

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|----|---|----|
| Being Catholic..... | 2 | Moral Law..... | 40 |
| Service Project: Brainstorming..... | 3 | Morality..... | 42 |
| The Catholic Church | 4 | Original Sin | 44 |
| Prayer | 6 | Free Will & Conscience | 46 |
| The Birth of the Catholic Church | 8 | Church History: Challenge & Reformation | 48 |
| Grace | 10 | The Ten Commandments | 50 |
| Our Blessed Mother | 12 | Commandments 1, 2, & 3..... | 52 |
| Acts of the Apostles..... | 14 | Commandments 4, 5, & 8..... | 54 |
| Patron Saints | 15 | Commandments 6 & 9 | 56 |
| Saint Paul..... | 16 | Commandments 7 & 10 | 58 |
| Church History: Patristic Period | 18 | Church History: Tridentine Period..... | 60 |
| God the Father | 20 | The Sacraments..... | 62 |
| The Incarnation | 22 | Conversion & Justification..... | 64 |
| The Many Names of Jesus..... | 24 | Confirmation | 65 |
| The Holy Spirit..... | 25 | Faith..... | 66 |
| The Fruits & Gifts of the Holy Spirit..... | 26 | Church History: the Modern Period | 68 |
| Church History: Petrine Period, Part 1 | 28 | Encyclicals..... | 69 |
| The Pope | 30 | My Ever-Growing Faith..... | 70 |
| Social Justice & Catholic Social Teaching..... | 32 | Service Project: Reflection | 71 |
| Stewardship..... | 34 | Prayers & More | 72 |
| Service Project: Planning..... | 36 | Glossary..... | 76 |
| Church History: Petrine Period, Part 2 | 38 | | |



Catholic Reflections Book I Item #628, ISBN 978-1-934732-18-2 by Jennifer Schweighofer & Kelly Gilbert

Nihil Obstat
Reverend J. Brian Bransfield
May 4, 2012

Imprimatur
Archbishop Charles Chaput
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
May 23, 2012

The *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* are official declarations that the material reviewed is free of doctrinal and moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who gave the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed.

Scripture quotations in this publication marked "CEV" are from the Contemporary English Version, Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scripture texts in this work, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO PHOTOCOPY THIS BOOK

This book is not to be reproduced in any manner whatsoever, in part or whole, without the written permission of the publisher. For additional information contact Universal Publishing. 1-800-940-2270 www.upub.net/catholic

GOD THE FATHER

*Lord God, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your mighty hand.
What god in heaven or on earth can perform deeds and powerful acts like yours? (Deuteronomy 3:24)*

Read

Who is God the Father? Is it possible for us to ever fully know him? Every human desires God in his or her life. We want to love him and learn all about him so that we can grow in our relationship with him. This desire to know God is natural because he is our Creator. God created every human being in his image and likeness so that we might live in communion with him and find happiness in him. God completely gives himself to us out of his great love for us.

Throughout the course of human history, God has slowly begun to reveal himself to us. Through God's words and actions, we are able to know for certain that God is our one true God, Creator, and Father. In the Old Testament, God is referred to by many names, such as Adonai, Elohim, and Yahweh. All of these names have meanings that help us understand that God is almighty and powerful.

In the books of the New Testament, even more is revealed to us about God. The New Testament describes God as holy, truthful, infinite, and love. We also learn that God possesses four divine characteristics. God is **omnipotent**, which means that he is all-powerful; he can do anything. God is also **omnipresent**, which means that he is everywhere, all the time. God is **omniscient**; he knows everything that ever was, is, or will be. Finally, God is **eternal**; he has always existed, and will continue to exist forever.

Because of God's nature, he will always remain a mystery to us that goes beyond all words and thoughts. God is transcendent, which means that although God is present to his creation, he is not of this world. God always has been, and always will be. One of the most challenging parts of having a relationship with God is our inability to visualize him in our minds. God is invisible and formless, and he is neither man nor woman. God understands our desire to see him, and this is another reason that he sent his only Son to us. When we see God as Jesus, we are able to finally see an image of God.

God is the source of all of the blessings of creation. As we grow in faith, we are able to notice God's presence all around us through his many gifts to us. It is because of God's gift of his Son that we are able to have salvation and eternal life. God's gift of faith allows us to have peace and comfort, even when we are faced with challenges. God's gift of love allows us to have relationships with him and his people. When we pray, we worship God our Father. He is worthy of our highest praise, adoration, and honor.

