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How to use this book

This book has been designed to cover the new Religious Education Directory (RED) for Catholic schools. To reflect the six branches of the RED, the book is divided into six chapters: Creation and covenant, Prophecy and promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to garden, To the ends of the earth and Dialogue and encounter.

Each chapter is divided into topics, with every topic on a new double-page spread. Some topics extend across more than one spread to enable you to explore them in a greater depth. In every topic, you will find features to help you discover, understand and build knowledge about Catholic teaching and practice.

Below is a sample double-page spread to show you some of the features you will find throughout the book and how they work.

Note that where the phrase 'Catholics believe ...' has been used, sometimes these are solely Catholic beliefs but in many instances these beliefs are shared by other Christians outside the Catholic Church or with a wider group still.

Links: Links between topics are highlighted to help you revisit and recap what you have already covered or to see how different parts of the course connect together.

Think: A question to get you thinking about a topic before diving in.

Images: Illustrations, photos and artwork to bring the topic to life.

2.3 What is Mary's role in salvation?

Link
See Book 1 Section 3.2 to remind yourself about the Incarnation

Understand
1 Write a short diary entry from Mary's perspective on the day of the Annunciation, explaining how she would have felt when she realised that she was the one who had been chosen by God to bring about their fulfilment.

Respond
2 Create a piece of art that would help Catholics to understand Mary's role in salvation.

Key words
Messiah – Hebrew word for 'anointed one', set apart to fulfil God's plan
fiat – Latin word for 'let it be done'

Mary in salvation history
We can see that throughout the history of the Jewish people there were various women who played key roles in helping to bring about God's plan of salvation, such as Miriam leading the people out of Israel alongside her brothers, Esther saving the people from death, Hannah dedicating her beloved son to God and Deborah providing wise advice and military leadership. In their own ways they cooperated with God to help bring about the redemption of his people. They 'kept alive the hope of Israel's salvation' (CCC 64). We now learn about another young woman, who through her absolute faith in God, played a key role in salvation history. However, this woman was different from those who preceded her. This woman bore the Saviour himself, through whom God's promises for salvation would be fulfilled.

Throughout the Old Testament the mission of many holy women prepared for that at Mary. (CCC 489)

Since the first Gospel, the Protoevangelium, God's people had waited for the coming of their **Messiah**, for the one who God would send to save them. As promised, it was through a woman living in Nazareth, it came. Mary, an apparently ordinary young woman living in Nazareth, is shown, many believe, to be triumphing over the serpent in the last book of the Bible, Revelation.

The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. (Revelation 12:4-5)

It is clear in both passages that not only would the serpent be defeated but the woman would play a central role in that victory. The Son of God would become flesh and blood through being conceived into the womb of Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus and it is through her that he became incarnate (of flesh) and ultimately brought salvation.

Mary's fiat
The Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament represents the spiritual presence of God. It held the tablets of the Law and also a piece of manna, the bread given by God, as a reminder of his divine intervention. Through the typology of the Ark, Mary has become known as the Ark of the Covenant as she carried the living bread, Christ, in her womb during her pregnancy. Some theologians use the words the 'Scandal of the Incarnation' as she carried the living bread, Christ, in her womb during her pregnancy. Because the success of God's plan to save humankind depended on the free will of one person, Mary could have said no. It was her free choice to cooperate with God; she was 'more than a merely passive instrument of God' (YouCat 84). Just as in Genesis Eve used her free will to disobey God, Mary used her 'let it be done' (*fiat* in Latin). Her yes, to accept the will of God and play a key role in his plan.

The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the **predestined** mother, so that just as a woman had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life. (CCC 488)

Mary's fiat goes far beyond the Annunciation and extends throughout her life, death and resurrection of Jesus. She did not run away, she did not doubt, she did not deny, she continued her 'yes' until the very end. She is a model of the first Christian.

Images:
A painting of the Annunciation
A statue of Mary with her son, Jesus, during his Passion

Key word
predestined – willed by God

Understand
3 Explain in your own words:
• the special role that Mary played in salvation
• the connection between Deborah's role in keeping the hope of salvation alive for the Israelites and Mary's role in salvation.

Respond
4 Consider the words of Mary, 'Let it be done'. What can you learn from Mary's response?

Understand
5 Why do you think Mary's response is held up as a model for the Church to follow?

Mary's role in salvation
Typology helps us to understand Mary, and her significance in salvation history. The writers of the books of the New Testament recognised Mary as the New Eve, the Ark of the New Covenant, and the Mother of God. Mary is shown to be inseparable from the redeeming mission of her son, Jesus. That isn't to say, however, that Mary did not need to be rescued too. Although Mary played an important role in salvation history, she was not equal to Jesus. She may have been born without sin but that was because God made her so. Mary still needed to be saved by Jesus' death and resurrection.

Key words: Definitions of the terminology you need to know.

Extracts: Key passages from the Bible and Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) are presented clearly.

Tasks: Understand, Discern and Respond tasks help you to remember, interpret and reflect on what you have learnt.



4

Desert to garden

In the last chapter you used St Mark's Gospel to learn about Jesus' call to discipleship and vocations. In this chapter, you will learn how Jesus' life, death and resurrection are the source of the salvation of humanity from sin, which is called the **Mystery of Redemption**.

To understand this, you will learn about:

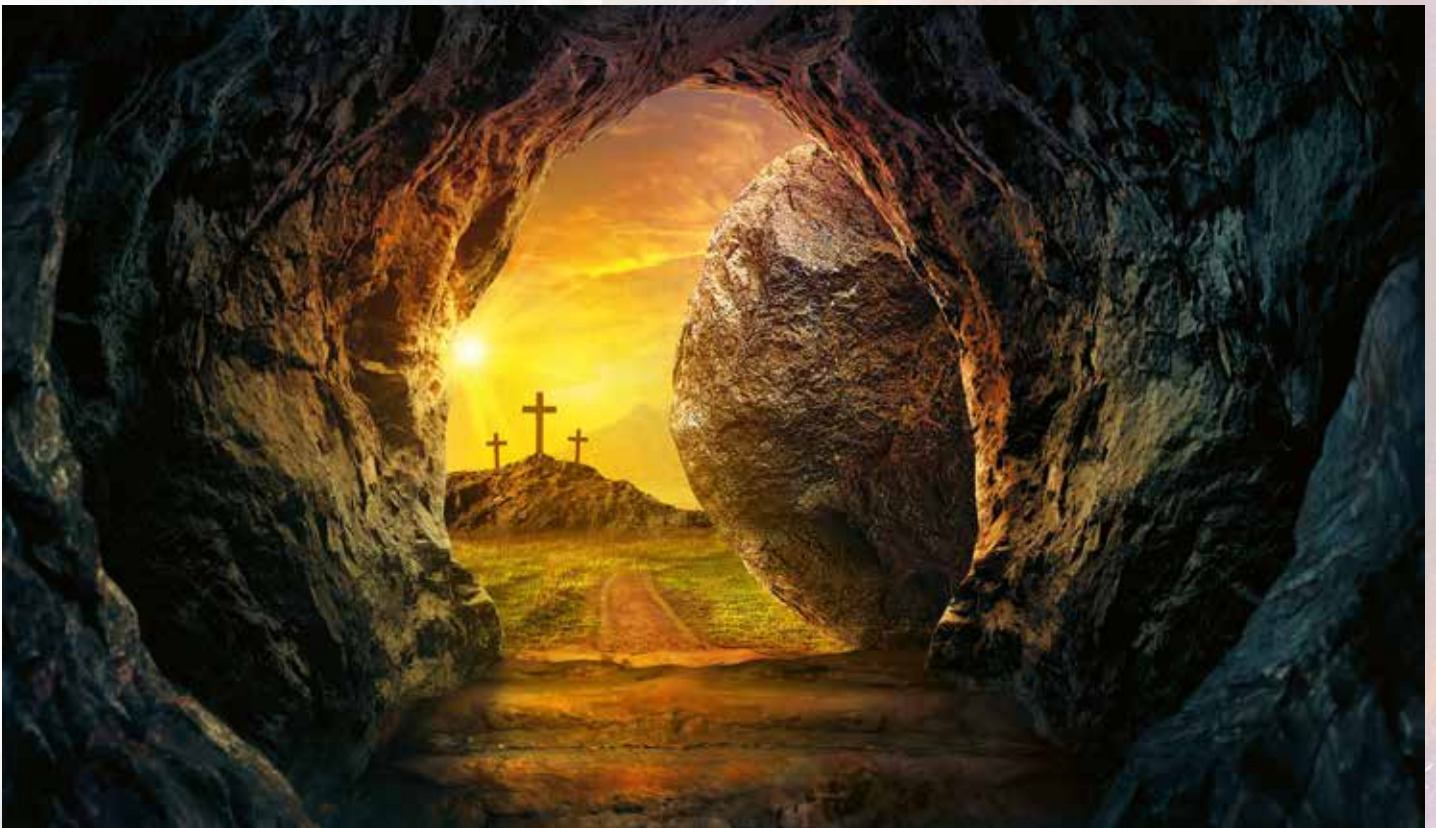
- the **Sinai covenant**
- the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and the role of sacrifice and the High Priest
- Hebrews 9
- how Jesus' crucifixion marks the start of a new and everlasting covenant and makes him the High Priest and the true temple.
- the need for the Mystery of Redemption and the different ways to understand the Mystery of Redemption
- how Jesus' crucifixion made believers all one in Christ
- *Agnus Dei* and *Ecce Agnus Dei*
- the sins of omission and commission and the challenges of forgiveness
- artistic responses to the mystery of suffering
- the practice of restorative justice and those working for justice and peace.

