



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Religious Studies (4051/4052)
Full and Short Course
Specification A

Unit 4 *Roman Catholicism (405004)*

Report on the Examination
2010 examination - June series

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Unit 4 Roman Catholicism

General Comments

The response from candidates to the first examination of this unit of the new specification was most encouraging. It is clear that centres are teaching the content well and that candidates are responding with interest and commitment. There was no area of the examined content which seemed not to have been covered by centres. Centres are to be commended on this conscientious approach.

There are however, areas of the specification that need to be brought to the attention of centres. It was evident that candidates dealt well with questions which required recall of facts or of Biblical material. The skills required to meet the assessment objective AO1 that is description, explanation and analysis- were demonstrated by candidates across the ability range. AO1 accounts for 50% of the marks available and most candidates were able to respond appropriately to these questions. The remaining 50% of marks are attached to questions which test the skill AO2. This requires candidates to use evidence and reasoned argument to express personal opinions and evaluate differing viewpoints, drawing upon the knowledge tested in other parts of questions. This was handled less well by some of the candidates and benefit would be gained by more practice in constructing a logical and reasoned argument to issues that are sometimes challenging for the average 16 year old.

In a few cases poor handwriting or the use of pale or faint pens made marking more difficult.

Question A1 *Christian Healing*

- (a) This question was well done and many candidates gained full marks.
- (b) There were some excellent answers to this question which demonstrated thoughtful consideration of this issue. The best showed maturity of thinking and those candidates of lesser attainment were able to offer sincere argument.
- (c) Candidates either knew the Rite of the Anointing of the Sick or they did not. Those who knew the Rite generally described it succinctly and accurately as the question required.
- (d) There were many thoughtful and logically presented answers to this question which showed that teaching on death had been understood and could be used to support the opinion offered.

Question A2 *Vocation in Action*

- (a) Almost all candidates were able to gain good marks on this question, having a good knowledge of Fairtrade.
- (b) This was generally well done with some of the better answers providing details of long and short term aid given by Cafod or Trocaire. However, candidates should beware of spending too much time when a description of the work is required in writing out quotes such as 'Give a man a fish....' which may be more appropriate in a different kind of question where understanding or evaluation is requested.

(c) This question carried 6 marks and to reach Levels 5 and 6 it was necessary to show reasoned argument. A significant number of candidates failed to do this. Some totally misunderstood the question and produced some bizarre arguments such as the likelihood of disease being passed on by workers who were treated unfairly. Better responses drew upon the first parts of the question to support their argument and also deployed relevant Biblical quotes. It is well to remind candidates that quotes should be relevant, brief and should advance or support the point being argued.

Question A3 *Christian Vocation*

(a) Almost all candidates knew the term 'vocation' and were able to gain some marks.

(b) Provided the term 'lay people' was known most found this a straightforward question.

(c) This question proved difficult for some candidates. There was poor understanding of the things that no one but a priest can do and a common belief that, in the absence of a priest a parish could summon up a bishop instead. Much argument was muddled and lacking in focus. The lack of reasoned argument resulted in many not being able to reach the higher levels.

Candidates also need to understand that in six mark evaluation questions, they are not required to state a personal opinion, but simply to show that they can put forward two different points of view and support them with argument and evidence. Sometimes, it assists a candidate's integrity to be able to work through a discussion of more than one point of view without feeling obliged to conclude by having to decide on one point of view.

Question A4 *Christian Values*

(a) Those who knew the Beatitudes were able to answer this question well.

(b) This was a very straightforward question and many gained full marks.

(c) This produced some interesting and original responses. There is apparent general agreement that the Commandments are out of date and there are too many of them. Honouring one's parents and not coveting other people's possessions seem particularly difficult to keep. Again poor structure of argument was a feature of some answers. Candidates would do well to practise this kind of question and the skills needed to support points of view, especially those they may find difficult to support personally.

Question B5 *Christian Reconciliation*

(a) Candidates who knew the rite of the Sacrament of Reconciliation answered well and were able to deploy subject specific vocabulary well.

(b) Some of the ideas expressed in answering this question were sound but once more careful and logical argument was not common. If thoughts were better ordered, and a structure of stating and supporting one point of view in relation to the statement followed by the other, candidates would be able to write with more confidence and do more justice to their ideas.

(c)(i) In answering the question about the Parable of the Good Samaritan, some wrote out the whole parable rather than selecting out what the Samaritan did as requested. For those who read the question correctly and did what was asked, this was an easy question.

(c)(ii) This was a straightforward question and was generally well answered.

(d) The responses to this question were either very good or muddled. Some candidates wrote with great insight about what an enemy might mean and their answers were fluent and a pleasure to read. Sound examples were given and references well chosen. Others got lost in one sided and often vehement argument and failed to see the connection to the parable about which they had just written.

Question B6 *Christian Marriage and Christian Values*

(a) This question was not well answered by many candidates who did not really look at what was being asked. There was little reference made to dignity and self-respect and most concentrated on extra-marital relationships omitting any reference to pre-marital or homosexual relationships.

(b) Some misread the question as being somehow about abortion. However, there were some very good answers in response to this evaluation question which were carefully constructed and well grounded in Roman Catholic teaching.

(c)(i) There were many sincere and simple answers to this question where the voice of the candidate was heard. There was good understanding of what the commandment means in family life.

(c)(ii) Some less able candidates gave very good answers to this question concerning responsible parenthood. Almost all candidates however omitted to mention broader aspects of responsible parenthood. There was little reference to family planning, to the procreative nature of sex and to contraception. Candidates were not penalised for this but the attention of centres is drawn to these aspects of the topic.

(d) Weaker candidates struggled with this question. Some responses were lacking in Religious Studies content or rich in many irrelevant quotes. Careful reading of the question is necessary so that candidates do not become muddled and so fail to do themselves justice. There were some excellent and thoughtful responses which showed a mature and compassionate understanding of this issue. The better answers were logical and well grounded in religious argument.