

**1. Question:**

1. Supposing you had plenty of free time for reading this summer, what titles would we find on your reading list?

- *Pope Benedict's Divine Mercy Mandate* by David Came
- *Hope for the World, To Unite All Things in Christ* by Guillaume Alancon
- *Servant of Truth, The Life and Mission of Servant of God Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J.* by David Hottinger
- *God or Nothing* by Robert Cardinal Sarah
- *Silence* by Cardinal Sarah – coming out in the fall
- *Remaining in the Truth of Christ, Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church* edited by Robert Dodaro, O.S.A.
- Books by Anthony Esolin

2. What theologian(s) alive today could stand in for Father Hardon?

Today most theologians do not write the comprehensive kind of treatments as Father Hardon was accustomed to do.

**2. Question:**

My question involves the Consecration requirement of daily Holy Mass and Holy Communion.

With the growing shortage of priests, would it be permissible to attend a Communion service on a Saturday morning or Monday morning where a Mass is not available locally?

**3. Question:**

In *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, on the Sacrament of Marriage it stressed the importance of continence in marriage by even incorporating it somewhat into the liturgical year as a sacrifice before certain feasts and celebrations. It was done in the spirit of mortification and sacrifice. Should continence be more stressed in marriage beyond natural family planning to combat our sensual society?

Hedonism and the focus on pleasure seems to be stressed in marriage today. The *Catechism of Trent* seemed to make a good point on the subject of continence, and said that to look at you wife as a mistress is the most vile act, and disrespect to her. (P.S Is my thinking too extreme. Is it a foolish question?)

**4. Question:**

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #497 states: “‘That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit,’ said the angel to Joseph about Mary his fiancée.” Is there any way the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops can change the word “fiancée” to “wife?”

**5. Question:**

1. Was Saint Joseph a widow with children before his marriage to Our Lady?
2. Is it *Eve alone* or is it *Adam and Eve* who are responsible for Original Sin?
3. Are Adam and Eve in Heaven? If so then they are Saints!

**6. Question:**

Your Eminence, I like to request to gather up the sufferings of all creation and then give it to the Blessed Mother for Her to make it worthy and present to Her son. This way no suffering is wasted. And I try to remember to present this every day. Is it ok for me to make this request? If I should forget, could the Holy Angels do this for me?

**7. Question:**

Please give some detailed information about the problems with Alpha in a Catholic Content. Our Diocese is promoting it and I feel that I need more information in order to discuss it with our priest. I told him of your objection and he said he disagreed. I did not have any details to support your objection.

**8. Question:**

What should be our attitude toward the Society of Saint Pius X? Are they in schism? Some say that they were compelled to protect the Liturgy.

**9. Question:**

If during the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, a person in the congregation becomes ill, may the priest who is offering Holy Mass leave the sanctuary during the Mass and administer the Anointing of the Sick to that person? Thank you.

**10. Question:**

Your Eminence, could you address the question "What is sin?" While obvious to most of us, knowing what sin is, is key to conversion for unbelievers. If one doesn't understand sin or think it doesn't apply to them, they could feel like they are not in need of a savior. I'm looking for help philosophically for a workplace/casual setting discussion and not a theological answer or an answer that refers to specific church persons. An appeal to reason and natural law. Thank you.

**11. Question:**

If a baptized member of the Catholic Church does not perform any type of penance on Friday, would they be guilty of mortal sin?

Reference taken from revised *Basic Catholic Catechism Course*, Lesson 13, The Sacrament of Penance, page 172.

**3. Friday Penance.** Every Friday is to be a day of self-denial and mortification. The principle goal is to unite oneself with the Crucified Savior, and to remember prayerfully His Passion. The standard recommended penitential practice is abstinence from meat. Although abstinence from meat on Fridays outside of Lent is optional, the Friday penance is **not optional**. Some form of penance is required on all Fridays; one should not lightly excuse oneself from this serious obligation. The person who does not abstain from meat must perform another penitential act such as abstinence from another favorite food, limiting television or news programs, additional prayer, or a work of charity such as almsgiving, visiting the poor or shut-ins, or some other good work. The systematic, deliberate neglect of such a penance on a consistent basis is mortally sinful (cf. CIC, canons 1250, 1251).

