

## *Members of the Catholic Church*

### **Q. 155. What is owed to the Pope and bishops by the faithful?**

The Pope and the bishops are owed honor, respect, obedience and love by the faithful.

We obey the fourth commandment of God, and thus serve Him and His Church, when we honor, love, respect, and obey the Pope and the bishops in union with him.

To be a Catholic means to believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, established the Church to continue His work of redemption throughout all ages. Since the average Catholic cannot probe the depths of philosophical and theological arguments, he turns with security and peace to the teaching authority of the Church, to which Our Lord promised immunity from error through the help of the Holy Spirit, to learn with assurance what he must believe and do to attain salvation.

#### *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**1900** The duty of obedience requires all to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and goodwill: “Pope St. Clement of Rome provides the Church’s most ancient prayer for political authorities: ‘Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, concord, and stability, so that they may exercise without offense the sovereignty that you have given them. Master, heavenly King of the ages, you give glory, honor, and power over the things of earth to the sons of men. Direct, Lord, their counsel, following what is pleasing and acceptable in your sight, so that by exercising with devotion and in peace and gentleness the power that you have given to them, they may find favor with you.’”<sup>2</sup>

#### *Vatican Council II*

Bishops who teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff are to be revered by all as witnesses of divine and Catholic truth; the faithful, for their part, are obliged to submit to their bishops’ decision, made in the name of Christ, in matters of faith and morals, and to adhere to it with a ready and respectful allegiance of mind. This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and that one sincerely adhere to decisions made by him, conformably with his manifest mind and intention. *The Church*, 25

### **Q. 156. Why is respect owed to everyone in the Church?**

Everyone in the Church deserves our deepest respect since, through Baptism, we are united to Christ in His Mystical Body and become His brothers and sisters. Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and is precious in His eyes. Our Lord said, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of

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*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). We should love and honor each of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Consecration to Christ implies obedience to the Commandments, fulfillment of our duties of state, offering up our sufferings in union with Christ, perseverance in doing all for the love of God, and sacrificing our time, talents, and resources to make Christ known in the world. As Christians we are called to love and respect our brothers and sisters, who have been created in the image and likeness of God, and who, through Baptism, have become children of God and members of Christ’s Mystical Body.



#R6-11

### ***Sacred Scripture***

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. *Genesis 1:27*

It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. *Romans 8:16-17*

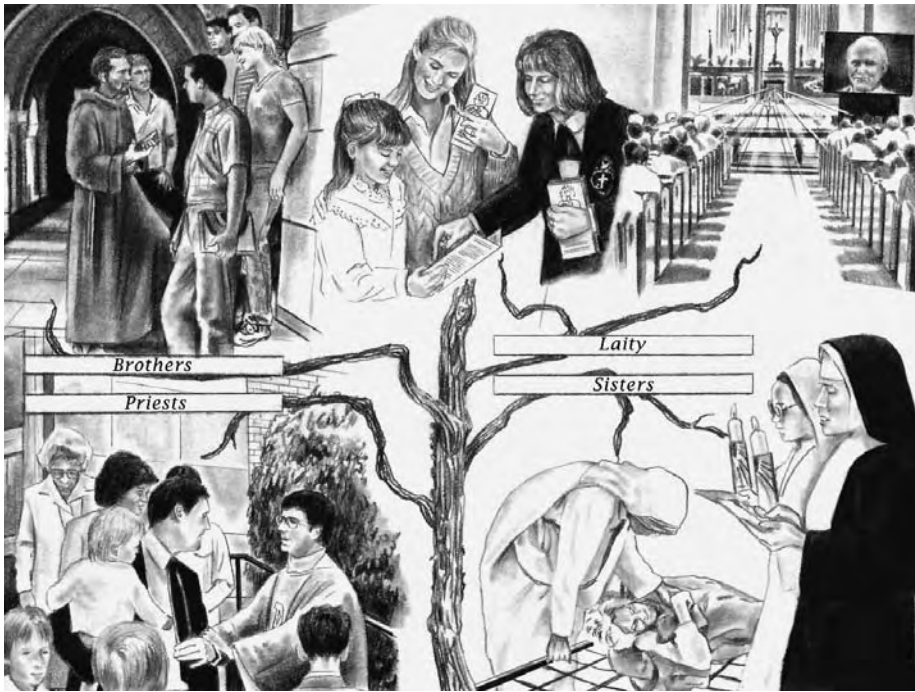
### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1934** Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity.

