

*What Catholics Believe*

Section 10:

The Life Everlasting



To Luke E. Hart, exemplary evangelizer and Supreme Knight from 1953-64, the Knights of Columbus dedicates this Series with affection and gratitude.

*The Knights of Columbus presents
The Luke E. Hart Series
Basic Elements of the Catholic Faith*

THE LIFE EVERLASTING

PART ONE • SECTION TEN OF
CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

*What does a Catholic believe?
How does a Catholic worship?
How does a Catholic live?*

Based on the
Catechism of the Catholic Church

by
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Nibil obstat
Reverend Alfred McBride, O.Praem.

Imprimatur
Bernard Cardinal Law
December 19, 2000

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Printed in the United States of America

A WORD ABOUT THIS SERIES

This booklet is one of a series of 30 that offer a colloquial expression of major elements of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Pope John Paul II, under whose authority the *Catechism* was first released in 1992, urged such versions so that each people and each culture can appropriate its content as its own.

The booklets are not a substitute for the *Catechism*, but are offered only to make its contents more accessible. The series is at times poetic, colloquial, playful, and imaginative; at all times it strives to be faithful to the Faith.

The Catholic Information Service recommends reading at least one Hart series booklet each month to gain a deeper, more mature understanding of the Faith.

PART I: WHAT CATHOLICS BELIEVE (THEOLOGY)

SECTION 10: THE LIFE EVERLASTING

1. OUR DESTINY IS “LIFE EVERLASTING”

The life story of any individual or community gets its meaning, point, and purpose from its end. So, to know what kind of story we are in, what is the “meaning of life,” we must know our end.

The Church tells us our end. It is one with our origin. In the words of the old *Baltimore Catechism*, “God made me to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world and to be happy with him forever in the next.”

2. REASON CONFIRMS FAITH IN LIFE AFTER DEATH

Life after death cannot be proved scientifically, for it cannot be observed publicly. But even apart from religious faith, the human mind can find good reasons for believing it, by using the basic rule of scientific reasoning: to accept a theory because it alone adequately accounts for the data. The data here include at least three pieces of evidence for immortality.

There is, first of all, our universal longing for “something more” than this world can ever give us. A real “life everlasting” is the only thing that makes sense of humanity’s deep innate

desire for “life everlasting,” a desire which is present in nearly all times and places and cultures. “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and [that’s why] our hearts are restless until they rest in thee,” says Saint Augustine at the beginning of the *Confessions*.

All natural and innate desires of the human heart, all desires that are found in all times and places because they come from within rather than from without, correspond to realities that can satisfy these desires: food, drink, sex, sleep, friendship, knowledge, health, freedom, beauty. The same should be true of the desire for life everlasting.

A second reason for believing in life everlasting are the data perceived by love. The eye of love perceives persons as intrinsically valuable, indispensable, irreplaceable. If death ends all, if life treats these indispensable *persons* as if they were dispensable and disposable *things*, “then life is an outrageous horror. No one can live in the face of death knowing that all is utter emptiness.” So says even the agnostic Ingmar Bergman in “The Seventh Seal.”

A third good reason for belief in life everlasting is the fact that we have spiritual, rational souls which are able to know eternal truths (2 + 2 is eternally 4), and to know the eternal value of love. This at least strongly suggests that we have a kinship with eternity, that we are more than merely temporal creatures.

Our *destiny* depends on our *nature* and our *origin*. If our origin is mere matter without mind or purpose, and if our nature is thus only material organisms, atoms, and molecules, then our destiny can only be material: to return to the dust from which we came. For whatever is made of material parts can come apart and die. But if we are also persons, selves, souls, subjects, I’s, then

that is immortal, for that is not composed of parts, like atoms. You can't have half an I! Souls can't be killed by cancer or bullets.

3. MANKIND'S INSTINCTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE "FOUR LAST THINGS"

What does the Church tell us about life after death? Her teaching is summarized in the "Four Last Things:" death, judgment, Heaven, and Hell.

