Things Catholics Must Believe and Do

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Introduction

These instructions are mandatory for Catholics (catechumens and the faithful) to believe or do unless otherwise stated. However, the rules for those who belong to an approved Catholic religious order may be different and must be followed by the members of the order.

Things Catholics Must Believe

Catholics must profess belief in the full deposit of the Catholic faith

All Catholics must profess belief in the full deposit of the Catholic faith (that is, all the dogmas of the Catholic Church) even though they may not know all of the dogmas. This belief is expressed in the following Catholic prayer titled the Act of Faith:

> *Act of Faith*: "O my God, I firmly believe all the sacred truths which thy Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches because thou hast revealed them, who canst neither lie nor be deceived."

There are three ranks of dogmas

There are three ranks of dogmas: basic dogmas, secondary dogmas, and deeper dogmas.

1. Basic Dogmas: For a list of all the basic dogmas, see RJMI's *Profession of Faith for the Days of the Great Apostasy*: The Basic Dogmas.
2. Secondary Dogmas: Some secondary dogmas are as follows:
   a) The dogmas regarding the sacraments except for baptism. Some dogmas regarding the sacrament of baptism are basic dogmas.
   b) Purgatory is a place where members of the Catholic Church go who died in a state of grace but guilty of venial sin or have not yet expiated all the punishment due to their sins. Once their venial sins and punishment due to their sins are remitted, they enter heaven.
   c) The necessity of penance for salvation
   d) Damned angels and damned humans remain in the hell of the damned forever and thus will never get out and enter heaven.
   e) The Old Covenant ended and was replaced by the New Covenant when Christ died on the Cross.
3. Deeper Dogmas: All the dogmas that are not basic or secondary dogmas are deeper dogmas.

Dogmas that all Catechumens must know and believe

These are the things necessary to be a catechumen:

1. Catechumens must want to be a member of the Catholic Church for a good motive.
2. Catechumens must believe in the basic dogmas of the Catholic faith stated in the Apostles' Creed. But they are not given the actual Apostles' Creed until they are about to enter the Catholic Church.
3. Catechumens must reject and condemn all false gods and false religions and thus believe that the Catholic God, Church, and faith are the only true God, Church, and faith.
4. Catechumens must believe that only members of the Catholic Church can be in the way of salvation, as this has to be their main motive for wanting to enter the Catholic Church.
5. Catechumens must promise to live a moral and virtuous life.
6. Catechumens must pledge obedience to the Catholic Church and her legitimate rulers.
7. Catechumens must be tested by the bishop to see if they have fulfilled these obligations and thus passed the test. If they have, then the bishop will make them catechumens. If no bishop is available in the foreseeable future, then a Catholic priest can make them catechumens. If no Catholic priest is available in the foreseeable future, then they can be made catechumens by a competent member of the Catholic Church.

Dogmas that simple laymen, priest, bishops, and theologians must know and believe

1. Basic dogmas must be known and believed by all the faithful as a necessity for membership in the Catholic Church.
2. Secondary dogmas must be known and believed by bishops, priests, deacons, and theologians. And they must be known and believed by laymen if time and circumstance permit.
3. Deeper dogmas that belong to the solemn magisterium must be known and believed by popes, cardinals, bishops, and theologians. However, deeper dogmas that belong only to the ordinary magisterium do not have to be known by any Catholic unless the circumstances require it.[1]

However, once a dogma (be it a basic, secondary, or deeper dogma) is taught to any Catholic, he is bound to believe it under pain of becoming a formal heretic.

A Catholic also becomes a formal heretic for refusing to learn about a dogma (be it a basic, secondary, or deeper dogma) when the situation requires him to learn about it and he makes no effort to do so. His culpable ignorance of the dogma is known as affected ignorance, a deliberately fostered ignorance.

[1] See RJMI book *History of the Solemn and the Ordinary Magisterium*. Some dogmas belong only to the solemn magisterium, some only to the ordinary magisterium, and some belong to both.

Exception for these days of the Great Apostasy

Because of the many idolatries and heresies by nominal Catholics during the Great Apostasy, which began in the 11th century, all Catholics (which thus include catechumens) must know and believe all of the points in the *Profession of Faith for the Days of the Great Apostasy*, composed by RJMI, if time permits. The reason is because many hold these heresies and idolatries today and if they are brought in as catechumens or members of the Catholics Church without testing them first, they will fall back out of the catechumenate or the Catholic Church if they learn about a dogma they do not accept. Hence it would be unfair to allow men to become catechumens or members of the Catholic Church before testing them on the many and prevalent idolatries and heresies of the Great Apostasy.

