ARE YOU HAPPY BEING A CATHOLIC?

Rediscovering the Joy of Faith
(An Overview of the Catechism of the Catholic Church)
“The Catholic Church is in trouble – even in Catholic Philippines…People have been leaving the Catholic Church. People are about to leave the Church.”

(Fr. Joel Tabora, SJ).
About one in every 11 Filipino Catholics, or 9.2 percent, sometimes considers leaving the Church, a recent survey by Social Weather Stations (SWS) found.

(Philippine Daily Inquirer)
Why do you think Catholics consider the idea of leaving the Church or actually leave the Catholic Church?
“Some may be exasperated with the RH debate. Others may be yearning for more palpable fellowship and experience of Christian communion. Yet others may be searching for greater depth and holiness as they search for God in this difficult world”.

(Fr. Joel Tabora, SJ)
Catholics think of leaving the Church because they LACK DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR FAITH.

Some say: “I don’t understand very well my faith. Hence, SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH IT. I have to leave it!”
If you don’t understand Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, will you conclude that something is wrong with the theory? Yet, why would one think that something is wrong with the Catholic Church simply because a very few cannot understand or agree with Her teachings?

Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I’m not sure about the universe.

-Albert Einstein
If you don’t understand the Catholic Faith, what will you do?

TAKE IT? or LEAVE IT?
CREDO UT INTELLIGAM

Believe in order to understand.

SAINT AUGUSTINE’S ADVICE
STUDY THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

FIRST RESOLUTION
“In order to arrive at a systematic knowledge of the content of the faith, all can find in the Catechism of the Catholic Church a precious and indispensable tool” (Porta fidei, no. 11)
BLESSED POPE JOHN PAUL II wrote:

“this catechism will make a very important contribution to that work of renewing the whole life of the Church… I declare it to be a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion and a sure norm for teaching the faith”

(Porta fidei, no. 11)
“It is in this sense that the Year of Faith will have to see a concerted effort to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith that receives its systematic and organic synthesis in the Catechism of the Catholic Church”

*(Porta fidei, no. 11)*
“In this Year, then, the CCC will serve as a tool providing real support for the faith, especially for those concerned with the formation of Christians, so crucial in our cultural context”

*(Porta fidei, no. 12)*
FAMILIARIZE WITH THE STRUCTURE OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
Catechism of Catholic Church: An encounter with Christ

“In its very structure, the CCC follows the development of the faith right up to the great themes of daily life. On page after page, we find that what is presented here is no theory, but an encounter with a person who lives within the Church”

(Porta fidei, no. 11)
“The Profession of faith is followed by an account of sacramental life, in which Christ is present, operative and continues to build His Church” (Porta fidei, no. 11)
“Without the liturgy and the sacraments, the profession of faith would lack efficacy, because it would lack the grace which supports Christian witness” (Porta fidei, no. 11)
“By the same criterion, the teaching of the Catechism on the moral life acquires its full meaning if placed in relationship with faith, liturgy and prayer” (Porta fidei, no. 11)
The Christian Mystery is the object of faith that is professed.

It is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions.

It enlightens and sustains the actions of God’s children.

It is the basis of our relationship with God.
Christians must profess their faith before men.

**SECTION 1: “I believe” – “We believe”**

- God reveals Himself. Man responds to God’s revelation.

**SECTION 2: Profession of Christian Faith**

- Christian faith is God’s gift. Our Faith is Trinitarian: the Creed
God’s salvation is present & acts in the world.

SECTION 1: The Sacramental Economy
The Church’s liturgy make present God action in man’s history.

SECTION 2: Seven Sacraments of the Church
The seven sacraments are performed by Christ Himself.
PART III: The Life of Faith

Man, created in God’s image and likeness, is called to communion with God in eternal life.

SECTION 1: Man’s Call – Life in the Spirit
Man can reach heaven through a life of virtues in the light of the Beatitudes and with the help of God’s grace.

SECTION 2: The Ten Commandments
Man is called to fulfill the two-fold commandment of charity: love of God and love of neighbor.
PART IV: Prayer in the Life of Faith

Man is invited to a constant conversation with God through prayer.

