

**A condensed answer is given in red, please listen to the Question and Answer Session for the entire answer.**

**1. QUESTION:**

- Please comment about your experience of how the Vatican's relationship with the Islamic world has developed along with international politics, perhaps commenting on any appropriate references, as to preparedness in rightly representing the Church's position for undertaking discussions about Islam.

From my study, the Muslims do not profess to hold the faith of Abraham. Their Allah is NOT the same God that we adore. They do not adore God as three in one but is a monotheistic god. Islam is fundamentally a law. In Islam their salvation is by being saved through their law. Their law is to impose on the whole world elimination of the infidels, those who do not subscribe to their law.

**2. QUESTION:**

- One of the questions in the *Revised Basic Course* is: **Lesson 13, #5. The priest does not actually absolve sins in Confession. False**  
I answered *false* because I have always understood that it is Christ Who forgives sins. I even heard a priest say in a homily that he doesn't forgive sins - Christ does. But I am confused. Part of my confusion comes from comparing the words spoken by the priest during Confession with the words spoken during the Consecration at Mass. When the priest says, "This is my Body, This is my Blood," he isn't referring to his own body and blood, but to Christ's, even though he uses the first person pronoun, "my." When the priest uses the first person to absolve sins in the Sacrament of Confession, however, he **IS** speaking of himself: "I absolve you...." Can you explain this further?

The priest does absolve sins because he is acting in the Person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) by the power of Holy Orders, and he acts in the Person of Christ in both of the Sacraments you are addressing (the Holy Eucharist and Confession). Christ is certainly the principal cause of the absolution in the Sacrament of Confession but the priest is a necessary instrumental cause.

**3. QUESTION:**

- If the parents give permission to grandparents to catechize and take the grandchildren to Mass on Sundays, can the children be baptized with the grandparents making the promises?

No, parents must make the promises and be committed.

**4. QUESTION:**

- Head coverings for women during Mass may cause some divisiveness, is this practice optional or should we as Marian Catechists all be doing this?

It is a beautiful form of devotion but it is optional.

**5. QUESTION:**

- How should we handle or talk about what is happening with the Pope and the men he has surrounding him?  
Pray for the Holy Father to have wisdom and courage to guide us. Do your part, teach and respect the Petrine office.

**6. QUESTION:**

- Does His Eminence agree that we should be adding our names to the signatures on petitions to be presented to Pope Francis at the World Meeting of Families? These petitions ask for assurance of returning to the sound teaching of Saint John Paul II on marriage. Is not Pope Francis already

as aware as anyone else about what is at stake? Is there a petition circulating that is more worthy than others?

Yes, the faithful have the right and duty to make their concerns known to pastors. Express to him, as his children, your concerns.

- Recently, we have heard a few times in the *Preface* something like "the cause of our downfall has become the means of our salvation". By "the cause of our downfall" is the Church be speaking of:
  1. desire for union with God gone awry in Adam and Eve but made possible by the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Holy Eucharist
  2. sin in general
  3. death in general
  4. the wood of the tree of Adam contrasted with the wood of the Cross of Our Lord
  5. A combination of several of these and more

#4 is correct.

**7. QUESTION:**

- Can you discuss how your assignment is going and are you seeing more priests doing the Extraordinary Form of the Sacred Liturgy?  
Going well.
- Are the teachings and proposals of the encyclical "*Laudato Si'*" binding on ALL Catholics to believe and accept? Might Your Eminence address this as I'm getting questions from those with whom I share our Faith?  
I personally struggle greatly with the "Global Warming" issue being scientific. And I wonder, when the teaching exceeds matters of Faith and Morals, and creeps into "science", is there no longer any obligation to accept these matters, other than to recognize God in all of His Creation and to be good stewards of the material gifts He has blessed us with?  
You are bound to hold only what is presented as magisterial. The Church has no capacity to declare that there is global warming.
- Can you share with us what you expect the Synod will do?
  - a) Might His Holiness issue a decree of amnesty that covers all remarried to a Decree of Forgiveness and an invitation to the Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church as now sacramentally married Catholics? And what then is our right response?  
The Holy Father cannot issue such a decree as he is at the service of the truth. He does not have absolute power; he is in total obedience to Christ.
- Pope Benedict XVI wrote about a smaller and more faithful Church, might Your Eminence speak to us about this?  
It is possible.

(Quote Below: "The church will become small," from Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco: 2009). *Faith and the Future* was originally published in 1969.)

