

# World religions report: catholics

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The world has more than a billion Catholics and with the ever growing religion, it will only get larger in number. To be a Catholic means to have complete faith in God and his divine grace. Having God's divine grace means to obey it and keep it holy as it was created by God and given to his people. The religion itself is based on this and the people take it very seriously. Catholics believe that all people are of good nature but when one commits a sin it not only hurts that one person but the people and the Church. Catholics are a Christian sect and believe in one God. Like other Christians, they believe that Jesus is God's Son which goes hand-in-hand with the belief in the Holy Trinity. God the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit are what makes up the Holy Trinity. The Catholics basic beliefs are the bible; which was created by God and is not wrong in any way. The Ten Commandments which are what the Catholics live by for moral and ethnic reasoning. The Ten Commandments are do not kill, do not covet, do not worship any graven object, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not commit adultery, Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, honor thy father and mother, do not take the Lord's name in Vain, and Thou shall not have any other gods before me. As mentioned previously, God's divine grace comes from seven sacraments. The seven sacraments are Penance, Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders. These are the spiritual development that makes up the religion. Catholics belong to Churches known as parishes. These places are where Catholics can go and worship no matter where they are in the world. Holy Mass is a worship that is held daily and weekly that marks Good Friday and Holy Thursday. Sunday Mass has always been a day to go and worship with family and friends. To

the Catholics it is an obligation and to miss Sunday Mass is considered a sin because it is the Day of the Lord unless a reasonable excuse is recognized. Many Catholics attend mass on Saturday night instead of Sunday morning because of the work schedule. This was not always the case but has been accepted by Christians since around 1980. They also have rituals of respect during the service which includes kneeling, singing, bowing and responding to the priest or deacon. Catholics incorporate their religion into everything since God created everything. The things one says, the things one do, and even one's thoughts are under God. Catholicism is not a once-in-a-while religion; it is everyday, 24-7 religion that a Catholic relates everything to. As every religion there are certain things that one must do in order to stay a Catholic. Everyday rituals include daily prayer, live a Christian life, and except the teaching of the church and of God. Being Catholic, one must go to mass every Sunday and holy day as part of the religion. Catholics must only eat one full meal during Ash Wednesday and sustain from meat on the Fridays during Lent which is part of the fasting and abstinence obligation of Catholicism. Lent lasts 40 days and 40 nights. They are to obey the laws of marriage in which the church carries as well as going to confession as much as needed. Every religion has those followers that have been very dedicated to the faith, those who have strayed, those who have returned, and then those followers who have come into the religion from another or no religion. These three different types of Catholics are known as Cradle Catholics which were born into, grew up, and baptized as a Catholic; the convert Catholics are those people who came into the religion from the outside either from another religion or no religion at all; the Revert Catholics are Cradle

Catholics who strayed from the faith only to return in hopes to become Catholic again. St. Johns Catholic Church in Grand Marais is the only Catholic Church in my area. St. John's Church has the largest group of people who attend in my county. Father Walsh is the priest who holds mass and service for the Catholics of Grand Marais as well as those traveling from different places. This church is among that largest in my county, it has marvelous stain glass windows that line the walls. The Church is located in what I would say as the middle of the town which is also located by the high school. Father Walsh is a full blood Irish and grew up in Ireland. In Ireland more than 90% is Catholic (Father Walsh, 2007). Father Walsh has been a priest for more than 40 years and just recently has he been serving in my community. Father Walsh has served as a priest in other areas such as Duluth, MN area. He was very informative about his religion, and how important it is for him to be Catholic. Father Walsh stated that even though many religions have changed over time Catholicism has stayed true to its ground because it is so traditional in all ways. Catholicism is a religion that is not easily changed by the newer religions that are formed. To be Catholic means to live a Christian life. He stated that Catholics have a very strong belief that God is present always because we are made in the image of God. That means that we are good even though we may sin and stray from staying true. As Catholics one of the most important things is the sacraments which God is experienced in the most common day events such as eating and drinking. For Catholics having a prayer life which is constant communication with God is important. Along with prayer life, Father Walsh stated that one must have a personal and a public prayer life. To have a healthy prayer life a Catholics must keep