But even humanity outside the Church instinctively knows something about these four things.

Life's one certainty is death. Everyone knows this, though not everyone knows what comes next.

Nearly all religions, cultures, and individuals in history have believed in some form of life after death. For man's innate sense of justice tells him that there must be an ultimate reckoning, that in the final analysis no one can cheat the moral law and get away with it, or suffer undeserved injustices throughout life and not be justly compensated. And since this ultimate justice does not seem to be done in this life, there must be "the rest of the story." This instinctive conviction that there must be a higher, more-than-human justice is nearly universal. Thus the second of the Four Last Things, judgment, is also widely known. As Scripture says, "whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). And most men do "draw near to God," most men have a religion, most men believe that God justly "rewards those who seek him."

Most men also know that justice distinguishes the good from the evil, and therefore that after death there must be distinguished destinies for us, rewards for good and punishments

for evil. Thus mankind also usually believes in some form of Heaven and Hell.

4. JUDGMENT AS ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

What the Church adds to this universal human wisdom – what man could not discover without divine revelation – centers in Christ. The Church gives a radically sharper focus to mankind's instinctive but vague sense of justice by telling us about *God*, and then gives an even sharper focus to our knowledge of God by showing us *Christ*.

This applies to the Final Judgment too. It is now an encounter with Christ. For:

- a) "In the evening of our life, we will be judged by our love" (Saint John of the Cross).
- b) And our love is a response to God's love, which was given to us in Christ (1 John 4:16).
- c) Therefore the standard at the Final Judgment is Christ. Like life, judgment is Christocentric. "In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself [John 14:6], the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare"⁶²⁴ (CCC 1039).*

"Death puts an end to human life as the time open either to accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ.⁵⁹² The New Testament speaks of the judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ..." (CCC 1021).

5. THE FINAL OPTIONS

In this judgment, "[e]ach man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death,

*CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through a purification⁵⁹⁴ [Purgatory] or immediately,⁵⁹⁵ – or immediate and everlasting damnation [Hell]"⁵⁹⁶ (CCC 1022).

There are only two eternal destinies: Heaven or Hell, union or disunion with God, the one and only ultimate source of all goodness and joy. Each one of us will be either with God or without him forever.

There is no reincarnation, no “second chance” after our life is over.

There is no annihilation, no end of the soul’s existence.

There is no change of species from human being to angel, or to anything else.

The “Particular Judgment” occurs immediately after each individual’s death. The “General Judgment” takes place at the end of all time and history.

So the scenario of final events is: first, death; then, immediately, the Particular Judgment; third, either Hell or Purgatory as preparation for Heaven, or Heaven immediately; fourth, at the end of time, the General Judgment; and finally “the new heavens and the new earth” for those who are saved.

6. THE “NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH”

God created the earth, loved it into existence, and declared it good (Genesis 1). He made us its custodian, and we failed. But despite our sin, God will restore the earth in the end. “The universe itself will be renewed... ‘in the glory of heaven.... At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ’”⁶³¹ (CCC 1042; see Acts 3:21, Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20;

2 Peter 3:10-13; Romans 8:22). “Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, ‘new heavens [sky] and a new earth’”⁶³² (Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13; CCC 1043).

We know neither the moment nor the manner of this transformation (CCC 1048). But we know its consequences. The consequences of a pregnant woman’s hope for childbirth are a much greater care and love for her body. Analogously, the consequences of our hope for “the new heavens and the new earth” are a greater love and care and appreciation and proper use of this earth. This universe is like a pregnant woman; she is more precious, not less, because another is to be born from her. “Far from diminishing our concern to develop this earth, the expectancy of a new earth should spur us on, for it is here that the body of a new human family grows.... That is why, although we must be careful to distinguish earthly progress clearly from the increase of the kingdom of Christ, such progress is of vital concern to the kingdom...”⁶⁴² (CCC 1049). For “[w]hen we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise...we will find them once again, cleansed this time from the stain of sin, illuminated and transfigured...”⁶⁴³ (CCC 1050).

