

Emphases of the Eleventh Grade Assessment

God's Plan of Salvation History

What is Salvation History? Salvation History is the story of God's love for us: how God created man and woman in the beginning; how Adam and Eve rejected God through disobedience (original sin) and how God, in His infinite love for us, sent His Son (Jesus Christ – 2nd Person of the Blessed Trinity) to rescue us from sin, and reunite us with Himself (salvation). The story of how this happened is called the *story of our salvation*, or God's Plan of Salvation History. The following is a summary of this story – all the wonderful works of love that God has done for us.

I. The Blessed Trinity

God is One in Three Persons (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit); A communion of Persons of total, self-giving love.

II. Creation

God created man and woman in His image and likeness. He created them to be united (in communion) with Him. Adam & Eve had sanctifying grace, a share in God's own Life (CCC 375).

III. The Fall of Adam & Eve

Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. The first sin of Adam and Eve (Original Sin) separated them from God. Adam and Eve, and all their descendants, could not share in God's Divine Life. God alone could fix the problem of sin, and reunite mankind with Himself.

IV. The Incarnation

God the Son (the 2nd Person of the Trinity) became man to reunite God and mankind.

V. Redemption

After three years of public ministry Jesus suffered, was crucified and died so that our sins could be forgiven. On the third day He rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. By His sacrifice on the cross we are now able to receive sanctifying grace in our souls (to again participate in God's Divine Life) (cf. 2 Peter 1:4).

VI. The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

After Jesus ascended to Heaven, He sent God the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Mary. Jesus strengthened the Apostles to dispense the seven Sacraments and the teachings of Christ. The Catholic Church, therefore, is a divine institution that was founded by Christ.

VII. The Church

Jesus established the Church (the Catholic Church), founded on the 12 Apostles with Peter as the head, whose mission is to teach and sanctify (to make holy) all of humanity. Through the Church we receive the seven Sacraments and the teachings of Jesus Christ, guarded and protected by the Holy Spirit through the teaching authority or Magisterium of the Church. The gift of the Magisterium (the pope and the bishops in union with the pope) assures us that the teachings of the Church today are the teachings Jesus gave to the Apostles two thousand years ago.

VIII. The Sacraments

It is through the seven Sacraments of the Church that we receive sanctifying grace within our soul (a participation in God's own Life). Sanctifying grace gives us the supernatural strength to be faithful to Jesus by living according to His teachings as summed up in the Ten Commandments.

The Apostles' Creed

I. The Blessed Trinity

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is One God in Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life” (CCC 234). Jesus is God. He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit is God. He is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Father pours out His love to the Son for all eternity and the Son returns that love to the Father for all eternity. This bond of love between the Father and Son is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity – the Holy Spirit. Father, Son and Spirit live a communion of total, perfect, self-giving love. Jesus told the Apostles about the Holy Spirit and spoke of Him as the Paraclete, the Advocate and the Spirit of Truth. (John 14, 15, 16, CCC 692)

In order to save us from sin, Jesus assumed a human nature and became a man. This is called the Incarnation. God the Father’s sending Jesus to save us from our sin is called our redemption that was accomplished by the Paschal Mystery. The Paschal Mystery includes the four events of Jesus’ Suffering, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. The Paschal Mystery made it possible for our sins to be forgiven and for us to be reunited with God. The Paschal Mystery is celebrated and made present in the Holy Eucharist and its saving effects of sanctifying grace, a sharing in God’s Divine Life, are communicated through the Sacraments.

We can know that God exists through our human reason but for us to love Him, God had to reveal many things about Himself to us through the prophets. God most fully revealed Himself to us through His Son, Jesus. We could not know that the Blessed Trinity is one God in three Persons unless Jesus revealed the truth of this mystery in the New Testament. Jesus revealed many things to us as found in the Bible and the Church’s Tradition (summarized in the Catechism); He taught us about the Father and the Holy Spirit; and He taught us how to live the Christian life – loving God above all and our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus told us to love others as He loved us. (John 13: 31-35). Jesus loved us to the point of giving His life for us on the Cross.

II. Creation

God wanted to share His love and goodness and so He chose to create. God created everything “out of nothing” and out of love (CCC 296). God first created the angels, spiritual, non-corporeal beings (without a body). Angels are servants and messengers of God. Every human being has a guardian angel. (CCC 328-329) Some of the angels chose to reject God by rebelling against His Divine Plan. “The Devil, the deceiver of the whole world, along with a third of the angels were cast from Heaven” (Revelation 12: 7-9, CCC 392).

God then created Adam and Eve. They were constituted in an original “state of holiness and justice.” This grace of original holiness was to participate in God’s divine life - to be in communion (in union) with God (CCC 375).

III. Created in God’s Image and Likeness

God created each person in His own image and likeness. This means that we have an immortal soul with an intellect (the ability to think) a will (the ability to freely choose good over evil) and the ability to be in communion with (to be united with) God, with other persons through friendship and with a spouse in a life-long commitment of marriage. Being in the image of God, we are called to love as God loves. Love means to give oneself in service to others, which is selflessness. The opposite of self-giving love is selfishness.

Of all visible creatures that God created, only man and woman are able to know, love and serve God. God has created us to be in communion with Him – to share in His Divine Life. This happens through prayer and in receiving the Sacraments, above all in the Holy Eucharist. It was for

this end, communion with God that we were created and this is the fundamental reason for our dignity.

IV. The Dignity of the Human Person

Each person is created with a body and a soul. Our immortal soul allows us to know and love. God gave this to us so we would know and love Him. By the power of knowing and loving God, we have a special worth over other earthly creatures. This worth is called “dignity.”