Think & Discuss

Think about each question. Discuss each question with the class.

1. How can we tell that God is always with us? Why is it important to be conscious of his presence?
2. God has many different names. What do some of these names mean, and how do they help us to know and understand God?
3. Do Jesus and the Holy Spirit also possess all three divine characteristics of God? Explain your answer.

Connect

What can you do today to show God praise, adoration, and honor?

Reflect Write a poem or song to describe your own personal relationship with God.

Questions?
Call 1-800-940-2270

THE POPE

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

Read

A Bit of Background

The **pope** is the visible head of the Catholic Church and the Bishop of Rome. He is also the Vatican's head of state. The office held by the pope is known as the **papacy**.

The pope is a symbol for unity in the Church. He is the successor of Saint Peter, whom Jesus chose out of all of the apostles to be head of the Church. Ever since the days of Jesus, there has been a pope. In fact, including Peter, there have been 265 popes throughout history! Peter's given name was Simon; however, when Jesus handed him the keys to heaven, Jesus said to him, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18) The name Peter literally means "rock." Jesus intended for Peter to lead the Church so that it could save all of God's people while also keeping it safe from corruption.

A Pope by Any Other Name

The pope is sometimes referred to as Supreme Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, and Primate of Italy.

Can He Really Do No Wrong?

In order to protect the Church and keep it pure throughout the ages, the Holy Spirit gives the pope the gift of **infallibility**, which means the pope does not err when he teaches on faith and morals. When the pope issues a doctrine, or speaks about faith and morality, he is protected from even the possibility of making a mistake in judgment by the Holy Spirit.

All In a Day's Work

As the visible leader of the Church, the pope has many important responsibilities. The most important is the manner in which he represents the Church. Everything the pope says and does is a reflection of the Church, and affects the way people respond to God's call to follow him. The pope is the chief administrator of the Church, and as part of this duty, he makes decisions about the goals of the Church and manages its affairs on a daily basis. He chooses to establish or consolidate dioceses all over the world, and he also appoints bishops to administer all of the Church functions within the various dioceses. Only the pope can bestow the title of cardinal upon a member of the clergy.

The Votes Are In

Cardinals are extremely important to the Church because, in addition to giving the pope advice, they elect his successor after he dies. Other duties of the pope include confirming specific people as saints, leading Mass, and presiding over the affairs of the Vatican.

Think & Discuss

Think about each question. Discuss each question with the class.

1. Where is the Vatican and what takes place there?
2. How is the pope elected? What process does the College of Cardinals have to follow?
3. Does the gift of papal infallibility make the pope free from personal sin? Why or why not?

Connect

Who is the current pope and what facts do you know about him?

Reflect

Choose a pope and write a short biography about him. Describe how this pope's work has contributed to strengthening the Catholic Church.

CHURCH HISTORY: PETRINE PERIOD, PART 2

Read

As the Petrine Period continued, towns and cities increased in size. To meet the educational needs of the growing population, the first cathedral schools and universities were established. Additionally, advances in architecture and technology led to the construction of the great Gothic cathedrals. Most of these cathedrals still stand today.

During the early development of the Church, Christians in the East and in the West had many differences. They didn't always agree on matters of politics and Church doctrine. These differences finally caused the Church to split in AD 1054. The Church divided into the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. This division is known as the **Eastern Schism**. The Eastern Orthodox Church differs from the Roman Catholic Church in a number of ways. For example, married men can be ordained to the priesthood in the Eastern Orthodox Church; however, this is not permitted in the Roman Catholic Church. There are also differences in the liturgical calendar and administration of the sacraments.

While the Church grew steadily in Europe, other areas experienced a noticeable decline in Christianity. In an effort to reclaim the Holy Land from the Muslims, the Church initiated the **Crusades** in 1095. These Crusades continued until the last decade of the thirteenth century. Despite much fighting and many lost lives, the Crusades were unsuccessful, and these regions remained predominantly Muslim.

In the thirteenth century, two new religious orders were founded: the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The **Dominican Order** is called such because of its founder, Saint Dominic; however, its official name is the Order of Friars Preachers. This order was established to preach and educate others about the Gospel, and they were especially focused on attempting to convert heretics. The **Franciscan Order**, named for Saint Francis of Assisi, also preached the Word of God. The Franciscans lived very humbly, with minimal possessions and material comforts, as they tended to those in need. It is the Franciscans who gave us the Stations of the Cross and the Angelus prayer.

