

# Catholic Family Catechism of the Devout Life

## Piety and the Lay Apostolate

### The Teaching of Christ

#### APOSTOLATE BUILT ON PIETY

1. *What is the devout life?*

**The devout life is piety plus apostolate. [7]**

The devout life is a personal adventure with Christ, like the adventures of the apostles in the *Acts of the Apostles*,

2. *What is piety?*

**Piety<sup>1</sup> is praying,<sup>2</sup> especially with Contrition,<sup>3</sup> Faith, Hope and Charity.<sup>4</sup> [10]**

Piety is spirituality, interior life, inner life, devotion.

Prayer is the soul of the apostolate and must be the first aim in religion teaching: see *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition II* (henceforth CFCDE) pp. 540; 114-120.

Contrition: "Repent; believe in the Gospel." Mark 1:14.

The theological virtues: 1 Corinthians 13.: 13.

3. *What did the Lord Jesus tell His apostles?*

**The Lord Jesus told His apostles to go forth and make disciples of all nations and teach what He commanded. [20]**

Matthew 28:19-20. 'Discipling' is tutoring, disciplining is being kind and being firm: Hebrews 12:5-11; Ephesians 6:4.

#### THE NEW COVENANT MADE PERSONAL

4. *Who is the Mediator of the new and eternal covenant?*

**The Lord Jesus is the Mediator of the new and eternal covenant. [12]**

1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; Jeremiah 31:31; Matthew 26:28; Exodus 24:8.

5. *How do we begin our personal covenant with God?*

**We begin our personal covenant with God by the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and the Sacrament-Sacrifice of the Mass. [21]**

A covenant is a contract or agreement. Our personal conversion to the Lord Jesus begins with the sanctifying grace of Baptism and is renewed at every Mass: "the new and eternal covenant." cf. CFCDE p. 6; 64-67; 70-73.

#### THY WILL BE DONE

6. *What is the Will of God for man?*

**The Will of God for man is to live his whole testing time in sanctifying grace and to die with the reward of eternal glory. [16+9]**

Matthew 6:10; 25:34; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Apocalypse 21:27.

7. *What is the apostolate of the laity?*

**The apostolate of the laity is adoring God, saving one's soul and helping others save theirs, with goodwill and good works in the home, workplace and wider world. [16+12]**

Luke 2:14; 1 Peter 1:9; for children, 'work' is their schooling. "What is most needed at this time is a laity virtuous, informed, determined and really apostolic," St Pius X.

#### MARY, MODEL OF DISCIPLESHIP

8. *Who is the model for lay apostles?*

**The Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of the Lord Jesus, is the model for lay apostles because she is His greatest disciple. [21]**

For us she is a living catechism, for she "heard the Word of God and kept it"; cf. Luke 8:21; 11:28; CFCDE p. 11

### Friends of the Lord Jesus

#### WITH JESUS IN OUR HEARTS

9. *What does the Lord Jesus mean to me? [9+10]*

**The Lord Jesus is my Friend, Saviour and Brother, my Way to the Father, sending me the Holy Spirit.**

"I no longer call you servants... but... friends," John 15:15. Abraham was tested & became the friend of God," Judith 8:26; "Speak, Lord, Thy servant is listening," 1 Samuel 3:9-10.

#### A RULE OF LIFE

10. *What is my Rule of Life?*

**My Rule of Life is a covenant with the Lord Jesus by fidelity to daily morning and night prayers, Sunday Mass, Friday penance, monthly Confession and keeping all God's Commandments. [11+19]**

Details depend on my state in life: cf. CFCDE pp. 5-10. The Commandments are Ten of justice, Two of charity and the new One of imitation. Solomon prayed, "Give Thy servant... an understanding heart that I may discern between good and evil," 1 Kings 3:9. Make intercession lists of family, relatives, friends, neighbours, pagans and any enemies. God wants each state of life to lead to holiness with the saints.

#### PRAYING

11. *How do I pray?*

**I pray by placing myself in the presence of God and listening and speaking 'heart to heart', meditating on the life, death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. [9+18]**

"The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." Exodus 33:11. "Truly Thou art a hidden God, O God of Israel," Isaiah 45:15. At Mass and Holy Communion the sacrifice of God-incarnate is 'contained, offered and received' to raise us up to the Blessed Trinity. By reciting the psalms devoutly in the Holy Spirit, the prayer of the Lord Jesus to the Father is made our own.

#### PENANCE

12\* *What penance should I do ?*

**The penance proposed by the Church for Fridays is abstinence from meat or an alternative.**

**Self-imposed penance is (1) welcoming the will of God, (2) being faithful to the duties of my state in life and (3) almsgiving, prayer and fasting. [15+24]**

Some acts of penance are both reparation for past sins and self-denial for strength against future temptations.

#### SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION

13. *How does Confession help sinners?*

**Confession helps make sinners into saints by restoring or perfecting the grace of Baptism. [14]**

See CFCDE pp.74-75,88-89 and *Heart Speaks to Heart* §91. In confession, the priest is also a spiritual director/adviser.

#### STATES OF LIFE with their own Sacraments

14. *What are Matrimony and Holy Orders for?*

**Matrimony and Holy Orders are sacraments, for states of life in the Communion of Saints that sanctify others via their recipients. [21]**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) §1534. "Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of the greatness of his love," Genesis 29:20. "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21. Religious Life in vows is not a sacrament, but like a sacramental.

15. *How are male and female complementary in marriage?*  
**Male and female are complementary in marriage, as breadwinner and homemaker ; those who are single sublimate these roles\* [18]**  
Husbands support wife and children; wives ennoble and enable husbands and children; but first they sanctify each other. The single state is also a vocation: cf. John 14:2.

