

APOLOGETICS...

DEFENDING THE FAITH

SCRIPTURE IN SUPPORT OF OUR CATHOLIC BELIEFS



COMPILED BY
C. MICHAEL HAGER

WWW.THEBIBLECATHOLIC.COM

WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

"The explanation of what we believe and why we believe it is called apologetics."¹

No, we have nothing to be sorry for. We aren't making excuses. The word apologetics comes from the Greek legal system; a charge was made in a *kategoria* and the defense answered with an, *apologia*, a formal speech, giving an explanation to reply and rebut the charges. This Classical Greek term appears in the Greek of the New Testament when The Apostle Paul employs the term *apologia* in his trial speech to Festus and Agrippa when he says "I make my defense" (Acts 26:2)

The term Apologetics has been used through the ages as the defense of the faith. Theologians have traditionally divided apologetics into three categories:

- Natural Apologetics, Truths that are able to be known without divine intervention through the observance of nature; the spirituality of the human soul, the objective reality of right and wrong.
- Christian Apologetics, The existence of God, the truths of Christianity, the reality of miracles, the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth.
- Catholic Apologetics, to defend divinely real truths not generally believed by non-Catholics; the Church founded by Christ, the authority of the Church, Apostolic Succession and the Papacy, salvation by faith and works.

We will be concerned here with Catholic Apologetics: To defend the teachings and basis of the Catholic Church from its founding by Jesus Christ to the present day to non-Catholic Christians. This is "That branch of theology that presents reasoned arguments on behalf of the Catholic Faith."²

Evangelizing to non-Christians requires a considerably different approach and will not be discussed here.

Why Apologetics?

"...always be prepared to give a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you."

1 Peter 3:15

I hope to help you understand why the Church believes and teaches as it does, how it came to believe and teach these things, the basis for the Holy traditions of the Church, its authority, and its basis of proof in scripture.

First, a little about myself. I am a converted Catholic. A Presbyterian, born and raised by Protestant parents. God was always in our household and I don't remember ever having an epiphany about Jesus, it was just a given fact in our home that he existed, His Father was the creator of the universe, and Jesus was going to get us to heaven. It wasn't drummed into us, we weren't force fed scripture or warned about the evils of sin. Jesus simply was, like Dad was, or Mom was. We went to Church and Sunday school, we said our prayers at night and we said grace at the table, one of my most memorable was of my younger brother offering thanks for all the delicious food at the Thanksgiving Day table, "...except for the peas." We had a good sense of humor about God in our family.

¹ Bishop David Foley, Diocese of Birmingham.

² From "Introduction to Apologetics" by John Martignoni

To their merit, my parents never badmouthed other denominations or even other religions. They led by example and we had friends from many different backgrounds and faiths and never a moment of judgment of others.

I'm the skeptic in our family. The logical thinker. I tend to distrust the "too-good-to-be-true" scenario. I search for the answers to illogical conclusions, I've gotten myself into trouble by pointing out the flaws in family member's support or protest of social or political views. I'm the guy that will research the e-mail promising that Bill gates will send me \$5.00 every time I repost an e-mail that he is tracking for research purposes, and I do the math that proves that his donations would exceed the national debt in about fifteen iterations of such a scheme.

Yet I never really bothered to question my own faith. It simply was. That changed one Sunday evening in 1964 when I was attending our Presbyterian Church Youth Fellowship meeting, and one of the girls in the group arrived with her Catholic neighbor in tow, a petite, vivacious, pretty girl, a little shy if not overwhelmed by meeting sixty or so new people all at one time, in a situation I'm sure she was not entirely comfortable with. I remember it specifically because I was standing closest to the door through which they entered and I was the first person she was introduced to. She has no recollection of that meeting since she met fifty nine other people and I'm sure had forgotten my name by the third person she was introduced to.

Cutting to the chase, I married her in 1971 and we raised three beautiful children together. I was by then well introduced to the Catholic Church but had too many unanswered questions, and in hindsight, too many years of misinformation about Catholicism so it took me until 2009 to finally understand and accept all of the teachings of the Church and become a confirmed Catholic at Easter Vigil of 2010. In short, I was converted by self-inflicted apologetics. Asking questions and receiving sound, logical answers.

How Do We Use Apologetics In Evangelization?

First, we have to make a couple of basic assumptions:

1. We believe in one God, the creator of the universe and of all things in it.
2. We believe in His Son Jesus Christ who died for our sins in order that we might be saved. (Insert Nicene creed here)
3. We believe in the entire body of works we call the Bible, and we believe in all of the teaching and authority of the Church.

The moment that we say we do not believe in one or more of the teachings of the Church, we are no longer in a position to defend the faith. We must accept ALL teaching and Authority of the truth as the whole truth, as God wants us to know and understand it. If we stumble, or admit that there is one tiny bit of Catholic teaching that we do not agree with, we are left open to the criticism that the Church does not have the authority, and we, like our Protestant brothers and sisters are free in our own minds to interpret scripture as we see fit and we give up all power and authority that we should have at our backs.

In Catholic apologetics, especially when evangelizing to most Protestants, this is a key point. Since most Protestants subscribe to the theology of Sola Scriptura, or the Bible alone as the authority of Christianity, the question you will be asked most when explaining your Catholic beliefs is "Where is that in the Bible?"

And that's where the fun begins! Because if you are prepared, you can logically and scripturally answer every objection that anyone poses to you about the Catholic Church.

In a nutshell, here are two basic important points that I learned in my ever skeptical quest for the truth:

There is nothing in the teachings of the Catholic Church that contradicts the Bible

There is nothing in the Bible that contradicts the teachings of the Catholic Church.

In other words, there is not a question you can ask about the teachings of the Catholic Church that does not have its roots in the traditions of the Church with the support of the Scriptures, or from the scriptures with the support of Church teachings. If you get nothing else, get this firmly settled in your head and be assured that you are backed up by the *“Church of the living God, the **pillar and foundation of truth.**”*³ (remember that statement for later)

Now, there are a few things that we believe in that are NOT directly in the Bible. The word Purgatory appears nowhere in the Bible and likewise, the Assumption of Mary, body and soul into Heaven is not to be found there. On the other hand, Protestant beliefs such as Sola Scriptura and salvation by faith alone are also not in the Bible so we can tread on shaky ground by saying simply that we believe the interpretations of the Church. This allows the Protestant to say, “Well, I believe in my interpretation of the Bible!”

As you can see, if unprepared, we can be walking through a mine field, and from my experience, most Protestants will be better armed biblically than we are. When I was in the third grade, I had to memorize twenty popular Bible verses in order to be awarded the White Bible that we all coveted. (Was that a sin?) And throughout most Protestant's lives they memorize important verses that either, give them solace, comfort and peace (which is a good thing), or verses that help support their particular beliefs.

Father Michael Boyle once told me that the difference between a sermon and a homily is that for a sermon, the speaker chooses a topic, then researches scripture to bolster his point, while a homily is when the meaning and interpretation of scripture is taught in its context with the experience and authority of the Church behind it.

One thing we could all learn from our Protestant brothers and sisters is to learn the bible more thoroughly. But we do have a defense, and that is that we cannot be found wrong if we stick to the teachings of the Church.

John Martignoni, president of the Bible Christian Society in Birmingham Alabama, has several great points to make concerning evangelizing to Protestants:

1. Be secure in the knowledge that you are backed by two thousand years of Church history, led by wise and holy men.
2. There is not a questions that can be asked about the Catholic Church that cannot be answered with authority, and with support of the scriptures. (We covered those first two above.)
3. Never be afraid to say “I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you.”
4. ALWAYS FIND OUT and get back to them.
5. Learn to be on the offensive without being offensive.

³ 1 Timothy 3:15

6. Never say "You are wrong"
7. Ask the other person to explain their beliefs, and ask them to quote the scripture that supports them.
8. Always tell the person that you are in 100% agreement with the Bible and you believe every word, but let them know that your interpretation may be different than theirs and be ready to explain yourself.

WHERE IS THAT IN THE BIBLE?

There are many practices and traditions in the Catholic Church that at first glance, and to many non-Catholics are not scriptural. This is a major source of complaint for those who hold to the idea of Sola Scriptura. When we speak of these practices to many non-Catholics, their natural response is “Oh Yeah, Where is THAT in the Bible?”

Some of the most notable examples are:

- The Assumption of Mary (and other beliefs)
- Purgatory
- Infant Baptism
- The Trinity (Although most protestant denominations do recognize and teach the Trinity)

CHURCH

CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE CHURCH

CHURCH IS BODY OF CHRIST

CHURCH MUST BE ONE

In 1954, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon founded the Unification Church in South Korea, as the sole authority on matters of faith and morals, in order to unify all of mankind to one faith in the world. Moon gathered many disciples and his congregation grew steadily under his leadership.

As he grew older and it was difficult for him to continue with the same vigor he turned leadership of the Church over to his daughter In Jin Moon who radically changed the teachings and doctrines of the Church and greatly reduced its membership to a current skeleton of its former self.

In 1933, Herbert W. Armstrong founded the Radio Church of God in Oregon, renaming it the Worldwide Church of God in 1968. He preached a combination of New Covenant and Old Covenant laws and espoused strict adherence to Sabbath traditions and dietary law. Upon his death in 1986, the Church continued under the leadership of a council of elders but has diminished in popularity ever since.

- In the year 1900, Charles Parham founded the Pentecostal Church in Southern California.
- In the year 1879 Mary Baker Eddy founded Christian Science.
- In the year 1870 Charles Russell founded Jehovah's witnesses
- In the year 1865 William Booth founded the Salvation Army
- In the year 1860 Ellen White founded the Seventh Day Adventists
- In the year 1830 Joseph Smith founded the Church of Latter-day Saints. He was twenty four when he published the Book of Mormon
- In the year 1828 John Darby Founded the Exclusive Brethren Church
- In the year 1747 Emanuel Swedenborg Founded The New Church (or Swedenborgianism)
- In the year 1744 John & Charles Wesley Founded the Methodist Church
- In the year 1727 Count Zinendorf Founded the Moravians
- In the year 1693 Jakob Ammann Founded the Amish Church
- In the year 1647 George Fox Founded the Quakers
- In the year 1605 John Smyth Founded the Baptist Churches
- In the year 1560 John Knox Founded the Presbyterian Church
- In the year 1536 John Calvin Founded Calvinism
- In the year 1534 King Henry VIII Founded the Anglican Communion
- In the year 1523 Huldrych Zwingli Founded Swiss Reformed Church
- In the year 1517 Martin Luther Founded the Lutheran Church
- In the year 33 Jesus Christ Founded His ONE True Christian Church

Protestant (n., adj.)

from German or French protestant, from Latin protestantem (nominative protestans), present participle of protestari (see protest (n.))

Denomination (n.)

"a naming, act of giving a name to," from Old French denominacion "nominating, naming," from Latin denominationem (nominative denominatio) "a calling by anything other than the proper name" to denominate, or remove from.

