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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCSE  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 3: CATHOLIC  
CHRISTIANITY AND ETHICAL THEMES  
3121U30-1**

**SUMMER 2022**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## GCSE

Summer 2022

### UNIT 3: CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY AND ETHICAL THEMES

#### General Comments

The paper appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates. Good knowledge and understanding were demonstrated by candidates, particularly in the lower tariff questions. Spelling, punctuation and grammar was found to be very good, with most candidates achieving marks within the intermediate or higher bands.

The (a) questions were extremely accessible with the majority of candidates answering these well and showing good knowledge and understanding of the key terms.

Generally, the (b) questions were answered fairly well and were mostly detailed.

The (c) questions seemed to prove difficult for many candidates. In general, candidates seem to be struggling with the extended writing that is required for 8 marks.

However, candidates appear to be aware of the need to write at length for the (d) questions, as was demonstrated by the SPAG marks.

There appeared to be a misunderstanding of trigger words for some candidates, and there was evidence of evaluation in some b and c answers (which do not require it).

Candidates must remember to clearly state the number of the question(s) they are continuing to answer on any additional writing pages they use e.g. 1d. 2c. It is extremely challenging to try and match up their responses if they don't make this clear and whilst we would not want to deter candidates from using the continuation space, the fact that so many did not make this obvious has caused significant delays to the marking process this Summer.

They must also be reminded not to write on pages that state 'Do Not Write on These Pages' as these pages will be missed out during the scanning process.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

Due to the element of choice in this year's paper, candidates were able to leave out one question on the paper. It appeared that questions 1 and 3 were by far the most popular to be answered and this was reflected in the marks.

#### **Q.1 (a) 'What do Catholics mean by 'Advent'?'**

This question was well answered by the vast majority of candidates, with just a small minority confusing Advent with Lent.

- (b) **‘Describe Catholic beliefs about Judgement.’**  
In question 1(b), a number of candidates showed a misunderstanding of the concept of purgatory. Some believed it is where judgement takes place, while others described it as a place between heaven and hell. It is important to note that purgatory is a place of cleansing before the soul reaches its final resting place in Heaven.
- (c) **‘Explain the importance of the Bible for Catholics.’**  
Candidates were generally confident in their knowledge of the Bible with many able to describe its uses. It is important to remind candidates to focus on the trigger word of ‘explain’ here, and also to ensure they are answering the question being asked.
- (d) **‘Christmas is the most important Catholic festival.’**  
Further work on skills of analysis and evaluation needs to be done, in particular with regards to addressing the question. Many candidates were confident in describing the events of Christmas for question 1(d), or even explaining the significance of the festival. However, fewer candidates were able to analyse its importance and reach a conclusion that was relevant to the question asked.
- Q.2**
- (a) **‘What do Catholics mean by ‘Icthus’?’**  
Many candidates responded well to this question. Those who showed knowledge of the key concept were able to give a detailed response.
- (b) **‘Describe the vision of Mary at Lourdes.’**  
Many candidates were familiar with Lourdes as a site of pilgrimage for Catholics, although fewer were able to give a detailed description of the visions. Some candidates misread the question and focused on a description of Mary instead, therefore not accessing the full range of marks available to them.
- (c) **‘Explain the nature of the Catholic Magisterium.’**  
2(c), which asked candidates to explain the nature of the magisterium proved quite difficult for those who chose this question. Many candidates failed to achieve the highest bands due to a lack of understanding of the Magisterium.
- (d) **‘Religious orders are no longer important in the Catholic Church.’**  
2(d) also proved to be difficult for many candidates. This was due to a lack of knowledge of religious orders, with some candidates referring to religious rules or commands in their responses.
- Q.3**
- (a) **‘What do Catholics mean by ‘responsibilities’?’**  
Many candidates were familiar with this key concept, and were able to give excellent examples of responsibilities, both religious and non-religious.
- (b) **‘Describe the Catholic Church’s attitude to same sex relationships.’**  
Candidates appeared to be familiar with the relevant beliefs and teachings on same sex relationships, and many were able to describe some of them. A number of candidates misread the question and responded with general information on sexual relationships, which was reflected in the marks.
- (c) **‘Explain Catholic teachings on divorce.’**  
In question 3(c), there seemed to be a misunderstanding of divorce as adultery for a significant number of candidates.

It is important to note that divorce does not equate to adultery. Candidates need to understand that adultery arises when a divorced person enters into a new relationship or remarries.

**(d) 'The Catholic Church's teaching on artificial contraception is no longer relevant.'**

Applying evaluation and analysis to question 3(d) appeared to be a problem for some candidates. Many responses showed an excellent explanation of the Catholic teaching on artificial contraception, but fewer responses evaluated and analysed this teaching in response to the question. Candidates should also ensure that they reference sources of wisdom and authority where appropriate so as to achieve the highest Band.

**Q.4** Question 4 was the least popular on the paper this year.

**(a) 'What do Catholics mean by 'extremism'?'**

Candidates appeared familiar with this key concept and on the whole, they were able to define it correctly using examples to illustrate further.

**(b) 'Describe when a personal religious conviction can conflict with the laws of a country.'**

The candidates that responded to this question showed knowledge of the key term in question (a) and were able to identify relevant examples for question (b). Most examples in question (b) were described with some detail.

**(c) 'Explain Catholic teachings on prejudice.'**

There seemed to be confusion between the key terms of prejudice and discrimination, with a number of candidates referring to discrimination in their responses, rather than prejudice.

**(d) 'It's up to you what you do with your money.'**

Responses to question 4(d) were quite general, with few candidates referring to sources of wisdom and authority to support their points.

Generally, the level of religious language in candidates' responses was very good, and many candidates appeared to be confident in using religious terminology throughout the paper.

### Summary of key points

- It is important that candidates understand each of the skills being assessed throughout the paper, and to demonstrate the relevant skill in each question. This is particularly crucial in the (d) questions.
- Candidates should be aware of the 'trigger' word in each question and understand what this is requesting of them.
- When attempting (d) questions, many candidates seemed to use a formulaic approach, which in many cases limited the response. For example, including 'this is a strong/weak argument' in a response should only be done if there is a good understanding of what this means and if there is a relevant point to be made.
- Candidates need to ensure they read the entire question before they begin their response. In some cases, candidates seemed to choose a key term from the question to write about, e.g. Mary in question 2(b) and ignored the requirements of the question.



WJEC  
245 Western Avenue  
Cardiff CF5 2YX  
Tel No 029 2026 5000  
Fax 029 2057 5994  
E-mail: [exams@wjec.co.uk](mailto:exams@wjec.co.uk)  
website: [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)