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CHAPTER FOUR

THE TEACHING CHURCH

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Deposit of Faith: 1 Tim 6:20

Summary of Lesson Content

Lesson 1

Public revelation began with Adam and Eve and ended with Saint John the Evangelist.

The sacred deposit of the Word of God was inspired by God and entrusted to the Church. There is one deposit of the Word of God, and from it flow Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

Lesson 3

As Catholics, we are blessed with Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Church Fathers are holy teachers of the Faith from the first eight centuries AD. Church Doctors are saintly theologians and teachers of any century.

Popes have also written documents on the Faith. Some of these documents are decrees from among the Fathers and the teachings of Christ, called encyclicals.

The *sensus fidelium* is the testimony of what the faithful have believed over the centuries and what saints have thought, meditated upon, and believed.

Lesson 2

The Apostolic Fathers were instructed by the apostles.

Creeds are formulations of the Faith, written as summaries for the faithful transmission of the Faith.

Ecumenical councils (gatherings of all the bishops in union with the Pope) are called to clarify Church teaching.

Lesson 4

The deposit of Faith was completed with the death of Saint John; however, our understanding of the deposit of Faith has developed over the last two millennia. This growth in the Church’s understanding is called the development of doctrine, which is the gradual unfolding of the meaning of the truths Christ has revealed to us.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING CHURCH

LESSON ONE: REVELATION

Aims

The students will learn that public revelation began with Adam and Eve and ended with Saint John the Evangelist.

They will learn that the sacred deposit of the Word of God was inspired by God and entrusted to the Church. There is one deposit of the Word of God and from it flow Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

Materials

- *Activity Book*, p. 13
- Optional:
 - “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563

Begin

Tell the students a story about how you became a religion teacher and why you enjoy teaching. Instruct the students to take out a paper and pencil and write about what you told them. They may share with one another to be sure the information they record is accurate. Explain how you gave them the entire oral report (Tradition) and they recorded it as accurately as they could (Scripture). As well-written as their reports may be, we may discover more information (such as how you told the story, your intention in telling the story, etc.) through discussion with the teacher/class (Magisterium).

Develop

1. Read paragraphs 1–11.
2. Define revelation. *Revelation* literally means “to unveil” something. God revealed himself and his teaching to man because we could not have discovered these truths on our own (in time and without error). Just as a teacher explains things clearly to his students to help them learn and understand, God reveals himself so that we can understand. God revealed himself gradually through salvation history and perfectly in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ.
3. The first phase of revelation occurred in the Old Testament. It is called “Pre-Christian” revelation. During this time, God revealed his existence as the one true God. He also revealed his plan for salvation. This phase of revelation was fulfilled in God’s perfect revelation of himself in becoming man (Jesus Christ). Christ’s coming began what is known as “Christian” revelation. Christian revelation contains the truths revealed by

Jesus Christ to his apostles. These truths include the most important mysteries of our Faith. Among them are the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Eucharist.

4. The Word of God is inspired by God (and perfectly revealed in Christ, who is the Word made Flesh). It has been communicated to us in two ways:
 - Sacred Scripture: the Word of God put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit
 - Sacred Tradition: the entirety of the Word of God entrusted to the apostles by Christ and the Holy Spirit

These two sources of revelation are closely connected and must be kept together for proper understanding of the truths of God and their faithful transmission. The Word of God is entrusted to the Teaching Church, called the Magisterium (the Pope and the bishops in union with the Pope), to safeguard and faithfully transmit it to God’s people.

Reinforce

1. Have the students work on *Activity Book* p. 13 (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 47).
2. Give the class time to work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 43).
3. Explain that because public revelation was fulfilled in Christ, there is no more revelation necessary. Saint John the Evangelist was the last first-hand witness of these truths, which he recorded in his Gospel and in the Book of Revelation.
4. You may teach about the synoptic Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke share similar stories and likely shared information in writing their texts. Although there are some differences, these do not discredit their writings or the truths contained therein. They provide various perspectives on the same teachings for different audiences.

Conclude

1. Teach the students to sing “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563.
2. End class by leading the students in praying the Nicene Creed (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 343).

CHAPTER 4

The Teaching Church

They asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God.”
Luke 20:21

“This gospel was to be the source of all saving truths and moral discipline. This was faithfully done: it was done by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received” (DV, 7).

As we have already seen, Our Lord left to the Church the *deposit of Faith*. His final command to the apostles was to teach all that he had instructed them. He relied on his apostles and their successors to carry his message to the world. This is made known to us today through the living voice of the Church—the Pope, the bishops, the priests—even the laity. Each of these conveys to us the message of Christ, especially the clergy, who are, by their office, the representatives of Christ. The Church bases her teaching on the deposit of Faith revealed to us by God. Before we look at the source of this teaching we should first consider what is meant by *revelation*.

