

What's Your Question?

GOD

- Who is God?
- Why did God create?
- Why does God "hide" from us mysteriously?
- How can anyone know who God is and what He expects of human beings?
- Does God really get involved in human life or is He a 'non-interfering God'?
- Why do we call God our 'Father'?
- What is the difference between 'Yahweh' and 'Jehovah'?
- Why to some people, especially Jews write 'God' as 'G_d'?
- What is the Holy Trinity?
- How can there be one God and three Divine Persons?
- Could you give me a thumbnail sketch on the life of Jesus?
- How can Jesus be God and man at the same time?
- What is the difference between calling Jesus 'God' and calling Him the 'Son of God' and the 'Son of Man'?
- Did Jesus know He was God?
- Since Jesus was a Jew, why should I be Catholic?
- Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?
- What was Jesus doing when He "descended into Hell"?
- Where is the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Old Testament?
- Why does the Orthodox Church say in its Creed that the Holy Spirit only proceeds from the Father, and not the Father and the Son?

REVELATION

- Why does the Church base its teachings on Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium, and not Scripture alone?
- Do all the doctrines of the Church carry the same weight?
- What are the basic beliefs I must hold to become a Catholic?
- Where did the Bible come from?
- Who gave the Bible such authority?
- Is the Bible full of mythical stories written to tell a moral and not to be trusted or taken literally?
- Does the Catholic Church teach that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is written without any errors?
- Do we have to believe that every single statement in the Bible is historically or scientifically accurate?
- Can I read the Bible myself or do I always have to have someone interpret the Bible for me?
- Why is the Bible divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament?
- What Bible do Catholics use and why don't they use the King James Version?
- How and why are the Protestant and Catholic Bibles different?
- Why is God so violent in the Old Testament?
- How much do all those rules and things in the Old Testament apply to me today?

- Why did the Church "lock up" the Bibles in past history?
- Why don't Catholics read the Bible today?
- What is the authority of the Catechism of the Catholic Church?

FAITH

- What is faith?
- Why is faith considered a gift?
- Isn't it a personal thing to decide that what I believe is true for me and what you believe is true for you?
- If I believe in Jesus, why do I have to be baptized?
- If I am happy with how my life is going, why do I need Jesus?
- Are Catholics "saved"?
- Why don't Catholics talk about and promote "accepting Jesus as their personal Savior"?
- Can you lose your salvation?
- What happens to unbelieving and unbaptized people when they die? What if they believe but are not baptized? Or what if they no longer believe but were baptized?
- What is the Catholic position on the doctrine of 'sola fide'?
- How does the Church look at the issue of 'faith and works'?
- What is the difference between: redemption, justification, and salvation?

CREATION

- What does the Church teach about how creation happened?
- What do Catholics believe about evolution?
- If God is Love, why is there so much suffering in the world?
- Couldn't God have come up with a "better way" to get us to return to Him other than the "Cross" and suffering?
- Is God the source of evil in the world?
- How does the Church determine what is 'miraculous'?
- What are angels?
- What are Guardian Angels?
- What does the Catholic Church teach about the devil?
- What does the Bible have to say about Satan? Why doesn't God get rid of him?
- Can angels still sin? If angels still sin, do they still become devils or are they punished and remain angels?
- What influence does the devil have over persons?
- What is exorcism?
- How does baptism take away original sin?
- If Adam and Eve didn't sin, would they have died?
- Isn't it unfair that we are "stained" by original sin even though we didn't do anything wrong ourselves?
- What does Gen 3:15 mean about the child of the woman crushing the head of the snake?