All persons have equal dignity and dignity cannot be taken away (CCC 356-357). Furthermore, persons differ in talents and abilities but not in dignity. Dignity is not determined by how productive a person is in society. For example, a mentally handicapped person or a terminally ill person has the same dignity as a healthy person. Animals and plants have value and are important but they do not have dignity.

God willed that man and woman were created with equal dignity but with fundamental differences (CCC 369). Furthermore, God created man and woman to be in communion with Himself and with others through friendship. Through Baptism, man and woman enter into this communion with God and become His adopted sons and daughters. We share in God’s Divine Life through sanctifying grace received in the Sacraments (2 Peter 1:4). “By the Sacraments of rebirth, Christians have become ‘children of God,’ ‘partakers of the divine nature,’” which allows Christians “to see in the faith their new dignity” (CCC 1692). Human beings are not “children of God” by their birth; they become children of God by Baptism (CCC 1265). This is an elevation of their dignity.

By sinning, we lower the perception of our own dignity and the dignity of others. Serious (mortal) sin lowers a person’s dignity by removing the life of grace: “The sinner wounds...his own dignity as a man called to be a son of God” (CCC 1487, 1861).

Everyone has the basic dignity of being a person, that is, a creature that is able to know and love the Creator. When we use our abilities to think and chose the way God does, we help other people to see the goodness of God.

V. Original Sin

“Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom” (CCC 396). Satan, “the father of lies” tempted Adam and Eve to abuse their freedom and to disobey God’s command. (CCC 397, John 8:44). They let their love and trust in God die in their heart by wanting to be like God but without God. Adam and Eve chose themselves over and against God by wanting to determine for themselves what was good and evil. In their free choice, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and immediately lost the grace of original holiness – union with God. They became afraid of our all-loving God of whom they conceived a distorted image (CCC 396-399).

We were created to be in relationship (in communion) with God both here on earth and forever in Heaven and now the human race was separated from God. Thankfully, all hope was not lost. In Genesis 3:15, God promised Adam and Eve that He would send a Savior to forgive our sins and provide the means for us to be reunited with God – to once more share in God’s Divine Life through sanctifying grace within our soul which is necessary to enter Heaven. (CCC 410-412)

Even after the cleansing of original sin and receiving sanctifying grace in the Sacrament of Baptism, we still suffer the effects of Original Sin in our human nature: human nature is weakened in its powers by being subject to ignorance, suffering, death, and being inclined to sin, which is concupiscence (CC 405, 2515).

Although we still suffer from the effects of original sin, we can now fulfill the purpose for which we were created: a relationship of communion with God, principally through the Sacraments.

VI. Mary

God created Mary without the stain of original sin so that she could be the perfect Mother of the Savior. This is called the Immaculate Conception. Mary is the Mother of Jesus and Jesus is God. Therefore, we rightly call Mary the Mother of God (CCC 490-492, 495).

We are called to venerate Mary in her highest honor as Mother of God. Jesus gave us the Blessed Virgin Mary to be our spiritual mother as He was dying on the cross. Speaking to Mary, Jesus said, “Woman, behold your son. Speaking to John who represents each one of us, He said, “Behold your Mother” (John 19: 26-27). “When the course of her earthly life was completed, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up body and soul into the glory of Heaven.” (CCC 974) The Assumption is important for us because it anticipates the resurrection of our bodies at the Final Judgment, allowing once again unity of body and soul.

VII. The Catholic Church

It was the Son’s task to accomplish the Father’s plan of salvation in the fullness of time. Jesus inaugurated His Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Reign of God. To fulfill His Father’s will, Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth (CCC 763, 766). The Church is born primarily of Christ’s total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the Cross.

Jesus chose twelve men and taught them all the secrets of the mysteries of His Kingdom (Matthew 13:11). He formed them to be the leaders of the Catholic Church, the only Church that He started. In the Gospel of Matthew 16: 18-19, Peter proclaimed that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus said that He would build His Church upon him as the Rock and Jesus gave to Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Out of the twelve men, Jesus chose Peter to be the head and he became the first pope, the spiritual head of the Church – the Vicar (representative) of Christ on earth (CCC 880-881).

The Apostles were ordinary men chosen by Christ to be His followers. However, in their fear and weakness, they betrayed Him. Consequently, at Pentecost after Jesus had ascended to Heaven, they were strengthened by God the Holy Spirit to do all that Jesus had commanded them. Therefore, we can rightly say that the Catholic Church is a divine institution, because it was begun by Christ and was only publicly manifested after the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

Jesus founded the Church with a structure with the Apostles as the spiritual leaders and St. Peter as head of the Apostles (CCC 765). As the Church began to grow and the Apostles began to die, successors were appointed. This same structure has existed in the Church since Jesus instituted the Twelve and can be seen with our present day pope and the bishops of the world. Each bishop in the world can trace his line back to the original twelve. (Judas was replaced by Matthias in Acts 1:15-26)

The pope and the bishops share in the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. This teaching authority is called the Magisterium. The pope and bishops guard, protect and hand on the teachings of the Church so that they will not be changed. The teachings cannot change because Christ gave them to us. Jesus began the Church to give us a share in His Divine Life through the Sacraments, to communicate God’s Truth through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture and to share the message of salvation with all peoples (CCC 888-890).