prayer to a personal level as well as joining together in mass for public prayer which completes the prayer life. The most important holiday for Catholics is Easter. Easter is the holy day for the church which recognized the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Of course like other religions Christmas is very important. I asked a question that is common among people: What are your thoughts when people say that Catholics are strict? Father Walsh explained to me that Catholics are strict but he believes that they are not strict enough. He states that our current life is a mere beginning to what we are offered in eternal life which is why Catholics are strict because ones does not abuse the life that God has given us. He has refrained from alcohol and drugs which is important in Catholic life. Father Walsh explained to me that even as a Catholic there are challenges that they face. For instance, it is to live a God centered life. Living a God centered life is hard because of the culture see it as drink and be happy but as Catholic that is not the case. He tells me that it is a shame that our culture has created a scene that revolves around drugs and the most important thing is the mind which is being abused. I explained to Father Walsh that I have learned many new things about old and new religions and as the new generations are formed people will experiment and join another religion. I asked him, how he would approach that fact if a family member found enlightenment from another religion? Father Walsh said that he would be disappointed because Catholicism is so rich and he would want them to check out the religion before they decide to leave it. If that person decided in another religion in which he or she found greater power than Father Walsh would wish them luck in finding enlightenment. The most common question

among those who attend Father Walsh's church is why do we have worship with everyone every Sunday? The importance of coming together as a large group is strong because we are all on the same pilgrimage and then will our prayers be complete. Younger adults have stated that mass is boring and repetitious in which Father Walsh did not argue. He pointed out that a pastor or priest should make a service come alive, so that when people leave they have a belief that something opened up inside. As I sat and listened to Father Walsh he made a very good point that many people tend to do. People tend to lose faith in God because if he is so good than why is there death, famine, and all the crime but one have to realize that humans have caused more of that than, I am sure, God intended. People have prevented God's work from being done because of being selfish or warlike. Catholics and Lutherans are both sects of Christianity even though each have its similarities each hold its differences. Each of the Catholic and Lutheran religions has strong beliefs in the holy Trinity and the passion and death of Jesus Christ. There are a few differences between the two. One difference between Catholic and Lutheran religions is that Catholics honor seven sacraments where Lutherans honor only two sacraments. As well as the differences in the number of sacraments, Lutherans do not have an established priest like Catholics do. The two sacraments which Lutherans celebrate are Holy Communion and Holy Baptism. During being baptized, Lutherans believe that we are spiritually cleansed by God by means water and the word. During Holy Communion, Lutherans are nourished by means of Word, Bread, and wine. The main belief that Catholics and Lutherans have a disagreement which is the blessing of the wine and bread occurs when they

honor the Last Supper (Jones, 2007). Transubstantiation is what the Catholics refer to as the blessing of the wine and bread. This occurs when the inside form changes into that of Christ and the outside displays the flaws. Catholics believe this to be receiving Jesus through the blessing of the bread and consuming it. The Lutherans use a different concept during the Eucharist. With the blessing of the wine and bread, Christ becomes present but the bread and the wine remain only bread and wine. This is known to Lutherans as consubstantiation. Even with these differences, Catholics and Lutherans are among religions that are ancient and have changed very little with the way the culture has changed others. The religion of Catholicism is a fascinating religion that I perceived as strict but I have learned that they are indeed strict people. They believe that Catholics should be more strict considering that fact that we were given these earthly bodies by God. They live their lives as Christians and obey the word in which God intended for us to obey. They have rules and rituals that they perform to show respect and passion for what they believe. Religions are made up of people and beliefs in which they find security and happiness. Who are we to judge the way people live their lives, or what religion they choose? Each one of us has our own beliefs and we only hope that we do not get judged. God is the only judge. For those reasons I am happy that I chose this religion because it is my willingness to understand Catholics that others will see that Catholicism is just another religion living a life the God intended us to.