

**Catechism of the
Independent Catholic
Christian Church
(2016 revision and expansion)**

Philadelphia: Rene Vilatte Press

Published by Rene Vilatte Press, 2010. Revised edition published 2016.
Public domain.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Faith of the Independent Catholic Christian Church	3
Independent Catholic Christian Church Statement of Values	9
The Catechism	11
Appendix	27

Introduction

This Catechism is a summary of the Christian faith as it is believed and practiced by the members of the Independent Catholic Christian Church. We live by the faith handed down through the ages by our forebears, inclusively offered to Christians living in the modern context. We strive to hold to the maxim, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

The Catechism is a version of the Outline of the Faith contained in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, revised and expanded to reflect the doctrine of the Independent Catholic Christian Church. We are deeply grateful to the Episcopal Church both for this document, and for the generosity they practice in keeping the Book of Common Prayer in the public domain. In addition, at the beginning of this book are an article on the faith of the Independent Catholic Christian Church and the Statement of Values of this church. The Appendix contains creeds, prayers, and other documents that are authoritative in this church.

Many thanks to ICCC priests Sandra Hutchinson and Michael Shirk and deacon Lyngine Calizo for their help in compiling this Catechism. May all who read and use this Catechism find it helpful in their journey with Christ.

+Timothy Michael Cravens

Presiding Bishop, Independent Catholic Christian Church

The Faith of the Independent Catholic Christian Church

by Timothy W. Cravens

Being an Independent Catholic, or Independent Sacramental Christian, means a number of things.

Our understanding of what it means to be “Catholic” is very similar to the basis for ecumenical dialogue put forth by the Anglican Communion in the Chicago-Lambeth quadrilateral in the nineteenth century. The quadrilateral identifies the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments, and the apostolic ministry of the historic episcopate as the irreducible elements of Catholic faith and practice which must be maintained at all costs.

First, as Independent Catholics, we accept the historic creeds of the church – the Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed – which teach the basic truths of the Christian faith. God exists as One God in Three Persons from eternity to eternity. God created the universe and all that is. God created humanity in God’s image, and when humanity sinned, provided redemption by becoming a human being in the person of Jesus Christ, who was fully God and fully human. Jesus died on the cross and then rose again from the dead, and by that death and resurrection, we are saved and restored to full and right relationship with God. God continues to be with us as the Holy Spirit, and continues the saving work of Christ through the Church, through its proclamation of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments.

We also accept the word of God expressed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We read the Bible in community as the Church. We interpret it in the light of the Tradition of the Church. We bring to bear upon our study the best use of Reason. And we use the lens of our Experience to understand the movement of the Spirit among the people of God in the Scriptures and what it has to say to us in our own day. We do not attribute to the Bible infallibility – only God is infallible, and to attribute that to a creature is idolatry. We hear the Spirit speak words of life and truth through Scripture – and any use of the Bible as a weapon to hurt others is a misuse, and not an expression of the word of God.

We rejoice in the sacramental life of grace, in which God uses created things to convey grace to us. There are two great sacraments of the Gospel, Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, in which all Christians share. We are baptized in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, through which our sins are forgiven and we are made members of Christ's Body, the Church. In the Eucharist, we receive the consecrated bread and wine which have become the Body and Blood of Christ, and are strengthened in our relationship with Christ and with one another and are sent out to do the work of Christ in the world. There are also five other sacraments which give us grace in time of need. The sacrament of Reconciliation gives us absolution and forgiveness of sins, reconciling us with God, one another, and ourselves. The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick brings healing of body and soul. The sacrament of Confirmation brings an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives, giving us new strength for the service of God. The sacrament of Marriage brings God's grace to the lifelong covenant between two people committed to one another as spouses. The sacrament of Ordination gives grace to deacons, priests, and bishops to carry out particular ministries in the Church.

We believe that there are certain ministries that are necessary for the Church to function in its fullness. While all Christians share in these ministries, as well as other ministries, some Christians are called to these ministries in sacramental ways. Some Christians are called to a life of sacramental servanthood, sharing also in the proclamation of the Gospel and assisting in the celebration of the sacraments. They are called to be deacons. Some deacons, in addition to sacramental servanthood, are called to a life of sacramental sacrifice, proclaiming the Gospel and sharing in the sacrificial ministry of Jesus Christ by offering the Eucharist and other sacraments and blessing the people. They are called to be priests. Some priests, in addition to sacramental sacrifice, are called to share in the pastoral oversight and governance of the church, and in ordaining others to be deacons, priests, and bishops. They are called to be bishops. We believe that bishops share in the ministry of the apostles and are brought into that ministry by a laying on of hands that has been passed down from the apostles.

These beliefs are common to a number of churches – Orthodox (both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian), Roman Catholic, Anglican, Old

Catholic, and Independent Catholic. But there are certain things which distinguish us from other churches. First, unlike both Orthodox and Roman Catholic denominations, we do not believe that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is to be identified with a single denomination. We believe that all the churches which hold the Creeds, Scripture, Sacraments, and Apostolic Succession of bishops, priests, and deacons are Catholic and are real churches, part of the one Church. Furthermore, just as we reject the notion that the Bible is infallible, so we also reject the idea that the Church, or any part of it, or any individual office within it, is or can be infallible or indefectible. The commitment of Jesus Christ to the Church is infallible – but to assign infallibility to a creature rather than the Creator is idolatrous. We also reject the belief that dogmas outside of the Creeds which some have proclaimed to be “infallible” can be so regarded, or required as beliefs. So, for example, while the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are certainly permissible beliefs, they cannot be required as a doctrinal test for any member of the Church.

