

# AQA Religious Studies Revision

## Catholic views

### Summary

The **Roman Catholic Church** is led by Pope Benedict; their teaching is given in the Catechism. Catholics believe the Church has the same authority (magisterium) as the Bible. Most Catholics agree with Natural Law, which gives a set of **absolute rules** that don't have exceptions - e.g. Do not kill. You should use the Sanctity of Life quotes, as these support a Catholic perspective. For example, they are against IVF and embryology because they believe that life is sacred from conception. They are against euthanasia as only God has the right to take away life. They disagree with taking drugs as it harms the life God gave us. Strangely, the Church has supported the Death Penalty, because it may be necessary to deter people from murder. However, the Pope has made clear that this is only in self defence, if there is no other way to protect society.

### Sanctity of Life

All humans are children of God, created by Him to know and love Him. They are made in His image and their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. God has a plan for every human being from the moment they are conceived, so every person is worthy of respect, justice, equality and dignity.

### Christians and rules

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, and Christians believe that they should obey God's will. The Bible gives Christians rules to live by, and the church (particularly for Catholics) explains what these rules mean in the modern world. Being Christian means not breaking God's rules.

#### 1. Nature of Truth

Moral truth - Catholics believe in absolute morality - rules like the ten commandments that should never be broken. The Church gives strict teaching on morality, saying abortion is never right; divorce is wrong; you shouldn't use IVF etc.

Spiritual truth - Catholics believe the Bible is an important source of spiritual truth. They also think the Church has the same authority, and can give important spiritual teaching.

Spirituality - Roman Catholics have a weekly service called Mass, where they remember Jesus' last supper, celebrating the Eucharist. At this sacred time, bread and wine are transformed into Jesus' body and blood. Holy Communion is one of the Sacraments - a sign of God's grace, when His divine life is given to us. Other sacraments include Baptism and Confirmation, Marriage, Last Rites, Confession and Anointing the Sick.

Catholics pray using the rosary, a set of prayer beads that helps them keep track when saying lots of prayers. There are famous chants, like Taize. Catholic worship is often solemn, quiet and reflective. Many Catholics go on retreats, withdrawing for a time from the busy world and spending peaceful time with God.

#### 2. Matters of Life

**When does life begin?** - From the moment of conception, every human being has human rights and should be given the utmost care and respect

**Infertility** - Catholics are against all forms of IVF, as spare embryos are produced. IVF attacks the sanctity of life. They are against AID, Surrogacy and egg donation, as they involve a third party, and attack the sanctity of marriage.

**Genetic Engineering** - Catholics don't agree with embryonic stem cell research, as it destroys embryos. They don't think scientists should 'play God'. They disagree with any risky techniques that threaten the sanctity of life. They also disagree with using PGD to enhance humans, as this goes against God's plan. PGD may also lead to discrimination against people with disabilities.

**Blood transfusion and organ transplants** - These are acceptable to Catholics as they help to preserve human life.

### 3. Matters of Death

Euthanasia is always wrong. "Without the consent of the person, [involuntary] euthanasia is murder. His consent would make it [voluntary euthanasia] suicide. Morally this is a crime which cannot become legal by any means." Pope Paul VI. 'Euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God' Pope John Paul II "God gives and He takes away" - Job

"Ordinary" treatments, e.g. feeding a patient must always continue, but "Extraordinary" treatments such as a complicated operation that is unlikely to succeed need not be given.

### 4. Drug Abuse

Catholics disagree with any drug that harms a sacred human life. Catholic monks brewed beer - there are even patron saints of beer, wine and barkeeping. Most Catholics are happy with moderate social drinking. **However, the Pope said** "we must all fight against the production, creation, and distribution of drugs in the world, and it is the particular duty of governments to courageously confront this battle against 'death trafficking.'"

FIFA tried to ban the Brazilian team huddling together in prayer. FIFA president called it "a danger" and said there was "no room for religion in soccer." The Catholic Church reacted angrily.

### 5. Media and Technology

Catholic countries are more strict with censorship - for example, Irish certificates on films are often higher than the UK. Catholics have their own tv and radio stations, newspapers and magazines. The Church says that pornography is a perversion of marital sexual relationships and those involved are seriously harmed and lose touch with reality.

### 6. Crime and Punishment

One aim of punishment is 'reparation' - putting right what you did wrong. Catholics have confession, where they say sorry to God, then have a penance to do. Penance is an activity, like prayer, that you do to show how sorry you are and try to put things right. Lord Longford is a Catholic who campaigned for Myra Hindley, Moors murderer, to be released, as she was sorry for what she had done and everybody deserves forgiveness and a second chance.

### 7. Rich and Poor

"True happiness is not found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement... God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them." Catechism "We cannot stand idly by, enjoying our own riches" Pope John Paul II. Some Catholics tithe (give 10% of their earnings). In some countries Catholics pay 1% extra tax straight to the Church.

