



## **Teachings of the LCCI**

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.

#### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

##### *What belief requirements do you impose on prospective members of the Liberal Catholic Church International?*

The Liberal Catholic Church has as one of its basic tenets freedom of thought. It "permits to lay members entire freedom in the interpretation of Creeds, Scriptures and Tradition, and of the Liturgy. The Church holds strongly that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, not its antecedent. A truth is not a truth for a man, nor a revelation a Revelation, until he sees it to be true for himself." ("Statement of Principles") We make no belief restrictions on lay members; instead, we ask questions about the prospective member's intentions. For example, in the Form of Admission to the Church we ask:

Wilt thou strive to live in the spirit of love with all mankind, and with all your will to fight against sin and selfishness?

Wilt thou strive to show forth in thy thoughts, thy words, and thy works, the power of God which is in thee?

##### *What belief requirements do you impose on prospective Clergy of the Liberal Catholic Church International?*

The Church requires that Clergy individually accept the following principles:

That Christ is present in the Sacraments and He is the Source of all Grace in those Sacraments.

That the Clergyman is as Christ's servant, and a steward of God's mysteries.

##### *What belief requirements do you impose on Bishops?*

Before a Consecration, a Bishop-Elect is asked to affirm, "Dost thou believe...in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, from whom, by whom, and in whom are all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, bodily and spiritual?"

*What is the LCCI position on reincarnation?*

The Liberal Catholic Church International does not teach or require a belief in the dogma or teaching of the principle known as Reincarnation, "Christian" or otherwise.

Extended FAQ

*How did the Liberal Catholic Church come into existence?*

The Liberal Catholic Church sprang from the Dutch Old Catholic Church. The Dutch Church became separated from Rome after giving refuge to a group of accused heretics called Jansenists, who were being persecuted by the Jesuits. The Dutch Church later began to be called "Old Catholic" when other European Catholic Churches joined with it as a result of the "new" dogma of Papal Infallibility declared in the First Vatican Council. The Liberal Catholic Church came into existence as the result of a complete reorganization in 1917-1918 of the Old Catholic movement in Great Britain upon a more liberal basis.

*What are the conditions for receiving Communion in the Liberal Catholic Church International?*

The LCCI offers Open Communion; that is, we welcome all the members of the Christian Brotherhood to receive Communion at our altars. There are no membership or belief requirements. The Blessed Sacrament of Christ's love was meant for the betterment of all people. Christ came not to heal the healthy but the infirm.

*Do Liberal Catholics believe that the Bread and Wine in Communion actually become the Body and Blood of Christ?*

We do teach that a change (Transubstantiation) occurs in the Bread and Wine after they are consecrated in the Holy Eucharist. The Body of Christ is the vehicle of his consciousness and the Blood of Christ is his life poured out in sacrifice.

*Are Liberal Catholic priests allowed to marry?*

Yes. Many people are unaware that the practice of requiring celibacy for Roman Catholic priests has only existed for a little over 1,000 years. It came about largely as a means of preventing the spouses and children of priests from inheriting Church property. Prior to that, married clergy were common, as they still are in the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Both celibate and married lifestyles have their respective merits.

*Do you ordain women?*

Yes, Our church ordains women to the priesthood and consecrates women as bishops. Gender is not an impediment to Holy Orders.

*Are divorced or remarried people welcome in your Church?*

Yes. We do not kick or keep people out because of divorce, nor do we bar them from receiving the

Sacraments. To do so is totally inconsistent with the example of love and forgiveness given by our Master, Christ.

*Will you baptize children born out of wedlock?*

Absolutely. The practice of some Churches to deny Baptism to children born out of wedlock is truly a sin. The Sacrament of Baptism is intended to benefit the child, not the parents; therefore, the marital status of the parents is not relevant.

*Do Liberal Catholics practice artificial means of birth control, such as birth control pills?*

The Liberal Catholic Church places no restrictions on its members use or lack of use of birth control methods. In fact, many Liberal Catholics, in keeping with church belief that religion should keep pace with human growth and enlightenment, consider family planning an important part of responsible human sexuality.

*Speaking of sexuality, are homosexuals welcome in the Liberal Catholic Church?*

Yes. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender people may receive Holy Communion at our altars, with no need to hide or repress their sexual orientation.

*Didn't Christ teach that homosexuality was a sin?*

No. Christ never mentioned homosexuality in any way. We might wonder why so many Christians are worried about something that Christ never once mentioned. While the Old Testament does condemn certain forms of homosexual behavior, such as homosexual rape, it also condemns men cutting their facial hair, eating pork, and many other things that today's Christians do not consider sinful. Homosexuality likely has a biological basis. Christ did not single out homosexuality for scorn, and neither should we.

*I'm still concerned, though, that many of these things - divorce, homosexuality, and sex outside of marriage - are sins. Doesn't a person need to be in a "state of grace" before receiving Holy Communion?*

First, Liberal Catholics recognize the futility of trying to divide the world into categories like "sinners" and "the righteous." Christ taught us in the story of the woman caught in adultery, that only the person who is without sin among us can cast a stone. We have all committed sins. Next, Liberal Catholics seek to recall the original meaning of the word "sin," which is "error." We have all made errors. Lastly, consider the company Jesus kept - drunkards, prostitutes, tax collectors, lepers, the poor and oppressed - and that nearly all of His critical comments were aimed at religious leaders. When Jesus walked the earth he did not withhold his love from all but the perfect, nor does he now.

