

PART ONE, SECTION TWO, CHAPTER THREE, ARTICLE 11 (PARAGRAPHS 988-991)

FAITH: Catholicism | TEXT: Catechism of the Catholic Church | VOLUME: 1997 Volume | AUTHOR: John Paul II

OVERVIEW

Paragraphs 988-991 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church introduce Article 11, 'I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body.' The text positions the resurrection of the dead not merely as an appendix to the faith, but as the culmination of the Creed's Trinitarian profession. It explicitly defines the 'resurrection of the flesh' (a phrase from the Apostles' Creed) as the restoration of the mortal body, countering any Gnostic idea that only the soul survives. The text links the believer's future resurrection directly to Christ's historical resurrection, citing the 'righteous' as the beneficiaries of this promise. It appeals to both Scripture (1 Corinthians 15) and Tradition (Tertullian) to establish that this belief has been essential to Christianity from its inception. Theologically, it emphasizes that the same God who created and saved (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) will also act to raise the dead.

KEY FIGURES

Jesus Christ, God the Father, The Holy Spirit, The Apostle Paul (implied author of 1 Cor 15), Tertullian

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH

Assertion: The 'mortal body' will come to life again, not just the immortal soul.

"The 'resurrection of the flesh'... means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our 'mortal body' will come to life again."

Evangelical Comparison: Both Catholicism and Evangelicalism strongly affirm the physical, bodily resurrection of the dead at the end of the age. This text explicitly rejects the idea that the afterlife is solely spiritual or that the body is discarded. This aligns with the Evangelical understanding of 1 Corinthians 15, where the body is sown in weakness and raised in power. There is no significant friction on the *nature* of the resurrection in this specific text.

2. RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Assertion: The righteous will live forever with the risen Christ.

"after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ"

Evangelical Comparison: The text states that 'the righteous' will live forever. In Evangelical theology (Sola Fide), a person is declared righteous solely through faith in Christ's finished work (imputed righteousness). In Catholic theology, righteousness is often viewed as a state of grace maintained through sacraments and cooperation with God (infused righteousness). While the text itself does not elaborate on *how* one becomes righteous, the systemic Catholic definition creates a latent theological gap regarding the basis of this future hope.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Partial

Theological Gap: While the eschatology (doctrine of end times) presented here is largely consistent with Evangelicalism, the soteriological foundation differs. The text promises resurrection to 'the righteous.' In the context of the Catechism, this implies a righteousness infused through sacraments and maintained by works, contrasting with the Evangelical doctrine of Sola Fide (faith alone). Furthermore, the epistemology relies on 'The Christian Creed' as a binding interpretative framework, whereas Evangelicals view creeds only as accurate summaries of the superior authority of Scripture.

Shared Values:

Physical resurrection of the body; Immortality of the soul; Christ's resurrection as the prototype for believers; Trinitarian agency in salvation; Rejection of materialism (death is not the end)

Friction Points:

1. [Major] Sola Fide – The promise of resurrection is for 'the righteous,' which in Catholic dogma requires cooperation with grace and sacraments, not faith alone.

Semantic Warnings:

"The Righteous"

In Text: Those in a state of grace (Catholic theology implies faith + works/sacraments).

Evangelical: Those declared righteous by faith in Christ alone (Romans 3:21-22).

Example: *When the text says 'the righteous will live for ever,' a Catholic understands this as those who die in a state of mortal grace. An Evangelical understands this as those justified by faith.*

"Flesh"

In Text: Man in his state of weakness and mortality (Para 990).

Evangelical: Often refers to the sinful nature (Sarx) in Paul's writings (Galatians 5:17), though also used for the physical body. The text clarifies it means the 'mortal body' here.

Example: *The text specifies 'flesh' refers to mortality/weakness to support the physical resurrection, distinguishing it from the sinful nature usage common in other contexts.*

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: Resurrection of the dead and life everlasting with the risen Christ.

How Attained: By being among 'the righteous' (implies Catholic sacramental system).

Basis of Assurance: Confidence is placed in the fact of Christ's resurrection, but personal assurance is conditional on remaining 'righteous.'

Comparison to Sola Fide: The text does not mention faith as the sole instrument of justification. It focuses on the *outcome* for the righteous, leaving the *method* of becoming righteous to other sections of the Catechism (which deny Sola Fide).

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Explicit Commands:

1. Firmly believe in the resurrection of the dead
2. Hope for the resurrection based on Christ's resurrection

Implicit Obligations:

1. Maintain a state of righteousness to ensure a resurrection to life
2. Accept the authority of the Apostles' Creed alongside Scripture

Ritual Requirements:

1. Profession of the Creed (implied by the context of the Catechism)

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. The text says 'the righteous will live for ever.' How does the Catechism define someone as 'righteous' compared to how Paul defines it in Romans?
2. If our confidence is in the resurrection, on what basis can we be sure we will be part of the resurrection to life rather than judgment?
3. Why do you think the text emphasizes the 'resurrection of the flesh' rather than just the spirit going to heaven?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. The Defeat of Death – Just as the Catechism highlights the resurrection as the source of confidence, the Gospel offers this confidence as a guaranteed possession to those in Christ, removing the fear of death. [Hebrews 2:14-15]

2. First Fruits – The agricultural metaphor of 'first fruits' implies that the rest of the harvest is guaranteed to follow. This guarantees the believer's resurrection solely because they are part of the 'harvest' belonging to Christ. [1 Corinthians 15:20-23]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Uncertainty/Performance [Moderate] – By conditioning the resurrection to life on being 'righteous' (in the Catholic sense of maintained grace), the believer carries the burden of potentially dying in a state of mortal sin and missing the resurrection of life. There is no 'finished work' assurance here, only a hope contingent on personal state at death.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Divine Revelation transmitted through Scripture and Tradition.

Verification Method: Adherence to the 'profession of our faith' (The Creed) and historical apostolic witness.

Evangelical Contrast: Evangelicals verify truth by Scripture alone (Acts 17:11). This text relies on the synthesis of Scripture and the 'Christian Creed' as a unified authority structure.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: 1997 (Latin typical edition).

Authorship: Promulgated by Pope John Paul II; drafted by a commission.

Textual Issues: None relative to the Catechism itself. It quotes the Apostles' Creed and Tertullian accurately.