

FAITH

Faith is the theological virtue, infused by God, by which we firmly assent to all the truths that God has revealed to mankind because God cannot deceive or be deceived. Faith is the foundation of all justification, the beginning of all supernatural virtue, the starting point of sanctification and perfection. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." While faith is infused as a free gift by God it nevertheless is given in strict accordance with the nature of man, and after it has been given it requires intelligent cooperation lest it be weakened or lost. This cooperation means three things:

1. Every Catholic must pray for the preservation and increase of his faith. Ordinarily, prayer is necessary for the attainment of any grace from God; since faith is the greatest grace, one who has received it must pray throughout life for perseverance and strengthening in his faith.
2. Every Catholic must strive to be faithful to the obligations imposed through faith. To offend God deliberately and repeatedly is to run the risk of some day finding that faith has been lost through failure to cooperate with God's grace.
3. Every Catholic must use his mind both to understand the motives for believing God's word, which are perfectly satisfactory to human reason, and to know the truths revealed by faith, in which nothing contradictory, nothing inconsistent, nothing intellectually incredible is to be found. On the negative side, this means that every Catholic is bound to preserve himself, in so far as possible, from every influence that would prove dangerous to his faith. Therefore all sins against faith center about either the denial of one's faith, or the neglect of means to

preserve and increase it, or the deliberate entrance into occasions that might destroy it

I. Mortal Sins

1. Have I denied that I was a Catholic, or openly expressed my disbelief in any doctrine of the Catholic faith?
2. Have I affiliated myself, even for a short time, with a non-Catholic sect or religious body?
3. Have I suggested or encouraged doubts about the Catholic faith in the minds of others?
4. Have I seriously expressed the opinion that all religions are equally good or equally true or equally pleasing to God?
5. Have I neglected to settle, by reading, studying, consulting, etc., serious doubts about my faith, when such neglect was evidently leading to a loss of faith?
6. Have I, without the necessary permission, read or kept or given to others forbidden books, such as Protestant Bibles, books on the Index of Prohibited Publications, books that pretend or profess to disprove the truth of the Catholic faith or that profess to prove the truth of a religion contrary to my faith?
7. Have I, without a serious reason, associated with persons who tried to destroy my faith?
8. Have I attended meetings or listened to speeches or sermons, which I knew would destroy seriously weaken my faith?

9. Have I joined a secret society forbidden by the laws of the Church, such as the Masons, the Oddfellows, etc?
10. Have I taken part in a Protestant church service?
11. Have I contributed to the advancement of a non-Catholic religious sect or movement as such?
12. Have I consulted a fortune-teller in the serious belief that I could learn something about the future, or made others think that I could tell their future when I knew that there was no adequate natural means of so doing?
13. Have I attended a spiritualistic séance?
14. Have I planned to marry, or actually pretended to enter the state of marriage, before a minister, or a judge, or a civil magistrate? Have I approved of other Catholics doing this or stood up for them when they did it?
15. Have I, without the necessary permission or reason, sent my children to a non-Catholic grade school, or approved of other Catholics doing so? Or without serious reason approved by the diocesan authorities, to a non-Catholic high school or university? Or have I done these things without making any provision to safeguard the faith of my children?

II. Venial Sins

1. Have I been irreverent in church and before the Blessed Sacrament?
2. Have I disturbed and distracted others in their prayers and devotions?

3. Have I kept others from prayer or devotions for some selfish reason?
4. Have I carefully avoided giving any sign that I was a Catholic because I might have been subjected to some ridicule if I did?
5. Have I read only such books and magazines as might be called dangerous, even though they are not strictly forbidden, e.g., books giving false and worldly views of life, novels that are frothy and barren of any principle?
6. Have I seldom, if ever, made an explicit act of faith?
7. Have I been slow in trying to banish or overcome doubts against faith?
8. Have I been careless and half-hearted in teaching my children to love their faith and to make acts of faith?
9. Have I deliberately passed up direct opportunities of informing others about the Catholic faith by going out of my way to avoid speaking of it?
10. Have I accepted the will of God and believed firmly in His providence in the sorrows of life?
11. Have I been irreverent in the use of sacramentals, such as holy water, the Sign of the Cross, etc?