**Questions and Answers\_Summer 2019**

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During the class session, my hope is to answer these questions in person, time permitting:

(a) How do Saints intercede for us? Can you give more specifics about the Communion of Saints?

(b) Can non-Catholics be saved? Many Catholics have been taught that only “card carrying” Catholics can be saved and find union with God?

(c) How was it decided that Peter was the Rock on which the Church was built? Was it decided before Jesus was born or because he stated the truth that Jesus was the Son of the Living God / our Savior?

(d) Where in the Bible does it tell you to confess to a priest?

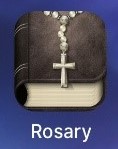
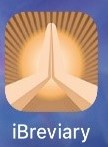
**Other questions you asked:**

**(1) How can I learn to pray the rosary? What prayers can I say after communion?**

I have bought “The Complete Rosary” on iTunes which I love. It is a scriptural rosary and you can pray along, it has all of the mysteries of the rosary. As they pray, they include Scriptural passages and some hymns.

I would also recommend downloading some free apps on your phone. Here are my suggestions:

(1) praying the rosary: (2) Laudate: (3) ibreviary (4) Catena

(1) *Praying the Rosary*: app is straightforward and walks you through the prayers of the rosary

(2) *Laudate*: excellent app; it has numerous prayers including order of the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, rosary, divine mercy chaplet; examination of conscience for confession or daily use, plus many other various prayers. [as to the prayers after communion, you can pray whatever comes to your heart but there are some prayers specifically for this time and you can find them in this Laudate app; to access the post-communion prayers, click on “prayers” then “groups”, then “post-communion group” and you will various prayers you can say after communion; there are various other collections of prayers under this “group” list you can search through]

(3) *ibreviary*: has various prayers, order of the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours

(4) *Catena*: A bible app; it does not have a Catholic Bible but the nice thing is that if you double click on various bible verses, it will give you a link to some Church Fathers’ commentaries

And these are just a few of many that could help you learn and pray various prayers.

**(2) Are there legitimate reasons to miss Mass?**

Yes, there are serious reasons why a person may have to miss Mass.

If a person has a serious illness this would be a serious reason to miss Mass. If a person who is dependent on you is seriously ill and there is no way you can leave them alone, this would be another example. Additionally, if it is impossible to go to Mass this would be another reason: maybe you are stuck at sea on a boat on a Saturday and Sunday and mass is not offered on the ship; or you are in a foreign country where there is no Catholic or Orthodox Church; or there is no minister available to offer Mass within a reasonable distance from where you are.

And if you are in a specific situation where you have an obstacle to fulfilling your Mass obligation and are uncertain what to do, especially if it is a continuing obstacle, talk to a priest so that he can help give you guidance.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2180-2183:

“…The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit…”

**(3) What are we to do during the “Lord’s Prayer” at Mass? Bow? Hold hands?**

The General Instructions of the Roman Missal (GIRM) is the book the Church gives us with the various prayers of the Mass and it gives the general instructions for the celebrant and the people for Mass. The Church asks those at Mass do what she instructs. In these instructions, when praying the Lord’s Prayer, it says the priest is to extend his hands and pray the Our Father out loud with the people. For the people, it says the people are to stand as they pray the Our Father and so we are to do what the Church asks of us. As to the specific question: “Do you bow? Do we hold hands?”, my response can only be to answer with just what the Church tells us: the instructions of the Mass say that the people are to stand and pray.

And we should consider what the GIRM says about gestures and postures in general during the Mass:

#42: “The gestures and bodily posture of both the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers, and also of the people, must be conducive to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, to making clear the true and full meaning of its different parts, and to fostering the participation of all. Attention must therefore be paid to what is determined by this General Instruction and by the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice. A common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them.”

#43: “It is for the Conference of Bishops, in accordance with the norm of law, to adapt the gestures and bodily postures described in the Order of Mass to the culture and reasonable traditions of peoples. However, attention must be paid to ensuring that such adaptations correspond to the meaning and character of each part of the celebration…For the sake of uniformity in gestures and bodily postures during one and the same celebration, the faithful should follow the instructions which the Deacon, a lay minister, or the Priest gives, according to what is laid down in the Missal.”