Matthew 16:15-19

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.

¹⁸ And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my **Church, (Singular)** and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In those brief exchanges, Jesus founded His Church and firmly handed over all control of it to Peter, the Apostles and their successors. Some may say that all of that power ended with the death of the Apostles and therefore Apostolic succession is non biblical.

But logically, if ALL power is given to Peter, and WHATEVER he binds on earth will be recognized by God in Heaven, then by passing that power to a successor, or instructing the other Apostles to elect replacements, God in Heaven will honor his action until the end of the age.

A Common Argument Against Peter

The earliest scriptures were first written down in Greek. The translators either worked from Hebrew texts or from the word of mouth stories handed down for generations. When translating from one language to another, it is sometimes necessary to modify the actual text to fit the proper grammar and rules of the new language.

In the early Greek, when Jesus speaks of Peter as the rock the proper grammar would be: "You are Petros (masculine gender) and upon this Petra (Feminine gender) I will build my Church."

In Modern Greek, the feminine and masculine have morphed into big rock and little rock, so the reading in Modern Greek would be "You are Petros (Pebble or small stone) and upon this Petra (Large unmovable boulder) I will build my Church."

A common argument is that the Catholic Church uses the English translation which has only one word for rock, big or small, that we fail to see that the word used for Peter is the diminutive, small, insignificant stone so obviously he is not the mighty rock that Christ built His Church upon.

The problem with this argument is twofold. First, in the ancient Greek, the two words were not exclusive in describing a rock, but rather were simply the correct Greek grammar attached to a male figure and a female entity.

Second, if we dig a little deeper we can see from scripture itself that Jesus spoke Farsi, the common language of the region at that time.

We know this for instance because the Greek translators left in a little Farsi at the crucifixion.

Matthew 27:46

⁴⁶ And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "**Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?**" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

And what is the Farsi word for rock? Kefa, which has no gender and is the only Farsi word for a rock of any size. So in the ancient farsi, Christ said "And so I say to you, you are **Kefa, (Rock)** and upon this **Kefa (rock)** I will build my Church"

This is an illustration of the dangers of individually interpreting scripture without the aid of those more knowledgeable than ourselves. Those with 2,000 years of experience to back them up.

A further indication of Peter's station in the Church is his name change.

Genesis 17:5

⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations

Abram demonstrated his great faith in the Lord by his willingness to sacrifice his son to the will of God. For his great faith, God renamed him **Abraham** and made a covenant that he would be the father of a great nation, of many nations.

Matthew 16:17-18

¹⁷ Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, **Simon** son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. ¹⁸ And so I say to you, you are **Peter**, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

With the full measure of the truth, we can see that Christ clearly built His One True Church upon the Rock of Peter.

We will discuss this in depth later in our discussion of Apostolic Authority.

What does the Bible say?

Jesus teaching His disciples says:

John 10:16

¹⁶ *I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be **one** flock, **one** shepherd.*

Or when praying to the Father before His betrayal:

John 17:17-23

¹⁷ *Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth. ²⁰ I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ so that they may **all be one**, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. ²² And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be **one, as we are one**, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as **one**, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me.*

And as Paul writes to the Romans:

Romans 15:5-6

⁵ *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think **in harmony with one another**, in keeping with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that with **one accord** you may with **one voice** glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Or in First Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 1:10

¹⁰ *I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you **agree in what you say**, and that there be **no divisions among you**, but that you **be united in the same mind and in the same purpose**.*

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³ *For in **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of **one Spirit**.*

And Ephesians

Ephesians 4:3-6

³ *striving to preserve the **unity of the spirit** through the bond of peace: ⁴ **one body and one Spirit**, as you were also called to the **one hope** of your call; ⁵ **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**; ⁶ **one God and Father of all**, who is over all and through all and in all.*

And Colossians

Colossians 3:15

¹⁵ *And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in **one body**. And be thankful*

Clearly, Christ wanted one Unified Church for all Which He Himself founded, and entrusted to Peter and the Apostles

Some anti-Catholic pundits claim that the Catholic Church is a Church of man, not of Christ, citing the Pope and the Bishops as objects of control and worship. But it's interesting to turn that around. All non-Catholic Churches are in fact, the Churches of men or women who decided for themselves that the One true Church that lasted fifteen hundred years was suddenly somehow wrong in their teaching and that they as individuals had discovered the real truth about the scriptures through their own interpretations.

...and what does the Bible say about that?

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles, **in opposition to the teaching that you learned**; avoid them.*

2 Peter 3:16-17

¹⁶ *speaking of these things as he does in all his letters. In them there are some things hard to understand that the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, just as they do the other scriptures. ¹⁷ Therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, **be on your guard not to be led into the error of the unprincipled and to fall from your own stability.***

2 Peter 1:20

²⁰ *Know this first of all, that there is **no prophecy of scripture** that is a matter of personal interpretation*
So how do we know how to interpret the scriptures? Who is given the authority to interpret them for us?

Luke 24:44-45

⁴⁴ He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.**

Acts 8:27-31

²⁷ ...Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, that is, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ The Spirit said to Philip, "Go and join up with that chariot." ³⁰ Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ He replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.

1 Timothy 3:15

¹⁵ *But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the Church of the living God, **the pillar and foundation of the truth.***

"The sacred mystery of the Church's unity" (UR 2)

813 *The Church is one because of her source:* "the highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit."²⁵⁹ The Church is one *because of her founder:* for "the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, . . . restoring the unity of all in one people and one body."²⁶⁰ The Church is one *because of her "soul":* "It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church's unity."²⁶¹ Unity is of the essence of the Church:

What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the universe, one Logos of the universe, and also one Holy Spirit, everywhere one and the same; there is also one virgin become mother, and I should like to call her "Church."²⁶²

814 From the beginning, this one Church has been marked by a great *diversity* which comes from both the variety of God's gifts and the diversity of those who receive them. Within the unity of the People of God, a multiplicity of peoples and cultures is gathered together. Among the Church's members, there are different gifts, offices, conditions, and ways of life. "Holding a rightful place in the communion of the Church there are also particular Churches that retain their own traditions."²⁶³ The great richness of such diversity is not opposed to the Church's unity. Yet sin and the burden of its consequences constantly threaten the gift of unity. And so the Apostle has to exhort Christians to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."²⁶⁴

815 What are these bonds of unity? Above all, charity "binds everything together in perfect harmony."²⁶⁵ But the unity of the pilgrim Church is also assured by visible bonds of communion:

- profession of one faith received from the Apostles;
- common celebration of divine worship, especially of the sacraments;
- apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders, maintaining the fraternal concord of God's family.²⁶⁶

816 "The sole Church of Christ [is that] which our Savior, after his Resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it. . . . This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him."²⁶⁷

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. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God."²⁶⁸

Wounds to unity

817 In fact, "in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church - for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame."²⁶⁹ The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body - here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism²⁷⁰ - do not occur without human sin:

Where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers.²⁷¹

818 "However, one cannot charge with the sin of the separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into

Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church."²⁷²

819 "Furthermore, many elements of sanctification and of truth"²⁷³ are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church: "the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements."²⁷⁴ Christ's Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him,²⁷⁵ and are in themselves calls to "Catholic unity."²⁷⁶

Toward unity

820 "Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time."²⁷⁷ Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: "That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me."²⁷⁸ The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁹

821 Certain things are required in order to respond adequately to this call:

- a permanent renewal of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity;²⁸⁰
- conversion of heart as the faithful "try to live holier lives according to the Gospel";²⁸¹ for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions;
- prayer in common, because "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism;'"²⁸²
- fraternal knowledge of each other;²⁸³
- ecumenical formation of the faithful and especially of priests;²⁸⁴
- dialogue among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different Churches and communities;²⁸⁵
- collaboration among Christians in various areas of service to mankind.²⁸⁶ "Human service" is the idiomatic phrase.

822 Concern for achieving unity "involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike."²⁸⁷ But we must realize "that this holy objective - the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ - transcends human powers and gifts." That is why we place all our hope "in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit."²⁸⁸

APOSTOLIC CHURCH

APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

The authority of the Church and the Apostles and the oneness of the Church are all so intimately intertwined that it is almost impossible to study one without the other.

In the last session we talked about the truth of one Church. In this session we'll talk about Apostolic Authority and succession but to put that in the perspective of the whole, we'll do a little review.

One Church

Christ tells Simon that he will build His Church on the rock of Simon who he now calls Peter, the Rock,

Matthew 16:18

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church (singular), and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

Then immediately He gives Peter the keys to the kingdom of Heaven and full authority on Earth over His Church.

Matthew 16:19

I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on Earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on Earth shall be loosed in heaven."

So Christ founded a single Church and put one man in charge of the whole thing with the full power of Heaven to back him up.

Truth

In John 8:31-32, Jesus says;

*...“If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples,³² and you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.”*

And what is the truth?

John 14:6

*Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the **truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

John 18:37

*So Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to **testify to the truth**. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”*

Apparently truth is very important to Jesus, he repeats it several times indicating that the Word of God through Jesus is the truth.

And who or what is the pillar and bulwark of the truth?

One united Church, joined together as one. He also founded it as an authoritative Church. A Church that can speak with authority about the truth in matters of faith and morals.

For Christians, the truth is critical for us to be saved, to reach heaven, to spend eternity with God. Where does this truth reside? As Christians, where do we look for this truth? The Bible, right? Well, yes and no. The Bible does tell us where the truth resides, very specifically, and it clearly states that it is NOT from within the Bible.

1 Timothy 3:15

¹⁴ I am writing you about these matters, although I hope to visit you soon. ¹⁵ But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the **Church** of the living God, **the pillar and foundation of truth**.

Establishing Authority

How does the Bible acknowledge the authority of the Church?

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵ "If your brother* sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. ¹⁶ If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, **tell the Church**. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.

Tell the Church... This is yet another indictment for a single Church with complete authority.

Many non-Catholics will claim that the "Church" is the whole body of Christianity and that all who profess their faith in Jesus are members of the entire body of His Church, regardless of any other doctrine they may believe in or practice. In a way this is true, we are all, Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and denominations ad-infinitum called Christians by our faith in Jesus Christ. But given the wide diversity of beliefs from denomination to denomination, some that range far afield of our own accepted beliefs, how do you take an unrepentant sinner to the Church?

Today there are Churches who marry same sex partners. There are Churches that condone birth control, there are even some Churches that have been known to claim that abortion may even be the best therapeutic option for the mother.

So a buddy of yours comes and tells you that they have met just the right guy and they are planning on getting married. You discuss it with him and go over all of the teachings of the Church, but he won't agree with you and sticks to his plan. So you bring him to the Men's Bible Study and several of us get together and go over the scriptures and the catechism and try and show him the truth about marriage but he still disagrees and you offer to make an appointment for him with a priest but he says, I'll go down to the Free Thought Fellowship Church down the road and talk to the pastor there. (Who, by the way got his certificate of Ordination on line from ministerregistration.org) The free thought Church claims that everyone is equal, is entitled to marry anyone they want, there is nothing sinful about it and Pastor Mailorder will gladly perform the ceremony...

