



SERVANT OF GOD  
FATHER JOHN A. HARDON, S.J.

*“Because the whole Church is of its nature missionary, and the work of evangelization is to be considered a fundamental duty of the people of God, all Christ’s faithful must be conscious of the responsibility to play their part in missionary activity.”*

Code of Canon Law 781

#### Marian Catechist Apostolate

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**Please read these General Study Guidelines before beginning your course.**

## Father Hardon’s Catholic Home Study Courses GENERAL STUDY GUIDELINES

The home study courses developed by Servant of God Father John A. Hardon, S.J. are intended to assist individuals to internalize the truths of the Catholic Faith, to grow in relationship with the Person of Christ, to apply the concepts learned to daily life, and finally, to hand on the Faith to others.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### AGE

These courses are most appropriate for adults 18 years and older. Other programs exist that are more appropriate for children and teens.

#### PRAYERFUL STUDY

Prayerful study of each of the courses in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament is highly recommended. Some things can only be understood when we are deeply in love with Christ, Who is the source of our understanding of the truths of the Catholic Faith. Frequent prayer and study before the Blessed Sacrament will foster a deeper, more personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Father Hardon often recommended such prayer and study as an indispensable means to receiving light for the mind and strength for the will.

#### INDEPENDENT RESEARCH AND STUDY

The questions in these courses are both thought-provoking and challenging. Feel free to consult any and all reliable and orthodox sources. Especially useful are the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, magisterial documents of the Church, and any books or articles written by Servant of God Father John A. Hardon, S.J. The tests are open book; however, they must be taken alone, with no help from spouses, friends, study group members or anyone else.

We learn and internalize what is studied most effectively by means of personal study and research. In other words, the process of independently studying the courses and researching the answers will most help us to grow in our knowledge and love of the Catholic Faith. Little or no internalization will take place if someone else simply provides us with the answers.

There is no time limit for the completion of the courses; however, it is a good idea, for the sake of continuity, to work consistently until each course is completed. No additional tuition or fees are required of those who take a long break in their studies.

#### GROUPS AND ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS

Following independent study and completion of open book test, it may be beneficial to be involved in a study group or in a one-on-one discussion with a group leader.

A group leader may be either a priest or qualified Marian Catechist.\* The role of the group leader is to provide explanations for questions that were answered incorrectly, for a fuller understanding of the Catholic Faith. Before meeting with a group leader, each participant is to answer the questions and mail the answer sheets to Inter Mirifica for grading. The answers, as recorded by the student in the *Workbook*, can be used for any subsequent review. If you would like to know if there is a study group in your area, or if you would like to request one-on-one assistance, please contact the Marian Catechist Apostolate at (608) 782-0011.

#### CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

A Certificate of Completion is awarded with the approbation of His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, International Director of the Marian Catechist Apostolate, to those who have completed a course according to the guidelines and have achieved an overall average score of 75% or higher. The Certificate may be used for diocesan certification, subject to approval by diocesan authorities.

#### ESSAY FOR COURSE THREE:

##### MASTERS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

After completing the last test for the *Masters of the Spiritual Life Course*, the final assignment is a five-hundred-word essay about any of the Masters studied in the course. Simply tell, in your own words, what you have learned from reading the Spiritual Master of your choice. Your essay will be returned to you, along with your Certificate of Completion, provided you have received an overall average score of 75% or higher.

\*Learn more about the Marian Catechist Apostolate on page 5.

# Study Hints

**Marian Catechist Apostolate**  
La Crosse, Wisconsin (608) 782-0011

## **HINT 1: TAKE YOUR TIME**

Take your time! Please do not race through the course and the questions. Be prepared to spend two to four hours on each lesson, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in your mind and in your heart as you study, reflect and pray about the beautiful teachings of the Catholic Church. Our Catholic Faith is a gift from Our Savior Jesus Christ. Slow down, and allow yourself to savor its richness and depth.

## **HINT 2: READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE READING THE MANUAL**

Experience has shown that students who read through the test questions before beginning each lesson avoid many careless errors. You may want to read each question more than once. It may be helpful to read the questions out loud as well. Be sure to read each and every word. Oftentimes, one word is the key to determining the correct answer.

When you see questions with the words *only* and *always*, be certain that the answer you choose is always applicable. Such words are absolute. They make no allowance for exceptions.

