

THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

Some duties of Catholic Christians, these were originally approved by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, 1884. (De jure means sanctioned by law and designates that which exists legally—because it was legislated—as opposed to de facto, “in reality,” which reflects merely custom or practice rather than the law of the land or the Church.)

1. To keep holy the day of the Lord’s Resurrection: to worship God by participating in Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation; to avoid those activities that would hinder renewal of soul and body; for example, needless work and business activities, unnecessary shopping, and so forth.

2. To lead a sacramental life: to receive Holy Communion frequently and the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly— (ideally once a month as a healthy practice) minimally, to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year (obligatory annually only if serious sin is involved, minimally, to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.¹

3. To study Catholic teaching in preparation for confirmation, to be confirmed, and then to continue to study and advance the cause of Christ.

4. To observe the marriage laws of the Church: to give religious training (by example and word) to one’s children; to use parish schools and religious education programs.

5. To strengthen and support the Church: one’s own parish community and parish priests; the worldwide Church and the Holy Father.

6. To do penance: including abstaining from meat and fasting from food on the appointed days.

7. To join in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church: to transmit the Faith to all people everywhere.