This vision frees us at once from two opposite errors: 1) the disdain for this world that tempts the “spiritualist” and 2) the worship of this world that tempts the “secularist.” The Christian Gospel cannot be identified with and reduced to some internal, spiritual “transformation of consciousness” (Gnosticism, Buddhism, New Age Movement, spiritualistic exaggerations) or to some external, secular social program of this-worldly peace and justice (Modernism, Marxism, “the social gospel”). It centers neither in our souls nor in our world, but in God, who created

both our souls and our world, and who recreates both our souls and our world in Christ.

7. THE REALITY OF HELL

C. S. Lewis says about the doctrine of Hell: “There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture, and, especially, of Our Lord’s own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason. If a game is played, it must be possible to lose it. If the happiness of a creature lies in self-surrender, no one can make that surrender but himself (though many can help him make it), and he may refuse” (*The Problem of Pain*).

If Hell is not real, then Jesus Christ is either a fool or a liar. For he warned us repeatedly and with utmost seriousness about it. If Hell is not real, the Church and the Bible are also liars, for they do the same.

But these three authorities are also our only sure foundation for believing in Heaven, and in God’s love and forgiveness. This forgiveness is something human reason alone cannot know, since it depends on God’s free choice, and our knowing it depends on his revealing this amazing surprise to us. (“Faith” means responding to this revelation and accepting this gift.) So our basis for believing in the reality of Hell is exactly the same authority as our basis for believing in the reality of Heaven: Christ, his Church, and her Scriptures.

8. THE CAUSE OF HELL: HUMAN FREE CHOICE

Hell is a real possibility because our will is free. If we look into the implications of the doctrine of free will, we will see the doctrine of Hell there as a necessary “part of the package.”

Our salvation consists essentially in union with God, spiritual marriage to God, a love-relationship with God. And love by its essence is free, a free choice of the will. God has freely done his part in loving us into existence by creating us, and then redeeming us from our sin at infinite cost to himself, on the Cross. But if we do not freely do our part, we cannot attain this end of a love-union with God. God will not force us to love; if freedom is forced, it is no longer freedom; and if it is free, it is no longer forced.

“We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely [mortally: in a serious matter, with full knowledge, and deliberate consent of the will] against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: ‘He who does not love remains in death....’”⁶¹² (1 John 3:14; CCC 1033). “To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell’” (CCC 1033).

“God predestines no one to go to hell....”⁶²⁰ (CCC 1037)
The cause of Hell is not God but man.

9. NO “SECOND CHANCE” AFTER DEATH

God forgives every sin – if only we repent while there is still time (life-time).

God has already forgiven us. But forgiveness is a *gift* – a gift of love – and a gift must be freely received as well as freely given. If we do not freely receive it while there is still time, we do not have it ever, we are not forgiven; we have justice instead of mercy.

“The [just] wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

There is no “second chance” after death because there is no more time. Our life-time comes to an end. The time for repentance and salvation is now: “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). After death our soul is no longer in this material body and this material universe, which is the place where time resides. Death is a final, definitive “point of no return.” “It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

10. WHAT IS HELL REALLY LIKE?

It was typical of medieval writers to use vivid imagery for Hell, showing it, for example, as a prison surrounded by thousand-mile-thick iron walls against which a pin makes one scratch every century. The damned have less hope of eventual escape than prisoners would have of escaping from such a place.

The point of such images is not literal, but it is infinitely serious. Christ used equally serious imagery. For instance, “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire” (Mark 9:44).

The Church does not ask us to take literally the popular imagery for Hell: demons with horns, pointed tails and pitchforks, a torture chamber, and physical fire. However, she does ask us to take seriously the imagery that comes from Christ. Images can be true even when they are not literal. And Christ’s images must be true because they come to us from Truth himself.