Be attentive also to the distinction between the words *can* and *may*. “Can” means “is able to,” or “has the power to.” In the courses, it often refers to the validity of the Sacraments. “May” means “is permissible” or “is lawful,” and refers to whether an act is licit or not. In the same way, we must be aware of the distinction between *must*, which indicates something that is required, and *should*, which indicates something that is strongly encouraged but not strictly required. For example, we must go to Sunday Mass, but we should go to daily Mass, if at all possible. Finally, be attentive to Father Hardon’s use of negatives in the questions. Try restating each of these questions as a positive statement in order to determine the correct answer.

When you begin to study, make notations in the *Manual* to help you more easily locate information that will be helpful when it is time to answer the test questions. When you cannot find an answer, or are unsure about it, skip the question temporarily. You may come across the answer as you read the material for other questions. Record all answers in the *Workbook* first, then transfer your answers, in pen, to the mail-in *Answer Tablet* sheets. The *Workbook* will be your permanent record, while the *Answer Tablet* sheets are to be sent in for grading.

## **HINT 3: SACRED SCRIPTURE**

The importance of familiarizing ourselves with Sacred Scripture, *God’s love letter to us*, cannot be overemphasized. Studying and praying with Sacred Scripture is a source of abundant grace.

Highlight the Scripture citations as you read each lesson. These citations are often referred to in the tests; highlighting makes it easier to locate them later. (A concordance of the Bible may also be used to locate Scripture quotations.) Some direct quotes from Scripture will match the person who said the words. Others will match the chapter and verse of the particular book of

the Bible from which the quote is taken. Others will match the second half of the verse. The Scripture verses included in the tests are significant; they should, in fact, be memorized.

## **HINT 4: CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) for more detailed explanations. See the “Subject Index” to find a particular topic and to locate pertinent references. Note that helpful CCC references are listed at the beginning of each of the *Basic Course* lessons.

## **HINT 5: MODERN CATHOLIC DICTIONARY**

Look up the vocabulary words listed for each lesson in the *Modern Catholic Dictionary*. Taking the time to do so will help you to answer the questions correctly. More importantly, it will help to clarify what the Church teaches about a particular topic.

## **HINT 6: MULTIPLE CHOICE SECTIONS**

In the multiple choice sections, choose the term or phrase that best completes each statement. In many cases, two, or even all three, of the choices are correct. You will need to choose the best answer. For example, a statement might read, “Jesus was born in...” Let’s say your choices are: 1) the world, 2) Judea, 3) Bethlehem. All three are correct, but Bethlehem is the most specific, and is therefore the best choice.

## **HINT 7: MATCHING SECTIONS**

The matching section has proven most difficult for the majority of students, since one wrong answer means that one or more of the other answers will be wrong as well. This section, perhaps more than the others, stresses the need to make distinctions, to think critically through the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, and to evaluate why one answer is more correct than another. We would like to offer a few suggestions about how best to complete this section.

1. Review the phrases in both the left and right-hand columns before beginning the matching process.
2. Begin by matching the term or terms that you know for certain to be correct.
3. Many of the terms match more than one other term. For this reason, we recommend that, beside each term in the left-hand column, you note all the possible correct matches. You will be able to eliminate choices as you go through the list, eventually finding the best possible match.
4. Be sure to review the vocabulary words in your *Modern Catholic Dictionary*. Oftentimes the exact phrasing used in the questions can be found therein.

## HINT 8: ARE THE QUESTIONS MEANT TO BE TRICKY?

Father Hardon's pedagogy may seem like word play or trickery, but that was not his intention. Father Hardon wants us to realize how dependent we are upon God's grace and upon the Church, to which Christ entrusted the authentic interpretation of all that God has revealed (Divine Revelation). Father's courses provide a framework and a foundation designed to inspire us with the wealth of Catholic wisdom found in the Fathers of the Church, papal writings, Sacred Scripture, Canon Law and similar resources. The course materials present concise explanations of the truths of the Catholic Faith, guiding us to develop a watchful eye and a discerning ear for these truths and how they are expressed.