We share the belief that the Church is fully present in a number of denominations as well as the rejection of infallibility with our Anglican and Old Catholic (Union of Utrecht) sisters and brothers. There are three characteristics which distinguish us from them.

First, these churches believe that, ideally, the church should be one organizational entity divided geographically so that there is only one diocese in a given location. While they may be in full communion with other churches that have dioceses in the same locale, they see this as an interim measure until organizational merger and unity can be accomplished. As Independent Catholics, however, we reject the idea that there should be one organization worldwide with only one diocese in an area, because we have seen, historically, how this leads to corruption. We instead hold to the early church model of independent local churches that cooperate with one another. The only universal Church is the invisible fellowship of all the baptized. We also accept that, in this age of greater mobility and electronic communication, local churches may be formed by networks of those who have a particular charism of ministry rather than a particular geographical location.

Second, Independent Catholics, unlike mainstream churches, do not typically own church property, and therefore meet in rented spaces or homes. This usually means that local communities are smaller, and gives them opportunities as well as imposing restrictions which do not exist when a church has its own building. This means that the traditional territorial parish paradigm does not exist for Independent Catholics. Also, it means that we integrate sacred space into our lives in ways not possible in most mainstream churches. We reserve the Blessed Sacrament in our homes, and like the early church, this is not restricted to clergy or religious, but is open to the laity who wish to do so as well. We integrate liturgy, celebrated in our homes, into our daily lives, so that the boundary between prayer and daily life becomes much more permeable.

Finally, Independent Catholics, with very, very few exceptions, rely on volunteer clergy who are not paid for their ministry. This has a number of implications. First, this goes hand in hand with the smaller communities that are typical of Independent Catholic churches, since the clergy only have limited time to devote to pastoral ministry, and the communities can exist without paying a clergy salary. In mainstream churches, often small churches are forced to close if they cannot pay for the maintenance of a building or the salary of clergy – these are not concerns of Independent Catholic churches. Second, while in mainstream churches (in particular the Episcopal Church), there are limits to the number of candidates who can be accepted into the ordination process because the church can only support a finite number of clergy with salary, benefits, and often housing, in Independent Catholic churches, anyone who is able to meet the requirements of the ordination process and who shows signs of a genuine vocation may be ordained.

The Independent Catholic Christian Church, in addition to sharing the above-mentioned characteristics with other Independent Catholic jurisdictions, has a number of characteristics of its own, shared by some but not all other jurisdictions.

We are fully inclusive of women and lgbt folk in all aspects of church life, and in particular in ordination and marriage. While many mainstream churches are moving in this direction, there is controversy about both and issues as to whether and how inclusion can happen in particular local contexts. In the ICCC, full inclusion of women and lgbt Christians is a

settled issue – those unwilling to accept it do not find a church home in our jurisdiction.

Another characteristic that we have that distinguishes us from some is that we embrace not only the Roman Catholic heritage, but also the Orthodox and Anglican heritage that we have as a result of drawing apostolic succession from all three streams. One particular way in which this manifests itself is in our worship, as we embrace liturgical diversity, drawing from the Byzantine, Roman, and Anglican liturgical traditions – and from both traditional and modern versions of these traditions. While each local community determines for itself exactly how this will be expressed in its own rites, we give mutual respect and embrace for those who may pray in a different liturgical rite than the one to which we are accustomed.

Thus, Independent Catholics are a group of churches that are rooted in ancient tradition, proclaiming the faith of Christ crucified, risen, and returning, celebrating the sacraments, living together in love – but willing to find new ways to minister to an ever-changing world. We invite you to join us in the Independent Catholic Christian Church, to share with us in proclaiming the Gospel and living its demands.

Independent Catholic Christian Church

Statement of Values

Creedally Orthodox

We proclaim the faith of the Nicene Creed:

- Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human
- Jesus Christ saves humankind through His death and resurrection

We base our faith on the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, interpreting them in light of the tradition of the Church, human reason, and the experience of Christians through the ages.

Joyfully Sacramental

We celebrate the seven sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick)

We preserve the apostolic succession

Radically Inclusive

We welcome all people to worship with us, inviting all baptized Christians to receive Holy Communion

We ordain men and women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and heterosexual Christians as bishops, priests, and deacons

We celebrate the marriages of both same-sex and opposite-sex couples

Deeply Prayerful

Prayer is a central part of the daily lives of our clergy, religious, and laity. We offer several public opportunities for common prayer each week, including some by conference call. We are devoted to the Divine Office, or Liturgy of the Hours, in which the church prays the Psalms, listens to God's word in Scripture, and offers our praises and prayers to God.

Liturgically Diverse

There is great diversity in the liturgical life of the Independent Catholic Christian Church. Great latitude is given to individual members and communities to pray in whichever authentically Christian forms best suit them. Some of our communities celebrate very traditional liturgies, while others use much more contemporary Christian expressions of worship.

