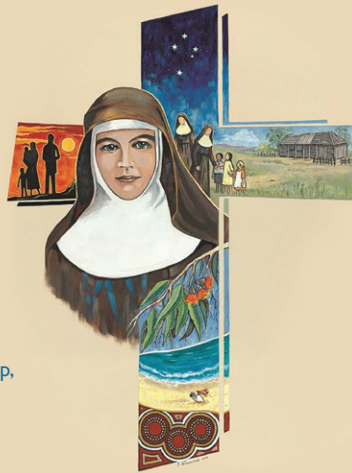


“Remember
we are but
travellers
here.”

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop,
Australia's Saint



Learning more

Perhaps you feel drawn to learn more about Jesus, and you would like to understand how the Catholic faith might assist you in that? If so, trust that desire and understand that God is drawing you to himself. It will mean both learning about the faith and, when the time is right, becoming committed to it.

If you don't know other Catholics, the Catholic Enquiry Centre can give you details of one or more parish communities near where you live. If you are interested, we may be able to introduce you to other Catholics in your area who can talk with you and provide you support.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact the Catholic Enquiry Centre. There are a variety of ways in which we can help you. For example, you might like a free book on different aspects of the Catholic faith. You could also ask for a copy of a simple prayer resource designed to help you deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ. Or maybe you simply have a question that you would like answered.

Questions?

If you or someone close to you is interested in finding out more about the Catholic faith, please contact the Catholic Enquiry Centre on 1300 432 484 or email info@catholicenquiry.com.

Further information can be found at:
www.catholicenquiry.com

What is the structure of the Catholic Church?

Jesus promised to be with his disciples 'until the end of time' (Matthew 28:20). However, aware that he couldn't be with them physically, he appointed one of those disciples to be the one upon whom his Church would be built (see Matthew 16:18). The Church, therefore, is primarily the community of disciples 'built' on the leadership of St Peter and his successors. For this reason, the Pope is said to be a symbol of our unity, and has a primary role in ensuring the Church understands and follows the teaching of Jesus Christ.

There are over 1.2 billion Catholics in the world, requiring much organisation. To assist in this, we are grouped into dioceses and parishes, with bishops, priests and deacons to help serve us in our local areas.

The Catholic Mass

At the heart of our community life is the presence of Jesus who promised to be with us until the end of time. We experience this in a special and privileged way as we come together to celebrate and worship at Mass.

The Catholic Mass is where we have our closest contact with God available to us in this life. It is the communion with and in Jesus that he invited us to participate in, "in memory of me." It re-presents for us what Jesus did at the Last Supper and through his sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary. We have a wonderful opportunity to encounter Jesus and be totally united to Him and to each other.

From the Mass, we are sent out to serve God and our brothers and sisters, and to share the wonderful news of God's love with all we meet.



Catholic Enquiry Centre

Reaching out in faith
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1300 432 484

Email: info@catholicenquiry.com

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About the Catholic Faith



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The heart of the Catholic Faith

Perhaps you are reading this because there is something in you that is just a little curious about what God might be asking of you, and you wonder if the Catholic faith might help you to understand and develop that awareness.

The first thing to understand is that there is so much more to the Catholic faith than can be communicated in this little brochure. Instead, all that is being attempted here is to provide you some introductory thoughts. You will spend eternity coming to understand who God is and how God works, but the journey has to start somewhere ...

So, the first thing to know about the Catholic faith is that it is a particular way of helping you to live and understand your relationship with God. We don't claim to be the only way to understand this relationship, but we believe that because of the promises of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit he bestows, the Catholic faith has a truth to offer that is not found elsewhere. Among other things, throughout our 2000+ year history we have developed insights into how God works with you, and calls you into this relationship, that can be of benefit to you.

The Catholic faith only exists for one reason: to proclaim the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church (the word 'Catholic' is simply another word for 'universal') is the continuation of the community that began

with the first disciples of Jesus all those years ago, and carries forward the mission that was entrusted to them. Jesus instructed them to share the Good News with all the nations. It is this we see continuing to be carried out through the work of the Church in every nation on earth (Matthew 28:19).

As the members of this community have sought to live and understand what God was asking of them down through the centuries, Catholic teaching has developed and grown. As Jesus taught his disciples: the Holy Spirit would be given to them, to guide them to all truth (John 16:13).

Jesus Christ is at the centre of who we are and of what we do. In him, God shows us what God himself is like: that he loves us so much that he is even prepared to die for us. What is more, in Jesus we see that God cannot be defeated by death. By uniting yourself to Jesus Christ (which is what baptism is) your own death can be transformed into the life of God.

The mission and ministries of the Catholic Church

Catholics are motivated by Jesus Christ, and guided by the Holy Spirit in our mission to love one another, to serve the world and to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength.

As Christians we wish to share this Good News, not just in words, but through our actions and the way we live our lives. We want everybody to experience the life-changing effect of having an active and living relationship with him.

The ministry of the Church in this country is to serve the poor, the sick, the elderly, prisoners, those struggling to find work, the indigenous people and the homeless. There are organisations ministering to immigrants and refugees; those needing school and tertiary education; those addicted to drugs and their families; those preparing for marriage and those needing marriage counselling; those needing the range of pastoral care services and those needing 'time out' from the stresses of today's pressures.

Today, the Catholic Church across Australia represents 22% of the population, and the Church is one of the largest employers in the land. A recent survey concluded that through the Church's more than 3000 organisations in this country, around 220,000 people are employed. All these people have the one mission: to serve others and, in so doing, to reveal to them the face of God.

The Catholic community has a place for everyone, whether young or old, married or single, and of all races and nations. Each person is invited to personally encounter the love of Jesus through his Church.