**Religion Study Module ~~1, 2, 3~~, 4, ~~5~~, 6, ~~7, 8~~, 9, 10, 11 and 12**

**Module 1:** The relationship between important life events and the questions people asks about meaning and purpose; the concept of religion and being religious

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| **Life Event** | **The nature of this experience** | **Questions** |
| Birth | It can stir questions about unborn life, parenthood, the wonder of a newborn child, the depth of personal joy, family relationships and belonging. | “Will I be a good parent?”  “Will my child be healthy?” |
| Adolescence | They may relate to the desire to be accepted as responsible, how to become more responsible, how influence and make a difference, personal identify within society, social and community responsibilities, future vocations and work. | “How do I know what job I will like”?  “What is my place in society?” |
| Marriage | Questions urge to the kind of reflection that leads to greater self-understanding and self-discovery, to lead to a greater appreciation of oneself. | “Will this make me happy?”  “Will we have a family?” |
| Death | Many people fear death. They may try to avoid contact with friends or relatives that may be dying. People question the nature of death, whether they were good. Death can lead to self-discovery and a greater perspective on life. | “Where will I go?”  “What if I need someone?” |

\*Life events prompt questioning

**Three categories of life experiences a person can encounter**

*Experiences of creation* – questions about life, its origins, its future and its ultimate meaning. This may lead to thinking about the existences of a being(s) greater than themselves.

*Experiences of the goodness of others* – there are examples of people showing heroic love, kindness and forgiveness. There are many examples also of people doing what is evil, and causing harm and destruction. Anyone who is aware of their own personal weakness will find human evil much easier to understand. Paul’s inner conflict “I want to do what is goof, evil lies a close hand” (Romans 7:15-25)

*Experiences of personal mystery* – is one of the most significant human experiences. It has the potential to lead a person to important questions about who they are, the purpose of life and its meaning. As people spend time reflecting about themselves, they find that there are always new insights and new understanding about the mystery of themselves. ‘Mystery’ referring to as deeply personal, need to be expressed, cannot be expressed by words alone and can never be full understood.

**Important Catholic Understandings**

*Questions of the human heart* – as people remember times when they found themselves thinking about God, they realise that such inclinations come from within them. It is within their hearts that they find themselves stirred to seek God. The more people listen to the human heart questions, the more easily they find God.

*“The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and god never ceases to draw man to himself”* (CCC 27)

*Conscience* – human conscience recognises the human heart questions. It is from conscience that God stirs a person to recognise the sign of the divine within and around them. Conscience draws a person into dialogue with God and enables them to recognise and accept God’s guidance. For Catholics, the formation of conscience is supported by studying:

* The life of Jesus himself
* The scriptures
* The teachings and beliefs of the Apostles, handed down within the church
* Christian moral teachings

“… conscience is man’s most secret core and sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths” (CCC 1776)

**Genuine religious experiences affect people**

1. Genuine experiences of God tend not to be short-term
2. Religious experiences cannot be ‘kept inside’
3. True religious experiences relate to issues of daily life

**The concept of religion**

“A religion is regarded as a set of beliefs and practises, usually involving the acknowledgement of a divine or higher being or power, by which people order the conduct of their lives both practically and in a moral sense” ABS

Catholicism expresses this definition as

* Beliefs = One God, Jesus is the son of God, the Trinity, transubstantiation
* Practices = sacraments
* Divine = “God”, he is the Holy Trinity and is love
* Moral order = catechism, commandments, beatitudes

**Similarities of religions**

* Develop particular ideas about their God or Gods
* Share common understanding about basic human questions
* Share memories handed down through the generations
* Worship, using common rituals and prayers
* Develop codes of behaviour base upon their understanding of how the divine expects them to behave

**Describing religion**

They all have sacred places, scared signs and symbols, rituals, sacred objects, religious writings, religious laws and religious leaders.

**Differences of Religions**

* Some believe the divine to be one God, while others believe there are several Gods
* The divine to be kind and merciful, while others believe the divine to be harsh and judgemental
* All people are equal, others believe they are not equal

**Types of Religions: Natural and Revealed**

Natural religions are considered as ‘man-made’ and are not particularly linked to a founder but a collective memory of stories which explain the origin of life, and ways to live and conduct one’s life. They are based on human wisdom.

Revealed religions have a founder who made the claim to have received some revelation from God. Thus, revealed religions differ from natural religions since their beliefs and practices are not simply philosophy or wisdom of man but have came directly from, God. These religions are also called monotheistic religions since they claimed to be revealed bu the One God.

**Other key definitions**

Religious belief – a religious belief is a conviction about an idea central to a religion that expresses a religious truth

Religious teachings – a religious teaching guides and informs people how to respond to religious belief

Religious practise – a religious practice is a recognised way of doing something religious

Religious signs and symbols – a religious sign or symbol is something used to represent and convey meaning about beliefs

Religious rituals – religious rituals are symbolic actions, such as movement, gestures and words to express and promote what is important about faith

Religious celebrations – religious celebration are special times when religious communities join together in worship, prayer or to celebrate a religious festival

Religious events – a religious even is similar to religious celebrations. It usually has a set time and sometimes a set place in which an important aspect of religious faith is celebrated

**Being religious**

Any time a person seeks, searches or thinks about the meaning of life and the reality of God they are being religious. It can be how frequently one practices or what a person believes in and how their behaviour matches the stated beliefs of a religion. Participation, adherence, observance, practice, affiliation and identity are ways people can describe what it means to be religious.