*"If he refuses to listen to [the witnesses], **tell the Church**."*

Which Church? Clearly, according to the scriptures, there can only be one Church with the authority to render decisions regarding faith and morals. So we **need** an authoritative Church if we are to know the **truth**. We need this authority so we do not have to guess at the truth, or guess at correct doctrine. With an authoritative Church we can **know** the truth with certainty in matters of faith and morals.

And wrap your head around this thought: **Without an authoritative Church, the Bible has no authority.**

Think about that for a minute. All Christians will generally agree that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. That when we understand it correctly, it contains no errors. It is the inspired Word of God who never makes mistakes.

So, how do we know all this? How can we be sure that what we are reading is truly the Word of God? How do we even know what the content of the Bible should be? In the scriptures themselves, there is no table of contents. Nowhere are we given a guideline as to what books should be included.

Think of this in the light of the wide spread protestant belief in Sola Scriptura; The Bible Alone. Since scripture itself does not list the books of the Bible, we have to rely on a non-scriptural source for this list and that source was the Catholic Church.

At the time of Jesus, there was no New Testament. At His crucifixion none of it had even been written. Christ, with all of the instructions he gave the Apostles regarding His Church, never gave them a list of scripture to go by.

He didn't need to. They all knew what the Jewish scriptures consisted of and they all revered them as valuable, holy books. Only later, when the value of Paul's letters became apparent did they start to be included in the teachings of the Church. Only later, of all of the dozens of gospel stories written did the four current gospels become solidified into the leading chapters of the New Testament. Only later did John write down the details of his vision on the island of Patmos which was eventually included in the Canon of Scripture.

And remember, when Paul was writing his letters to the many communities of Christians all over the known world, he had no indication that they would someday become scripture. They were no more important at the time than a letter from our Bishop to our parish.

Somewhere along the line, Paul's letters, the Gospels, Revelation, and the rest of the books we now call the New Testament were included in general among most Christian communities as important to the faith. By the dawn of the second century AD, most communities accepted roughly the same set of scriptures that we have today with a few exceptions more or less.

The Muratorian Fragment, dated circa 155-200 AD lists many of the current books of the New Testament with a couple missing and a few others included. *"The plain fact of the matter is that the canon of the Bible was not settled in the first years of the Church. It was settled only after repeated (and perhaps heated) discussions, and the final listing was determined by Catholic bishops. This is an inescapable fact, no matter how many people wish to escape from it."*⁴

Finally, 382 AD at the Synod of Rome the current list of the Canon of Scripture was agreed upon. In 393 AD the Council of Hippo, a meeting of African Bishops agreed with Rome. Then in 397 AD and again in 419 AD a second gathering of Bishops met in Carthage and further ratified the selection made in Rome and

⁴ From Catholic Answers, Quick Answers, www.catholic.com Was the Canon of Scripture Determined before the Church Councils that Decided it?

Hippo. All agreed on the list of the entire Bible with all 74 books (not 66). The list has not changed to this day.⁵

Since the obvious authority of the source of the Canon of Scripture was the Catholic Church, all non-Catholics who acknowledge the Bible as God's Word, by default, acknowledge the authority of the Catholic Church whether they know it or not.

The Church is not of the Bible, the Bible is of the Church.

How do we know that Bible is the inerrant Word of God? The Church tells us so. The Church gave us the Bible as we know it today, as it has been for over sixteen hundred years.

Authoritative Church

What is the nature of the Church's authority?

All authority, inside and outside of the Church comes from God. So the authority of the Church is God's authority. We acknowledge this authority every Sunday when we recite the creed: "I believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Apostolic Authority

The authority given to the Apostles by Christ who was given His authority By God the Father.

Matthew 28:18

*¹⁸ Then Jesus approached and said to them, "**All power in heaven and on Earth has been given to me.**"¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."*

John 20:21-22

*²¹ [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. **As the Father has sent me, so I send you.**"²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit."*

Jesus clearly gives the Apostles all power in heaven and Earth. "As the Father sent me (with all power in Heaven and Earth) So I send you. (with all power in Heaven and Earth)"

What more authority could a person possibly have? Understand this: Apostolic Authority is the authority of God the Father Himself!

From God the Father, top Jesus the Son passed down to the Apostles. The precedence for and the beginning of Apostolic Succession!

⁵ In 1545 the Council of Trent convened in answer to the Protestant demands for reformation and the current canon of the Bible was further approved and ratified without change. Protestants will sometimes mistakenly claim that Trent added seven books to the Bible when in fact, it merely reaffirmed the original canon set in Rome in 382 AD

Consider then, that when the Apostles spoke on matters of faith and morals, you were hearing the word of Jesus Christ Himself and therefore the Word of God the Father Himself.

Luke 10:16

¹⁶ Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

John 14:16-17

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, ¹⁷ the Spirit of **truth**, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.*

And there is that word **Truth** again! The Apostles received the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit directly From Jesus.

John 14:26

²⁶ The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.

So Jesus lays the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles to be with them at all times to guide them in the Truth.

John 16:13-15

*¹³ But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all **truth**. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.*

The Apostles are sent out to teach all Nations. But they are not sent ill equipped. They are sent with the Holy Spirit to always guide them in the truth. And with this guidance, they were able to teach on matters of faith and morals without error.

Infallibility

This brings us to the concept of infallibility. Being infallible, within the meaning given by the Catholic Church does not mean that a person is ever and always perfect in everything they do. Heaven knows we have had some less than stellar priests, Bishops and Popes throughout history. But while some of these fallible men may have been downright corrupt, when it came to their teaching on faith and morals, we are assured by Jesus that the Holy Spirit would not let them speak in error.

Infallibility is a negative protection. It prevents error from being taught.

Apostolic authority is an authority that is characterized by the gift of infallibility in the areas of faith and morals.

Teaching and Understanding

Acts 8:27-31

²⁷ So he got up and set out. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, that is, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ The Spirit said to Philip, "Go and join up with that chariot." ³⁰ Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ He replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.

The Bible itself tells us here that we need someone to guide us in the proper interpretation of the scriptures. While we should always read the Bible and interpret it for ourselves, and while we can discern many beautiful meanings from such readings, we ultimately need guidance and instruction in what it all really means at the deepest levels.

So God, having given us the truth of His word would certainly give us an infallible guide to that truth.

1 John 4:6

⁶ We belong to God, and anyone who knows God listens to us, while anyone who does not belong to God refuses to hear us. This is how we know the spirit of **truth** and the spirit of deceit.

This is a deep and somewhat scary passage. John is telling us that you can tell who is of God by who listens to us. (The apostles) and who is without God by those who do not listen. How can a non-Catholic reconcile this passage?

1 Peter 1:12

¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you with regard to the things that have now been announced to you **by those who preached the good news to you [through] the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**, things into which angels longed to look.

Infallible teaching...

The Apostles passed on their authority, given them by Jesus Christ to other men, who then passed on their authority to still other men in an unbroken chain from Peter to Francis our current (2015) Pope.

Matthew 28:19-20

*¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, **until the end of the age.**”*

Do you think Jesus expected the twelve to make disciples of all nations by themselves? Do you think he expected them to accomplish this in their limited lifetimes? Or was he talking about the twelve and all of their successors until the **end of the age**?

In order for the successors of the apostles to accomplish their mission, they would have to have the same authority given to the original twelve. It is only logical to conclude that if one has possession of all power on heaven and Earth, they also have the ability to pass that power on to the next person and to the next and to the next until the **end of the age**.

What else could Christ have meant? Christ lived through the apostles who passed this on to their **successors** and so on in order to complete Christ’s mission. The successors of the Apostles, apostolic succession.

1 Corinthians 12:28

*²⁸ Some people God has designated **in the Church** to be, **first, apostles**; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues.*

There is no mention of term limits. The Church is still with us, and so are the successors of the Apostles complete with the apostolic authority entrusted to the original twelve.

Going back to **Matthew 28:20** (above) we see also that the mission of the Apostles is a teaching mission, which makes the mission of the Church a teaching mission. And what were they to teach? All that Christ commanded them.

Apostolic Succession in the Bible

Acts 1:14-26

¹⁵ During those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (there was a group of about one hundred and twenty persons in the one place). He said, ¹⁶ “My brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was the guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ He was numbered among us and was allotted a share in this ministry. ¹⁸ He bought a parcel of land with the wages of his iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled out. ¹⁹ This became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem, so that the parcel of land was called in their language ‘Akeldama,’ that is, Field of Blood. ²⁰ For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

‘Let his encampment become desolate, and may no one dwell in it.’

And:

‘May another take his office.’

²¹ Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us, become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³ So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place.” ²⁶ Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles.

This is the first recorded example of filling the office of a fallen Apostle with another. Interestingly, in the King James Version of this passage, it says “and his **bishoprick** let another take” So clearly there was an office held by the Apostles, the Office of Bishop that needed to be filled by another when vacated for whatever reason.

The Apostles held the highest office in God’s Church. They were the first Bishops and they continually created new offices of Bishops and ordained new Bishops to fill them as the Church grew.

1 Timothy 1:18

¹⁸ **I entrust this charge to you**, (the office of Bishop) Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophetic words once spoken about you. Through them may you fight a good fight.

Titus 1:4

⁴ to Titus, my true child in our common faith: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our savior.

1 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷ For this reason I am sending you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord; he will remind you of my ways in Christ [Jesus], just as I teach them everywhere in every Church.

Here we see that Paul passed on his authority to other men, and admonished those in the Church to obey those who received that authority. Again, apostolic succession in the Bible.

2 Timothy 1:13-14

¹³ Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴ Guard this rich trust with the **help of the Holy Spirit** that dwells within us.

Paul passes on his trust to Timothy with the **help of the Holy Spirit**. Passing on the authority given him by Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:2

² And what you heard from me through many witnesses **entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well**.

Timothy is instructed to appoint other men, to pass on his authority to others who will also teach with authority. What else can this be but authoritative, apostolic succession? In this one passage we can see four generations of apostolic succession:

(1) Paul appoints (2) Timothy who will appoint (3) faithful people to teach (4) others as well. Clear successive authority in the Church.

Titus 1:5-7

⁵ For this reason I left you in Crete so that you might set right what remains to be done and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you, ⁶ on condition that a man be blameless, married only once, with believing children who are not accused of licentiousness or rebellious. ⁷ For a bishop as God's steward must be blameless, not arrogant, not irritable, not a drunkard, not aggressive, not greedy for sordid gain.

Titus is appointing Bishops in Crete with the authority given him by his predecessor.

1 Timothy 1:3

³ I repeat the request I made of you when I was on my way to Macedonia, that you stay in Ephesus to instruct certain people not to teach false doctrines. (Authority of ONE Church)

1 Timothy 4:11-13

¹¹ **Command and teach** these things. ¹² Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. ¹³ Until I arrive, attend to the reading, exhortation, and teaching.