The most prominent image is *fire*. Fire is an agent of destruction. “Jesus often speaks of ‘Gehenna,’ of ‘the

unquenchable fire' reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost"⁶¹⁴ (CCC 1034). Gehenna was a valley (*Ge Hinom*) outside the holy city of Jerusalem. When the Jews first entered the Promised Land under Joshua about 15 centuries before Christ, they found the pagan Caananite tribes who lived there using this valley as the place where they sacrificed their own children to their evil demon-gods by burning them alive. The Jews recognized this as so supernaturally evil that they refused to live in this accursed place, and used it only to burn garbage day and night with unending fire.

Fire is a natural image for Hell because fire destroys. Christ tells us, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). The fire of Hell may not be a physical, external fire but it is certainly the spiritual, self-destructive fire of pride, egotism, selfishness, or rebellion: the self-destructive state of a self shut up in itself, destroying itself by refusing to give itself in faith, or hope, or love. Any soul that will not die to its own self-will, and will God's will, cannot live with God in Heaven. For dying to self-will and living in unselfish love is the very essence of God's own life, and the essence of Heaven. The identification of eternal salvation with unselfish love is not an "option" for "religious people" only; it is a necessity for every person, for it is dependent not on man's changeable choice but on God's unchangeable nature. Since self-giving love is the essential nature of the life of the Creator and Designer of all human souls, it is the only source of life for any such soul, in time or in eternity. It is what we are designed for. The alternative is not another form of

life, but death. In time, this is the state of mortal sin; in eternity, it is Hell.

Whatever else is in Hell, “the chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs” (CCC 1035). “All your life an unattainable ecstasy has hovered just beyond the grasp of your consciousness. The day is coming when you will wake to find, beyond all hope, that you have attained it, or else, that it was within your reach and you have lost it forever” (C. S. Lewis).

There are many different terms for the essential state of soul that leads to Heaven: the state of grace, being “born again” of the Spirit, penitence (repentance), faith, hope, and love (*agape*), willing God’s will, dying to self, humility, and submission (*islam*). There are also many different terms for the opposite essential state of soul that leads to Hell: the state of mortal sin, “the flesh,” impenitence, unbelief, despair, lovelessness, selfishness, pride, egotism. The simplest way to say it is this: “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God: ‘Thy will be done’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘thy will be done’” (C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*). Everyone who arrives in Hell can sing: “I did it my way.”

11. PURGATORY

Purgatory exists because God is both just and merciful.

Purgatory is “like a refiner’s fire” (Malachi 3:2). It refines and purifies those who at the moment of death are not good enough for an immediate Heaven or bad enough for Hell. “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after

death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (CCC 1030). "The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned"⁶⁰⁶ (CCC 1031).

Saint Catherine of Genoa says that although Purgatory is incomparably painful because we see all the horror of our own sins, yet it is incomparably joyful because God is with us there, and we are learning to endure his truth, his light. It is also joyful because all those in Purgatory have already passed the Particular Judgment and are assured of their eventual entrance into Heaven.

The existence of Purgatory logically follows from two facts: our imperfection on earth and our perfection in Heaven.

- a) At the moment of death, most of us are not completely "sanctified" (purified, made holy), even though we are "justified" or saved by having been baptized into Christ's Body and thereby having received God's supernatural life into our souls, having accepted him by faith and not having rejected him by unrepented mortal sin.
- b) But in Heaven, we will be perfectly sanctified, with no lingering bad habits or imperfections in our souls.
- c) Therefore, for most of us, there must be some additional change, some purification, between death and Heaven.
This is Purgatory.

Purgatory is like Heaven's porch, or Heaven's incubator, or Heaven's washroom. Unlike Heaven and Hell, Purgatory is only temporary. Purgatory takes away the temporal punishment still due to our sins after baptism. Faith and repentance have already saved us from the eternal punishment due to our sins, i.e., Hell.

There are only two eternal destinies, not three: Heaven or Hell, being with God or without him.