There is an intimate bond between Christ and the Church and so we describe the Church as the Body of Christ. Christ is the head of the Body; we are the members and we have unity as a result of our union with Christ, most especially in the Holy Eucharist. (CCC 787-789)

VIII. The Four Marks of the Church

The Catholic Church has four marks or defining characteristics: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. These marks are essential for the Church founded by Christ. (CCC 866-869) The Church

is apostolic because the popes can be traced back to St. Peter. The Church is holy because Christ gave Himself up for Her on the cross to make Her holy, the Holy Spirit gives life to the Church and the Holy Spirit sanctifies the members, principally through the Sacraments (CCC 809, 798, 747). Therefore, we rightly say that the Church is the sinless one made up of sinners. Jesus' plan to share His message with people everywhere was to take place through His followers with the Pope as Spiritual Head, with bishops, priests and laity following the pope's guidance.

IX. Our response to God

Our response to our belief in God should include: coming to know God's greatness and majesty; being thankful to God for giving us what we need; and recognizing the dignity of each person being created in the image of God. As followers of Jesus, we are called to read and reflect on the Word of God in the Bible, to use our talents to serve others, and to unite our sufferings, in patience, with those of Jesus. God's call on each person's life to use their talents and gifts to serve others and find happiness is known as that person's vocation.

X. The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven

The Four Last Things include Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. Death is one of the effects of Adam and Eve's sin, but was not part of God's original plan. Death is the separation of the soul from the body. The meeting of our Lord and judgment by Him, which will occur at the moment of our death is called the Particular Judgment. (CCC 1021-1022) The resurrection of all the dead will precede the Final Judgment in which Christ will come again in His glory at the end of time and all the angels with Him. (Matthew 25: 31-46; CCC 1038-1040) "He will come again to judge the living and the dead" (Apostles and Nicene Creed).

Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ in Heaven (CCC 1008, 1021-1023). Heaven is an eternal, intimate relationship with the Blessed Trinity, "the state of supreme and definitive happiness, the goal of the deepest longings of humanity" (CCC 1024).

If our love for God is not perfect enough for Heaven, we will go to Purgatory, a temporary separation from Heaven to have our soul cleansed and purified of all sins before we can enter the joy of being united with the Most Holy Trinity in a communion of life and perfect love (CCC 1024, 1030-1032).

"We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to believe in Him and to love Him. We cannot love God if we sin gravely against Him or our neighbor. To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from Him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed, which lasts forever, is hell" (CCC 1033). Other names for hell are eternal death, the "unquenchable fire," eternal punishment, and painful torment (Matthew 5:22, 29, 10:28; 13:42, Mark 9:43-48).

The Sacraments

Jesus instituted the seven Sacraments, which are sacred signs that give us sanctifying grace within our soul (a share in God's Divine Life). The grace we receive in the Sacraments is not something we earn. Rather grace is "the free, and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God...partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life." (CCC 1996) The seven Sacraments are Baptism, Reconciliation, the Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and the Anointing of the Sick.

Each sacrament has two components: matter and form. The matter is the tangible material "stuff" (signs) of the sacrament (e.g. water in baptism); while the form is the words used by the

minister in the Sacrament. (e.g. “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”)

I. The Sacrament of Baptism

In the Sacrament of Baptism, we are cleansed of original sin, we become children of God and members of God’s Family, the Church. As Our Lord tells us in the Scriptures without Baptism we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. (John 3: 1-7) At Baptism, God infuses into the soul the three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity (love). These supernatural gifts allow us to believe in God, trust in His promises and love God and our neighbor. A virtue is a good habit. We grow in the virtue of faith, for example through prayer and making acts of faith. Theological means that the gifts of faith, hope and charity are given to us by God and they draw us back to Him. The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity. CCC 1812-1829)

In Baptism, God also infuses the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit into the soul. (CCC 1266, 1830-1831) Students should study the Rite of Baptism.

II. The Sacrament of Reconciliation – a Sacrament of Healing

Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus wants to free us from our sins, which are acts of selfishness that we commit after Baptism Jesus gave the Apostles the power to forgive sins on Easter Sunday night (John 20: 19-22). This power has been handed on to all ordained priests. Through the power of Christ, the priest forgives sins. The steps to making a good confession include a) praying for the grace to know our sins and to be sorry for our sins b) examining our conscience c) confessing our sins d) receiving absolution and e) carrying out the assigned penance. In order to receive forgiveness for our sins, we must be truly sorry for our sins, make a firm commitment not to sin again and confess our sins to a priest. Students should know the Ten Commandments by heart.

In deciding what is right and wrong we should be guided by a properly formed conscience. Fundamentally, our conscience tells us to do good and avoid evil. Every sin is an act of selfishness. However, there are two types of sin: mortal and venial sin. Mortal sin is a very serious sin (such as blasphemy, which is saying hateful things against God and failing to attend Sunday Mass due to our own fault. Serious offenses against our neighbor include stealing and lying.) For an act to be a mortal sin, three conditions must be present: serious matter, full knowledge of the evil act and full consent of the will (freely choose to commit the sin). When someone commits mortal sin, he breaks his relationship with God, losing sanctifying grace within his soul –forfeiting a share in God’s Divine Life. Mortal sin must be confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We should go to the Sacrament of Confession before receiving Holy Communion if we have committed a mortal sin.

7 Venial sin is sin that wounds our relationship with God but does not destroy our love for Him. We want to avoid venial sin because it can eventually lead to mortal sin.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation gives us the strength to break sinful habits, to forgive someone who has hurt us and to be more faithful in following Christ. People are guilty of sin when they knowingly choose what is wrong. Sins are acts of selfishness. We do not sin when we do something wrong by mistake or just feel tempted to do what is wrong. A desire to sin is a temptation. When we are tempted to do what is wrong, we should pray and resist the temptation. Mother Church encourages us to frequent the Sacrament of Confession on a monthly basis to be purified, strengthened, and enlightened to live the Christian life.

