

Faith Loops

This month we resume our presentation of Faith Loops, PowerPoint shows with images and information that are intended to **inform** us of Church teachings and **form** us in our Catholic faith. To learn more about your faith while waiting for Mass to begin, come a few minutes early. Each Faith Loop takes 12 – 15 minutes to view.



The more we know and understand about our faith, the more confident we are in passing it onto others, especially our children.

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross



The cross is the most powerful and meaningful symbol of our Christian faith. We have crosses in our churches, our homes, and around our necks.

Crosses come in all shapes and sizes and materials. Each one, however, reminds us of Jesus' death as well as His resurrection.

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

The exaltation of the cross dates back to the fourth century when the emperor of the Roman Empire, Constantine, legalized Christianity after 300 years of Christian persecution. Constantine's mother, Helena, journeyed to Jerusalem and, according to Tradition, discovered the true cross upon which Jesus was hung.



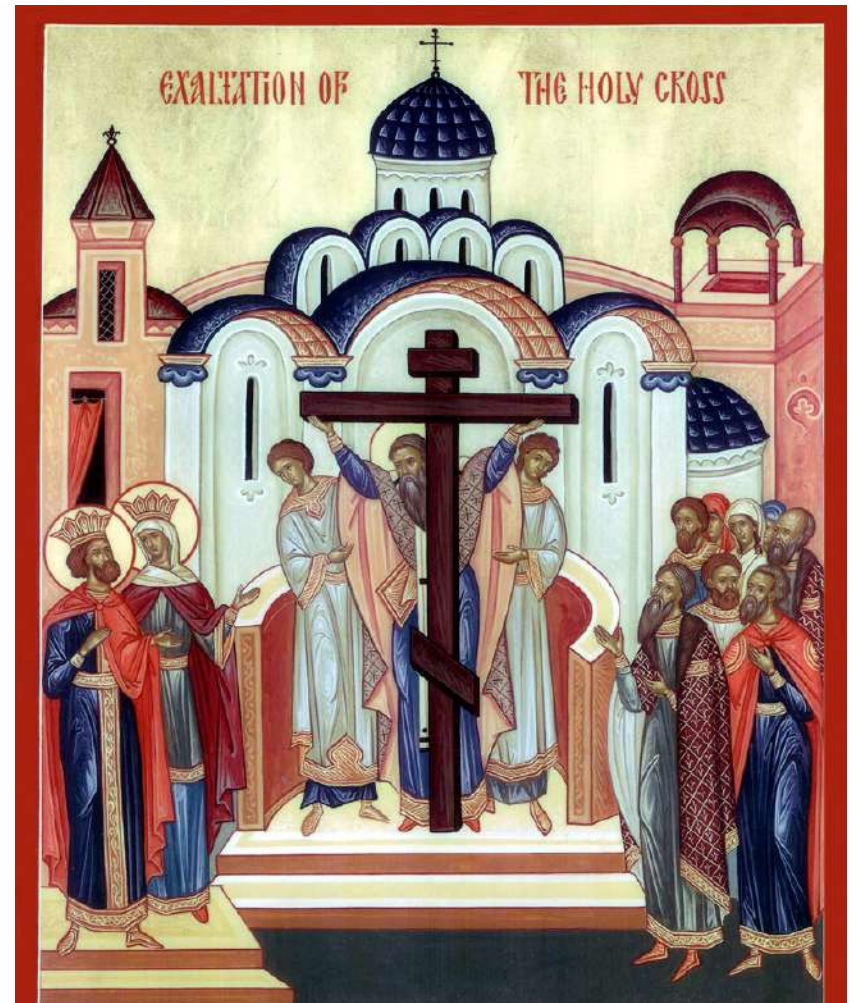
Helena had a church – the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – built on the traditional site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial.

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

The cross that Helena found was ceremonially venerated on September 14 in the year 335 A.D.

The feast day became known as the “Exaltation of the Holy Cross.”

It is also known as the “Triumph of the Cross” because, three days after dying on the cross, Jesus triumphantly rose from the dead.



Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

We exalt the cross, not to remember the cruel nature of Jesus' death but to remind ourselves of the unfathomable love God has for us.

In John 3:16, Jesus says to Nicodemus, "For God so loved the the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."



Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

Each year, the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14.

On this day we reflect on what the Cross means to us.



You Asked Us...

Why do Catholics Make the Sign of the Cross?