*Have Liberal Catholics accepted the liturgical reforms of Vatican II?*

Some of the liturgical "reforms" of the Roman Catholic Church's 1962-1964 denominational conference (Vatican II) were already instituted in the Liberal Catholic movement in advance, in the early 1900's, such as the use of the language of the people in the services of the Church. We have not,

however, turned around our altars, simplified mass vestments, eliminated the requirements for gold or linen in items that touch the Blessed Sacrament or otherwise decreased the respect due to the Body and Blood of Christ. Our Mass is a revised English version of the old Latin Tridentine Mass used before Vatican II, and is very traditional and beautiful.

*What do Liberal Catholics think about Mary?*

While the Liberal Catholic Church does not seek to clearly define the role of the holy Lady Mary as certain other Churches have, there are many Liberal Catholics who have a special devotion to her. Some view her in a very traditional Catholic way as the Theotokos, or “God-Bearer,” while others see her as the World Mother – a manifestation of the feminine aspect of divinity. She is often honored in the devotion of the Rosary. Forms of the Rosary that may be found in use in the Liberal Catholic Church include the popular Dominican Rosary, the Franciscan Crown Rosary, the Rosary of the Seven Rays and the Rosary of the Five Trees.

*I have heard that the early Bishops of the Liberal Catholic Church were Theosophists. What is Theosophy and is a belief in it required in the Liberal Catholic Church International?*

Theosophy is a school of thought founded in the late 1800’s. Its purpose is the comparative study of religion and mysticism. Some of its basic principles are belief in the eastern concepts of reincarnation, karma, vegetarianism and abstention from the use of alcoholic beverages. While many of the Liberal Catholic Church’s early Bishops did, in fact, hold theosophical ideals, a belief in them is neither required nor forbidden in the Liberal Catholic Church International. The LCCI respects the freedom of individual conscience on these issues, as in others.

## **About the LCCI**

### **Statement of Principles**

It is an independent and autonomous body, in no way dependent on the See of Rome, or upon any other See or authority outside its own administration. It is neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant, but Catholic.

The Church is called Liberal Catholic because its outlook is both liberal and Catholic. Catholic means universal, but the word has also come to stand for the outlook and practice of the historical church as distinct from that of the later sects. The Liberal Catholic Church allies itself with this historical tradition. It combines the Catholic form of worship with its stately ritual, its deep mysticism, and its abiding witness to the reality of sacramental grace with the widest measure of intellectual liberty and respect for the individual conscience.

The Liberal Catholic Church came into existence as the result of a complete reorganization in 1915-16 of the Old Catholic movement in Great Britain upon a more liberal basis. This Church derived its Orders from the Mother See of the Old Catholic movement, the ancient archiepiscopal See of Utrecht in Holland. The Liberal Catholic Church has carefully preserved this succession of Orders.

### **Doctrine**

The Liberal Catholic Church believes that the vitality of a church gains in proportion as its members increasingly draw their central inspiration from an intense faith in the LIVING CHRIST. The Church accepts in the plain and literal sense the marvelous promise of Jesus Christ when on earth: "And behold I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

In regards these promises as validating all Christian worship, of whatever kind, so long as it be earnest and true. But it further holds that, while the promise of the Presence with individual believers is thus effective, our Lord also appointed certain rites or Sacraments (called mysteries in the Eastern Church) for the greater helping of His people, to be handed down in His Church as especial channels of His power and blessing. Through these means of grace He is ever present with His Church, giving to His people the wonderful privilege of fellowship and communion with Him, guiding and protecting them at every stage from the cradle to the grave.

The Liberal Catholic Church recognizes seven Sacraments, which it enumerates as follows: Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Absolution, Holy Unction, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders. To insure their efficacy to the worshipper, the administration of all sacramental rites is guarded with the most jealous care. It has preserved an Episcopal succession that is valid, as understood throughout the whole of those Churches in Christendom that maintain the Apostolic Succession as a tenet of their faith.

Besides perpetuating these sacramental rites, the immediate followers of Christ handed down in His Church a body of doctrine and certain principles of ethics. Some of this original teaching of Christ has been lost, and some of it has been obscured by the accretions of the ages. What remains is a priceless heritage to be guarded with loving care and reverence.

The Liberal Catholic Church regards the Holy scriptures, the Creeds, and the Traditions of the Church as the means by which this teaching of Christ has been handed down to His followers. It regards them as fundamental, true, and sufficient as a basis of right understanding and right conduct.

The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds are authorized for use in the Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church.

### **Freedom of Thought**

Membership in most of the Christian Churches rests on the acceptance of a common belief. There is frequently wide discrepancy between the real belief of a thoughtful individual and the official profession which is expected of him. This leads to suppressed disbelief, to say nothing of insincerity, and tends to check the free exercise of the mind.