**Other responses to religion**

* Secularism is the viewpoint that government agencies and societal institutions should not be influenced by a religion or religious belief.
* Atheism is the viewpoint or idea that there is no God; they deny God’s existence, or do not believe in God.
* Agnosticism is where people are uncertain about the existence of God or how people’s ability to know if God exists.
* Humanism – is an approach to life base on humanity and reason. It is based on the understanding that the world itself and human beings reveal all that we need to know. Human reason is the foundation for every situation and action in the world.

**Module 2:** *the nature of religious belief; the key features of one religious belief or teaching; the key features of one religious ritual or practice*

\*A creed is a profession of faith, something that lists the beliefs of a group of people

**Revelation – Religious belief**

Revelation is the continuing and dynamic process by which God communicates personally with people.

**Three key elements of Revelation**

1. God’s self-revelation begins with Creation:

People can recognise the existence of the creator when they reflect on the created universe. God reveals through Genesis that he created the world in six days and rested in the seventh.

*“In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth…” (Genesis 1)*

1. God is revealed to Abraham and his descendants:

God revealed an unconditional love to God’s people over time and in various stages. God first chose Abraham and his descendants to be God’s own people and revealed more to different people at different times. The process if revelation is the personal revelation of God to humanity.

*“The Lord appeared to Abram and said “I am God Almighty”” (Genesis 17)*

1. Jesus Christ is the fullness of God’s self-revelation:

The climax of God’s revelation is Jesus Christ. Before Jesus, God made the people of Israel aware that he would send one, whom they cam to refer as the Messiah. To the Jews, the Messiah would have the task of restoring God’s kingdom. Jesus became known as the Messiah, the Christ. He proclaimed and restored the kingdom of God. In practice, this means that he made it possible for everyone to be free to relate closely with God.

**The two main sources for learning about Revelation – Scripture and Tradition**

Both scripture and tradition form the source of Christian teaching. Both ensure the accuracy and fidelity of modern Catholic teaching to what has been revealed by God.

**Scripture: The bible records and tells the story of God’s self-revelation**

Scripture (the bible) is a collection of 73 books. This collection of books contains the canon or definitive body of Christian scripture. The bible is divided into two parts, the Old Testament with 46 books, everything revealed by God prior to the coming of Christ and the New Testament with 27 books that reveal the teachings of Christ. God inspired a range of authors, and the bible has different writing styles to reveal God.

**Tradition: Understanding how God’s self-revelation is to be lived and experienced**

God continues to guide people’s thinking to interpret scripture accurately in each historical age. Christ then entrusted the task of interpreting the meaning of God’s word, which is handed on through the Scriptures and Tradition, to the ‘living Magisterium of the Church’. This Magisterium is living because God works through it, safeguarding his revelation as the Church interprets and expresses it in her celebration of the Scriptures, her liturgy, her doctrinal teaching, and her moral life.

*“His Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but it is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it” (CCC 86)*

**Covenant: God’s relationship with all people**

A covenant is a scared verbal agreement or contract that bestows the rights and requires obligations. God entered into successive relationship covenants with Abraham, Moses and in Jesus Christ. This was to achieve intimacy with humanity. Each offered a deeper relationship with God and involved:

* Promises by God
* Obligations if a relationship with God was to develop
* Greater intimacy with God provided people lived the covenant faithfully

**Religious Rituals and Practices**

Religious rituals are an expression of religious faith. Religious rituals use symbolic actions, such as movement, gestures, and words to act out, symbolise, express, and promote what is important about faith. Rituals help people enter into the mystery of their faith. Rituals are communal celebrations that express a sense of belonging to a community and call for participation.

Religious practices are a recognised way of doing something religious. Religious practices may include ways of praying, styles of religious worship, and a set of times and in specific places religious ways of doing something.

**The key features of one religious ritual and practice: The Sacrament of Baptism**

The sacrament of baptism initiates a person into the Christian community. Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism, we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God.

*“Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the world” (CCC 1213).*

Baptism is expressed:

* Culturally
* Historically
* Physically
* Theologically

**The Sacrament of Baptism, as a religious practice**

The sacrament of Baptism uses several rituals to help people enter into meaning and mystery of the sacrament. Baptism relies upon the ritual use of a very ordinary element, water, to convey a deeper experience and understanding of Christian faith. As part of the sacrament, the person being baptised is ritually immersed in water. This ritual ‘immersion’ symbolises several important beliefs about Baptism. For instance, there is a symbolic death and as they emerge from the water, they take on a new life. Another meaning conveyed in ritual is that water relates to cleaning. When the person is baptised, they are cleansed of original sin.

