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## Instructions for Use

The Youth Catechism, which is written in language suitable for young people, deals with the entire Catholic faith as it was presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC of 1997), without aiming, however, at the completeness provided in that volume. The work is structured in **Question-and-Answer** format, and **numbers** after each answer refer the reader to the more extensive and in-depth treatments in the CCC. A **commentary** following the answer is meant to give the young person additional help in understanding the questions that are discussed and their significance in his life. Furthermore, the Youth Catechism offers in the margin a continuous series of supplementary elements, such as **pictures**, summary **definitions**, citations from **Sacred Scripture**, quotations from **saints** and reliable **teachers of the faith** but also from non-religious authors. At the conclusion of the book, there is an **index of subjects and persons** to facilitate finding specific topics.

## Symbols and Their Meaning:



Citation from Sacred Scripture



Quotations from various authors, including saints and other Christian authors



Definitions



See definition given for the term

Layout, Design, Illustrations by Alexander von Lengerke, Cologne, Germany

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## CONTENTS

### FOREWORD

Letter from Pope Benedict XVI

### PART ONE

#### What We Believe 13

Why We Are Able to Believe 14 | Man Is Receptive to God 14 | God Approaches Us Men 16 | Men Respond to God 25 | The Christian Profession of Faith 27  
I Believe in God the Father 31 | I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son 51 | I Believe in the Holy Spirit 73

### PART TWO

#### How We Celebrate the Christian Mysteries 101

God Acts in Our Regard by Means of Sacred Signs 102 | God and the Sacred Liturgy 104 | How We Celebrate the Mysteries of Christ 108  
The Seven Sacraments of the Church | The Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) 116 | The Sacraments of Healing (Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick) 133 | The Sacraments of Communion and Mission (Holy Orders and Marriage) 143 | Other Liturgical Celebrations 156

### PART THREE

#### How We Are to Have Life in Christ 161

Why We Are Put on Earth, What We Are Supposed to Do, and How God's Holy Spirit Helps Us to Do It 162 | The Dignity of the Human Person 162 | Human Community 180 | The Church 190 | The Ten Commandments 193 | You Shall Love the Lord Your God with All Your Heart, and with All Your Soul, and with All Your Mind 193 | You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself 202

### PART FOUR

#### How We Should Pray 257

Prayer in Christian Life 258 | How to Pray: The Gift of God's Presence 258 | The Sources of Prayer 270 | The Way of Prayer 274  
The Lord's Prayer: The "Our Father" 280

### INDEX

Subject Index 288 | Definitions Index 298  
Abbreviations 300 | Acknowledgments 301





“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Jn 1:29



In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.

Heb 1:1-2



“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”

Lk 1:35

**116** *What does it mean to say that the Holy Spirit has “spoken through the prophets”?*

**Already in the Old Covenant God filled men and women with the Spirit, so that they lifted up their voices for God, spoke in his name, and prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah. [683-688, 702-720]**

In the Old Covenant God sought out men and women who were willing to let him use them to console, lead, and admonish his people. It was the Spirit of God who spoke through the mouth of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets. John the Baptist, the last of these prophets, not only foresaw the coming of the Messiah. He also met him and proclaimed him as the liberator from the power of sin.

**117** *How could the Holy Spirit work in, with, and through Mary?*

**Mary was totally responsive and open to God (Lk 1:38). Thus she was able to become the “Mother of God” through the working of the Holy Spirit—and as Christ’s Mother to become also the Mother of Christians, indeed, the Mother of all mankind. [721-726]**

Mary made it possible for the Holy Spirit to work the miracle of all miracles: the Incarnation of God. She

gave God her Yes: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, she went with Jesus through thick and thin, even to the foot of the Cross. There Jesus gave her to us all as our Mother (Jn 19:25-27). → 80-85, 479

### 118 What happened on Pentecost?

**Fifty days after his Resurrection, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit down from heaven upon his disciples. The age of the → CHURCH began. [731-733]**

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit transformed fearful apostles into courageous witnesses to Christ. In a very short time, thousands had themselves baptized: it was the birthday of the Church. The miracle of the languages on → PENTECOST shows that the Church is there for all peoples from the very beginning: She is universal (= the Latin term for the Greek *kat' holon*, catholic) and missionary. She speaks to all men, overcomes ethnic and linguistic barriers, and can be understood by all. To this day the Holy Spirit is the "soul" of the Church, the essential principle of her life.

