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Catholicism

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To be Catholic means to be united as one. Catholicism is the faith and practices of a Catholic. It composes of perspectives that guide its followers to their satisfied and successful lives. Being Catholics, people make commitment to God. This also means that they must listen and embrace His will. Considered to be one of the largest organized bodies of the world religion, Catholicism was rooted from Christianity and formed later around the 3rd and 5th centuries C.E., in Rome.¹ Catholicism is the most influential denomination to all man kind in which has continuously spread throughout the world.

The origin of Catholicism traces back to the history of a Catholic Church. Catholics are taught by heart that they are always part of this sacred place. To them, Church is like a spiritual family, headed by a holy father called pope. According to the bible, the very first man to be called pope was St. Peter, one of Jesus Christ's apostles. St. Peter was elected by Christ himself due his to faithful and true loyalty.² During St. Peter's era, the pope had absolute power and authorities within the Catholic Church. Even until today, the same rule applies as the current Catholic popes still hold supreme legislative, executive, and judicial power. Yet this power comes with responsibility to govern the body of Catholicism. By that, the popes have to take part in international congresses, conferences, and meetings.³ Whilst

1 "Library." *Roman Catholic Origins, Roman Catholic History, Roman Catholic Beliefs*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.patheos.com/Library/Roman-Catholicism.html>>.

2The Hammer, Charles. "When Was The Catholic Church Founded?" N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://www.catholicapologetics.info/apologetics/protestantism/origin.htm>>.

3 Trigilio, John, and Kenneth Brighenti. *Catholicism for Dummies*. New York: Wiley Pub., 2003. Print.

engaging in these activities, the popes can deliver messages on Catholic faith or opinions on Catholic religion through freedom of speech. As a result, beliefs on Catholicism are expressed to a great number of people.

The greatest example of Catholic Church is Basilica Papale di San Pietro in Vaticano (Saint Peter's Basilica). It is located in the Vatican City, the smallest nation of its own independence. Saint Peter's church remains as one of the remarkable forms of art in the Renaissance period. The architecture was a product of contribution among the famous Italian artists; Bramante, Michelangelo, Carlo Maderno and Bernini.⁴ In present time, church is a local place of worship where believers of Jesus Christ would come together to listen to his teachings that are being passed on by the holy father. Since then they were taught that people should go to church to show respect to their God.⁵ In addition, the Catholic must attend the Holy Mass, a church service of recognition to the death of Jesus Christ, every week. Joining the Mass is one of the most important actions for being Catholics, thus skipping Mass without a worthy excuse is considered as a great sin.⁶

Catholic faiths are far more complicated than believing that God exists, but believing in what God has taught them. For a Catholic, God is the definition of truth and goodness. Therefore, everything that He said is all truth and all good. Being so, his teachings are worth knowing and are essential for human salvation. Teachings of God are sometimes called the "deposit of faith," a doctrine where the God would reveal truths that cannot be discovered by either science or philosophy. Words of God come

⁴"St. Peter's Basilica." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 15 Sept. 2012. Web. 15 Sept. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica>.

⁵"Why Do People Go to Church?" *Why Do People Go to Church*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.whyyz.com/why-do-people-go-to-church>>.

⁶ Trigilio, John, and Kenneth Brighenti. *Catholicism for Dummies*. New York: Wiley Pub., 2003. Print.

in two forms; the spoken word, also called Sacred Tradition, and the written word known as Scripture or Bible.⁷ Catholics would rely on these form of Word as a message of truths and instructions that could assist them in their daily lives.

In addition, Catholics also believe in the life after death. It is said that when a Catholic dies, he will be placed in one of the three possible places; heaven, hell, and purgatory.⁸ Judgements on whether where each Catholic will be put is based upon his actions during his lifetime on earth. If he dies without sin, then heaven is the answer. However, Catholic who dies with mortal sin will be led to hell, which is a place for severe punishment. Such punishment includes limbo of infant and limbo of Fathers. One possible source of a Catholic's sin may have risen from his rejection of God's love.⁹ Apart from heaven and hell, Catholic may end up in purgatory, a place of suffering the souls of sinner before going to heaven.

For centuries, there are many Catholics who have changed the world. One of them was Christopher Columbus. He was born in Genoa in 1451. Living his life as a sailor, Columbus had his dream to sail around the world. With great determination, he took off his journey to the unknown sea, on a route where nobody had ever passed before. Unexpectedly yet fortunately, he discovered a new land, in which is called today as America. Along with his crew, Columbus had spread Catholicism to the natives in North, Central , and South of the American continent.¹⁰ As a result, Catholicism became popular, thus many American citizen were converting to Catholics during Columbus' time.

7 Trigilio, John, and Kenneth Brighenti. *Catholicism for Dummies*. New York: Wiley Pub., 2003. Print.

8Do Catholics Believe You Go Straight to Heaven When You Die? (Assuming You Meet All the Requirements)?" *Yahoo! Answers*. Yahoo!, n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2012. <<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080607164547AACBhgK>>."

9"Death: Afterlife Beliefs." *ThinkQuest*. Oracle Foundation, n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2012. <<http://library.thinkquest.org/16665/afterlifeframe.htm>>.

10"RECENT ARTICLES." *Honoring Christopher Columbus*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/history/world/wh0024.html>>.

Second example of an important Catholic was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxjiu, known today as Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She was born on August, 1910 to the Albanian ancestry. Professionally in teaching history and geography, Mother Teresa became the headmistress of a middle school in Calcutta. However, she decided to resign from her job after saying that she had a dream where she was speaking to Jesus Christ. He has kindly asked her to go help the poor in different countries. Mother Teresa did what she was told and because of that, there were many hospitals and clinics founded during her time. More over, she opened up schools for the poor who did not have the opportunity for education. In schools, students were taught about social history, as well as the subject of Catholicism. Being one of the most generous people on earth, Mother Teresa of Calcutta was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and was the fourth person to be named an honorary citizen of the United States in 1996.¹¹

Catholicism is traditionally superior among other denominations. For many years, its idea has integrated to many regions of the world through the presence of the Catholic Church, the beliefs of the Catholic people, and the practices that are being bought by a Catholic as one travels around from place to place. Not only that it bought strength to its people, but Catholicism also unite them as one warm community.

¹¹ Trigilio, John, and Kenneth Brighenti. *Catholicism for Dummies*. New York: Wiley Pub., 2003. Print.