

Owning Your Catholic Identity

References from Scripture, the Catechism, and the Early Fathers of the Church

Sign of the Cross

Tertullian (Second Century) – In all our coming in and going out, in putting of our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupieth us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Fourth Century) – Let us then not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the cross our seal, made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and in every thing; over the bread we eat and the cups we drink, in our comings and in goings; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake; when we are traveling, and when we are at rest.

Dead saints

Mark 12:26-27 [Saints are not dead] – Now about the dead rising--have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!

Hebrews 12:1 [Saints surround us] – Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Praying to saints

Romans 8:38 [death cannot separate us from God] – For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 5:8 [prayers of the Saints taken to God] – And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Joshua 5:13-15 [reverence to an angel] – Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell face down to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

CCC 2679 – Mary is the perfect *Orans* (pray-er), a figure of the Church. When we pray to her, we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men. Like the beloved disciple we welcome Jesus' mother into our homes (Jn 19:27), for she has become the mother of all the living. We can pray with and to her. The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope.

CCC 2683 – The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom (Heb 12:1), especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were "put in charge of many things" (Mt 25:21). Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world.

Catholics pray directly to God

CCC 2564 – Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.

CCC 2664 – There is no other way of Christian prayer than Christ. Whether our prayer is communal or personal, vocal or interior, it has access to the Father only if we pray “in the name” of Jesus. The sacred humanity of Jesus is therefore the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father.

Purgatory

2 Maccabees 12:46 [Prayer for the dead] – Thus he [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

Matthew 5:21-26 [Hell is permanent, but some sins forgiven after death] – “You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raqa,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

“Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.”

Matthew 12:31-32 [Sins forgiven after death] – Therefore, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 [Purified as by fire] – According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire (itself) will test the quality of each one's work. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person will receive a wage. But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire.

1 Peter 3:6-7 [We may need purification] – In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Rev 21:27 [Only the perfect can enter God's presence] – ... but nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

CCC 1030 – All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

Prayer to Idols

CCC 2129 – The divine injunction [against the worship of idols] included the prohibition of every representation of God by the hand of man. *Deuteronomy* explains: “Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves in the form of any figure” (Deut 4:15-16).

CCC 2130 – Nevertheless, already in the Old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with the bronze serpent, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim.

CCC 2132 – The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, “the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype” (St. Basil) and “whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it” (Council of Nicaea II). The honor paid to sacred images is a respectful veneration, not the adoration due to God alone.

Num 21:4-9 [God commands making a bronze serpent] – Then the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray the LORD to take the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people, and the LORD said to Moses, “Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover.” Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone

who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered.

John 3:14-15 [Serpent represented Jesus] – And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

Exodus 25:10-22 [Statues on the Ark of the Covenant] – "You shall make an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. Plate it inside and outside with pure gold, and put a molding of gold around the top of it. Cast four gold rings and fasten them on the four supports of the ark, two rings on one side and two on the opposite side. Then make poles of acacia wood and plate them with gold. These poles you are to put through the rings on the sides of the ark, for carrying it; they must remain in the rings of the ark and never be withdrawn. In the ark you are to put the commandments which I will give you. You shall then make a propitiatory of pure gold, two cubits and a half long, and one and a half cubits wide. Make two cherubim of beaten gold for the two ends of the propitiatory, fastening them so that one cherub springs direct from each end. The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, covering the propitiatory with them; they shall be turned toward each other, but with their faces looking toward the propitiatory. This propitiatory you shall then place on top of the ark. In the ark itself you are to put the commandments which I will give you. There I will meet you and there, from above the propitiatory, between the two cherubim on the ark of the commandments, I will tell you all the commands that I wish you to give the Israelites.

1 Kings 14-38 [Statues and adornments in Solomon's Temple] – When Solomon finished building the temple, its walls were lined from floor to ceiling beams with cedar paneling, and its floor was laid with fir planking. At the rear of the temple a space of twenty cubits was set off by cedar partitions from the floor to the rafters, enclosing the sanctuary, the holy of holies. The nave, or part of the temple in front of the sanctuary, was forty cubits long. The cedar in the interior of the temple was carved in the form of gourds and open flowers; all was of cedar, and no stone was to be seen. In the innermost part of the temple was located the sanctuary to house the ark of the LORD'S covenant, twenty cubits long, twenty wide, and twenty high.

Solomon overlaid the interior of the temple with pure gold. He made in front of the sanctuary a cedar altar, overlaid it with gold, and looped it with golden chains. The entire temple was overlaid with gold so that it was completely covered with it; the whole altar before the sanctuary was also overlaid with gold. In the sanctuary were two cherubim, each ten cubits high, made of olive wood. Each wing of a cherub measured five cubits so that the space from wing tip to wing tip of each was ten cubits. The cherubim were identical in size and shape, and each was exactly ten cubits high.

The cherubim were placed in the inmost part of the temple, with their wings spread wide, so that one wing of each cherub touched a side wall while the other wing, pointing toward the middle of the room, touched the corresponding wing of the second cherub. The cherubim, too, were overlaid with gold.