Key words

Mystery of Redemption – the divine process of salvation

Sinai covenant – the covenant established between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai

Discuss how the images below are linked to the central image of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



4.1

What was the Sinai covenant and how is it linked to Herod's Temple?



Think

What is a covenant and what covenant did God make with Abraham? Discuss with your partner.

Link



See Book 2 Chapter 1.6 to remind yourself about the Ten Commandments

What was the Sinai covenant?

God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him: 'I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing' (Genesis 12:2).

This covenant was then **constituted** at **Mount Sinai** between God and the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham (Israel), who had recently been freed from slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

God called Moses to the summit (the highest point) of Mount Sinai to enter into a covenant relationship. God revealed the Ten Commandments as the foundations of the covenant and the people agreed to obey God's commandments, and God promised they would be his chosen people.



▲ Mount Sinai, in modern-day Egypt

How was God's covenant with Israel constituted?

To **seal** the covenant, Moses performed a symbolic act involving the sprinkling of the blood from a sacrificed animal: 'Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words"' (Exodus 24:8).

In ancient covenant-making ceremonies, blood was often involved as a **solemn** and **binding** element, signifying the seriousness of the promises being made. When Moses sprinkled the blood from the sacrificed animal, it demonstrated the commitment being made to the sacred covenant. When Moses sprinkled the blood on the people, it showed that they were also responsible for upholding the covenant. Moses's statement in Exodus 24:8 emphasises that God is the establisher of the covenant; it is not merely a human agreement but a divine covenant **initiated** by God.



Understand

- 1 How was God's covenant with the Israelites constituted?

How was the Temple used in Judaism?

The Temple, in Judaism, is referring to the historical Temple in the city of **Jerusalem** which is central to Jewish history and religious practice. There have been two main Temples:

- The First Temple was called King Solomon's Temple as he instructed it to be built in the tenth century BC to house the Ark of the Covenant, a sacred and ornate chest containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, a golden pot of manna and **Aaron's rod**. The Ark of the Covenant was kept in the innermost chamber of the Temple, called the **Holy of Holies**. The Mercy Seat, which was made of gold, rested on top of the Ark of the Covenant. It had two cherubim facing each other, with their wings spread out. It symbolised the throne of God's presence and mercy. The First Temple was destroyed by the **Babylonians** in 586BC as part of their conquest of Jerusalem, and the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat was either destroyed or lost.
- The Second Temple, which is often referred to as Herod's Temple, was built after the Babylonian exile and completed around 516BC. King Herod further developed it in the first century BC. The Temple was the dwelling place of God's presence which was contained in the Holy of Holies. This was the most sacred space for Jews and only the High Priest could enter it, once a year on Yom Kippur, the **Day of Atonement**. The Second Temple was destroyed in AD70 by the Romans.

The Temple was therefore where Jewish people worshipped God and offered sacrifices. Different types of sacrifices were presented by priests on behalf of the people. Sacrifices were seen as a means of **atonement**, symbolising the people's **repentance** and dedication to God. It was also Herod's Temple to which Jesus was brought as a baby, and which he visited as a child and during his ministry.



▲ Ark of the Covenant

Key words

constituted – to set up in a legal or official form

Mount Sinai – a mountain in Egypt, associated with Moses receiving the Ten Commandments

seal – a symbol used to mark something as official or genuine

solemn – serious and earnest, often associated with religious ceremonies

binding – creating a legal obligation that cannot be easily undone

initiated – to start a process, often with a ceremony

Aaron's rod – a rod associated with Aaron, brother of Moses, that symbolised his role as a leader and priest

Holy of Holies – the innermost and most sacred room in the historical Jewish Temple in Jerusalem reserved for God's presence

Babylonians – the people of ancient Babylon, an influential civilization in Mesopotamia which today is Iraq

Day of Atonement – a solemn day of repentance and fasting for Jews, also known as Yom Kippur

atonement – the act of making amends for sins or wrongdoing

repentance – the sincere regret for one's sins, often accompanied by a commitment to change



Understand

- 2 What was the main role of Herod's Temple?
- 3 How is Herod's Temple linked to the Sinai covenant?

Who was the High Priest?

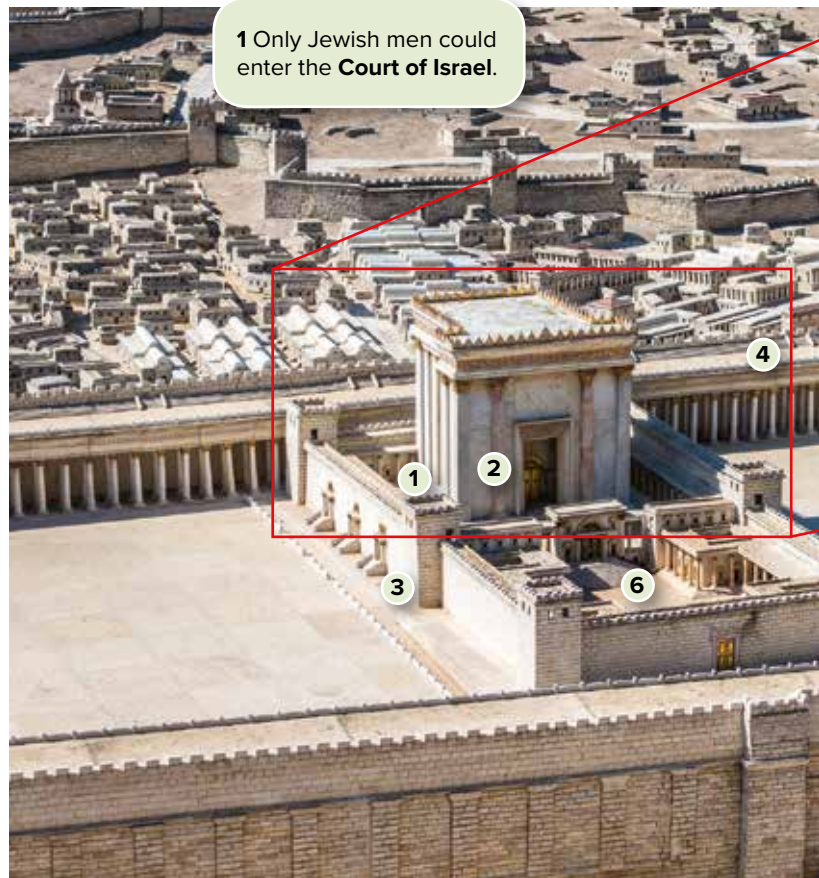
In ancient Judaism, the role of the **High Priest** was unique and central to religious practices. Only the **High Priest** could enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple, and this could only be done once a year on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

What happened on the Day of Atonement?