Things Catholics Must Do

The Three Pillars: Prayer, Penance, and study the Catholic faith

I compare prayer and the grace earned by it to gas in a car; studying the faith to instructions on how to drive a car; and penance to the maintenance of a car. The car is your body and soul, and the goal is to be in the way of salvation. You can have a car that works but unless you have gas in the tank, it will not go; and unless you are instructed on how to drive it, it will not go; and unless you maintain it, it will break down.

Pray

> "Pray, lest ye enter into temptation." (Lk. 22:40) "Let nothing hinder thee from praying." (Eccus. 18:22) "Be instant in prayer; watching in it with thanksgiving:" (Col. 4:2)

Catholics must do the following prayers:

- The Morning Prayers and Night Prayers. (See *The Catholic Prayer Book* on pages 5-6.)
- Pray one Rosary (5 decades) and one Angelic Chaplet a week. (See *The Catholic Prayer Book*.)
- On Maundy Day, pray the Holy Hour any time between 12 midnight and 6am. (See *The Catholic Prayer Book*.)
- On Good Sixth Weekday, pray the Stations of the Cross and the Seven Penitential Psalms. (See *The Catholic Prayer Book*.)
- On a first sixth weekday, do or attend at least one long exorcism prayer during the year. (See *The Catholic Prayer Book*.)
- Read the *Roman Martyrology* for the current day from the RJMI revised *Roman Martyrology* accessed on the Pastoral Menu.
- Attend Mass on the Lord's Day and other days of obligation if possible. If a Catholic Mass is not available, pray the Mass prayers instead: the Introit, Collect,

Lesson, Epistle, the prayers after the Epistle and before the Gospel, the Gospel, Creed, Offertory, Secret, Communion, and Postcommunion.

Do not expect to be lifted up to the third heaven every time you pray. Pray as a duty, as a military duty, even when you feel no inspiration or are distracted. Most times you pray, you will not be lifted up and many times you will be distracted, but pray anyway and you will see the great results. God will come to you and inspire you in his good time, when and where he sees fit. Most times God will inspire you when you are reading the scriptures or studying the faith. But he will even inspire you when you are recreating or doing every day activities.

Do penance

"I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself should become a castaway."
(1 Corinthians 9:27)

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth."
(Colossians 3:5)

"The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast."
(Matthew 9:15)

On penitential days, Catholics must endure their voluntary, mandatory, necessary, and accidental penances. Everything else they do must not be penance and thus must be enjoyed with as much comfort as possible. You must not do a penance that would harm your health, endanger your life, or cause death unless God directly commands it.[2]

On abstinence and regular, light, and Eucharistic fasts

- **Abstinence:** No meat, meat gravy, soup made from meat, or lard may be taken. The 6th weekday is a day of abstinence for all Catholics unless it is also a feast day of obligation.
- **Regular Fast:** One meal a day, no meat, no alcohol, no dessert.
- **Light Fast:** Two meals a day, no meat, alcohol and one dessert are allowed.
- **Eucharistic Fast:** No food or drink (except water) may be taken from three hours before Holy Communion until 15 minutes after.

Eating outside of the allowed meal or meals on fasting days is not permitted. However, water, coffee, tea, fruit juices, and sodas are allowed. Milk or pureed juices (such as tomato juice, V8, or smoothies) are not allowed outside the meal except for milk or cream in coffee or tea.

The fasting schedule

The yearly fasting schedule regarding regular fasts and light fasts is as follows.

[2] See RJMI book *Penance Is Necessary for Salvation*.

Regular fast days

- A regular fast during Holy Week, from the 2nd weekday to the 7th weekday (6 days)
- A regular fast during Advent from 12/17 to 12/24, except for the Lord's Day. (7 days)
- A regular fast on the Ember Days, except for the Ember Days after Pentecost, which are not fast days. (9 days)
- A regular fast on all vigils.

That makes a total of 28 regular fast days during the year.

Light fast days

- A light fast during Lent until Holy Week. No fasts on the Lord's Day and Holy Days of Obligation. Holy Week is a regular fast from the 2nd weekday to the 7th weekday.
- A light fast on the 2nd, 4th, and 6th weekday during Advent until 12/17. 12/17 to 12/24 is a regular fast.

