



## SUMMARY OF DOCTRINE

The existence of God, infinite, eternal, omnipotent, transcendent and immanent. He is the One Existence from which all forms of existence are derived. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

The manifestation of God in the universe under a triplicity, called in the Christian religion Father, Son and Holy Spirit; three Persons in One God, co-equal, co-eternal; the Son "alone-born" of the Father. The Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Father the Source of all; the Son, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14); the Holy Spirit, the Life-Giver, the Inspirer and Sanctifier.

The Holy Lady Mary is seen as not only the mother of Jesus but also as an embodiment of the Feminine aspect of Divinity, the World Mother and Queen of the Angels.

Every person is a complex of personality, soul and spirit, made in the Image of God, divine in origin and a Spark of the Divine Fire. Sharing God's nature, people cannot cease to exist; therefore they are eternal and their future is one whose glory and splendour have no limit.

Christ ever lives as a mighty spiritual Presence in the world, guiding and sustaining His people. The divinity that was manifest in Him is gradually being unfolded in humankind, until each person shall come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

The world is the theatre of an ordered Plan, according to which the Spirit of each person by repeatedly expressing itself in various conditions of life and experience continually unfolds inner spiritual powers. That evolution or spiritual unfoldment takes place under an inviolable law of cause and effect (karma). "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Peoples doings in physical incarnation largely determine their experience after death in the intermediate world (or world of purgation), the heavenly world and also their circumstances in subsequent incarnations (reincarnation). Humanity is a link in a vast chain of lives leading from the Highest to the lowest. As each person helps the person below, so also they are helped by Those who stand above them on the ladder of lives, receiving thus a "free gift of grace". There is a "communion of Saints", Holy Ones or perfected beings who help humankind; also a ministry of Angels that we strive to intelligently work and co-operate with.

Each person has moral and ethical duties to him or herself and to others. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). Love must be manifested, therefore this doctrine must be lived through selfless service to humanity.

It is the duty of all humankind to learn to discern the divine Light in all people "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Because all people are sons of God they are inseparably linked together. That which harms one harms the whole of the human family. Hence each person owes it as a duty to all: firstly, to endeavour constantly to live up to the highest good that is within, thereby enabling that God within to become more perfectly manifest; and,

secondly, to recognize the fact of the human family by constant effort towards unselfishness, love, consideration and service to all people without distinction of race, religion, politics, gender, sexuality or nationality. Service of humanity and the sacrifice of the lower self to the higher are laws of spiritual growth.

Christ instituted various Sacraments through which we can worship and in which "an inward and spiritual grace" is given to us through "an outward and visible sign." There are seven of these rites which may be ranked as Sacraments; namely, Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Absolution, Holy Unction, Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders. The doctrine of these Sacraments is sufficiently set forth in the authorized Liturgy of The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community. Christ, the living Head of the Church which He founded, is the true Minister of all Sacraments and instituted the Apostolic Succession which validates those Sacraments of the Christian Church through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

## **SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES**

### **Relation to Other Faiths and Christian Denominations**

The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community is not a new religious communion and is a part of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We believe in the value of all religions, that each plays its part in the development of human religious life, each aiding the society in which it flourishes "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." (John 10:16). The church actively promotes religious tolerance and understanding to all.

The church is open to working and co-operating with other Christian denominations and is happy to exchange pulpits with them by agreement, but it can only invite priests to officiate at its altars if they have been ordained in a valid line of Apostolic Succession.

### **The Scriptures**

The Bible is the central spiritual text of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community, it is viewed as having much which is divinely inspired especially when understood allegorically and spiritually, but because of its historical antecedence it is seen as a guide rather than as an infallible authority. Our church is both scriptural and sacramental. The Apocrypha, Nag Hamadi Scrolls and the Dead Sea Scrolls are also seen as having value and containing much material which is divinely inspired. We would also suggest that there is evidence of the highest inspiration in the scriptures of other faiths and we encourage every person to study these scriptures to promote greater understanding and tolerance of all pathways. Psychology and science also have much to offer when understood and connected spiritually.

