

Precepts of the Catholic Church*

1. To assist at Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation.
(Jan. 1 – Solemnity of Mary; 40 days after Easter – Ascension Thursday; Aug. 15 – Assumption of Mary; Nov. 1 – All Saints’ Day; Dec. 8 – Immaculate Conception; Dec. 25 – Christmas)
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
(The Church’s current regulations in the U.S. require fasting and abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday; and abstinence from meat on the Fridays during Lent. Every Friday is a day of sacrifice. We are obliged to make a sacrifice every Friday; This could be the traditional practice of abstinence from meat or another sacrifice.)
3. To confess our sins at least once a year in the Sacrament of Penance.
4. To receive Holy Communion worthily during the Easter Season.
(To receive Holy Communion worthily, one must: observe the Eucharistic Fast of one hour before receiving Holy Communion; be in the state of grace, believe that Holy Communion is the true Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.)
5. To contribute to the support of the Church.
6. To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage.

* The *Precepts of the Catholic Church* are a description of the **absolute minimum** actions required of Catholics regarding the Church.

The Church uses these precepts remind us that Christian life requires a commitment to prayer and active participation in the liturgy and sacraments. If we fall below this bare-minimum level, we can't rightly consider ourselves to be in full communion with the Catholic Church.

Each of these precepts of the Catholic Church is a requirement. Together with the Ten Commandments they represent the minimum level of moral living. Intentional violation of the precepts or the Commandments is a *grave matter*, meaning a mortal sin.

Go beyond the minimum!

Always remember: the precepts of the Catholic Church are *minimum* levels of participation in the life of the Church. Out of love for Christ and a desire to advance in the spiritual life, you will normally try to do far more than they require.

Many people **recommend** that Catholics:

- Attend Mass at least one *more* time a week. (Most Church parishes celebrate Mass every day of the year!)
- Go to confession at least once a month, and find a regular confessor so he can give you better guidance.
- Find a good *spiritual director* to give you sound guidance for growing in the spiritual life.
- Receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at every Mass, if you meet the guidelines for reception (are free from mortal sin, etc.).
- Make a habit of practicing penitential and charitable acts *beyond* those required by the precepts of the Catholic Church.
- Contribute as much as possible to the material needs of the Church and the needy.