(For a history on mandatory fast days, see RJMI book *On Mandatory Fast Days*.)

Special rules regarding fasting

- **Special penitential days** occur when non-penitential days are converted to penitential days when penance is imposed upon you or the community by a religious authority or by your confessor or spiritual director or by yourself for a good reason. If imposed by yourself, you must get the approval of a Catholic superior if one is available (your priest, spiritual director, head of your religious order, or head of the household). If you do not have access to a Catholic superior, then you can impose it upon yourself but it must be for a good reason.
- **Special Days: Birthdays or wedding anniversaries:** When a birthday or wedding anniversary (hereafter "special day") coincides with a penitential day (a regular or light fast), the feast for the special day can be transferred to another day that is not a penitential day.
- **Children:** Children under the age of 5 are exempt from the laws of fasting, but the laws of abstinence still apply. Children between 5 and 9 can do a light fast instead of a regular fast.
- **Pregnant or nursing women:** Pregnant or nursing women are exempt from the laws of fasting, but the laws of abstinence still apply. Replace fasting with some other penance.
- **Heavy labor or poor health:** When health or ability to work would be seriously affected by fasting, the fast (but not abstinence) may be modified (such as a regular fast reduced to a light fast) or all fasting abolished. If it is abolished, it must be replaced by some other form of penance. If possible, a dispensation from a proper authority is needed to modify or abolish your fast. If a dispensation is not possible, then you can modify or abolish the fast by your own authority but it must be for a good reason.

- **Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the morning or during working hours and must not be taken to get drunk, as willful drunkenness is a sin. *"Wine was created from the beginning to make men joyful and not to make them drunk."* (Eccus. 31:35)
- **Non-fasting penances on penitential days:** The main penances on penitential days are fasting and abstinence. However, other penances can be imposed upon you by a pope, bishop, priest, confessor, spiritual director, or a religious rule. And you can take an extra penance upon yourself with the approval of a proper authority. If a proper authority is not available, then you do not need this approval. For some non-fasting, non-abstinence penances, see RJMI book *Penance Is Necessary for Salvation*: Penances.
- **Dispensation:** A Catholic authority can dispense you from observing any penitential day or any day of obligation for a good reason and can modify or abolish your fast or other penances by a dispensation for a good reason. If a Catholic authority is not available, you can exempt yourself by the law of epikeia from these things for a good reason and thus without the approval of such an authority. The hierarchy of Catholic authorities who can give dispensations is as follows: the pope, bishops, priests, confessors, spiritual directors, or religious superiors.

Rules for non-penitential days

There is a time to do penance and time not to do penance. There is a time to fast, a time to feast, and a time to eat normally!

> "Go, eat fat meats and drink sweet wine…because it is the holy day of the Lord and be not sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength." (2 Esdras 8:10)

St. Paul says, *"The living God…giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy."* (1 Tim. 6:17) Hence St. Paul not only knew how to do without but also how to abound[3]:

> "I speak not as it were for want. For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content therewith. I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound: (everywhere, and in all things I am instructed) both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." (Phili. 4:11-13)

Hence when you are not doing penance, you must enjoy things with as much comfort as possible. Catholics are neither stoics nor epicureans:

> "Make straight the path for thy feet, and all thy ways shall be established. Decline not to the right hand, nor to the left: turn away thy foot from evil." (Prv. 4:26-27)

The non-penitential days are all the days outside of the penitential (fasting) days. On non-penitential days, you must not do voluntary penances. However, you can do necessary penances, such as those that come with your daily duty and physical exercises. You must enjoy feasting and other good things in moderation and with as much comfort as possible and only endure mandatory, necessary, or accidental penances.[4] If the non-penitential day is also a feast day of obligation, then only necessary chores can be done and physical exercise must be limited to a minimum unless your health requires more exercise.[5]

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[3] See RJMI book *The Hellenization of Christianity by the Anti-Church Fathers and Scholastics*: The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophies.
[4] See RJMI book *Penance Is Necessary for Salvation*: Penances: Types of penances (voluntary and involuntary).
[5] See in this article, "No unnecessary work on the Lord's Day and other days of obligation," p. 10.