**The Rite of Baptism, as a religious ritual**

* There must always be water present, either by triple immersion or by pouring on the candidate’s head three times
* The words: The Trinitarian formula i.e. “I baptise you in the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit

**Key Features of the Rite of Baptism**

1. Reception of the child. The parents are asked “What do you ask the Church?” and “What name have you given the child?”. An action where the celebrant makes a sign of the cross on the forehead of the child being baptised and asks the parents and godparents to do likewise
2. Preparation of faith through the Liturgy of the Word, a prayer of exorcism and the anointing with the oil of the Catechumens.
3. Actual Baptism / the sign of Baptism. Involves the pouring of water over the child’s head or the immersion of the child in water while the following words are said, (name of child “I baptise you…..Spirit”

**Module 3:** the characteristics of the major divisions within a world religion

\*There have been two cataclysmic schisms in Christianity:

1. The East-West Schism (The Great Schism) 1054

2. The Protestant Reformation 1517

These have resulted in three major divisions which exist today:

1. Those Catholic groups which adhere to the Pope and Latin Church
2. The Eastern Orthodox groups which look to the patriarch of Constantinople and
3. The Protestant Churches which do not recognise such figures of spiritual and dogmatic authority

**Cultural and geographical differences that existed were:**

1. Whilst the Eastern Byzantine Church maintained right tradition in its practice, the western church was influenced by various Germanic and barbarian peoples and was open to change
2. The West spoke Latin while the East spoke Greek, a language difference that reflected great cultural differences
3. The East viewed the West as uncultured barbarians. In the East the general population was well educated but in the West education was confined to the church
4. There were disputes between the eastern and western Churches over the jurisdictions of areas such as the Balkans and Sicily

**The Iconoclast Dispute**

In the 8th century, the iconoclasts believed that icons, the flat wooden images of saints and holy figures that are a feature of Eastern churches, were idolatrous.

*“You shall not make yourself an idol” (Exodus 20:4)*

Emperor Leo ordered the great icon of Christ over the gates of Constantinople to be destroyed along with all images of Christ and Saints in churches. He then tried to extend his authority to the West by annexing Sicily and Southern Italy.

The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 restored the use of icons but insisted that they should not be worshipped. In 858 Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who had opposed the Iconoclasts and who refused to re-instate Iconoclast clergy, was deposed and was replaced. He was excommunicated for meddling in the affairs of Constantinople. The breach was never healed.

**Liturgical Practice**

In the Eucharist the Latin Church used ‘unleavened bread’ which the eastern Church considered too “Jewish” while the Eastern Church used leavened bread to symbolic Christ’s resurrection.

The Eastern Church used ‘intinction’ i.e. dipping the bread into wine at communion which the Latin Church saw as heretical.

Eastern lower clergy married while priests of the western Church were celibate.

Eastern clergy wore beards while in the west they were clean shaven

**Filioque Controversy**

The Latin phrase “and the son”, which was accepted as an addition to the Nicene Creed by the Western Churches and subsequentially opposed by the Eastern Churches.

*“We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son” (381 with amendment)*

The theological dispute between the Eastern and Western Church is somewhat subtle and is seen by man as a matter of semantics dealing with the persons of the Godhead and the nature of the Trinity. Essentially the belief was the same, but the wording was different.

**Differences in Recognising the Pope**

**The immediate Cause of the Schism**

The final crisis came when the Normans invaded southern Italy and Sicily, areas which were nominally ruled by the East, but belonged to the West. The Pope, refused to aid the Byzantine Emperor, because he wished to claim back jurisdiction of the area from the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius. Pope Leo IX asserted his authority by holding a synod to reform the Sicilian Church and appointed a new archbishop of Sicily. Michael Cerularius was furious and in retaliation closed all western churches in Constantinople and expelled the clergy.

Pope Leo IX sent his legate, Cardinal Humbert de Silva Candida, to negotiate with the Patriarch of Constantinople but Humbert excommunicated the Patriarch and broke of negotiations. On the 16th of July, 1054 Humbert slammed the Papal bull of excommunication on the altar of the Church of Holy Wisdom. This led to the separation of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches, which both claim to be “the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church”.

**Module 5:** *the nature of one current issue in society to which a religion seeks to respond; the response of a religion to one current issue in society*

Homelessness is “the state of having no home” (ABS). A person is considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

* Is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
* Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
* Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations

**Types of Homelessness**Primary homelessness – includes all people ‘without a roof over their head’. This means people who are living on the streets, sleeping in parks etc

Secondary homelessness – includes people who frequently move from one type of shelter to another. This includes people living in homeless services, hostels, people staying with other households who have no home of their own and people staying in boarding houses for 12 weeks or less.

Tertiary homelessness – refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long term basis (more than 13 weeks), who live in accommodation that does not have ‘self-contained facilities’ (don’t have bathroom or kitchens and who don’t have security provided by a lease). They are homeless as their accommodation does not have the characteristics identified in the minimum community standard for housing.

**Reasons for homelessness:**

* Young people become homeless because of family breakdown, often stemming from parental conflicts
* Collapse of their relationship with a husband/wife or partner
* Some cannot afford living expenses

**Nature of homelessness:**

1. Youth homelessness is invisible. The youth are ‘couch surfing; and living in unstable situations. This means they are temporarily staying with friends, relatives, family and sometimes strangers.
2. Nearly half of all homeless Australians are children and young people under the age of 25. 43% make up al homeless people in Australia.
3. Homelessness can affect any person. In reality many young people become homeless due to family breakdown, family violence and child abuse. 45% of homeless young people identity interpersonal relationships problems including family violence and conflict with parents are the primary reason for being homeless.
4. A job alone is not the solution for homelessness

**The Facts:**

* 1 in 200 people are homeless on any given night (Homelessness Australia)
* Homelessness does not just mean sleeping on the street. There are three different types of homelessness: primary, secondary, tertiary (ABS)
* 45% of homeless young people identify interpersonal relationship problems including family violence and conflict with parents as the primary source of being homeless

**The Churches response:**

The Catholic Denomination of Christianity (CDoC) responds to the issue of homelessness at different levels of society and in different ways. Jesus’ mission is expressed in the ways of PRIEST, PROPHET and KING. This mission is shared by all the disciples.