As Catholics we typically make the sign of the cross when we begin and end our prayers, and when we enter and leave a church. Using the right hand, we trace the cross on our body, touching first the forehead and the chest, and then the left shoulder followed by the right shoulder. We often accompany this gesture with the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."



You Asked Us... **Sign of the Cross**

We do this for several reasons. Firstly, it is a statement of belief in God – a Trinity of Three Persons – and in the saving work of Christ on the cross. We mark ourselves as Christians through the Sign of the Cross and are reminded that God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16) on the cross. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2157) states: “Through the Sign of the Cross we place ourselves under the protection of the Triune God.” It reminds us of the importance of sanctifying everything we do.



You Asked Us... **Sign of the Cross**



Originally Christians traced the cross with the thumb or finger on their own foreheads.

The earliest formalized way of making the sign of the cross appeared in the fifth century. The thumb, forefinger, and middle fingers were held together to symbolize the Holy Trinity. The other two fingers, pressed into the palm, symbolized the dual nature of Christ. He is human and divine.

You Asked Us... **Sign of the Cross**

Gradually, the sign of the cross was incorporated into different parts of the Mass, such as the three-fold signing of the forehead, lips, and heart at the reading of the gospel. During Baptism and Confirmation, this signature of our faith is, with the oil of Chrism, traced on our foreheads.



Although 'crossing' ourselves can become routine, the simple act of 'signing' has profound meaning and should be made consciously and devoutly, and with purpose and pride in our Christian identity.

Test Your Knowledge...

The Catholic Church

A gathering of the Church's bishops from around the world to discuss and make decisions about significant issues; e.g. Vatican II, is known as a(n):

- a. encyclical
- b. synod
- c. ecumenical council
- d. conclave



Test Your Knowledge...

The Catholic Church

A gathering of the Church's bishops from around the world to discuss and make decisions about significant issues; e.g. Vatican II, is known as a(n):

c. ecumenical council

Over the last 1900 years, there have been 21 ecumenical or 'worldwide' councils. At the First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., the council formulated the Nicene Creed. In 431 A.D., at the First Council of Ephesus, they proclaimed Mary as the Mother of God.

Test Your Knowledge...

The Catholic Church

An encyclical is:

- a. one of the pope's pastoral letters
- b. a Catholic encyclopedia
- c. an official Church teaching
- d. a gathering of the Church's bishops

Test Your Knowledge...

The Catholic Church

An encyclical is:

a. one of the pope's pastoral letters

A papal encyclical is a pastoral letter from the Pope to the bishops and the whole Church, addressing various topics of faith and morals. The most recent encyclical, written by Pope Francis, was “Dilexit Nos” (He Loved Us). It reflected on the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus.