Generously Relational

The people of the Independent Catholic Christian Church share a strong common life, even as we are widely dispersed. We do not believe that it is possible to be a "solitary Christian", but instead believe that we are called to work together as the church, in its various expressions, so that we may grow in our discipleship to Christ. We are also called to bear witness to Christ and work for justice in the larger world. We invite you to join us in our journey of Christian life.

The Catechism of the Independent Catholic Christian Church

Human Nature

- Q. What are we by nature?
A. We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God.
- Q. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
A. It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.
- Q. Why then do we live apart from God and out of harmony with creation?
A. From the beginning, human beings have misused their freedom and made wrong choices.
- Q. Why do we not use our freedom as we should?
A. Because we rebel against God, and we put ourselves in the place of God.
- Q. What help is there for us?
A. Our help is in God.
- Q. How did God first help us?
A. God first helped us by revealing himself and his will, through nature and history, through many seers and saints, and especially through the prophets of Israel.

God the Father

- Q. What do we learn about God as creator from the revelation to Israel?
A. We learn that there is one God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
- Q. What does this mean?
A. This means that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains, and directs it.
- Q. What does this mean about our place in the universe?
A. It means that the world belongs to its creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and to care for it in accordance with God's purposes.

Q. What does this mean about human life?

A. It means that all people are worthy of respect and honor, because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God.

Q. How was this revelation handed down to us?

A. This revelation was handed down to us through a community created by a covenant with God.

The Old Covenant

Q. What is meant by a covenant with God?

A. A covenant is a relationship initiated by God, to which a body of people responds in faith.

Q. What is the Old Covenant?

A. The Old Covenant is the one given by God to the Hebrew people.

Q. What did God promise them?

A. God promised that they would be his people to bring all the nations of the world to him.

Q. What response did God require from the chosen people?

A. God required the chosen people to be faithful; to love justice, to do mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.

Q. Where is this Old Covenant to be found?

A. The covenant with the Hebrew people is to be found in the books which we call the Old Testament.

Q. Where in the Old Testament is God's will for us shown most clearly?

A. God's will for us is shown most clearly in the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments

Q. What are the Ten Commandments?

A. The Ten Commandments are the laws given to Moses and the people of Israel.

Q. What do we learn from these commandments?

A. We learn two things: our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbors.

Q. What is our duty to God?

A. Our duty is to believe and trust in God;

Ia/1 To love and obey God and to bring others to know him;

Ib/2 To put nothing in the place of God;

II/3 To show God respect in thought, word, and deed;

III/4 And to set aside regular times for worship, prayer, and the study of God's ways.

Q. What is our duty to our neighbors?

A. Our duty to our neighbors is to love them as ourselves, and to do to other people as we wish them to do to us;

IV/5 To love, honor, and help our parents and family; to honor those in authority, and to meet their just demands;

V/6 To show respect for the life God has given us; to work and pray for peace; to bear no malice, prejudice, or hatred in our hearts; and to be kind to all the creatures of God;

VI/7 To use all our bodily desires as God intended;

VII/8 To be honest and fair in our dealings; to seek justice, freedom, and the necessities of life for all people; and to use our talents and possessions as ones who must answer for them to God;

VIII/9 To speak the truth, and not to mislead others by our silence;

IX – X
/10 To resist temptations to envy, greed, and jealousy; to rejoice in other people's gifts and graces; and to do our duty for the love of God, who has called us into fellowship with him.

Q. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?

A. The Ten Commandments were given to define our relationship with God and our neighbors.

Q. Since we do not fully obey them, are they useful at all?

A. Since we do not fully obey them, we see more clearly our sin and our need for redemption.

Sin and Redemption

Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation.

- Q. How does sin have power over us?
 A. Sin has power over us because we lose our liberty when our relationship with God is distorted.
- Q. What is redemption?
 A. Redemption is the act of God which sets us free from the power of evil, sin, and death.
- Q. How did God prepare us for redemption?
 A. God sent the prophets to call us back to himself, to show us our need for redemption, and to announce the coming of the Messiah.
- Q. What is meant by the Messiah?
 A. The Messiah is one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.
- Q. Who do we believe is the Messiah?
 A. The Messiah, or Christ, is Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of God.

God the Son

- Q. What do we mean when we say that Jesus is the only Son of God?
 A. We mean that Jesus is the only perfect image of the Father, and shows us the nature of God.
- Q. What is the nature of God revealed in Jesus?
 A. God is love.
- Q. What do we mean when we say that Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and became incarnate from the Virgin Mary?
 A. We mean that by God's own act, his divine Son received our human nature from the Virgin Mary, his mother.
- Q. Why did he take our human nature?
 A. The divine Son became human, so that in him human beings might be adopted as children of God, and be made heirs of God's kingdom.
- Q. What is the great importance of Jesus' suffering and death?
 A. By his obedience, even to suffering and death, Jesus made the offering and sacrifice which we could not make; in him we are freed from the power of sin and reconciled to God.

- Q. What is the significance of Jesus' resurrection?
- A. By his resurrection, Jesus overcame death and opened for us the way of eternal life.
- Q. What do we mean when we say that he descended to the dead?
- A. We mean that he went to the departed and offered them also the benefits of redemption.
- Q. What do we mean when we say that he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father?
- A. We mean that Jesus took our human nature into heaven where he now reigns with the Father and intercedes for us.
- Q. How can we share in his victory over sin, suffering, and death?
- A. We share in his victory when we are baptized into the New Covenant and become living members of Christ.

