

## 4. *It cares about the world*

The Catholic Church is the largest charitable organization in the world, providing an enormous amount of money, time and effort to people on a global scale, usually in the poorest and most disenfranchised areas.

One of the ways that the Catholic Church has provided help to people around the world is through various organizations like the **Knights of Columbus** (*responsible for donating \$158 million and 70 million hours in 2012 alone*) Blessed Mother Teresa's **Missionaries of Charity**, **Catholic Charities USA** (*responsible for adoption, counseling, social issues and more*) and the **Society of St. Vincent DePaul** (*ministering specifically to the poor*).

The Catholic Church is also responsible for **1/4 of the world's health care** through the inception of Catholic Hospitals around the world.

Another very visible way the Catholic Church cares about the world is through its efforts in education.

Throughout the entire world, there are over **1350 Catholic post-secondary institutions**, including the two oldest Universities in Europe: the Universities of Bologna and Paris.

On a local level, the Catholic Church has founded and runs **244 colleges and universities** in the United States alone, with Georgetown University being its oldest, established in 1789.

## 5. *It practices all seven Sacraments*

In the Catholic Church will you be able to receive the grace of God in any of the seven Sacraments.

The Catholic Church accepts the presence of the seven Sacraments and makes them available to all Catholics.

### **Why are the Sacraments important?**

Because they provide for us a means to receive God's grace, and it is by grace that we receive salvation.

**Did you know?** *Every single Sacrament in the Catholic Church comes from the Bible.*

- **Baptism:** Matthew 3:13—17 and John 1:32 (Baptism of Jesus); John 3:3—5 (Teaching Nicodemus); Titus 3:5—6 (“washing of regeneration”).
- **Eucharist:** John 6:22—71 (The Bread of Life Discourse); Mark 14:22—26 (The Last Supper) and many, many more.
- **Confirmation:** Acts 2:1—13 (Pentecost); Acts 8:14—17 (Baptized Christians fully receive the holy Spirit by “laying on of hands”)
- **Reconciliation:** John 20:21—23 (Jesus gives Apostles authority to forgive sins); Acts 19:18 (new Christians confess their sins to the Apostles).
- **Anointing of the Sick:** Mark 6:13 and James 5:14—15 (Examples of the Apostles practicing this Sacrament)
- **Marriage:** Genesis 2:20—24 (Adam given Eve); Matthew 19:6 (Jesus teaches on marriage)
- **Ordination:** Acts 7:2 (Church elders called “father”); Judges 17:10 (call for priest)

# 5

## Good Reasons to stay in, or join, the Catholic Church



*Faith Formation Department  
1380 Lancer Blvd.  
La Crescent, MN 55947*

# 1. It's Biblical

Something you might hear about the Catholic Church is that it contradicts the Bible or teaches against the Bible. This could not be further from the truth. In fact:

- it is the Catholic Church who is responsible for the Bible that we read today.
- it was because of the interpretations of the Church Fathers (many of whom are Saints) that we have much of the theology of the Catholic Church.

Some examples of this theology from the Bible:

- The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist: *The Bread of Life Discourse* (John 6: 22—71)
- The Immaculate Conception: *The Angelic Salvation* (Luke 1:28)
- Confession to a priest: Jesus appears to the Apostles after the Resurrection (John 20:22—23)
- The Pope: Jesus' discourses with Peter (Matthew 16:13—19; John 21: 15—19)

Another thing you might hear is that the Church adheres to the evil "traditions of men," which the Bible denounces in Mark 7:8. & Colossians 2:8

However, the Bible doesn't say that all traditions are bad. In fact:

- the Bible also affirms the use of traditions in 1 Corinthians 11:2, where Christians are actually encouraged to maintain the traditions of the Church.

Finally, if you want to hear the Bible, attend Mass.

If you attend Mass on everyday for 3 years, you will hear most major stories from the Old & New Testaments.

Nearly every part of the Mass is rooted in the Bible. For example:

- The Sign of the Cross (Matthew 28:19)
- The Kyrie (Tobit 8:4; 1 Timothy 1:12)
- The Gloria (Luke 2:14)
- The Our Father prayer (Matthew 6:9—13)
- Breaking of Bread (John 1:29)
- Dismissal (books of Dan., Luke and 2 Chron.)

# 2. It's Scientific

Despite what you might have heard about any conflict between religion and science, no such conflict has ever existed between the Catholic Church and science.

While there may be some unfortunate examples of individuals in the Church conflicting with scientific ideas, this is not a reflection of Church *teaching* itself.

In fact, there are numerous examples of "men of science" also being "men of faith." Some examples include:

**Nicholas Copernicus:** The developer of the sun-centered universe theory

**St. Albert Magnus:** Dominican friar and prolific scientific writer who reconciled science and religion

**Gregor Mendel:** Augustinian monk and "Father of Modern Genetics"

**Georges Lamaitre:** Belgian Priest and professor who developed the *Big Bang Theory*

**Louis Braille:** Inventor of Braille, a system of communication for people with impaired vision

- Other than these people, the Catholic Church boasts numerous winners of the Nobel Prize in the areas of Physics and Chemistry and Medicine.
- Also, the Catholic Church very recently founded the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, which promotes progress in the areas of mathematics, physical and natural sciences.
- The Vatican Observatory is one of the oldest research institutions in the world.
- Did you know Pope Francis has a Master's Degree in Chemistry?

Since the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church is directly or indirectly responsible for most of the major advances made in science through education, funding and/or individuals making the advance.

# 3. It's Historical

The Catholic Church can trace its roots back to the time of Jesus and the Apostles. This faith has been passed on through the centuries .

One of the strongest arguments for the Catholic Church is the fact that it has not changed its core beliefs since the time of Jesus and Apostles.

This is evidenced by the many writings of the "Church Fathers," who were the first Christians after the Apostles who helped develop the faith.

These Church Fathers wrote on many beliefs specific to Catholicism. This shows that the Catholic beliefs have been around since the Apostles, the first followers of Jesus.

**For example:**

- The Mass & celebrating on Sundays:  
*See St. Justin Martyr, "First Apology," 155 AD*
- The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist:  
"[...] the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ" (St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Romans*, 107 AD)
- The Succession of Bishops from the Apostles:  
"[...] if they [the Apostles] should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry" (St. Clement, *Letter to the Corinthians*, 80 AD)
- The Immaculate Conception of Mary:  
"[...] there is no flaw in thee [Mary]" (St. Ephraem, *Nisibene Hymns*, 370 AD)
- Praying for those who have died/Purgatory:  
"[...] there is no doubt that the dead are aided [by prayers]" (St. Augustine, *Sermons*, 411 AD)
- The Assumption of Mary:  
"[...] the Apostles concluded that the body [of Mary] was taken up to heaven." (St John Damascene, *Dormition of Mary*, 747 AD)
- The Authority of Peter and the Pope:  
"I think it my duty to consult the chair of Peter [...]" (St. Jerome, *Letter to Pope Damasus*, 396 AD)
- The Perpetual Virginity of Mary:  
"Mary [...] is believed to be a virgin both before and after she bore him [Jesus]" (St. Gregory of Tours, *Eight Books on Miracles*, 584 AD)