While we study, learn and better understand the Catholic Faith, it is important to keep in mind that our Faith touches divine mysteries, realities which are hidden from our natural reason. And except for the goodness and love of God, Who willed to make known His wisdom and plan for our salvation, we would be blind to these realities. We should respond with gratitude and humility: gratitude for God's revelation and gift of Himself to us, and humility due to an awareness of our own sinfulness, unworthiness and total dependence on God's grace for any knowledge and understanding we may acquire. In this way, our study of the Faith will deepen our knowledge of God which, in turn, will deepen our relationship with Him.

### One "Iota" Matters

Father Hardon developed questions to dispel the kind of errors against the Catholic Faith that he encountered regularly during his long teaching career and in his world travels. His tough questions encourage critical thinking, and teach us how important it is to express clearly and precisely the doctrines of the Faith so that there is no room for misinterpretation.

As a result, the courses foster in participants the ability to distinguish truth from error. For example, the statement "it doesn't matter one iota" is false when applied to our Faith. An iota, the 9th letter in the Greek alphabet, has come to mean "a very small amount." One *iota* establishes the distinction between Orthodoxy (the Truth) from heresy (erroneous faith, or heterodoxy). An examination of the words *homo-ousios* and *homoi-ousios* makes this abundantly clear. *Homo-ousios* means "the same substance, or consubstantial." If we add one iota, an "i," we have the word *homoi-ousios*, which means "a similar or like substance." Both words have been used to define the divine nature of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. One word is correct and one is not. This is why the *Nicene Creed* declares that the Son is of the same substance (*homo-ousios*), consubstantial, with the Father. One iota makes a tremendous difference in the plan of salvation. Jesus Christ must be truly and fully God for us to be saved, reconciled and reunited with God. Father Hardon is not splitting hairs with points such as this. Rather, he is distinguishing truth from error regarding important spiritual realities.

## Growth in Humility

It is said that persons who are most subject to losing their faith are those who are intellectually proud. Father Hardon's courses are not intended to frustrate or humiliate those who undertake the study of the Catholic Faith, but growth in humility is often an added bonus for students. Simply stated, the questions help to develop in us a greater degree of intellectual humility. Father Hardon knew that humility is the foundation of holiness, and, since our growth in holiness was his most pressing goal, he provided plentiful opportunities for growth in humility.

Studying the Faith helps us to work against our tendency to be autonomous, individualistic and overly independent in our thinking regarding spiritual matters. We simply cannot understand the Faith, which is a free gift from God, on our own. Note the sharp contrast between learning the Faith to acquire divine knowledge and academic study to acquire human knowledge. To receive the saving truths of the Faith, we must open our hearts, and not just our intellects. This is hard work because of the tendencies ingrained in us by our human nature and by the pervasive influence of our secular culture.

## HINT 9: FRUSTRATED? DON'T RUSH! TAKE TIME FOR PRAYER

If you begin to get frustrated, set the course aside for a day, or even longer, as you clear your frustration through prayer. Prayer and reflection should surround your study. Growing in faith involves development in understanding over time, as we turn to the Lord in humility, asking His help in grasping deep truths of the Faith and in gaining insight.

On the other hand, when there is a deadline do not wait until the last minute to start a lesson, as it may become stressful to complete. More importantly, there will not be enough time to pray about, mull over and seek a clear understanding of the content addressed by each question. One of the major objectives of the course is to help us make use of the virtue of faith in seeking understanding. This is at the core of our quest to know God better, that we may love Him with all our hearts (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 158).

## HINT 10: I'VE TAKEN MANY CLASSES. DO I NEED MORE?

We never stop learning. Certainly, we can never say that we know enough about God. The mysteries of God are awe-inspiring and infinite. Thus, ongoing instruction and prayer are strongly encouraged. Both are indispensable to preserving our faith and our relationship with the Blessed Trinity. Regardless of your background, whether you have advanced degrees in theology or are a "cradle Catholic" wanting to grow in your Catholic Faith, these courses are a challenging means of gaining additional insight and understanding. They cover all the essential elements of the Faith in a systematic and comprehensive way. As believers, we need to know and practice these essentials in this life in order to obey Christ's command to "go therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (*Matthew* 28:19) and in order to attain the eternal life for which we are created.



## HELPFUL PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

### HINT 11: WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF THE SOUL?

Man is a creature composed of a material body united with a spiritual soul. The spiritual soul has no weight, shape or size. The faculties or powers of the soul are the intellect, memory and will; the intellect provides light to the will in order that a person may choose to do what is right and just, that is, to love what is truly good.

