

Knights of Columbus
Council 459
Spiritual Training
October: Precepts of the Church

Opening Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Precepts of the Church

- For the sake of ourselves and our neighbors, we need to be prepared to answer the question, “What does it mean to be Catholic?”
- I doubt that any of us can fully answer this question, but we can begin by referring to the Precepts of the Church.
- The Precepts of the Church are the bare minimum requirements that the church lays forth for its members. They are the criteria which must be fulfilled before we can call ourselves Catholic- or for that matter, be a Knight.
- There are five of them. They are:
 1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
 2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
 - Lent is an excellent time for this.
 - Confession is so beneficial to our relationship with God and the Church, though, that making more frequent efforts to go is very important to growing in faith.
 3. You shall humbly receive your creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter Season.
 - Even though we are only required to receive the Eucharist once a year, remember that even if we don't receive it (maybe because we feel we need to go to confession first), we should still go to Mass (Precept 1).
 - Also, we are encouraged to receive communion often because of its benefits- assuming we are in a state of grace.

4. You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.
 - Meaning, we must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and abstain from meat on Fridays in Lent.
 - In many places around the world, abstinence from meat is practiced on Fridays year-round.
 - In the US the practice is largely forgotten, but officially still in place *unless* replaced by some other mortification.
 5. You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.
 - Among the precepts, this one will vary the most in how it is put into practice. Each of us must honestly assess what we can and should do to support the Church.
- Note that the Knights booklet “These Men they call Knights” includes two additional precepts, but are not recognized by most as precepts:
 - To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage
 - To join in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church
 - These precepts have the following characteristics:
 - Positive, not negative, rules.
 - Clear-cut and few in number.
 - They allow us to be considered Catholic, and are therefore a jumping-off point for a full, good life in union with other Faithful.
 - They provide a concise and memorable way to begin to explain the practice of our Faith to others
 - These are very basic requirements, so most of us, most of the time, will not need to worry that we aren’t achieving the minimum.
 - Keeping these Precepts allows us to wear the badge of a “Catholic”- but as Catholics we should always be growing in our Faith.
 - If we are not moving forward, we are moving backward.
 - These rules are a jumping-off point, but in the end we would do well to take G.K. Chesterton’s advice and grow our Faith from a “theory” into a “love affair.”

Closing Prayer - Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that thou art one God in three Divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that thy Divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe theses and all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because thou hast revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Resources

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, Ch 3., §§ 2041-2043
- Outlines of the Catholic Faith, pages 63-65