In the mid-fourteenth century, Europe was struck by a devastating disease known as the **Black Death**. Estimates suggest that one-third of Europe's population perished in this epidemic. Many believed that the plague was God's punishment for sinful behavior. The catastrophic effects caused some to question their faith, while others became more devout than ever. Some members of the clergy succumbed to fear of the Black Death and refused to administer last rites to the dying. However, many others continued to minister to the sick and were often struck down by the disease themselves.

Think & Discuss

Think about each question. Discuss each question with the class.

1. What are some other differences between the Eastern and Western Churches? Why do you think they couldn't agree on certain practices and doctrine?
2. The Crusades resulted in many deaths of Muslims and Christians alike. Why do you think the pope supported the Crusades? Do you think the actions of the Crusaders are sinful? Why or why not?
3. The Dominicans and Franciscans still exist today. What function do these orders serve in today's world?

Connect

If an epidemic like the Black Death were to strike the United States today, do you think your faith would be strengthened, weakened, or remain the same? Why?

Reflect

Choose a Gothic cathedral to research. State where it is, who designed it, and when it was built. Then describe the architectural features of the cathedral, both inside and out.

MORAL LAW

Read

God gives us the freedom to make our own choices. However, he hopes that we will choose to live holy lives so that we can spend eternity with him. To help us make good choices, God gives us moral law. **Moral law** defines which behaviors lead to eternal happiness with God in heaven, as well as those that lead us away from God. Our conscience (that inner voice that urges us to do good and avoid evil) is the voice of moral law.

Moral law consists of both natural law and revealed law. **Natural law**, as the name suggests, is that part of moral law that naturally exists within our hearts. It is present within each of us and allows us to share in God's divine wisdom so that we may do good; it is our moral compass. Natural law prompts us to live justly and to protect the most basic rights of others. God reminds us how to follow natural law in his Ten Commandments, although natural law existed long before God spoke to Moses. As a society, natural law inspires us to create and uphold laws to protect the rights and dignity of every person.

Because we live in a sinful world and not everyone can easily recognize the natural law in their hearts, God also shares moral law with us in a more obvious way. **Revealed law** is the moral law that God reveals to us. There are two parts of revealed law: the Old Law and the New Law.

The **Old Law** is the first stage of revealed law. We learn about the Old Law in the Old Testament when God makes a covenant with his people; the Ten Commandments summarize the Old Law. Saint Augustine tells us that God "wrote on the tables of the Law what men did not read in their hearts." The Old Law tells us what we must do as well as what we must not do. We are to love God and our neighbor, and avoid all that might lead us away from this love.

Although the Old Law is our foundation of living a moral life, it is imperfect. It tells us how to live a moral life but does not give us the strength and grace of the Holy Spirit to help us do so. We find this strength and grace in the second stage of revealed law: the New Law. The **New Law** completes divine law, both natural and revealed. The New Testament tells us how the New Law is revealed by Jesus, particularly through his Sermon on the Mount. The New Law is present throughout Jesus' life and teachings, as well as in the continued teachings of his apostles. Just as the Ten Commandments summarize the Old Law, the two Great Commandments and the New Commandment summarize the New Law. When we have faith in Jesus, we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, which makes it possible to love in this way.

Think & Discuss

Think about each question. Discuss each question with the class.

1. What are some violations of moral law? How do these violations lead us away from God?
2. Why do you think Natural Law is sometimes difficult to recognize?
What can you do to more easily hear what your heart tells you is right?
3. Compare and contrast the Old Law and the New Law. How does the New Law complete divine law?

Connect

What does your family do to respect and live by natural law?

Reflect Describe how natural law, the Old Law, and the New Law inspired specific elements of the Constitution.

LIVING PURELY & CHASTELY: COMMANDMENTS 6 & 9

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Read

God gives all humans the gift of sexuality. The sixth and ninth commandments teach us how to responsibly use this gift according to his plan. We are to use the virtues given to us (such as chastity, purity, and temperance) to overcome temptations to violate these commandments.

Commandment #6: You shall not commit adultery.

Although the sixth commandment specifically mentions adultery, it encompasses much more than one spouse being faithful to another. This commandment calls us to a chaste life and demands that we behave purely and modestly. As such, any sexual act outside of marriage is a violation of the sixth commandment. God created men and women for different purposes. Each gender has its own unique personal and sexual identity that is a very special gift from God. We are to respect this gift by following the chaste example of Jesus throughout all of the stages of our lives.