### 119 What does the Holy Spirit do in the Church?

**The Holy Spirit builds up the → CHURCH and impels her. He reminds her of her → MISSION. He calls people into her service and sends them the necessary gifts. He leads us ever deeper into communion with the Triune God. [733-741, 747]**

Even though the Church during her long history has often seemed "abandoned by all good spirits", the Holy Spirit has been at work in her despite all the human failings and inadequacies. The mere fact of her two-

### ? PENTECOST

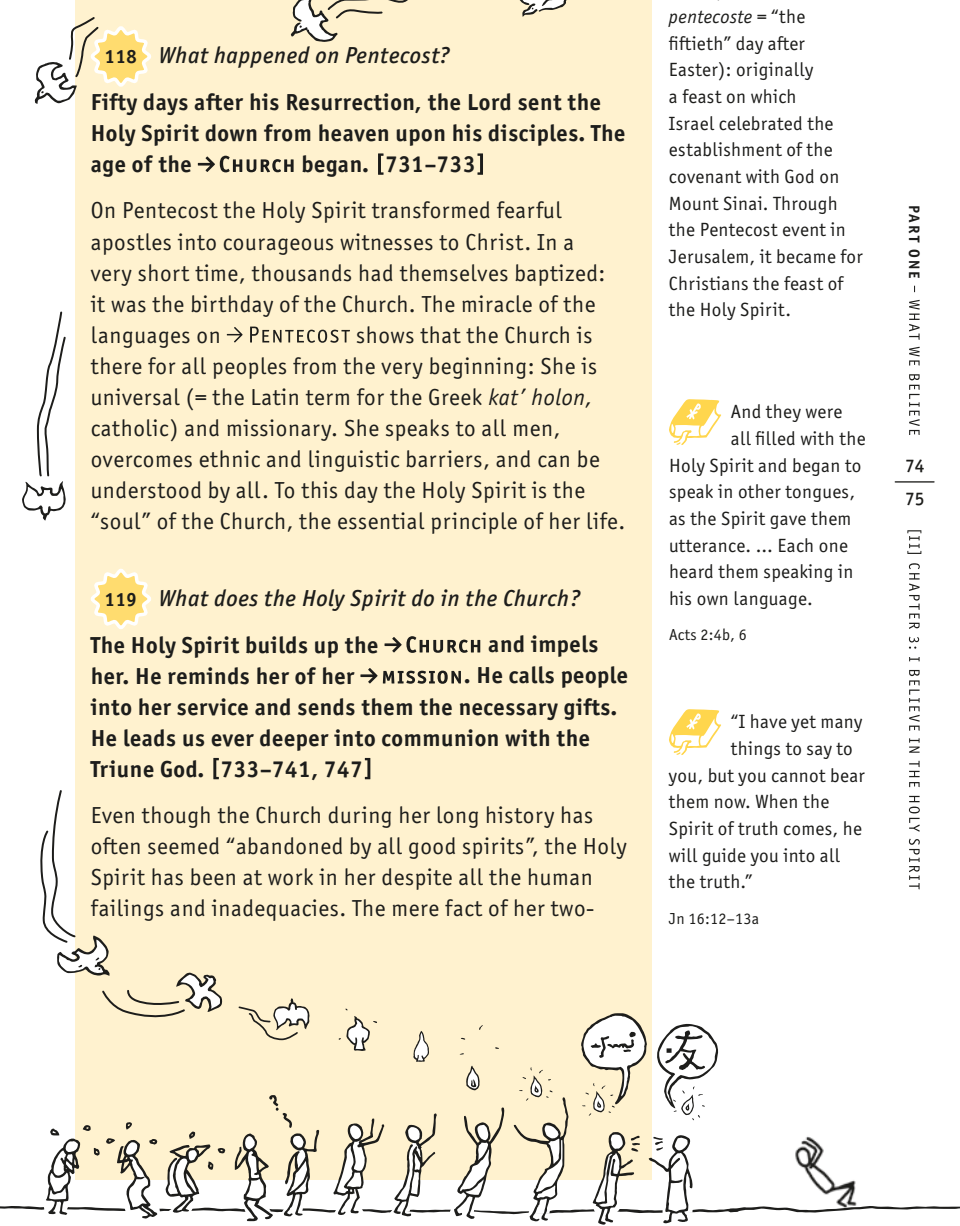
(from Greek *pentecoste* = "the fiftieth" day after Easter): originally a feast on which Israel celebrated the establishment of the covenant with God on Mount Sinai. Through the Pentecost event in Jerusalem, it became for Christians the feast of the Holy Spirit.

