

Roman Catholicism – Understand What It Teaches

Mass

The Roman Catholic Church believes that each time the mass is “performed,” Christ’s sacrificial work on the cross is relived.

“In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.” Catechism, Pg. 344, #1367.

“When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ’s Passover, and it is made present. As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out.” Catechism, Pg. 343, #1364.

This position contradicts the Holy Scriptures.

“For Christ also hath *once* suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:” I Peter 3:18.

“... but now *once* in the end of the world hath he [Jesus] appeared *to put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself.” Hebrews 9:26.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.” Hebrews 10:10.

The RCC’s declaration really says what Jesus did on the cross was not complete. He has to be sacrificed over and over again. It is self that has to be sacrificed over and over again, not God and Jesus. Yet the catechism says:

“Every time this mystery is celebrated, ‘the work of our redemption is carried on’ ...” Pg. 354, #1405.

God’s word cannot be more clear:

“So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many ...” Hebrews 9:28.

“But this man, after he had offered *one sacrifice for sins for ever*, sat down on the right hand of God;” Hebrews 10:12.

Sacraments – Necessary For Salvation

“The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary* for salvation.” Catechism, Pg. 292, #1129.

What are the sacraments?

“There are seven sacraments in the Church: Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.” Catechism, Pg. 289, #1113.

These seven sacraments are nothing more than a list of seven good works. This means that anyone missing these in their life will not be saved. Paul declared: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ...” Romans 3:20.

Looking at the Eucharist: Partaking of the *Eucharist* has alleged power to cleanse from past sins and preserve from future sins.

“For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins:” Catechism, Pg. 351, #1393.

“By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins.” Catechism, Pg. 352, #1395.

John said, “... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” I John 1:7. But Jesus doesn’t have to shed His blood again and again!

“Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died He died to sin once for all ... Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself ... But now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ... So Christ, also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many ... By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ... But He, having offered one sacrifice for sin for all time, sat down at the right and of God ... For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.” Romans 6:9-10; Heb. 7:27, 9:26, 28, 10:10, 12, 14, 18.

What preserves us from future sins? Eating this little sweet man-made wafer?

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:11.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Psalm 119:9.

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” II Timothy 4:18.

The RRC will come back and say that when the wafer is eaten, it actually changes into the blood and body of Jesus – so He does cleanse and preserve. This is another RCC tradition called *transubstantiation*.

“The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: ‘Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.’” Catechism, Pg. 347, #1376.

Rome claims this universal teaching was with the church from its beginning. That is a false statement. “Pope” Gelasius I [492-496 A.D.] at the end of the fifth century said the elements of the bread and wine are *not* changed at the eucharistic celebration.

“The sacrament which we receive of the body and blood of Christ is a divine thing. Wherefore also by means of it we are made partakers of the divine nature. Yet the substance or nature of the bread and wine does not cease to be. And certainly the image and likeness of the body and blood of Christ is set out in the celebration of the mysteries ... Thus, as the elements pass into this, that is, the divine substance by the Holy Ghost, and none the less remain in their own proper nature, so they show that the principal mystery itself, the efficacy and virtue of which they truly make present (represent) to us, consists in this, that the two natures remain each in its own proper being so that there is one Christ because He is whole and real (Pope Gelasius I, *On the Two Natures of Christ*. Taken from Darwell Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (London: Longmans, Green, 1909), Vol. I, p. 102).”^[1]

“At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ’s Body and Blood.” Catechism, Pg. 336, #1333.

“The Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts, in such a way that the breaking of the bread does not divide Christ.” Catechism, Pg. 347, #1377.

When Jesus became human, veiling the divine, He lost His omnipresence. His presence was revealed through the third person of the Godhead. “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; ...” John 16:7

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life...” John 6:40. He is neither back on this earth nor repetitively bleeding and dying for us.

Purgatory

“The roots of the teaching on purgatory can be traced to pagan Greek religion and philosophy in such writings as the Roman poet Virgil’s *Aeneid* and especially through the influence of Plato, whose views were introduced into the Church primarily through Origen, who is considered a heretic by the Roman Catholic Church. He was an influential promoter of the

concept of purgation through suffering after death. These views had a major influence on such Fathers as Ambrose, Jerome and most importantly Augustine [354-430 A.D.], who more fully developed the Roman Catholic teaching on purgatory. He, in turn, greatly influenced Gregory the Great [590-604 A.D.] and is the major authority appealed to by all subsequent Roman Catholic theologians. In fact, after Augustine, there is very little that is added by others to his basic teaching on the concept and nature of purgatory.”[\[2\]](#)

The RCC admits this doctrine was man-made:

“The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent.” Catechism, Pg. 268-269, #1031.