### ***Vatican Council II***

Mutual esteem for all forms of the Church’s apostolate, and good coordination, preserving nevertheless the character special to each, are in fact absolutely necessary for promoting that spirit of unity which will cause fraternal charity to shine out in the Church’s whole apostolate, common aims to be reached and ruinous rivalries avoided. *Lay People, 23*

This Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament. *The Church*, 26



### **Q. 157. Why is the Catholic Church a community?**

The Catholic Church is a community since its members share Christ's life with one another; it is a people brought together by God.

The Church is a community of those throughout the world whom God has called to give witness to Christ and to the new life He has brought to man. This assembly is called the "People of God" and the "Mystical Body of Christ."

When we describe the Church as the People of God and as the Mystical Body of Christ, it helps each of us to see himself as one with a group to whose destiny we are tied and whose welfare we share. This is the reality of our Baptism: we are joined to the whole Christ, that is, joined to Christ and His people, the Church.

If we are thus joined in Christ, He is truly one with us in a very intimate sense. The Church is seen as the successor to ancient Israel, and Jesus, the Messiah and Head of the new People of God, is seen as rooted in humanity by His physical birth, life, death, and Resurrection. The infant Jesus is the Son of Mary and the Son of God. He is of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David.

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

#### **Sacred Scripture**

Q. 157. Eph 4:15-16; 1 Pet 2:9-10.

#### **Catechism of the Catholic Church**

Q. 157. Paragraphs 782, 787, 804-805.

Through His humanity we are each united to Christ as our Savior. The divinity of Christ must not be slighted; still, that does not cancel out His true humanity. When we use the phrase the “People of God,” we see Christ, prefigured in Moses. Jesus shares a truly human nature with Moses and, like him, leads the People of God from slavery to freedom, from death to life. Christ is our Passover. When we think about the Blessed Virgin Mary, the daughter of Zion, whose Son is Jesus, we clearly see that Jesus is one of us, truly Emmanuel, our “God with us.”

God has called this community to give witness to His Son Jesus and to live the new life He has brought to men. As members of this community, we are joined to Christ through Baptism; we share in His divine life through grace, which reaches us especially in the sacraments.

### ***Sacred Scripture***

For the body does not consist of one member but of many... But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body... But God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” *1 Corinthians 12:14, 18-20, 24-26*

### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**805** The Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit and his action in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes the community of believers as his own Body.

### ***Splendor of Truth***

The first Christians, coming both from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, differed from the pagans not only in their faith and their liturgy but also in the witness of their moral conduct, which was inspired by the New Law. The Church is in fact a communion both of faith and of life; her rule of life is “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6). (*section 26*)