The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community will promote and make its teachings as widely available as possible through all means of communication to members and the general public for the common good and the spiritual, moral and ethical development of humanity.

### **Freedom of Thought**

Membership of most Christian churches rests on acceptance of a common belief. There is often a wide discrepancy between the real belief of a thoughtful individual and the official profession that may be required of them. Such inconsistency leads to a suppressed disbelief or insincerity and tends to check the free exercise of the mind. Truth is not truth for a person until they experience it as being true for them. The church leaves members free in the interpretation of scriptures and its teachings, it asks only that differences of opinion are expressed in a courteous manner and that all people attending its services and functions do so with an attitude of respect and reverence.

## **Morals & Ethics**

We believe in the sacredness of all life and that every living being is a Temple of the Divine which must be respected and preserved "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (Cor. 3:16). Therefore we encourage all our members and people to consider becoming vegetarian, non smoking and to abstain from the consumption of alcohol and recreational drugs. From this understanding we also promote a respect for the natural world, human life and the environment. These are voluntary and will perhaps be as a result of inner illumination, understanding and an outward expression of the Love of Christ.

We promote and encourage the sanctity of marriage and the family, both being an expression of selfless love. The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community does not see any reason to refuse to marry divorced persons.

Men and women have equal value and are both equally divine in origin, God being dual in nature and being both masculine and feminine. As a church we actively discourage discrimination against either sex.

Every person is entitled to privacy and the freedom to live their life as they see fit within the limits of the law of the country. Whilst encouraging a life of moral and ethical standards, compassion and concern the private affairs and boundaries of the individual are to be respected.

## **Terms of Communion and Membership**

Any person who reverently and sincerely attends the services of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community may receive the Blessed Sacrament of Christ. This is placed directly on the tongue.

Membership of the church is through a service of Baptism, Confirmation or admission. Any person may attend services informally and there is no requirement of membership to attend services or other church activities.

## **Liturgy**

All services for the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community are contained within the Liturgy authorised for use by the synod of the church, this may not be altered or changed without permission from the synod. The language of the liturgy must always be in the vernacular and the prevailing tone is one of devotion and joyous, positive worship. The ceremonial directions and details for the services of the church are contained in the book 'Ceremonies of the Liberal Catholic Rite by Bishop Irving Cooper'.

The central act of worship is 'The Holy Eucharist' also known as the 'Mass'. During the Eucharist when the words of institution and consecration are said over the bread and wine, Christ is then present in a spiritual manner through these forms. The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community affirms that the Holy Eucharist is not a mere service of commemoration, but is Christ's supreme gift of Himself to His church and is used as a vehicle for the distribution of His love and spiritual influence throughout the World for the benefit of all humanity and creation.

## **Confession and Absolution**

Confession and Absolution are available to any person who requests them and is not just limited to members. Confession is seen in the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community as a means for a person to discuss in confidence with a Priest or Bishop any problems or issues that may be troubling them or weighing heavily on their mind. Absolution helps in loosening emotional and mental discord within the person and aids in restoring a state of inner spiritual harmony and equilibrium, it is however not seen as a way for 'sins' or wrong doing and its consequences to be wiped away.

## **Healing**

Spiritual healing is an important part of the work of the church, it is complimentary to but not a substitute for medical treatment which must always be sought. Much illness or disease within the body can be caused by discord between the personality and the soul. Spiritual healing is to aid in the restoration of harmony and equilibrium between the soul and the personality of the person, thus aiding them in drawing closer to the Divine Spark within them. Physical benefits may become apparent but are not expected. The gift of healing cannot be assumed to be conferred at ordination. Healing is assisted by absolution, the Eucharist, public or private services of healing (unction), or extreme unction if the person is near to death. Spiritual healing is available to all who request it. All healing comes from Christ himself, the Holy Spirit and the angels.