**(4) After confirmation, how often is it appropriate to go to Confession?**

For all Catholics above the age of reason [which means able to discern right and wrong], the Church requires at a minimum going to Confession once a year. However, this is the minimum requirement. The Church encourages us to go regularly and, in general, the recommendation I most commonly hear from priests and spiritual directors is to try to go once a month.

But another point is that if you find yourself having committed a mortal sin, then you need to go to the sacrament of Confession as soon as possible without unreasonable delay. And you should not present yourself to receive Holy Communion until you have gone to Confession.

**(5) Is it a sin for a Catholic to attend a Protestant worship service in addition to attending Mass on a Sunday?**

In general, the answer to this question is no, it is not a sin to attend a Protestant worship service as long as the Catholic first and foremost fulfills their obligation to go to Mass. However, we must consider the intentions and motivations of why a person is going to the Protestant service.

As a Catholic, if you are attending these services as an act of charity, it is not sinful. But in all situations, the Church asks us to discern and be very prudent. We should not be a cause of scandal in our actions.

What are examples of going to these services as an act of charity? If there is a married couple and the husband is Catholic and the wife is not (or vice versa), the Catholic husband goes to Mass as well as attending the other service with his wife. This is done as an act of charity for his wife and to support her as she walks in the Christian life. This is not sinful. But in these situations, the Church would encourage the couple to be mutually supportive, meaning that the wife should also attend Mass with her husband when possible.

Another example is that a person may attend a Protestant services a few times (in addition to going to Mass) simply to learn more about their beliefs in order to be able to better evangelize non-Catholics. This is not sinful.

Another example is often seen with new converts to Catholicism. They may continue to go to Mass as well as continue to attend their former non-Catholic worship services for a short time because they do not want to immediately destroy their relationships with family members or friends. This is not sinful. The initial few months and years of conversion are not always easy especially when in a situation where people are hostile to the Catholic Church. However, this is not something that should continue for a prolonged time. Converts should gradually stop attending these other services (unless there is a serious reason such as having a non-Catholic spouse) since they no longer hold to those beliefs and practices (and this is in general and not to say there may not be occasions to attend).

BUT I must add that if a Catholic does attend these non-Catholic worship services, they should **refrain** from receiving “holy communion” / the “Lord’s supper” offered at these services. The bread and wine (or grape juice) offered at these other services are symbolic of the Last Supper BUT it also signifies a ‘communion’ with that given community. As a Catholic, we are not in full communion with the beliefs and practices of these denominations so we should not perform actions or gestures that would indicate otherwise.

Now could it be sinful for a Catholic to attend these services? Yes. There are many examples but here are a few: if you are going with the intention of disavowing your Catholic faith; if you are going with the intention of creating scandal; if you go and publicly and intentionally profess a truth contrary to the Catholic faith.

**(6) What is the point of the wedding at Cana? Why does Jesus speak that way to his mother? What’s the moral of the story?**

It is impossible to give a brief answer to explore all of the depths to this event. There are many levels of significance.

For one, this is the first public miracle Jesus performs so it is significant.

There is also a sense of foreshadowing with this event: Jesus is the perfect bridegroom and all of us are called to be the brides of Christ and, exactly three years after this wedding at Cana, Jesus will die on the cross, offering his own life for us. (And Paul speaks of how a bridegroom is to be willing to lay down his life for his bride in Ephesians 5:25-27.)

Additionally, in first part of John’s Gospel, if you read carefully, he is giving us a new creation story. Just as in Genesis we are given 7 days beginning, John fashions the beginning of his Gospel in “7 days” as well, showing us that Jesus came to bring us a new creation. So if you read closely you will see that there is first “in the beginning” (John 1:1) and then we are introduced to John the Baptist. Then, we will see “the next day” (1:29), “the next day” (1:35), “the next day” (1:43) and then “on the third day” (2:1). And if we count these “days” John the Apostle gives us, it is a total of seven days. And then, what happens on the seventh day? The wedding at Cana. This is significant because the seventh day is to be a holy day of rest with our Lord – Adam and Eve, the first married couple rested with God as we see in Genesis. But now John is indicating to us that this seventh day is also to be symbolic of our wedding with the Lord. In this life, we participate most intimately in this wedding feast when we participate in the Mass but ultimately this is to point us to heaven – where God calls us to be united perfectly with him and where we will celebrate the wedding feast of the Lamb with us Bride the Church (Revelation 19:7-9).