Command and teach... who can command and teach without authority? And how is this authority transferred from person to person?

2 Timothy 1:6

⁶ For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God* that you have **through the laying on of my hands**.

2 Timothy 4:14

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was conferred on you through the prophetic word* with the **laying on of the hands** of the presbyterate. (The Bishops)

Through **the laying on of hands** from one to another. The Apostles pass on not just their teaching, but the full power in heaven and on Earth that was passed down from God through Christ to the first twelve, generation after generation.

So, to recap...

- “Jesus Founded ONE Church.
- The Church is Authoritative.
- The Church is a visible Church with doctrinal unity.
- The authority of the Church is apostolic in nature, it comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ through the Apostles Guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Apostolic authority is an authority characterized by the charism or the gift of infallibility in the areas of faith and morals.
- Apostolic authority, the authority of Christ Himself does not die with the apostles, but rather is passed on through the bishops, the successors to the apostles through the formal laying on of hands.”⁶

The Bishop of Rome

How does all of this relate to the office of the Pope? The Pope is the Bishop of Rome, so as a Bishop, he is a successor of the Apostles, with all of the authority that all Apostles receive from their predecessors. But the Pope is the successor of Peter himself, the first leader of the Church, arguably the first Pope, and certainly the first Bishop of Rome, although the title of Pope was not conferred upon the Bishop of Rome for many years after Peter.

Matthew 16:13-19

*¹³ When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are **you**, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to **you**, but my heavenly Father. ¹⁸ And so I say to **you**, **you** are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give **you** the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever **you** bind on Earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever **you** loose on Earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Christ is clearly speaking directly to Simon Peter and giving him individual, direct control over the Kingdom of Heaven.

In Isaiah God is speaking to Shebna and He’s not too happy. God tells Shebna that he will strip him of all his titles and wealth and give over the keys to the Kingdom of David to Eliakim.

Isaiah 22:22

²² will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; what he opens, no one will shut, what he shuts, no one will open.

This is virtually the same language Jesus uses with Peter, giving the key holder total control over the Kingdom.

⁶ From a talk, “Apostolic Authority and the Pope” by John Martignoni, President, The Bible Christian Society

In Matthew, Jesus also promises that the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against the Church. Therefore, if any of the successors of Peter should speak in error on matters of faith and morals, then the gates of hell would certainly begin to crack open. Since these gates will not prevail against the Church, the successors of Peter MUST be infallible in their teachings on these matters.

We discussed the issues of Peter as the Rock, the Greek Petra, Petros and the Aramaic Kefa. We'll not argue the point and here stipulate that Peter IS the Rock upon which Christ built His Church. But to another point, Christ proclaims that Peter has recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God and that this was revealed to him by the Father.

If God can reveal this to Peter, could he not also do that for all of his successors through the ages?

Many detractors of the Papacy may claim that Peter had no special place among the Apostles, yet Christ specifically gave only Peter the keys to the Kingdom.

John 21:15-19

¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." [Jesus] said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

Who feeds and tends the sheep? The shepherd. Jesus clearly is appointing Peter the shepherd of His flock.

John 10:16

¹⁶ have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

One flock (One Church) One Shepherd (One Pope). Christ, of course, is THE shepherd, but Peter and his successors stand in Christ's place here on Earth.

Also, Simon or Peter's name is mentioned over one hundred seventy times in the Bible while all the other Apostles combined are only mentioned around ninety times. A pretty good indication of his importance to the ancient writers.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter is always the first to act. Nearly the whole first half of the book is about Peter. Peter called for a vote to replace Judas, Peter first told them to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In the Gospels Peter was the one who walked on water.

Luke 22:31-32

³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once **you** have turned back, **you** must strengthen your brothers.”

Jesus is specifically praying for Peter to strengthen his brothers and that Peter’s faith will not fail. Peter is repeatedly put in a position of primacy throughout the New Testament. He was made the Prime Minister of God’s Kingdom here on earth.

The Pope is the direct descendant of Peter with the full authority of the Keys of the Kingdom. Whatever he binds on earth will be bound in Heaven, whatever he looses on Earth, will be loosed in Heaven. If that is the case, then that binding and loosing MUST be free from error. If it’s not, then God is approving error. And we know, God is without error.

And lastly;

2 Peter 1:12-15

¹² *Therefore, I will always remind you of these things, even though you already know them and are established in the truth you have.* ¹³ *think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by a reminder,* ¹⁴ *since I know that I will soon have to put it aside, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me.* ¹⁵ *I shall also make every effort to enable you always to remember these things after my departure.*

Here Peter is clearly telling mature Christians of the time that he will provide a way to remind them always of the truth of Jesus Christ, even after his death.

In **2 Peter** above, Peter is telling his audience that he will soon leave this world as Christ told him he would. In John 21:18 Christ tells him “you will stretch out your hands” indicating that he would be crucified for the glory of God. In **John 21:15-17** Christ is assuring that he will have a shepherd to tend and feed His flock after he is gone. In **2 Peter**, Peter is telling his flock that he will make sure there is someone after him to reach and remind them of the truth.

Pope Francis I, the successor of the Apostle Peter.

Amen

AUTHORITATIVE CHURCH

Catholics claim that the Church is the authority in matters of faith and morals. The bible backs up that authority and works in harmony with the teachings of the Church. But where does this authority come from? Well, first of all from Jesus Himself as we have seen earlier:

Matthew 16:19

¹⁹ *I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and **whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.***”

An Old Testament parallel can be seen in Isaiah:

Isaiah 22:20-22

²⁰ *On that day I will summon my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah;* ²¹ *I will clothe him with your robe, gird him with your sash, confer on him your authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to*

the house of Judah. ²² I will place the **key of the House of David** on his shoulder; **what he opens, no one will shut, what he shuts, no one will open.**

What if I gave you my car keys and said, "Here is my car. I trust you to use it as you would your own. You will decide who may ride in it and you will decide who may not."?

You now have total control over my car, with my blessing and YOU make all the decisions about its use. The gate keeper of a great house held the keys to the house and was given authority by the Lord of the house over all of the house. Likewise we have seen that Jesus gave all power on Earth to Peter as the Gate Keeper of Heaven.

Jesus Delegates all power to the Apostles

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Then Jesus approached and said to them, "**All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**" ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you always, until the end of the age.**"

Power to discipline

Matthew 18:17

¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, **tell the Church.** If he refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.

Power to legislate

Matthew 18:18

¹⁸ Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Power to speak with Christ's voice

Luke 10:16

¹⁶ Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

Power to forgive sins

John 20:21-23

²¹ [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. ²³ **Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.**"

Power to offer sacrifice (Eucharist)

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, ²⁴ and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

All of this power and more was given to the Apostles directly by Christ to hand down to their successors until the end of the age.

This is the source of the Authoritative Church.

INFALLIBLE CHURCH

PERPETUAL CHURCH

PRIMACY OF PETER

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

SCANDALS IN THE CHURCH

SOLA SCRIPTURA, OR BIBLE + TRADITION?

“The Bible is the Holy Word of God. It is all we need to fully understand God’s will for us on Earth.”

This is the concept of ***Sola Scriptura***, “only scripture”, or “The Bible Alone”.

Here is an interesting quote from a Baptist Pastor, a teacher of Sola Scriptura that ironically refutes his own teaching:

*“There are many today who would demand “no creed but the Bible” the same way the Arians did. But we should learn from history that biblical language is not enough when it comes to defending the meaning of biblical language. R. P. C. Hanson explained the process like this: “Theologians of the Christian Church were slowly driven to a realization that the deepest questions which face Christianity cannot be answered in purely biblical language, because the questions are about the meaning of biblical language itself” (R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy* [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1988], p. xxi).*

*What does this imply for the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture? That doctrine is based mainly on **2 Timothy 3:15-17** and **Jude 1:3**.*

The sacred writings . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. . . . Contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

In other words, the Scriptures are sufficient in the sense that they are the only (“once for all”) inspired and (therefore) inerrant words of God that we need, in order to know the way of salvation (“make you wise unto salvation”) and the way of obedience (“equipped for every good work”).

The sufficiency of Scripture does not mean that the Scripture is all we need to live obediently. To be obedient in the sciences we need to read science and study nature. To be obedient in economics we need to read economics and observe the world of business. To be obedient in sports we need to know the rules of the game. To be obedient in marriage we need to know the personality of our spouse. To be obedient as a pilot we need to know how to fly a plane. In other words, the Bible does not tell us all we need to know in order to be obedient stewards of this world.

The sufficiency of Scripture means that we don’t need any more special revelation. We don’t need any more inspired, inerrant words. In the Bible God has given us, we have the perfect standard for judging all other knowledge. All other knowledge stands under the judgment of the Bible even when it serves the

Bible. For example, the English language serves the Bible by making it accessible to readers of English. But even as English does this, it stands under the Bible and is governed by the Bible. So the English word “yes” cannot translate the Greek word for “no.” The Bible is sufficient to prevent that misuse of English.

In this way the Bible is served by our extra-biblical knowledge in many ways. For example, the word “ant” occurs twice in the Bible (Proverbs 6:6; 30:25). It is never defined. The Bible expects us to know what an ant is from our experience. But if we say that the lesson of the ant is that we should all be lazy, the Bible is sufficient to prevent that error.

So it is with language in doctrinal disputes. Non-biblical language serves the Bible by ruling out some meanings and including others. The word “trinity” and the phrase “one substance with the Father” are extra-biblical terms. But they contain essential biblical truth. To affirm with extra-biblical language that God is “one essence in three persons” (=trinity) and that the Son is “one substance with the Father” is more biblical than to use biblical language to call Christ God’s creature. The sufficiency of Scripture does not dictate the language we use to interpret the Bible; rather it governs the meaning of the language we use. For that it is wholly sufficient.”⁷

While attempting to prove that scripture contains all that we need, he outlines quite nicely why we need outside influences to properly understand its meaning.

Many protestant will often tell us that many tenants of our Catholic faith are not in the Bible, that Catholicism contains man made components that are in opposition to God’s Word. So how does the Church respond to these ideas? More importantly, how do we respond?

Once again, I will say, we respond with kindness, love and patience, remembering never to argue or debate, but calmly explain the truth based on our understanding of our bible and the teachings of the Church.

Remember, the Bible is of the Church, the Church is not of the Bible. A clear example of this is found in the Old Testament itself. Before the ancient scriptures existed, there were the people of God. The very first story in the Bible is about two specific people who came into existence before writing was even invented. Adam and Eve, were God’s perfect creations and they needed no bible to commune with God. They walked freely with Him in the Garden.

Later, in Exodus, it is clearly described how the Hebrews, who existed before the book was written were given God’s laws by God himself, through Moses. It is widely believed that Moses himself, then wrote the first few books of the Old Testament, or the Hebrew Tora. Clearly the people, their faith and their belief in the one true God predated scripture.