“All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.” Catechism, Pg. 2658, #1030.

“The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect...” Catechism, Pg. 268-269, #1031.

“But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory ...” Catechism, Pg. 249, #954.

Thousands pay money for prayers in mass, and become involved with all sorts of works to get relatives, even dead for decades, out of purgatory. It is not found in the Bible and never mentioned until the sixth century by Gregory I, and not till the Council of Leon in 1274 A.D. did the church begin to look officially at its positions.

Some people are not good enough to go to heaven and some not bad enough to go to hell. So purgatory was created. The Council of Florence in 1439 made it official Catholic dogma. Martin Luther argued against it in 1517. It created the need for indulgences that built St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome. Why are there so many poor towns in Catholic countries where the only building of splendor is the Catholic Church? Purgatory and indulgences funded the building programs.

God’s word declares that eternal life is free.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

“By the righteousness of one [Jesus] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Romans 5:18.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” Ephesians 2:8.

The price has already been paid. To charge for salvation through a false pretense that money will buy moral progress is extortion.

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” I Corinthians 6:20.

The price was the blood of Jesus Christ:

“... feed the church of God, which he [Jesus] hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts 20:28.

Jesus paid our price by a death experienced once only.

“But now once in the end of the world hath he [Jesus] appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Hebrews 9:26.

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus ...” I Corinthians 6:11.

Indulgences

As late as two years ago Pope John Paul II opened the door again to sell indulgences. This was consistent with the long-standing monetary exchange for spiritual benefits.

“An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.” Catechism, Pg. 370, #1471.

“Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.” Catechism, Pg. 374, #1498.

The Scripture teaches: “For the wages of sin is death...” Romans 6:23. “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:15.

Yet this practice continues even though it was one of the catalysts for the Reformation. Protestants paid little attention to this anti-Christian practice that the pope recently revived. Yet, it was a part of the Jubilee celebration the Vatican just completed.

“Indulgences were first introduced in the eleventh century and initially were granted on the basis of the Roman interpretation of the power of the keys. Later, there developed the theory of the treasury of merit. Popes began to offer them in order to raise money for personal building projects, or for the promotion of personal causes such as the Crusades or the extermination of heresy. The practice became so corrupted that the Church actually taught that by the payment of money one could buy an indulgence and secure the release of souls in purgatory.

“The theory and practice of indulgences and the treasury of merit certainly finds no sanction in the Scriptures or writings of the Church Fathers. It is non-existent in these sources and

therefore can claim no biblical or historical validation. The indulgence teaching is the logical outcome of a corrupt theology. It is a serious depreciation of the sufficiency and exclusive nature of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ."[\[3\]](#)

Salvation Through The Church

This has been a hot topic for the Catholic church since Pope John Paul II permitted the release of *Dominus Iesus* on September 5, 2000. It reiterated the RCC's long stance that there is no salvation outside of the church. Though an outcry should have come from the Protestant world, it was met with only mild opposition. Here is the Catechism's position:

"The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism explains: 'For it is through Christ's Catholic Church *alone*, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained.'" Catechism, Pg. 215, #816.

"... all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body: Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: ... Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary to God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it." Catechism, Pg. 224, #846.

"It is in the Church that 'the fullness of the means of salvation' has been deposited. It is in her that 'by the grace of God we acquire holiness.'" Catechism, Pg. 218, #824.

"In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body united with its head; this implies that she receives from him the fullness of the means of salvation ..." Catechism, Pg. 220, #830.

One of the earliest declarations of this came from Pope Innocence III (1198-1216 A.D.). "By the heart we believe and by the mouth we confess the one Church, not of heretics but the Holy Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic (Church) outside which we believe that no one is saved."[\[4\]](#)

This was reiterated by Pope Pius IX (1846-1878 A.D.) and actually became church dogma at Vatican I that he presided over: "For, it must be held by faith that outside the Apostolic Roman Church, no one can be saved; that this is the only ark of salvation; that he who shall not have entered therein will perish in the flood; but, on the other hand, it is necessary to hold for certain that they who labor in ignorance of the true religion, if this ignorance is invincible, are not stained by any guilt in this matter in the eyes of God ... But the Catholic dogma that no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church is well-known; and also that those who are obstinate toward the authority and definitions of the same Church, and who persistently separate themselves from the unity of the Church, and from the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, to whom 'the guardianship of the vine has been entrusted by the Savior,' cannot obtain eternal salvation."[\[5\]](#)

Jesus said, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John 6:47.

"Neither is there salvation in any other [except Jesus]: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:10, 12.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36.

“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:17.

“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved...” Acts 15:11.

