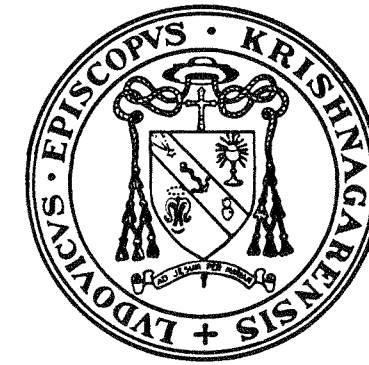


A CATECHISM IN PICTURES
My Catholic Faith
A MANUAL OF RELIGION

Most Reverend Louis LaRavoire Morrow, D.D.
Bishop of Krishnagar



“Now this is everlasting life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ” (Jn. 17:3).

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HOUSE**

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On the cover: The symbol on the cover represents the Catholic Church, which, under the protection of Christ, brings the reward of heaven, the wreath, to the faithful.

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As a

THANK-OFFERING

for innumerable graces received
this work

is humbly dedicated to

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

in the
Sacrament of His Love

THE MOST BLESSED EUCHARIST

for the Benefit of the Young

PREFACE

"My Catholic Faith" is prepared for those who desire to have a concise knowledge of the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. It is a complete catechism, useful for ready reference, for it takes up in a clear and practical manner the questions and subjects that are likely to arouse the interest of the general reader, whether Catholic or non-Catholic.

In the preparation of the book we had especially in mind those earnest souls who seek to understand the Catholic Church, but not understanding it, cannot yet be completely convinced. And this is also why the book has been found invaluable by catechists and members of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, in their work of teaching both adults and children. We have been assured by priest friends that in getting their catechetical sermons ready they have not seldom taken a lesson or two of "My Catholic Faith" because the matter is well divided and to the point.

At the same time, the form in which topics are presented complete in facing pages, as well as the numerous illustrations and non-technical language, make of "My Catholic Faith" a practical textbook for that important subject, Religion. In fact it has already been adopted in the secondary schools and junior colleges of several dioceses in our country.

"My Catholic Faith" is the last book in our "My Religion Series", consisting of: "My Jesus and I" for little ones of the kindergarten age; "My First Communion" for those preparing for that important event; "My Catechism, Book I" and "My Catechism, Book II" for intermediate grades, to be accompanied by "My Bible History"; and lastly this book that we here offer, "My Catholic Faith".

"My Catholic Faith" follows the strictly logical sequence in subject-matter: (1) the Credo, containing what we must *know* and *believe*; (2) the Commandments of God and the Church, containing what we must *do*; and (3) the Sacraments and Prayer, containing the *means of grace* by which we can attain God. It is not, however, necessary to follow this sequence when reading, teaching, or studying this book. "My Catholic Faith" is so constructed that one group of topics can be taken up independently of the rest. The Credo, which is the doctrinal part, is generally more difficult for young people to understand than the Commandments. For this reason the first part of the book may be postponed by teachers of religion until the other parts have been thoroughly considered.

Special attention was paid to the selection of appropriate texts from the Bible. These will familiarize the reader with Holy Scripture, and effectively prove the falsity of the anti-Catholic charge that the Church discourages the reading of the Bible. The revised editions of the Baltimore Catechism and of the New Testament, which have been so painstakingly prepared by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D. C., are used in this book.

Two subjects of utmost importance are almost completely dealt with: the Catholic Church (*pages 94 to 149*), and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (*pages 264 to 293*). Other topics which may be termed not strictly doctrinal—such as Eastern Churches, Roman Curia, Church and State, Papal Decorations, Science and the Bible, Capital and Labor, Evolution—are discussed, because we wish to aid our people not only in their devotion, but also in their desire for information about the attitudes and practices of Holy Mother Church.

It is our earnest hope that "My Catholic Faith" will help our beloved Catholic people to know their religion exactly, and to practice it according to the teachings of the Church and its Divine Founder.

BISHOP MORROW

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PART ONE

What To Believe :
The Apostles' Creed



In creating us, God gave us the power and right to choose which path we should follow in life: either the path of obedience, or the path of disobedience to His commandments. The first seems wearisome and full of thorns, but reward comes in the end: happiness with God. The second seems full of pleasures and roses, but punishment awaits the

traveler at the end: eternal damnation in hell.