### HINT 12: WHAT IS A PERSON?

Among angels and men, *person* denotes an individual, subsisting intelligent being with intellect and will. A person is really distinct from all other persons, capable of acting freely and accountable or responsible for such actions.

### HINT 13: WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE?

*Human nature* refers to the essence of a human being composed of body and soul. The faculties or powers of the human soul (intellect, memory and will), are the basis for rational thought and voluntary decisions, or personal life.

### HINT 14: WHAT IS SALVATION HISTORY?

*Salvation History* is God's plan to save mankind from sin and lift the human family to the glory of Heaven. It is the story of mankind's elevation to the supernatural order of grace, and the deliverance from its fall from grace into sin through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. It begins with the formation of Adam and Eve as *types* or *figures* of Jesus and Mary (the New Adam and the New Eve). It continues with God's promise of a Savior-Redeemer after the Fall of our First Parents, and unfolds through Abraham, Moses and David. It comes to its definitive fulfillment and conclusion through Our Savior Jesus Christ, particularly through His Second Coming in glory at the end of time. "Then after their fall [God's] promise of redemption aroused in them the hope of being saved and from that time on He ceaselessly kept the human race in His care, to give eternal life to those who perseveringly do good in search of salvation" (*Dei Verbum* 3). Salvation History continues through the work of the Church until Christ comes again.

### HINT 15: WHAT IS THE "COMMON GOOD"?

The *common good* is the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily (cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* 26). Fulfillment is not understood in a subjective or relative way, that is, my fulfillment as I or some group define or defines it. Rather, it is the fulfillment which is the objective perfection for which God created us (cf. *Matthew* 5:48). The common good permits all to participate in the spiritual and material goods which are necessary for a fully human life, as God has intended it from the beginning. These goods include: food, clothing, shelter, health, work, education, free exercise of religion, freedom to act according to a sound or properly formed conscience, protection of the sanctity of marriage and the family, freedom from violence and the like. The common good presupposes respect for the person and his fundamental right to life. It requires the social well-being and development of the group, and the stability and security of a just order (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1906-1910). The safeguarding of the common good is the reason that the political authority exists.

### HINT 16: WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

Marriage is the most basic of all human institutions. It is the foundation of the family, and, therefore, the bedrock of human society. It requires a love rooted in fidelity to one another, a love which is both *unitive* and *procreative*. Such love excludes adultery, unnatural sexual expression, and sexual intercourse which is not open to life.

Marriage is a *voluntary contract* between a man and woman who agree to live together as husband and wife for the rest of their lives, to accept children as God intends, and to be faithful to one another until death. Marriage is possible only between a man and a woman, since procreation is impossible except between man and woman. "Same-sex marriage," as it is called, is opposed to the nature of marriage and is, in fact, a contradiction in terms. It is not possible, according to nature, for two persons of the same sex to be "one flesh."

Marriage is also a *sacred* contract, having been established by God as the natural means of uniting a man and woman, and of procreating and educating His children. Even before Christ elevated marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament, it was a contract involving two human persons and God Himself. It is called a *covenant* to indicate how, from its institution at the beginning of human history, it typifies both the covenant between God and the entire human race, and the covenant between Christ and His Church.

### HINT 17: HELPFUL RESOURCES

Another benefit of taking Father Hardon's courses is that participants become better equipped with the skills necessary to find answers to questions about the Catholic Faith. Students will benefit greatly by searching for clarity in a wide variety of readily available orthodox Catholic resources. Researching what seems to be a perplexing question or concept rather than simply repeating mechanically information is an excellent way to gain a deeper understanding of the truths of our Faith.

Students who are unable to find the answers to particular questions (or who do not understand why a particular answer is correct or incorrect) are encouraged to contact the International Office of the Marian Catechist Apostolate for assistance (608-782-0011 or [Prayer@MarianCatechist.com](mailto:Prayer@MarianCatechist.com)).