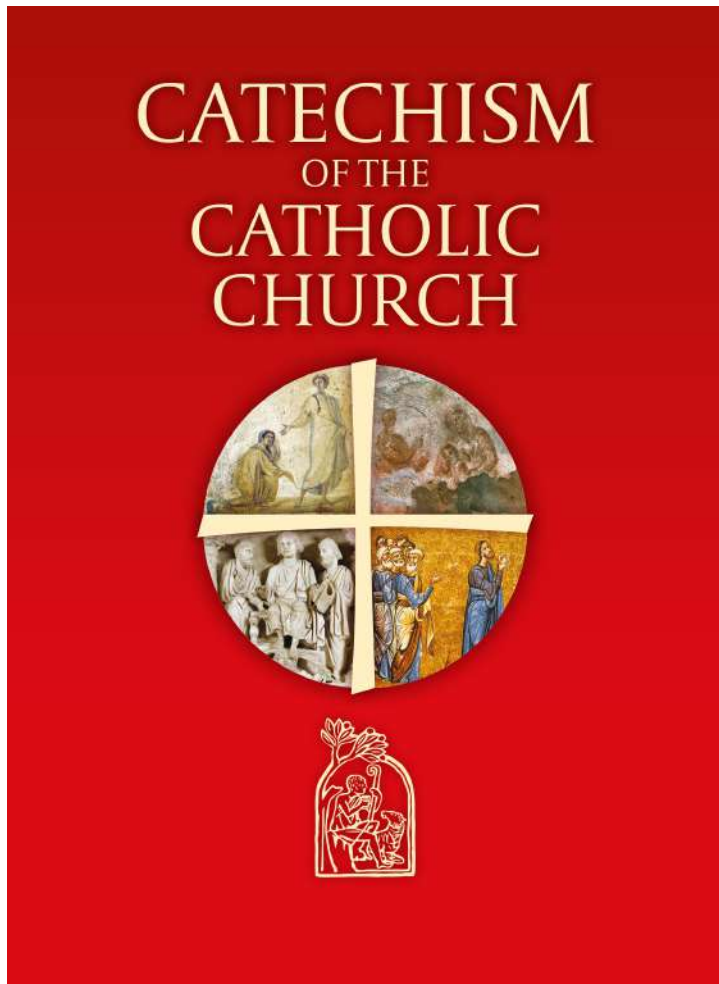


Word of the Week: **Doctrine**

The word derives from the Latin *doctrina* and means 'teaching' or 'instruction'. For us, a doctrine is an

official teaching of the Church based on the Revelation of God by and through Christ.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is an excellent resource for us, as it contains essential teachings of the Catholic Church in regards to both faith and morals.



Clergy Vestments – the **Dalmatic**

The outer vestment worn by deacons is called a **dalmatic**. It is a tunic with arm-length, wide sleeves. The sides are sewn together and the bottom of the vestment is squared. The color of the dalmatic and the stole match.

The recommended prayer said by a deacon when he puts on the dalmatic:

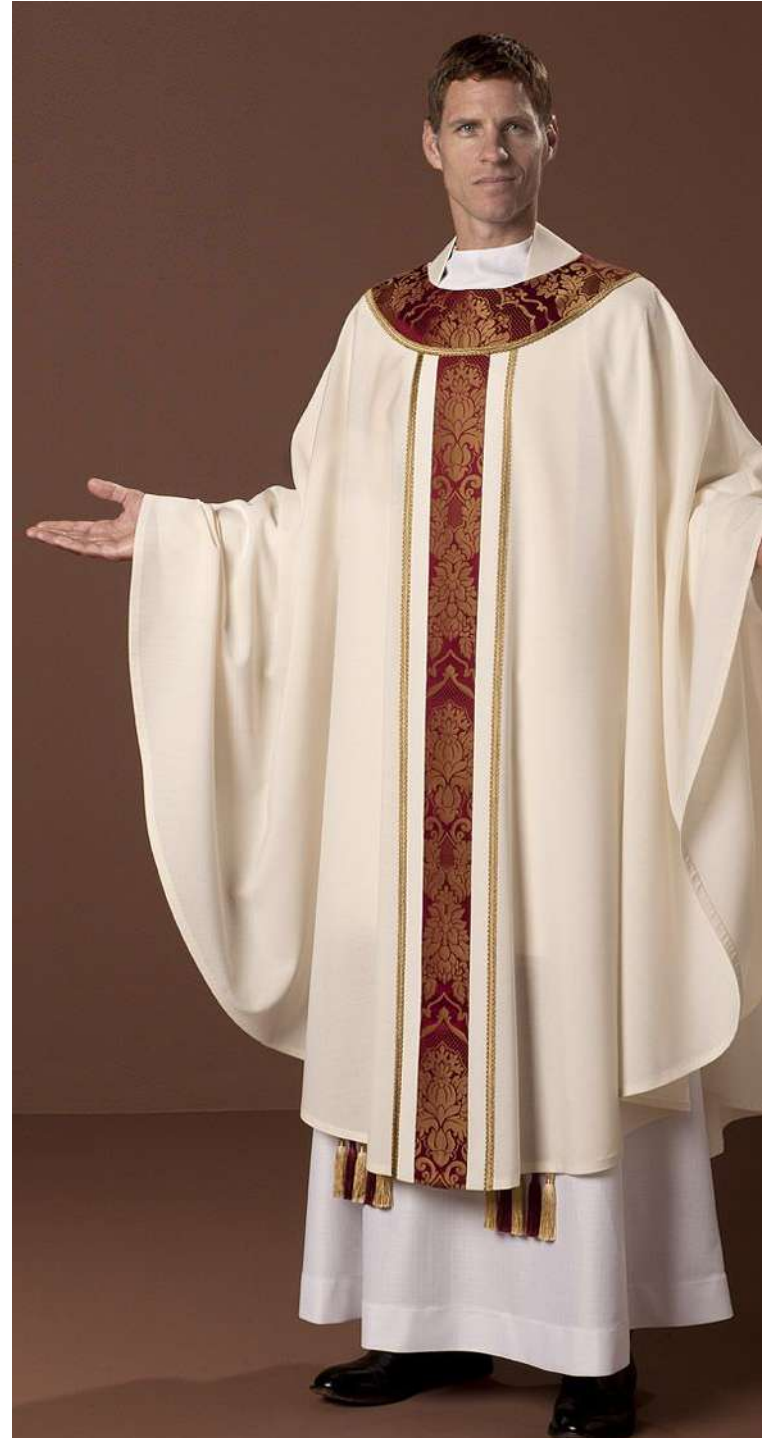
Lord, endow me with the garment of salvation, the vestment of joy, and with the dalmatic of justice ever encompass me. Amen.