On the Day of Atonement, the Jewish people engaged in fasting, repentance and prayer. The High Priest wore sacred clothing and would offer a bull as a sin offering to atone for his own sins and the sins of his household. The High Priest would then select two goats for the atonement ritual. One was sacrificed as an offering for sin and the other was designated as the scapegoat. The blood of the sacrificed goat was used by the High Priest to cleanse the Holy of Holies. This ritual signified the removal of sins and the renewal of the covenant. The High Priest would confess the sins of the people over the other goat and then send it away into the wilderness. This symbolised the carrying away of the sins of the community. (This is where the word 'scapegoat' comes from.)



▲ The High Priest entering the Holy of Holies



1 Only Jewish men could enter the **Court of Israel**.

2 At the centre of the Court of the Priests stood the **altar of sacrifice**, where offerings were presented to God. It was a central focus of ritual activity, and it played a crucial role in the atonement for sins.

▲ Herod's Temple

3 The **Court of the Priests** was accessible only to Jewish priests. This court contained the altar where sacrifices were made and other structures related to the rituals and ceremonies performed by the priests.

Understand

- 4 Describe the role of the High Priest.
- 5 What are the main features of the Day of Atonement rite in ancient Judaism?
- 6 How are these rites from the Day of Atonement linked to the Sinai covenant?

Respond

- 7 Have you ever been anywhere which amazed you by its scale and size?

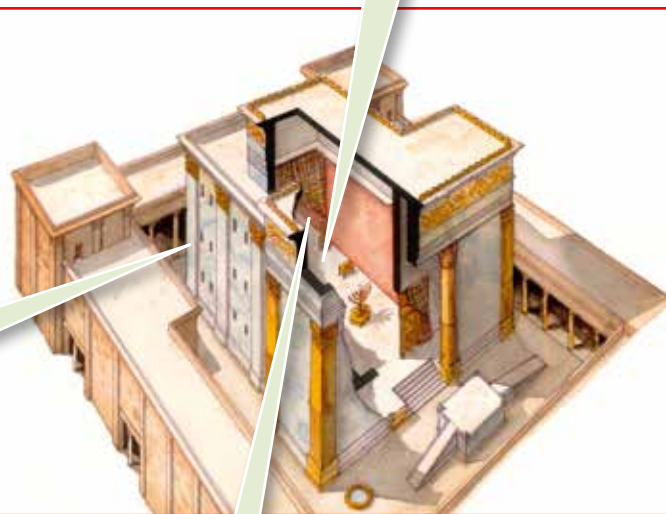
Herod's Temple

4 The **Sanctuary** refers to the entire Temple, which would have been the most impressive structure in Jerusalem. It includes various courtyards, chambers and inner chambers where religious activities and rituals took place.

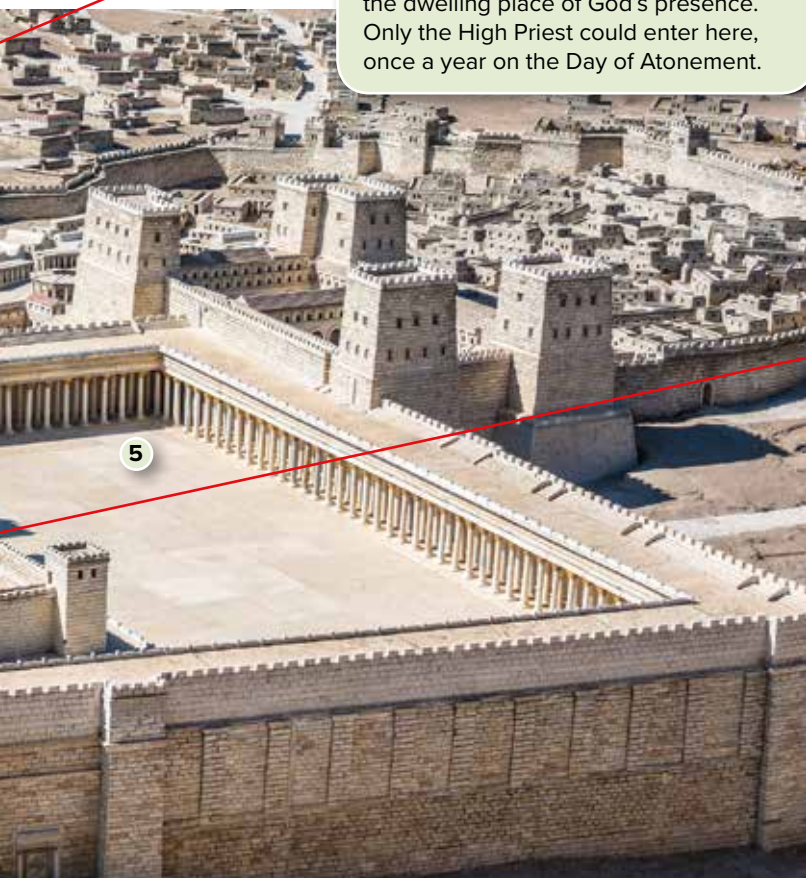
5 The **Court of the Gentiles** was open to all people. They could enter this area and observe the activities of the Temple. This court also contained various merchants and money changers.

The **Holy of Holies** was the most sacred and important place in Judaism as it was the dwelling place of God's presence. Only the High Priest could enter here, once a year on the Day of Atonement.

The **Holy Place** refers to the area just outside the Holy of Holies. It contained the golden **menorah**, and the golden altar of **incense**. It also contained the table of showbread, which held twelve loaves of bread, representing the presence of God. Only priests were allowed to enter the Holy Place.



The **veil** was like a thick curtain which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The veil signified the separation between God and humanity.



Understand

8 Imagine you are a priest walking through Herod's Temple into the Holy Place – describe what you see, hear and smell.

6 The **Court of the Women** was the area in which Jewish women were allowed to be. There were chambers around the Court of the Women used for various purposes, including the treasury where people would make offerings.