CHURCH - FOUNDATION AND MARKS

- Did Jesus intend to found a visible society called the "Church", rather than an invisible reality called the "kingdom of heaven"?
- Can you give me a thumbnail sketch of the history of the Catholic Church?
- Why does the church teach that it is the one founded by Jesus?
- Why does the Catholic Church call itself the 'true church'?
- What does it mean to say that the Church is one, when it is so divided?
- What does it mean to say that the Church holy, when it is full of sinful people and has committed immoral acts in the past?
- What does it mean to say that the Church catholic, when not all Christians belong to it?
- What does it mean to say that the Church is apostolic, since it's not known which of the original Twelve any given bishop is the successor to?
- If the Catholic Church is the true Church, why do some priests advise serious Inquirers and seekers to stay in their Protestant Churches or not come back to the Church if they have been inactive for a long time?
- Why do different priests teach different things about the Church's teaching?
- What is the Church's view of the Crusades?
- What is the Church's view of the Inquisition?
- Why do a lot of Catholics identify themselves as Catholic not Christian?
- When and why did the Orthodox Church separate from the Catholic Church?
- What is the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the Orthodox churches today?
- What is the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the Protestant churches?
- What is the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the Jewish religion?
- What is the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the Islamic religion?
- What is the "theology of partial communion" all about?
- Why is the Church accused of not opposing the Holocaust?
- Why was the Church perceived as being anti-Semitic?
- Does a person have to give up membership in the Masonic organizations to become Catholic?
- Are not all Christian Churches essentially the same and the areas of disagreement superficial to the Christian faith and not worth arguing over?
- Since other religions like Islam, Mormonism and Judaism believe in one God, does it really make any difference which religion you follow as long as you follow one faithfully?
- Does God listen to the prayers of non-Christians?
- Does the Church discourage Catholics from attending Protestant services on a regular basis?
- Can you give me thumbnail sketch of the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism?
- What does the saying, "Outside the Church there is no salvation" mean?
- Does God expect me to convert others to Catholicism or simply pray for them?

CHURCH

- Why does the Church regards itself as a hierarchical institution?
- Can you give me a thumbnail sketch of the Church's organization?

- How does a priest become a bishop?
- What is the authority of the local bishop in relation to the Bishop of Rome?
- What does it mean to call the diocese the "local Church"—isn't that really the parish?
- Why don't bishops perform "big" miracles today like the apostles did in their time?
- How can some Bishops in the Catholic Church defend practices such as homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia and still continue in active ministry?
- What is a Cardinal?
- What is a Monsignor?
- What is an Ecumenical Council?
- If the conclusions of an Ecumenical Council are binding on the whole Church, how can Western (Roman) Catholics define dogmas that the Eastern (Orthodox) Christians would not accept, since they're not represented at a Council?
- What happens if not all bishops agree with the conclusions of an Ecumenical Council (as Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre did not after Vatican II)?
- What is the relationship of dioceses to one another?
- How can the Church change its rules and practices?
- Why should I obey the "teachings of the Church"?
- What is an 'imprimatur' and a 'nihil obstat'?
- Why are the bureaucracy, paperwork, and processes so necessary in the Catholic Church?

CHURCH - PAPACY AND INFALLIBILITY

- Was St. Peter really the first Pope?
- Explain the issue about 'Petros', 'Petra', and 'Lithos'.
- Since the Church didn't use the term 'Pope' in the first few centuries of its existence, how did the concept of 'Pope' and 'papacy' originate?
- What is the difference between Apostles and Disciples?
- How do we know it is necessary to have Apostolic Succession?
- How do Popes get elected?
- What are the limits of papal authority?
- What does it mean that the Pope is infallible?
- How do I know what I 'have to' believe and what is recommended that I believe?
- Is the Catechism infallible?
- What is the laity?
- Does the laity share in the decisions made about running the church?
- How does the Church view women?
- What are 'nuns' or 'Sisters'?
- What are religious orders?
- What is a 'secular' or 'Third' order?

COMMUNION OF SAINTS AND MARY

- What does the Catholic Church mean by the Communion of Saints?
- What is the process for a person to be named a Saint?
- Do I have to believe that Saints are in heaven?
- Why do Catholics honor the Saints?

