

PART 1 – KNOWLEDGE OF THE FAITH

What does the Holy Spirit help us to do?

The Holy Spirit prompts us to know God the Father through God, Jesus, His Son.

How do we come to know Jesus?

We come to know Jesus through the Church.

What are the visible and invisible components of the Church?

The Church is an *invisible* communion with the Spirit. It is also a *visible* community with a hierarchical structure. These two components form one mystery, which can only be recognized in faith.

What do we call the hierarchical structure of the Church?

We call this structure the Magisterium. The Pope is the head of this structure.

What are some common images that describe the mystery of the Church?

The following images describe the mystery of the Church: Temple of the Holy Spirit; Flock of Christ; Vineyard; Mystical Body of Christ.

Our Church is Trinitarian. What does that mean?

First of all, we believe in the Holy Trinity – three persons in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Secondly, the Church reflects the Trinity – *People of God, Body of Christ, and Temple of the Holy Spirit.*

What are the marks of the Church?

The marks of the Church are One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

What does it require to have membership in the Church?

Membership in the Church requires (1) the faith-filled act of Baptism, full initiation through the celebration of (2) Eucharist and (3) Confirmation, and (4) continuing participation in the life of the Church.

What is a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is an outward sign, instituted by Christ to give Grace. The Sacraments are a continuation of Jesus' ministry and presence in the world, and a gift of strength and life to His people, the Church. They are specific faith actions of the Church, empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

How many Sacraments are there, and what are they?

There are seven Sacraments.

The *three* Sacraments of Initiation are BAPTISM, EUCHARIST, and CONFIRMATION.

The *two* Sacraments of forgiveness and healing are RECONCILIATION/PENANCE and ANOINTING OF THE SICK.

The *two* Sacraments of Service to the Church/Vocation are MATRIMONY and HOLY ORDERS.

Christ, acting in the Church, is the ultimate celebrant of every Sacrament.

How does the Church contain the fullness of God's Divine Revelation?

Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, under the guidance of the Magisterium, contain the fullness of God's divine revelation. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Church continues to develop throughout history.

What is Sacred Tradition?

Sacred Tradition contains the collected teachings and lived experience of the Church.

How does the guidance of the Magisterium continue Sacred Tradition?

The Pope, and his bishops in communion with him, are the Magisterium of the Church. They teach in two ways:

***Definitive teaching* is infallible, meaning perfect and without flaw.**

***Authoritative teaching* is believed by the faithful of the Church based on the trust in the Church as founded by Christ.**

Who is the pope?

Our pope at this time is Francis I

Who is our bishop?

The Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh is Most Reverend David Zubik. Our auxiliary Bishop is William Waltersheid. We are also served by retired Bishop Winter.

Why does the Church honor Mary?

Mary is the Mother of the Church and the perfect model for all Christians to follow, because she cooperated with Christ in the Redemption.

PART 2 – KNOWLEDGE OF THE SACRAMENTS

What are the fruits of Baptism?

The fruits of Baptism are forgiveness of original sin, forgiveness of personal sin, and birth into new life. *The baptized are incorporated into the Church and share in the PRIESTHOOD, PROPHETIC MISSION, AND KINGSHIP OF CHRIST. THE FAITHFUL ARE PRIESTS, PROPHETS, AND KINGS.*

What does the Sacrament of Confirmation enable us to do?

The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit enable us to develop our talents as members of the Church and strengthen us to serve God as He wills. Confirmation is sometimes called the “Sacrament of Christian Maturity”

How does the Divine and the Church interact in the Liturgy of the Mass?

In the Liturgy, and especially in the sacraments, there are *unchangeable parts*, which are divinely given. There are other parts which the Church has the authority to adapt to different cultures.

What are the fruits of the Eucharist?

The ultimate fruit of the Eucharist is the fullness of divine life and unity of the Mystical Body of Christ.

- **In the Eucharist, the substance of bread and wine is transformed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. This is called TRANSUBSTANTIATION. Christ is totally, completely, and substantially present in both or either forms of the bread and wine.**
- **The Eucharist is a memorial of Christ’s Passover; it not only recalls, but it also makes present.**
- **The Eucharist is thanksgiving to God the Father for all of Creation.**
- **CHRIST is present in the Liturgy in the Bishop/Priest preside, in the Word of God, in the assembly, and especially in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine.**
- **The Mass not only recalls the Paschal mystery, but is makes it *present*, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.**
- **In the Mass, we are joined to the heavenly liturgy.**

How does the Church unfold the whole mystery of Christ during the year?

In the course of the liturgical year, the Church “unfold the whole mystery of Christ, from His INCARNATION and NATIVITY, through His ASCENSION, to PENETECOST and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.”

What are fruits of reconciliation?

For the faithful, confession of sin and ABSOLUTION are the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and the Church. SIN is a rupture in our relationship with God that is always an intentional choice to do evil. Baptism does not remove CONCUPISCENCE, the inclination to sin.

