

I believe in the Trinity; the Three that are also One.

I believe that God is eternal, omnipotent and fully beyond our comprehension or description. I believe we were created to praise God and that we were initially created to be something like God ... in God's image. Humanity however chose the irrational response of disobedience and self-centeredness.

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God ... the Messiah. I believe that he is truly God as well as truly human and that he came to our world to accomplish a mission; to provide a way for us back to God. He came to die in our place as the "one and only" perfect sacrifice for our sins. I believe he died, was buried and that he rose again and sits on the right hand of God. I believe that we can know with complete assurance that Christians will also experience resurrection. I believe that Christ is the head of the Church and that the conduct and confessions of the Church are subordinate to the will of Christ as revealed in Scripture. I believe in God's grace and that there is absolutely no way any of us can "earn" our salvation.

I believe that God instituted the Sacraments for our good. We celebrate Communion together and with the fellowship of all Christians throughout time as we sense the spiritual presence of Christ. Through Communion we give thanks, we remember what Christ has done for us and we experience a foretaste of the Kingdom to come. Baptism is "a sign and seal of incorporation into Christ." (BoO W-2.3001) In Baptism we are symbolically cleansed by the water as we die to sin and rise to a new life in Christ. We pledge together to support and teach those who are baptized into the Church and we remember our own baptisms. I believe we need the Sacraments as they enable us to more clearly sense Christ, to remember him as well as our own stories regarding how God has reached out to us.

I believe that God allows us to walk through valleys and very difficult days but I do not believe that God causes calamity. As Romans indicates, I believe that God can work all things for our good so that even very tragic events can eventually yield good through God. However, we must choose to recognize the good rather than grow bitter and hard hearted. God meets us "where we're at" and creates something good through difficulties and grief ... if we allow God to grow us in this way.

I believe that God loves justice, honesty and a humble heart that recognizes his/her need for Christ. In our prayer life, I believe that God wants us to be "real" ... tatters and all. I believe that God desires a deeply intimate relationship with each believer and I believe that God wants us to spend time in his Word.

I additionally believe it is possible for myself and other Christians to more and more "walk the talk" (to become less tattered) over time with God's help as we seek to emulate the mind and heart of Christ. I believe that Christianity is challenging and it is meant to be so. I believe that confidence in God grows as we actively "step out in faith" since we discover through firsthand experience that God enables, sustains and gives us the power to grow through the Spirit.

I believe that Christianity is much more than simply ruminating about ourselves and rejoicing in our personal relationship with Christ and others in His Church. It's not "all about us." We are Christ's body here on earth and we are to reach out to non-believers in tangible ways reflecting God's love and plan for salvation. The Church exists to point others to Christ as the Spirit prompts *in addition* to building up believers and so we are to bear good fruit. I personally have enjoyed and benefited immensely by being buoyed up through the Church but I'm also aware of the fact that Christ wants us to reach out to others who need Him.

I have found that no matter where we may find ourselves, no matter what state we are in, no matter what unexpected things are happening that God remains good, that God is with us and that God is "for us." I believe that God loves us more than God hates our sin for we have been purchased with a great price and we are precious in God's sight.