Clergy Vestments – the **Chasuble**

The outer garment worn by the priest is different than the dalmatic worn by a deacon. It is called a **chasuble**.

The name 'chasuble' is derived from a Latin word, ***casula***, which means 'tent' or 'little house', as it covers the priest from head to foot like a canopy or a tent.



Clergy Vestments – the Chasuble

The chasuble has open sides (unlike the deacon's dalmatic) and is rounded or curved at the bottom of the vestment (unlike the squared bottom of the



dalmatic). The chasuble is only worn for Mass. It symbolizes the role of the priest in leading the people of God in worship.

All the vestments, when they are brand new, are blessed before they are used.

From the Suggestion Box ...

Who was the youngest saint to die as a martyr? How old were they?

Great question! Thanks for asking.

One of the youngest and most famous saints was **St. Maria Goretti**. She was born into a poor family in Corinaldo, Italy, on October 16, 1890 and died on July 6, 1902 at the age of eleven. Her father had died two years earlier, and she helped raise her younger siblings. Maria had a love for God and trusted in Him.



From the Suggestion Box ...

Who was the youngest saint to die as a martyr?

Maria Goretti died a martyr after being fatally stabbed by a 20 year-old neighbor by the name of



Alessandro, who tried to seduce her. Maria Goretti, wanting to remain pure, rejected his advances. In anger, Alessandro stabbed her fourteen times. Before she died, however, Maria Goretti went to confession and received Holy Communion. And she forgave her killer.

From the Suggestion Box ...

Who was the youngest saint to die as a martyr, and how old were they?

Today, the Church recognizes her example of purity and forgiveness. Santa Maria Goretti was beatified in 1947 and declared a saint in 1950. Her feast day is July 6.

A Catholic church in Edmonton is named after her.



Prayer Before Mass

Dear God, help me to be open to all that you want to give me at Mass today.

My heart is open. I come in hope.

I come empty and unsure and troubled.

I come in need to be loved by you,
united with this faith community,
strengthened by your word,
and nourished by the Bread of Life.

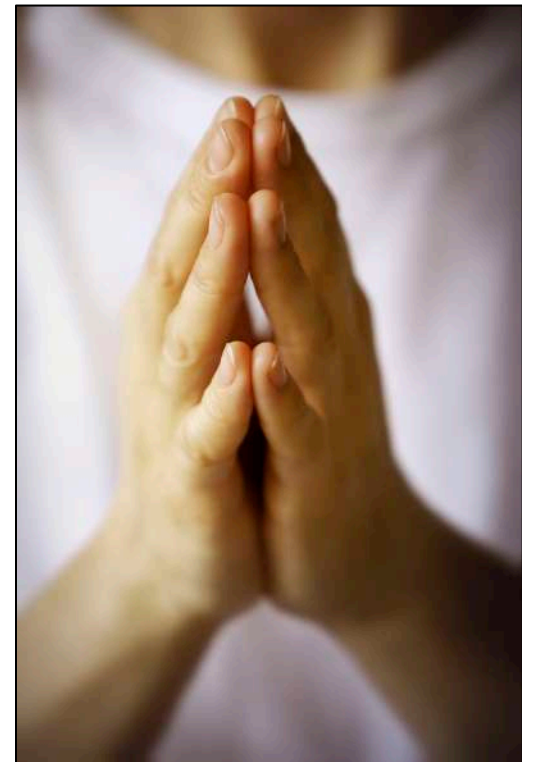
Cleanse me. Refresh me.

Strengthen me for the journey ahead.

Lead me to heaven.

Thank you, God, for this time together.

Thank you, God, for everything. Amen.



Questions???

Do you have a question about the Catholic faith or about the celebration of the Mass? If so, write it on a piece of paper and drop it into the marked shoebox on the table at the back of the church. We will try to answer it in a Faith Loop at a later date.

Thank you.