## **Mysticism**

We believe the ancient pathway of purification, illumination and union is the way of the cross and discipleship. The gradual unfoldment of the Christ Spirit in each person and direct communion with the Master is the goal of every Christian. In this mystic state a certainty of true knowledge or 'gnosis' is reached. Such truths, by first hand knowledge, keep alive and illumine teachings and prevent theology becoming legalistic, narrow and authoritarian.

## **Clergy**

All clergy of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community (Sub-Deacons, Deacons, Deaconesses, Priests and Bishops) do not receive a wage from the church and give of their time and energy voluntarily, but they may claim expenses from the church for costs incurred and receive donations for church funds for their work on behalf of the church, but no fee may be exacted for offering the sacraments.

We do not ordain women as Deacons and Priests or consecrate them as Bishops, not as an act of discrimination, but because our researches have shown that the full sacramental and Apostolic powers are not fully transmitted or active. Women do take a full leadership role liturgically as Deaconesses, organisationally as trustees and as members of synod on an equal basis with men.

Clergy from other churches may incardinate into 'The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community' in line with the process laid out in the Canon Laws of the church. They must have been ordained or consecrated in a valid line of apostolic succession, be in complete agreement with the churches 'Statement of Doctrines and Principles', undergo a DBS check or it's equivalent, take an oath of canonical obedience and observe a one year period of probation before becoming a full member of the synod of the church.

The clergy of the church claim no spiritual or temporal domination over those who adhere to its Rite and must always respect the choices and decisions of the individual. They are expected to share, live and promote the teachings of the church as stewards of the mysteries of God.

If any allegations of abuse, misuse of power or position are made, the member of the clergy in question will immediately be suspended from duty whilst investigations are made. Any member of the clergy who is found guilty of abuse or misuse of power and position will immediately be removed from their function. The church will co-operate fully with the appropriate authorities. All clergy are required to have a current DBS check or the equivalent in their country of residence or church activity. They must have and carry a current and up to date church identity card when undertaking any work on behalf of the church. They are required to abide by a code of conduct and the churches child protection policy.

All clergy of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community are free to be married or unmarried. The church however expects its clergy to respect the sanctity of marriage vows, show responsibility in

their behaviour towards other people and to not enter into any unlawful relationship.

Whilst the members of the church are free to interpret scriptures and the teachings of the church according to their own understanding, the clergy of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community must be in complete agreement with and teach its doctrines, principles, teachings and theology.

### **Beauty and the Arts**

Beauty is the expression of The Divine in form, whether it be through harmonious and inspirational music, elegant architecture and beautiful use of colour in vestments and paintings. Beauty inspires intuition and draws out creativity in our nature. The church encourages the arts and seeks to mirror the Divine Beauty in its worship.

### **Politics**

The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community is not a political organisation and is and will not be allied or associated with any political party or movement, each individual member of the church is free to pursue their own political interests.

### **Finance and Charitable Work**

The operations and charitable work of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community are dependant on the voluntary contributions of the public, its members and clergy. Any funds raised other than for the running and administration of the church are to go towards its charitable works and the church may not make a profit.

The church may charge for events other than services, such as retreats, seminars and study courses but will not seek to exclude any person from attending on the basis of financial hardship, and reduced rates may be offered.

In its charitable work the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community will not offer preferential treatment to members and does not require membership to receive charitable aid or teachings.

### **Governance of the Church**

All spiritual matters appertaining to the Church such as doctrine, teachings, the liturgy and selection of candidates for ordination are made by the members of the synod of the Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community in line with the Canon Laws of the Church. All profane matters such as finance, legal issues, charitable works and promoting the church are decided on by the trustees of the church who are the directors of the not for profit company 'The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community Limited', company number 7935762 which is a registered charity with the charity number 1156934. There must be at least three independent trustees who are also directors and are not members of the clergy to decide on matters where conflict of interest may arise. This not for profit company and registered charity may create branches of itself in other countries. The Liberal Catholic Church Grail Community is an entirely autonomous body not dependant or answerable to The Roman Catholic Church, any other Liberal Catholic jurisdiction or Christian Church.