



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Religious Studies A (4050)

Unit 3: Roman Catholicism

405003

Report on the Examination

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Unit 3: Roman Catholicism

General Comments

Centres are to be commended on the positive way in which their candidates were prepared for this new specification. It is clear that centres are teaching the specification content very well and that candidates are responding with interest and understanding.

It is important to remind centres that all six areas of the specification will be examined on the question paper. Part A comprises four compulsory short-answer stimulus-response questions worth a total of 48 marks. Part B comprises two optional extended response questions from which candidates choose and answer one question worth a total of 24 marks. Each question paper is worth 72 marks. The assessment objective AO1 is worth 50% of the total marks, and to achieve this objective candidates in their responses are expected show the ability to describe, explain and analyse using knowledge and understanding. The remaining 50% of marks are for assessment objective AO2, and candidates in their responses are expected to show an ability to use evidence and reasoned argument to express and evaluate personal responses, informed insights, and differing viewpoints.

Candidates generally coped well with all sections of the paper. It was obvious from the responses that many candidates have had practice in constructing answers to AO2 3-mark and 6-mark questions. However, some candidates need reminding that to achieve a Level 5 or 6 two different, though not necessarily opposing, points of view must be considered and the candidates must present relevant information coherently, employing structure and style to render the meaning clear. The text produced should be legible and spelling, punctuation and grammar should be sufficiently accurate to render the meaning clear. The key words here are 'well-argued' and 'apply...effectively'. The difference between a Level 6 and a Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. Candidates could achieve up to Level 4 for well developed one-sided responses. In 3-mark AO2 questions responses which showed sound knowledge and understanding of one viewpoint achieved full marks; a second point of view is not necessary to achieve full marks here.

It is important to remind candidates to write in the spaces provided and not to write in the margins. Additional pages are provided for those who require extra paper. Poor handwriting and the use of pale or faint pens made marking difficult at times.

Part A

Question A1 Belief and Sources of Authority

Part (a) was well answered. Most candidates made reference to 'infallibility', 'ex cathedra' and 'head of the church'.

There were some excellent answers to part (b), with many candidates making links between bishops' role in a diocese and their role in advising the Pope. The most common mistake was candidates making reference to bishops administering confirmation and laying on of hands, which did not refer to their teaching ministry.

There were also some very good answers to part (c). Most candidates agreed with this statement, and the more able candidates focused on the choice whether or not to be members of the Church and made good links between the Pope being head of the Church, having Apostolic succession and his role in the Magisterium. Those who disagreed focused on the idea of free will.

Part (d) was generally well answered, with most candidates achieving 2 marks.

The AO2 question in part (e) produced a variety of responses. Most candidates made the link between the Apostles' Creed and the teaching of the Apostles, but the more able candidates produced more developed responses by also stating it unifies Christians and, if you are a Christian, you have to believe everything in the Apostles' Creed by process of definition. Less able candidates explained what should or should not be believed but without it being linked to the Apostles' Creed.

Question A2 Places of Worship

Overall candidates produced well developed responses to part (a). Most focused on the altar, lectern and tabernacle. However, the most consistent error in explaining the purpose of the tabernacle was that it was used for storing the body and blood or the bread and wine rather than for storing the consecrated hosts for use in Eucharist Services, at the next Mass or even to take communion to the sick and housebound. Few mentioned it as a focus for private worship in church. Some candidates described the feature and where it was placed rather than explaining its purpose. Some candidates described features of Orthodox churches.

Part (b) was generally well answered. However, less able candidates would benefit from practice with answering this type of evaluation question. Many candidates focused on the Real Presence and the tabernacle, the Church being the house of God, or receiving the sacraments in the church, which are all ways of being close to God. Others disagreed, stating that you can get close to God through reading the Bible, pilgrimage or doing good deeds, which are all relevant alternatives to being in church.

Question A3 Eucharist and the Our Father

Part (a) was less well answered. Candidates who had either studied this part of the specification well or went to Mass and received Holy Communion knew the answer and achieved 3 marks. However, many candidates did not know how the bread and wine were received by Catholics and achieved no marks. Many candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about transubstantiation.

In part (b) many candidates knew that the term Eucharist means thanksgiving but failed to develop their answers to include thanksgiving for the sacrifice that Jesus made through his suffering and death. Most answers lacked development and received only one mark. Some candidates explained transubstantiation as the meaning of the term Eucharist and achieved no marks. The responses showed that most candidates had not studied sufficiently this aspect of the specification.