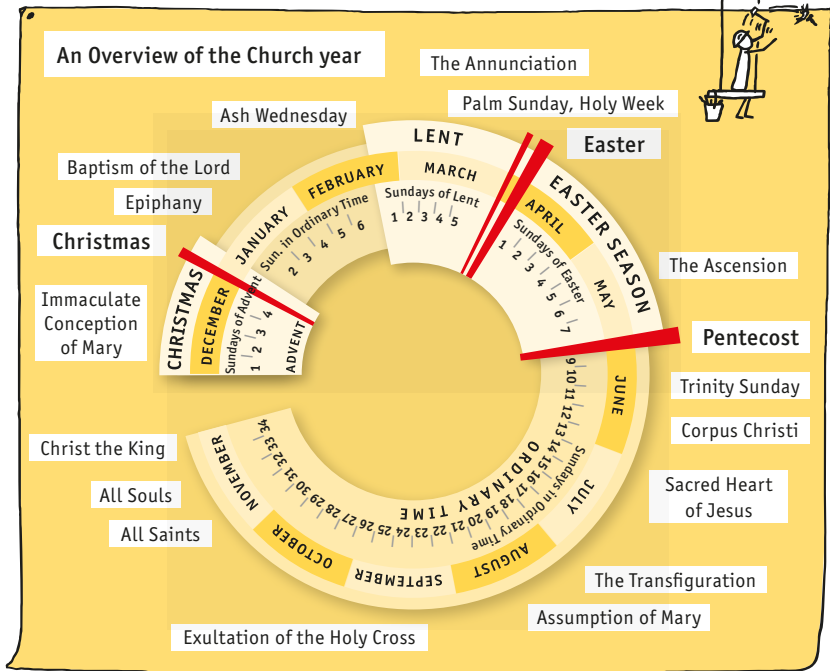
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ... Each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Acts 2:4b, 6

"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."

Jn 16:12-13a





The Church's New Year begins on the first Sunday of Advent and reaches its highpoint at Easter.

**187** *How important is Sunday?*

**Sunday is the center of Christian time, for on Sunday we celebrate Christ's Resurrection, and every Sunday is a miniature Easter. [1163–1167, 1193]**

If Sunday is disregarded or abolished, only work-days are left in the week. Man, who was created for joy, degenerates into a workhorse and a mindless consumer. We must learn on earth how to celebrate properly, or else we will not know what to do in heaven. Heaven is an endless Sunday.

→ 104–107

**188** *What is the Liturgy of the Hours?*

**The Liturgy of the Hours is the universal, public prayer of the → CHURCH. Biblical readings lead the person who prays it ever deeper into the mystery of the life of Jesus Christ. Throughout the world this gives**

**the Triune God the opportunity at every hour of the day to transform gradually those who pray and also the world. The Liturgy of the Hours is prayed not only by → PRIESTS and religious. Many Christians who take their faith seriously join their voices with the many thousands of praises and petitions that ascend to God from all over the world. [1174–1178, 1196]**

The seven “hours of prayer” are like a treasury of the → CHURCH’S prayers. It also loosens our tongues when we have become speechless because of joy, sorrow, or fear. Again and again one is astonished in reciting the Liturgy of the Hours: an entire reading “coincidentally” applies precisely to my situation. God hears us when we call to him. He answers us in these texts—often in a way that is so specific as to be almost disconcerting. In any case he also allows us to have long periods of silence and dryness so that we can demonstrate our fidelity.

