

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

July 2009

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.

1. What does the Church teach about Satan?

The Church, first of all, teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God. The earliest stories about Satan did not portray him to be fighting against God (see Job 1:6 and Zechariah 3:1). Satan worked in God's heavenly court as a sort of prosecutor, testing human virtue by afflicting misfortune, to gauge the virtuousness of human reaction. The word "Satan" comes from a root word meaning "accuser." Over time Satan and other angels, of their free choice, rejected God and became actively involved in doing evil. Satan became a powerful controller of the forces of evil, acting out of hatred for God and humankind. He tempts people, he had the power to kill and he had influence in the evil that led to Jesus' death (John 13:2). But it is important to remember that Satan is only a creature, and as such is subject to the power of God. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, God overcomes the evil of Satan now and forever. When you are faced with temptation or to cooperate or participate in any kind of evil, ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength to resist Satan's influence. The Holy Spirit will give you all the strength you need!

2. What does the phrase "He descended into Hell" from the Apostles' Creed mean?

First of all, it means that Jesus experienced death as completely as we do. Secondly, it means that after his death, Jesus went to the realm of the dead, where the souls of all those who had died before Him awaited his judgment. Those who were righteous were brought into heaven, and the unrighteous were condemned to remain in hell, separated from God for all eternity. By descending into hell, Jesus completely established his power over all creation – on earth, in heaven and in hell.

3. How long do Catholics have to fast before receiving Holy Communion?

You are to fast for one hour before receiving Holy Communion, not one hour before the beginning of Mass. There are exceptions for the elderly and those who are suffering from some illness where it is necessary for them to consume medicine or food or drink. This same exception applies to those who care for those who are elderly or suffering from some illness, as the Church recognizes that caregivers require their strength as well. Pregnant women are also included in these exceptions. Pregnancy is not look upon as an illness but a blessing, but the Church agrees that pregnant women should be implicitly included in the exceptions to the eucharistic fast. Some knowledgeable in Canon Law joke that a pregnant woman is eating for her baby, who is not bound to the Church's laws for fast and abstinence.