SECTION 1: Prayer in the Christian Life

Prayer is essential in the life of believers.

SECTION 2: The Lord’s Prayer – Our Father

The *epitome* of Christian prayer is the “Our Father”.
Any question, so far?

ENTER
THE DOOR OF FAITH
“… a sure norm for teaching the faith and a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion” (FD, 3)

“… a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine” (FD, 3)
Many Catholic adults are searching for a positive, coherent and contemporary statement of what the Church believes and teaches. The Catechism provides such a statement in a comprehensive, yet summary format. Catholic adults should be encouraged to read and study the Catechism. While private study of the Catechism might fit most comfortably into the learning styles of some adults, most benefit greatly from organized discussion groups or study circles. Growth in the knowledge of the faith which one believes \((fides quae creditur)\) tends to deepen the quality of the faith by which one believes \((fides qua creditur)\). Thus the Catechism can be used by the faithful as an instrument for the holistic maturation of their faith.
PART ONE
THE PROFESSION OF FAITH
Section 1: “I believe – We believe”

Chapter 1: Man’s capacity for God
   - Article 1: The Revelation of God
   - Article 2: Transmission of Divine Revelation (Tradition)

Chapter 2: God comes to meet man
   - Article 3: Sacred Scripture

Chapter 3: Man’s Response to God
   - Article 1: I believe
   - Article 2: We believe
Section 2: The Profession of the Christian Faith
(in 12 articles – 12 Apostles)

Chapter 1
I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER

Article 1

Chapter 2
I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

Articles 2-7

Chapter 3
I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Articles 8-12
THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

Section 1:
“I believe – We believe”

Chapter 1
Man’s capacity for God

Article 1:
The Revelation of God

Article 2:
Transmission of Divine Revelation (Tradition)

Chapter 2
God comes to meet man

Article 3:
Sacred Scripture

Chapter 3
Man’s Response to God

Article 1:
I believe

Article 2:
We believe
I. THE DESIRE FOR GOD:
The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. “For you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (St. Augustine). Man, by nature, is a religious being.
II. WAYS OF KNOWING GOD:

1) THE WORLD: starting from movement, becoming, contingency, and the world’s order and beauty, we can know God as the origin and the end of the universe.
2) THE HUMAN PERSON: with his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence.
Man’s faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with Him, God willed both to reveal Himself to man, and to give Him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith. The proofs of God’s existence, however, can predispose one to faith and help one to see that faith is not opposed to reason (CCC, 35)
III. WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES?

“Our Holy Mother, the Church, holds and teaches that God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason”. Without this capacity, man would not be able to welcome God’s revelation.
IV. HOW CAN WE SPEAK ABOUT GOD?

- It is possible to speak about God to all men.
- But our language is limited. “We can name God only by taking creatures as our starting point, and in accordance with our limited human ways of knowing and thinking”.
- Taking the perfections in creatures as starting point, we can speak about God analogically.
Article 1. THE REVELATION OF GOD

I. God reveals His “Plan of Loving Goodness” by deeds and words “which are intrinsically bound up with each other” (DV, 2)

III. Christ Jesus – “mediator and fullness of all revelation. God has said everything in His Word. No further revelation.

Christian faith cannot accept “revelations” that claim to surpass or correct the Revelation of which Christ is the fulfillment, as is the case in certain non-Christian religions and in certain recent sects based on such “revelations”.
Article 2. THE TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE REVELATION (Apostolic Tradition)

I. THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION. The Gospel was handed on ORALLY and in WRITING. The preaching continued in apostolic succession.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITION & SACRED SCRIPTURE. One common source; two distinct modes of transmission.
III. **The Interpretation of the Heritage of Faith.** The Apostles entrusted the whole *depositum fidei* to the whole Church. The Magisterium alone has the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God (written or oral). The dogmas of faith. The supernatural sense of faith (*sensus fidei*). Growth in understanding the faith. “The Holy Spirit will lead us to the fullness of truth”.
Article 3. THE SACRED SCRIPTURE

I. CHRIST – THE UNIQUE WORD OF SACRED SCRIPTURE. God speaks in human words. God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom He expresses Himself completely.