→ 473, 492

**189** *How does the liturgy affect the spaces in which we live?*

**By his victory, Christ has penetrated all places in the world. He himself is the true Temple, and the worship of God “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24) is no longer bound up with a particular place. Nevertheless, the Christian world is filled with churches and sacred signs, because men need specific places in which to meet and signs to remind them of this new reality. Every house of God is a symbol for our heavenly Father’s house, to which we are journeying. [1179–1181, 1197–1198]**

Certainly one can pray anywhere—in the forest, on the beach, in bed. But since we men are not merely spiritual but also have a body, we need to see, hear, and feel one another; we need a specific place if we want to meet so as to be the Body of Christ; we must kneel down if we want to worship God; we must eat the transformed bread when it is offered; we must set our bodies in motion when *he* calls us. And a cross on the roadside will remind us of who owns the world and where our journey is taking us.

The seven times for prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours are:

- Matins (Office of Readings or Vigils, in the early morning hours)
- Lauds (Morning Prayer)
- Terce (9:00 a.m., Midmorning Prayer)
- Sext (12:00 noon, Midday Prayer)
- None (3:00 p.m., Midafternoon Prayer)
- Vespers (Evening Prayer)
- Compline (Night Prayer)



## Subject Index

The numbers in this index refer to the numbers of the individual questions. A number printed in bold gives the main reference; other numbers indicate further discussion.

- Abba, dear Father** 38, 290, 477
- Abortion** 237, 292, 379, **383**, 421, 498
- Absolution** 231, 233, 237, 239, 458
- Abuse, sexual** 386, 410
- Adam and Eva** 66, 68
- Addiction** 287, **389**
- Adoption** 422, 435
- Adoration** 149, 218, 461, 483, **485**
- Adultery** **424**
- Agnus Dei** 214
- AIDS** 414
- Alleluia** 214
- Alms** 345, 447, 449
- Altar** **191**, 213, 214, 215–217, 255
- Amen** **165**, 527
- Amendment, purpose of** **232**
- Angels** 52, **54**, 55, 179, 183, 489
- Anger** 120, 293, 318, **396**
- Animals, love of** **57**, 437
- Anointing** 115, 174, **181**, 195, 203, 244
- Anointing of the Sick** 193, **243–246**
- Anointing of the Sick, effects of the** **245**
- Anointing of the Sick, minister of the** **246**
- Anointing of the Sick, requirements** **243**
- Anointing of the Sick, Rite of the** **244**
- Annulment** **269**
- Anti-Semitism** 135
- Apostle** 12–13, **26**, 92, 99, 106, 118, 129, 137, 140–141, 143, 175, 209, 229, 252, 259, 482
- Apostles, calling of** **92**
- Apostolic character of the Church** **137**, 141
- Apostolic succession** 92, 137, 141
- Art** 461
- Artificial fertilization** **423**
- Ashes, imposition of** **272**
- Assisted dying** **382**
- Atheism** **5**, **357**
- Authority** **325**, 326, 329, 367, 375, 392, 399, 446
- Authority from Christ** **92**, 139–144, 242, 249
- Authority of the Pope** 141
- Ave Maria** **480**
- Baptism, prerequisite for** **196**
- Baptism** 130, 151, 193, **194–202**
- Baptism, the only way to salvation?** **199**
- Baptism, formula of** **195**
- Baptismal name** **201**, 361
- Baptism, minister of** **198**
- Baptism, administration of** **195**
- Beatitudes** 282, **283**, 284
- Beauty** 461
- Betting** 434
- Bible** **12–19**
- Bible and the Holy Spirit** **119**
- Bible and prayer** **491**
- Bible, its errors** **15**
- Bible, list of the individual books** **22**
- Bible, reading it correctly** **16**
- Biotechnology** **435**
- Birth control** 421
- Bishop, consecration of a** **252**
- Bishops** 92, 134, 137, **142–144**, 213, 253, 258
- Bishops and the Pope** **142**
- Bishops, their duty** **144**, 246, 440
- Blase, blessing of St.** **272**
- Blasphemy** 316, 359, 455
- Blessed Sacrament** 212, 218
- Blessing** 170, 213, 259, 272, 483, **484**, 498, 499
- Blessing of produce** **272**
- Breaking of the bread** 212, 223, 482
- Bread and Wine** 99, 181, **208**, 213, 216,