What are the effects of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?

The special grace of this sacrament has the following effects: it unites the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and the good of the whole Church: it provides the courage, strength, and peace to endure the sufferings of old age or illness in a Christian manner: it offer the forgiveness of sin if the sick person is unable to obtain it through the Sacrament of Reconciliation: it restores health if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul: it prepares the sick person for the passing over into eternal life. The proper time for receiving this sacrament is when “the believer begins to be in danger of death because of illness or old age.” They may receive the sacrament more than once.

What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

This sacrament ordains men into the priesthood. “Through ordained ministry, that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as the head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.”

- **The Church confers the sacrament of Holy Orders only on baptized men who have a recognizable suitability for the ministry.**
- **Called by God through the Church, the priests are ordained to serve as co-workers with the bishop in serving the Catholic community.**
- **Priests act in the person of Christ and in the name of the whole Church.**
- **The priesthood reaches its highest point in the celebration of the Eucharist.**
- **Priests remain celibate for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.**

What is matrimony?

Matrimony is the sacrament that joins a man and a woman in marriage.

- **Christ is present in this Sacrament to enable the couple to live out what might seem at times an impossible demand.**
- **Jesus taught that marriage is permanent and cannot be dissolved. The church cannot change that teaching.**
- **By its very nature, marriage must be open to the procreation and education of children.**
- **Persons who are divorced and remarried without an annulment remain in the Church but cannot receive Communion.**

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **All people are created in God’s image.**
- **Every Christian is called to holiness.**
- **Each person is unique and gifted.**
- **Every person has the responsibility to develop a personal faith relationship with Jesus.**
- **Catholic values, such as the *corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the cardinal and theological virtues*, shape our lives.**

PART 3 – IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

God the Creator

- God is the Creator who creates all things good.
- All of creation is the result of God’s unconditional love.
- Happiness depends upon understanding who God created us to be.
- Through personal prayer and the communion of believers, we are part of salvation history.
- We play a role in keeping all God’s creation sacred.

Jesus and the Paschal Mystery

- God so loved the world that Jesus entered the human experience.
- The humanity of Jesus is the standard for our own humanity.
- **THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS IS THE PASCHAL MYSTERY.**
- Baptism is the immersion into the life of Christ.
- In the Eucharist we are offered the real presence of Christ.
- We are called to become the living presence of Christ in this world.

Holy Spirit the Sanctifier

- The Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the Blessed Trinity sent by the Father and Son to live within us and to unite us.
- We are called to membership within the community of believers through the Spirit.
- The Spirit strengthens our relationship with Jesus and empowers us to continue to His mission through the Gifts of the Spirit.
- The Spirit proclaims us to proclaim Jesus, the person and message, to “the ends of the earth.”
- The Holy Spirit enlightens our choices so that we come to recognize the will of God in our lives.
- **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING, RIGHT JUDGEMENT, COURAGE, KNOWLEDGE, REVERENCE, AND WONDER AND AWE.**

Church as the Community of Life

- The Church is a family of faith called to holiness through happiness.
- Our faith family, the Church, offers support, guidance, and care for its member throughout life.
- Godparents and sponsors represent the Christian community and are to be models of faith.
- The *Communion of Saints* is the community of all believers, living and dead.
- The Liturgy is a celebration of the community whose life and faith is nurtured by the Word and the Eucharist, and by the presence of each individual.
- The Church is at once human and divine.

Practice of Virtue

- There is power IN, and responsibility FOR, God's gift of free will.
- Personal and social sins exist in our own life experiences.
- We need to take ownership of our personal choices.
- The Christian virtue of Hope is based on the belief that Jesus triumphed over evil.
- Our ability to choose good is empowered by the Spirit.

Sacraments/Sacraments of Initiation

- The seven Sacraments touch all stages and important moments of a Christian's life.
- The Sacraments of Initiation "lay the foundation of every Christian life."
- The reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of Baptismal grace.
- In Confirmation, the recipients are "enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit."

Symbols of the Spirit; Rite of Confirmation

- The *renewal of Baptismal Vows* in the Rite of Confirmation affirms the connection between the Initiation Sacraments.
- The Christian life is one of *continual conversion* from sin to a life of grace.
- The Paschal Mystery triumphs over sin, and through personal conversion we become *other Christs* to the world.
- The ancient Liturgical gesture of *imposing hands* symbolizes the confirming of the Divine power of the Holy Spirit.
- Each confirmed person is empowered by the *gifts of the Holy Spirit* to share their faith with others as they continue the mission of Jesus.
- The *anointing with oil* in the Rite of Confirmation symbolizes selection and strength as it did in biblical times.
- Being *marked with the Sign of the Cross* is a reminder that we share in the life of Christ.
- The **Amen** is the candidate's personal affirmation of his or her desire to be a spiritual witness of Christ in the world.