*From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge—a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so will she lose many of her social privileges. In contrast to an earlier age, she will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision. As a small society, she will make much bigger demands on the initiative of her individual members. Undoubtedly she will discover new forms of ministry and will ordain to the priesthood approved Christians who pursue some profession. In many smaller congregations or in self-*

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contained social groups, pastoral care will normally be provided in this fashion. Alongside this, the full-time ministry of the priesthood will be indispensable as formerly.

The Church will be a more spiritualized Church, not presuming upon a political mantle, flirting as little with the Left as with the Right. It will be hard going for the Church, for the process of crystallization and clarification will cost her much valuable energy. It will make her poor and cause her to become the Church of the meek. The process will be all the more arduous, for sectarian narrow-mindedness as well as pompous self-will will have to be shed. ... But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a more spiritualized and simplified Church. Men in a totally planned world will find themselves unspeakably lonely. If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new. They will discover it as a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they have always been searching in secret.

And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith. She may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but she will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man's home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.

**8. QUESTION:**

- How can we help Catholics who have a civil divorce and one of the spouses will not cooperate in the declaration of nullity process so desperately desired by the other spouse?  
**Help them understand that the nature of the process is not directed into prying into their privacy.**

**9. QUESTION:**

- After a declaration of nullity, can we go back to using Miss Smith?  
**Certainly, but it would require a legal change.**
- Is becoming a Consecrated Marian Catechist considered becoming a Consecrated Religious?  
**No, it is a consecration of devotion not a consecration to a state in life.**

**10. QUESTION:**

- A little background is probably helpful with this question. At times, a Natural Family Planning (NFP) couple, usually the very young, in their 20's, will learn the method but plan to postpone children for reasons such as:
  - planning to attend or finish graduate school
  - Desire to "settle into" the marriage for 6 months.
 Would it be prudent to say anything about postponing the family and if so, what is prudent to be said given the purposes of a sacramental marriage?  
**Teach them that NFP should never be used for selfish reasons. Help the couple to see that children are not a burden, but that they crown their relationship.**

**11. QUESTION:**

- What impact does lighting a candle have on our prayers? What is the origin of this practice?  
**It is a devotional practice that carries grace. The candle represents a continuation of our prayer.**

**12. QUESTION:**

- There is devotion to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart. Is there devotion to Saint Joseph's heart, e.g. "O

most chaste heart of Joseph" or "O most pure heart of Joseph"? Isidoro Isolano said, "The Lord for Himself and for the glory of His Name raised Saint Joseph to be the head and special patron of the Kingdom of the Church Militant."

- Should we not be invoking Saint Joseph more, considering all that is happening in the Church now?

**Yes, invoke him; he is the patron of the Universal Church.**

**13. QUESTION:**

- Do you know anything about the Taize Community? What is your opinion on this?  
**Taize has nothing to offer Marian Catechists so I would not recommend you pursue it.**

**14. QUESTION:**

- We seem to live in a perverse society that has gone mad! I know of a 15 year old child who was given birth control pills for painful menstrual cramping; as of this writing the poor child is struggling to live, with multiple blood clots in both of her lungs. Some of us parents have had to argue with our children's pediatricians because we don't want to give our children HPV vaccines These are only some of our problems: We find men dressing like women and women holding hands, etc., in public view of our children, as well as, Bruce Jenner's highly publicized sex change and the recent Supreme Court decision on so called "gay marriage." So what next; my husband has heard of a group that wants to promote legalizing polygamy in this country. Many of us homeschool, some of us enroll our children in Catholic Schools, or Academies. We try the best we can to form them properly in the Faith and we pray!
- What else can we do; how can we turn this nation around? What is it going to take for us to become a faith filled, God fearing country again; I fear it won't be long until judgement is upon us, and it won't be pretty!  
**Parents must be absolutely vigilant of their children, especially what they are taught in school and what they view on "screens."**

**15. QUESTION:**

- I need a pep talk
- 1. You have been through many difficult times, I'm wondering, how do you do it? What do you hold on to so as not to be overwhelmed by it all?
- 2. In relying on Divine Providence, what things do you do? What is your routine? What prayers do you pray? What can we implement?
- 3. What other advice would you give me?  
**The times are very disturbing but we know the final chapter of the story, it is the victory of Christ. Have confidence, pray harder, study the faith (it will bring you joy), be alert, be informed, and deal with what is right before you (don't dwell on worry).**

**16. QUESTION:**

- Another problem is what to recommend in regard to women's dress and sleeve length. What is your recommendation? I found a papal decree on modesty but it was written in 1930. I feel we, as catechists, need to have some current guidelines.  
**Women's dress should be modest, using prudential judgment. Two significant things:**
  1. Cover the chest, no swooping necklines.
  2. Skirts at knee length.