Why then is it difficult to believe that the modern church, the Church of the New Covenant, the Church of Christ himself and Christianity as a whole, existed before there was written record of its formation?

Even then, at the time of Christ, most of the books of the Old Testament were separate volumes, with the possible exception of the Tora itself which may have existed in continuous scrolls much like today. When

⁷ From “Thoughts on the Sufficiency of Scripture” Published on Desiribnggod.org by Pastor John Piper

some of Christ's contemporaries started writing down their observances, memories and thoughts about Christ, their writings were in the form of letters and essays written to their peers in order to perpetuate the teachings and traditions that Christ had given them. Well into the tenth and eleventh centuries, the books of the Bible, even those officially included in the Canon of the Church were nearly all individually bound books. It's where they got the common term, "Books of the Bible".

Remember that it was the Catholic Church that finally coalesced the seventy three books we know as the Bible into its present form. The Catholic Church gave the Bible to the world.

Specifically, *"In about 367 AD, St. Athanasius came up with a list of seventy three books for the Bible that he believed to be divinely inspired. This list was finally approved by Pope Damasus I in 382 AD, and was formally approved by the Church Council of Rome in that same year. Later Councils at Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD) ratified this list of seventy three books. In 405 AD, Pope Innocent I wrote a letter to the Bishop of Toulouse reaffirming this canon of seventy three books. In 419 AD, the Council of Carthage reaffirmed this list, which Pope Boniface agreed to. The Council of Trent, in 1546, in response to the Reformation removing 7 books from the canon (canon is a Greek word meaning "standard"), reaffirmed the original St. Athanasius list of seventy three books."*⁸

Still, there are those who will continue to challenge this truth and will ask questions intended to trip up the unwary believer such as "Where is Purgatory mentioned in the Bible? That word is not even mentioned in the Bible once." How do we answer these kinds of questions?

The assumption being that if it's not in the Bible, it's not Christian and it's not of God. But like Christ, sometimes the best way to answer a question is with a question. "Do you believe in the Trinity?" The answer will invariably be yes. "Then where in the Bible does the word 'Trinity' appear?" Is there biblical support for the Trinity? Of course, and there is also Biblical support for the doctrine of Purgatory.

We quickly establish that even for the "Biblical Christian" there are strong beliefs that are NOT directly quoted in the Bible. Now you have begun to build a foundation for answering questions about teaching and doctrine not found directly in the Bible.

You might ask (holding up your Bible) "For a Christian, what is the Pillar and foundation of the truth?" Most people will answer "The Bible." Then ask them to look up 1 Timothy 3:13 in THEIR Bible and read it to you:

¹⁵ *but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the **church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.***

1 Timothy 3:15 (AKJV)

You might then ask; "If the Bible alone is the full word of truth, how do you interpret the Bible itself stating that it is the Church that is the Pillar (upholder) and ground (foundation or basis) of the Truth?"

This is a direct contradiction of the concept of Sola Scriptura. It opens the door wide to the need for us to pay attention to the Church for all matters concerning faith and morals and our salvation.

⁸ From "The Bible - 73 or 66 Books?" published on www.catholicBible101.com No individual author cited.

John 8:32 says “know the truth, and the Truth shall set you free.” A bold statement, but by itself, how do we know what the truth is? IF the Church is the upholder and teacher of the Church, abiding by Her teaching will certainly reveal the Truth!

In case the answer to your question about the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth might be answered correctly, your response is easy: “Then am I not right, according to the scriptures, to abide by the teachings of the Church?”

We know from experience that this argument will not necessarily sway the beliefs of an opponent, but at least you have established a biblical basis for your own beliefs, and for a Bible Christian, that can be hard to counter.

Remember that the Catholic Church takes every word of the Bible seriously and ALL of its teachings and traditions have a basis in, or the support of, the scriptures. Also know without doubt, there is nothing in the Bible that contradicts the teachings of the Church and there is nothing in the teachings of the Church that contradicts the Bible.

The next hard hitting question is “If you believe in the Bible alone, and there is no other authority but the scriptures, where exactly in the Bible does it say this?”

They may cite **2 Timothy 3:15-16**

¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Agree with them. “I believe that one hundred percent!” Convincing on the face of it, but there are several things to remember. When this was being written it was not yet scripture, but merely a letter to Timothy, bidding him to use all of the known scripture for teaching, correction, training, etc. So the sentence itself was at the time not self-referencing.

Further, if you go back just one verse we read ¹⁵ *and that from infancy you have known [the] sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* So Paul is clearly talking only about the Old Testament scriptures in general use when Timothy was an infant. So should we take this passage at face value, and in content, Paul might be saying that all of the OLD Testament *is profitable for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness.*

Also, note carefully that it says ALL, not ONLY and this is a concept that the Church teaches emphatically, ALL scripture. (Might be a good time to bring up the three year cycle of scripture readings in the Catholic Mass during which we hear nearly the entire Bible should we attend Mass daily)

Finally, note that it says scripture is “profitable”, not “sufficient” and certainly not “only”.

Another verse often used by non-Catholics to justify Sola Scriptura is **John 20:31**

³¹ But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

However, if you read the passage in context, including the previous passage, **John 20:30**, we find:

³⁰ *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book.* ³¹ *But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.*

Read in context, these passages actually contradict the concept of Sola Scriptura.

Once again, always be sure, when presented with a verse of scripture that proves the fallacy of the Catholic Church to read it carefully and read it in context. Without exception, a verse used to prove the Catholic Church wrong, has been read out of context or presented out of context and can easily be refuted by a little careful study.

And remember, if for any reason you cannot immediately find the truth, remember to say “I don’t know the answer to this one but I will find out and get back to you.”

Remember that most people will not be convinced by your arguments. But if they are sound, scripturally based and logical in their conclusions, you have at least planted a seed. It’s up to the Holy spirit to reap the harvest.

One of the things we have in common with our protestant neighbors is belief that the Word of God is the Truth of our faith. The difference being that while they believe in the Bible as the only Word of God, we believe that the Bible and the traditions of the church are the combined sources of the Truth.

Again, the question will likely be “Where is that in the Bible?”

2 Thessalonians 2:15

¹⁵ *Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the **traditions** that you were taught, either by an oral statement (spoken traditions) or by a letter (Scripture) of ours.*

2 Timothy 2:2

² *And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well. (Pass on these instructions or traditions)*

1 Corinthians 11:2

² *I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold fast to the **traditions**, just as I handed them on to you.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ *And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God **from hearing us**, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, **the word of God**, which is now at work in you who believe.*

Acts 2:42

⁴² *They devoted themselves to the **teaching of the apostles** and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.*

Remember that when each of these scriptures were written, they were not scripture and they were either admonishing the audience to heed the traditions or recording past events that happened **before** the writing existed, and **before** it became scripture so clearly, if we are to take every word in the Bible seriously, we must “hold fast to the traditions” of the Church as well as the scriptures.

You may be told that in the Bible Jesus specifically tells us that we should condemn the traditions of men, therefore the Catholic Church is clearly contrary to scripture. Far from it, Jesus said that we should condemn the traditions of **men**, but all of the traditions mentioned in the above passages are the traditions of the Apostles, and who taught them to the apostles? Jesus Christ Himself, which takes them cleanly out of the category of men and squarely in the hands of the Son and by definition by the Holy Spirit and, God Himself. The traditions of God and of His Holy Church, which makes these traditions the Word of God.

And while we speak about traditions, every non-Catholic church out there has their own set of traditions, not in the bible:

- Church on Sunday (Not in the Bible, but a traditions based on the authority of the Catholic Church)
- Sunday School before big Church
- Wednesday night prayer meetings
- Alter Calls
- Fifth Sunday Singings
- The order of worship
- Their favorite hymns
- Etc.

Historically, since Martin Luther broke away from the Catholic Church, as we discussed in an earlier session, there are approximately 40,000 plus protestant denominations in the world today. Almost all of them claim Sola Scriptura as the True Word of God, almost all of them claim to be based on the Bible alone, guided by the Holy Spirit, and each of them claim to have the correct interpretation of the scriptures, yet almost all of them are guided by doctrines that conflict in some way with each other.

Since the Holy Spirit is of God, in God and is God, and there is but one Truth, well, I’ll let you mull that one over for yourselves. But let me offer this from John Martignoni: “The doctrine of Sola Scriptura has done nothing but divide the Body of Christ.”

So how do we answer the question of Purgatory? Where is that in the Bible?

TRADITION CONDEMNED?

REPITITIOUS OR WROTE PRAYER

CALL NO MAN FATHER

CELIBACY

FASTING

PURGATORY

SACRAMENTS

INFANT BAPTISM

REGENERATIVE BAPTISM

CONFIRMATION

THE EUCHARIST

CONFESSION

ANOINTING THE SICK

HOLY ORDERS

MATRIMONY

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

MARY

MARY MOTHER OF GOD

MARY'S ASSUMPTION

“At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, when bishops from throughout the Mediterranean world gathered in Constantinople, Emperor Marcian asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem to bring the relics of Mary to Constantinople to be enshrined in the capitol. The patriarch explained to the emperor that there were no relics of Mary in Jerusalem, that “Mary had died in the presence of the apostles; but her tomb, when

opened later . . . was found empty and so the apostles concluded that the body was taken up into heaven.”⁹

There are two texts of Scripture most commonly used to “disprove” the Assumption of Mary.

John 3:13:

¹³ No one has ascended up to heaven, but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.

If “no man” has ascended into heaven, wouldn’t that include the Blessed Virgin Mary?

1 Corinthians 15:22-23

*²² For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, ²³ but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, **at his coming**, those who belong to Christ;*

Common Objections: No-one will be taken up before the second coming of Christ. The assumption of Mary is not in the Bible.

And that is correct. The assumption of Mary is not in the bible. But, does that mean it could not have happened?

We’ve seen that Enoch “Walked with God” in **Genesis 5:24** and that **2 Kings 2:11** states that “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”, so clearly that’s not what Paul meant in **1 Corinthians 15** and if you read the passage carefully, it says ‘*each one in proper order*’ so who are we to determine that order? Plus, Enoch and Elijah were not the only ones to be assumed in the Bible and plenty of the dead were raised, even in biblical times, way before the second coming. So the assumption of men is possible according to the scriptures. And nowhere in the Bible does it say that Mary was NOT assumed into heaven so the possibility of her assumption is not counter to biblical teachings.

As for humans being resurrected before the second coming, it is pretty evident in **Matthew 27:52** that *“⁵² tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.*

The first zombie apocalypse perhaps? No, but certainly “many” were raised from the dead long before the second coming.