- Why do you pray to the dead (saints, Mary)? Why don't Catholics pray directly to Jesus?
- Why do Catholics kneel in front of a statue and pray? Isn't that worshipping the statue, which is idolatry?
- Why do Catholics give special honor to Mary?
- Why does some Catholic literature refer to the 'worship' of Mary?
- Can you give me a thumbnail sketch of the beliefs of the Catholic Church about Mary?
- What is the "hierarchy of truths"?
- Can one be Catholic and not believe in certain Marian doctrines (like the Immaculate Conception)?
- Why do Catholics say that Mary is from the line of David if it is not in the Scriptures?
- Why do Catholics say that Mary is the Mother of God and not just the Mother of Jesus?
- If Mary is considered Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Spouse of Joseph, is she a bigamist?
- What is the Immaculate Conception?
- Since Scripture clearly says that "all men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," how can Catholics maintain that Mary is immaculately conceived and remained sinless?
- What does the Church teach about the perpetual virginity of Mary?
- What is Assumption?
- Do the Orthodox churches believe in the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption?
- What does it mean to call Mary the 'Mediatrice of all Graces'?
- Why do some Catholics call Mary an Advocate?
- If Jesus is the Redeemer and Catholics believe Mary is the Co-Redemptrix, do Catholics believe she is equal to Jesus?
- Why do we call Mary Queen of Heaven and Earth?
- Why do Catholics call Mary the "Mother of the Church"?
- Why do we honor Mary under different titles--isn't it the same person?
- Why do many Catholics believe so strongly in Marian apparitions?
- Which apparitions does the Church regard as genuine?
- If Mary reveals something to the Church in an approved apparition, is that considered part of what Catholics must believe (i.e. is it part of Divine Revelation)?
- What are the 'Secrets of Fatima'?
- Why is devotion to Mary important or recommended?
- Can devotion to Mary be excessive?
- Why do we dedicate countries to Mary, like Mexico to Guadalupe and America to the Immaculate Conception?
- What do some of the different representations of Mary mean? (Examples, icons of Mary; Guadalupe; Lourdes; Fatima; Our Lady of Grace; Our Lady of Victory; and so on.)
- How do Mary and the Saints, 'hear' our prayers, especially if we pray in our minds?

- Why do Catholics say certain Marian prayers (such as the "Hail, Holy Queen" and the Memorare) that seem to put Mary in Jesus' place, as if she can answer prayers that Jesus might not answer?
- What is the Miraculous Medal?
- How do you pray the Rosary?
- Where does the Rosary come from?

RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND LIFE EVERLASTING

- How can our bodies be resurrected if they have been eaten by worms, cremated, or otherwise completely destroyed?
- What does the Catholic Church have to say about the "end times"?
- What does the Church believe about Millennialism?
- What happens when people die?
- What is predestination?
- What is the Catholic view of Heaven?
- What does a person have to do to go to heaven, or is everyone going to heaven, except for really evil people like Hitler?
- Is there a 'Limbo'?
- What is Purgatory?
- Why are there prayers 'for', 'to' and 'by' those in Purgatory?
- Does everyone who dies in the state of grace have to go through Purgatory?
- What is Hell?
- Do Catholics believe that such a loving Father could really send people to hell?
- Why is Jesus taking so long to return?
- What does the Church teach about the rapture?
- What does the Church teach about the judgment after a person dies?

LITURGY

- What is "Liturgy"?
- What is a 'blessing'?
- What is the nature and purpose of sacrifice in the Old Testament?
- Why don't the Jews still sacrifice animals?
- What are the 'Eastern Rite' Churches?
- What are the essential differences between liturgies in the East and West?
- What are some of the differences between the Latin Rite Mass and Mass celebrated according to other rites?

SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL, BAPTISM, AND CONFIRMATION

- What are the Sacraments and what is their role?
- Can you give me an overview of the Sacraments?
- How does baptism take away original sin?
- What is a reborn Christian?
- Why does the Church baptize infants?
- What happens if a baby dies before it is baptized?
- What's the difference between "process" (RCIA) and a "program"?
- How long does it take to become a Catholic?
- If a person receives the Holy Spirit at Baptism, why is there Confirmation?
- Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit different from Baptism and Confirmation?