So why does Jesus refer to Mary as “woman”? This is NOT at all intended to be derogatory. Jesus is God. He cannot sin! He would not disrespect any human person but, more than that, Mary is his mother and he would never dishonor her. And we can tell by Mary’s reaction that this is not interpreted by her as offensive.

So why does he say this? There are several explanations. I will list three resources below that you can read.

But one of the reasons that stands out most to me is because it seems Jesus is telling us WHO Mary is. What do I mean? As I mentioned above, it seems that John is giving us a new creation account. He starts off “in the beginning.” Then he gives us different events and on the seventh day we have a wedding. A wedding is a covenantal relationship. Our earthly marriages are sacred not only because they are bonds of love and are procreative but because they point to our goal – our marriage with God in heaven for all eternity!

So considering this, if we look back in Genesis, the culmination of the creation story is the creation of Adam and Eve and then their marital covenant plus the seventh day when they are to be at rest with God. But in Genesis, we are told that the first Adam and Eve do not remain faithful to God. They freely choose to disobey God and rebel. The result of this first sin was that death entered the world and human beings were no longer able to enter heaven. And it was because of this first sin that it was necessary for God to become man and redeem the world.

But after this first sin, God makes a promise to humanity. If you read Genesis 3:15, God gives an important prophecy. He says that at some point in the future, God was going to send a Savior. This Savior – this Messiah – would be born of a woman and he would destroy Satan.

Gen 3:15: “I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, between your [Satan] seed [plural] and her seed [singular]; he [her seed] shall bruise your head and you [Satan] shall bruise his heel.”

Who was this woman? It would be a woman who was at enmity with Satan – which means that she was opposed to Satan, fighting against Satan and was not living in sin. And this woman would give birth to the Messiah/the Savior. So this woman could not have been the first Eve since she had just disobeyed God. Throughout the Old Testament we meet many other holy women among the Jewish people but none give birth to the Messiah. So who is it? When we look here in John’s Gospel, we have a new creation story. And on the seventh day, we see Jesus – the new Adam (1 Corinthians 15). And so if Jesus is the new Adam, who is the new Eve? Who is this “woman” of Genesis 3:15? Well, we know that Mary is the mother of Jesus the Messiah. And if there is any doubt, here at Cana, we Jesus identify Mary as “woman.” What woman? He is pointing us back to the long-awaited woman from Genesis 3:15 – the new Eve. The woman who would give birth to the Savior – the Messiah. And so here at Cana, we meet the new Adam and the new Eve. It will be their obedience that unties the knots caused by the disobedience of the first Adam and Eve.

You can read more on this:

(a) <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/apologetics/knowing-mary-through-the-bible-new-wine-new-eve.html>

(b) <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/jimmy-akin/was-jesus-dissing-his-mother-when-he-called-her-woman>

(c) <https://catholicproductions.com/blogs/blog/the-wedding-at-cana-and-jesus-response-to-mary>

**(7) If a man remains unmarried throughout his life, does this affect the sacrament of matrimony?**

The sacrament of matrimony is not impacted by those who are called to the single life. If a person finds themselves called to the single life, it simply means they do not receive the sacrament of matrimony.

**(8) What does incense symbolize? Why would it still be used today and if its important why is it not used at every Mass?**

Incense is an ancient symbol that has been used for thousands of years and across various religions. It has various meanings. Our ancestors in the faith – the Jewish people – used incense in their sacrifices in the Temple. We see incense in the Temple as commanded by God: Num 7:13-17; Ex 30:1-10; 34-38. Soo incense would have been very familiar to Mary, Joseph and the Apostles – all Jewish people. Christians continued to use incense in their own worship and we even see when John the Apostle writes about his vision of heaven in the book of Revelation, incense is depicted being used in worship numerous times (example Rev 8:4).

The purpose of incense as Catholics use it is to symbolize several things: it is to symbolize our prayers rising to heaven; it is to symbolize sanctification and purification; it is to identify certain objects as sacred and blessed; it gives us a sense of the transcendent; and it is also to create an ambiance of heaven.