Each must choose for himself. We may find the choice a hard struggle. We shall be strengthened in the choice of the difficult path if we remember that we belong to God, that He loves us, that He will help us and is waiting for us at the end of the road — of obedience.

1. Religion and the End of Man

What is the destiny of man?—Man's high destiny is to go to God, because man comes from God, and belongs entirely to God.

1. Our reason tells us that Someone *made* us. That Someone is God.

Nothing can proceed from *nothing*. If there had ever been a moment when nothing existed, nothing would ever have existed. Therefore, because we exist, we know Someone who made us also exists; that Someone is God. "He made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. 99:3). "All things have been created through and unto Him" (Col. 1:16).

2. Our reason also tells us that God must have made us for some purpose. God made man to *know* Him, to *love* Him, and to *serve* Him in this world, and to be happy forever with Him in the next. God made us for

Himself. The *end* of man, as of all creation, is the glory of God; to manifest the divine perfections, to proclaim the goodness, majesty, and power of God.

"The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16:4). Whether he wishes to or not, man must manifest God's perfections, dominion, and glory. Man's very existence does this; even his sins will in the end show forth God's infinite holiness and justice.

3. Through glorifying God, man is *destined* to share His everlasting happiness in heaven. Man was created chiefly for the life beyond the grave; this present one is merely a preparation for the eternal life.

In this life we are exiles, wanderers, pilgrims. Heaven, the Home of God, is our true country, our

true Home. There God wants to share with us His own unmeasured bliss. "For we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come" (Heb. 13:14).

4. We belong to God. Since we are His creatures, we have certain *duties towards God* which we must fulfill. Religion teaches us what these duties are.

What is Religion?—Religion is the virtue by which we give to God the honor and service due to Him alone as our Creator, Master, and Supreme Lord.

It is by religion that we know, love, and serve God as He commands us to know, love and serve Him. It is by religion, then, that we fulfill the end for which we were made, and so save our soul.

In order to practice this virtue, we must:

1. **Believe** all the truths revealed by God.

In religion we learn about God and His perfections. We learn something about His great love for us. We learn what is right and what is wrong. We learn *what God commands us to do*. We learn about the future that He has prepared for us.

2. **Carry out** in our lives what we learn about the duties we owe to God, about *His commands and wishes*. Mere knowledge is not religion, and will avail us nothing. The devil has knowledge, but he has no religion. Religion includes the *service of God* in fulfilling what we have learned of our duties towards Him. Religion is not a matter of feeling; it is a matter of will and of action.

Our Lord says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and *keep it*" (Luke 11:28). The Apostle St. James said: "But be *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1).

Is it necessary for us to practice Religion?—It is absolutely necessary for us to practice religion; God gives us no choice in the matter.

1. Our *chief business* in life, the business which God commands us to attend to, is to go to God. And this depends on our practice of religion.

It is by religion that we fulfill the purpose for which we were created. By *believing* what God has revealed, we *know* God. By *knowing* God, we cannot help but *love* Him. By practicing what we learn and *obeying* God's commands, we *serve* Him. "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me" (John 14:21).

2. Many people spend their lives in a vain pursuit of riches, honors, and pleasures. But these never satisfy the heart of man even on earth. Besides, they have to be *left*

behind when the hour of death comes.

"For when he shall die, he shall take nothing away: nor shall his glory descend with him" (Ps. 48:18).

From whom do we learn to know, love, and serve God?—We learn to know, love, and serve God from Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who teaches us through the Catholic Church.

1. The study in which Jesus Christ teaches us about God and how to know, love, and serve Him, is the study of Religion. It is the most important study anyone can undertake. The *neglect* of this study is the root *cause of crime* in the world at present. Without a knowledge of God men give way to their basest passions.

Our salvation is much more important than a knowledge of physics, poetry, or history. All our science and knowledge, with our wealth and honors, will be profitless if we do not save our soul. "What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

2. This study needs thought and attention. We need to listen to a good *teacher*. We cannot study it well by ourselves alone.

The deacon Philip asked the Ethiopian reading Holy Scripture, "Dost thou then understand what thou art reading?" But he said, "Why, how can I, unless someone shows me?" (Acts 8:31).