Key words

High priest – the chief priest of the Jewish religion before the destruction of the sacred temple

menorah – a Jewish seven-branched candle

incense – an aromatic substance that is slowly burnt to create a fragrant odour during worship

Gentile – a person who does not belong to the Jewish faith

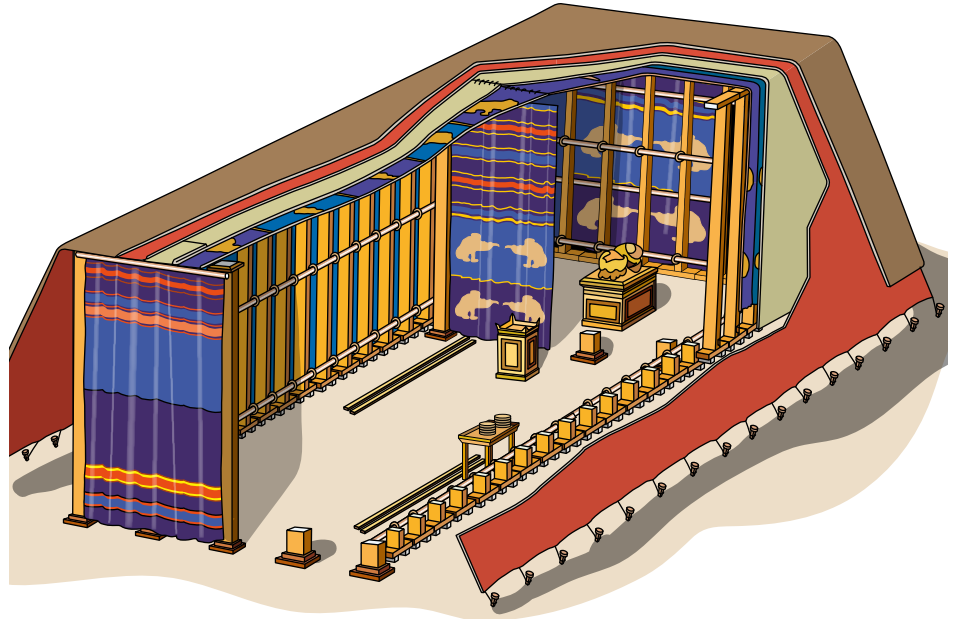


Think

What was the main difference between the First and Second Temple in Jerusalem? Look back to the previous pages if you are not sure.

The Tabernacle

Between Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the creation of the Holy of Holies in the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant was protected by a special tent, with different areas, similar to those of the Temple. This tent was also referred to as the tabernacle.



▲ The tabernacle

Hebrews 9

Hebrews is a book from the Bible that can be found in the New Testament. It is a letter written to Christians who had originally been Jewish, encouraging them to remain faithful to their new Christian beliefs. Hebrews 9 outlines the ancient Jewish rituals related to the Sinai covenant and contrasts them with the eternal nature of Jesus' sacrifice.

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tables of the covenant. Above it all were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, this securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without **blemish** to God, **purify** our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

Therefore he is the **mediator** of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal **inheritance**, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the **transgressions** committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.' And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9)

In the last three paragraphs the writer of Hebrews 9 explains how Jesus' life, death and resurrection **supersede** the ancient Jewish atonement rituals and the Sinai covenant.



Understand

- 1 What is the first paragraph of Hebrews 9 describing and why did the writer end the paragraph with the sentence, 'Of these things we cannot speak now in detail.'?
- 2 What significant Jewish day is described at the beginning of the second paragraph in Hebrews 9?

Key words

blemish – a flaw or imperfection

purify – to cleanse or rid of impurities

mediator – a person that intervenes to reconcile or resolve conflicts

inheritance – property or assets received from a predecessor, typically passed down through generations

transgressions – breaking of laws, rules, or moral principles

supersede – taking precedence or replacing something else, often due to being more important



Understand

- 3 Using Hebrews 9, copy and complete the table below to make connections between aspects of the ancient Jewish atonement rituals and Jesus. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Aspects of the ancient Jewish atonement rituals	Connection to Jesus
Holy of Holies	God's presence is Jesus as he is God Incarnate, the Son of God
High Priest	
Animal sacrifice for atonement of sins	
Animal bloodshed	
Sinai covenant	
Annual Day of Atonement	

- 4 Using your answers to Task 3, explain how the writer of Hebrews 9 represents Christ's sacrifice as superseding the ancient Jewish atonement rite.

Key word

custodian – a person responsible for the care, protection, and management of something valuable

Jesus is the true temple

Hebrews 9 supports the Catholic Church's teaching that Jesus' body is the true temple, 'the place where his [God's] glory dwells' (CCC 1197). The name Jesus meant 'God saves'. God's very name is present in the name Jesus. This is what the Catechism means when it states 'The name "Jesus" signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son' (CCC 432). Catholics also understand this to mean that God's presence was no longer limited to the Holy of Holies because Jesus was God, and as a result Catholics understand Jesus as the true temple – the dwelling place of God. This was evident when Jesus died and the veil (curtain) in the Holy of Holies tore – 'Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.' (Matthew 27:50–1)



▲ Jesus casts out the traders in Herod's Temple and explains he is the true temple



▲ The veil (curtain) in the Holy of Holies was torn in two

Jesus himself confirms he is the true temple in the Gospel of John (John 2:13–25). He casts the merchants out of the Temple, ordering them to 'not make my Father's house a house of trade.' (John 2:16) and when Jesus is challenged about his actions he says: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Gospel of John explains that 'he was speaking about the temple of his body' (John 2:21). Jesus knew he would be 'destroyed' when he was crucified but three days later he would rise again.

A new way to worship

Remember the writer of Hebrew 9 was writing to Jewish Christians in the early Church who may have visited Herod's Temple and would have worshipped God who dwelt in the Holy of Holies. Therefore, the writer is emphasising that because of Jesus there is a New Covenant that brings about a new priesthood with Christ as High Priest, and a new way of worshipping 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24). Jesus explained this to the woman at the well in the Gospel of John when he said 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship

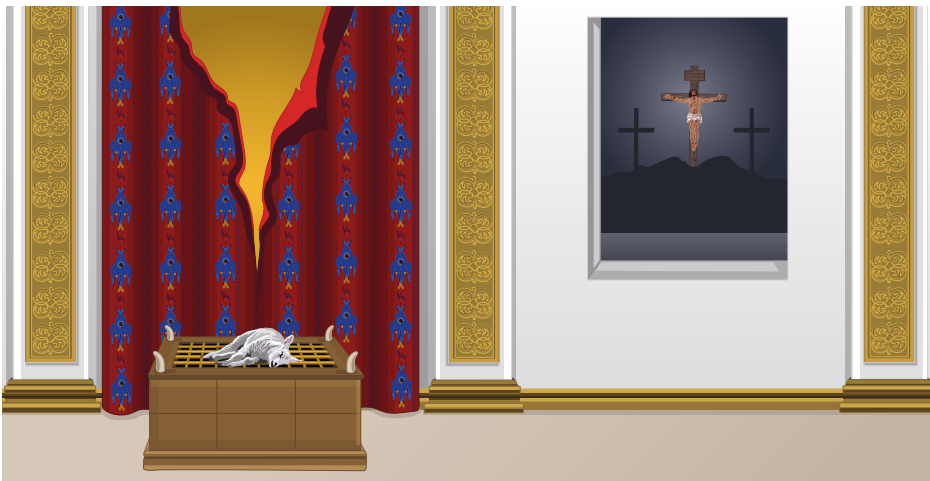


▲ Jesus speaks to the woman at the well about the new way to worship

what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' (John 4:21–4). The Old Covenant is superseded by a New and Everlasting Covenant, sealed by the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who is the perfect sacrifice, which means there is now a new way for Christians to worship.

All one in Christ

Catholics believe that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, and the resulting tearing of the veil (curtain) in the Holy of Holies, did away with the spiritual and physical barrier of sin and separation between God and humanity. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the division caused by sin had been overcome, giving humans direct access to God. All believers can now approach God personally through Jesus' loving gift of himself to the Father. Catholics also believe they participate in this offering whenever the Eucharist is celebrated.



▲ Jesus' sacrifice united God with humanity

The tearing of the veil was also seen as a symbolic gesture that shows that God is for all people. This is explained in Galatians: 3:23–8:

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:23–8)

Catholics believe that through Christ's sacrifice all believers can come to God and be forgiven of their sins, saved from death, and given eternal life.

Understand

- 7 How did Jesus' sacrifice on the cross enable believers to come to God and all be one in Christ?