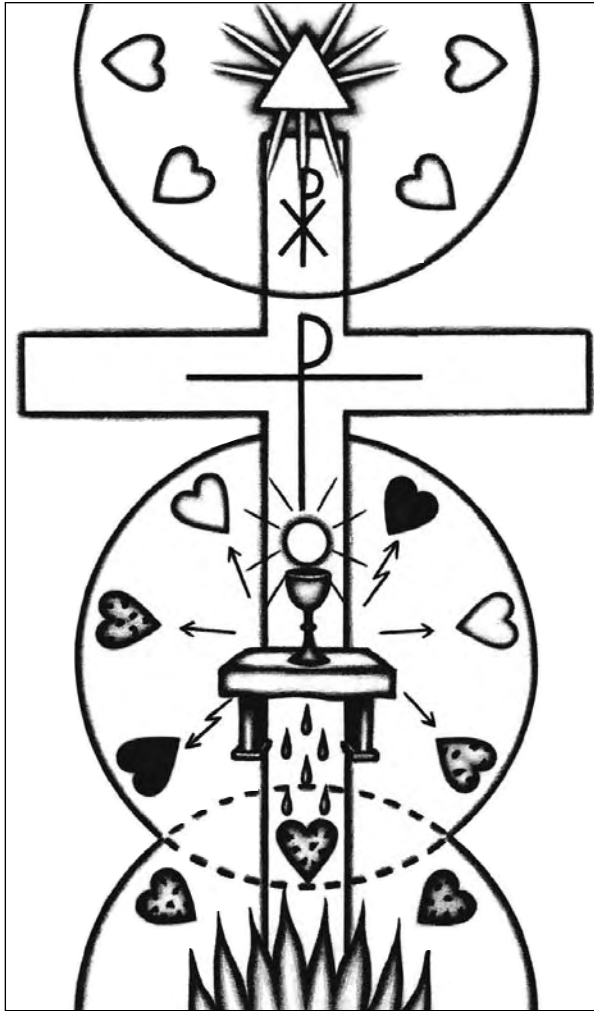
### ***Vatican Council II***

Fully incorporated into the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who – by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion—are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. *The Church, 14*

The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but who do not however profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter. For there are many who hold sacred scripture in honor as a rule of faith and of life, who have a sincere religious zeal, who lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and the Savior, who are sealed by baptism which unites them to Christ, and who indeed recognize and receive other sacraments in their own Churches or ecclesiastical communities. Many of them possess the episcopate, celebrate the holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion of the Virgin Mother of God. There is furthermore a sharing in prayer and spiritual benefits; these Christians are indeed in some real way joined to us in the Holy Spirit. *The Church, 15*

**Catechism by Diagram**

#C15-62



**A Community Sharing the Life of Christ.** The Catholic Church is a community (three circles) that shares the life of Christ (monogram, large cross). By Baptism the faithful are made one body with Christ and also members of the People of God. This union with Christ is especially brought about through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (altar, host, chalice), in which the faithful join Christ (monogram) in His sacrifice on Calvary (cross). By His grace, they are sanctified (white heart), forgiven of their sins (spotted heart), and aided in avoiding mortal sin (black heart). The Church Militant is aided by the life of Christ's grace. The Church Suffering in Purgatory receives the benefits of the Mass.

**Summary Prayer**

*Lord God, eternal Shepherd, You have so tended the vineyard You planted that it now extends its branches to the farthest lands. Look down on Your Church and come to us. Help us to remain in Your Son like branches that are planted firmly on the vine of Your love, that we may testify before the whole world to Your great power working everywhere. We ask this through and in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Amen.*

**Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise** (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. How is the Church a community?
2. How can you and your family use your time, talents, and possessions to build up your parish community?
3. Pray for all the members of the Catholic Church, that all may contribute to the strengthening of the Christian community.

**Q. 158. Is everyone in the Church equal?**

All the members of the Church are equal, but they have different duties and roles. They are united to each other as the one People of God whose Head is Christ.

Describing the Church as the “People of God” emphasizes the fact that the Church is composed of people, including the Pope, bishops, priests, deacons, and the laity. As the Second Vatican Council said, the Church is “a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (cf. St. John Chrysostom, *De Oratio Domino*, 23). In this assembly of people, there is a basic equality of all persons.

Just as God made Moses the leader of His people in the Old Testament, so Christ gave His Apostles and their successors the right to teach and to command in His Name. This authority is given to them for the service and welfare of the People of God.

The Church is also a “priestly people,” but the ministerial priesthood is essentially different from “the priesthood of the faithful.” All, however, are equal and united as the one People of God.