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| Priest – To sanctify (prayers and liturgies) | “… fill our hearts with compassion for those who lack warmth of a home” Australian Catholic Social Justice Council – Prays for the homeless |
| Prophet – To teach (advocate change) | "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed". (Proverbs 19:17). According to scripture, we are called to look after the poor.  “all people have a right to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education, and employment.” (Pope John XIII).  This means that when people are without a chance to earn a living, and must go hungry and homeless, they are being denied basic rights. |
| King – To govern (practical aid) | Pope Francis opened a new shelter in Vatican City in 2015. Francis gave out 400 sleeping bags to the homeless to encourage them to move to Vatican City. Francis opened showers, created barber shops, medical and laundry services in St Peter’s square. |

**Local:**

The Shopfront – provides free legal assistance for homeless and disadvantage young people aged 25 and below. The Shopfront refers clients to specialist programmes and helps 3000 people a year.

**National:**

St Vincent de Paul – speaks up against the issue of homelessness and calls for the government to act. They call the government for a $10 billion Social and Affordable housing fund, the preparation of a national housing plan, the recognition of human rights to housing and to have a new target to have homelessness housing shortfall by 2025.

**Global:**

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Immigrants and Itinerant people – encourages Christians to be a ‘good Samaritan’. Provides homes, necessary services, documentation and counselling for migrants.

**Module 7 and 8:** *examples of how people are influenced and shaped by a religion; how people respond to the meaning and purpose offered by a religion.*

*the relationship between one particular religious belief and the lives of people; the relationship between one particular religious ritual or practice and the lives of people*

**The influence of religion**

* Sometimes religions can motivate a person to behave in a way consistent with the way of life promoted by a religion, sometimes the opposite

**Personal Development**

* Throughout their life each person experiences a range of influences that shape who they are and how they live
* Religion can be one of these influences contributing to the development of a person
* The influence is through circumstances of a person’s life, other people, events and ideas that people encounter in life that they are influenced by a religion

**People influenced by religion**

* Some people are moved by particular situations or circumstances and discover in a religion the powerful way to respond to life and its challenges
* Often it is through the example and words of other people that person finds themselves being influenced and shaped by a religion
* It is in the very nature of a religion that people find themselves being influenced and shaped by religion
* In particular, it is through the beliefs, practices and celebrations that are central to the religion that a person can be influenced

**How people are shaped:**

* By stories of people (e.g. saints)
* The nature of religion through beliefs, practices and celebrations

**Response to religion**

* People respond to religions in different and complex ways and often, how they respond, vary throughout life
* For some, religion does not register as anything important, with little known or understood about religion or particular religions
* Some may be immersed in a culture or way of life rich in religion
* For others, there may be a much more conscious approach of either accepting or rejecting a religion

**The CDoC view – including the religious belief of revelation:**

The catholic view is that religion is more than a way of life – it is God reaching out to people and people’s response to this action of God.

*“… created man to make him share his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man” (CCC 1)*

Man was created by God and is called to relate with him, man is called to proclaim the gospel as Jesus intended the Apostles too and faith has been passed down by others therefore it’s man’s responsibility to pass it down to their neighbour.

**Man’s response to God**

*“Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself” (CCC 166)*

People can respond to the religious belief of revelation by building their relationship with God and by speaking to others about their faith.

**The relationship between one particular religious teaching and the lives of people: Dignity of the human person (D.O.H.P)**

* Each religious teaching of a particular religion aims to show people what a meaningful and purposeful life looks like, and promote ways to live such a life
* For instance, many people see justice as a key issue and challenge in life. In Catholic thought, the God-given dignity of each person is central and, in particular, it is at the heart of the social teaching or doctrine of the Church

**Catholic Social Teaching**

* If Catholics believe all people are created in the image and likeness of God, then all people share in the respect or dignity that God deserves
* Catholics therefore believe that people should show concern and respect for God and for God’s creation, including respect for all people
* The Catholic church teaches that the God-given dignity of each and every person needs to be respected and upheld individually by society

**The church and social justice**

Catholic beliefs find expression in the Catholic Social Teachings. These teachings directly seek to apply the beliefs of the Church to the needs of justice in the world today. Worldwide and in Australia Social Justice is one of the highest priorities of the church. The Pope and the bishops constantly call on Catholics to become involved in fostering social justice.

*“God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27)*

**Natural law**

Human beings have been created in the image and likeliness of God. Within them is the need to reflect God’s goodness, if they are to find true and lasting happiness. To reflect God people must be capable of discovering the potential for goodness that is within them and to distinguish good from evil. People can don this through reason.

God intentions of how people should behave can be found in basic law of human nature. From this law come moral obligations such as:

* Respect the equality given to every person by God
* Respect every person’s right to life
* Respect every person’s right to all that is necessary for life
* Respect every person’s right to justice

Every human is obliged to obey Natural law, created by God, which relies upon God for its continuing existence

*“It expresses the dignity of the person and the basis for fundamental rights and duties” (CCC 1956)*

**The relationship between Natural Law and Divine Law**

God intervened directly into human history and revealed specific laws to guide human behaviour. This revelation of God’s law is known as Divine law.