What Is Revelation?

Revelation literally means to “draw back the veil” or to uncover. God is primarily a mystery to us. On our own we can have only a limited

knowledge of him. However, God has unveiled some of the mysteries about himself so that we might come to know and love him. He has helped us to know who he is and what he expects of us.

In other words, revelation is the communication by God to man of the truths about himself that he wants man to know but that man could never uncover on his own. These truths are known as doctrines or teachings of our Faith.

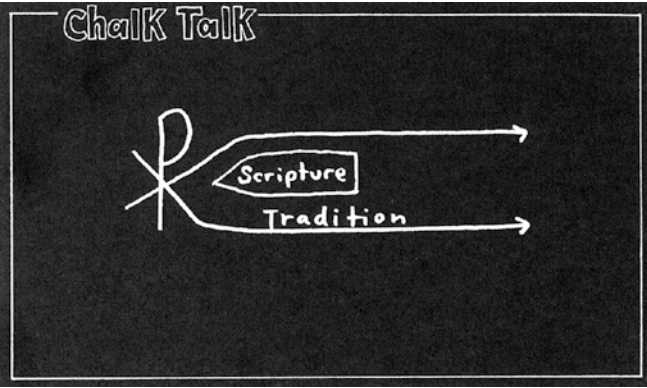
God did not reveal these truths about himself all at once but only gradually with the passing of time. The process of public revelation began with Adam and Eve and ended with the death of the last apostle, St. John.

The first phase of God’s revelation can be found in the Old Testament. Because this revelation took place long before the birth of Christ, we call it “pre-Christian” revelation. If we look at the Old Testament, we can see that God gradually revealed more about himself as the centuries passed.

This revelation was completed when God fully showed himself to us by becoming man and living among us. This phase is known as “Christian” revelation. It contains the truths revealed by Jesus Christ to his apostles. These



CHALK TALK: SOURCES OF REVELATION



“It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.”
—*Dei Verbum* 10

Preview

In the next lesson, the students will learn about the Early Church.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING CHURCH

LESSON TWO: EARLY CHURCH

Aims

- The students will learn that the Apostolic Fathers were instructed by the apostles.
- They will learn that creeds are formulations of the Faith, written as summaries for the faithful transmission of the Faith.
- They will learn that ecumenical councils (gatherings of all the bishops in union with the Pope) are called to clarify Church teaching.

Materials

- *Activity Book*, p. 14
- Optional:
 - “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563

Begin

- The apostles were taught by Christ. They were witnesses to his life, deeds, miracles, teachings, death, Resurrection, and Ascension. They were Christ’s closest followers, who knew him and his revelation most intimately. They passed on what Christ taught to his disciples. Some recorded their knowledge in the Gospels to ensure its transmission. Note: Can we have Scripture without Tradition? No! Scripture comes from Tradition.

Develop

- 1. Read paragraphs 12–18.
- 2. The apostles trained disciples in all that they knew to be revealed by Christ (many of these disciples were bishops in the Early Church). The leaders of the Church were very faithful in transmitting the truths of Christ carefully and in their entirety. The immediate disciples of the apostles are called the Apostolic Fathers.
- 3. Review that Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition (the Word of God) were entrusted to the apostles (the leaders of the Church) and, therefore, were entrusted to the Church to safeguard, interpret, and faithfully transmit.
- 4. In the Early Church there was some confusion over various teachings and thus clarification was needed. Christians turned to the Teaching Church (which has the duty to safeguard, interpret, and faithfully transmit the truth). The Magisterium (Teaching Church) is the Pope and the bishops in union with him. They gathered together in what is called an ecumenical council. This has certain requirements:
 - Universal invitation (all bishops invited)
 - Sufficient representation (most bishops attended)
 - Papal authorization (Pope has the last word, and if the bishops are not in union with the Pope, they do not have authority)Some doctrines clarified in ecumenical councils are: the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and Mary as Mother of God.
- 5. From some of the councils, in which Church teaching was clarified and our understanding of doctrine summarized, creeds were written to summarize our Faith and ensure that it is faithfully transmitted. Examples are the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.

Reinforce

- 1. Have the students work on *Activity Book* p. 14. (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 47)
- 2. Give the class time to work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 43).
- 3. Have the students write summaries of the ecumenical councils and their primary teachings. Each student can research a different council and make a presentation for the other students. Be sure the students understand the importance and teachings of the first seven ecumenical councils.
- 4. The students may research different creeds and compare them.

Conclude

- 1. Lead the students in singing “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563.
- 2. End class by leading the students in praying the Nicene Creed (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 343).

revelations include the most important mysteries of our Faith. Among them are the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Eucharist.