The New Covenant

- Q. What is the New Covenant?
- A. The New Covenant is the new relationship with God given by Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to the apostles; and, through them, to all who believe in him.
- Q. What did the Messiah promise in the New Covenant?
- A. Christ promised to bring us into the kingdom of God and give us life in all its fullness.
- Q. What response did Christ require?
- A. Christ commanded us to believe in him and to keep his commandments.
- Q. What are the commandments taught by Christ?
- A. Christ taught us the Summary of the Law and gave us the New Commandment.
- Q. What is the Summary of the Law?
- A. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
- Q. What is the New Commandment?
- A. The New Commandment is that we love one another as Christ loved us.

- Q. Where may we find what Christians believe about Christ?
A. What Christians believe about Christ is found in the Scriptures and summed up in the creeds.

The Creeds

- Q. What are the creeds?
A. The creeds are authoritative statements of our basic beliefs about God.
- Q. How many creeds does this Church use in its teaching?
A. This Church uses three creeds: The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.
- Q. What is the Apostles' Creed?
A. The Apostles' Creed is the ancient creed of Baptism; it is used to recall our Baptismal Covenant.
- Q. What is the Nicene Creed?
A. The Nicene Creed is the creed of the universal Church and is used at the Eucharist.
- Q. What is the Athanasian Creed?
A. The Athanasian Creed is an ancient document proclaiming the nature of the Incarnation and of God as Trinity.
- Q. What is the Trinity?
A. The Trinity is one God in three persons, equal to one another in every respect: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit

- Q. Who is the Holy Spirit?
A. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and in the Church even now.
- Q. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the Old Covenant?
A. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the giver of life, the One who spoke through the prophets.
- Q. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the New Covenant?
A. The Holy Spirit is revealed as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow in the likeness of Christ.

- Q. How do we recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
- A. We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.
- Q. How do we recognize the truths taught by the Holy Spirit?
- A. We recognize truths to be taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures

- Q. What are the Holy Scriptures?
- A. The Holy Scriptures, commonly called the Bible, are the books of the Old and New Testaments.
- Q. What is the Old Testament?
- A. The Old Testament consists of books written by the people of the Old Covenant, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to show God at work in nature and history.
- Q. What are the apocryphal or deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament?
- A. The Apocrypha is a collection of additional books written by people of the Old Covenant, and used in the Christian Church, regarded by some as canonical and others as not. This Church allows its members liberty of conscience as to their canonical status.
- Q. What is the New Testament?
- A. The New Testament consists of books written by the people of the New Covenant, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to set forth the life and teachings of Jesus and to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom for all people.
- Q. Why do we call the Holy Scriptures the Word of God?
- A. We call them the Word of God because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.
- Q. How do we understand the meaning of the Bible?
- A. We understand the meaning of the Bible by the help of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church in the true interpretation of the Scriptures.

The Church

Q. What is the Church?

A. The Church is the community of the New Covenant.

Q. How is the Church described in the Bible?

A. The Church is described as the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head and of which all baptized persons are members. It is called the People of God, the New Israel, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, and the pillar and ground of truth.

Q. How is the Church described in the creeds?

A. The Church is described as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

Q. Why is the Church described as one?

A. The Church is one, because it is one Body, under one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Why is the Church described as holy?

A. The Church is holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's work.

Q. Why is the Church described as catholic?

A. The Church is catholic, because it proclaims the whole Faith to all people, to the end of time.

Q. Why is the Church described as apostolic?

A. The Church is apostolic, because it continues in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles and is sent to carry out Christ's mission to all people.

Q. What is the mission of the Church?

A. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Q. How does the Church pursue its mission?

A. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.

Q. Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?

A. The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

- Q. Who may participate in the mission of the Church?
- A. All faithful Christians participate in the mission of the Church. We welcome all people to worship with us, inviting all baptized Christians to receive Holy Communion. We ordain men and women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and heterosexual Christians as bishops, priests, and deacons. We celebrate the marriages of both same-sex and opposite-sex couples.
- Q. Is the Church identical with any particular denomination?
- A. No, the Church is the body of all baptized believers in Christ, and any congregation of faithful Christians in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, is a true part of the visible Church of Christ.
- Q. Does the Church have any visible head on earth apart from Jesus Christ?
- A. No, there is no single member of the Church who is the head of the Church (apart from Jesus Christ), nor does any member have universal jurisdiction, nor can anyone speak infallibly regarding any matter of faith or morals.
- Q. Who is the model of the Church?
- A. Mary, the Mother of God, is the model of the Church through her cooperation with God's plan of salvation in her assent to the Annunciation, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your Word."
- Q. What do we mean by the Immaculate Conception?
- A. Some Christians believe that, by a special gift of grace, Mary was conceived without original sin in order to prepare her to be the mother of Christ.
- Q. What do we mean by the Assumption?
- A. Some Christians believe that, as a foretaste of the resurrection in which all the faithful will share, Mary's body was taken up bodily into heaven at her death.
- Q. Are the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption essential doctrines requiring the assent of all the faithful?
- A. No, the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are not essential doctrines, and members of this Church are free to believe or not believe these doctrines according to the dictates of their conscience.