Commandment #9: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

The ninth commandment expands on the sixth commandment; in addition to refraining from impure acts, this commandment calls us to refrain from impure thoughts. God wants us to rejoice in the love that a husband and wife have for one another. The bond of a married couple is sacred; any attempt to break that bond is a serious sin. Additionally, deliberate lustful thoughts about anyone (not necessarily directed towards a married person) are a violation of the ninth commandment. In order to avoid breaking this commandment, we must live chaste lives with pure hearts.

Adolescence can be a confusing time. As we begin to mature both physically and emotionally, we may be tempted to indulge in behavior that breaks the sixth and ninth commandments. This is perfectly normal, and temptation itself is not sinful. For example, if a lustful thought pops into a person's head, but he or she quickly dismisses it, this is not sinful. However, deliberately having lustful thoughts and/or acting on these thoughts is sinful. God created us to develop this way, and he understands the challenges we face during this time. If you find yourself struggling with temptation that violates these or any of the other commandments, go to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, pray for God's guidance, and ask a trusted adult for advice.

Think & Discuss

Think about each question. Discuss each question with the class.

1. What does it mean when we are called to be pure of heart?
2. Today's society can make living a chaste life very challenging. What are some of these challenges, and what can we do to overcome them?
3. How are the sixth and ninth commandments alike? How are they different?

Connect

Who can you go to for guidance in keeping the sixth and ninth commandments?
Why do you trust that this person will be able to help you?

Reflect

Write an informative essay about the dangers of engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage. Include details on the emotional, spiritual, and health-related consequences of these actions.

CHURCH HISTORY: TRIDENTINE PERIOD

Read

The Council of Trent in AD 1545 marks the beginning of the **Tridentine Period**, which continued until the Second Vatican Council in 1963. The word “Tridentine” literally means “from Trent” and refers to the Council of Trent. During this period, the Church would continue to experience reform and renewal, as well as new challenges.

In 1545, Pope Paul III called the **Council of Trent**. This was the longest ecumenical council; it consisted of 25 sessions over the course of 18 years. This council condemned the heresies of Protestantism and addressed the need for reform in the Catholic Church. It resulted in educational requirements for priests, which renewed the laity’s respect for the clergy. To assist with instruction in Catholic doctrine, the council published the Roman Catechism, which outlined the Apostles’ Creed, the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Catholic prayer. The council also organized the liturgy and decreed that the sources of divine revelation are Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

In the 1700s, the Church was faced with another new challenge: the **Enlightenment**. Also known as the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment was a time of science and human reason, ideas that often conflicted with the Church’s teachings. Rather than relying on faith to be the source of truth, people like Isaac Newton, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire suggested that truth could be discovered through science and intellect.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the newly independent United States of America saw steady growth of the Catholic Church. Dioceses were established in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and other prospering areas. In the early 1800s, Elizabeth Ann Seton founded the first parish Catholic school for girls in the United States. Poor girls in the city of Baltimore could attend this school free of charge. Elizabeth would go on to establish numerous other parochial schools, as well as the Sisters of Charity, the first religious community in the country. The Sisters of Charity, an organization dedicated to helping poor children, still exists today.

In 1958, Pope John XXIII was elected as the new pontiff. A leader of modern **ecumenism** (a movement to unite all Christian denominations), he expressed his desire for all Christians to come together to live as the Body of Christ. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he called the **Second Vatican Council** in 1962. Unfortunately, he would not live to see the council conclude; he passed away in 1963, and Pope Paul VI continued the council. The Second Vatican Council proclaimed the Church doctrine that we still use today. The liturgy was revised, with a particular focus on greater participation from the laity. In the true spirit of the ecumenical movement, the council also recognized that everyone has the right to religious freedom.

Think & Discuss

Think about each question. Discuss each question with the class.

1. Why do you think educational requirements for priests helped the laity have more respect for the clergy?
2. Think about the scientists and philosophers of the Enlightenment. In what ways did their theories conflict with the Church? How do you think the Church responded to this?
3. How can we personally participate in the ecumenical movement? Why is our participation important?

Connect

The Council of Trent resulted in educational requirements for priests. Ask your priest about his education. What did he have to study in order to become a priest?

Reflect

Science has advanced dramatically since the Enlightenment. Think of a topic that science and religion disagree on. What is the Church's response to this topic?