III. The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper (Mt. 26: 26-30; Lk 22: 14-20)

The two major parts of the Mass are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In the Liturgy of the Word, there are three readings from the Bible. The first reading is

from the Old Testament, the second reading is usually from the letters of St. Paul and the third reading is from one of the four Gospels about the life and words of Jesus. After the first reading, we respond to God's Word by praying a Psalm from the Old Testament. From listening to God's Word at Mass, we receive guidance in making good decisions, we come to know better how much God loves us and we are given direction on how to follow Jesus more closely.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, after the priest prays the words of Jesus, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus (transubstantiation = change of substance). We are able to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. At the time we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, it is our closest union with Him on earth. We want to be totally focused on Him in our prayer.

The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament and also a Sacrifice. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus offers Himself to the Father in thanksgiving and we join ourselves with Him, offering our obedience, thanksgiving and service to the Father. Furthermore, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is made present (in an unbloody manner) on the altar. (CCC 1362-1367) The Church calls the Holy Eucharist the source and summit of the Christian Life.

IV. The Sacrament of Confirmation

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, our relationship with the Holy Spirit is strengthened. The Holy Spirit strengthens in the person the Theological Virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that were received in Baptism. One of the reasons the grace of Baptism is given by God is for personal sanctification. The grace of Confirmation is to strengthen each person to join in Christ's mission as His disciple. This special outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the same as once granted to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. (CCC 1302). Students should study the Rite of Confirmation.

The effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation include: To be more firmly united to Jesus; to be a witness to the faith by our words and action; to defend the faith and never be ashamed of the cross; to strengthen our bond with the Church; to serve others in need. (CCC 1303-1305)

The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit sustain the moral life of Christians (CCC 1830).

The matter in the Sacrament of Confirmation is the anointing with sacred chrism. The form is the words of the bishop: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

V. The Sacrament of Holy Orders

A man is ordained a priest in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Only a priest can forgive sins through the power of Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and celebrate the Holy Eucharist. At Mass, the priest prays the words of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

The sacrament of Holy Orders configures the ordained priest to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ's instrument for His Church. By ordination one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in His triple office of priest (offering the Sacrifice of the Mass), prophet (teaching the Faith), and king (offering his life in service to others) (CCC 1581). Students should study the Rite of Holy Orders. (CCC 1592-1594)

"The ministerial priesthood differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful. The ordained ministers exercise their service for the People of God by teaching, divine worship and pastoral governance" (CCC 1592).

"Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees: that of bishops, that of presbyters (priests), and that of deacons. The ministries conferred by ordination are irreplaceable for the organic structure of the Church: without the bishop, presbyters and deacons, one cannot speak of the Church" (CCC 1593).

“The bishop receives the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which integrates him into the Episcopal college and makes him the visible head of the particular Church entrusted to him. As successors of the Apostles and members of the college, the bishops share in the apostolic responsibility and mission of the whole Church under the authority of the Pope, successor of St. Peter” (CCC 1594).

“Deacons are ministers ordained for tasks of service of the Church; they do not receive the ministerial priesthood, but ordination confers on them important functions in the Ministry of the Word, divine worship, pastoral governance, and the service of charity, tasks which they must carry out under the pastoral authority of their bishop” (CCC 1596, 1569-1571).

VI. The Sacrament of Matrimony

As the Sacraments in the Service of Communion, the Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony are directed to the salvation of others; if they contribute to personal salvation it is only through service to others that they do so (CCC 1534).

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, God Himself establishes a marriage bond between the husband and wife. “Love between a man and woman is achieved when they give themselves totally, each in turn according to their own masculinity and femininity, founding on the marriage covenant that communion of persons where God has willed that human life be conceived, grow and develop. To this married love, and to this love alone, belongs sexual giving, ‘realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death’” (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, TM #14). It is Christ the Lord who raised marriage between a baptized man and woman to the dignity of a sacrament. The Sacrament of Matrimony gives spouses the grace to love each other “with the love with which Christ has loved His [Bride, the] Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life” (CCC 1661). The family founded on the marriage of a man and a woman is the basic cell of human society. “Married love has four characteristics: it is *human* love (physical and spiritual), it is *total*, *faithful* and *fruitful* love” (TM #29). “The revealing sign of authentic married love is openness to life” (TM #15).

Marriage is based on the consent of a man and a woman, that is, on their will to give themselves completely, each to the other, in a life-long commitment before God, “in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love” (CCC 1662). Conjugal love “aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands *indissolubility* and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to *fertility*” (CCC 1643). These are the Goods of Marriage. “Unity, indissolubility, and openness to fertility (children) are essential to marriage. . . Divorce separates what God has joined together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its ‘supreme gift,’ the child” (CCC 1664).

The use of contraceptives is always seriously wrong, because there are two essential aspects of the marital act: the unitive and the procreative. (CCC 2369) Contraception prevents the total gift of self to the spouse in the Sacrament of Marriage. The Church accepts natural Family Planning. It is a natural and effective way of postponing pregnancy for valid reasons that are determined through prayerful consideration and an examination of conscience that does not destroy the unitive and procreative ends of marriage. Students should study the Rite of Marriage.

VII. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is for the Christian experiencing the difficulties of a serious illness, old age or danger of death.

