

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

November 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 is the “magisterium” of the Church?

The word *magisterium* comes from the Latin word which means “teacher”. The *Magisterium* is the teaching authority of the Church. It is used to indicate the authority and responsibility the church has in fulfilling the promise of Christ to bring to all people all that Christ told the people in his time. The Church in its role as the *Magisterium* is to be the faithful interpreter of God’s word to humankind. The *Magisterium* consists of the Holy Father, and then on all the Bishops of the world together with him. Together they are the official interpreters and guardians of the revealed truths. The *Magisterium* is one always-living way our Lord honors his promise to his followers to guide them into all truth (John 16:13).

2. What is “epiclesis”?

Epiclesis is a Greek word that means an invocation, a calling down. It is the name given to that part of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass in which the priest asks God to send the Holy Spirit on the bread and wine that they may become the Body and Blood of Christ. From the earliest times, these prayers have contained such an invocation.

3. Someone recently told me that unbaptized babies cannot go to heaven. Is this true?

We know very little about these matters of faith. but we do know and believe that people who die without baptism are in the hands of a loving, merciful and saving God. God wishes salvation for everyone. God created each child out of love. That love, I believe, has touched each child, each person with the same power of salvation that is offered to the rest of us.

4. What do we mean by “Catholic Social Doctrine”?

This refers to a large body of official Catholic teaching which deals with social matters such as economic life, rights and responsibilities of private property, political systems and their relationships to the individual citizen, labor unions, war and peace, and many others. These teachings of the Church have developed over many centuries, but have been more specific during the past century. Pope John XXIII summarized the basics of this complex body of doctrine in one of his great social encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra*. First, he says, all aspects of economic life in a nation are not for special interests of certain individuals, but must be regulated and governed by the principles of social justice and charity. Secondly, he said all social institutions (governments, welfare programs, international bodies, etc.) must be conducted, “not merely for private gain, but also in the interest of the common good of all people.” The violation of these basic principles lies at the source of most social evils of our age. Nearly every pope in the last century has written on these issues, as well as many national conferences of bishops.