Study the Catholic faith

> "He that refuseth to learn shall fall into evils." (Prv. 17:16) "Take heed to thyself and to doctrine; be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:16)

Follow the RJMI's Bible reading schedule at least two days a week. (See *MLR Daily Bible Reading Schedule*.)

And study the Catholic faith at least two days a week by spending at least 30 minutes studying the Catholic faith either by reading, listening, or watching works of the Catholic faith that are on my website at www.JohnTheBaptist.us.

If you have not already done so, study and prepare to take the *Profession of Faith for the Days of the Great Apostasy*. And read my book *On How to be a Good Catholic*.

Wear sacramentals

> "For he that shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also will be ashamed of him when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mk. 8:38)

Wear on your person one or more sacramentals, such as the St. Benedict crucifix, the Sacred Heart Badge, the St. Philomena Cord, or the Miraculous Medal.

All but the St. Philomena Cord must be worn outside of the clothing and thus be visible to the public unless they are forbidden by an employer or other person in authority or if they will get in the way of work when doing heavy labor. If you wear a suit and tie for your job, you can wear a Catholic religious pin on your lapel if your employer allows it; and you can wear the rest of the sacramentals under your clothing. You must not wear the sacramentals when bathing. The only one you are required to wear when sleeping is the St. Philomena Cord.

Have an altar and holy images in your home

If possible, set aside a place in your home for an altar to pray before. And if possible, it must have a crucifix; images of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Face of Jesus from the Shroud of Turin, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Michael; and relics if possible. You can also have other holy items according to your devotions.

Your home must also contain a sufficient amount of holy items so that whoever visits you will know that you are Catholic and that you put your faith above all else. The only time you do not have to display holy items in your home is when the State forbids it. In this case, you can hide them and only bring them out when it is safe.

No unnecessary work on the Lord's Day and other days of obligation

Catholics living in Catholic nations or other nations that enforce or allow the law of no unnecessary work on the Lord's Day and other days of obligation must obey it.

Exceptions for Catholics living in non-Catholic nations

However, it is understood that Catholics living in non-Catholic nations will not be able to get off from work on most of the days of obligation. Hence they are dispensed or exempted from not working on the days they cannot get off but must attend Mass if possible. And a Catholic who is self-employed or owns a business in a non-Catholic nation can work on days of obligation if his livelihood or that of his business and employees depends upon it.

Exceptions for necessary work

In Catholic nations or other nations which enforce the law banning unnecessary work on the Lord's Day and other days of obligation, necessary work can be done, such as cooking, cleaning dishes, taking care of crops or animals, policing, firefighting, fighting in a war, doctoring, and nursing, if it cannot be put off for another day. Speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, *"*Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit and will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath day?*"* (Lk. 14:5)[6]

The faithful must confess their mortal sins to a Catholic priest if one is available

The faithful must confess their mortal sin to a Catholic priest if one is available in the foreseeable future. If a Catholic priest is not available in the foreseeable future, then the faithful must confess their sins to God and he will remit them.[7]

Must pay tithes to the Catholic Church

Catholics must pay tithes to the Catholic Church under pain of mortal sin unless dispensed from doing so by a competent authority. That standard rate is 10% of net income.

> Net income is the amount after expenses are deducted from your total (gross) income. The only expenses that cannot be deducted are for jewelry, other unnecessary things, and for recreation. Hence, expenses such as for rent, mortgage payments, gas for the car used for purposes other than recreation, utilities, insurance payments, taxes, food, clothing, medicine, business, and medical expenses are deducted from the total income.

(See RJMI article *Brief on Tithes*.)

Modesty rules

See Mary's Little Remnant article *Modesty Rules for Men and Women.*

Obey all of God's Commandments as taught by the Holy Catholic Church

All Catholics must obey God's Commandment as taught by the Holy Catholic Church, which consists of many laws:

[6] For more details, see RJMI article *The Law of No Unnecessary Work on the Lord's Day*.
[7] See RJMI book *Sacraments without a Priest*: The Sacrament of Penance without a Priest.

Moses says, “Keep, therefore, and do the things which the Lord God hath commanded you. You shall not go aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. But you shall walk in the way that the Lord your God hath commanded that you may live, and it may be well with you.” (Deut. 5:32-33) “But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God to keep and to do all his commandments and ceremonies which I command thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.” (Deut. 28:15)

Jesus says, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Mt. 19:17) “Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.” (Lk. 11:28)

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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