Most candidates did well on part (c). The more able candidates were able to show a well argued response with evidence of reasoned consideration of two different points of view in their responses and achieved 5 or 6 marks. Many candidates argued in favour of the Eucharist, explaining that receiving the Eucharist brings you closer to God and allows you to put belief into practice as a community, 'do this in memory of me', whilst also making the link with transubstantiation. More able candidates explained the Our Father as the perfect prayer, given to us by Jesus in response to the question how to pray. They further explained that it unifies Christians and includes all types of prayer, for example adoration. Less able candidates did not develop their responses and made basic references to the Eucharist as just re-enacting the Last Supper. Again, these candidates would benefit from lots of practice answering this type of question; most achieved 2 or 3 marks.

Question A4: Sacraments of Initiation

Part (a) was very well answered, showing good knowledge and understanding of the similarities between the two sacraments. Most candidates made reference to both as sacraments of initiation, and to oil of chrism being used and the vows being renewed. Most candidates achieved full marks on this question.

Part (b) was very well answered. Responses showed evidence of good teaching and good understanding of how being confirmed might help Roman Catholics in their everyday lives. Many candidates explained at length the importance of receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit and that confirmation completes the process of initiation into the Church. Many also explained that candidates for confirmation now have a special task in life and developed this point by giving examples.

The more able candidates did very well on part (c) and presented good developed answers showing well-argued responses with evidence of reasoned consideration of two different points of view. Again, responses from less able candidates lacked development, and more practice may help these candidates achieve higher marks. More developed responses made reference to Jesus being baptised, baptism showing commitment to your faith, believers becoming children of God and being welcomed into God's family, and the fact that you must be baptised to receive other sacraments. Many candidates also gave good counter-arguments, presenting good examples of being a Christian without being baptised, for example people who live and act like Jesus: charity workers, members of the Salvation Army, those who go on pilgrimage etc.

Part B

Question B5 Worship and the Bible

Most candidates did very well in part (a), giving good examples of how Roman Catholics might follow the example of Mary. Their responses included being obedient to the will of God, caring for others in the same way that Mary cared for Elizabeth, looking out for the needs of others, being good parents, standing by their children, accepting all things in faith etc. However, some candidates wrote really good responses about *why* Roman Catholics might follow the example of Mary and failed to achieve any marks.

The answers to part (b)(i) were very good. Some candidates wrote in great detail and with good understanding. Good reference to being in fellowship with Catholics worldwide was made and developed. Responses to part (b)(ii) were also generally good and included reference to Quaker and Methodist denominations, spontaneous worship and waiting for inspiration from the Holy Spirit. However, less able candidates confused this with private worship.

There were some very good, well developed answers to part (c). More able candidates made reference to objects such as rosary beads, statues, Bibles, candles, stained glass windows as aids to worship. More developed answers made the link between statues of saints being used to intercede for us and becoming idols in themselves, thus breaking the Commandments. Many candidates focused on the fact that objects can be distracting but can also be a focus to bring worshippers closer to God.

Some good responses to part (d) were seen; these acknowledged how Quakers use the Bible in worship, the use of the Bible in the Catholic Mass for readings and in the priest's sermon, Bible worship in Protestant churches and Bible study groups. Arguments for the Bible's use in private worship were well developed.

Question B6 Festivals

Most candidates achieved Level 3 or 4 in part (a). Responses included going to Mass, receiving ashes on the forehead in the sign of the cross, and ashes made from the burning of last year's palm. However, few candidates made reference to fasting, abstinence or repentance.

All candidates did well on part (b)(i). Most candidates worked their way through the Last Supper and showed good knowledge and understanding. There were also some good responses to part (b)(ii). Candidates made reference to many of the points in the mark scheme: Pentecost marks the birth of the church; it comes fifty days after Easter and completes the Easter celebration; the disciples received the Holy Spirit; and the power of God is still active today. Less able candidates retold the account of Pentecost and could score no more than Level 2.

There was a mixed response to part (c). More able candidates made reference to Christmas as the birth of Jesus, when God took on human form, marking the start of Jesus' ministry. Many candidates produced effective arguments about Easter, making reference to the Resurrection, life after death, Jesus' destiny, and the hope of seeing loved ones again. Less able candidates concentrated on the death of Jesus rather than the Resurrection.

Some candidates produced good, developed responses to part (d). Most candidates achieved at least a Level 3. Many did not make reference to traditions associated with festivals in general but concentrated mostly on Christmas and Easter. These candidates had difficulty developing their arguments and could not be awarded above Level 4.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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