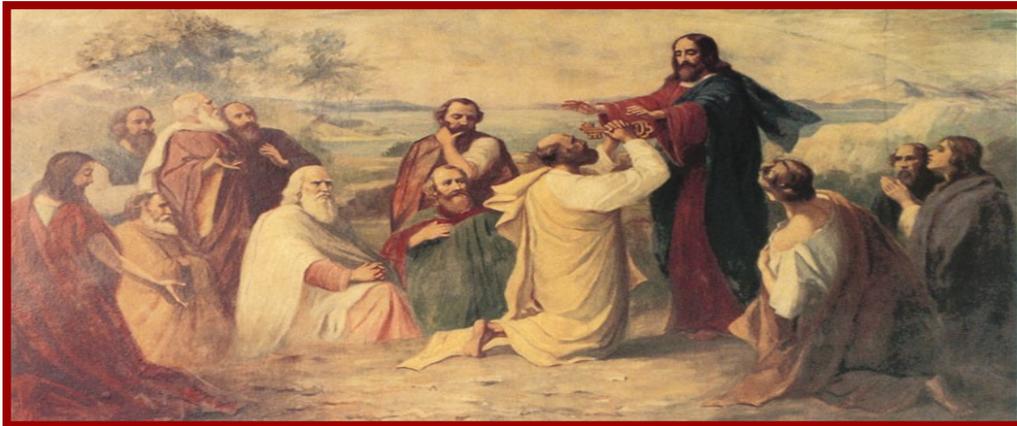
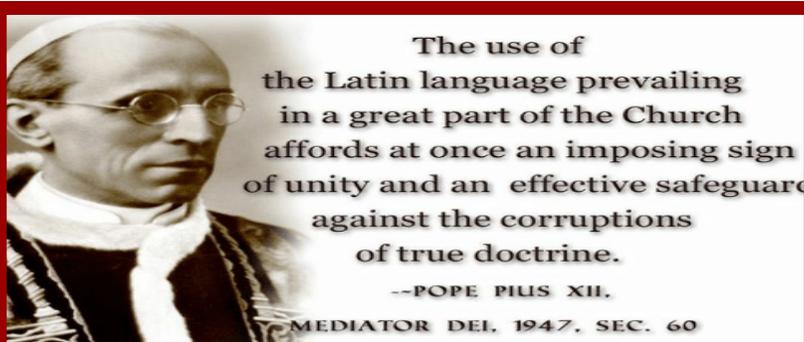


**Looking for Answers –
Explore What The Catholic Church Really Teaches –
Part 13**



Question:



**Latin Is Still The Official
Language of the Roman
Catholic Church -Sacrosanctum
Bellator**

Why is Latin the language of the Church? How can the congregation understand the Mass whenever it is said in Latin?

Answer:

The Catholic Church began in the days of the Roman Empire, and the language spoken throughout that Empire was Latin. St. Peter moved the seat of Church government from Antioch to Rome, and the Catholic Church government remains centered there to this very day. It was only natural that Latin became the language of the Church. As the centuries elapsed, for example, Latin still remained the

language of the educated classes – even into the 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that Latin should still be the official language of the Catholic Church. It simply always has been.

Furthermore, a universal language greatly facilitates the unity of the Church. Ecumenical Councils, for example, have always been held in Latin, enabling bishops from all over the world to communicate with each other easily. Moreover, unlike English, French, German and the other languages of the Western world, Latin does not change over the centuries – it is not affected by national idioms, slang and the like; therefore, in Western countries Latin is the official language of the Mass because it helps to preserve the original purity of the Mass liturgy although today, the Mass is usually said in the language of the people. Catholics have always had a complete translation of the Mass Latin in their missal, or Mass handbook, so they have always been able to understand and follow everything the priest says and does at the altar, even when the Mass is in Latin.

It should also be borne in mind that the Mass is never exclusively in Latin. All sermons, Gospel and Epistle readings, parish announcements and closing prayers are in the language of the congregation.

Question:



Why do Catholics call their priests *Father* despite the fact that Christ said: *Call no man on earth your father; for one is your Father, Who is in Heaven?* (St. Matthew 23:9)

Answer:

Catholics call their priests *Father* because in all matters pertaining to Christ's Holy Faith they perform the duties of a father, representing God. The priest is the agent of the Christian's *supernatural* birth and sustenance in the world. *Father* is a title which does not conflict in the slightest with Matthew 23:9. Christ forbids the Christian to acknowledge any fatherhood which conflicts with the Fatherhood of God just as He commands the Christian to *hate* his father, mother, wife, and his own life, in so far as these conflict with the following of Christ. (St. Luke 14:26).

But Christ does not forbid Christians to call His own representatives by the name of *Father*. Catholic priests share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ (not a human priesthood), and their sacred ministry partakes of the Fatherhood of God. Like St. Paul (himself a Catholic priest), every Catholic priest can refer to the souls he has spiritually begotten as his *children in Christ*. (1 Corinthians 4:14). St. Paul considered himself to be the spiritual father, *in Christ*, of the *Corinthians*: *For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you.* (1 Corinthians 4:15). The title of *Father* is entirely proper for an ordained priest of Jesus Christ.



Question :

Why do Catholics practice fasting and abstinence from meat on certain days? Does not St. Paul call abstaining from meats a *doctrine of devils*? (1 Timothy 4:1 – 3).

Answer:

Catholics give up eating meat – for example, on Good Friday – to commemorate and honor Christ's Sacrifice on that day, and to follow His instruction to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. (St. Matthew 16:24; St. Mark 8:34; St. Luke 9:23). It is a practice that dates back to the earliest days of the Christian Church. Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria both mention it in their writings. It is a practice which is thoroughly Christian, for

we note that Christ Himself recommended fasting, saying: *When thou fastest anoint thy head, and washed thy face... And thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee.* (St. Matthew 6:17 – 18). In the same vein the Apostle Paul described his own suffering for Christ:... *In hunger and thirst, in fastings often...* (2 Corinthians 11:27).

Fasting was practiced both by Christ's followers (Acts of the Apostles 14:22) and by Christ Himself. (St. Matthew 4:1 – 2). And Our Lord told His disciples that some devils cannot be cast out *but by prayer and fasting*. (St. Matthew 17:20). Paul's denunciation of those who abstain from eating meat applies to those who reject the eating of meat entirely, as though it were evil in itself. His denunciation has nothing to do with the abstinence of Catholics, for on other days Catholics eat as much meat as do other people. Moreover, the abstinence from meat is not binding on all Catholics. Young children, old people, sick people, and all Catholics where meat is the principle diet, are excused.

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