“The special grace of the Sacrament has as its effects: the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church; the strengthening, peace, and

courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the Sacrament of Penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul; the preparation for passing over to eternal life” (C 1532, 1520-1523). The Anointing of the Sick gives the person the strength to be sorry for sin and to resist temptation so that their friendship with God can be stronger now and at the moment of death. Students should study the Rite of Anointing of the Sick.

VIII. The Liturgical Year

The liturgical year is a celebration of the life of Christ, and certain days are in honor of Mary and the saints. The liturgical year begins with Advent, the four weeks in preparation of the birth of Christ our Savior on Christmas. Advent is a time of penance as we die to selfishness and sin in order to prepare for the coming of Jesus. After Epiphany (the coming of the Wise Men) and the Baptism of Jesus, we celebrate Ordinary Time. Lent is the forty days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in which we seek to gain control of our desires by making sacrifices. We want to become less attached to worldly things so that we are free to grow in our relationship with Jesus. The season of Lent is the forty days of penance in which we seek to die to selfishness in order to rise to new life in Christ on Easter. The Paschal Mystery, the mystery of the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, is celebrated during the Sacred Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Holy Saturday is called the Easter Vigil. Forty days later, we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven. Ten days later, the Church rejoices with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the public manifestation of the Church. From Pentecost to Advent, Ordinary Time is celebrated and we focus on the public ministry of Jesus: His call for us to believe in Him, pray each day and respond to His graces by following His example. (CCC 1163-1165, 1168-1173).

The Moral Life

I. The Ten Commandments

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are God’s laws of love, the rules that help us know how to live in order to stay close to Him. (CCC 2052) Those who want to be faithful to Jesus show their love for Him by following His commandments. (John 14:15) The students should know the Ten Commandments by heart.

Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments in the two Great Commandments: Love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself. Living the Catholic Faith is a response to God’s grace through receiving the sacraments (sanctifying grace), prayer and good works (actual grace). We grow in this capacity to live the Faith by:

- 1) learning the teachings of Christ given through the Church,
- 2) believing in the teachings through assent
- 3) being obedient to the teachings by living according to them.

The Church, with the command from Christ as given to the Apostles and passed on to us through the Magisterium, announces the saving truth. In addition, to the Church belongs the right to announce moral principles, composed of a characteristic body of rules, commandments and virtues proceeding from faith in Christ and animated by charity (CCC 2032-2033). The Precepts of the Church are positive laws with an obligatory character because they are decreed by the pastoral authorities to guarantee the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

- 1) You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.

- 2) You shall confess your sins at least once a year
- 3) You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season
- 4) You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church
- 5) You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church
(CCC 2041-2046)

II. The Natural Law

The moral law that is present in the human heart is called the Natural Law. The Natural Law is the way by which everyone has a basic sense of right and wrong. The Natural Law is expressed in the Ten Commandments. “It expresses the dignity of the person and determines the basis for his fundamental rights and duties” (CCC 1956). “This law is called ‘natural’ because our reasoning ability that recognizes this law on the heart belongs to human nature” (CCC 1955). Due to the effects of original sin, we do not perceive the precepts of the natural law clearly and immediately. We need God’s grace and the help of knowing what God has revealed in Tradition, Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church (the Magisterium – the Pope and bishops in union with the Pope) so moral and religious truths may be known by everyone with ease, with firm certainty and without error. (CCC 1960)

III. The Beatitudes

Jesus gave us the eight Beatitudes. The Beatitudes promise spiritual rewards for those who respond to God’s grace. Jesus calls us in the Beatitudes to change our interior attitudes that are the foundation for our outward actions. . In Matthew 5: 43-48, which is part of the Sermon on the Mount and contains the Beatitudes, Jesus told His followers that to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, that they (and we) must love and forgive even our enemies. Students should know the Beatitudes.

IV. Conscience

God gave us a conscience so that we could know right from wrong according to the law written on our heart. However, it is hard to avoid what is wrong and do what is right. This is why God teaches us about right and wrong through the Bible, the Church and personal prayer. Furthermore, it is why it is important for us to listen to God in prayer and let God help us to make up our mind what to do (conscience).

Conscience involves practical judgment, using reason to apply correctly the fundamental law to do what is good and avoid what is evil. A “right conscience” makes correct judgments, and an erroneous conscience makes bad judgments. (CCC 1776-1802) A person’s conscience does not decide what is the truth, what is good and evil. God has told us what is good and evil. A properly formed conscience *detects* the truth. Scripture, Tradition and the teachings of the Church must be used in forming our conscience. True freedom comes from knowing the Truth, and choosing to follow this Truth, which is the will of God. The fundamental moral value of how we are to treat others is based upon the dignity of each person, created in the image and likeness of God. We must make good moral decisions based upon the objective Truth of Jesus Christ and His Church rather than the opinions of society and culture. For example, although society approves of abortion (as it approved of slavery over 200 years ago), the choice to end an unwanted pregnancy is killing an unborn child, who deserves all the his or her rights as a person from the moment of conception.

V. Sin

There are good (virtuous) and bad (sinful) choices. Right choices are the way that we love God, others and ourselves. This is how we grow in holiness. Sinful choices are acts of selfishness. Sins wound us personally as well as in our love for God and others.

There are mortal (deadly) and venial sins (CCC 1855). Mortal sin is a serious disobedience of the law of God that breaks our relationship with Him. In mortal sin, the sinner loses sanctifying grace in the soul (participation in God's Divine Life). Serious sin leads to feelings of guilt, loneliness, and misery, and causes a person to turn off the path to God until the sin is forgiven. Mortal sin blinds us to the truth and it results in the loss of charity. If we die in unrepented mortal sin, we cannot ever be united with God in Heaven.