Source of Revelation

“God graciously arranged that the things he had once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and be transmitted to all generations” (DV, 7). This sacred deposit of the Word of God has been entrusted to the Church.

There is only one single sacred deposit of the Word of God, but from it flow both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, the Bible. It is important to recognize that Tradition and Scripture are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit” (DV, 9). By means of Tradition, the books of the Bible are known to the Church, and the Scriptures are more thoroughly understood and interpreted.

Sacred Scripture, the Bible, is the written Word of God. It is made up of a collection of books written at various times by different men who wrote under God’s inspiration. As we know, the Bible is made up of the Old Testament, which contains pre-Christian revelation, and the New Testament, which contains Christian revelation.

The New Testament, however, does not contain all that Jesus did and said. In fact, the various books of the New Testament were not even begun until some twenty or thirty years after the death of Christ. The apostles began to preach the message of Christ first, and only later were some of these teachings committed to writing. Scripture itself testifies to the fact that the Gospels do not include all of Jesus’ words. At the end of his Gospel, St. John says, “. . . there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (Jn 21:25).

What Jesus taught his apostles was passed on to their disciples. For example, St. Polycarp of Smyrna, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and St. Clement of Rome all lived during the last part of the first century and the beginning of the second century. Because they were personally taught by the apostles, they are known as **Apostolic Fathers**. Their writings contain some of Jesus’ teachings that are not explicitly found in the New Testament.

Over the centuries many varied and contradictory interpretations of the Bible have arisen. Who had the authority to decide which was the right one? It is important to note that the Church—which, as we have seen was given authority by Christ (Mt 16:19) to settle all disputes on earth—is the interpreter of Sacred Scripture. She is the custodian (or guardian) of Scripture and Tradition because she was promised the guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

The Second Vatican Council says, “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church” (DV, 10).

Creeds

An important written expression of Tradition is found in the *creeds*, or statements of belief, of the Church. These creeds are summary statements of the main doctrines proposed for belief by the Church. The earliest of these dates back to very early times and is called the *Apostles’ Creed*.

The *Nicene Creed* was formulated at the council of Nicaea and approved in its final form at the council of Constantinople in the fourth century. It is an expansion and explanation of

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ber of the sacraments, and the nature of the Church. The decisions of these councils clarify or define the teaching of the Church.

Fathers and Doctors of the Church

The writings of the *Fathers and Doctors* of the Church are also written records of witnesses. The **Fathers of the Church** are saintly Christian writers of the early centuries of the Church who are recognized as special witnesses of the Faith. Among the more well-known are the following: St. Athanasius, a bishop during the fourth century who defended the doctrine that Christ was both God and man against the Arian heresy; St. Augustine, a bishop of the fourth century who converted after leading a life of great sin and became one of the greatest theologians in the Church; and St. Jerome, a monk and a scholar during the fourth century who translated the Bible into Latin, the common language of the people at that time.

CARDINAL NEWMAN

John Henry Cardinal Newman was born in England in 1801. He was an Anglican scholar who founded the Oxford Movement in England in order to reform the Anglican Church. In many sermons, lectures, and books, Newman expounded the “Anglo-Catholic” position. One of his most important works was a book entitled *On the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in which he discussed how the Church’s understanding of her Faith deepens over time. His discussion of this question was the most complete treatment of it up until that time.

Eventually John Henry Newman was led to the true Church of Christ through his studies and his writings. Toward the end of his life he was made a cardinal of the Church by Pope Leo XIII.

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the Apostles’ Creed. In the first creed, and in fact in the early days of the Church, most doctrines were stated in plain and simple language. Over the years questions and difficulties arose concerning many of these doctrines. The later creeds, particularly the Nicene, were written to explain more fully some of these doctrines.

Councils

A second written expression of Tradition is found in the statements of the ecumenical councils of the Church. An ecumenical council is a gathering of bishops from all around the world to discuss matters of concern to the Church under the authority of the Pope. We call them *ecumenical*, meaning whole or worldwide, because they involve all the bishops. Over the centuries councils have frequently been called in response to controversies over basic doctrines of the Faith. The councils have given the Church the occasion to explain more completely and accurately certain beliefs.