218, 488

**Bread, daily** 522, 523

**Brothers and sisters of Jesus** 81

**Burial** 394

**Business ethics** 428

---

**Canon of Sacred Scriptures** 14

**Capital/capitalism** 331, 435, 439, 442

**Cardinal virtues** 300

**Catechumenate** 196

**Catholic** 130, 133, 134, 220, 222, 267–268

**Catholic social teaching** 323

**Celebrant** 215

**Celibacy** 255, 258, 261

**Chance** 20, 43

**Charism** 113, 119, 120, 129, 257, 393

**Charity** 305, 309

**Chastity** 311, 404–406, 463

**Chastity for single persons** 145

**Child soldiers** 435

**Children** 86, 262, 265, 271, 354, 368, 371–372, 374, 383, 384, 416, 418, 419, 422, 460

**Children of God** 113, 125, 138, 173, 200, 226, 279, 283, 340, 401

**Children, trafficking in** 435

**Chrism, Anointing with** 203

**Chrism, Sacred** 115, 170, 174, 203, 244

**Christ, the Judge of the world** 112

**Christ, the Lord** 110, 363, 489

**Christ, the original sacrament** 193

**Church 121–128**

**Church and democracy** 140

**Church and non-Christian religions** 136, 198, 438

**Church and Sacred Scripture** 19

**Church and the Holy Spirit** 119

**Church and the Kingdom of God** 89, 91, 110, 123, 125, 138, 139, 284, 520

**Church, apostolic character of the** 137, 140

**Church as Body of Christ** 121, 126, 129, 131, 146, 175, 196, 208, 211, 217, 221, 343

**Church as Bride of Christ** 127

**Church as institution** 121, 124

**Church as People of God** 121, 125, 128, 138, 191, 204

**Church as Temple of the Holy Spirit** 119, 128, 189

**Church building** 189, 190, 214, 498

**Church, catholicity of the** 133, 134

**Church, collegiality of the** 140

**Church, divisions in the** 130, 131, 267

**Church, hierarchical structure of the** 140, 413

**Church, holiness of the** 124, 132

**Church, infallibility of the** 13, 143

**Church, local** 141, 253

**Church, nature of the** 125

**Church, origin of the term** 121

**Church, precepts of** 345

**Church, structure of the** 138

**Church, task of the** 123, 150

**Church, unity and uniqueness of the** 129, 141

**Civil society** 447

**Class war** 439

**Clerics** 138

**Coercion** 261, 288, 296, 420

**Commandments** 17, 67, 307, 348, 337, 352

**Common good** 296

**Communications media** 459

**Communion, Holy** 208, 212, 213, 221

**Communion of Saints** 146

**Communion, reception by non-Catholics?** 222

**Communism** 439

**Compline** 188

**Condoms** 414

**Confess, obligation to,** 234

**Confession** 151, 173, 175, 193, 206, 220, 225–239, 317, 458

**Confessional, secret of the** 238, 458

**Confirmation** 193, 203–207

**Confirmation, minister of** 207

**Confirmation, requirements for** 206

**Conscience** 1, 4, 20, 120, 136, 232, 289, 291, 295–298, 312, 354, 397, 470

**Conscience, examination of** 232, 233