?

Think

Discuss and establish who was allowed in these different areas of Herod's Temple – the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, the Priests' Court, the Court of Israel.



Understand

- 5 Describe what the Church means when it teaches that the New Covenant ushers in a new priesthood with Christ as High Priest, and a new way of worship 'in spirit and truth', making links with the belief that Christ's body is the true temple.

Extension

- 6 Using your answers, explain Hebrews 9 using the senses of scripture:
- Literal
 - Spiritual
 - Allegorical
 - Moral
 - Anagogical



▲ All one in Christ

4.3

Why is Jesus called the Lamb of God?

?

Think

Why do you think Jesus is called the Lamb of God? Discuss with your partner.



▲ The blood of the lamb was used to protect the Israelites from death

Jesus is often referred to as being the Lamb of God. This title comes from both the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament lambs were commonly sacrificed as offerings to atone for the sins of the people. Catholics believe Jesus was the ultimate example of a sacrificial lamb because his death on the cross atoned for the sins of humanity. Also, in the account of the Passover in the Book of Exodus, the blood of a lamb was used to mark the doorposts, protecting the Israelites from the angel of death. Jesus is like the Passover lamb because his blood brings deliverance from the power of sin and death.

In the New Testament, when John the Baptist sees Jesus coming he declares – ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ (John 1:29). His prophetic statement highlights the sacrificial nature of Jesus’ mission. In 1 Peter 1:19, the Apostle Peter describes Jesus as a ‘lamb without blemish or spot showing that Jesus is the perfect sacrifice because he is without sin. The shedding of Jesus’ blood during his crucifixion means sin is forgiven and a new covenant is established.

Jesus is not only called the Lamb of God because of his sacrifice but also because of his victory over death at his resurrection. In the Apocalypse, Jesus is depicted as the conquering lamb who is worthy to open the seals of the scroll (Apocalypse (Revelation) 5:6–10). This imagery emphasises Jesus’ triumph over sin and death through his resurrection.



▲ Jesus the conquering lamb



Understand

1 Why is Jesus called the Lamb of God?

When do Catholics refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God?

During Mass Catholics use two prayers that refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God; these prayers are called *Agnus Dei* and *Ecce Agnus Dei*.

Agnus Dei is the Latin term for 'Lamb of God'. The *Agnus Dei* is sung or recited during the liturgy of the Eucharist just before Catholics receive the Eucharist. Catholics say together:

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

It serves as a **poignant** moment of reflection on Christ's sacrifice, inviting Catholics to remember the **redemptive** work of Jesus as the Lamb of God and to seek his mercy and peace.

Ecce Agnus Dei is the Latin term for 'Behold the Lamb of God', which echoes the words of John the Baptist who declared, on seeing Jesus, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29).

These words are used during the celebration of the Eucharist, after the Lord's Prayer and the sign of peace, when the priest breaks the Body of Christ (the consecrated host), as the body of Jesus was broken at his crucifixion. The priest says 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.' It serves as a moment of recognition and reverence for the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

In response to the *Ecce Agnus Dei*, Catholics say together – 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.' This prayer expresses humility and acknowledgment how unworthy Catholics feel to receive the Body of Christ.

Key words

poignant – evoking a keen sense of sadness

Redemptive – redeeming or saving from sin



▲ Jesus the Lamb of God



▲ The priest holds the broken Eucharist and says out loud the *Ecce Agnus Dei*



Understand

- 2 Explain when and why the *Agnus Dei* and *Ecce Agnus Dei* prayers are used during Mass.

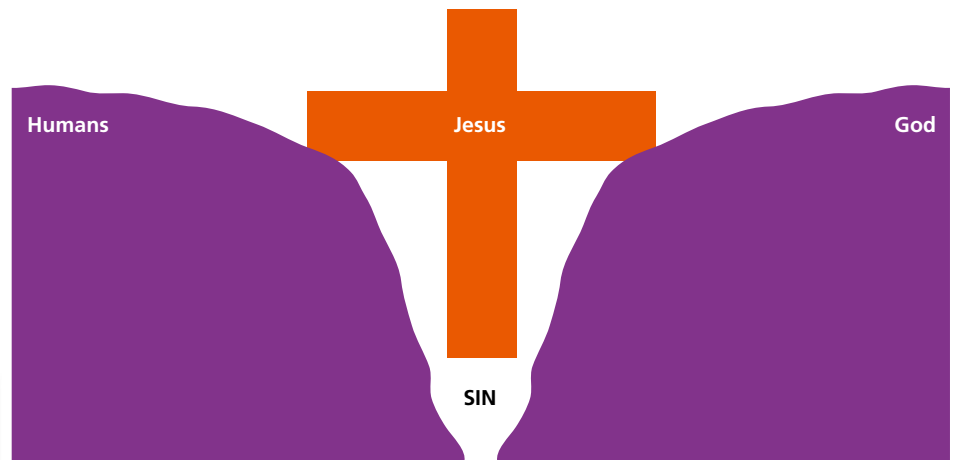
4.4

What is the Mystery of Redemption and why is it needed?

?

Think

Explain to your partner what this illustration is trying to express about Catholic beliefs about Jesus' crucifixion. Make sure you really understand your partner's answer.



▲ Jesus' crucifixion unites God with humanity

What is the Mystery of Redemption?

The Mystery of Redemption is God saving humanity from sin and reconciling humanity to himself, through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The Catechism explains that:

Christ's whole life is a mystery of redemption. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross, but this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life:

- already in his Incarnation through which by becoming poor, he enriches us with his poverty;
- in his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience;
- in his word which purifies its hearers;
- in his healings and exorcisms by which 'he took our infirmities and bore our diseases';
- and in his Resurrection by which he justifies us. (CCC 517)

The Mystery of Redemption is a mystery because aspects of God's plan and actions are beyond human understanding and can only be fully known by God.

Why was the Mystery of Redemption needed?

The Mystery of Redemption was needed because of the Fall, when Adam and Eve turned away from God and were banished from the Garden of Eden. As a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, original sin and death entered the world which broke the harmonious relationship between God and humanity, leading to a state of sin and separation between God and humans.

Catholics also believe that redemption is needed because 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23) and humans are not able to reconcile themselves with God through their own efforts. It is therefore necessary for God to offer a means of reconciliation and this also reflects God's love and mercy and desire to redeem and reconcile humanity to himself.



Understand

- 1 What is the Mystery of Redemption?
- 2 Why is the Mystery of Redemption needed?

What are the different ways in which to express the Mystery of Redemption?

The Mystery of Redemption is at the centre of Catholic theology and is understood in a variety of ways. Each way attempts to capture a unique perspective on the depth and significance of God's saving work in Jesus.

Grace

Grace is when someone does something generous for you when you did not earn or deserve it, and they do not ask for anything in return, for example your dad coming to collect you unexpectedly from football training despite the fact you were rude to him before leaving the house. In the Catholic context, grace is a sharing in the life of God. It is God's gift, which we have done nothing to deserve, which is evident in the forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus. Catholics receive forgiveness, not because of their own merit or efforts, but as a **manifestation** of God's grace. Grace demonstrates God's love for humanity.

Redemption

Redemption means to buy back. In the Catholic context, it refers to Jesus' act of redeeming humanity from sin and death through his sacrificial death on the cross.



▲ God freely gave humanity the gift of Jesus' salvation



▲ Christ the Redeemer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Atonement

Atonement means to make something one (whole) again, for example you may atone for being rude to your mum by saying sorry, then if she forgives you, your relationship is one again. In the Catholic context, it refers to Jesus' death on the cross being an act of atonement for sin through which humanity is reconciled with God. Jesus' sacrifice atones for sin and restores the broken relationship between God and humanity.