The earliest controversies were over the Trinity and the human and divine natures of Christ. The Council of Nicaea addressed these questions. It is evident that when there was a controversy there had to be an arbiter (or umpire) to decide what the true teaching was. Later councils addressed questions about which books were in fact inspired and thus to be included in the Bible, the nature and num-

The lists that follow contain some of the most important of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose	St. Jerome
St. Augustine	St. John Chrysostom
St. Basil the Great	St. John Damascene
St. Benedict	St. Leo the Great
St. Cyprian	St. Paulinus of Nola
St. Gregory the Great	St. Polycarp
St. Ignatius of Antioch	

DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

St. Albert the Great	St. Francis de Sales
St. Alphonsus Liguori	St. John of the Cross
St. Anselm	St. Peter Canisius
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	St. Robert Bellarmine
St. Bonaventure	St. Teresa of Avila
St. Catherine of Siena	St. Thérèse of Lisieux
	St. Thomas Aquinas

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EARLY ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

- First Nicaea, 325: affirmed that Jesus is true God (same substance as the Father).
- First Constantinople, 381: affirmed the divinity of Holy Spirit.
- Ephesus, 431: proclaimed Mary *Theotokos* (God bearer) and affirmed the unity of Jesus as one Divine Person, even in the womb of Mary.
- Chalcedon, 451: affirmed that Jesus is one Divine Person with two natures: human and divine.
- Second Constantinople, 553: affirmed Church teaching on the Trinity and the Incarnation.
- Third Constantinople, 680–681: affirmed that Jesus has two wills, human and divine, along with his two natures, and that the human will, although separate, submits in all things to his divine will.
- Second Nicaea, 787: affirmed that worship is due to God alone and that we can venerate saints, relics, and sacred images.

Preview

In the next lesson, the students will learn about the writings of the Church.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING CHURCH
LESSON THREE: CHURCH WRITINGS

Aims

The students will learn that the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church are testimonies to the teachings of the Church. Church Fathers were recognized as special writers of the Faith. Church Doctors are saintly theologians and teachers of any century.

They will learn that Popes have also written documents on the Faith. Some of these documents are decrees or expressions of the teachings of Christ, called encyclicals. The *sensus fidelium* is the testimony of what the faithful have believed over the centuries and what saints have thought, meditated upon, and believed.

Materials

- Activity Book, p. 15
- Optional:
 - “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563

Begin

It is important for the Church to document what she believes. Often the Church is of one accord. However, there are times when new movements of thought that are contrary to the truths of our Faith become popular. We must refer to the documents of the Church in order to understand the truths of our Faith. For example, neo-gnosticism occasionally resurfaces in an immoral culture, but referring to Church writings, we can be protected from error.

Develop

1. Read paragraphs 19–23 (up to Development of Doctrine).
2. Discuss the Church Fathers. They are saintly Christian writers of the early centuries of the Church, who are recognized as special witnesses of the Faith. They often wrote against heresies (false teachings) or helped people to better understand the Faith. Have the students read the list of the Fathers provided at right.
3. Discuss the Doctors of the Church. They are saintly theologians of any century whose writings are outstanding in guiding the faithful at all times and who have been recognized officially by the Pope. There are three women Doctors of the Church (Saint Thérèse of Lisieux was recently named as such). A list is provided on p. 45 of this manual.
4. The Pope, by himself, can teach on matters of faith and morals. Often popes write encyclicals—letters sent to the bishops and the faithful, expressing the teaching of the Church on matters of faith and morals and other timely subjects.
5. Another form of Church Tradition is the *sensus fidelium*. This is the testimony of the faithful. It records what they believed over the centuries, what saints have thought, meditated upon, believed, etc. Included in this testimony are the actions and prayers of the faithful. The whole body of the faithful who have an anointing from the Holy Spirit cannot err in matters of the Faith. This, however, is not limited to any one time, but through all times and in all places. This is an important body of testimony for the Church.
6. Assign each student a Father or Doctor of the Church to research. Each student should make a presentation of his findings for the next class.

Reinforce

1. Have the students work on Activity Book p. 15 (see Teacher’s Manual, p. 47).
2. Give the class time to work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter.
3. Have the students think of an example of the *sensus fidei* and its importance in the Church. (marian doctrines are a good example.)
4. Each student should choose an encyclical and explain it to the class.

Conclude

1. Lead the students in singing “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563.
2. End class by leading the students in praying the Nicene Creed (see Teacher’s Manual, p. 343).

ber of the sacraments, and the nature of the Church. The decisions of these councils clarify or define the teaching of the Church.

Fathers and Doctors of the Church

The writings of the *Fathers* and *Doctors* of the Church are also written records of witnesses. The **Fathers of the Church** are saintly Christian writers of the early centuries of the Church who are recognized as special witnesses of the Faith. Among the more well-known are the following: St. Athanasius, a bishop during the fourth century who defended the doctrine that Christ was both God and man against the Arian heresy; St. Augustine, a bishop of the fourth century who converted after leading a life of great sin and became one of the greatest theologians in the Church; and St. Jerome, a monk and a scholar during the fourth century who translated the Bible into Latin, the common language of the people at that time.