Who are those that advocate no study of religion?—Those that advocate no study of religion are generally termed free-thinkers, agnostics, skeptics, and rationalists.

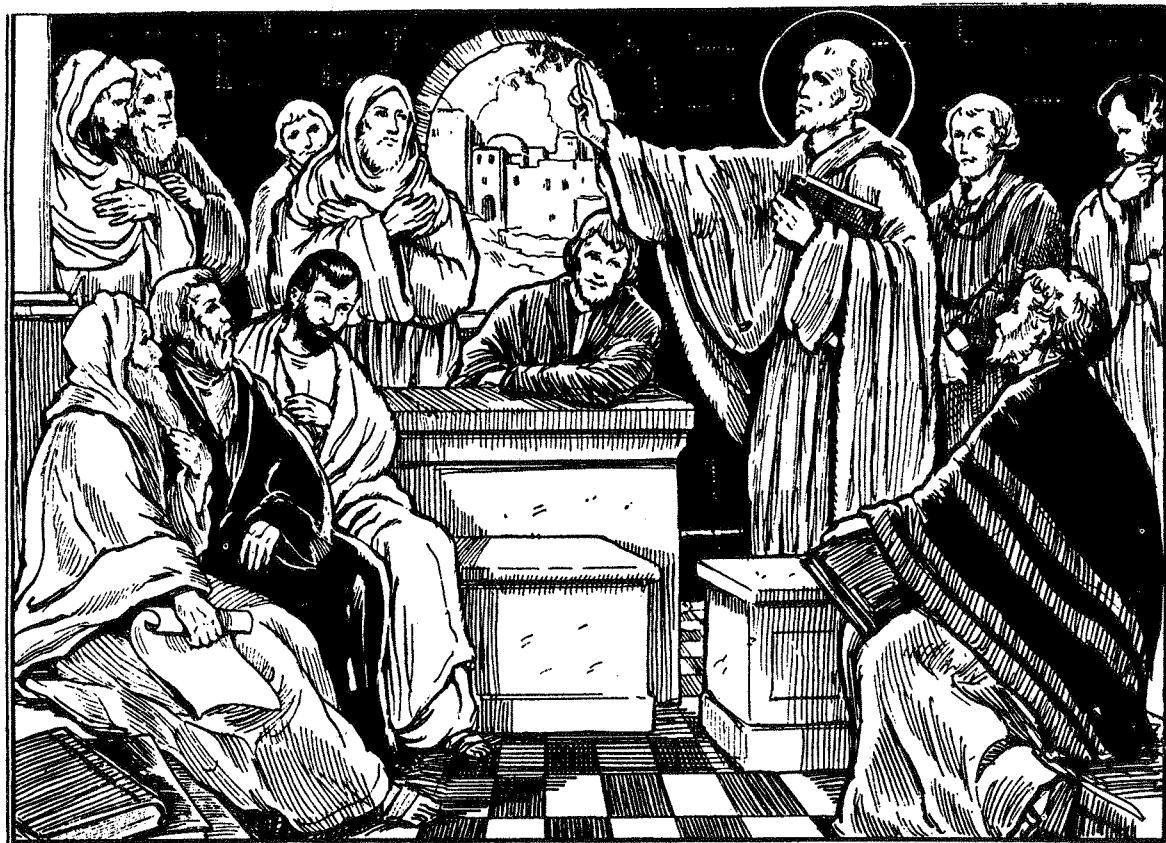
1. These thinkers claim that all problems can be solved by the use of the *intellect* alone, without necessity of any principle, law, dogma or authority.

"Freedom of thought" has a pleasant sound, but it is against reason; by it the mind is fettered by error. We submit our minds freely to natural and scientific truths; that is true freedom. If there is no freedom of thought in mathematics, why in religion?

2. "Freedom of thought" is evidently a *contradiction*; we are not free to think what is not the truth. There are fundamental laws that bind the intellect.

For instance, are we free to believe that the sun revolves around the earth, even if it appears to do so?

3. The intelligent man, in order to attain the kind of freedom humanly possible, should find out to which authority he must submit; he must discover which is the *Law*. And this is why the rational man studies Religion, to find out this fundamental Law.