### 12. Question:

Our parish priest said in a homily, "The Pope never said same-sex marriages are okay. He never said that. He said, 'respect the union.'"

After Mass, I said, "I can respect the person, made in the image and likeness of God. But the union is sinful. I can't respect that."

He replied, "Well, the Pope said respect the union. The Pope is the authority of the Church. We have to do that."

Father doesn't mince words in calling a sin a sin, and has been called out and walked out on by two lesbians attending Mass at a nearby church where he was preaching.

Father Hardon said we should receive what the Pope says, even trying to introduce it in our conversations, referring to him as the "Holy Father."

My questions are:

1. Was our priest (a good Filipino priest, on loan to our diocese), overstating the Holy Father's authority here?
2. How does one respect a homosexual union?

### 13. Question:

My question deals with actual NEW Church authority due to the changes in the annulment process and the perceived if not real changes given in *Amoris Laetitia*. Will any priest in the Sacrament of Confession be able to by-pass the long-established annulment process and with the NEW expanded authority granted by Pope Francis permit those who are civilly divorced and civilly remarried to in "good conscience" receive the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Eucharist. That is to say, to be "in FULL Communion with the Roman Catholic Church?"

**14. Question:** Your Eminence, could you please comment on how, if at all, the pastoral approach of the Holy Father of "accompaniment" for the present times affects our task of catechesis?

**15. Question:** Your Eminence, given the Holy Father's style of encounter with the media, what can we do to be properly informed ourselves and what can we say to help people who are confused by things they hear of Pope Francis saying or doing and may conclude something is lacking in his orthodoxy?

**16. Question:** Your Eminence, what are the terms of reference for the commission set up by the Holy Father recently, to study questions about women deacons?

### 17. Question:

Your Eminence, could you please explain what exactly is the meaning of "Ordinary Magisterium" and whether teachings such as St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* once given as a series of papal homilies, are part of the Ordinary Magisterium? Also, how does "ordinary magisterium" relate to the pontificate of Pope Francis thus far?

**18. Question:**

Is *Humanae Vitae* an infallible teaching?

**19. Question:**

**Can the Holy Souls in Purgatory pray for us?**

My question regards Lesson 5 of the *Revised Basic Manual's* explanation of the Communion of Saints, in particular as **to whether the Poor Souls in Purgatory can actually intercede for us while they are in Purgatory or only after they enter Heaven.** This has caused much contradiction among my friends and parish priest. Please, if you could respond to this debated theological truth, clarifying it for me, is it the **Father Hardon view** or the **Saint Thomas Aquinas view.** Thank you for helping us know how to teach this topic.

Specific Questions:

1. **Can the Poor Souls in Purgatory pray for us?** Father Hardon says yes in the *Revised Basic Course* but my parish priest says no based on Saint Thomas Aquinas—he says the Holy Souls in Purgatory are powerful in response to our prayers for them, but **ONLY** after they enter Heaven.

*The common opinion of theologians today is that the Souls in Purgatory can pray for us. It is not clear that Saint Thomas Aquinas denies this entirely, but only in so far as it involves organizations established for prayer. It would seem Saint Thomas never clearly states that an individual in Purgatory cannot pray for us as individuals, although they cannot form groups to pray together for the living.*

*By “prayer groups” as used by Saint Thomas I believe are meant officially approved groups of faithful whose prayers for the deceased forms a single petition of all in the group, even if this or that member is not present for legitimate reasons. Even if it is true that the Souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves or others as members of such groups any longer, they can still pray for others as a single person. I believe this is the meaning, but I have no source to check it as correct. Hence, the poor souls, to pray for us, need to pray singly for each singly, not as part of an organized society or state. We on the contrary as members of an organized group can pray for as many souls as we wish, asking each (even if we do not know names) to pray for us.*

2. **Does the Church teach as doctrine that they *can* pray or *cannot* pray for us?**

*The Catholic Church does not teach either position, but the fact that the Church has allowed the faithful including saintly theologians to ask for the prayers of single souls in Purgatory is already permission for the practice. Those who do not wish to hold this, therefore, may not deny others to do so.*

3. **If it is not doctrine can you hold either view?**

*You may hold either view, but you cannot forbid others to hold and to practice it.*

4. **Is my parish priest correct in stating that one is to follow Saint Thomas Aquinas when something has not been declared doctrine?**