The walls on all sides of both the inner and the outer rooms had carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The floor of both the inner and the outer rooms was overlaid with gold. At the entrance of the sanctuary, doors of olive wood were made; the doorframes had beveled posts. The two doors were of olive wood, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The doors were overlaid with gold, which was also molded to the cherubim and the palm trees. The same was done at the entrance to the nave, where the doorposts of olive wood were rectangular. The two doors were of fir wood; each door was banded by a metal strap, front and back, and had carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, over which gold was evenly applied. The inner court was walled off by means of three courses of hewn stones and one course of cedar beams.

The foundations of the LORD'S temple were laid in the month of Ziv in the fourth year, and it was completed in all particulars, exactly according to plan, in the month of Bul, the eighth month, in the eleventh year. Thus it took Solomon seven years to build it.

1 Kings 7:24-25 [Solomon's Temple] – Under the brim, gourds encircled it, ten to the cubit all the way around; the gourds were in two rows and were cast in one mold with the sea. This rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east, with their haunches all toward the center, where the sea was set upon them.

St. Thomas Aquinas (quoted in CCC 2132) – Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.

Sacred Scripture

CCC 102 – Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely.

CCC 103 – For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God's Word and Christ's Body.

CCC 133 – The Church “forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn ‘the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ.’ by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. ‘Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ’” (St. Jerome).

Infant Baptism

Genesis 17:12 [Infants circumcised] – Throughout the ages, every male among you, when he is eight days old, shall be circumcised, including houseborn slaves and those acquired with money from any foreigner who is not of your blood.

Luke 18:15-16 [Jesus touched the infants] – People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them, and when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. Jesus, however, called the children to himself and said, “Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Colossians 2:11 [Baptism replaces circumcision] – In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ.

Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist

John 6:48-51 [Jesus is the Bread of Life] – I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

John 6:60-66 [Many of his disciples could not accept this and left] – Then many of his disciples who were listening said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, “Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe.” Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father.” As a result of this, many (of) his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.

1 Corinthians 11:27-31 – Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying. If we discerned ourselves, we would not be under judgment;

St. Ignatius of Antioch (a disciple of St. John, first century) – I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ.

Those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, Flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His goodness, raised up again.

St. Justin Martyr (second century) – For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century) – That which seems to be bread, is not bread, though it tastes like it, but the Body of Christ, and that which seems to be wine, is not wine, though it too tastes as such, but the Blood of Christ. Draw inner strength by receiving this bread as spiritual food and your soul will rejoice.

Sacred Tradition

John 21:26 [Not everything was written] – There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written.

2 Timothy 2:2 [Teach what you have heard] – And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 [Follow oral teachings] – Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.

1 Peter 1:25 [The Word is proclaimed] – This is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

Papal Authority

Matthew 16:18-19 [Peter made pope] – And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Acts 4:8-12 [Peter spoke for the apostles] – Then Peter, filled with the holy Spirit, answered them, "Leaders of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.' There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved."

Abortion

Exodus 21:22-24 [Penalty for killing the unborn is death] – When men have a fight and hurt a pregnant woman, so that she [gives birth prematurely], but no further injury [to her child], the guilty one shall be fined as much as the woman's husband demands of him, and he shall pay in the presence of the judges. But if injury [to the child] ensues, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Didache (70 A.D.) [Abortion is murder] – The second commandment of the teaching: You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not seduce boys. You shall not commit fornication. You shall not steal. You shall not practice magic. You shall not use potions. You shall not procure [an] abortion, nor destroy a newborn child.

Letter of Barnabas (74 A.D.) [Abortion and infanticide are forbidden] – The way of light, then, is as follows. If anyone desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works. The knowledge, therefore, which is given to us for the purpose of walking in this way, is the following. . . . Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born.

Permanence of Salvation

Phillipians 2:12 [Work out your salvation] – So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

James 2:14-26 [Faith without works is empty] – What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?

So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.

You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble.

Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that faith without works is useless?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God." See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Confession and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Matthew 9:2-8 [Jesus had authority to forgive sins] – And there people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Courage, child, your sins are forgiven."

At that, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."

Jesus knew what they were thinking, and said, "Why do you harbor evil thoughts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your

sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" --he then said to the paralytic, "Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home." He rose and went home. When the crowds saw this they were struck with awe and glorified God who had given such authority to human beings.

John 20:21-23 [Jesus gave his authority to the apostles] – (Jesus) said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 [God gave us reconciliation through Jesus] – And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

James 5:16 [Confess your sins to one another] – Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.

Mary, the Mother of God

Luke 1:26-38 [Mary is the handmaid of the Lord] – In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"

And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:39-55 [All generations will call her blessed] – During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

John 2:3-5 [Do whatever he tells you] – When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." (And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

John 19:25-27 [Mary at the foot of the cross] – Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

Acts 1:13-14 [Mary was present in the Upper Room] – When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.