

A Mini-Catechism

based on the four parts of the universal
Catechism of the Catholic Church

By and Based on the Books of Robert J. Cormier (www.thefaithkit.org)
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A Commentary on the Nicene Creed

We believe in one God—we have no reason to believe in more than one, but we have enormous reason to believe in the one there is.

the Father, the Almighty—our loving provider, and He who can do anything that can be done, a great thing in a provider.

maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen—and this is how we experience Him even though He is unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ—in other words, we are not looking for any more revelations; we are not in need of any more information in order to have a living faith.

eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God—in other words, he is made of God's own love, as are we.

Through him all things were made—in other words, creation was designed with his life, death, and resurrection in mind.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven—in other words, his whole life was crafted to teach us what we need to know.

by the power of the holy spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man—in other words, God's plan conceived Jesus.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried—to show us that God understands everything we go through, and even suffers with us.

on the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures—actually, despite the desire to say that Jesus rose three days later in fulfillment of certain Old Testament prophecies, this is not what the New Testament reports. This indicates an overriding memory of what the New Testament does report.

he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father—and so we can pray to him now.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end—in other words, at the end of time God will make of us the family that we were meant to be.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified—in other words, God is a family; He is more than one person we are persons.

He has spoken through the prophets—in other words, God's plan was at work from the beginning.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church—in other words, since we were made to be family, we are called to be a Church, one Church, one family in faith.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins—in other words, God did indeed ordain certain actions to speak for Him.

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come—absolutely.

Amen.

The Seven Sacraments

For all intents and purposes, the word “sacrament” means “sacred sign.” It is something we can see, particularly an action, which God through the life of Jesus gave the Church in order to speak to His name.

That God has ordered certain signs to speak for Him is no mystery. We need signs to speak to one another. There are some things you cannot say with words alone. This is also true in church.

Though each of the sacraments is an official act, each has several spiritual meanings. For example:

“Baptism,” the act by which people are received into the Church, involves water. The use of water symbolizes the bath, or shower, that makes us feel like new. Of course, the person baptized *is* new; he or she is a new Christian. The rest of us can renew this feeling every time we profess our faith as long we have made the effort to actually mean it! The idea that baptism frees us from sin is a reminder that sin is self-centeredness. We are “freed” in the sense that we have formally embarked upon the road to love. The baptism of infants on the basis of their parents’ faith and promise “to do all they can to raise their children in their faith” is an obvious reminder that *we were made to be family*.

“Confirmation,” where people baptized as infants are now given a chance to speak for themselves, is a reminder of the importance of decision, the one way we can gain faith by an act of the will.

Beyond the community’s need for structure and official leadership, God gives some “holy orders” because He wants His people to receive His truth from a real voice, His assurance from a real smile, and His love from a real embrace. But all God’s people are called to share their faith, and they do this best by living it.

“Confession” helps us to believe that we have gotten a completely new start. After all, if we confess, it is clear that we have learned from whatever happened, turning it from something bad into something good. In confessing, we have dealt with the matter in the way that God has given us to do so. There is nothing else to do or think about. It is in this sense that sins confessed are said to be “erased.”

“The anointing of the sick” is done to assure the sick that God will take care of them no matter what. The fact that it often helps people feel better physically is a reminder of the intimate connection between physical and spiritual health.

“Marriage” is a wonderful sacrament. What represents God better than a person? What represents God’s love better than the deeply personal and passionate love of a man and a woman, especially when they demonstrate their love in their commitment to one another? After all, you can die for a stranger, but you would willingly share the rest of your life only with someone you love for who this person is. This is the kind of love that God feels for each of us.

The “Eucharist” is the richest sacrament of all. It is the meal we share to remind ourselves that *we were made to be a family*. It is a re-presentation of the moment when Jesus, revealing his decision not to run, accepted the cross where he taught and showed us love. It blesses the communion where God’s love is presented in a way we can see, receive personally so each of us knows that God is talking to “me,” and even eat whereupon it becomes part of us, reminding us that we can never lose God’s love. And much, much more....

The Ten Commandments

I am the Lord your God, you shall not have strange gods before me. This first commandment is really twofold: We are asked not to believe in other spiritual powers besides God; and we are asked not to see anything but God as all-important.

You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain. This is another two-fold commandment: We are not to use God's name when we are not talking to God; and we are not to talk dirty.

Keep holy the Sabbath. This is yet another twofold commandment. On Sunday we are to come to church and we are to avoid all unnecessary work. (God has always known about the importance of rest and rhythm.)

Honor thy father and thy mother. Respect and obey legitimate authority—unless you are asked to violate your conscience.

Thou shall not kill. Nor injure. Not even with words.

Thou shall not commit adultery. Nor otherwise lie with your body.

Thou shall not bear false witness. Nor otherwise lie. The world will not work unless people tell the truth.

Thou shall not steal. Nor buy what was stolen. Nor cheat. Nor vandalize.

Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife or husband. In other words, strive to keep your thoughts clean.

Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods. In other words, resist the myth "if only."

The Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven—”our” father, and not just our God but our loving provider.

hallowed be thy name—in other words, “holy” be thy name; and I will try not to use it in vain.

thy kingdom come—in other words, take us to heaven now.

thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven—in other words, if we are not ready to go to heaven now, let Your plan for us be followed.

Give us this day our daily bread—in other words, give us what we truly need; and I will try not to confuse what I need with what I want.

forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us—in other words, I will try to be as understanding with others as You are with me.

and lead us not into temptation—in other words, knowing my own imperfection, I pray that I will not be too severely tested; and I will try to be compassionate to those who have not been as fortunate so far.

but deliver us from evil—in other words, deliver us from the imperfection of this world; thy kingdom come.

Amen.