For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must be present: serious matter, full knowledge of the evil act, and full consent of the will by choosing evil over good. A person who commits a mortal sin must not receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist until he/she goes to confession and receives forgiveness and healing, by which the person is reunited with Jesus (CCC 1857-1859, 1415, 1861).

Venial sin wounds but does not break our relationship with God. It involves breaking a commandment in a less serious matter. However, all sin is serious because sin offends God. Venial sin weakens charity, which impedes the soul's progress in the exercise of virtues (good habits) and the practice of the moral good. We are drawn to become overly attached, in a disordered way, to persons and material things by placing them before true love of God and neighbor. Unrepented venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin.

VI. The Christian Life – A Life of Faith, Hope and Charity

The Christian Faith is above all a life of Faith, Hope and Charity: we can know God as His children by believing all that He has revealed to us through the Catholic Church; we are called to trust in His infinite love and promises; and we are called to love God above all and others with God's own love. Truly living and growing in Faith, Hope and charity brings inner joy and peace – true happiness.

God infuses the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity into the soul of a person at Baptism. The Theological Virtues are supernatural gifts that help Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. The Theological Virtues grow through prayer and by making acts of faith, hope, and charity. The Christian Life is a response to the grace of God in seeking to grow in faith, hope and charity. When we stop growing in Faith, Hope and Charity, the virtues begin to die. Therefore, we should continue to pray, on a daily basis, for an increase in Faith, Hope and Charity to better follow Jesus. The Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity are the foundation of the moral life. (CCC 1812-1829)

VII. The Cardinal Virtues

“Virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good,” or simply good moral habits. (See the glossary of the Catechism) The virtues make self-mastery possible, which leads to joy in leading a morally good life. (CCC 1804) The Cardinal Virtues are the virtues of Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and Temperance. The word Cardinal comes from the Latin word *cardine*, which means hinge. They are called the “hinge” virtues because every other natural virtue (not the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity) is based upon and grows from the Cardinal Virtues.

Prudence – discovering our true good and choosing the right means of achieving it

Fortitude/Courage - firmness in the pursuit of the good

Justice – giving the proper due to God and neighbor

Temperance - moderating the attraction of the pleasures of the senses (CCC 1805-1809)

VIII. The Virtue of Chastity

The virtue of chastity grows from the virtue of temperance, “which seeks to permeate the passions and appetites of the senses with reason” (CCC 2341). “*Chastity is the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression*” and is needed due to the effects of original sin (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* 16). In developing the virtue of chastity through a proper understanding of the dignity of each person and through effort and practice, we look upon a person and treat him/her with respect and dignity rather than as an object for sexual pleasure (lust). Chastity is a life-long process of self-mastery involving training in modest behavior, protection of the senses, fidelity to prayer, reception of the sacraments and wise guidance. In youths and unmarried adults, it involves a firm commitment to avoid situations that are likely to inflame sexual desire. Purity in thought, word and deed is essential for chastity.

“Purity requires *modesty*, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It is ordered to chastity...by guiding how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity” (CCC 2521-2522).

The sacred gift of marital union is to be reserved for spouses in the Sacrament of Marriage. Until the point of committing themselves totally to one other before God, any pre-marital sexual activity amounts to using the other person for personal gratification and pleasure. Therefore, these sins against purity and chastity are not expressions of genuine love, even if they “feel” loving. The usual consequences of sins against chastity include guilt, loss of innocence, greater selfishness, damage to a future marriage, risk of disease, teenage pregnancy, rift in relationship with parents, depression and loss of our relationship with and love for God. (CCC 2337-2351, 2514-2533) God has given us a plan for authentic love and chastity that guards against using other persons and that protects marriage, family and the dignity of the human person through the virtue of chastity.

IX. Vocations

God’s plan for each person is called a vocation (calling). God created each person with distinct gifts and talents, which are to be used to serve God and others. Our personal vocation is not mainly what we choose to do but primarily what we have been chosen for. We seek to discover the adventure of life, which God has planned for us. Christ calls each person to follow Him in a special way as a married person, a dedicated single person, a consecrated person, or as an ordained priest. These are the personal vocations by which we respond to live God’s primary call to seek and to love Him (the vocation to holiness of life). (CCC 358, 898, 873, 934-935, 938-945, 953, 825)

God reveals our personal vocation through the deepest desires of our heart, through prayer, through role models, through the wise guidance of faithful adults, and through circumstances of life (CCC 1547-1551, 1601, 1618-1620, 1878-1880). Quiet prayer provides the opportunity to recognize that these desires actually originate from God and reveal the manner of serving others that will bring the greatest personal joy and fulfillment. Our personal vocation is the means by which we draw closer to God. A vocation does not just concern the individual person because a vocation involves serving others and building up the Church, the family of God. We should pray for the grace to serve God in our vocation with an undivided heart.

“*Human life is a gift received in order then to be given as a gift*” (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* #12). In fact the gift reveals, so to speak a particular characteristic of human existence, or rather, of the very essence of the person. When God Yahweh says that ‘it is not good that man should be alone’ (Genesis 2:18), He affirms that ‘alone’ man does not completely realize His existence. He realizes it only by existing ‘*with someone*’ –and even more deeply and completely: by existing ‘*for someone.*’ Married love is fulfilled in openness to the other person and in self-giving, taking the form of a total gift that belongs to this state of life. Moreover, the vocation

to the priesthood or consecrated life always finds its meaning in self-giving, sustained by a special grace, the gift of oneself ‘to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner’ in order to serve Him more fully in the Church (TM #12).