- What does it mean that some Catholics are 'Charismatic'?
- How can people be more open to experiencing the release of the Holy Spirit in their lives?

SACRAMENTS - HOLY EUCHARIST AND MASS

- Is the word 'Eucharist' used in different ways?
- What is adoration of the Eucharist (Blessed Sacrament)?
- Why and when do Catholics genuflect?
- Why do Catholics say that the Eucharist is the 'body, blood, soul and divinity' of Jesus?
- Why is the Eucharist placed in that box?
- What is a simple explanation of Transubstantiation?
- What do the Lutherans believe about the Holy Eucharist? The Anglicans/Episcopalians? The Baptists? The Presbyterians? Methodists? Pentecostals? Baptists and Evangelicals?
- Why is the Mass called "the Mass"?
- If Latin is the 'official' language of the Liturgy, why do we celebrate it in English?
- Why is the Mass so important to Catholics?
- What is the significance of the various actions of the priest at Mass?
- Is the Mass a sacred meal or a sacrifice?
- Why does worship seem to be so lively, spontaneous, and even entertaining in some non-liturgical churches (e.g., Pentecostal) while Catholic liturgies seem quiet and formal?
- What is the point of priests having to wear all those vestments?
- Did Jesus actually carry out these same rituals or teach others to have so many rituals?
- At what point in Scripture do we have an example of the structure of Mass that is still done today?
- Why are there differences of opinion about kneeling during Mass?
- What is the Liturgy of the Word and how is it structured?
- What are Catholics doing just before the Gospel reading when they mark their foreheads, lips, and hearts with a Cross?
- Why don't you carry a bible to church?
- Why is the sermon shorter in the Catholic Church than in Protestant Churches?
- What is the difference between a homily, a sermon, and preaching?
- Why is there a collection in Mass?
- What does the Liturgy of the Eucharist mean and how is it structured?
- Why does the church require unleavened bread at Mass?
- Since some Christians regard Jesus' words to "do this in remembrance of me" as an ordinance or recommendation, why do Catholics treat it as a command?
- Are Catholics obliged to go to communion at each Mass?
- Why don't people who receive Communion receive the Body and the Blood?
- I feel very uncomfortable when everyone goes up to receive the Eucharist and I can't. What should I do?
- Why don't you have an altar call at Mass?
- Why do Catholics wear shorts and jeans to Church?

- Does the Catholic Church permit girls to serve on the altar at Mass?
- What is sacred space?
- How do Catholics celebrate Passover?
- The Catholic Church accepts Baptism from other Christian traditions, so why can't Protestants receive Communion at Mass?
- Why can't Catholics receive communion from other Christian churches?
- If Catholics recognize the validity of Orthodox sacraments, why can't the two groups intercommunicate?
- What are the exceptions to the rule that non-Catholics cannot receive communion in the Catholic Church?

SACRAMENTS - RECONCILIATION AND ANOINTING

- How can a priest forgive our sins?
- Why do we confess our sins to a priest, and not go directly to God?
- If in Scripture, Jesus seems to have given the authority to forgive sins to all of his disciples (Jn 20:23), why must Catholics confess their sins only to a priest?
- Can the priest be trusted with what you tell them?
- What is the history of the sacrament of Penance?
- Can Jesus really forgive everything I have done? Will He?
- Under what circumstances might a priest refuse to give absolution?
- What is the procedure for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, including the confession of sin?
- What is the "penance" that the penitent is supposed to perform?
- How often must a Catholic go to confession?
- Does confession make Catholics less good?
- If I sin and ask God's forgiveness and then die, will I go to Heaven?
- What happens if a person hides something from the confessor, or forgets to confess something?
- What happens when a priest gives you absolution?
- What is an indulgence?
- Why did Luther accuse the Church of selling indulgences?
- What is the Anointing of the Sick?
- Do all sacraments 'heal'?
- Does the Catholic Church believe healings happen today? Why don't people witness to them?