16. *How are parents like God?*  
**Parents are like God in giving life to children, — a gift they cannot repay — risking rebuff of parental love, having mercy on their failings and loving them into repentance. [29]**  
CFCDE p. 101; 50-51; 56-57.

## GRACE BUILDS ON NATURE

17. *How do parents help their children?*  
**Parents help their children to grow in discipleship through a secure childhood and an eager adolescence, to become mature adults. [8+12]**  
CFCDE pp. 100-101; parents *disciple* their children as Christ did His *disciples* by *discipline* both kind and firm. The big aim is progress in prayer, to 'know the Lord'; 'knowing about' is not enough: "Samuel did not yet know the Lord," 1 Samuel 3:7.

18. *What is family catechetics?*  
**Begun and continuing at home, family catechetics by mothers and fathers and older siblings hands on the faith once delivered to the saints. [23]**  
Jude 1:3. Home catechesis is vital even with Catholic schools. It progresses into Bible and prayer groups, RCIA support and internet apostolates. Full homeschooling is helpful.

## HONEST WORK

19. *Why does God value honest work?*  
**God values honest work, because He created us in His image to share in His work of creating by improving the world, helping others to Heaven, and earning a living for our loved ones. [18+16]**  
Psalm 90[89]:17; Ephesians 4:28; Coloss. 3:23-24; John 5:17. "Jesus worked with Joseph...." cf. CFCDE pp. 55, 112.

## CONFIRMATION: Sacrament of Lay Apostolate

20. *What does Confirmation do? [29]*  
**Confirmation strengthens us to imitate the apostles (1) by daily prayer and (2) Sunday Mass, speaking up bravely for the Lord and not being afraid to do good, even if mocked.**  
Confirmation is the sacrament of the lay apostolate. Beware of 'human respect'. Rather, do the Works of Mercy, Corporal and Spiritual, cf. CFCDE pp. 68-69; 112; 107, 103.

## THE SNARES OF THE DEVIL

21. *What are some marks of manhood?*  
**Some marks of manhood are devotion to duty and taking responsibility for others. [13]**  
Resist bad example from peers or older people implying that maturity comes from drinking, smoking, swearing, crude and dirty talk, immodesty and immorality. Duty includes self-control over mood, tongue and temper. See CFCDE pp. 97, 111.
22. *What is spiritual warfare?*  
**Spiritual warfare is fighting against selfishness, sin and Satan, and all his works and empty show. [16]**  
"The life of man on earth is a warfare", Job (Douai) 7:1; 14:14. "Our weapons are not worldly," 2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Peter 2:11. The Devil uses espionage, sabotage and subversion against mankind. Sing *Onward, Christian Soldiers*.

## MISSION TO OUR PAGAN NEIGHBOURS

23. *Describe how we should treat others?*  
**Honour civil rulers and all men, love the brethren, and never use Christian freedom as an excuse for wickedness. [9+10]**  
1 Peter 2:13-17. Holy Name Pledge, CFCDE p. 97. "God has no grandchildren!" — even children of believers need a personal conversion of heart to live in covenant with the Lord.
24. *What does our pagan society need from us?*  
**Our pagan society needs our Easter joy of faith, hope and charity through the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit [12+8]**  
Our good works help the pagans to glorify God so they do not brand us as fools or criminals, cf. 1 Peter 2:12; Matthew 5:16. The Twelve Fruits are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity," Galatians 5:22-23 (CCC §1832, cf. §736).
25. *How can we think kindly of others?*  
**We can think kindly of others by praying for them and thanking God for the good they do. [18]**  
Intercession lists help us help them. "Every good thing that is done, no matter who did it, is of the Holy Spirit."
26. *How do we encourage others to become Catholics?*  
**We encourage others to become Catholics by giving reasons for the hope that is in us, with gentleness and reverence. [20]**  
1 Peter 3:15. Persuade rather than argue: *Handouts n 87*.

## CHASTITY/PURITY

27. *How are our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit?*  
**Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit by His indwelling and He will destroy any who defile it [11+8]**  
1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:21-22;
28. *What is purity?*  
**Purity is using our parenting powers according to God's plan for our state in life. [15]**  
Chastity differs for single, married and 'spiritually married'. CFCDE pp. 80-81; 104-105.
29. *What are clothes for?*

**Clothes are for modesty and dignity, to suit the weather and honour others. [13]**  
cf. CFCDE pp. 110-111; Genesis 2:25; 3:7, 10,11.

## FAITH, HOPE & CHARITY

30. *What do we hope to hear the Lord Jesus say?*  
**We hope to hear the Lord Jesus say: "Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... As you did it to the least of My brethren, you did it to Me." [25+15]**  
Matthew 25:34,40. cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1; 4-8; 13:13.

## READING

Spiritual reading nourishes our minds with **doctrine and piety** and opens our hearts to new **opportunities each day** to live as friends of the Lord Jesus. Regular prayer and Sacramental life will rouse us to an effective apostolate: "Prayer is the soul of the apostolate."

- Missal(s): Sunday, Weekday &/or Daily.
- A prayer book such as *Heart Speaks to Heart*.
- Bible: *Revised Standard Version 2<sup>nd</sup> Catholic Edition*.
- *The Liturgy of the Hours*, especially with the patristic readings.
- *An Introduction to the Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales.
- *The Soul of the Apostolate* by Dom Chautard.

**THIS HANDOUT IS TO BE ENLARGED INTO A BOOK  
Suggestions welcome**