X. Social Justice

Justice is a Cardinal Virtue. Social Justice begins with love of God and is shown in love for neighbor. Love for neighbor entails respect for the human person in all forms. Dignity of the human person, and love of neighbor are at the heart of how Catholics are called by Christ to relate to others in society. There is in fact a certain resemblance between the unity of the Divine Persons in the Blessed Trinity, and the fraternal unity we are called to have with all members of the society we live in. This means that we have a responsibility for the good and well being of all in society, especially those who are poor, oppressed, and suffering. Hence in terms of Catholic social teaching, the Church has, and continues to have a preference and obligation to the both the physical and spiritual poor. This is evident in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. (CCC 1807, 1890, 1928-1948)

“The *works of mercy*” are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead” (CCC 2447, 2041-2046).

Our Prayer Life

I. What is Prayer?

Prayer is lifting up our minds and hearts to God – listening and talking with God in order to develop and continue to deepen our relationship with Him. Prayer is a gift from God. Jesus calls us to pray everyday and gives us the strength (grace) to respond to that call. We need to pray every day in order to stay close to Jesus. Any friendship builds on frequent communication. Therefore, without daily prayer our relationship with Jesus weakens. We need to set a specific time in the day for prayer otherwise the time is taken up with other things and we may simply forget to pray. At times it may be difficult to be faithful to daily prayer. However, we should continue in our prayer time and not give up.

Prayer is an essential way we respond to God. “In order to pray, one must have the will to pray. . .and one must learn how to pray” (2650). Prayer is necessary if we are to know God personally and to do His will. Living the Christian life, over a period of time, is impossible without prayer. CCC 2757

“The Holy Spirit is the interior Master of Christian Prayer” (CCC 2672). It is always good to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in prayer, even how to pray for often “we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Romans 8:26).

“*Prayer is a vital necessity*” (CCC 2744). Prayer presupposes effort on our part. “The habitual difficulty in prayer is *distraction*” (CCC 2729). When we become aware of distractions in prayer, it is best to simply turn our focus back to Our Lord and continue persevering in prayer. Jesus insists on *vigilance*. (CCC 2730) Another difficulty in prayer is *dryness* that requires conversion if there are a lack of roots. (CCC 2731) “The most common yet hidden temptation in prayer is our *lack of faith*. (CCC 2732) When a person in prayer has the desire to come closer to God, one should recognize that this personal desire has come from the grace that God has provided. God hears every prayer that we make and answers every prayer in a way that is best for us.

II. The Four Forms of Prayer

There are four forms of prayer: Adoration (praise and blessing), Contrition (repentance), Thanksgiving (gratitude) and Supplication (asking God for things). Each of these four forms of prayer may be found in three different expressions of prayer: Vocal prayer, Christian meditation, and Contemplative Prayer. Vocal Prayer is verbalized prayer of the heart. Christian meditation is “a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion, and desire.”(CCC 2723) Meditation is prayerful thought or reflection on a specific Scripture, the mysteries of Christ’s life in the Rosary, the writings of the saints, or a truth of the Faith. Contemplative Prayer is the silent and attentive gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. It achieves both intimacy and deep union with Christ. In all of these three expressions of prayer, when we ask, the Holy Spirit continues to teach us how to pray and helps us to pray with our heart, which is our source of true prayer. The Holy Spirit also works in our lives by guiding and inspiring us to seek the good and avoid the evil.

III. The Mass

The Mass is the highest form of prayer because it is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is perpetuated (made present) and we participate in the sacred banquet of communion by receiving the Lord’s Body and Blood. To receive communion is to receive Christ Himself who has offered Himself for us (CCC 1382). Jesus asks us in the Ten Commandments to attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation because He knows that we need to receive Him in Holy Communion to be strengthened for the difficulties of daily life. We are to fast one hour before receiving Holy Communion. This includes fasting from gum and candy. We need to participate fully in mind and heart in the prayers and songs of the Sunday Mass.

IV. The Our Father and Glory Be

Jesus taught the Apostles the “Our Father”. It is important that we do not simply repeat a formula mechanically, but pray the words that express to the Father everything that we need. In the “Our Father”, we ask for the coming of the Kingdom of God and for God to forgive our sins as we forgive others.

The “Glory Be to the Father” is a prayer in which we give praise to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

V. The Holy Rosary

Students should know the mysteries of the Rosary. In praying the Rosary, we think about the different events in Jesus’ life which help us to understand how He faced difficult situations. This meditation, in turn, helps us to respond to life’s situations and problems in the same way that Jesus did. We are also able to ask for Mary’s intercession in the Rosary.

Sacred Scripture

I. Divine Inspiration

The Sacred Scriptures are divinely inspired. This means that “God is the author of Sacred Scripture and He inspired the human authors of the sacred books” (C 105, 106) God did not dictate the Scriptures word for word to the human authors. Rather, He inspired the human authors by guiding and shaping the message they wrote in their own style and from the culture of their day. Though God acted in and by the sacred writers, “it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever He wanted written, and no more” (CCC 106). “The inspired books teach the truth. ‘Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without

error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures” (CCC 107)

Students should memorize the books in the Old and New Testaments, knowing the major events, such as the Ten Commandments, Jesus giving the Beatitudes, St. Peter and St. Paul leading the Church and in which book they can be found. (CCC 105-108)