Key word

manifestation – the act of becoming evident or visible



▲ The 'Christus Victor' view of the atonement

4.4 What is the Mystery of Redemption and why is it needed?

Salvation



▲ Jesus saves humanity from death, for a new life

Salvation means to save, for example if a teenager saved a woman from being hit by a car, the woman could call the teenager her saviour. In the Catholic context, it refers to how Jesus saved humanity from sin, death and separation from God. It also results in being saved for a new life in **communion** with God. The concept includes both a negative aspect – being rescued *from* the consequences of sin, and a positive aspect – being saved *for* a new life with God.

Reparation (making right a wrong)

Reparation means to make right something you have done wrong through specific actions, for example if you stole money from your brother you could make reparations by paying him back. In the Catholic context, Jesus made reparations for the effects of sin through his death and resurrection.



▲ Reparation is making right something you have done wrong

Sanctification (making holy)

Sanctification is the process of being made holy or set apart for God's purposes. In the Mystery of Redemption, it signifies the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Catholics to make them more like Jesus.

Taken together, these understandings of the Mystery of Redemption demonstrate the depth and breadth of God's saving work in Jesus of restoring humanity to himself.



Understand

- 3 In your own words, explain three of the ways to understand the Mystery of Redemption.



Respond

- 4 Which of the ways to explain the Mystery of Redemption do you most relate to, and why?



▲ Sanctification is the process of being made holy

Key words

communion – the spiritual union existing between individual Christians and Christ, the Church and their fellow believers

reparation – the act of making amends or compensating for a wrongdoing

sanctification – the process of being made holy or set apart for a sacred purpose, often associated with purification

What are sins of commission and omission?

For Catholics, 'sin is an offence against reason, truth, and right conscience' (CCC 1849). In Catholic theology, sins are generally categorised into two types: sins of commission and sins of omission.

Sins of commission

Sins of commission are sins that involve actively doing something that is **morally** wrong, for example stealing, lying, violence. The **gravity** of sins of commission is often evaluated based on the nature of the act, the intention behind it and the circumstances surrounding it. Some acts are considered more serious than others, for example shoplifting to make money compared with shoplifting to feed your family. The Church also recognises varying degrees of moral **culpability**, for example shoplifting because your much older sibling told you to.



▲ Shoplifting – a sin of commission

Sins of omission

Sins of omission are sins that involve the failure to perform a good action, for example neglecting to help someone in need or failing to speak out against injustice. The priest and teacher in the parable of the good Samaritan demonstrate the sin of omission when they fail to help the man who has been attacked. The gravity of sins of omission is often related to intent and the harm caused by the failure to act, for example if the omission leads to serious harm, it can be considered gravely sinful.



Respond

- 1 What do you think is worse: being greedy or failing to help someone who is hungry? Make sure you can explain your answer.

Key words

Gravity – the seriousness of a situation

culpability – responsibility or guilt for a wrongdoing

4.5 What do Catholics believe about sin and punishment?



The Catechism states that sins of omission can be as serious as sins of commission, especially when they involve serious situations, full knowledge and deliberate consent (CCC 1857).

The Catholic Church teaches that individuals are responsible for both their actions and their failures to act. Therefore, Catholics confess these sins when they say the Penitential Act at the beginning of the Mass:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and
in what I have failed to do, ...

The Catholic tradition emphasises the **examination of conscience** and the Sacrament of Reconciliation as ways to reflect on your sins of commission and omission, seek forgiveness and strive to become a better person.

▲ The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Link



Look back to Book 2, Chapter 4.8 to remind yourself about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Key word

examination of conscience – a self-reflective process to assess one's moral actions



Understand

- 2 Which of the following are sins of commission and which are sins of omission?
 - a Not putting your dirty clothes in the wash
 - b Writing graffiti
 - c Hitting your sibling
 - d Ignoring your friend's insults about someone in your class
 - e Pretending to be ill
 - f Staying up all night playing computer games even though you need to look after your baby brother the next day
- 3 What do you think is worse: the sin of commission or omission? Explain your answer.



Respond

- 4 Have you ever felt guilty for not doing something you knew you should have done?

What do Catholics believe about punishment?

Catholics uphold the need for punishment and believe that when people have done wrong they should be held accountable for their actions. Catholics recognise the authority of the law and that crimes should be punished accordingly.



▲ Lethal injection – one form of **capital punishment**

However, the Catholic Church states that punishments should be just and **proportional** to the seriousness of the crime. Both inadequate and **excessive** punishment are inconsistent with the principles of justice. For Catholics, this applies to the use of the death penalty. Pope St John Paul II and Pope Francis have spoken out against capital punishment, affirming the sanctity of life, the **inherent dignity** of all humans and the importance of alternative means of protecting society.

For Catholics, any punishment should also aim to protect society and prevent future harm. This includes a focus on addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour and working towards a more just and **equitable** society.

As we have learnt in this chapter, Catholics recognise the need for mercy and the potential for redemption and therefore believe all forms of punishment should be accompanied by opportunities for **rehabilitation** and **reintegration** into society.

Key words

capital punishment – the state-sanctioned execution of a person as a punishment for a crime

inherent dignity – the value of each person, regardless of external factors

equitable – fair, just, or impartial

rehabilitation – the process of restoring someone to a former or healthier state, especially after criminal behaviour

reintegration – the act of being restored into society



Respond

- 5 Do you think capital punishment is a just punishment? Explain your answer.
- 6 Why are Catholics opposed to the use of capital punishment?



Understand

- 7 What do Catholics think is the purpose of punishment?

4.6

What is restorative justice?

?

Think

Have you ever been **reconciled** with someone you have fallen out with? How was this achieved?

Key words

dialogue – the exchanging of ideas

reconciliation – the restoration of relations

restoration – the process of returning something to its original condition

restitution – the act of restoring or compensating for loss or injury

Restorative justice is an approach to justice focused on repairing the harm caused by wrongdoing. There is no opposition to punishment, but rather victims and offenders are given the opportunity to come together in a process that encourages accountability, **dialogue** and ultimately **restoration** and **restitution**.



▲ Restorative justice

Participation in the restorative justice process is entirely voluntary; no one is forced to take part. Instead, all those involved agree to the restorative justice process and they have the right to withdraw at any stage.

- Before the process begins, the offender must take responsibility for their actions and the hurt they have caused.
- The next stage of the restorative justice process can take various forms, for example a meeting or letters. Whatever structure is used, a considerable amount of time is always spent carefully preparing for any meeting to ensure there are positive outcomes for all involved.
- If the process involves meeting in person, a trained facilitator guides the meeting, helping to create a safe and respectful environment for dialogue. The facilitator ensures that each participant has the opportunity to speak and be heard.
- First, the victim has the chance to express their feelings and describe the impact of the harm, and to ask questions. Then the offender has an opportunity to take responsibility for their actions, express remorse and discuss their understanding of the impact on the victim.
- Participants work together to develop an agreement that outlines specific actions the offender will take to repair the harm. This may involve making amends, apologising or participating in activities that contribute positively to the community.
- Once the agreement is reached, it needs to be implemented. This may involve monitoring and support from relevant authorities or community members.
- The effectiveness of the restorative justice process is often assessed through follow-up meetings to review progress and evaluate the impact of the agreed actions.

Understand

- 1 Explain what restorative justice is supposed to achieve.

Case study



Restorative justice

Raj worked as a ticket inspector on the trains. He asked Jack, who was travelling on the train, for his ticket and challenged him when he did not reply. Without warning, Jack punched Raj in the side of the head and ran off. Raj was hurt, upset and shocked as he had never been attacked before. Jack was caught and charged with assault.