Revelation 11:7-12

⁷ When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will wage war against them and conquer them and kill them. ⁸ Their corpses will lie in the main street of the great city, which has the symbolic names “Sodom” and “Egypt,” where indeed their Lord was crucified. ⁹ Those from every people, tribe, tongue, and nation will gaze on their corpses for three and a half days, and they will not allow their corpses to be buried. ¹⁰ The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and be glad and exchange gifts because these two prophets tormented the inhabitants of the earth. ¹¹ But after the three

⁹ THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY: A BELIEF SINCE APOSTOLIC TIMES by Father Clifford Stevens, “Catholic Heritage” Magazine, July-August 1996 Reprinted at www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/AOFMARY.HTM

and a half days, a breath of life from God entered them. When they stood on their feet, great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven say to them, "Come up here." So they went up to heaven in a cloud as their enemies looked on.

Two witnesses sent by God were assumed into heaven body and soul into heaven before the return of Christ. If all of these major players could be assumed into heaven, there is no reason to believe that Mary, the most important woman ever born, could not have also been assumed body and soul into heaven to reside with her Son.

The principle of the assumption is not contrary to scripture.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

965

After her Son's Ascension, Mary "aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers." In her association with the apostles and several women, "we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."

...also in her Assumption

966

"Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." (LG 59; cf. Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950): DS 3903; cf. Rev 19:16) The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians: (491)

In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death. (*Byzantine Liturgy, Troparion, Feast of the Dormition, August 15th*)

491

Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, (Lk 1:28) was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: (411)

Common objection: **The Queen of Heaven is a false goddess.**

Jeremiah 7:17-18

¹⁷ Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸ The children gather wood, their fathers light the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven, while libations are poured out to other gods—all to offend me!

Of course as in many other passages, the full context must be appreciated to understand the message. Call her “Queen of Heaven” or call her a “God” it is the falseness of the worship that is offending to God, not the title.

“What the Church Teaches

First, let us be clear about what the Catholic Church means by the Queenship of Mary. Simply put, the Queenship of Mary refers to Mary’s royal dignity as Mother of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. As we shall see, that title takes nothing away from Jesus’ own Kingship, but rather is a consequence of it.

In his encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam* (1954), Pius XII taught, “Certainly, in the full and strict meaning of the term, only Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is King; but Mary, too, as Mother of the divine Christ, as His associate in the redemption, in His struggle with His enemies and His final victory over them, has a share, though in a limited and analogous way, in His royal dignity” (no. 39). Pope Pius XII makes clear that royal dignity belongs “in the full and strict” sense to Jesus Christ alone. At the same time, Mary possesses a certain royal dignity by association with Christ in his Incarnation, Redemption and victory over evil.

Vatican II also affirmed Mary’s Queenship: “She was exalted by the Lord as Queen of all in order that she might be more thoroughly conformed to her Son, the Lord of Lords and the conqueror of sin and death” (*Lumen Gentium* 59; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 966).

Mary’ Queenship is based on a number of elements. First, Mary's maternal relationship to Jesus, the King of Kings. Second, the Blessed Virgin's association with Jesus' work of redemption. Third, the royal dignity possessed by all members of the Church, including Mary, which is fully realized in heaven. This last element is, in a sense, an extension of Mary's association with Jesus, only under the aspect of her relation to the Church. Scriptural explanations of these points can help Protestants recognize Mary's royal dignity. ¹⁰

Revelation 12:1

¹ A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

A woman in heaven, adorned with the sun and the moon and wearing a crown, most certainly a queen or at least a princess.

Revelation 12:5

¹⁰ From CatholicCulture.org, “Queen of Heaven: Pagan Divinity or Royal Mother of the Messiah?” by mark Brumley

⁵ *She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne.*

Who else could this child be other than Jesus Christ? Destined to rule over the earth with an iron rod, and caught up to God and His throne!

And just to be sure:

Revelation 19:15-16

¹⁵ *...He will rule them with an iron rod, and he himself will tread out in the wine press the wine of the fury and wrath of God the almighty. 16 He has a name written on his cloak and on his thigh, "**King of kings and Lord of lords.**"*

Who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Jesus Christ, The Son of the woman clothed in the sun wearing a crown. The son of the Queen of Heaven, the son of God and Mary, the Queen of Heaven.

Revelation 1:8

⁸ *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

The Alpha:

Geneses 3:15 15

¹⁵ *I will put enmity between you [**Satin**] and the woman, [**Mary**] and between your offspring and hers [**Jesus**]; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.*

The Omega:

Revelation 12:17

¹⁷ *Then the dragon [**Satin**] became angry with the woman [**Mary**] and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring [**Jesus and the faithful**], those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus.*

The beginning and the end of the Bible...

966

"Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as **Queen over all things**, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians:

In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death.

725

Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love,¹⁰⁷ into communion with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples. (208, 2619)

726

At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve ("mother of the living"), the mother of the "whole Christ."¹⁰⁸ As such, she was present with the Twelve, who "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,"¹⁰⁹ at the dawn of the "end time" which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church. (494, 2618)

The Ark of the Covenant was the vessel in which the holiest items were stored and transported. The tablets of God's commandments were kept there, along with a gold container of Manna from the desert and Aron's staff that had budded to confirm his authority after the people had rebelled against his rule as high priest.

The arks cover was the Atonement cover, or mercy seat, the place where God resided while in the temple.

There is no doubt, confirmed by the many scriptures that reference the ark, that it was extremely important to the Israelites and to God as the holiest of holy objects and was filled with the power of God. It was built to exacting specifications, given by God himself and was covered entirely in the purest gold with no stain or impurities to hold the holy artifacts of God. How precious these items were to God that he would command such a perfect and pure container to hold and guard them.

So, when God sent His most precious gift to the earth, it only makes sense that he would create the most holy, pure and unblemished vessel to contain His very Son, the Savior of the world. This very notion is the basis of several teachings about Mary. The Immaculate Conception provides a human free from the stain of original sin. Mary's unquestioning yes to the message of an angel that she would bear the Son of God. Her pure and perpetual virginity all speak to her unblemished purity as the ark of the New Covenant, the container of the word made flesh, the Mother of God.

But where is that in the bible?

Revelation 11:19 – 12:1

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm. – ¹ A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Remember that when this was written, there were no chapter and verse divisions. It was a single writing similar to an essay or a letter of today. A continuous series of thoughts written all together. This was Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant appearing in heaven with the Ark of the Old.

Luke 1:35

*³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will **overshadow** you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.*

Exodus 40:34

*³⁴ Then the cloud **overshadowed** the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle [the place of the Ark of the Covenant].*

1 Kings 8:10-11

*¹⁰ When the priests left the holy place, the cloud **overshadowed** the house of the LORD ¹¹ so that the priests could no longer minister because of the cloud, since the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.*

In this case, the house of the LORD is the newly completed temple in Jerusalem that Solomon had built.

And let's consider this parallel from the Old and the New Testaments

2 Samuel 6	Luke 1
² Then David and all the people who were with him set out for Baala [a town] of Judah ...	³⁹ During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah ,
⁹ David became frightened of the LORD that day, and he said, " How can the ark of the LORD come to me? "	⁴³ And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
¹⁰ David took the ark to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.	⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.
¹¹ The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months ,	⁵⁶ Mary remained with [Elizabeth] about three months ...
¹² David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the City of David with rejoicing .	⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
¹⁵ David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts of joy ...	⁴² [Elizabeth] cried out in a loud voice
¹⁶ As the ark of the LORD was entering the City... King David was leaping and dancing before the LORD...	⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb

Luke 1:41-43

⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and **Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit**, ⁴² cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And how does this happen to me, that the **mother of my Lord** should come to me?"

Mary the Ark of the New Covenant, Mary the Mother of God.

“Rejoice, you who are full of grace”

721

Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church’s Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the “Seat of Wisdom.” (484)

In her, the “wonders of God” that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

722

The Holy Spirit prepared Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily”¹⁰² should herself be “full of grace.” She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the “Daughter of Zion”: “Rejoice.”¹⁰³ It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle¹⁰⁴ lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son. (489, 2676)

723

In Mary, the Holy Spirit fulfills the plan of the Father’s loving goodness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit’s power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.¹⁰⁵ (485, 506)

724

In Mary, the Holy Spirit manifests the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.¹⁰⁶ (963)

Common Objection: ***“The Immaculate Conception is clearly not scriptural.”***

First, let's clarify what Immaculate Conception is about. It is a common misconception among non-Catholics that it is about Jesus, and even some Catholics believe this. Certainly His conception was immaculate and without sin as must be since He is of God, in God and is God himself, one with the trinity.

But the Church has established the dogma that Mary also was born without original sin. “That Jesus saved her even from the taint of original sin at the moment of her creation.” And she remained sinless throughout her lifetime. So where in the Bible does it tell us this?

When speaking to a non-Catholic about questions such as these we can turn to the original idea of Sola Scriptura, that everything Christian must be found in the Bible. Ask a simple question. “Do you believe in the Trinity?” for 99% of Christians the answer will be “Yes.” Then ask them where the word trinity appears in the Bible. You have very simply confirmed that NOT all Christian concepts are found directly in the Bible.

Then your next question could logically be, “Could God have created Mary without sin if He wanted to?”

You might at least pique their interest.

First, are there biblical references of anyone else who was sinless? Of course, the very first mother, Eve was created perfect and without sin. It was her personal sin that established the concept of original sin. But before that, she was completely without sin. This establishes that God could and did create human beings without sin.

If he created Eve without sin, couldn't he have done the same for Mary? And who was greater in the grand scheme of things? Eve, born without sin was the instrument through which sin came into the world, Mary, was the instrument through which salvation came into the world. Should she not have been born without sin also?

Luke 1:41-42

⁴¹ *When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, ⁴² cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.*

Mary is referred to by Elizabeth as “Blessed among women” and Elizabeth was “filled with the Holy Spirit” when she spoke these words. If one is filled with the Holy Spirit, there is no room for error, Mary was blessed among all women. And she replies to Elizabeth:

Luke 1:48

⁴⁸ *For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, **from now on all generations will call me blessed.***

We do not call Eve blessed, and she was created without sin, why then, not Mary?

Geneses 3:14-15

¹⁴ *Then the LORD God said to the snake: Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals, tame or wild; On your belly you shall crawl, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.*

This is a clear reference to Jesus Christ conquering Satan. It is known as the Protoevangelium "The First Good News"

Also note this: "...*you and the woman, and between your seed and hers;*"

This is the only place in scripture that mentions the **woman's** seed. All other references to seed, heirs, children, or offspring are from the man. Even the genealogy of Christ in the first chapter of Matthew leads from Abraham through forty two generations to Joseph, not Mary, but in Geneses, the very first mention of any seed of progeny in the Bible is of the **woman's seed**, the **seed of Mary**. Because Mary conceived Jesus of the Holy Spirit, not of a man.

God himself said "...*I will put enmity between you and the woman...*" which is to say "you and the woman will be enemies." So if Mary is an enemy of Satan, decreed by God, how can she sin, unless she succumbs to Satan and becomes his ally? Mary MUST have been without sin.