# Protestant views

## Summary

The **Protestant churches**, including the Church of England, Baptists, Methodists, Salvation Army etc., ask what the Bible says about the world we live in today. They may be more concerned with love and compassion than rules. The church leaders give advice, but leave a lot up to the individual's conscience. They are not as fond of absolutes, saying a bad act may be the **lesser of two evils**.

## Love

Jesus said 'love your neighbour as you love yourself' and 'love your enemies'. He demonstrated 'agape' (Christian love) by the way he treated people, and through dying on the cross. Martin Luther King called it a 'creative, redemptive goodwill to all mankind'. It is an unselfish, sacrificial love. John said 'God is love'. Christianity teaches that we should love everyone as God loves us, following Jesus' example. For **any** issue, Christians ask "What would Jesus do?" (**WWJD**).

### 1. Nature of Truth

Moral truth - Protestants believe in the authority of the Bible. Much of the Old Testament was specifically for the Jewish people, but the Ten Commandments, and other moral rules, still hold. However, Jesus' teaching and example are more important. Protestants tend not to see morality as absolute. In many cases, they talk of the 'lesser of two evils'. Churches leave it up to the individual to decide on some specific issues, although they do give guidelines.

Spiritual truth - The Bible is the key source of spiritual teaching and inspiration for Protestants. In recent years, there have been examples (e.g. Toronto) of the Holy Spirit taking over in worship. The 'Toronto Blessing' involves people laughing uncontrollably, falling over 'in the Spirit' and talking in tongues.

Spirituality - Much of the Church of England's services are similar in origin to Catholics. However, other Protestant churches are very different. Quakers have two hour long services with no structure at all. Many evangelical Christians focus on the Scriptures in their services.

### 2. Matters of Life

	Roman Catholics	Church of England
Artificial Insemination by Husband (AIH)	✓	✓
Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID)	✗ Sanctity of marriage	✓
IVF	✗ Sanctity of life	✓
IVF with donor egg or sperm	✗ Sanctity of life/marriage	✓
Surrogacy	✗ Sanctity of marriage	✗ "Strikes at the heart of the family"

The Church of England used to be against donor eggs and sperm, but has changed its view recently. Use the teaching on love and compassion to explain why donor gametes may be the 'lesser of two evils' than childlessness.

### 3. Matters of Death

"Those who become vulnerable through illness or disability deserve special care and protection."  
Church of England

"We need to provide better care for the dying rather than kill them off 'early.'" Methodists

Dame Cicely Saunders, an Anglican, started the Hospice movement to care for the dying.

Protestants are generally against keeping a person alive “against his will, when all the dignity, beauty and meaning of life had vanished” (Methodist leader). They may support withdrawing treatment, but not active euthanasia.

#### **4. Drug Abuse**

Church of England tries to promote social conditions which will allow people to live with dignity without turning to alcohol or illegal drugs. They “deplore the destructive effects of drugs on individuals and communities”. Some Protestants ‘take the pledge’ and go without any alcohol, looking at the effects of alcohol in society. The Church of England won’t invest in brewers, distillers and operators of pub companies.

In 2001 the Church of England advocated the decriminalisation of the use of cannabis and called for other changes in the prescription on the NHS of controlled substances such as diamorphine. The Church tries to “encourage that sense of self-confidence in individuals which will help them resist the pressures of a drug-taking society.”

#### **5. Media and Technology**

There is a ‘God Channel’ set up by Protestants, as well as Christian radio stations. Evangelical Christians use the media to communicate the message that ‘Jesus saves’.

Mary Whitehouse, a Protestant Christian, famously campaigned about the need to ‘Clean up tv’. Many Protestants are against the sex, violence and swearing that can be found in the media. However, Kanye West, a Protestant Christian singer, has used strong lyrics, and many Christians think it is the message behind music, not the language, that is most important.

Recently, the Church of England has claimed that the spread of hard-core *sex* and *violence* in films and video games is ‘fatally eroding’ standards of behaviour.

#### **6. Crime and Punishment**

The CofE would ‘deplore the reintroduction of capital punishment into the United Kingdom sentencing policy.’ They focus on individuals taking responsibility for their actions, and think that prison is failing to rehabilitate offenders. They support “the development of restorative justice programmes which enshrine the biblical principles of holding offenders responsible for their crimes, addressing the needs of victims, and enhancing the protection of the public.” They think there are too many black people in prison – this is unfair. The CofE engages in work on the resettlement of prisoners, women’s prisons and visiting.

#### **7. Rich and Poor**

The Salvation Army helps homeless people, running soup kitchens, redistributing furniture and clothes, providing accommodation and support. All Protestant groups respond with love, following Jesus’ example and giving practical support.

Many Protestants support the idea that we should live in a fairer society. They agree with the minimum wage, better workers’ rights, and a fairer distribution of wealth. Many protestants helped set up the Welfare system, ensuring that all people in the UK have good education, free access to health care, accommodation, food and other benefits. In March 2010, Church of England workers went on strike for fairer pay.