SACRAMENTS - HOLY ORDERS

- When did Jesus institute the Priesthood?
- The New Testament says nothing about a "Christian priesthood," so why do Catholics (and Orthodox) have priests?
- Since the Bible seems to indicate that all Christians are priests (e.g., 1 Pt. 2:9), why can't an ordinary person consecrate the Eucharist and preach in a church?
- How does one become a priest?
- Can clergy hold positions of authority in business, industry, or government?
- Why does the Church consider Anglican and Lutheran ordination invalid?
- Since the Bible said "Call no man father", why do you call the preacher "Father"?

- What does it mean to say that the bishop exercises the “fullness of the priesthood”? Isn't a priest fully a priest?
- What is the role of a deacon?
- Why don't Catholic Priests marry?
- Why does the Latin Rite maintain a celibate clergy, whereas the Eastern Rites and the Orthodox do not?
- Can a priest leave the priesthood?
- Why are Anglican/Episcopalian priests allowed to be ordained in the Catholic Church even if they are married?
- Why does the Church restrict the office of priest to men only?
- What is the role of women in the Church?
- Why are there no women deacons in the Catholic Church?
- Since nuns are not priests, why can't they marry?

SACRAMENTS - MATRIMONY

- What makes marriage a sacrament?
- What kinds of preparation are necessary to marry in the Church?
- What place should faith have in my selection of a marriage partner?
- Who administers the Sacrament of Matrimony?
- Why should young couples marry rather than merely cohabiting?
- Is there a difference between a Christian marriage and a Catholic marriage?
- What makes a marriage valid?
- Why do Catholics have to abide by the marriage laws in the Catholic Church?
- If the Church says that a marriage of Protestants performed by a minister or civil authority is valid, why do Catholics have to be married by a priest?
- If a couple desiring to marry does not want to have children, what are their options?
- What are the implications for the marriage of a Catholic and a member of a non-Christian religion or an atheist?
- What are the implications for a marriage of a Catholic and a baptized Christian who is not Catholic?
- What is an annulment?
- Why is it easier for some people to get annulments?
- What is the Scriptural background that gives the Church the authority to question the background of a person going through an Annulment?
- What are the Pauline and Petrine Privileges?
- Are the children illegitimate if there's an annulment?
- Why do Catholics have to go through the whole annulment/con-validation process if they weren't Catholic when they were married?
- If both spouses in a marriage have been married previously, do they both need to get an annulment before they can be married in the Church?
- If a Catholic is married outside the Church, does he/she have to be married again if they come back to the Church?
- Why do I have to get my first marriage annulled before I can become a Catholic or get married in the church?
- What is the Church's position on divorce?
- Can someone who is divorced attend Mass and receive the Eucharist?
- Can a divorced person who has remarried participate in parish ministry?

- Why does the Catholic Church not allow divorce, when Catholic marriages fail at the same rate as those of the general population, as many Catholics file for divorce, and other Christian denominations (including Orthodox) allow divorce?
- What does the Church do to pastor and help those Catholics who are divorced?

SACRAMENTALS

- Why do we have things like the rosary, holy water fonts, scapulars, ashes on Ash Wednesday, blessed items, etc?
- What is 'Holy Water' and why is it used?
- What are the Stations of the Cross?
- What is a scapular?
- Why do Catholics have to have Jesus on their crosses?

HUMAN PERSON

- "Am I basically a spirit who has a soul and lives in a body?"
- How can I tell if I am doing God's will?
- What is more important, 'obedience to the Church' or 'obeying one's conscience'?
- If God is love, why do we have to fear Him?
- What is the difference between 'eternal punishment' and 'temporal punishment' due to sin?
- Are temptations sinful?
- How can the Lord's Prayer ask God not to “lead us into temptation,” since God neither deceives nor is deceived, and would certainly not try to lead a person to commit sin?
- What is the difference between venial and mortal sin?
- What are some of the contributions of blacks and other people of color to the Catholic Church?