Q. What are the Ecumenical Councils?

A. The Ecumenical Councils were seven meetings of bishops of the early Church, before the Great Schism, which defined many of the essential doctrines of the church, particularly those of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

The Ministry

Q. Who are the ministers of the Church?

A. The ministers of the Church are lay persons, deacons, priests, and bishops.

Q. What is the ministry of the laity?

A. The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

Q. What is the ministry of a deacon?

A. The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

Q. What is the ministry of a priest or presbyter?

A. The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

Q. What is the ministry of a bishop?

A. The ministry of a bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

Q. Who, then, are religious?

A. Some Christians, both lay and ordained, are called to deepen their baptismal vows by taking additional vows and living religious lives of prayer, ministry, and witness to Christ. For most, the vows are poverty, chastity, and obedience; those in the Benedictine tradition take vows of obedience, conversion of life, and stability. Some religious are called to live out their religious life as a member of a religious community; others are called to a solitary religious life.

Q. What is the duty of all Christians?

A. The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

Prayer and Worship

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.

Q. What is Christian Prayer?

A. Christian prayer is response to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What prayer did Christ teach us?

A. Our Lord gave us the example of prayer known as the Lord's Prayer.

Q. What are the principal kinds of prayer?

A. The principal kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.

Q. What is adoration?

A. Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.

Q. Why do we praise God?

A. We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.

Q. For what do we offer thanksgiving?

A. Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.

Q. What is penitence?

A. In penitence, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives.

Q. What is prayer of oblation?

A. Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.

Q. What are intercession and petition?

A. Intercession brings before God the needs of others; in petition, we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.

Q. What is corporate worship?

A. In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments.

Q. Why do we ask the Angels and Saints to pray for us?

A. We ask the Angels and Saints to pray for us because they are our friends and our sisters and brothers, and because they are in the immediate presence of God in Heaven.

The Sacraments

Q. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.

Q. What is grace?

A. Grace is God's favor towards us, unearned and undeserved; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills.

Q. What are the seven sacraments?

A. The seven sacraments are Holy Baptism, the Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Reconciliation of a Penitent, and Anointing of the Sick.

Holy Baptism

Q. What is Holy Baptism?

A. Holy Baptism is the sacrament by which God adopts us as children of God and makes us members of Christ's Body, the Church, and inheritors of the kingdom of God.

Q. What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?

A. The outward and visible sign in Baptism is water, in which the person is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace in Baptism?

A. The inward and spiritual grace in Baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit.

Q. What is required of us at Baptism?

A. It is required that we renounce Satan, repent of our sins, and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Q. Why then are infants baptized?

A. Infants are baptized so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God.

Q. How are the promises for infants made and carried out?

A. Promises are made for them by their parents and sponsors, who guarantee that the infants will be brought up within the Church, to know Christ and be able to follow him.

The Holy Eucharist

Q. What is the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again.

Q. Why is the Eucharist called a sacrifice?

A. Because the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, is the way by which the sacrifice of Christ is made present, and in which he unites us to his one offering of himself.

- Q. By what other names is this service known?
 A. The Holy Eucharist is called the Lord's Supper, and Holy Communion; it is also known as the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and the Great Offering.
- Q. What is the outward and visible sign in the Eucharist?
 A. The outward and visible sign in the Eucharist is bread and wine, given and received according to Christ's command.
- Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace given in the Eucharist?
 A. The inward and spiritual grace in the Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ given to his people, and received by faith.
- Q. What are the benefits which we receive in the Lord's Supper?
 A. The benefits we receive are the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our union with Christ and one another, and the foretaste of the heavenly banquet which is our nourishment in eternal life.
- Q. What is required of us when we come to the Eucharist?
 A. It is required that we should examine our lives, repent of our sins, and be in love and charity with all people.

Other Sacraments

- Q. What is Confirmation?
 A. Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing with Chrism.
- Q. What is required of those to be confirmed?
 A. It is required of those to be confirmed that they have been baptized, are sufficiently instructed in the Christian Faith, are penitent for their sins, and are ready to affirm their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Q. What is Ordination?
 A. Ordination is the rite in which God gives authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit to those being made deacon, priests, and bishops, through prayer and the laying on of hands by bishops.

- Q. What is Holy Matrimony?
- A. Holy Matrimony is Christian marriage, in which two people enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.
- Q. What is Reconciliation of a Penitent?
- A. Reconciliation of a Penitent, or Penance, is the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution.
- Q. What is Anointing of the Sick?
- A. Anointing of the Sick with oil and the laying on of hands is the rite by which God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, mind, and body. This rite is also known as Unction of the Sick.
- Q. Is God's activity limited to these rites?
- A. God does not limit himself to these rites; they are patterns of countless ways by which God uses material things to reach out to us.
- Q. What are sacramentals?
- A. Sacramentals are material objects, things or actions, such as rosaries, crucifixes, scapulars, and medals, set apart or blessed to manifest the respect due to the Sacraments, and so to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion.
- Q. How are the sacraments related to our Christian hope?
- A. Sacraments sustain our present hope and anticipate its future fulfillment.

The Christian Hope

- Q. What is the Christian hope?
- A. The Christian hope is to live with confidence in newness and fullness of life, and to await the coming of Christ in glory, and the completion of God's purpose for the world.
- Q. What do we mean by the coming of Christ in glory?
- A. By the coming of Christ in glory, we mean that Christ will come, not in weakness but in power, and will make all things new.
- Q. What do we mean by heaven and hell?
- A. By heaven, we mean eternal life in our enjoyment of God; by hell, we mean eternal death in our rejection of God.