The **Doctors of the Church** are the saintly theologians of any century whose writings are outstanding in guiding the faithful at all times and who have been recognized officially as such by the Pope. One of the foremost among these is the great Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas, who lived in Italy during the thirteenth century. Three women are included among the Doctors: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. To help you understand more about the Fathers and Doctors, you might want to choose one from the list in this chapter and read about his life.

The writings and decrees of individual Popes are another expression of the teachings of Christ. Some of these are known as **encyclicals**, letters sent by the Pope to the bishops and the faithful, expressing the teaching of the Church on matters of faith, morals, social responsibility, and other important topics.

Over the centuries, the faithful have believed a consistent body of truth. The thoughts and

CARDINAL NEWMAN

John Henry Cardinal Newman was born in England in 1801. He was an Anglican scholar who founded the Oxford Movement in England in order to reform the Anglican Church. In many sermons, lectures, and books, Newman expounded the “Anglo-Catholic” position. One of his most important works was a book entitled *On the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in which he discussed how the Church’s understanding of her Faith deepens over time. His discussion of this question was the most complete treatment of it up until that time.

Eventually John Henry Newman was led to the true Church of Christ through his studies and his writings. Toward the end of his life he was made a cardinal of the Church by Pope Leo XIII.

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writings of the saints, as well as the actions and prayers of the faithful, are part of this sense of the faithful, or **sensus fidelium**, for the truth. Their testimony does not contradict the formal teachings of the Church.

The Church teaches us that the “whole body of the faithful who have an anointing that comes from the Holy One cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people, when, “from the bishops to the last of the faithful” they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals” (LG, 12).

Development of Doctrine

One last point remains to be made here about the teaching of the Church. Although the deposit of Faith was completed with the death of the last apostle, St. John, our understanding of it has developed over the last twenty centuries. We call this the **development of doctrine**. This is the gradual unfolding of the meaning of many things that Christ revealed to us. It is this development of doctrine that we find in the councils of the Church, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors, and the practical experience of the Faith among the faithful of the Church. Since the Holy Spirit, who

continues to guide the Church, is the Spirit of Truth, any further development can never be—and never has been—in contradiction to any previous doctrine. One example to illustrate this is the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. This doctrine is hinted at in Scripture (“Hail, full of grace,” Lk 1:28), was defended by some of the Doctors of the Church, and was part of the *sensus fidelium* for centuries. Yet it was not officially declared until 1854, by Pope Pius IX. It was not a new revelation, but rather an unfolding of one doctrine over time. Something that is implicit in a doctrine becomes explicit, or it can be the logical consequence of a doctrine.

In this chapter we have discussed the sources of the Church’s teaching. In the next chapter we will consider the authority of the Church, first, as it pertains to matters of doctrine and the teaching of the Church and, second, as it pertains to matters of discipline, the governing of the Church.

Words to Know:

revelation Tradition Sacred Scripture
Apostolic Fathers Fathers of the Church
Doctors of the Church encyclical
sensus fidelium development of doctrine

Q. 12 *What is the Apostles’ Creed?*
The Apostles’ Creed is the summary and profession of faith in the chief mysteries and other truths revealed by God through Jesus Christ (CCC 187, 194).

Q. 13 *What is a mystery?*
A mystery is a truth revealed by God which is beyond our reason (CCC 237).

Q. 14 *What are the chief mysteries of Faith that we profess in the Creed?*
The chief mysteries of Faith that we profess in the Creed are the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (CCC 189–90).

Q. 15 *What is the deposit of Faith?*
The deposit of Faith is all that is contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, handed on in the Church from the time of the Apostles, and from which the Magisterium draws all that it presents for belief as being revealed by God (CCC 84–86).

Q. 16 *What is the development of doctrine?*
The development of doctrine is the growth in understanding of God’s revelation through the study and prayer of believers and the teaching of the Magisterium (CCC 66, 94).

Q. 17 *What is the sensus fidei?*
The *sensus fidei* is a supernatural appreciation of the Faith shown by universal consent in matters of faith and morals, as expressed by the whole body of the faithful under the guidance of the Magisterium (CCC 92–93, 889).

Q. 18 *What is an ecumenical or general council?*
An ecumenical or general council is a gathering of all the bishops of the world with the consent of the Pope, to exercise their collegial authority over the universal Church (CCC 884).

Q. 19 *What is an encyclical?*
An encyclical is a pastoral letter written by the Pope and sent to the whole Church to express Church teaching on some important matter. (CCC 892).