As to when incense could be used during the Mass, here is what the General Instructions of the Roman Missal says about incense:

#276: “Thurification or incensation is an expression of reverence and of prayer, as is signified in Sacred Scripture (cf. Ps 140 [141]: 2; Rev 8: 3). Incense may be used optionally in any form of Mass: a. during the Entrance Procession; b. at the beginning of Mass, to incense the cross and the altar; c. at the procession before the Gospel and the proclamation of the Gospel itself; d. after the bread and the chalice have been placed on the altar, to incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar, as well as the Priest and the people; e. at the elevation of the host and the chalice after the Consecration.”

Outside of Mass, incense can be used during solemn celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours, during processions and other times set forth in the liturgical books.

Good article with more info: <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/why-do-priests-use-incense.html>

**(9) Mass – can you run through the responses and everything in general?**

This is an excellent resource: <https://www.catholicbridge.com/catholic/catholic-mass-full-text.php>

Additionally, the Laudate phone application and iBreviary application also include the “Order of the Mass” which are the different prayers that are said.

**(10) Confession – can you tell me all about it?**

There will be a talk specifically on the sacrament of Confession given by Fr. Gavin during one of these summer sessions and he will be able to discuss this in length as I know there are many questions pertaining to this…

**(11) When does life start? In detail!**

Human life starts at the moment of conception. This is the moment when the sperm and the ovum unite and the process called fertilization occurs. From this moment a new human life is created. And all human life from the very moment of its beginnings is sacred. Human life is to be respected throughout all stages of development, whether the human is in the stage of being an embryo or a fetus or an infant or a teenager or an adult.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* can be read in full on this topic but here are some excerpts:

[**2258**](javascript:openWindow('cr/2258.htm');): *Human life is sacred* because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being

[**2270**](javascript:openWindow('cr/2270.htm');): Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.

[**2280**](javascript:openWindow('cr/2280.htm');)**:** Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of.

[**2288**](javascript:openWindow('cr/2288.htm');): Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good

**(12) How should a patron Saint be chosen?**

The idea of having “patron Saints” has been a practice in the Church for centuries. You will see specific countries and churches associated with a given patron Saint. This does not mean that *only* this Saint is called upon but it means that this Saint is called upon in a special way to pray for the country/the parish. Over time, Catholics began the tradition of identifying specific Saints as patrons to specific activities of ordinary life (such as the patron of carpenters is St. Joseph) or specific patrons for certain diseases or circumstances (St. Peregrine for cancer and St. Thomas More for adopted children) but people also identify specific patrons for themselves as well.

Other examples of patrons: St. Catherine of Alexandria is the patron of philosophers, St. Cecilia of musicians and St. Gianna Molla is the patron for unborn children.

These patrons do not have to be used exclusively but we call upon them in a special way for ourselves or for others.

To choose your patron Saint for Confirmation, it is important to first learn about the Saints. There are various resources but the more of the Saints you know, the easier it will be to choose one as your patron. Some other things to consider when making a selection: is there a Saint you can identify with? Is there a Saint you have a strong admiration for? Is there a Saint you want to imitate? Is there a Saint you have something in common with? Etc.

This patron Saint will become someone you use as a special intercessor in your life though you are never limited to only asking this patron to intercede for you.

This is a list of some of the Saints, given in alphabetical order: <http://www.saintsresource.com/saints-index-alphabetical>

This list shows you occupations or specific causes associated with given Saints: <http://www.aboutcatholics.com/beliefs/alphabetical-list-of-patron-saints/>

This is another great resource I think you will find very helpful (made for teenagers but even as an adult I love it): <https://lifeteen.com/blog/biggest-best-list-confirmation-saints-guys-girls/>

**(13) Can a Deacon Administer the “Last Rights” to the sick or dying?**

Ministers and the Sacraments:

*Baptism*: ordinarily it is an ordained minister (bishop, priest, deacon); in an emergency anyone can

*Confirmation*: ordinarily a bishop; with permission from bishop or in an emergency a priest can

*Eucharist*: only a bishop or priest

*Confession*: only a bishop or priest

*Holy Orders*: only a bishop can ordain

*Matrimony*: for a Catholic, under canon law the wedding is to be celebrated in the presence of either the bishop or pastor of the parish but it is also an option that either of these could delegate another priest or deacon to be present

*Anointing of the Sick*: only a bishop or priest

**(14) Purgatory - what is it and where is the proof?**

This is a teaching of the Church that is VERY misunderstood. There is too much to say to write anything in brief so I will refer you to some resources for now. It is a topic we discuss during the RCIA year.

