



**Teachings of the Church of St. Thomas  
(Liberal/Old Catholic)**

The Liberal Catholic Church exists to forward the work of her Master, Christ, in the world and to feed His flock. It draws the central inspiration of its work from an intense faith in the living Christ, believing that the vitality of a church gains in proportion as its members cease to think only of a Christ who lived 2000 years ago and strive rather to serve as a vehicle for the eternal Christ who ever lives as a mighty spiritual presence in the world, building and sustaining His people: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the age."

Rt. Rev. James Ingall Wedgwood (1892-1950)  
Founding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church

## The Trinity

- We teach the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.
- We teach that God the Father is the Creator and Preserver of Mankind and that His love shall never fail.
- We teach that the historic Jesus is the Christ, who is also the Ancient of Days. We teach that He was incarnated (born of the Virgin Mary), crucified, resurrected and ascended.
- We teach that it is by Christ that "all things were made, and as the indwelling life all things exist, and as the transcendent glory all things live and move and have their being."
- We teach that Christ lives on as a mighty spiritual Presence in the world, guiding and sustaining his people.
- We teach that we are created in the image of God and that we are heirs of God.
- We teach that we are all immortal, both before and after physical death.
- We teach that our bodies are vehicles or expressions of our consciousness, of the indwelling Spirit.
- We teach that the Christian Church is the mystical Body of Christ.

## The Sacraments - General

- We teach that there are seven Sacraments: Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Absolution, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, Holy Unction, and Holy Orders.
- We teach that the Sacraments were instituted by Christ Himself and He is present in them.
- We teach that all of the Sacraments are received from the Hand of Christ Himself and the officiant is but an instrument in that Hand.

## The Sacraments – Baptism

- The Church practices infant baptism, as a dedication of the child to Christ, as a grafting of the child into the mystical Body of Christ, and as a means of opening the child's whole nature to the most holy Spirit of the living God.

## The Sacraments – Eucharist

- We teach that in the Holy Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine become linked, or polarized, on the Life of the Christ and become literal outposts of His Life and His Consciousness.
- We teach that, as the corporate worship of the Church, the Holy Eucharist is designed to help those who physically take part, and to pour out a flood of spiritual power upon the surrounding world.
- We teach that we are assisted from the beginning of the Eucharist by the Angel of the Mass, and later by all of the various Orders of Angels.

## The Sacraments – Absolution

- We teach that Christ has given to the Priests of His Church the power to absolve the repentant faithful from their sins. We teach that the Sacrament of Absolution is a loosening from the bondage of sin, a restoration of the inner harmony that was disturbed by the wrongdoing, so that

the person can make a fresh start toward righteousness. We do not teach that Absolution is a way of escaping the consequences of one's misdeeds. "Harbor no illusions; God is not deceived: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7)

#### The Sacraments – Confirmation

- We teach that the Sacrament of Confirmation is intended to supplement the Sacrament of Baptism and thus bestow on the person the fullness of complete union with the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church Universal.

#### The Sacraments – Holy Matrimony

- We teach regarding Holy Matrimony that the couple are the celebrants and that the method of sacramentalizing the marriage is the placing of the blessed ring by the groom on the ring finger of the bride with the reciting of the Names of the Trinity.

#### The Sacraments – Holy Unction

- We teach that in the Sacrament of Holy Unction we are assisted by a healing Angel.

#### The Sacraments – Holy Orders

- We teach that the power of the Apostles has descended to this day through the Apostolic Succession. In the case of the Liberal Catholic Church International, that Succession is derived from the Dutch Old Catholic Church and is complete and valid.
- We teach that the minor orders (Cleric, Doorkeeper, Reader, Exorcist, and Acolyte) are intended primarily to assist the candidate in his own spiritual growth and life. We teach that the major orders (Deacon, Priest, and Bishop) are intended primarily to assist the Christian Community. Subdeacon is an intermediate stage. Both men and women may be ordained to any of these levels.

#### Scripture / Creed / Tradition

- We teach that the Holy Scriptures, the Creeds, and the Traditions of the Church are the means by which the teachings of Christ have been handed down to His followers. We teach that they are fundamental, true, and sufficient as a basis for right understanding and right conduct.
- We teach that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired in a general sense only, and can in no way be construed as verbally infallible. We hold that the books of the Old Testament are of unequal value.
- We teach that all Christian worship is valid, of whatever kind, so long as it is earnest and true.
- We teach that the sign of the cross can be traced to the earliest times of Christianity; it is the Christian "sign of power." We teach that it is a vehicle of spiritual force, flowing sometimes from the Priest to the congregation, sometimes from on high into the Priest and people. We teach that when it is made over ourselves, it will draw around us unseen influences that will tend to drive away unwholesome thoughts, and at the same time make it easier to retain what is good.
- We teach that the vestments worn by the Priest date from the earliest times of Christianity, and

that they are part of the general scheme by which spiritual power is spread out upon the congregation.

- We teach that the Seasons of the Church were "appointed for our solace and instruction."
- We teach that the efforts of men and women can hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God. We teach that the expectation of faith is victory: that good shall finally triumph over ill, and that death is but a gateway to eternal life.

#### Universalism (or Apokatastasis)

- We teach that everyone shall "one day reach His Feet, however far they stray." We teach that the "dead" pass to a life of higher service, where there is available to them the "felicity of [the] . . . Presence, evermore . . . ." What we shall experience "at His Feet" is conscious life in Christ.