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MAJOR CHURCH FATHERS

St. Ambrose of Milan	Hermas
St. Athanasius	St. Hilary of Poitiers
St. Augustine of Hippo	St. Ignatius of Antioch
St. Basil the Great	St. Irenaeus of Lyons
St. Benedict of Nursia	St. John Chrysostom
St. John Cassian	St. John of Damascus
St. Clement of Alexandria	St. Julius I
St. Clement I	St. Justin Martyr
St. Cyprian of Carthage	St. Leo the Great
St. Cyril of Jerusalem	Novatian
Eusebius of Caesarea	Origen
St. Gregory of Nyssa	St. Peter Chrysologus
St. Gregory the Great	St. Polycarp
	Rufinus of Aquileia
	Tertullian

Preview

In the next lesson, the students will learn about the development of doctrine.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING CHURCH
LESSON FOUR: DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

Aims

The students will learn that the deposit of Faith was completed with the death of Saint John; however, our understanding of the deposit of Faith has developed over the last two millennia. This growth in the Church’s understanding is called the development of doctrine which is the gradual unfolding of the meaning of the truths Christ has revealed to us.

Materials

- Activity Book, p. 16
- Optional:
• “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” Adoremus Hymnal, #563

Begin

Review the deposit of the Word of God and its communication through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. This is entrusted to the teaching Church, the Magisterium.

Review the Apostolic Fathers, councils, and creeds that help us to clarify our beliefs and transmit them to the faithful.

Develop

1. Read paragraphs 24–25, as well as the inset box on Cardinal Newman (to the end of the chapter).
2. Explain that the deposit of Faith was completed with the death of Saint John; however, our understanding of the deposit of Faith has developed over the last two millennia. This is called the development of doctrine: the gradual unfolding of the meaning of the truths that Christ revealed to us. To demonstrate this, explain that we all know our mothers. However, we grow in our understanding of their love through the sacrifices they make and their displays of this love (e.g., affection, gifts, ongoing support, etc.). As we grow older, we also learn about our parents’ relationship (how they met, how they fell in love, etc.) and who they are individually (hobbies, dreams, etc.). Although our understanding of our parents is growing, they have not changed (and in some way we already knew these things). We simply learned to communicate or articulate what we already knew: this person we call mom is the same person who dreams of her child’s wedding and children, loves her spouse and children, etc. All of this is what we mean by “mom” or “dad.”
3. The development of doctrine relies upon the sources of revelation as interpreted by the Magisterium, upon the Apostolic Fathers, Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the *sensus fidelium*.
4. Review the box on Cardinal Newman in the student text. The students should appreciate the importance of his work on the development of doctrine.
5. Have the students make their presentations on the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. They may dress up for their presentations, or play a game, such as name that Doctor or Father.

Reinforce

1. Have the students work on Activity Book p. 16 (see Teacher’s Manual, p. 47).
2. Give the class time to work on the Memorization Questions and Words to Know from this chapter and to prepare for the quiz and unit test.
3. The students may study the Immaculate Conception as an example of the development of doctrine.

Conclude

1. Lead the students in singing “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” Adoremus Hymnal, #563.
2. End class by leading the students in praying the Nicene Creed (see Teacher’s Manual, p. 343).

ber of the sacraments, and the nature of the Church. The decisions of these councils clarify or define the teaching of the Church.

Fathers and Doctors of the Church

The writings of the *Fathers and Doctors* of the Church are also written records of witnesses. The **Fathers of the Church** are saintly Christian writers of the early centuries of the Church who are recognized as special witnesses of the Faith. Among the more well-known are the following: St. Athanasius, a bishop during the fourth century who defended the doctrine that Christ was both God and man against the Arian heresy; St. Augustine, a bishop of the fourth century who converted after leading a life of great sin and became one of the greatest theologians in the Church; and St. Jerome, a monk and a scholar during the fourth century who translated the Bible into Latin, the common language of the people at that time.

The **Doctors of the Church** are the saintly theologians of any century whose writings are outstanding in guiding the faithful at all times and who have been recognized officially as such by the Pope. One of the foremost among these is the great Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas, who lived in Italy during the thirteenth century. Three women are included among the Doctors: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. To help you understand more about the Fathers and Doctors, you might want to choose one from the list in this chapter and read about his life.

The writings and decrees of individual Popes are another expression of the teachings of Christ. Some of these are known as **encyclicals**, letters sent by the Pope to the bishops and the faithful, expressing the teaching of the Church on matters of faith, morals, social responsibility, and other important topics.

Over the centuries, the faithful have believed a consistent body of truth. The thoughts and

CARDINAL NEWMAN

John Henry Cardinal Newman was born in England in 1801. He was an Anglican scholar who founded the Oxford Movement in England in order to reform the Anglican Church. In many sermons, lectures, and books, Newman expounded the “Anglo-Catholic” position. One of his most important works was a book entitled *On the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in which he discussed how the Church’s understanding of her Faith deepens over time. His discussion of this question was the most complete treatment of it up until that time.