After the incident, Raj was scared and defensive. He experienced low mood, fear and anxiety, and his family struggled to help him. He was also worried that a similar incident was going to happen again and that he himself might respond aggressively. He decided it was best to give up his job but this meant that he had no income and needed to find a new career.

After talking to a friend, Raj agreed to take part in restorative justice with the help of the police, but he decided he did not want to meet Jack in person. As a result, Raj wrote Jack a letter detailing the impact of the crime and how it had negatively affected his life.



▲ Ticket inspector

Jack replied and was genuinely **remorseful** over his actions and apologised to Raj. He explained that he was struggling with his mental health due to a gambling addiction, but that this did not justify his behaviour. He had taken steps to address these issues and he took full responsibility for his behaviour. He provided assurances that this was something he would not repeat.

Raj was pleased to have had the opportunity to challenge Jack's behaviour. He credits restorative justice with helping him to rebuild his confidence and improve his general wellbeing.



Understand

- 2 What happens during the process of restorative justice?



Discern

- 3 What do you think could happen to offenders if they fail to recognise their need for forgiveness?
- 4 Consider the claim that 'Restorative justice is the easy option for offenders'.
Present arguments for and against this claim, including a Catholic response, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments. Arrive at a judgement supported by an effective evaluation of the arguments.

Key word

remorseful – feeling deep regret or guilt for one's actions



Respond

- 5 What do you think about the practice of restorative justice? Would you engage in the process? Make sure you can explain your answer.

Key word

agency – the capacity or ability to act independently and make choices

Artistic responses

Art can play a meaningful role in the restorative justice process because art provides victims with a powerful tool for expressing their emotions and experiences. Through different artistic forms, such as painting or sculpture, victims can convey their feelings, share their stories and regain a sense of **agency**. In communities that have experienced historical trauma, art can provide a means of remembrance and healing. It also allows for the acknowledgment of historical injustices and can be a powerful tool for educating the public. Artists can also use their work to raise awareness about social justice issues and inspire hope.

Here are some examples:

These bronze statues stand on separate columns with their outstretched hands almost touching. The artwork depicts the reconciliation between the two sides during The Troubles in Northern Ireland, symbolising how Loyalists and Irish Republicans acknowledged their pain and struggles, but chose to bridge the divide together to make peace.



▲ *Hands Across the Divide*, 1992, Maurice Harron, Londonderry/Derry, Northern Ireland

Vasconcellos, the artist who created this sculpture said: 'The sculpture was originally conceived in the **aftermath** of the War. Europe was in shock, people were stunned. I read in a newspaper about a woman who crossed Europe on foot to find her husband, and I was so moved that I made the sculpture. Then I thought that it wasn't only about the reunion of two people but hopefully a reunion of nations which had been fighting.' (Josefina de Vasconcellos).

This throne was made by Mozambican artist Cristóvão Canhavato (who works under the name Kester) as part of the 'Transforming Arms into Tools' Project. This project took weapons previously used by soldiers on both sides of the Mozambican civil war and transformed them into tools that could be used for farming or construction, or in the home.



▲ *Reconciliation*, 1977, Josefina de Vasconcellos, in St Michael's Cathedral, Coventry



Discern

- 6 Choose one of these works of art and interpret it, making links with scripture, Church teachings, and Catholic beliefs and practices about forgiveness and reconciliation.
- 7 Compare and contrast it with the other artworks. Discuss with your partner what the makers could have intended to communicate and how effectively each piece conveys Catholic beliefs about reconciliation and forgiveness.



Respond

- 8 Create your own symbol of reconciliation.

Key word

aftermath – the consequences after a significant event



▲ *Throne of Weapons*, 2001, Cristóvão Canhavato (Kester)



Think

What do you think about the Catholic belief that all sin can be forgiven? Be prepared to explain your answer.

Key words

retribution – punishment inflicted as a form of payback

perpetrators – individuals responsible for committing a harmful or criminal act

genocide – deliberate and systematic extermination of a group of people

Why is it hard to forgive horrendous evil?

When horrendous evil happens, our natural reaction is to want to get **retribution**, to ensure someone pays for the pain we have suffered. As we have learnt in this chapter, Catholics do believe that justice should be served when evil acts are committed, but the Church also teaches that Catholics should ‘forgive those who trespass against us’ (The Lord’s Prayer). This can be incredibly difficult, for a number of reasons.

Survivors of horrendous evil may experience intense emotions such as anger, grief and trauma. These emotions can make forgiveness seem impossible. Working through such emotions is a complex and often lengthy journey. Forgiveness becomes even more challenging when **perpetrators** show no remorse or continue to cause harm.

Horrendous evils, such as **genocide**, war crimes or acts of terrorism, often involve widespread human suffering and death. The sheer **magnitude** of these acts can make forgiveness seem almost inconceivable, as the pain and trauma are deeply embedded in a community and in individuals. Reconciliation and forgiveness at a collective level can be complex processes that involve acknowledgment of historical wrongs and efforts to build bridges between communities. (See the case study on South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, below.)



Understand

- 1 What is horrendous evil? Give three examples.

Case study

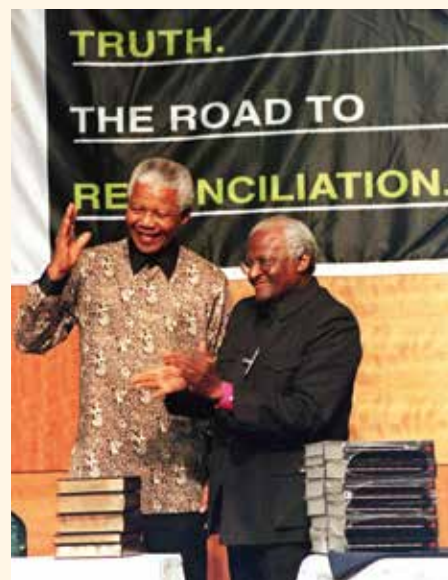


Reconciliation and restorative justice in action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa was established in 1995 as part of the transition from **apartheid** to a democratic system. The TRC aimed to promote national reconciliation by addressing the horrendous human rights abuses that occurred during the apartheid era.

The TRC was given the power to investigate abuses between 1960 and 1994. This included crimes committed by both sides. Public hearings were held where victims and perpetrators could testify about the human rights abuses they experienced or committed. These hearings were broadcast on television and radio so everyone could hear what was being said. The TRC also considered applications from individuals who sought **amnesty** for politically motivated crimes, but they had to make a full confession about what they did. It then recommended reparation for victims and ways to rehabilitate perpetrators.

The TRC played a crucial role in ensuring the truth was told and in acknowledging the painful past of South Africa. While it did not satisfy everyone, and faced criticisms for being too **lenient**, it contributed to the nation’s journey towards reconciliation and healing.



▲ Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu were central to establishing the TRC.

Case study



Forgiveness in action

Marie Wilson died in 1987 holding her father's hand, after a bomb planted by terrorist organisation the Provisional Irish Republican Army, **detonated** during a Remembrance Sunday service in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

In the aftermath of the bombing, Gordon Wilson, a committed Christian, was interviewed by the media and said:

She held my hand tightly, and gripped me as hard as she could. She said, 'Daddy, I love you very much.' Those were her exact words to me, and those were the last words I ever heard her say ... But I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life ... I will pray for these men tonight and every night.

Gordon's words of forgiveness had a profound impact on those involved on both sides of the conflict and contributed to the ongoing dialogue about forgiveness and reconciliation in the context of the Northern Ireland Troubles.



▲ Gordon and Jean Wilson

Case study



Forgiveness in action

Anthony Walker was eighteen years old when he was brutally murdered in 2005 in a racially motivated attack in Merseyside. His death sparked widespread outrage. The two perpetrators were caught and jailed.