#### Additional helpful resources available through the Marian Catechist Bookstore ([Bookstore@MarianCatechist.com](mailto:Bookstore@MarianCatechist.com)):

- ❖ Ludwig Ott's *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*
- ❖ Denzinger's *Sources of Catholic Dogma*
- ❖ *Code of Canon Law*
- ❖ Vatican II documents and various other magisterial documents
- ❖ *Catholic Bible Dictionary*
- ❖ *The Catholic Bible Concordance*

#### Online resources:

- ❖ Magisterial documents (e.g., Vatican II documents), *Code of Canon Law*, etc.: [www.Vatican.va](http://www.Vatican.va)
- ❖ Father Hardon articles and audio recordings: [www.MarianCatechist.com](http://www.MarianCatechist.com), click on "Father Hardon" [www.TheRealPresence.org](http://www.TheRealPresence.org), click on "Hardon Archives"
- ❖ Catholic Encyclopedia, Early Church Fathers: [www.NewAdvent.org](http://www.NewAdvent.org)

## Father Hardon and the Marian Catechist Apostolate

### What is the Marian Catechist Apostolate?

#### HISTORY

The Marian Catechist Apostolate was founded by Servant of God Father John A. Hardon, S.J. in response to Saint John Paul II's call for a New Evangelization. Shortly before his death in 2000, Father Hardon asked His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, then Bishop of La Crosse, Wisconsin, to assume leadership of the Apostolate.

#### MISSION

The mission of the Marian Catechist Apostolate is to form catechists, both doctrinally and spiritually, for the teaching of the Catholic Faith. Marian Catechists seek to evangelize society, striving to live each day in the presence of Christ through daily prayers and devotions, and through disciplined study. The *Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Basic and Advanced Catholic Catechism Courses* are the foundation for the Marian Catechist's learning well the Catholic Faith.

Once the Faith is learned well, Marian Catechists work in the apostolate of catechesis, handing on the Faith to others.

#### MARIAN CATECHIST SPIRITUALITY

Central to members of the Marian Catechist Apostolate are love for the Holy Eucharist, a strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and an unwavering loyalty to the Holy Father as Successor of Saint Peter. Because members realize that a vital spiritual life is essential for truly effective catechesis, Marian Catechists' love for Christ is sustained by fidelity to certain spiritual practices, which have long been a beautiful part of Catholic life and tradition. The spiritual practices of the Marian Catechist in Formation are on the back page of this guide.

Upon completion of the courses and sufficient progress in the spiritual life, many members choose to make an *Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. This Consecration involves a one-year commitment to be faithful to the spiritual practices of the Marian Catechist, and to continued study and catechetical activity. The Consecration bestows particular graces that assist in the teaching of the Faith. In addition, by means of the Consecration, Our Lady draws us closer to her Son, that we may be true and loyal co-workers with Christ in bringing His truth and His selfless love into the world.

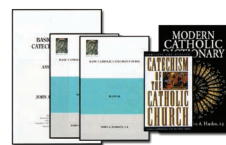
#### BECOMING A MEMBER

We invite you to participate in the New Evangelization by becoming a member of the Marian Catechist Apostolate. Membership is open to adult Catholic lay people (whether single, married, or widowed) who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, are in good standing with the Church, and are practicing Catholics.

To join the Apostolate now, please fill out the membership application and return it with your annual fee. If you have further questions, please visit our website at [www.MarianCatechist.com](http://www.MarianCatechist.com), call us at (608) 782-0011, or contact us online: [Prayer@MarianCatechist.com](mailto:Prayer@MarianCatechist.com).

## Father Hardon's Catholic Home Study Courses

These courses provide formation in the Catholic Faith that is both challenging and rewarding. Each course is designed for home study, which allows the student to complete it at his own pace. Each contains thought provoking questions to be completed and mailed in for correction.



### Basic Catholic Catechism Course Revised and Updated by Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke

16 LESSONS

RECOMMENDED PACE: 1 or 2 lessons per month



### Advanced Catholic Catechism Course

36 LESSONS

RECOMMENDED PACE: 1 or 2 lessons per month

PREREQUISITE: Basic Catholic Catechism Course



### Masters of the Spiritual Life Course

7 LESSONS (covering seven Masters of the spiritual life)

RECOMMENDED PACE: one lesson per month

### Commentary on the General Directory for Catechesis

By Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke

The *Commentary* is a well organized tool to aid catechists in effectively teaching the Catholic Faith. Study of the *Commentary*, required in the formation of every Marian Catechist, is usually completed after the *Basic Catholic Catechism Course*. Both the study questions and the *Commentary* may be ordered or downloaded from the Marian Catechist website: [www.MarianCatechist.com](http://www.MarianCatechist.com).