HUMAN PERSON - ETHNIC ISSUES

- Have there ever been any black Popes?
- Why is St. Augustine, the great African bishop and Doctor of the Church, is quoted so often yet he is hardly ever acknowledged as an African?
- From the images I see in the media, why does the Roman Catholic Church appear to be so "white or Anglo" when it is presented?
- When Jesus lived on earth as a fully human person, was He a man of color?
- Why should African-Americans center their lives around the person of Jesus and not center it on their ethnicity?
- How many African-American Catholics and how many people of color world wide are there approximately?
- Why are there so few vocations among blacks and hispanics in this country compared to Africa and South America?
- Why is the "one family" created by Almighty God so rarely "preached" to the whole of the people of God?
- Is it such a good thing for so many ethnic churches to exist?

HUMAN PERSON - GRACE AND PRECEPTS

- How does 'justification' differ from 'salvation' and 'sanctification'?
- Does the Church believe in the gift of tongues today?

- How can I merit anything since I am a sinful human being?
- Is it possible to be perfect in this life?
- What are the basic rules I must agree with and adhere to if I become Catholic?
- Why is it a mortal sin to not go to Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation?
- What are "holy days of obligation"?
- If you only have to go to confession once a year to confess mortal sins, why go frequently to confess venial sins?
- Why do we fast and abstain from meat during Lent?
- Do Catholics tithe?
- Do I have some obligation to God because He created me?
- Why do I need a "religion"?
- Are horoscopes bad?
- Why do some Catholics bow their heads at the name of Jesus?
- Why do Catholics celebrate the Sabbath on Sundays?
- What does keeping the Lord's Day 'holy' mean?
- Can Catholics shop on Sunday?

HUMAN PERSON - MORALITY AND LIFE ISSUES

- What is the Church's teaching on abortion?
- What if the doctors remove the cancerous uterus of a pregnant woman and the baby dies, isn't this abortion?
- What are the consequences for a person who is involved somehow in abortion?
- Is euthanasia wrong?
- Is assisted suicide wrong?
- Can a person who commits suicide have a Catholic burial ceremony in a Catholic cemetery?
- How should Catholics relate to pro-life activists who bomb abortion clinics and shoot abortion providers?
- What's wrong with capital punishment?
- Is it a sin to get drunk?
- Why living together a sin?
- Is it sinful to be a homosexual (gay or lesbian)?
- Are impure thoughts always sinful?
- Is masturbation sinful?
- On what authority does the Church tell unmarried couples to abstain from sex and married couples to stop using artificial contraception?

- Is birth control always wrong?
- What does the Catholic Church teach about fertilization techniques that take place within marriage, like in vitro fertilization, fertilization of eggs outside the uterus and implantation of live embryos, and so on?
- What does the Church teach about fertilization techniques that result in multiple fetuses and the doctors recommend removing some to save others?
- Is it sinful to get a tubal ligation?
- Is it sinful to get a vasectomy?
- Why is sex outside marriage wrong?
- What are the principal arguments in favor of abortion and contraception and how can they be refuted?
- What is the difference between artificial birth control and Natural Family Planning (NFP)?
- Is Natural Family Planning an outdated theory that does not really work?
- Why would God want us to have more kids than we can take care of properly?
- What if you love God but can't follow the 'rules' of the Church, like the prohibition of birth control?
- Since many practicing Catholics simply ignore Catholic Church teaching on birth control, isn't the teaching unrealistic and out of touch with modern day reality?
- In what way does the Catholic Church help those in need?

PRAYER

- How can I start to pray to God?
- Why do Catholics cross themselves?
- How do I know that I'm being heard by God when I pray?
- Does it matter if one versus ten people are praying for something?
- How do we know when our repetitious prayers have become "vain"?
- If Jesus warned against repetitious prayer, why is there so much repetition in Catholic prayers and in the Mass?
- Is Centering Prayer an acceptable way to pray?
- Are Yoga and Transcendental Meditation acceptable as Christian forms of prayer?
- Are the enneagram and the use of labyrinths compatible with Christian prayer?
- Why is the ending of the 'Our Father' different for Protestants and Catholics?