Objection: **but in Romans 3:9-12 it clearly states:**

⁹ *Well, then, are we better off? Not entirely, for we have already brought the charge against Jews and Greeks alike that they are all under the domination of sin,¹⁰ as it is written: "There is no one just, not one,¹¹ there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. ¹² All have gone astray; all alike are worthless; there is not one who does good, [there is not] even one.*

Also **Romans 3:23**

²³ *all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God.*

So based on these two passages, Mary MUST have sinned, since ALL have sinned.

Again, to fully understand any passage we need to look at the WHOLE Bible. Note that Paul says "as it is written". He is clearly quoting scripture, the only scripture at the time being the Old Testament. Too bad it doesn't say "*as it is written in Psalm 14...*"

This is a very important Catholic concept. When someone in the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament, we MUST go back to the Old Testament text to see what it means in context. If we don't, we are seriously in jeopardy of misunderstanding or misinterpreting the New Testament text.

A prime example of this is when Jesus on the cross cries out "*My God, My God, why have you forgotten me?*" This has been interpreted by many to mean that at the moment of His death, God turned His back on Jesus. But if Jesus IS God, how could He turn His back on Himself?

Jesus used many references to the Old Testament scriptures in His teaching and at the time of His crucifixion, most of the people around the cross would have been very familiar with the psalms. Today if I quote to you, "Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light." I would have to go no further and all of you instantly know the rest of that song and feel at least a little twang of patriotism.

Christ is near death on the cross. He is weak from a brutal beating and loss of blood, he is literally suffocating to death from the position of hanging by his arms and he's really not in the mood for long sermons, so he says: "My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?"

Everyone at the cross instantly recognizes:

Psalm 22: which begins with verse 1:

¹ *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

But ends with verse 31:

³¹ *The generation to come will be told of the Lord, that they may **proclaim to a people yet unborn the deliverance you have brought.***

What has He actually said here? That even though all seems lost and I am now in anguish, great things are to come and God will be in control and we will all be saved. An accurate foretelling of the sacrifice of Christ and the promise of salvation to come.

To the people gathered around the cross, this is a powerful statement from their Rabbi.

Without this reference, twenty four generations removed from David, Jesus is simply calling out to God, "Why did you do this to me?"

This is an extremely important lesson for us to remember. There are powerful references to the Old Testament from the New Testament but if we fail to look at them in their full context we will almost surely misinterpret the meaning of the New Testament passages.

Therefore, when Paul says in Romans "**as it is written:***there is not one who does good, [there is not] even one.*" We MUST look back at what he is quoting to understand the context. Out of context the passage seems to say that no man on earth does good or is without sin. But the passage he is quoting from in **Psalm 14:** clearly is NOT talking about every man on earth, but specifically about the **evildoers** who turn away from God.

Psalm 14:1-3

¹ *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Their deeds are loathsome and corrupt; not one does what is good. ² The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if even one is wise, if even one seeks God. ³ All have gone astray; all alike are perverse. Not one does what is good, **not even one.** ⁴ Will these **evildoers** never learn? They devour my people as they devour bread; they do not call upon the LORD. ⁵ They have good reason, then, to fear; God is with the **company of the just.***

Clearly, David is speaking of two groups of people, the **evildoers** and the **just**.

With the Old Testament context, we can see that Paul is talking about the burden of original sin from which we all suffer. And this clearly leaves the possibility that there are some who do not suffer personal sin.

Even those non-Catholics who believe that Paul is talking about personal sin will make exception for some people, most notably infants and young children. Everyone agrees that infants and young children have not committed personal sin. So even those who quote **Romans 3:12** don't believe that all men have committed personal sin. There are exceptions. So if there are exceptions, it seems Paul is talking about original sin, not personal sin. And if there are exceptions, then why not for Mary, saved from original sin from the moment of her conception?

Luke 1:5-6

⁵ *In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.* ⁶ ***Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.***

The parents of John the Baptist were "**blameless**". Without sin. So there is biblical precedence for other sinless people.

Luke 1:15

¹⁵ *for he will be great in the sight of [the] Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be **filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.***

If one is filled with the Holy Spirit, how can one sin? So John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit at conception, free from sin. If you are **filled** with the Holy Spirit, there is no room for sin. Clear precedence for the immaculate conception of Mary. Who is of more importance: the one who is to make way for the LORD or the one who is to deliver Him into the world? Could God have created Mary without sin if He wanted to? Apparently it's just all in a day's work for Him.

Luke 1:28

²⁸ *And coming to her, he [the angel Gabriel] said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."*

Mary is declared full of grace even before the conception of Jesus. Full of the Grace of the LORD. How can she commit personal sin in such a state? Remember;

Luke 1:37

³⁷ ***for nothing will be impossible for God.***

And for other examples from scripture:

Revelation 14:3-5

³ *They were singing [what seemed to be] a new hymn before the throne, before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn this hymn except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been ransomed from the earth.* ⁴ *These are they who were not defiled with women; they are virgin and these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been ransomed as the first fruits of the human race for God and the Lamb.* ⁵ *On their lips no deceit has been found; **they are unblemished.***

One hundred forty four thousand sinless souls!

And what about Enoch and Elijah?

Hebrew 11:5

⁵ *By faith **Enoch** was taken up so that he should **not see death**, and “he was found no more because God had taken him.” Before he was taken up, he was attested to have pleased God.*

2 Kings 2:11

¹¹ *As they walked on still conversing, a fiery chariot and fiery horses came between the two of them, and **Elijah** went up to heaven in a whirlwind,*

Paul tells the Romans, “the wages of sin is death.” But Enoch and Elijah are both assumed body and soul into heaven without death. They never died, so they must also have been without sin.

Given all these examples, doesn't it simply make sense that Mary, easily the most important of all these sinless people should also be made sinless so as to be Holy and pure enough to bear the very Son of God? Can God and sin coexist in the same person?

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Immaculate Conception

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To become the mother of the Savior, Mary “was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.” The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as “full of grace.” (*Lk 1:28*) In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace. (2676, 2853, 2001)

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Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, “full of grace” through God, (*Lk 1:28*) was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: (411)

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. (*Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus, 1854: DS 2803*)

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The “splendor of an entirely unique holiness” by which Mary is “enriched from the first instant of her conception” comes wholly from Christ: she is “redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son.” The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person “in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” and chose her “in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.” (*Eph 1:3–4*)(2011, 1077)

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The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God “the All–Holy” (Panagia) and celebrate her as “free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.” By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.

“Let it be done to me according to your word...”

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At the announcement that she would give birth to “the Son of the Most High” without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of faith, certain that “with God nothing will be impossible”: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word.” (*Lk 1:28–38; cf. Rom 1:5*) Thus, giving her consent to God’s word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God’s grace: (2617, 148, 968, 726)

As St. Irenaeus says, “Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.” (*St. Irenaeus, Adv. haeres. 3, 22, 4: PG 7/1, 959A*) Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert... : “The knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith.” (*St. Irenaeus, Adv. haeres. 3, 22, 4: PG 7/1, 959A*) Comparing her with Eve, they call Mary “the Mother of the living” and frequently claim: “Death through Eve, life through Mary.” (*LG 56; Epiphanius, Haer. 78, 18: PG 42, 728CD–729AB; St. Jerome, Ep. 22, 21: PL 22, 408*)

The Catholic Church teaches us that Mary was a virgin at conception (Biblical fact) and remained a virgin throughout her life and until the end of time.

Common Objection: ***“The bible clearly states that Jesus had brothers and sisters.”***

Mark 6:3

³ *Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the **brother** of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.*

Here is a prime example of how biblical interpretation must rely not only on what you directly read from your particular translation, but also on the history, culture and use of language at the time of its writing. To understand this, let's take a look at some Old Testament passages:

Genesis 11:27

²⁷ *These are the descendants of Terah. Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran begot Lot.*

Then, a few passages later:

Genesis 14:12-14

¹² *They took with them Abram's **brother** Lot, who had been living in Sodom, as well as his possessions, and departed. ¹³ A survivor came and brought the news to Abram the Hebrew, who was camping at the oak of Mamre the Amorite, a kinsman of Eshcol and Aner; these were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his **brother** had been captured, he mustered three hundred and eighteen of his retainers, born in his house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.*

Is this a contradiction, or inaccuracy in the scriptures? No, here is the problem: in the ancient languages of the Middle East, the Hebrew word **אָח** or **awkh** was the only word used to describe male relatives. Every male in your immediate extended family was your **brother**. Likewise the word for **sister** was **אָחֻת** or **achoth** and was used to describe all female relatives within your close extended family. There were no words to describe cousin, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

In some translations, in **Genesis 14:12**, **brother** has been replaced with **nephew**, and in verse **14** with **kinsman**, because even though the original word used was **awkh** or **brother** we know from chapter **11:27** that Lot is clearly the son of Abram's actual brother Haran, or Abram's nephew.

At the Crucifixion

So, how do we know that James, Joses, Judas and Simon are not Jesus' actual brothers?

Matthew 27:55-56

⁵⁵ *There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him.* ⁵⁶ *Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*

This clarifies that in Mark 6:3, that James and Joses were **NOT** actual brothers of Jesus since they are the sons of another Mary. We know that Mary the mother of Jesus was at the foot of the cross of Jesus, and was not looking on from a distance with the other women.

That the Bible labels them as His brothers, most likely indicates that they were His cousins. Relatives of either Mary's side or Joseph's side of the extended family.

If Jesus had actual brothers, would His last act in life be to grievously offend them?

John 19:26-27

²⁶ *When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son."* ²⁷ *Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*

Jewish tradition at this time was that upon the death of the Father, the eldest son took over the responsibility of the care and keeping of the mother. Jesus, clearly hands this honor to his disciple who is not even a kinsman. If he had indeed had many brothers and sisters, this action would have been a grievous insult to his own brothers.

And let's consider one more passage. After Jesus had ascended into Heaven, all that had been there returned to Jerusalem to the upper room to appoint a successor to Judas.

Acts 1:14-15

¹³ *When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.* ¹⁴ *All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.* ¹⁵ *During those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (there was a group of about one hundred and twenty persons in the one place)...*

So, there were the eleven remaining Apostles, Judas the son of James, some women, Mary the mother of Jesus and his **brothers**. Let's assume that "Some" women were the three mentioned earlier, but we can throw in maybe a half dozen more just for argument's sake, that makes about twenty two people clearly not His **brothers**. No mention is made of sisters so that leaves around ninety eight **brothers** in the room. In the literalist sense, Mary could clearly not have been a perpetual virgin since the birth of ninety eight brothers (not counting sisters) would have necessitated the delivery of one set of triplets every year since the birth of Jesus with one year off when she might have had twins.

Not likely. The ninety eight brothers in the upper room were kinsmen of Jesus, not his maternal brothers.

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What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ. (963)

Mary's predestination

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“God sent forth his Son,” but to prepare a body for him, (*Gal 4:4; Heb 10:5*) he wanted the free cooperation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee, “a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary”: (*Lk 1:26–27*)

The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life.

