

Faith Tidbits..

*a little food for thought
and some knowledge
about your
Catholic faith*

February 2008

This monthly series will answer questions you always wondered about or questions you never even thought to ask... all about our Catholic Faith.

If you have a question you want answered, call Diane Hardick at 633-3672.

Is there a sin that will never be forgiven by God?

The Gospel of St. Matthew (12:31) speaks of a sin “against the Holy Spirit” which will never be forgiven. That sin is simply the refusal to repent—the refusal of the help of the Holy Spirit to turn away from evil and toward God. Our Creator has made us in his divine image and has given us the freedom to love to run away from love and God. Because of this, God neither forces his love nor his forgiveness on us. Therefore, if we chose to reject his love and the help of the Holy Spirit to live a good life, he allows it. Our God wishes salvation and eternal life for all his people, but ultimately it is our choice to accept or reject his invitation.

Is it still a mortal sin to miss Mass on Sunday?

I’m sometimes tempted to believe that it was a big mistake of the Church to make a “law” that we must go to Church on Sunday. Too many Catholics still go to Mass because of this obligation. Sunday Eucharist is “the summit and source” of who we are as Catholic Christians. It is the life-breath of the Christian person and community. The *Code of Canon Law* states: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in Mass” (Canon 1247). Notice it does not say “go to”; it says “participate”. This means something different from just showing up to fulfill our obligation. As believers we are called to *full active and conscious participation* in the Mass. We come to give thanks – to give honor, praise and glory to our God through our active participation in the Mass. So I think the question should be focused more on why we go to Mass – to fulfill our obligation

What is the origin of the Roman collar for clergy?

For at least the first five centuries of the Church there were no special rules for clergy dress. Even the Council of Trent in the 16th century simply required “that (Catholic) clerics always wear a dress comfortable to their order, that by the propriety of their outward apparel they may show forth the inward uprightness of their morals.” Later in the same century, Pope Sixtus V designated the cassock as fulfilling the “propriety” of Trent. The Roman collar was not used in the United States or England until the 1800’s. In the United States, the Council of Baltimore (1884) rules that in public, priests should wear the Roman collar, along with a dark coat that reached to the knees. Present canon law requires that clergy are to “wear suitable ecclesiastical garb in accord with the norms issued by the Conference of Bishops and in accord with legitimate local custom” (Canon 284).