**Divine Law**

All the commandments and laws that are given directly by God. These include those laws and commandments of Jesus as well as those of the Old Testament.

**The authority of Divine Law**

Divine law always binds people. No one can disobey the law deliberately without sinning.

**The relationship between one religious ritual and the lives of people – the celebration of the eucharist within the practice of the mass**

Religious rituals use repeated and symbolic actions, such as movement, gestures, and words to express and promote what is important about faith. In the faith life of Catholics, rituals help people enter the mystery of their faith and play an important role in Catholic worship. Rituals are communal celebrations that express a sense of belonging to a community and call for participation, not observation.

Religious practices are a recognised way of doing something religious (mass). Practices may include praying, worshiping, and a set of times and specific places, and ways of doing something. Religious practice will often use religious signs and symbols. Rituals can be incorporated into the practice

**The relationship between rituals and practices and the lives of people**

By participating in rituals or practices that involve the Word of God, people can find support and guidance for living the Christian life. Christians draw upon, express, and deepen their faith through a variety of rituals and practices

**Religious ritual: Celebration of the Eucharist**

In celebrating the Eucharist within the Mass, Christians gather in the presence of Jesus and:

* Hear answers to life questions
* Are challenged to face the truth
* Are empowered to follow Jesus and his teachings

In Catholic teaching, Jesus (the Word of God) is present in four distinct ways during the celebration of the eucharist:

* In the assembly
* In the minister
* In the word
* In the sacrament

*“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them”* *(Matthew 18:20)*

**The Assembly:**

Christ is present in the mass through the members of the Church, the Body of Christ, his continuing presence in the world

**The Word:**

When the scripture is proclaimed at mass it is the Lord who speaks to us through the words

**The Sacrament:**

He is present in the bread and wine representing his body and blood. When we eat or drink from the Cup we enter into communion with his Body and Blood.

**The Minister:**

Christ is present in the person of the priest who leads the celebrations of the mass

**A religious ritual expressing the Paschal Mystery - the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Its relationship to and meaningfulness in the lives of Catholics: Catholics, from their reading and living out of the messages within the scripture and Church teaching, grow in their understanding of the Paschal Mystery and its meaningfulness in their lives.

The Paschal Mystery is lived out in the lives of believers when they are people of hope fully believing in new life and the Resurrection. The believe that hope and life can come from suffering and sacrifice; that by giving, you receive; that great joy and satisfaction come from giving up what you want; or they think in terms of ‘for the good of everyone’.

The Eucharist is also a celebration of Christ’s Life, Death and Resurrection which is the Paschal Mystery. It is remembered through the scripture, communal prayers and responses sung and spoken, and in the breaking of the bread during Mass.

**Religious practice: Attending Mass (Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist):**

Christians consider the power of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, works in several very important ways through the activity of the Mass, in that the Word of God:

* Creates = the universe and all that it contains came into being and is sustained by God’s word
* Reveals = God is revealed through the Word of God
* Gathers = people are drawn together in worship to listen to the Word of God

**The purpose of the Mass:**

* To gather community
* To experience union with Christ Jesus (through Holy Communion)
* To hear and participate in the messages of revelation and salvation intended for all through the Word of God

**Module 9:** *the main structures and processes of a particular religion*

**Religious structures:**

Refer to the organisation of a religion, including its leadership. These structures may be well established and formal or less well-defined and informal.

**Religious processes:**

Refer to how things are done in a religion, it is the workings of a religious structure.

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| **Religious Structure** | **Religious Process** |
| -A diocese  -The Magisterium  -The hierarchy of the Church | -Apostolic Succession  -Apostolic Tradition  -Vatican II |

**Catholic structures and process’s purpose:**

The Catholic Church has many structures and processes that are designed to support the work and mission of the Church. These structures typically serve at least one of these functions:

* To teach and safeguard the Christian message (e.g. homily)
* To provide for the growing holiness of believers
* To govern the Church in Jesus’ name

*“To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name by his power”* (CCC 873)

**Structure 1 – A diocese:**

In the Catholic Church, there is no one person in charge of the Church. In Australia, the church is made up of diverse groups of diocese, religious institutes and societies of apostolic life, as well as networks of lay organisations.

The church is organised into *35 dioceses, each head by a Bishop*. The majority are *geographically defined*, and others are for special categories of people such as the Eastern Rite Catholics or the Military Ordinariate of Australia which was formed for the spiritual pastoral care of the Defence Force of Australia Personnel.

Each diocese is made up of a smaller geographical area, called *parishes*. These dioceses are independent of each other except when they cede authority in a particular activity to another Church authority. The bishop of each diocese on has the Pope as his superior.

**The diocese**

*“Refers to a community of the Christian faithful in communion of faith and sacraments with their bishop ordained in apostolic succession” (CCC 833)*

A diocese led by a bishop consists of a number of parishes. In WA there are four dioceses: Perth, Geraldton, Bunbury and Broome. In the diocese the Church as the Body of Christ gathers for special feasts and events, usually in a Cathedral.

The Cathedral is the principal church of the diocese and the bishop’s church. It has a special chair called the *cathedra* which symbolises the role and responsibility to teach, sanctify and govern.