The Apostles, before they parted, gathered together in Jerusalem in the first Council of the Church. There they decided to put down in a brief statement their principal doctrines, so that their teachings might be uniform wherever they preached. This statement of the articles of faith we call today

"The Apostles' Creed". It was formulated in order to put into fruition the command of Our Lord: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days" (Matt. 28:19-20).

2. The Apostles' Creed

Where do we find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church?—We find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church in the Apostles' Creed.

1. A *creed* is a summary or statement of what one believes. "*Creed*" comes from the Latin *credo*, which means *I believe*; that is, I accept or hold true something on the word of another.

"*I believe*," with relation to the Apostles' Creed, means that *I firmly assent* to everything contained in it. I believe it exactly as if I had seen those truths with my own eyes. I believe it on the *authority or word of God*, Who cannot deceive or be deceived.

2. The Apostles' Creed is so called because it was composed by the Apostles, and

contains a *summary* of the *principal truths* they taught.

The Apostles' Creed is repeated at Baptism, as a declaration of faith. In ancient times it was required before Baptism, as a sign of fitness for reception into the Church.

3. The Apostles' Creed has come down to us *intact*, except for a few clauses added by the Church later, in order to counteract various heresies. These additions, however, are not new doctrines, but a clarification of what the Creed already contained.

Thus the words "Creator of heaven and earth" were added to counteract the Manichaeen heresy that the world was created by the principle of evil; and the word "Catholic" was added, to distinguish

the True Church from churches springing up around it. As our Lord said, "And you also bear witness, because from the beginning you are with me" (John 15:27).

3. There are several *other creeds* used by the Church, in substance identical with the Apostles' Creed.

The *Nicene Creed*, which is said in the Mass, was mainly drawn up at the Council of Nicea, in the year 325. The *Athanasian Creed* is said by priests in the Divine Office for Sunday.

Into how many articles may the Apostles' Creed be divided?—The Apostles' Creed may be divided into twelve articles.

1. All the articles are absolutely *necessary* to faith: if even one article is omitted or changed, faith would be destroyed.

It is symbolical to divide the Apostles' Creed into twelve articles, because the Apostles numbered twelve; thus we are reminded that the Creed comes to us and was taught by the Apostles of Our Lord.

2. The following are the articles:

(1) I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;

(2) And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord;

(3) Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;

(4) Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

(5) He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead;

(6) He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;

(7) From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

(8) I believe in the Holy Ghost;

(9) The Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints;

(10) The forgiveness of sins;

(11) The resurrection of the body;

(12) And life everlasting. *Amen*.

The twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed contain the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, one God in three distinct Divine Persons,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—with the particular operations attributed to each Person. The Creed contains three distinct parts. The first part treats of God the

Father and creation. The second part treats of God the Son and our redemption. And the third part treats of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification.

What act of religion do we make when we say the Apostles' Creed?—When we say the Apostles' Creed we make an act of faith.

1. Christian faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to *believe* firmly whatever God has revealed, on the testimony of His word. By it we believe in the truth of many things which we cannot grasp with our *understanding*.

For example, we believe in God, although we cannot see Him. We believe in the Trinity, although it is beyond our understanding. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

2. Faith does not require us to believe in anything *contrary to reason*. When we believe what we cannot perceive or understand, we act according to reason, which tells us that God cannot err, lie, or deceive us. We therefore put our *trust in God's word*.

In many *natural things* we often believe what we do not see, as sound waves and atoms, on the testimony of scientists who have studied them. Thus we act *within reason*; but how much more reasonable it is to believe on the word of God!

3. A great *reward* in heaven awaits those who suffer persecution or die for the faith or some Christian virtue. The number of martyrs who have died for the Catholic faith is estimated at more than sixteen millions.

All the Apostles suffered persecution, and all except St. John suffered death by martyrdom, for their faith. St. John the Baptist was beheaded because he censured Herod for violating the law of marriage. St. John Nepomucene was put to death because he refused to violate the seal of confession. "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:32).

4. *Neglect* of the study of the truths of our religion is frequently the cause of lukewarmness, a bad life, and final apostasy and impenitence. We should be zealous in studying the Christian doctrine, in the catechism and religion lessons, in sermons, missions, and retreats.

If we have any doubts, we should consult our priests; God will not forgive ignorance if we voluntarily neglect the means He has granted to dissipate it.