

- **Welcome and Introduction**
- **Definition of Apologetics**

The purpose of **Apologetics** is to inform and defend the faith. Catholics should know about their faith so as to be prepared when questions are asked or doubts arise. The word, "**Apologetics**" does not mean that one should go around apologizing for being Catholic. It comes from the Greek term, "**apologia**", which we get from the first letter of St. Peter, where he says that we should "*always be ready to give a reason for the hope that lies within us*" (**1 Peter 3:15**).

We must **always** be prepared to give answers to those who are seeking the truth. The only way to prepare for this is to understand **why** we believe what we believe. If we do not have a sufficient knowledge of our faith – how can we sufficiently share our faith with any of our friends or family members? How can we help them to understand the message of the Gospel if we don't understand it ourselves? All Catholics should be informed on subjects such as the Real Presence, Salvation, Confession, Purgatory, Marian Doctrines and many others so that we can spread the Good News as Jesus commanded us (**Matt. 28:19-20**).

We also need to hope to dispel many myths and falsehoods about the Church that have developed over time – to set the record straight. Our non-Catholics brothers and sisters also have a right to know the truth.

1) What are the main differences between Catholics and non-Catholic Christians?

- a) The Catholic Church represents the "fullness of the faith" meaning we embrace the entire gospel whether written or spoken through the mouths of the Apostles. (Tradition & tradition)
- b) Misinterpretation of basic beliefs such as Sola Fide (Faith Alone) and Sola Scriptura (Bible only)
- c) Catholics believe Jesus established a His church and appointed leaders to continue spreading the Gospel and pass down the faith.

2) What unites us as Christians?

- a) The belief in the Trinity, Jesus' divinity, salvation through the finished work of Christ, the Scriptures, etc.
- b) We are all trying to get to heaven.
- c) We know there is a hell.

3) What are quasi-Christians?

- a) JW's, Mormons, non-Trinitarian churches.
- b) Do not believe in the basic tenets of the faith such as the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus.
- c) Usually not well educated in Scripture but are very good at memorizing certain verses and distorting their meaning.

4) Starting out as an Apologist

- a) Read the Bible beginning with the (4) Gospels
- b) Followed by Acts of the Apostles, epistles (Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians) and the remaining New Testament. This will help you see the correlation between the Old and New Testaments. (Typology, prophecies, understanding God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
- c) Read the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Virtually all of the Church's teachings are present either explicitly or implicitly
- d) **Read the Early Church Fathers** - Helps you understand what the ancient Church believed. You will find they were very Catholic back then. *(a) See notes on Ignatius of Antioch*
- e) **Read conversion and re-conversion stories** - A great way to help you understand what issues people struggled with and what it took to convince them of the truth. *(b) See notes on book titles*

5) Next Steps

- a) **Learn the Objections** – Read anti-Catholic materials and understand what the objections to the Catholic faith are and why. (Bad anti-Catholic authors like Boettner and Chick, What they were taught by their church, preconceived ideas, Poor translation of the bible, misinterpretation of Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic)
- b) **Do your homework and study** – Don't just read the material, understand its meaning as Catholic. Look for good orthodox periodicals, books, etc.
- c) **Build up your library** - www.catholic.com/tracts/apologists-bookshelf
- d) **Avoid debating until you are well prepared** – Doesn't mean you have to have all of the answers but you enough to have educated conversations.

- **Avoid being divisive or mean spirited** – Must remember we are not here to fight but to spread the Gospel.
- **Learn how to handle differences** – Respect their differences and do not engage in argumentative behavior. If you don't know the answer, be honest and tell the person you will get back to them.
- **Basic materials** – www.catholic.com/tracts/apologists-bookshelf

Ignatius of Antioch ([Ancient Greek](#): Ἰγνάτιος Ἀντιοχείας, also known as **Theophorus** from [Greek](#) Θεοφόρος "God-bearer") (ca. 35 or 50-between 98 and 117)^[1] was among the [Apostolic Fathers](#), was the third [Bishop of Antioch](#), and was a student of [John the Apostle](#).^{[2][3]} En route to his martyrdom in Rome, Ignatius wrote a series of letters which have been preserved as an example of very early [Christian theology](#). Important topics addressed in these letters include [ecclesiology](#), the [sacraments](#), and the role of [bishops](#).

- **Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God. . . . They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes. — *Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2–7:1* (Ignatius stressed the value of the [Eucharist](#), calling it a "medicine of immortality" (*Ignatius to the Ephesians 20:2*))**
- **Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful to baptize or give communion without the consent of the bishop. On the other hand, whatever has his approval is pleasing to God. Thus, whatever is done will be safe and valid. — *Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8*, (It is from the word *katholikos* ("according to the whole") that the word [catholic](#) comes. When Ignatius wrote the Letter to the Smyrnaeans in about the year 107 and used the word *catholic*, he used it as if it were a word already in use to describe the Church. This has led many scholars to conclude that the appellation *Catholic Church* with its ecclesial connotation may have been in use as early as the last quarter of the 1st century.)**

Conversion Stories

- **Rome Sweet Home** – Scott Hahn
- **Surprised By Truth** – Patrick Madrid
- **Welcome Home** – St, Joseph Communications