The 35 dioceses are separated into 7 geographical archdiocese, 21 smaller dioceses and 7 non-geographical dioceses.

**Structure 2 – The Magisterium:**

It is the *Pope in communion with the bishops, divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit to interpret the Word of God.*

The Magisterium **originated** when Jesuses instituted the sacrament of *Holy Orders* for the handing down of his authority to the Apostles and those who would follow them (Apostolic Succession). As the Apostles came to be known as “bishops” and with the Pope as the special successor to St Peter, they teach in the name of Jesus. Catholics believe that the power of Christ is too strong to be affected by human limitations.

The early Christians accepted the authority of the Apostles when they taught in the name of Jesus. When the Apostles exercises the spiritual gifts, Jesus had given them, it was Jesus who was guiding the Church through them. Jesus, not the Apostles or the Magisterium of the Church, is the one who gives the Christian message. It is Jesus who guides the Magisterium’s teaching.

The **purpose** of the Magisterium is to ensure that all who are trying to live and to teach the message of Christ do so authentically.

The **role** of the Church’s Magisterium in the life of the Church can be learned by studying the practice of the early Church. Many of its members had seen and heard Jesus himself. The practice of the early church teaches much about the roles of Peter, the Apostles and others such as Paul, who were called to share the spiritual gifts and role given by Jesus to the Apostles.

The Church’s Magisterium continues to hand on the liturgies, teachings and moral commands of Jesus today. The Magisterium has the responsibility of making sure that the Christian message is not distorted by human opinions or attitudes that conflict with it.

*“Now I want to make it quite clear to you… the gospel that was preached by me, that it was no human message” (St Paul – Galatians 1:11-12)*

The responsibility of teaching Jesus; message accurately is more important than the messenger. Catholics believe that the Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God but it is its servant.

The Magisterium teaches the faithful in two main ways, the **Extraordinary and Ordinary ways**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Extraordinary Magisterium** | **Ordinary Magisterium** |
| Is when all the bishops meet in an ecumenical council to decide on matters of faith or morals and the Pope makes a pronouncement with full authority from the Chair of Peter. | Is when the Pope and bishops, acting in groups or alone in their diocese, govern, sanctify, or teach their flock on various matters using their gift of authority. E.g., Pope writing an encyclical. |

The **Universal Magisterium** is when the Pope and Bishops throughout the world, agree and intend to teach a doctrine of faith or morals to the whole church.

**Types of teachings:** *infallible teachings, definitive teachings, teachings to help understand revelation and teachings on contemporary issues.*

Infallible teachings are those teachings that are “divinely revealed”. They relate either to faith or the essential requirements for Christian morals. They are called “infallible” (incapable of error) for two reasons:

1. They are found in what God has revealed through Jesus
2. The Holy Spirit has guided the Church’s understanding of them

Infallible teachings can be proclaimed by Councils of Popes and bishops, or by Popes on their own. Examples of infallible teachings are the Creeds. Doctrines about the Trinity and the seven sacraments. Infallible teachings cannot be changed because what God has revealed cannot change.

Definitive Catholic teachings are the teachings that help ‘define’ a person’s faith as a Catholic. Because of their relationship to what God has revealed, the definitive teachings must be consciously agreed to and lived by anyone who is Catholic. E.g. deliberate abortion or euthanasia breaks the Fifth Commandment.

Teachings which help understand Revelation are the most frequent teachings of the Popes and bishops and aims to help Catholics understand better the Christian message, and how it relates to daily life. The purpose of the teachings is:

* To explain God’s revelation clearly
* To point out how some teachings are consistent with what God has revealed
* To warn about ideas that conflict with what God has revealed

Catholics are called to accept these teachings. The most regular examples of these teachings over the past few decades are those relation to issues of Social Justice.

The Magisterium teaches in light on contemporary new issues. The Spirit continues to guide the understandings of Popes and bishops about the Gospel of Jesus. The conscience response called by these statements is religious acceptance as the accuracy depends on the knowledge available at that time.

*“I believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding the Pope and the Bishops as Jesus promised, and so I accept this official teaching”*

**Process 1 – Apostolic Succession**

Apostolic Succession preserves and passes on the teachings of Christ. It is passed on authentically, so the teachings present is message accurately.

Jesus promised he would help his followers in several ways. He promised that he would remain present with his followers as they taught his message by example and words. He would guide them and help them.

*“And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (Matthew 28:20)*

Jesus promised to share the holy spirit with them. In practice, the holy Spirit would not only protect them from changing or disorting his message, but instead:

*“he will lead you to complete truth” (John 16:13)*

Jesus then called the twelve apostles to accept the special gifts. Their calling was to lead the Church in his name after Ascension.

The early Christians accepted the role of the Apostles because of three promises of Jesus:

1. Given at the last supper, was that the **Holy Spirit** *“will lead you to complete truth” (John 16:13)*
2. **Jesus** would be **present** with them *“I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (Matthew 28:20)*
3. No evil or human weakness or pressure will prevail against the church *“the gates of the underworld can never overpower it”*

The teachings have only been accepted when they have been exercising the roles and gifts they have inherited from the Apostles.