By Baptism, the laity are made one body with Christ and members of the People of God. Sharing, in their own way, in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ, they play a vital role in carrying out the mission of the Church in the world. St. Peter says, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

The baptized, therefore, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. Through all the works of Christians, they may offer spiritual sacrifices to and proclaim the perfection of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Thus all Christians, persevering in prayer and praising God, should offer themselves as sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. They should bear witness to Christ (cf. Romans 12:1) and always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope of an eternal life which is theirs (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

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*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

The laity are distinguished by their “secular character.” Although those in Holy Orders can at times be engaged in secular activities and professions, they are, by reason of their vocation, especially ordained to the sacred ministry. The laity are called by God to work for the sanctification of the world like a leaven, from within, by carrying out their proper tasks according to the spirit of the Gospel. They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people so that they too might offer spiritual sacrifices of everything they do, and in this manner witness to Christ in the world.

Priests should minister to the needs of one another and of the laity. The laity should enthusiastically cooperate with and support their priests. All clergy, religious, and laity are brothers and sisters in the Mystical Body of Christ. Thus, while there is a basic equality among all members of the Church, there is a diversity of functions and responsibilities.



### ***Sacred Scripture***

I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him. For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. *Romans 12:3-6*

As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace. *1 Peter 4:10*

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” *Revelation 1:5-6*

### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1935** The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: “Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design.”<sup>1</sup>



### *Vatican Council II*

Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. *The Church*, 10

The social nature of man shows that there is an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society. Insofar as man by his very nature stands completely in need of life in society, he is and he ought to be the beginning, the subject and the object of every social organization. Life in society is not something accessory to man himself: through his dealing with others, through mutual service, and through fraternal dialogue, man develops all his talents and becomes able to rise to his destiny.

Among the social ties necessary for man's development some correspond more immediately to his innermost nature—the family, for instance, and the political community; others flow rather from his free choice. Nowadays for various reasons mutual relationships and interdependence increase from day to day and give rise to a variety of associations and organizations, both public and private. Socialization, as it is called, is not without its dangers, but it brings with it many advantages for the strengthening and betterment of human qualities and for the protection of human rights. *Modern World*, 25

### *Summary Prayer*

*Heavenly Father, in the New Testament You shed light on the miracles You worked in ancient times: the Red Sea is seen as a symbol of our Baptism, and the nation You freed from slavery is a sign of Your Christian people. May every nation share the faith and privilege of Israel by coming to new birth in the Holy Spirit and becoming one people in Christ. We ask this in His most powerful and holy Name. Amen.*

### **Q. 159. Who in the Church is called to a life of holiness?**

In the Church each member has a vocation to lead a life of holiness.

When God created man, He gave him the gifts of supernatural life, of divine sonship. Man was alive with the very life of God, but by sin, he lost this gift of divine life. Left to himself, man was incapable of winning back the divine life. But God,

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*



in His infinite mercy, conceived the wonderful plan of the Redemption and sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus, into the world to save mankind.

Christ became man and took man's sinfulness upon Himself. He stood in the place of all men before His Father. By accepting His death on Calvary, He paid the penalty for all men's sins. Since He was God's Son, the bonds of death could not hold Him. He rose to life. With Him all mankind passed from death to life, returned to the Father's sonship, and again enjoyed the intimacy of His love.

In Christ we have already died to sin and risen to new life. He infuses into our souls that very life of divine sonship which filled Him at His own Resurrection. He does this through the sacraments which He instituted for the Church. Christ wills to carry on His life within us for the glory of the Father. This life of Christ within us is that state of holiness to which we are all called by God.

This Christ-life means that we can open our minds to Him by faith so that we may have the same outlook that He had. We open our hearts to Him so that He may live in us His own life of love and self-surrender to the Father. We strive to imitate His life so that in all things we become like Him. St. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).



