

# The Faith of the Catholic Church

This presentation makes no claim to be an exhaustive expression of Catholic belief – for that you will need to immerse yourself in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. There is much that is not covered in these sessions: the fact that they are not included here does not mean they are unimportant, but points to the fact that these pages serve only as an introduction to the Catholic faith. I offer these pages in the hope that they may help you with some of the key aspects of our Catholic faith.

The Course of instruction and growing in faith is in four parts – the four great and ancient elements of the faith:

1. **The Creed** (*what* we believe) – in this section we look at the central teachings of the faith as handed down to us from the apostles. These are summarised for us in the *Creeds*. This section deals with *faith*: what it means to believe, what specifically do we believe and how does believing change our lives.
2. **The Sacraments** (how we *receive and become* what we believe) – this section deals with how the Church, gathered together, celebrates the faith she holds – and this is done most fully in the seven sacraments. These are life-changing actions by which God gives us his life and we are made new.
3. **The Commandments** (how we *live* as a consequence of what we have become) – becoming the children of God, sharing his life and divine nature means a change in the way we live. We are now members of the household of God through the sacraments, and this change in who we are calls us to live as the people we have become. This way of life is revealed to us through the foundation of the 10 Commandments.
4. **The Our Father** (how we *pray* as a result of what we have become) – the change that God has wrought in us through the sacraments is shown most clearly in the way we relate to God: we are no longer rebels at war with God but his children (still prodigal) but now able to relate to God as children to their father, not as slaves to their owner. This relationship is underpinned by the spiritual life – the life of prayer. The most complete summary of all forms of Christian prayer is the prayer given us by Christ – the Our Father.

Specifically, then, the sessions will be looking at these four areas, opening up the extraordinary treasures of the Church and making available to us the wisdom and insight of thousands of the holiest men and women our race has known.

*Fr Guy de Gaynesford*