*“The church is apostolic in her origin because she has been built on “the foundation of the Apostles”” (CCCC 857)*

**Process 2: Apostolic Tradition**

Through the tradition, scripture and Magisterium

The full message of Christ is also called the ‘deposit of faith’ and this was entrusted to the Apostles. *“The Apostles transmitted all they received from Christ and learned from the Holy Spirit to their successors, the bishops, and through them to all the generations until the end of the world” (Compendium CC12)*

The teaching of the Apostles is transmitted through the Apostolic Tradition by two complementary means: **Sacred Tradition** and **Sacred Scripture**

Sacred Tradition – is the process by which the faith is handed on and it is also that which is handed on. This included scriptures, the teachings of the Church, the writings of the fathers, the liturgical practices of the Church and the living faith of the Church throughout the ages.

Scared Scripture – is the inspired word of God, the message of salvation, in written form and is contained in the bible. The books of the Bible were accepted as authoritative within the Tradition of the church.

*“Tradition and Sacred Scripture are bound closely together and communicate with each other. Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ. They flow out of the same divine spring and together make up one sacred deposit of faith from which the Church derives her certainty about revelation” (Compendium CCC 14).*

The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the deposit of faith has been entrusted to the successor of Peter and to the bishops in communion with him.

*“Scripture, tradition and the Magisterium are so closely untied with each other that one of them cannot stand without the others” (Compendium CCC 17)*

**Module 10:** *the impact an event or issue had on a religion – sexual revolution*

The Sexual Revolution occurred in America during the 1960s and 70s. It led to attitudes towards sexual behaviour to become more tolerant and liberal in the US. It was influenced by the ongoing civil rights and anti-war movements which created a younger generation of people that questioned authority and rejected their parents’ values. Many in this younger generation, particularly in San Francisco were part of a subculture known as hippies, which promoted a culture of *“free love”* that placed emphasis on the power of love and beauty of sex.

**Three key features**

-Occurred in the 1960s and 70s in America

-It was the change in attitudes of the younger generation towards sexual behaviour

-It promoted *“free love”* that placed emphasis on the power of love and beauty of sex

**Key causes:** *the pill, contraception, premarital sex and the legalization of abortion in 1973*

**Life before the event:** the traditional family were shown with a mother and father who was always married and had two or three children. These families were supposed to get along. Fathers wore suits while the mothers wore dresses, and the children were always completing their chores. On ads, it was never seen or hinted that a husband and wife were having a sexual relationship with each other. It wasn’t uncommon for a married couple to sleep in different beds.

**The purpose of sex (Catholic view):**

*“God created man in his own image… male and female he created them”; He blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply” (CCC 2331)*

**CDoC moral teaching 1 (artificial contraception/homosexuality):**

*“The martial act must always be open to the transmission of life”*

Many of the youth were upset with this idea and felt that the Church should not have an impact on people’s sexualities. The people did not want to be dictated by the Pope which triggered propaganda. Pope Paul VI released his contentious letter *Humane Vitae* which condemned sexual behaviours.

**CDoC moral teaching 2 (artificial contraception):**

*“It is a sin to deliberately separate sexuality from procreation”*

The sexual revolution challenged this teaching as more of the youth began to break away from tradition and use contraception. This however is against the church as it prohibits potential conception of new life during fertile periods. This triggered a huge decline in the church.

**CDoc moral teaching 3 (homosexuality):**

*“Complete sexual fulfilment must occur in the act of love with one’s spouse of the opposite sex”*

**The impact on a religion (Humane Vitae)**

In 1968, the Catholic Church released the encyclical *Humane Vitae,* which was directed against artificial contraception.

Pope John XXIII appointed a commission to review the Catholic teaching on contraception in the light of these developments. His successor Paul VI expanded the commission. A majority report recommended that Church teaching permit artificial contraception within marriage.

The report was leaked, creating expectation to change. The encyclical, which set the question within a rich theology of marriage, decided against contraception on the basis that it contravened natural law.

The encyclical was received with hostility. The response led Christians to question the attitudes of their church to sexuality and authority. The encyclical was followed by dissent, disciplinary measures against many priest who protested, and by the resignation of many from the ministry.

*“Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children”*

**The Birth Control Commission**

In 1963, a papal commission began working on a new statement on marriage as part of the Second Vatican council convened by Pope John XXIII to update the teachings of the Catholic Church. They decided to take the issue off the tablet as they were scared people would begin to bring up the contraceptive pill that had recently developed. There was talk of the hierarchy sanctioning its use for Catholic couples because it used natural occurring hormones.

His commission consisted of six people: four of them layman. After Pope John XXIII died, the commission was continued and expanded to 13 members and later 58 including 5 married women.

The commission studied the history of catholic teachings on contraception and found that many of the scientific and theological underpinnings of the prohibition on contraception was faulty or outdated. The Laymen presented the findings of surveys they had conducted of devout Catholic couples about their experience with the rhythm method. The women testified about their own use of the method. It was found that natural family planning did not seem to bring couples closer but instead often drove them apart. They heard of couples who became obsessed with sex because of the restrictions on spontaneous demonstration of affection. They heard women speak of having more than just the role of childbearing.

The commission voted 80% to recommend the church to rescind its ban on artificial contraception. The members declared that contraception was not *“intrinsically evil”* nor the Pope’s previous teaching on it infallible. But to conservatives in the Vatican, it was impossible that the teaching on birth control could change because it would acknowledge that the hierarch had been wrong on an issue.