The Liberal Catholic Church permits to lay members entire freedom in the interpretation of Creeds, Scriptures and Traditions, and of the Liturgy. It asks only that differences of interpretation be courteously expressed. The Church holds strongly that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, not its antecedent. A truth is not a truth for a man, nor a Revelation a revelation, until he sees it to be true for himself. As a man grows spiritually, so will he grow into the perception of truth. No mere lip profession or superficial assent of the mind can take the place of this growth, and to ask anything less than this is a sacrilege. Christ surely meant His religion to be one of love and freedom, one which would help people at their different stages of spiritual growth. He did not prescribe formula whose literal acceptance should be a condition of salvation. The consequence of being unable to recognize a truth is simply to lose the help that the knowledge of the truth would give.

The Liberal Catholic Church considers, therefore, that it acts in accordance with the spirit of its Master in welcoming gladly into its ranks those who are still seeking for truth. As a working basis of fellowship, it asks of its members not the profession of a common belief, but their willingness to worship corporately through a common ritual. It tries to help them discover truth for themselves by providing them with opportunities for spiritual growth. It asks of them sincerity, purity of motive, tolerance, breadth of mind, courtesy of expression, willingness to work, and a constant pursuit of high ideals -confident, above all, that the power of the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's love may well be trusted to work God's own true purpose in their souls.

### **Ethics**

The Liberal Catholic Church lays great stress on the corporate aspect of Christian life and

worship, believing that as a system of ethics, philosophy, and worship, Christianity was intended chiefly to help mankind grow into the love of Christ, and in so doing to solve the many difficulties that beset the way of human brotherhood - that brotherhood which is the cornerstone of a truly religious life. Without mutual goodwill, no system of social organization can be other than chaotic.

The Church strives to inspire its members with a love for humanity and the desire to serve their fellows.

### **Terms of Communion**

The Liberal Catholic Church welcomes to its altars all who reverently and sincerely approach them. It looks upon the Christian Church as a great brotherhood of all who turn to Jesus Christ - their Master and their Friend - as the inspirer of their spiritual life. It offers the Blessed Sacrament of His love to any member of the family who reverently desires it.

Candidates are admitted to the Liberal Catholic Church by Baptism, or (if that has been received in complete form) by Confirmation or Admission. Admission is a simple ceremony in which the person is accepted into membership and a blessing is invoked on their religious aspirations.

The essentials of its baptismal rite are the use of water and the usual Trinitarian formula, together with the application of the Oil of Catechumens and Chrism; and those of the Confirmation rite are the imposition of the Bishop's hand with the proper formula, and the use of Chrism. When persons who wish to join the Liberal Catholic Church have received these Sacraments in a less complete form, it is usual to repeat them "conditionally."

### **Relation to Other Churches**

The Liberal Catholic Church is not a new sect. It is a constituent part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church: that historical Church which is truly One, despite its many outward divisions both in East and West, because the One Life of Christ animates and sustains it through the Sacraments He instituted. The Liberal Catholic Church has preserved these Sacraments in their integrity and plenitude and believes its doctrine to be in conformance with the teachings of Christ and freed from the corruption of later ages.

It regards Christ's Church as consisting of "the blessed company of all faithful people." The different churches, whether historical or new, receive His blessing in proportion to the earnestness of their members and the extent to which they retain the Sacraments of His grace and reflect His teachings.

The Liberal Catholic Church, therefore, seeks to work in amity with all other Christian denominations. It has no wish to proselytize, and welcomes all to regular and full participation in its services, without asking or expecting them to leave their own church. On the other hand, if members of other churches are attracted by the distinctive features of its work, they are invited to join. Its chief appeal is to the thousands who stand outside the

existing church organizations and religious societies, and are bereft of the help they might otherwise receive.

The Liberal Catholic Church is at all times ready to establish relations of intercommunion with other Churches upon the friendliest possible basis. It would be far from denying to the non-episcopal bodies the charismatic or prophetic ministry of preaching and inspiration. At the same time, it does not concede to them the Catholic priesthood which, of course, they do not claim. The Catholic view is that the priesthood depends for its efficacy upon the valid transmission of the Episcopal succession. Where both parties are willing, the Church permits its clergy to exchange pulpits with ministers of non-episcopal Churches, but it does not invite the latter to officiate at its altars.

### **Mysticism and Modern Thought**

The Church seeks to bring into alliance with its worship all that is true and good in modern thought. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18) Spiritual truths are at all times capable of discovery or rediscovery.

The traditional path of Purification, Illumination, and Union is still open for the seeker's treading. Those who approach by this path may hope to attain the spiritual insight that is the aim of every earnest Christian.

The Liberal Catholic Church, as a modern Christian Church, maintains that religion should keep pace with human growth and enlightenment, and holds that the Church has handed down a very precious heritage from Christ Himself.

The Liberal Catholic Church welcomes to its membership all who are seeking truth, and does not require acceptance of a specific body of doctrine. The distinctive contribution of the Liberal Catholic Church to Christian thought is this wide freedom, together with the traditional Sacraments which it administers.