Good article: <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/apologetics/the-burning-truth-about-purgatory.html>

An older talk I gave on this topic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n64ZzurxXnk>

**(15) Was the Last Supper the Feast of Passover or did Jesus make it a “new” Passover?**

In the Eucharist, we receive the Real Presence of Jesus (Body, Blood, soul and Divinity) and by partaking of the Eucharist we are consuming the New Paschal Lamb sacrificed for us. Jesus’ Paschal (Passover) Mystery is what we celebrate during holy week and what we celebrate at every Mass.

This is difficult to explain in brief. I have done talks on this and, even after an hour of talking, there is more that could be said. For our purposes here, I will recommend reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church as I think this will begin to answer this question for you. If you have additional questions let me know.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1362-1365:* The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is His Body…In the sense of Sacred Scripture the memorial is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time the Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them. In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ’s Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice offered once for all on the cross remains ever present. “As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which ‘Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed’ (1 Corinthians 5:7) is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out.” Because it is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice…In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28)…

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1384-1385:* The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: “Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53). To respond to this invitation we must prepare ourselves for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself” (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)…

*Catechism #1405:* Every time this mystery [the Eucharist] is celebrated, “the work of our redemption is carried on” and we “break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ.”

*Catechism #1323:* At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us

*Catechism #1337*: The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love. In order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; "thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament."

*Catechism #1340*: By celebrating the Last Supper with his apostles in the course of the Passover meal, Jesus gave the Jewish Passover its definitive meaning. Jesus' passing over to his father by his death and Resurrection, the new Passover, is anticipated in the Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist, which fulfills the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the Church in the glory of the kingdom.

*Catechism #1367:* The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: "The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different." "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory.”

*Catechism #1382:* **“The Paschal Banquet”:** The Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood. But the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is wholly directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion. To receive communion is to receive Christ himself who has offered himself for us.

**(16) Did Jesus go to hell?**

In the Apostles’ Creed, we say Jesus “descended into hell.” This is an English translation of the Latin *infernos* which means “a place of fire” and translated from the Greek *katoteros* which means “the lower parts.”

But for most Christians today, we hear the word “hell” and we think of the place of Satan, the demons and of the damned. But this phrase “descended into hell” refers to the fact that Jesus descended into *Hades*. *Hades* is not strictly “the fires of the hell of the damned” but is a general term that refers to the underworld / the place of the dead.

Before the time of Christ, the gates of heaven were no open since humanity had been cut off from communion with God since the Fall of Adam and Eve. Humanity had to await Jesus the Messiah to redeem the world and make heaven once again possible.

So for those who died before Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension, what happened?

The Jewish people did have a developing understanding of the afterlife but believed in death and life after death. We see in Maccabees, a Jewish mother and her seven children are martyred but they proclaim their trust in God and their hope in the Resurrection of the dead. And in 2 Maccabees 12, we see Jewish soldiers praying for men in their regiment who had died. Jesus himself tells us about an unnamed rich man and a poor man named Lazarus and about how when they both die, they are separated by an abyss and the rich man is in fire whereas the poor man is with Abraham. This gives us further information about the afterlife before heaven’s gates were open.

So the understanding of the afterlife was that the righteous people such as Abraham, Isaac, Moses and David – all he righteous had died before Christ – could not enter heaven as the “gates of heaven were closed” but they were still longing for the coming of the promised Messiah. These righteous people were dead so were in the “underworld” / “Hades”, but they were distinct and separated from those who were wicked. The wicked who rejected God and hated God were condemned to the fires of hell for eternity. So the wicked even before Christ were in hell – the place of the damned with Satan and the demons. But the righteous people were in a state of waiting. This state was often referred to as “Abraham’s bosom” or “the limbo of the Fathers” – again, a state for the righteous who died before Christ.

So when Jesus Christ comes and then dies on the cross, he goes to Hades, the place of the dead, to preach and introduce himself to all of these righteous men and women who had been longing for his coming. After Jesus rises from the dead and ascends into heaven, he will then usher in all of these righteous people who have been made perfect into heaven with him.

So much more should be said but it is difficult in this brief Q&A. Here are two articles that may help but feel free to ask additional questions.

One article on this: <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/did-jesus-descend-into-hell.html>

Another article on this topic: <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2014/the-harrowing-of-hell>