- Q. What do we mean by purgatory?
- A. By purgatory, we mean our growth in grace as we are purified from sin in preparation for the beatific vision of God in eternal life.
- Q. Why do we pray for the dead?
- A. We pray for them, because we still hold them in our love, and because we trust that in God's presence those who have chosen to serve him will grow in his love, until they see him as he is.
- Q. What do we mean by the last judgment?
- A. We believe that Christ will come in glory and judge the living and the dead.
- Q. What do we mean by the resurrection of the body?
- A. We mean that God will raise us from death in the fullness of our being, that we may live with Christ in the communion of the saints.
- Q. What is the communion of saints?
- A. The communion of saints is the whole family of God, the living and the dead, those whom we love and those whom we hurt, bound together in Christ by sacrament, prayer, and praise.
- Q. What do we mean by everlasting life?
- A. By everlasting life, we mean a new existence, in which we are united with all the people of God, in the joy of fully knowing and loving God and each other.
- Q. What, then, is our assurance as Christians?
- A. Our assurance as Christians is that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Appendix

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:

by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
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.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Athanasian Creed

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the
Catholic Faith.

Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he
shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and
Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the
Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the
Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one,
the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy
Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord,

So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world;

Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting;

Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.

Who although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ;

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God;

One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works.

And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Definition of the Union of the Divine and Human Natures in the Person of Christ

Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D., Act V

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance (homoousios) with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer (Theotokos); one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.

Books of the Bible

Old Testament

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
I Samuel
II Samuel
I Kings
II Kings
I Chronicles
II Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs/Song of Solomon
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Michah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah

Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Deuterocanonical/Apocrypha

Tobit
Judith
The Additions to the Book of Esther
Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus/The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach
Baruch
The Letter of Jeremiah (sometimes Baruch, chapter 6)
The Additions to the Book of Daniel
 The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Holy Children
 Susanna
 Bel and the Dragon
I Maccabees
II Maccabees
I Esdras (II Esdras in Slavonic, III Esdras in Appendix to Vulgate)
Prayer of Manasseh
Psalm 151
III Maccabees
II Esdras (III Esdras in Slavonic, IV Esdras in Appendix to Vulgate)
IV Maccabees

New Testament

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians

Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

1. First Council of Nicea (325)
2. First Council of Constantinople (381)
3. Council of Ephesus (431)
4. Council of Chalcedon (451)
5. Second Council of Constantinople (553)
6. Third Council of Constantinople (680 – 681)
7. Second Council of Nicea (787)

Statement of Faith of the Independent Catholic Christian Church

The Independent Catholic Christian Church and its member ministries and individuals accept the following principles:

1. The Old and New Testaments as our Scriptures
2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of Christian faith
3. The seven sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Anointing of the Sick, Reconciliation, and Ordination
4. The historic threefold ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the apostolic succession
5. The ordination of both male and female and both gay and straight Christians as Bishops, Priest and Deacons and the marriage of both same-sex and opposite-sex couples as sacramentally valid

6. The Ten Commandments and the Summary of the Law as the standard of Christian morality
7. The Christian life of prayer, expressed in its highest form in the Lord's Prayer

Confessional Statement of the Mission Episcopate of St. Michael & St. Timothy

1. We accept the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the rule and ultimate standard of faith, containing all things necessary to salvation, being interpreted in the light of the tradition of the Church, human reason, and the experience of the people of God. We hold those books known as apocryphal or deuterocanonical in high regard and leave to individual conscience the question of their inclusion in the canon.
2. We accept the Apostles' Creed as our Baptismal Symbol and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith. We hold the Athanasian Creed in high regard for its teaching on the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.
3. We celebrate our faith and are sustained through the Sacraments, the outward signs of inward grace. We accept the two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself – Baptism and the Eucharist – ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution and of the elements ordained by Him. We also accept the Sacraments of Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Reconciliation, and the Anointing of the Sick.
4. We accept the Historic Episcopate, Priesthood, and Diaconate, locally adapted in the methods of administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of the Church.
5. We believe in the inclusiveness of the Gospel and offer the Church's ministry of the Word and the Sacraments to all regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or economic or social status. In particular, we believe that Ordination is open to all qualified candidates regardless of sex or sexual orientation and that Marriage is open to all couples who make a solemn covenant to commit their lives to one another regardless of the sex or gender makeup of the couple.

6. We believe in the Ten Commandments and the Summary of the Law as the standard of morality for Christians.

7. We believe in the daily Christian life of prayer, which receives its highest expression in the Lord's Prayer.

The Ten Commandments

Note: Different Christian denominations divide the commandments differently: the Roman numeral represents the Roman Catholic and Lutheran division, while the Arabic numeral represents the Orthodox, Anglican, and non-Lutheran Protestant division.

Ia./1. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.
You shall have no other gods but me.

Ib./2. You shall not make for yourself any idol.

II./3. You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

III./4. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.

IV./5. Honor your father and your mother.

V./6. You shall not commit murder.

VI./7. You shall not commit adultery.

VII./8. You shall not steal.

VIII./9. You shall not be a false witness.

IX./10a. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.

X./10b. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Common Prayers

The Sign of the Cross.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Psalm 148

1 Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; *
praise him in the heights.