*One may follow Saint Thomas before something has been declared, but one may not thereby on this basis forbid others to follow it.*

*The order of consultation to look for Church teaching is the following:*

*A. Magisterium of Church, papal and Episcopal (councils approved by Pope);*

- B. *Tradition (and in a sense tradition does support the position of Father Hardon);*
- C. *Scripture.*

*The obligation to follow Saint Thomas Aquinas on this point does not exist, particularly when it is not clear that Saint Thomas is opposed to this as explained above. (See number one above.) Those who wish may follow other saints, and that the Church has permitted this for centuries clearly indicates something good here.*

*Legitimate theological opinion may not be used to damn other views, unless there is basis for this in the sources just noted (See A,B & C). In this case, regarding the Holy Souls in Purgatory, those who wish to follow their interpretation of Saint Thomas Aquinas may not forbid others from following a far stronger tradition supporting prayer by Souls in Purgatory for those on earth who request this.*

## 5. What should Marian Catechists teach?

*Marian Catechists should teach what Father Hardon teaches.*

As to the sources:

6. Resource, Catechism of the Catholic Church. Doesn't paragraph #958 in the Catechism show that our prayers help the Poor Souls attain Heaven, and only THEN they are able to intercede for us? CCC 958 states: "Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective."

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church does not teach this expressly, and this can be easily interpreted as supporting the contrary.*

7. **Resource, An Unpublished Manuscript on Purgatory**, Nihil obstat Rev. Msgr. Carroll E. Satterfield, STD Censor Librorum; Imprimatur His Eminence, Laurence Cdl. Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, 1967. The suffering soul tells the visionary that **"I shall be more helpful to you in Heaven than I am here."** p. 21.

*The visionary under discussion rightly says the souls can do more for us in Heaven than in Purgatory, but this is not a denial that something is done before the Soul in Purgatory reaches Heaven.*

8. **Resource, other saints: A further consideration from Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Many saints have claimed that the poor souls do regularly intercede for them.** See this quote from the great Doctor of the Church, Saint Alphonsus Liguori (from *The Great Means of Salvation and Perfection*):

*"So the souls in purgatory, being beloved by God, and confirmed in grace, have absolutely no impediment to prevent them from praying for us. Still the Church does not invoke them [liturgically], or implore their intercession, because ordinarily they have no cognizance of our prayers. But we may piously believe that God makes our prayers known to them; and then they, full of charity as they are, most assuredly do not omit to pray for us. Saint Catharine of Bologna, whenever she desired any favor, had recourse to the souls in purgatory, and was immediately heard. She even testified that by the intercession of the souls in purgatory she had obtained many graces which she had not been able to obtain by the intercession of the saints."*

*Saint Alphonsus agrees that it is allowed to pray for help to the Holy Souls in Purgatory.*

9. Resource, Father Hardon, page 48, *Revised Basic Manual*: III. The Communion of Saints. Quote:

“There is a spiritual union between the faithful on earth, the souls in Purgatory, and the saints in Heaven, all gathered into the same Mystical Body of Christ. The term *Communion of Saints* itself emphasizes the relationship of the members with one another. “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” (*Romans* 12:4-5).

The mystical union between the members of the Communion of Saints forms a supernatural bond of charity that allows for a continuous exchange of supernatural gifts. As one Mystical Body, the Church Militant, the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant cooperate by sharing their prayers, intercession and the merits of good works with one another for the greater glory of God and the building-up of Christ’s Body. According to the centuries’ old teaching of approved theologians, the saints in Heaven intercede for the souls in Purgatory because they are both members of the same Body. **The souls in Purgatory intercede for each other because they are also members of one Body. The saints and the Poor Souls intercede for us because we are one Body with them.** The faithful on earth pray for each other on earth, ask for favors from the saints in Heaven, and pray for the souls in Purgatory. Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that the angels, too, enter the Communion of Saints because they come under Christ’s power and receive of His *gratia capitis*, the grace of His Headship (cf. *Summa Theologica* [hereafter *ST*] III, q.8, ad 4).”

*Father Hardon clearly and convincingly teaches that we may ask help from the Poor Souls.*

*All told it seems clear that the Church not only permits but tends to promote prayer to the Poor Souls in Purgatory.*