II. INSPIRATION & TRUTH OF SACRED SCRIPTURE. God is the author. God inspired the human authors. The inspired books teach the truth. Christianity is not a “religion of the book” but of the living Word.
III. The Holy Spirit, Interpreter of Scripture. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm, and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words. Three criteria:

a) Be attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture.

b) Read the Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole Church.

c) Be attentive to the analogy of faith (coherence of truths of faith among themselves).
The Four Senses of the Scripture. Literal sense & the spiritual sense, divided into three (allegorical, moral, anagogical). Thus, we have four senses:

a) Literal sense: meaning conveyed by the words, discovered by exegesis. All other senses are based on this.

b) Allegorical sense: significance of events in Christ.

c) Moral sense: the events are written to lead to act justly.

d) Anagogical sense: we view realities in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland.
The Letter speaks of deeds;
Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act;
Anagogy our destiny.

Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.

St. Augustine of Dacia
IV. THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE. It was by Apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of sacred books (canon). 46 Old Testament; 27 New Testament: a total of 73.

OLD TESTAMENT: witness to the whole divine pedagogy; a storehouse of sublime teaching on God and of sound human wisdom, a treasury of prayers. In these books, the mystery of our salvation is hidden.

NEW TESTAMENT: the ultimate truth of God’s Revelation; its central figure is Jesus Christ, his Paschal Mystery. The Gospels are the heart of all the Scriptures.
Three stages of Gospel formation:

1. The Life and Teachings of Jesus. The Four Gospels hand on what Jesus really did and taught while he lived among men, for their eternal salvation.

2. The Oral Tradition. After the Ascension, the Apostles handed on to their hearers what Jesus had said and done, but with fuller understanding.

3. The Written Gospels. The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form.
The Unity of the Old and New Testaments:

Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet.

“In the Old Testament the New is concealed, in the New the Old is revealed” (St. Augustine of Hippo, Quaest. in Hept. 2,73: PL 34, 623; cf. DV 16).
“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”

St. Jerome
BY HIS REVELATION, God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, in order to invite and receive them into his own company.
SECTION 1, Chapter 3: MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD

BY FAITH, man completely submits his intellect and will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer – the “obedience of faith”.

I. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

“Obedience in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth Himself. Abraham, the “father of all who believe”, is the model of such obedience in OT. Mary is its most perfect embodiment.
Faith is a personal adherence of the whole man to God who reveals Himself. It involves an assent of the intellect and will to the self-revelation God has made through his deeds and words.
“To believe” has two-fold reference: to the person, to the truth, by trusting in the person who bears witness to it.
SECTION 1, Chapter 3: MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD

II. “I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED”.

To believe in God alone
To believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God
To believe in the Holy Spirit

Article 1
I BELIEVE

To believe in God alone
To believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God
To believe in the Holy Spirit
III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH

Article 1
I BELIEVE

Faith is grace.
Faith is a human act.
Faith is certain. Faith seeks understanding. Faith is not opposed to science and reason.
Faith is an act of freedom. Faith is necessary.
Perseverance in faith. Faith – the beginning of eternal life.
I. “LORD, LOOK UPON THE FAITH OF YOUR CHURCH”

Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God. But it is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone.
“I BELIEVE” *(Apostles’ Creed)* is the faith of the Church professed personally by each believer, principally during Baptism. “WE BELIEVE” *(Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed)* is the faith of the Church confessed by the bishops assembled in council or more generally by the liturgical assembly of believers.
We do not believe in formulas, but in those realities they express, which faith allows us to touch.

As a mother who teaches her children to speak, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith.
Article 2
WE BELIEVE

III. ONLY ONE FAITH

Through the centuries, in so many languages, cultures, peoples and nations, the Church has constantly confessed this one faith, received from the Lord.

For though languages differ throughout the world, the content of the Tradition is one and the same.
“Faith is a foretaste of the knowledge that will make us blessed in the life to come”

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Comp. Theol.* 1, 2
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.
Take a Break Buddy!