The Sacred Scriptures are a collection (library) of writings, inspired and written by many authors (e.g. St. John, St. Paul). After Jesus’ Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, the Catholic Faith spread throughout the Roman World. It first spread orally. The Gospels, were taught, orally passed on, and then later written down. One of the ways that Our Lord’s teachings were explained to later generations was through the writings of the Apostles, and their disciples (e.g. the Gospels and the writings of St. Paul in the New Testament). These writings were read during Mass together with the Old Testament Readings. However, many other writings also circulated in the Roman World in the early centuries after Christ, and the Christians needed help to know which writings were divinely inspired. This was important because the early Christians needed to know which teachings were authentic in order to follow Jesus. At this time in history there was much confusion. (CCC 120-127)

Therefore, the bishops of the Church (successors to the Apostles) met together in what is called a *Council*, and determined which writings were divinely inspired. They decided which of these writings were inspired books contained in the New Testament, (because they contained the teachings of Our Lord), which writings were readable, though not necessarily inspired, and which writings were forbidden. Those writings in the New Testament identified by the Church’s Sacred Tradition and inspired by the Holy Spirit were determined to be 27 books (from St. Matthew’s Gospel to the Book of Revelation). Together with the Old Testament books, the fullness of God’s Public Revelation to us is contained in these books. In order to fully understand the Scriptures, we must, first and foremost, approach the Scriptures as the Word of God and read God’s Word in the light of our Catholic Faith. (CCC 75-76, 101-104)

II. The Covenants between God and man/woman

A Covenant is a sacred family bond (a partnership) that God made with specific people of the Old Testament. The Covenant was the means that God used to gradually bring us back into communion with Himself due to Adam and Eve’s sin. The Original Sin caused our separation from God by our loss of sanctifying grace within our soul. God never broke the Covenant but the people of the Old Testament continued to break the Covenant with God through their sin. This was due to their weakness: they did not have sanctifying grace in their soul (a share in God’s own Life).

God made five Covenants in the Old Testament with the following people: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. Jesus made the new and eternal Covenant with the Apostles at the Last Supper: “This is my blood of the new and eternal Covenant which will be shed for you for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in memory of Me.” In asking the Apostles to do this in His memory, Jesus ordained them the first priests. The Apostles, and in turn their successors, the bishops as well as the priests were to give us the Sacraments. We enter the New and Eternal Covenant when we are baptized and we personally renew the Covenant with Jesus when we receive the Holy Eucharist. (CCC 54-73)

A Covenant is a sacred family bond that God made with the Chosen People through specific leaders of the Old Testament. The Covenant was needed because of Adam and Eve’s sin, our separation from God. God never broke the Covenant but the people of the Old Testament continued to break the Covenant with God through their sin. This was due to their weakness: they did not have sanctifying grace in their soul, a participation in God’s Divine Life.

II. The Old Testament

The Old Testament relates how God created everything out of nothing and out of love. Man and women were the crown of creation, as they were able to be in friendship with God. Due to the Original Sin, Adam and Eve separated themselves from God through the loss of sanctifying grace within their soul, which is a share in God's own Life. The Old Testament is the history of the people waiting for the Savior to reunite God and all men and women. God began to form His Chosen People through Abraham. The people were not able to be faithful to God over any long period of time because Jesus had not yet reconciled the world to Himself through His Suffering, Death and Resurrection. Therefore, the people did not yet have a share in God's Divine Life through the gift of sanctifying grace.

The Book of Exodus tells the story of the Israelite departure from Egypt, the land of their physical and spiritual bondage. Through Moses, God calls His people out of Egypt, to the Promised Land. The event of Passover recalls the first event of the Exodus. Specifically, Passover commemorates the tenth and last plague in Egypt, when the first-born males were struck down. The Lord passed-over the houses of the Israelites that had marked their houses with the blood of the sacrificial lamb as prescribed by God. In this way the Lord spared the Jewish first-born males from the plague of death, and delivered them from the hand of the Egyptians.

After wandering in the desert for 40 years, the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land. Here, the tribes of Israel were not constant in their love for God or His Commandments. They returned to their former ways, and worshiped foreign gods. They rejected the covenant with God, and committed sins and horrible abominations against God and man. So God sent the prophets as His messengers to call the people back to His love and to be faithful to the covenant they had made with Him.

At the end of the Old Testament, the Chosen People realized that they could not be faithful without God's help (without sanctifying grace in their soul). They needed a Savior. Our ancestors were ready for Jesus to come.

IV. The New Testament

The Bible is the written Word of God. The Church considers the heart of the Bible to be the four Gospels. The four Gospels present us with the life of Jesus our Savior, who came to gather all people into the "family of God," the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Jesus was carrying out the Father's will to bring us back into communion with Himself through this Kingdom, the Church.

Jesus began the Catholic Church by choosing twelve Apostles, revealing to them what we need to know to love Him, specifically the truths about being His faithful followers. Jesus instituted the seven Sacraments, the way that we receive sanctifying grace within our soul, a share in God's Divine Life. Grace strengthens us to be Christ's followers. It was, above all, through His Death on the Cross and His Resurrection that He accomplished the coming of His Kingdom (CCC 541-542). Each person is called to union with Christ in and through His Church.

The Four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each tell us of the life, teachings, death and Resurrection of Our Lord. The Gospel of St. John differs from the other three in that it is more spiritual, theologically deep and meditative. An example is the phrase "the Word became flesh." St. John says more than "God became like one of us." He says: "the Word became flesh." "The Word" refers to Jesus, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and "became flesh", refers to the Incarnation, defined as God becoming man.

By the example of Jesus' life, death and Resurrection, Christ has called each of us as His followers to a life of sacrificial love toward God and neighbor. Jesus said that he who wishes to be first in this world must be the servant of all.