The point of Purgatory is not the past, and not an external, merely legal, punishment for past sins, as if our relationship with God were still under the Old Law. Rather, its point is future, and it is internal “rehabilitation,” it is training for Heaven. For our relationship with God has been radically changed by Christ; we are “adopted” as his children, and our relationship is now fundamentally filial and familial, not legal. Purgatory is God’s loving parental discipline (see Hebrews 12:5-14).

12. IS PURGATORY FOUND IN SCRIPTURE?

Protestants argue against Purgatory on the basis of their principle of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) – a principle that is not found in Scripture, by the way. But:

- 1) The reality of Purgatory is found in Scripture, though not the word – just like the Trinity. For instance, Scripture speaks of a cleansing spiritual fire (1 Corinthians 3:15; 1 Peter 1:7).
- 2) The two principles mentioned above (in paragraph 10) are found in Scripture: that at death many of us are still imperfect (1 John 1:8) and that in Heaven we will all be perfect (Matthew 5:48; Revelation 21:27). Put these two principles together and Purgatory necessarily follows.
- 3) Scripture also teaches us to pray for the dead, “that they may be delivered from their sin” (2 Maccabees 12:46) – which is impossible for those in Hell and already finished for those in Heaven.

- 4) Scripture also distinguishes sins that cannot be forgiven either before or after death from sins which can be forgiven after death (Matthew 12:31).
- 5) Finally, the Church, which Scripture calls “the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), has always taught and has solemnly and officially defined Purgatory as a divinely revealed dogma (Councils of Florence in the fifteenth century and Trent in the sixteenth century).

13. WHAT IS HEAVEN?

- 1) The essence of Heaven is the *truth* or light of God’s presence. Thus Christ describes it: “This is eternal life: that they may know thee, the only true God” (John 17:3). The Church calls this the “Beatific Vision:” “[to] see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face...”⁵⁹⁹ (CCC 1023).
- 2) Heaven is our *home*, our destiny, our fulfillment, our completion. Whatever else it will be, whatever else it will feel like, it will feel like home, for it is the place we were made for, designed for.
- 3) Heaven is *joy*. “Heaven is the...fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness” (CCC 1024).
- 4) Heaven is the *ecstasy* (the word means “standing-outside-one’s-self) of self-forgetful, self-giving love (*agape*) – the love of God and of all the other blessed creatures of God. This is what God is – “God is *agapeagape*)

on earth is our best appetizer for Heaven; it is the only thing we can do forever without being bored.

- 5) Saint Paul describes the life of Heaven in one word: “For me to live is Christ, and [therefore] to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). “To live in Heaven is ‘to be with Christ’” (CCC 1025).
- 6) To be in Heaven is also to be your true self. All men are born into a lifelong identity crisis, and in Heaven they find “their true identity, their own name”⁶⁰¹ (CCC 1025). God promised that “to him who conquers I will give...a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it” (Revelation 2:17). “What can be more a man’s own than this new name which even in eternity remains a secret between God and him? And what shall we take this secrecy to mean? Surely, that each of the redeemed shall forever know and praise some one aspect of the Divine beauty better than any other creature can. Why else were individuals created?” (C. S. Lewis).
- 7) But perhaps the best definition of Heaven is that it is indefinable. “This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the Kingdom, the Father’s house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: [but] ‘no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him’”⁶⁰³ (1 Corinthians 2:9; CCC 1027).

14. THE PRICE OF HEAVEN

Christ speaks of Heaven as “the pearl of great price” (Matthew 13:46) and as the “one thing needful” (Luke 10:42) that makes life infinitely simple in the long run. For there is *only one infinite good*: God, and our union with God in Heaven. The King James Version renders the question: “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Who ever uttered words more practical than those?

God thought each human soul so infinitely precious that the price he paid for its salvation was far more than the whole creation, it was the lifeblood of the Creator, on the Cross.

The whole creation would be far too small a price for us to pay for Heaven. “Were the whole realm of nature mine / That were a present far too small. / Love so amazing, so divine / Demands my soul, my life, my all” (Isaac Watts). All God wants from us is our all: our heart, our free love. That is the one thing he cannot give himself.