Eventually John Henry Newman was led to the true Church of Christ through his studies and his writings. Toward the end of his life he was made a cardinal of the Church by Pope Leo XIII.

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writings of the saints, as well as the actions and prayers of the faithful, are part of this sense of the faithful, or **sensus fidelium**, for the truth. Their testimony does not contradict the formal teachings of the Church.

The Church teaches us that the “whole body of the faithful who have an anointing that comes from the Holy One cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people, when, “from the bishops to the last of the faithful” they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals” (LG, 12).

Development of Doctrine

One last point remains to be made here about the teaching of the Church. Although the deposit of Faith was completed with the death of the last apostle, St. John, our understanding of it has developed over the last twenty centuries. We call this the **development of doctrine**. This is the gradual unfolding of the meaning of many things that Christ revealed to us. It is this development of doctrine that we find in the councils of the Church, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors, and the practical experience of the Faith among the faithful of the Church. Since the Holy Spirit, who continues to guide the Church, is the Spirit of Truth, any further development can never be—and never has been—in contradiction to any previous doctrine. One example to illustrate this is the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. This doctrine is hinted at in Scripture (“Hail, full of grace,” Lk 1:28), was defended by some of the Doctors of the Church, and was part of the *sensus fidelium* for centuries. Yet it was not officially declared until 1854, by Pope Pius IX. It was not a new revelation, but rather an unfolding of one doctrine over time. Something that is implicit in a doctrine becomes explicit, or it can be the logical consequence of a doctrine.

In this chapter we have discussed the sources of the Church’s teaching. In the next chapter we will consider the authority of the Church, first, as it pertains to matters of doctrine and the teaching of the Church and, second, as it pertains to matters of discipline, the governing of the Church.

Words to Know:

revelation Tradition Sacred Scripture
Apostolic Fathers Fathers of the Church
Doctors of the Church encyclical
sensus fidelium development of doctrine

Q. 12 What is the Apostles’ Creed?
The Apostles’ Creed is the summary and profession of faith in the chief mysteries and other truths revealed by God through Jesus Christ (CCC 187, 194).

Q. 13 What is a mystery?
A mystery is a truth revealed by God which is beyond our reason (CCC 237).

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Q. 14 What are the chief mysteries of Faith that we profess in the Creed?
The chief mysteries of Faith that we profess in the Creed are the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (CCC 189–90).

Q. 15 What is the deposit of Faith?
The deposit of Faith is all that is contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, handed on in the Church from the time of the Apostles, and from which the Magisterium draws all that it presents for belief as being revealed by God (CCC 84–86).

Q. 16 What is the development of doctrine?
The development of doctrine is the growth in understanding of God’s revelation through the study and prayer of believers and the teaching of the Magisterium (CCC 66, 94).

Q. 17 What is the *sensus fidei*?
The *sensus fidei* is a supernatural appreciation of the Faith shown by universal consent in matters of faith and morals, as expressed by the whole body of the faithful under the guidance of the Magisterium (CCC 92–93, 889).

Q. 18 What is an *ecumenical* or *general council*?
An ecumenical or general council is a gathering of all the bishops of the world with the consent of the Pope, to exercise their collegial authority over the universal Church (CCC 884).

Q. 19 What is an *encyclical*?
An encyclical is a pastoral letter written by the Pope and sent to the whole Church to express Church teaching on some important matter. (CCC 892).

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DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH
(all are saints)

Albert the Great	Gregory the Great
Alphonsus Liguori	Hilary of Poitiers
Ambrose of Milan	Isidore of Seville
Anselm of Canterbury	Jerome
Anthony of Padua	John Chrysostom
Augustine of Hippo	John Damascene
Basil the Great	John of the Cross
Venerable Bede	Lawrence of Brindisi
Bernard of Clairvaux	Peter Canisius
Bonaventure	Peter Damian
Catherine of Siena	Robert Bellarmine
Cyril of Alexandria	Teresa of Avila
Cyril of Jerusalem	Thérèse of Lisieux
Francis de Sales	Thomas Aquinas

Preview

In the next lesson, the students’ understanding of the material covered in this chapter will be reviewed and assessed. There will be a quiz and unit test.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING CHURCH
REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Aims

The students’ understanding of the material covered in this chapter will be reviewed and assessed.

Materials

- Quiz 4, Appendix, p. A-4
- Optional:
 - “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563

Review and Enrichment

1. The students should understand God’s revelation. They must know the definition of revelation, the periods of revelation, the sources of revelation, and to whom revelation has been entrusted.
2. The students should be able to identify the Apostolic Fathers, the Church Fathers, and the Doctors of the Church.
3. The students should be able to write out one of the Church’s creeds from memory.
4. The students should know the number of councils. They should know from memory the names, dates, and doctrines taught in the first seven councils.
5. The students should be able to give a biography of either a Father or Doctor of the Church.
6. The students should be able to explain encyclicals, the *sensus fidelium*, and the development of doctrine.