After her son's murder, Gee Walker, a practising Christian, said:

I can't hate. We're a forgiving family and it extended to outside ... we don't just preach it, we practise it ... What does bitterness do? It eats you up inside, it's like a cancer. We don't want to serve a life sentence with those people. (Liverpool Echo, 27 July 2020)



▲ Anthony Walker

Gee Walker went on to create the Anthony Walker Foundation, to keep Anthony's legacy alive and promote racial harmony through education, sport and the arts. The charity has worked with some 40,000 young people through varying programmes and has helped nearly 10,000 victims of hate crime.

Gee said:

Seventy times seven we must forgive, that's what we were taught, that's what the Bible said, that's what we have to do ... It is hard, it is so hard, but you get through it. It eases the bitterness and the anger if you can wake up in the morning and think 'forgive, forgive, forgive'. (Liverpool Echo, 27 July 2020)



▲ Gee Walker

Key words

magnitude – refers to the importance of something

apartheid – a system of institutionalised racial segregation and discrimination that existed in South Africa from 1948 to the early 1990s

amnesty – granting of pardon, overlooking past offences

lenient – to be understanding and forgiving

detonated – the action of causing an explosion



Discern

- 2 Consider the claim that some actions are too awful to be forgiven. Present arguments for and against this claim, including a Catholic response, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments. Arrive at a judgement supported by an effective evaluation of the arguments.

4.8

When have Catholics worked to establish justice and peace?

Throughout recent history, Catholics have engaged in peaceful **resistance** to fight for justice, promote human rights and contribute to reconciliation.

Here are a few examples from around the world:

?

Think

'Religions only cause conflict.' Do you agree? Be prepared to explain your answer.

Civil Rights Movement, United States – 1950–1960s
Many Catholics, including clergy and the **laity**, actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States which aimed to end racist discrimination. The Catholic Church supported efforts to end racial segregation and discrimination, for example Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans publicly denounced segregation and took steps to desegregate Catholic institutions, including schools and universities.

Peaceful resistance, Chile – 1973–90
During the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile (1973–90), the Catholic Church, led by figures such as Cardinal Henríquez, spoke out against human rights abuses. The Church also provided sanctuary for those seeking safety from persecution, **advocated** for human rights, and organised dialogue between opposing groups.



▲ Where in the world have Catholics worked to bring justice and peace?

Anti-Apartheid Movement, South Africa – 1912–94
The Catholic Church in South Africa, along with other Christian denominations, played a significant role in the struggle against apartheid, for example the Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu publicly spoke out against apartheid. Catholics were among those who advocated for justice, equality and reconciliation.

Key words

resistance – the act of opposing something

laity – Christians who are not ordained members of the clergy

advocated – to actively support and champion a cause

The Solidarity Movement, Poland – 1980s
Many Catholics played a crucial role in the Solidarity Movement, which challenged the Communist **regime** in Poland. The Catholic Church provided space for people to meet, guidance on issues regarding the regime, and a platform for expressing grievances.

Peaceful resistance, Philippines – 1980s and 2017
During President Marcos' rule of the Philippines, he became a **dictator** who used **corruption**, human rights abuses and political **repression** to keep himself in power. The Catholic Church, led by Cardinal Jaime Sin, played a key role in the People Power Revolution that led to the ousting of President Marcos and the restoration of democracy.

In 2017, a fourteen-year-old Catholic high-school student called Shibby Lapeña de Guzman joined a protest rally against the unlawful killings that were occurring due to the campaign of President Duterte against illegal drugs. She made a speech at the protest and argued that President Duterte's actions were a violation of human rights.

These examples from around the world illustrate ways Catholics have engaged in peaceful resistance to fight injustice, campaigned for human rights, and helped make society a fairer place. They are also clear examples of how Catholics have **enacted** Catholic Social Teaching.

Link



See Book 1, Chapter 1.8 to remind yourself about Catholic Social Teaching.



Respond

- Which type of injustice today resonates most deeply with you?
How could you take action to create a positive change?

Key words

regime – a government that is not democratic

dictator – a ruler who holds absolute power, often maintained through force

corruption – the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain

repression – suppressing something, often referring to the use of force to subdue individuals or a group

enacted – put into effect



Understand

- How have Catholics used peaceful resistance as a means of bringing about justice and reconciliation?

Research

- Find out more about Shibby Lapeña de Guzman, the Catholic high-school student who spoke out against government injustice in the Philippines:
 - Why was she protesting?
 - What impact did her actions have on her life?



▲ Shibby Lapeña de Guzman protesting in the Philippines

There are many examples of Catholics working for peace around the world – here are two case studies:

Case study



Work on peacebuilding in a place of conflict

The Corrymeela Community was founded in 1965 by Ray Davey, a Christian minister, as a way of building a more peaceful Northern Ireland. At this time, Northern Ireland faced violent conflicts from sectarian groups, with one side wanting Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom and the other wanting it to be reunited with the Republic of Ireland.

The name Corrymeela comes from the Irish words *Corra* (meaning crane) and *Míleánn* (meaning land). The crane, a bird with a wide view of its surroundings, serves as a symbol for the community's commitment to seeing and understanding the broader context of Northern Ireland's complex history.



▲ A crane has a wide view of its surroundings

Corrymeela is **ecumenical** and inclusive, welcoming people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. It aims to create a safe space where individuals can come together, share their experiences, and work towards understanding one another.

Key words

ecumenical – promoting unity between different Christian denominations

It has facilitated numerous programmes, workshops, and initiatives that bring together people from different communities to foster understanding and build relationships. The community is also engaged in educational work, providing resources and programmes that explore issues related to conflict, reconciliation, and peacebuilding.



▲ The Corrymeela Centre

Corrymeela has played a significant role in promoting dialogue, building relationships and facilitating reconciliation in Northern Ireland and continues to be relevant in promoting healing and understanding.



Understand

4 Why was the Corrymeela Community established?



Discern

5 Explain the work of Corrymeela and the extent to which it is a faithful expression of Catholic teachings about forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption.

Case study



International peace movement

Pax Christi, Latin for 'Peace of Christ', is a global Catholic peace movement and organisation that works for peace, justice and reconciliation. The movement emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. The founders of Pax Christi were deeply influenced by their Catholic faith and sought to promote the Gospel message of love, nonviolence and peace in response to the devastation caused by the war.



▲ Pax Christi is an international organisation working for peace

Pax Christi's mission includes:

- **Peacebuilding:** Pax Christi is committed to promoting peace and resolving conflicts through **nonviolent** means. The organisation is involved in initiatives aimed at preventing violence and fostering reconciliation in areas of conflict.
- **Justice and human rights:** Pax Christi advocates for social justice and the protection of human rights. This involves addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, inequality and injustice.
- **Nuclear disarmament:** The movement has been actively involved in campaigns and advocacy efforts for nuclear disarmament, aligning with the Catholic Church's stance on the immorality of nuclear weapons.
- **Promotion of nonviolence:** Pax Christi emphasises the principles of nonviolence, drawing inspiration from the teachings of Jesus Christ. The movement believes that nonviolent action is a powerful and effective means of addressing social and political issues.

It is not only Catholics who work for Pax Christi; the organisation welcomes individuals from various faith traditions and backgrounds who share a commitment to peace and justice.

Key words

Nonviolent – rejection of the use of physical force and using peaceful means to resolve conflicts

nuclear disarmament – process of reducing or completely getting rid of nuclear weapons



Understand

- 6 Explain the work of Pax Christi as an organisation dedicated to peace, justice and reconciliation.



Respond

- 7 In what ways could you or your school support the work of Pax Christi?

Research

- 8 Find out about any groups in your parish or local community that are working for justice and peace, and how you could contribute to their work.