T. S. Eliot speaks of Christianity as “a condition of complete simplicity / Costing not less than / Everything.”

15. THE WAY TO HEAVEN

The way to Heaven is a “way down” from God, not a “way up” from man. It is divine grace.

That is why there is one way, not many. If getting to Heaven were a matter of man-made roads up the mountain, then all the roads – all the religions of the world – might be basically equal. But the way is the “one way” God made, not the many ways man made. No man, not even a man who found his way to God, can be equal to the God who found his way to man. Even the world’s greatest mystic, saint, or prophet cannot find a religion equal to the one

founded by the incarnate God himself. No religion is comparable to Christianity because no man is comparable to the God-man.

Other religions teach that the way to Heaven (or ultimate happiness and fulfillment) is some human way: for instance, practicing yoga, or experiencing a transformation of consciousness in “enlightenment,” or obeying a law well enough, or being sincere and kind enough. But Christianity’s answer is a Person: the One who claimed, “I AM the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me” (John 14:6). Christ does not merely *teach* the way to Heaven; he *is* the way to Heaven.

And the *only* one. He himself says that; the idea was not invented by any man, or by the Church. The Church must be faithful to her Master’s words and not change them into something more “politically correct.”

Men have made many roads up the religious mountain, seeking God, and there is much truth, goodness, and beauty to be found on these roads. But God made one road down – God became the road down – the One who “came down from heaven” (John 3:13) seeking man. If this man is not who he claims to be – God incarnate and the only way to Heaven – then he is the world’s most arrogant liar or lunatic. And if he is who he claims to be, then “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). All who are saved, whether Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, pagan, or atheist, are in fact saved by Christ, however imperfectly they may know him.

Catholics can know him in greater detail and depth than any others through the teachings of the Church he founded to teach in his name and with his authority. Therefore Catholics have a much greater responsibility to practice the truth they know so much more fully, and to share it with the world in both

word and deed. In the words of Saint Francis of Assisi, our task is to: “Preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary.”

Notes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church in order of their appearance in quotations used in this section

⁶²⁶ Cf. *Jn* 12:49.

⁵⁹² Cf. *2 Tim* 1:9-10.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 857-858; Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304-1306; Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820.

⁵⁹⁵ Cf. Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000-1001; John XXII, *Ne super his* (1334): DS 990.

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1002.

⁶³¹ *LG* 48; cf. *Acts* 3:21; *Eph* 1:10; *Col* 1:20; *2 Pt* 3:10-13.

⁶³² *2 Pet* 3:13; cf. *Rv* 21:1.

⁶⁴² *GS* 39 § 2.

⁶⁴³ *GS* 39 § 3.

⁶¹² *1 Jn* 3:14-15.

⁶²⁰ Cf. Council of Orange II (529): DS 397; Council of Trent (1547): 1567.

⁶¹⁴ Cf. *Mt* 5:22, 29; 10:28; 13:42, 50; *Mk* 9:43-48.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304; Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820; (1547): 1580; see also Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000.

⁵⁹⁹ Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000; cf. *LG* 49.

⁶⁰¹ Cf. *Rv* 2:17.

⁶⁰³ St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 58, 10,1: CSEL 3/2, 665.

“Faith is a gift of God which enables us to know and love Him. Faith is a way of knowing, just as reason is. But living in faith is not possible unless there is action on our part. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, we are able to make a decision to respond to divine Revelation, and to follow through in living out our response.”

– United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 38.

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Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* 34
Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and Mission
of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World

About the Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus, a fraternal benefit society founded in 1882 in New Haven, Connecticut, by Blessed Michael McGivney, is the world's largest lay Catholic organization, with more than 1.9 million members in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. The Knights support each other and their community, contributing millions of volunteer hours to charitable causes each year. The Knights were the first to financially support the families of law enforcement and fire department personnel killed in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and to work closely with Catholic bishops to protect innocent human life and traditional marriage. To find out more about the Knights of Columbus, visit www.kofc.org.

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