The favorite John 3:16 refutes this centuries old contemptible tradition.

Another salvation problem:

“Even though incorporated into the Church, one who does not however persevere in charity is not saved.” Catechism, Pg. 222, #837.

If members aren’t charitable to the community and to the church, they will be lost.

Paul refutes this legalistic concept: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9.

Pope’s Role In The Church

Central Power Overall:

“For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.” Catechism, Pg. 234, #882.

“The Roman Pontiff ... as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful ...” Catechism, Pg. 235, #891.

The Bible says the Holy Spirit was sent in Jesus’ place – not a man or a pope:

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ...” John 16:13.

Head of Church:

“The Pope enjoys, by divine institution, supreme, full, immediate, and universal power in the care of souls.” Catechism, Pg. 246, #937.

God’s word refutes that:

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church ...” Ephesians 5:23.

“And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church ...” Colossians 1:18.

Papal Infallibility

“The Roman Pontiff ... enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful – who confirms his brethren in the faith – he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals... This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.” Catechism, Pg. 235, #891.

“In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. By a supernatural sense of faith the People of God, under the guidance of the Church’s living magisterium, unfailingly adheres to this faith.” Catechism, Pg. 235, #889.

This unfortunate tradition assumes a trait of God Himself. The Bible talks of the weakness of all men:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Romans 3:23.

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:” Romans 3:10.

“For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin...” II Corinthians 5:21.

Does this position extend to others?

“The pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abides in the truth that liberates. To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church’s shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals.” Catechism, Pg. 235, #890.

“The infallibility of the Magisterium of the Pastors extends to all the elements of doctrine, including moral doctrine, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, expounded, or observed.” Catechism, Pg. 495, #2051.

Catholic documents tell us that this doctrine was not in the past history of the church.

“Roman Catholic medieval scholar, Brian Tierney, affirms these facts with these statements regarding the views of the twelfth and thirteenth century canonists who were the authoritative commentators of their day: ‘What can be proved beyond doubt is that no public teaching

affirming the infallibility of the pope was transmitted to the canonists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in whose works, for the first time, abundant texts for the investigation of this whole question becomes available. The commentators on Gratian's Decretum knew all the most important texts – forged and genuine – relating to the authority of the pope and the indefectibility of the Roman Church. They did not associate those texts with any doctrine of papal infallibility. They showed no awareness that any of their predecessors had ever associated them with such a doctrine ... The theologians of the thirteenth century could not possibly have taken the doctrine of papal infallibility from the canonical tradition of the church because the doctrine simply did not exist in the writings of the canonists.”[6]

This came into the church after a fierce battle between Pope Pius IX and his cardinals during Vatican I deliberations. The outcome: The pope prevailed and this statement ensued:

“Vatican One states: ‘We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church. But if any one – which may God avert – presume to contradict this our definition: let him be anathema”[7]

Conclusion

“Those who become confused in their understanding of the Word, who fail to see the meaning of antichrist, will surely place themselves on the side of antichrist.”[8]

Soon we will individually be called to defend our faith and positions. Our defense lies in the sacred Scriptures and a broad understanding of the three angels’ messages. The third angel warned that worshiping the beast would lead to loss of eternal life. In fact, it would trigger the wrath of God. What really does that beast mean, stand for and represent?

This is the second in a series of lead articles that will focus on the papacy – the antichrist. But this is more than an issue of simply identifying who the antichrist is. It is knowing what he represents. It needs to bring unquestioned understanding that the dragon gives it his authority and power. It transcends seeing a peaceful man that everyone loves and is positive about. It goes beyond the fascination of the Vatican’s beauty and awesome riches. It accepts the naked truth that the papacy is a tool of Satan and called a beast in both the Old and New Testaments.

We are told that our understanding of this matter is to be clear – very clear – so our sympathies will not side with Rome. Soon we will have to warn the world against the perverse nature of the papacy. These articles are to help us to be ever so clear in what that false system of worship represents. Next month Steve Wohlberg continues this discussion.

References (emphases added unless otherwise noted):

- [1] William Webster, *Roman Catholic Tradition, Claims and Contradictions*, p. 57.
- [2] *Ibid*, p. 63.
- [3] *Ibid*, p. 67.
- [4] From the letter Eius exemplo. Found in Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (London: Herder, 1954), p. 166, #423.
- [5] From the Allocution, Singulari quidem. Found in Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (London: Herder, 1954), 1647, 1677.
- [6] Brian Tierney, *Origins of Papal Infallibility* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 12-13.
- [7] *Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council*, "Concerning the Infallible Teaching of the Roman Pontiff," Chapter IV. Cited by Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877, p. 270-271).
- [8] *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 949.