Name: _____

The Teaching Church

Quiz 4

Part I: Matching.

1. d men personally taught by the apostles

2. g letter written by the Pope about Church teaching

3. a communication by God to humanity

4. h growing in our understanding of God’s revelation

5. b the written Word of God

6. c teachings of Jesus passed on to his followers

7. i statement of belief

8. e holy theologians of Christian doctrine

9. f Christian writers of the early centuries of the Church

a. revelation

b. Sacred Scripture

c. Tradition

d. Apostolic Fathers

e. Doctors of the Church

f. Fathers of the Church

g. encyclical

h. development of doctrine

i. creed

Part II: Answer in complete sentences.

1. What do Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition have in common?
They are sources of God’s revelation to man, which is safeguarded by the Church, the custodian of Scripture and Tradition.

2. What is a Father of the Church?
A Father of the Church is a Christian writer of the early centuries whose writings and teachings are the earliest expressions of the Tradition of the Church.

3. What is a Doctor of the Church?
A Doctor of the Church is a saint whose writings are acknowledged by the Church for their enduring theological and spiritual value.

4. What is an ecumenical council?
An ecumenical council is a gathering of the bishops from all around the world—under the authority of the Pope—to discuss matters of concern to the Church.

A-4

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Assess

1. Distribute the quizzes and read through them with the students to be sure they understand the questions.
2. Administer the quiz. As they hand in their work, you may orally quiz the students on the Memorization Questions from this chapter (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 45).
3. After all the quizzes have been handed in, review the correct answers with the class.

Conclude

1. Lead the students in singing “Glorious things of thee are spoken,” *Adoremus Hymnal*, #563.
2. End class by leading the students in praying the Nicene Creed (see *Teacher’s Manual*, p. 343).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING CHURCH
ACTIVITY BOOK ANSWER KEYS

Name: _____

Revelation

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Who comprises the living voice of the Church?
The living voice of the Church is comprised of the Pope, bishops, priests and laity.

2. What is revelation?
Revelation is communication by God to man regarding the truths about himself.

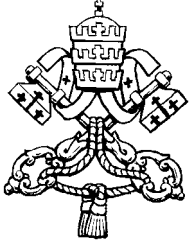
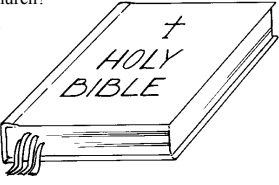
3. When did public revelation begin and end?
Public revelation began with Adam and Eve and ended with St. John.

4. Who is the source of revelation?
The Word of God is the source of revelation.

5. In what two ways is the Word of God passed on to us?
The Word of God is passed on to us through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture.

6. What is Sacred Tradition?
Sacred Tradition is the entirety of the Word of God, which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.

7. What is Sacred Scripture?
Sacred Scripture is the Bible, the written Word of God.



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Name: _____

Our Heritage of Faith

Write descriptions of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church below:

Fathers of the Church:
Answers will vary.

Doctors of the Church:

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Name: _____

Creeds and Councils

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is a creed?
A creed is a statement of belief.

2. What is the Apostles’ Creed?
The Apostles’ Creed is the earliest summary of the Church’s beliefs.

3. What is the Nicene Creed?
The Nicene Creed is an expansion and explanation of the Apostles’ Creed. It was formed at the Council of Nicaea.

4. Why were creeds written?
Creeds are written to explain more fully, and in better detail, some of our doctrines.

5. What is an ecumenical council?
An ecumenical council is a gathering of bishops from all over the world to discuss Church matters under the authority of the Pope.

6. What is discussed at ecumenical councils?
Normally, controversies over doctrine are discussed and more completely and accurately stated at ecumenical councils.

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Name: _____

Development of Doctrine

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is *sensus fidelium*?
Sensus fidelium means "the sense of the faithful" and refers to what the faithful have believed over the centuries.

2. What is *sensus fidei*?
Sensus fidei is the fact that the whole body of the faithful cannot err in matters of belief when they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals.

3. What are encyclicals?
Encyclicals are letters by the Pope to bishops and the faithful expressing the teaching of the Church on faith, morals, social responsibilities, and other important topics.

4. Explain the development of doctrine. Do the truths of the Church change?
The development of doctrine is the gradual unfolding of the meaning of many things Christ revealed to us, making explicit what was already understood implicitly. The truths of the Church do not change.

5. Using the example of the Immaculate Conception, explain the process of the development of doctrine?
Answers will vary, but should be based on p. 30 of the student text.

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TEACHER'S NOTES