The minority report said: *“The Church cannot change her answer, because this answer is true… it is true because the catholic Church instituted by Christ… could not have so wrongly erred during all of those centuries of its history”*

**Module 11:** *a comparison of societal and religious views on one current issue in society*

**Respect for human life:**Jesus revealed many ways for Christians to be guided. One of the most important ways to find guidance is to follow the ten commandments. In particular the fifth commandment is concerned with respecting the right of every human being to the life given to them by God. God demands that human life is to be safeguarded and protected. God created human lide, and sustains its existence in the fifth commandment:  
  
*“Thou shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13)*

**Every human life is sacred**

Every human life is sacred to God. God is involved in the development of every person. Everyone has a special relationship with God and God relates with each of them personally. God ultimately wants us to be united in ‘heaven’.

There are three divine actions that teach people the value God has for human life:

* Creating human life
* Giving every person a soul
* Calling all to live the lives that lead to eternal union with God in heaven

*“God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim the right directly to destroy an innocent human being” (CCC 2258)*

**An essential principle for democracy**

Human equality is that all people have an equal right to live and to the necessities of life. In forbidding deliberate killing, God is teaching the equality of people. Anyone who deliberately kills another believes themselves superior to the victim. This is contrary to the will of God, the Creator and it both endangers and violates the foundation principle which democracy is built.

**Laws that permit deliberate killing:**

No human authority can disobey God. Parliaments or other authorities that legislate to permit the deliberate killing of human life disobey the Fifth Commandment. They are claiming to be superior and in voting breaks the Fifth Commandment.

**How people reject God’s value of human life:**

* Deliberately killing, murdering, aborting, euthanizing
* Failing to care for the elderly, disabled, terminally ill or those lacking necessities
* Failing to protect human life adequately by being careless about their own and others health
* Failing to provide adequate defence of human life

**Why people follow social trends and reject God’s value of human life?**

* Political control may attempt some to eliminate opponents
* Personal conveniences which may tempt a person to kill others considered a nuisance or a burden
* National projects which may tempt governments to cut funds to the sick, elderly, unemployed or disable
* Materialistic living standards which may tempt people to ignore those lacking necessities of life
* Career or reputation which may tempt a pregnant woman to have an abortion

**Christians promote proper care of the terminally ill:**

All people who are terminally ill, or who are frail or disabled are scared to God. The Fifth commandment requires that they be given good palliative care. This includes the relief of pain.

The care of those in great pain requires sufficient quantities of drugs to relieve the pain. Although people may know this may have the effect of bringing forward the time of death, such drugs should be administrated. This is not euthanasia, for these drugs are given to treat pain and not kill.

*“The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity…. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. It should be encouraged” (CCC 2279)*

It is not euthanasia so long as the death of the patient is not the reason for administrating the pain-relieving drug.

**Euthanasia:**

Is the deliberate and intentional killing of a human being because of illness, age, disability, pain, weakness, or unhappiness. It contravenes God’s laws and values.

*“I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person” (Gospel of Life 65)*

**Ordinary and Extraordinary means of preserving life:**

Ordinary means refers to means that must be taken to preserve life (e.g. feeding test tubes as people need nutrition to live). Everyone is obliged to care for their own and other’s health, by seeking medical treatment, providing for those who are sick, frail or weak and maintain standards of health and hygiene.

Extraordinary means refer to treatment which are too expensive, not beneficial or cause pain if treatment is prolong. In other words, its aggressive medical treatment. The fifth commandment does not oblige aggressive medical treatment or extraordinary means for preserving human life.

*“Discounting medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of ‘over-zealous’ treatment” (CCC 2278)*

A medical treatment can be extraordinary for three reasons:

1. Not be reasonably available to the patient because of cost
2. Not be reasonably beneficial to the patient in terms of improvement or cure
3. Be unreasonably burdensome and demanding on the patient or others

The decision should be made by the patient, in consultation with medical personnel.

**The Christian perspective on human suffering:**

God’s revelation helps to understand the meaning of human experiences such as suffering. To understand human suffering, we can look at the lfie of Jesus. He endured physical and psychological suffering for the love of others. God will turn our sufferings in mysterious ways of good.

Jesus wants us to *“take up his cross” (Luke 9:23)*

In the Catholic church it is believed that suffering can help prepare death. Suffering has a purifying aspect as it can lead people to reflect and focus on right values, it discards the unimportant, it can lead to awareness of past wrongs needing forgiveness, it can be offered with the sufferings of Jesus and It brings the reward of deep peace.

For Christians suffering provides an opportunity to prepare for death by inviting acceptance of a purgatory on earth. Suffering can lead the person of Christian faith to eternal experiences.

**Types of euthanasia:**

* Active – is when a person directly and deliberately causes a patient’s death, e.g., a doctor gives the patient an overdose of painkillers
* Passive – is when a person does not directly take the patient’s life but allows them to die. E.g., withdrawing treatment or withholding treatment
* Voluntary – is when the patient requests euthanasia
* Non-voluntary – is when the patient is unconscious or unable to make a meaningful choice between living or dying so an appropriate person takes the decision on their behalf
* Involuntary – occurs when the patient was to live but is killed anyway
* Indirect – when the treatment has side effects of speeding the patient’s death
* Assisted suicide – refers to when a person who is going to die needs help to kill themselves and asks for it

**Module 6:**