#C37-9

### ***Sacred Scripture***

I...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. *Ephesians 4:1-6*

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you invoke as Father him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. *1 Peter 1:14-17*

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**2013** “All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.”<sup>71</sup> All are called to holiness: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”<sup>72</sup> “In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ’s gift, so that... doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.”<sup>73</sup>

***Splendor of Truth***

His [every Christian’s] moral life has the value of a “spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1; cf. Phil 3:3), flowing from and nourished by that inexhaustible source of holiness and glorification of God which is found in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist: by sharing in the sacrifice of the Cross, the Christian partakes of Christ’s self-giving love and is equipped and committed to live this same charity in all his thoughts and deeds. (*section 107*)

***Vatican Council II***

It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love. *The Church*, 40

***Summary Prayer***

*Lord, You are the fullness of life, holiness, and joy. Fill our days and nights with the love of Your wisdom, that we, the People of God, may bear fruit in the beauty of holiness, like a tree that is watered by running streams.*

*Almighty God, You are our Father and we are Your people. You keep constant guard over us. Protect us from hidden snares and make us holy, that we may praise and thank You, and so live in righteousness before You.*

*So that Your people might walk in innocence and holiness, You gave us our Lord Jesus Christ. Help Your children to love what is truly perfect, so that we may neither speak what is evil nor do what is wrong. Let us stand in Your sight and always celebrate Your love and justice, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

***Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise*** (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. In what sense are the members of the Church equal?
2. As a lay person, what is your distinct role and responsibility in the Church? Describe specific ways in which you can fulfill these responsibilities.
3. Foster a fervent and constant desire for holiness in the fulfillment of your daily duties.

***Chapter Summary Prayer***

*Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we beg of You, have mercy on Your Holy Catholic Church. Protect and bless the Pope and all bishops, priests, and deacons. Fill them with wisdom, strength, and virtue, that they may live lives worthy of their sublime vocation and guide their flocks to*

*eternal salvation. Visit all of the faithful with Your sanctifying grace, so that by leading pure and holy lives, they may persevere in Your love.*

*Stretch forth Your mighty arm and protect Your holy Church against all attacks of the enemy; destroy their power so that, in peace and security, we may work out our salvation and spread Your holy Faith. Exalt and glorify Your Church with the splendor of holiness so that, as the Bride of Christ, she may give praise to You forever and ever. Amen.*

### Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 45

*See Appendix A for more references.*

#### **Q. 155. What is owed the Pope and bishops by the faithful?**

*Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), Vatican II, sect. 7, 8, 10;*  
*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 8, 12, 18-28;*  
*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 9, 30;*  
*The Relationship Between Faith and Reason, John Paul II, sect. 52-62;*  
*Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 3, 4, 30, 37, 65, 109, 114.*

#### **Q. 156. Why is respect owed to everyone in the Church?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 7, 9, 11-13, 30-33;*  
*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 12, 28-29, 37;*  
*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 13, 25, 27, 29, 30;*  
*Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 14, 18.*

#### **Q. 157. Why is the Catholic Church a community?**

*Catechesis in Our Time, John Paul II, sect. 24;*  
*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 2, 7-9, 11, 13, 14, 27, 30-33;*  
*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 18-20;*  
*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 25, 27;*  
*On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 25-26;*  
*Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 18;*  
*Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 26, 35, 107, 118.*

#### **Q. 158. Is everyone in the Church equal?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 30-33;*  
*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 15, 28;*  
*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 27, 30;*  
*On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 25;*  
*Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 14;*  
*Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 1, 107.*

#### **Q. 159. Who in the Church is called to a life of holiness?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 7, 9, 11-14, 30-33, 39-47;*  
*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 16-17, 30, 55;*  
*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 25, 27, 30;*  
*Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 10;*  
*To the Youth of the World, John Paul II, sect. 9.*



## Thought Provokers

*Please see Appendix C for the answers.*

- Q. 155: In addition to respect and obedience, how else should we provide help for the Pope and for our bishops, priests, and deacons?
- Q. 156: Every human person deserves our respect. Why?
- Q. 157: In what sense is the Christian family a community?
- Q. 158: What did St. Paul mean when he wrote: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."? (Galatians 3:26-28)
- Q. 159: Why is growth in holiness, or sanctity, so hard to achieve?