

# Why do you remain Catholic?

**Headline:** Why do you remain Catholic when you have over 30,000 denominations in the United States from which to choose. Are you just going through the motions as a Cradle Catholic or are you very intentional about your choice of Church?

**Objective:** Know why you have chosen the Catholic Church to be YOUR Church and be ready to defend your choice. There are many reasons why a person would want to remain a Catholic despite the human shortcomings of some of the clergy and laity within the Church today and throughout the past 2,000 years.

Here are my top reasons why I remain a Catholic.

First, the Catholic Church is the only Church founded by Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the Son of God. All other Christian churches were founded by some human. For grins, I asked Alexa "Who founded the Roman Catholic Church?" She said, "Jesus Christ."

Second, since Jesus founded the Catholic Church, it has been guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth for 2,000 years. Thanks to the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church has survived many attempts to destroy it from both outside the Church and inside the Church. When Jesus founded the Catholic Church and made St Peter, the first Pope, He promised that the "Gates of Hell would not prevail against it" and He has kept that promise for 2,000 years despite a few immoral popes, corruption, scandals, and numerous external attacks. Throughout her long history, the Catholic Church has produced countless Saints who lived lives of heroic virtue, sometimes resulting in martyrdom. Many of these Saints had very sinful lives before their conversions giving all of us hope for everlasting life.

Third, The Catholic Church has the "Fullness of the Truth". The Church has not changed any of Divine Revelation shared from Jesus and His Apostles. This Truth of Divine Revelation has been preserved for 2,000 years and can be found in Sacred Scripture (the Bible) and Sacred Tradition (the Church's teachings that were orally transmitted by Jesus and the Apostles). The Church has developed doctrine; has changed disciplines; and has changed emphasis but has always preserved the Truth of Divine Revelation. The Bible and the Church's teaching (found in the Catechism) give us the "fullness of the Truth" to help guide our lives in a world full of lies and false teachings, contrary to the teachings of Jesus. After His Ascension into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to guide and sanctify His Church which even has guidance on modern issues such as euthanasia, cloning, IVF, embryonic stem cell research, etc. The Catholic Church will not change its doctrines or dogmas to conform to cultural and secular norms.

Fourth, Jesus instituted seven Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist. God's Grace is a sharing in the Divine Life. In other words, Grace gives us the ability to do God's Will. With God's Grace, we can surpass our human capabilities. The Sacraments are external signs instituted by Christ to give Grace. From Sacred Scripture, we know that we are saved by Grace. We also know from Matthew 16 that Jesus gave the Church the power to forgive sins. Three Sacraments forgive sins (Baptism, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick). Most importantly, the Church has the Holy Eucharist which is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In Sacred Scripture, Jesus is very clear and emphatic about His Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, especially in John 6. What an awesome Gift of Jesus Himself!

Fifth, the Church has the Communion of Saints which are great examples of real holiness. We can ask these Saints, who are God's Hall of Famers, to intercede and help us in our everyday struggles. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of Jesus who displayed her intercessory powers at the Wedding at Cana when Jesus reluctantly responded to her request to replenish the wine by turning water into wine.

Finally, there are many beautiful traditions that are a treasure chest for spiritual growth. Such traditions as the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, novenas, Eucharistic Adoration, special prayers, and holy writings from Doctors of the Church are excellent vehicles that help our prayer and spiritual life. Jesus gave us a great Gift when He gave us the Catholic Church.

**Song Suggestion:** How can I keep from Singing (Red 598 verses 1, 2, and 4)

### **Bible and Catechism Readings:**

#### **John 6: 53-56:**

So Jesus said to them: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him."

#### **1 Peter 3: 15-16:**

Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for your hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and reverence.; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

#### **Catechism 778:**

The Church is both the means and the goal of God's plan; prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth (cf Rev 14:4). Catechism 779: The Church is both visible and spiritual, a hierarchical society and the Mystical Body of Christ. She is one, yet formed into two components, human and divine. That is her mystery, which only faith can accept.

**Saint:** St Paul, who was a devout Pharisee who participated in the martyrdom of St Stephen and who persecuted many Christians, had a tumultuous conversion experience and became the Apostle of the Gentiles. Despite many hardships, beatings, and imprisonment, St Paul was responsible for the conversion of many pagans in the known world at that time. The primary mission of the Catholic Church is to evangelize others by sharing the Good News of Christ throughout the world as St Paul did.

### **Vignette:**

A visiting Priest gave an impressive homily to the parishioners of IHM about the Holy Eucharist. He was quite upset that his good Friend, who was raised as a Catholic, decided to leave the Catholic Church. When the Priest asked his Friend why he left the Catholic Church for another Christian Church. His Friend replied that his new church had better preaching, better fellowship, and better music from their choir. In response, the Priest acknowledged and conceded that his Friend's new church may have had better preaching, better fellowship, and a better choir. However, the Priest then asked his Friend, "Don't you miss the Holy Eucharist, the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?" In response to this question, his Friend was dumbfounded and had no reply. They then engaged in a deep discussion on the Scriptural clarity from Jesus on the Church's teachings about the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. His Friend then realized that he had made a serious mistake in leaving the Catholic Church, the only church founded by Jesus Christ.

## Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

1. Do you know of anyone like the Priest's Friend in the Vignette? What was his/her reason for leaving the Catholic Church and how would you respond?
2. If someone were to ask you why you are a Catholic, what would you say in response?
3. How would you defend the teachings of the Catholic Church on the Holy Eucharist to another Christian who believes that the Holy Eucharist is just a symbol?
4. How would you explain the Last Supper as the first Mass in which Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at this Passover meal with His Apostles on Holy Thursday?

## Resources:

"Why I am a Catholic" by G.K.Chesterton

"On Good Friday, Here's Why I Remain Catholic" by Elizabeth Scalia

"Bishop Barron on Why Catholics Leave the Church" (video) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dftZ5K\\_EA4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dftZ5K_EA4s)

"Why Be Catholic" (video) by Patrick Madrid <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk6iWEth6oU>

## Step it up!:

1. Assume that you meet someone in an elevator and that person asks you why you are a Catholic. Provide a one minute response.
2. Read John 6 carefully which happened one year before the Last Supper in which Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at this Passover meal with His Apostles. Explain how this Gospel reading clearly and emphatically supports the Catholic Church's teaching on the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

**Author:** George Cullen