2 Praise him, all you angels of his; *
praise him, all his host.

3 Praise him, sun and moon; *

praise him, all you shining stars.
 4 Praise him, heaven of heavens, *
 and you waters above the heavens.
 5 Let them praise the Name of the LORD; *
 for he commanded, and they were created.
 6 He made them stand fast for ever and ever; *
 he gave them a law which shall not pass away.
 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, *
 you sea-monsters and all deeps;
 8 Fire and hail, snow and fog, *
 tempestuous wind, doing his will;
 9 Mountains and all hills, *
 fruit trees and all cedars;
 10 Wild beasts and all cattle, *
 creeping things and winged birds;
 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, *
 princes and all rulers of the world;
 12 Young men and maidens, *
 old and young together.
 13 Let them praise the Name of the LORD, *
 for his Name only is exalted, his splendor is over earth and heaven.
 14 He has raised up strength for his people and praise for all his loyal
 servants, *
 the children of Israel, a people who are near him. Hallelujah!

Psalm 149

1 Hallelujah! Sing to the LORD a new song; *
 sing his praise in the congregation of the Faithful.
 2 Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; *
 let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
 3 Let them praise his Name in the dance; *
 let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.
 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people *
 and adorns the poor with victory.
 5 Let the Faithful rejoice in triumph; *
 let them be joyful on their beds.
 6 Let the praises of God be in their throat *
 and a two-edged sword in their hand;

- 7 To wreak vengeance on the nations *
and punishment on the peoples;
8 To bind their kings in chains *
and their nobles with links of iron;
9 To inflict on them the judgment decreed; *
this is glory for all his Faithful people. Hallelujah!

Psalm 150

- 1 Hallelujah! Praise God in his holy temple; *
praise him in the firmament of his power.
2 Praise him for his mighty acts; *
praise him for his excellent greatness.
3 Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; *
praise him with lyre and harp.
4 Praise him with timbrel and dance; *
praise him with strings and pipe.
5 Praise him with resounding cymbals; *
praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.
6 Let everything that has breath *
praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

Benedictus Dominus Deus

The Canticle of Zechariah

Luke 1:68-79

- Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from
our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Magnificat

The Canticle of Mary

Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Nunc Dimittis

The Canticle of Simeon

Luke 2:29-32

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, *
according to thy word;

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, *

which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *

and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *

and to the Holy Ghost:

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, *
world without end. Amen.

Independent Catholic Christian Church

Policy on Fasting and Abstinence

I. Fasting in Scripture

Throughout the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, fasting is practiced as a form of piety. In the Old Testament, there were both public fasts, called by kings or prophets and ultimately codified into specific fast days, and private fasts taken on by individuals. Fasting was practiced as an expression of mourning, as a form of supplication, as a means of penitence, and as a preparation for a desired divine communication. The prophets, while not condemning fasting, made it clear that, unaccompanied by just living and authentic faith in God, fasting was worthless. Jesus also condemned fasting done for show before other people and not for love of God, but he assumed that, after his death, his disciples would fast, and he began his own ministry with a forty-day fast in the wilderness. The early disciples fasted as a means of supplication.

II. Fasting in the Christian Tradition

The church soon developed its own fasting practices. The Jewish practice encouraged fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, and the Christian practice, modeled on this, encouraged fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, in commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ. In imitation of the forty-day fast of Jesus and as a preparation for baptism at Easter, the forty-day season of Lent was introduced, later being extended first to penitents and then to the entire church. Four times a year, at the Ember Days, fasts were observed in preparation for ordinations. Vigils of important feasts were also observed by fasting, and Lent-like seasons of preparation and fasting were observed for other feasts besides Easter, most notably Advent in preparation for Christmas.

III. Meaning

Fasting has several meanings. As an ascetical practice, it helps Christians to gain control of their appetites and bodies as a means of consecrating these to God. As a practice of prayer, it helps us pray with our whole bodies, and give physical reality to our prayers, as well as relieving us of tasks that would take us from our prayers. As an act of solidarity, it reminds us of the

suffering of those who are destitute, and moves us to action – the practice of donating as alms the money that would be spent on food and other things given up is to be strongly commended.

III. Health

Leviticus 18:5 states that "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgements: which if a person do, they shall live in them: I am the Lord". The rabbinic tradition has always held that, if a person's life is at stake, then religious obligations must be relaxed or even set aside to preserve life. Similarly, Jesus states that "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Therefore, fasting should never be carried out when it might have negative effects on a person's life or health, whether physical or psychological. In particular, with our culture's emphasis on beauty and thinness, some have developed eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia, or milder disorders – those who have struggled with such conditions are strongly advised not to fast, but rather to substitute another ascetical practice in place of abstaining from food if practical. Those who are ill, pregnant or nursing, very young, or elderly are also to avoid abstaining from food – they may also substitute another ascetical practice if desired.

IV. Recommended Practices

For those who wish to fast, the traditional practice is to eat only one full meal per day, perhaps with a small breakfast and small collation together not equal to a full meal. Those who wish to abstain do so by giving up eating meat and alcohol. Those for whom these practices are not suitable are encouraged to find another ascetical practice, such as giving up particular forms of entertainment or other pleasurable things, particularly if money saved by doing so is thereby made available for alms. Those who fast or abstain from food may, of course, also carry out this form of asceticism as well. All of those who fast, abstain, or engage in other ascetical practices should avoid doing so in an ostentatious way. In addition, ICCC members who are fasting are strongly encouraged to spend extra time in prayer, and to give alms, and should do so where possible on days of fasting and abstinence when ascetical practices themselves may not be possible.

