

Penny Catechism Changes

Differences between the Catechism of Christian Doctrine published by the Catholic Truth Society in England and Wales in 1958 and the revised edition published in 1971.

From its inception until the expiry of the 1958 edition, the famous Penny Catechism, containing the official and authoritative statement of Catholic Doctrine, remained unchanged apart from some details of minimal significance in some of the prayers and devotions.

In 1971, a new edition was issued by the Catholic Truth Society incorporating changes which, though subtle, are significant and clearly designed to have an effect. We believe that it is desirable to bring these changes to the attention of Catholics, both to warn them of dilution of Catholic doctrine that has already taken place and to put them on their guard against further changes which will most probably be introduced in further revised editions.

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Page Bros (Norwich) Ltd

Answer 121

1958 Edit. Mortal sin is a *grievous* offence against God.

1971 Edit. Mortal sin is a *serious* offence against God.

Answer 122

1958 Edit. It is called mortal sin because it kills the soul and deserves hell.

1971 Edit. It is called mortal sin because *it is so serious* that it kills the soul and deserves hell.

Answer 178

1958 Edit. We expose ourselves to the danger of losing our Faith by neglecting our spiritual duties, reading bad books, going to non-Catholic schools and *taking part in the services or prayers of a false religion.*

1971 Edit. We expose ourselves to the danger of losing our Faith by neglecting our spiritual duties, reading bad books, going to non-Catholic schools.

Note the elimination of ' . . . taking part in the services or prayers of a false religion.' It is interesting to note that the answer 177 is the same in both editions reading: 'The sins against Faith are all false religions, wilful doubt, disbelief or denial of any article of Faith and culpable ignorance of the doctrines of the Church.'

Answer 232

1958 Edit. *It is a mortal sin to neglect* to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

1971 Edit. *Catholics are under serious obligation* to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation unless prevented by other serious duties or by ill-health.

Note the important change. It is no longer a mortal sin to miss Mass, nor is such neglect specifically stated to be in any way sinful.

Answer 241

1958 Edit. Children are bound to go to confession as soon as they have come to the use of reason and are capable of *mortal* sin.

1971 *Edit.* Children are bound to go to confession as soon as they have come to the use of reason and are capable of *serious* sin.

Note replacement of mortal sin by serious sin. Again mortal sin is *out* as in Answer 232.

Answer 265

1958 *Edit.* The words used in Confirmation are these: 'I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

1971 *Edit. Incorporating 1976 revision.* The words used in Confirmation are these: 'N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.'

Note that in view of the fact that the signs of the Cross, the chrism of salvation, the words 'I confirm', and the first two Persons of the Holy Trinity have been omitted, thus making the proper form absent, the validity of the sacrament is open to question (see *Summa Theologiae* by St. Thomas Aquinas, III, a. 72, 4).

Answer 296

1958 *Edit.* If a person sinfully conceal a *mortal sin* in Confession he is guilty of a great sacrilege, by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost in making a bad Confession.

1971 *Edit.* If a person wilfully conceal a *serious sin* in Confession he is guilty of a great sacrilege, by telling a lie to the Holy Spirit in making a bad Confession.

Note. Again mortal sin replaced by serious sin.

Answer 308

1958 *Edit.* It is a sacrilege to contract marriage in *mortal sin*, or in disobedience to the laws of the Church, and, instead of a blessing, the guilty parties draw upon themselves the anger of God.

1971 *Edit.* It is a sacrilege to contract marriage in *serious sin*, or in disobedience to the laws of the Church, and, instead of a blessing, the guilty parties draw upon themselves the anger of God.

Note. Again mortal sin is replaced by serious sin.

Answer 309

1958 *Edit.* A 'mixed marriage' is a marriage between a Catholic and one who, though baptized, does not profess the Catholic Faith.

1971 *Edit.* A 'mixed marriage' is a marriage in which only one partner is Catholic.

Question 310

1958 *Edit.* Has the Church always forbidden mixed marriages?

1971 *Edit.* Does the Church encourage mixed marriages?

Note the change in the question. The past is to be forgotten. *Forbidden* is replaced by *encourage*.

Answer 310

1958 *Edit.* The Church has always forbidden mixed marriages and considers them unlawful and pernicious.

1971 *Edit.* The Church does not encourage mixed marriages and considers them dangerous.

Note the change. The Church no longer forbids mixed marriages but merely does not encourage them. Are they no longer 'unlawful' and 'pernicious'? (A secular dictionary defines pernicious as - highly injurious or hurtful; destructive.)

Question and Answer 311a is an addition in the Revised 1971 Edition of the Penny Catechism. It is:

Question 311a. What does the Catholic partner of a mixed marriage promise?

Answer 311a. The Catholic partner of a mixed marriage promises to *do everything possible* to preserve the Faith and have all the children of the marriage baptized and brought up in the Catholic religion.

Note. Therefore taking together answers 310 and 311a, a Catholic, although 'not encouraged' to do so, may now contract a mixed marriage and allow the children to be brought up outside the Faith.

The Confiteor

1958 Edit. I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever a Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the Saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech blessed Mary ever a Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me. Amen.

1971 Edit. I confess to almighty God that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever Virgin, all the angels and saints, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Note the omission of 'grievous', diluting the concept of mortal sin.

Act of Faith

1958 Edit. I firmly believe there is one God; and that in this one God there are three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the Son took to Himself the nature of man from the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and that in this our human nature He was crucified and died for us; that afterwards He rose again, and ascended into heaven, from whence He shall come to repay the just with everlasting glory, and the wicked with everlasting punishment. Moreover, I believe whatsoever else the Catholic Church proposes to be believed, and this because God, who is the Sovereign Truth, and can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed all these things to this His Church.

1971 Edit. My God, I believe in you and all that your Church teaches, because you have said it, and your word is true.

Note: The Trinity is omitted so that the words could address any false church. There is not even a mention of *one* God, thus allowing pantheism. Also omitted are the Virgin Birth,

the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, Heaven and Hell.

Act of Hope

1958 Edit. O my God, relying on Thine almighty power, and Thine infinite mercy and goodness, and because Thou art faithful to Thy promises, I trust in Thee that Thou wilt grant me the forgiveness of my sins, through the merits of Jesus Christ Thy Son; and that Thou wilt give me the assistance of Thy grace, with which I may labour to continue to the end in the diligent exercise of all good works, and may deserve to obtain in heaven the glory which Thou has promised.

1971 Edit. My God, I hope in you, for grace and for glory, because of your promises, your mercy and your power.

Act of Charity

1958 Edit. O Lord my God, I love Thee with my whole heart, and above all things, because Thou, My God, art the sovereign Good, and for Thine own infinite perfection art most worthy of all love, and for Thy sake I also love my neighbour as myself.

1972 Edit. My God, because you are so good, I love you with all my heart, and for your sake, I love my neighbour as myself.

Note: The description 'so good':

- (a) suggests the possibility that God could be even better,
- (b) invites people to place their own definition on how good God is,
- (c) applies a man-made measure to God. It is possibly blasphemous.

Throughout the Appendix

1958 Edit. 'Thou' and 'Thee', spelt with a capital letter, are used to address any person of the Holy Trinity.

1971 Edit. Any Person of the Holy Trinity is addressed as 'you', spelt without a capital letter.