V. Seasons and Days of Fasting

The liturgical diversity of the Independent Catholic Christian Church dictates that there will be local variations in which days are to be observed, and some in religious life may have additional days or seasons under their rule or constitutions. However, in general, the following days are those which ICCC members observing a Western calendar are encouraged to observe, subject to local observance:

A Table of Fasts

Ash Wednesday Good Friday

Other days of fasting, on which the Church recommends such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion:

1. The Forty Days of Lent.
2. The Ember Days at the Four Seasons, being the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Pentecost, September 14, and December 13.
3. All the Fridays in the Year, except Christmas Day, and The Epiphany, or any Friday which may intervene between those Feasts.

Days of Solemn Supplication

The three Rogation Days, being the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before the Ascension of our Lord.

VI. The Eucharistic Fast

The Eucharistic fast, whether from midnight, for three hours, or for one hour, is a salutary practice recommended to the Faithful; however, it is not obligatory in this Jurisdiction, and the Faithful are urged to receive regardless of whether or not they have fasted, if they are spiritually disposed. The elderly, the infirm, pregnant women, and any others whose health would be affected are strongly discouraged from observing the Eucharistic fast.

Liturgical Calendar

The liturgical diversity of the Independent Catholic Christian Church dictates that there will be local variations in which days are to be observed. However, in general, the following days are those which ICCC members observing a Western calendar are encouraged to observe, subject to local usage:

Weekly Calendar

Sunday - weekly feast of the Resurrection

Friday - weekly remembrance of the Crucifixion

Temporal Calendar

First Sunday of Advent

Second Sunday of Advent

Third Sunday of Advent

Ember Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas - December 25

Circumcision - January 1 (also known as Holy Name or Mary, Mother of God - but with gospel of circumcision in every case)

Epiphany - January 6

Ash Wednesday & 40 Days of Lent

First Sunday in Lent

Ember Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday

Second Sunday in Lent

Third Sunday in Lent

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Sixth Sunday in Lent/Palm Sunday

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday in Holy Week

Maundy/Holy Thursday

Good Friday

Holy Saturday

Easter Sunday & six other Sundays of Eastertide

Rogation Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday

Ascension Day

Pentecost Sunday/Whitsunday

Ember Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday

Trinity Sunday

Ember Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (after Holy Cross Day)

Sanctoral Calendar

St. Andrew - November 30

St. Thomas – December 21 (observed by some on July 3)

St. Stephen - December 26

St. John the Evangelist & Apostle - December 27

Holy Innocents - December 28

Conversion of St. Paul - January 25

Presentation of Jesus/Purification of Mary/Candlemas - February 2

St. Matthias - February 24 (February 25 in leap years by some)

Annunciation - March 25

St. Mark - April 25

St. Philip and St. James – May 1 (observed by some on May 3)

Visitation – May 31 (observed by some on July 2)

St. Barnabas - June 11

Nativity of St. John Baptist - June 24

St. Peter (& St. Paul) - June 29

St. Mary the Magdalene – July 22

St. James the Greater - July 25

Transfiguration - August 6

St. Mary the Virgin/Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – August 15

St. Bartholomew - August 24

Holy Cross – September 14

St. Matthew - September 21

St. Michael (& All Angels)/Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael –
September 29

St. Luke - October 18

Ss. Simon & Jude - October 28

All Saints - November 1

The Due Celebration of Sunday

All Persons within this Church shall celebrate and keep the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, by regular participation in the public worship of the Church, by hearing the Word of God read and taught, and by other acts of devotion and works of charity, using all godly and sober conversation.

**Independent Catholic/Old Catholic Saints
According to the Use of the
Independent Catholic Christian Church**

**All Listed are Observed as
Bishop Confessors in the Traditional Rite
Or Pastors in the Modern Rite**

February

16 Francis Hodur, 1953

March

26 Carlos Duarte Costa, 1961

May

14 Dominique-Marie Varlet, 1742

June

26 George Cummins, 1876

July

8 Joseph Rene Vilatte, 1929

24 Aftimios Ofiesh, 1966

August

1 Mikhail Itkin, 1989

November

10 George Alexander McGuire, 1934

17 Prince Rudolph Edward Landes de Berghes, 1920

28 Izabela Wilucka, 1946

December

13 Pierre Martin Ngô Đình Thục, 1984

20 Arnold Mathew, 1919

Notes:

1. In keeping with the liturgical diversity practiced in the Independent Catholic Christian Church, the use of the observances on this calendar is completely optional. Communities and individuals are free to use all, any, or none of them as is appropriate to their particular charisms.
2. The dates given are the dates of death – the heavenly birthdays, as is traditional for feasts of saints. At some point, other dates may be given as alternatives, particularly for Duarte Costa and Mathew, so as not to conflict with Holy Week and Sapiientiatide. Communities and individuals are free to transfer these observances to other dates if appropriate to avoid conflicting with other observances.
3. No suggestions are given at this time for the level of observance in the traditional rite (double, semidouble, simple, commemoration). In the modern Roman rite they are at this time “optional memorials” and in the modern Anglican rite “lesser feasts”, which are entirely optional, and in both, they may be commemorated on the observance of another day.