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Throughout the Old Covenant the mission of many holy women prepared for that of Mary. At the very beginning there was Eve; despite her disobedience, she receives the promise of a posterity that will be victorious over the evil one, as well as the promise that she will be the mother of all the living. (*Gen 3:15, 20*) By virtue of this promise, Sarah conceives a son in spite of her old age. (*Gen 18:10–14; 21:1–2*) Against all human expectation God chooses those who were considered powerless and weak to show forth his faithfulness to his promises: Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Deborah; Ruth; Judith and Esther; and many other women. (*1 Cor 1:17; 1 Sam 1*) Mary “stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him. After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion, and the new plan of salvation is established.” (722, 410, 145, 64)

Mary — “ever-virgin”

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The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary’s real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man. In fact, Christ’s birth “did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it.” And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as *Aeiparthenos*, the “Ever-virgin.”

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Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus. (*Mk 3:31–35; 6:3; 1 Cor 9:5; Gal 1:19*) The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, “brothers of Jesus,” are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls “the other Mary.” (*Mt 13:55; 28:1; cf. Mt 27:56*) They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression. (*Gen 13:8; 14:16; 29:15*)

Non Catholics may break this subject into further smaller sections and will make arguments against Catholic practice based on the scriptures they might choose to bolster their position. Again, I remind you of two things to remember: ***You must read ALL the words*** and our main mantra:

There is nothing in the teachings of the Catholic Church that contradicts the Bible
There is nothing in the Bible that contradicts the teachings of the Catholic Church.

If your friend is somewhat open minded, and you've been persuasive and logical enough, he might say something like "Ok, I accept your explanation that your statues aren't idols, but you still pray to them and that's worshipping them in my book." So we'll break down the difference between worshipful prayer and intercessory prayer and he may then counter with, "But First Timothy two, verse five says: For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, Himself human." This then is where we need to read all the words.

First, we'll take a look at the idea of worshipping the saints. Once again, part of the problem here has to do with language and part of it with scripture selected for an intended meaning.

Language.

In the early Christian languages, there were actually three different levels of honor afforded holy beings. The lowest level was the Greek *dulia* which was a level of respect due exceptional people such as the saints. Then *hyperdulia*, meaning beyond *dulia* was afforded to Mary, the Mother of Jesus for obvious reasons, then the highest level reserved for God was the Greek *latria* meaning the honor that is due God alone.

It was clearly understood that *latria* must be reserved for the one true God and no other, but that *dulia* and *hyperdulia* were perfectly acceptable as expressions of honor for Mary and the saints. The translations of these words into English, condensed them into one word in the Old English, *weorthscipe*, which means to be worthy of honor, respect, or dignity. To worship in the older, larger sense is to ascribe honor, worth, or excellence to someone, whether a sage, a magistrate, or God. *Weorthscipe* was later distilled down to the word worship which we use today in place of the Greek *latria* which leaves us no specific English words for the honor due Mary or the saints.

So, it was clear to the early Christians what level of honor they were giving to the saints, Mary and God Himself, but we are left at a loss for words to describe this in English. As a result, those with a little less understanding of the Bible and of Catholic teaching, may paint us with a broad brush in regards to Catholic worship practices.

Scripture

Protestants often use two scripture passages to "prove" the fallacy of Catholic beliefs in veneration of and intercessory prayer to the saints, the first being mentioned above:

1 Timothy 2:5

⁵ *For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, Himself human*

The Protestant argument is that since Christ is clearly the only intercessor between God and Man, praying to the saints is obviously non scriptural. Of course this couldn't be further from the truth.

There are more than two dozen passages that directly or indirectly encourage us to pray to the saints or others to intercede for us with God beginning with 1 Timothy 2 in its full context (remember, read all the words?)

1 Timothy 2:1-7

¹ *First of all, then, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, ² for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. ³ This is good and pleasing to God our savior, ⁴ who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, Himself human, ⁶ who gave Himself as ransom for all. This was the testimony at the proper time. ⁷ For this I was appointed preacher and apostle (I am speaking the truth, I am not lying), teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

While Paul tells us that there is only one [special] mediator between God and Man, in the same sentence he asks others to pray for him; to intercede on his behalf with prayers to God.

“...asking one person to pray for you in no way violates Christ’s mediatorship, as can be seen from considering the way in which Christ is a mediator. First, Christ is a unique mediator between man and God because he is the only person who is both God and man. He is the only bridge between the two, the only God-man. But that role as mediator is not compromised in the least by the fact that others intercede for us. Furthermore, Christ is a unique mediator between God and man because he is the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15, 12:24), just as Moses was the mediator (Greek **MESITAS**) of the Old Covenant (Gal. 3:19–20).”¹¹

Consider further:

Romans 15:30

³⁰ *I urge you, [brothers,] by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in the struggle by your prayers to God on my behalf*

Colossians 4:3

³ *at the same time, pray for us, too, that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak of the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison*

2 Thessalonians 1:11

¹¹ *To this end, we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith,*

¹¹ “Praying to the Saints” a Catholic Answers Tract (<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/praying-to-the-saints>)

2 Thessalonians 3:1

¹ Finally, brothers, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may speed forward and be glorified, as it did among you

In each of these passages Paul is asking for others to offer prayer to God. He is not content that he alone should pray but is asking for others to pray for something specific. He is asking **other living human beings to intercede on his behalf** and pray for his requests. (Note: **Living** is a key word here.)

Next you may hear the argument that Paul is asking living human beings to pray for him, but Deuteronomy clearly tells us NOT to call on the dead.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12

¹⁰ Let there not be found among you anyone who causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire, or practices divination, or is a soothsayer, augur, or sorcerer, ¹¹ or who casts spells, consults ghosts and spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead. ¹² Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the LORD, and because of such abominations the LORD, your God, is dispossessing them before you.

The argument being that we as Catholics are calling up the dead to do our bidding. Of course what Deuteronomy is telling us is not to call on the dead to do our bidding. Do not rely on the dark arts and magic to increase our position on earth by means other than through our faith in God Himself.

Remember that key word living? Throughout the scriptures, the theme of Christ's teachings is for us to obtain eternal **LIFE** through our faith and works through Jesus Christ, only son of the one true God.

So by the very definition of persons who makes it to heaven being saints in heaven, they are scripturally verified to be eternally **ALIVE** and therefore we do not call up the dead when we ask for their prayers. We are not attempting to resurrect their bodies, but rather are speaking to their eternal souls, petitioning them for their prayers on our behalf.

Where is that in the Bible?

Mark 12:26-27

²⁶ As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, 'I am the God of Abraham, [the] God of Isaac, and [the] God of Jacob'? ²⁷ He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly misled.

Here Jesus tells us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are most certainly alive in Heaven with many other saints. The God of the Living.

Mark 9:4

⁴ Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Here are two dead guys, clearly and visibly alive to the Apostles with Jesus.

"Okay, fine. But how do we know the saints can even hear us? They are in Heaven, far above our plane of existence."

Jesus Himself tells us that we can communicate in the life beyond in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Luke 16:19-30

[19-22 Paraphrased] There was a poor man named Lazarus who lay at the door of a rich man. They both died and Lazarus was sent to heaven while the rich man went to the netherworld.

²³ and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' ²⁵ Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.

[26-31 Paraphrased] and there is a great chasm between us that prevents us from crossing in either direction. The rich man then asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers of his torment and Abraham tells him if they haven't listened to Moses and the prophets they won't believe even if someone rises from the dead.

So here is Jesus telling us that the prophets and the early fathers are alive in heaven and can communicate quite well.

"Well sure, but that doesn't mean they can hear us on earth."

Revelation 5:8

⁸ When he took [the scroll], the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each of the elders held a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

It's clear that the saints in heaven do actively intercede for us. We are explicitly told by John that the incense they offer to God are the prayers of the saints. Since prayers are not physical in nature they obviously can't be physically offered to God, so the saints in heaven are offering our prayers to God, mentally, interceding for us, on our behalf.

"But you bow down to statues and that's clearly against the (Protestant) second commandment!"

Yes, we bow and we kneel and sometimes we do it in front of a statue. That doesn't mean we are worshipping the statue any more than a protestant is worshipping his Bible when he kneels down with it in his hands.

Some non-Catholics may also cite **Deuteronomy 4:15-18:**

¹⁵ Because you saw no form at all on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, be strictly on your guard ¹⁶ not to act corruptly by fashioning an idol for yourselves to represent any figure, whether it be the form of a man or of a woman, ¹⁷ the form of any animal on the earth, the form of any bird that flies in the sky, ¹⁸ the form of anything that crawls on the ground, or the form of any fish in the waters under the earth.

They will use this passage to indicate that since God had no form to Moses or the Israelites, there can therefore be no form given to God and no painting or statue of God is permitted. Well, we already know that God not only permits statues, but specifically directed their construction and use and while the ancient Israelites may have been prohibited from depicting God in any way, He did finally reveal Himself in **Daniel 7:9**

⁹ As I watched, Thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days took his throne. His clothing was white as snow, the hair on his head like pure wool; His throne was flames of fire, with wheels of burning fire.

This is the form often used to illustrate God in Protestant Bibles and story books.

But the Holy Spirit did reveal itself physically in at least two forms in the New Testament; once in the form of a dove when Jesus was baptized and again as tongues of flame at Pentecost. Protestants often use these two images as well in illustrations and in symbols to display on their cars, or wear as a lapel pin.

The most obvious image of God is in Christ Himself, God made man, living and of course visible on earth. When the wise men came to Bethlehem they “saw” the Babe, lying in a manger. The perfect icon of God Himself. And I like to think that since at least half of Jesus’ DNA was from God, he probably looked at least a little like God Himself must have wanted us to think of Him.

The Teaching of the Church on Idolatry

Since the Apostles walked their ministries on Earth, the Church has always condemned idolatry as sin against God and subsequent Church councils have treated it the same way. The Second Council of Nicaea in the year 787 dealt extensively with the question of religious uses of icons and imagery declared “[T]he one who redeemed us from the darkness of idolatrous insanity, Christ our God, when He took for his bride his holy Catholic Church . . . promised He would guard her and assured His holy disciples saying, ‘I am with you every day until the consummation of this age.’ . . . To this gracious offer some people paid no attention; being hoodwinked by the treacherous foe they abandoned the true line of reasoning . . . and they failed to distinguish the holy from the profane, asserting that the icons of our Lord and of His saints were no different from the wooden images of satanic idols.” (paraphrased)

Again the Catechism of the Council of Trent in 1566 tells us that the sin of idolatry is committed “by worshipping idols and images as God, or believing that they possess any divinity or virtue entitling them to our worship, by praying to, or reposing confidence in them” (paragraph 374)

And of course in our current Catechism, **CCC 2114**:

“Idolatry is a perversion of man’s innate religious sense. An idolater is someone who ‘transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God’”

“The Church absolutely recognizes and condemns the sin of idolatry. What anti-Catholics fail to recognize is the distinction between thinking a piece of stone or plaster is a god and desiring to visually remember Christ and the saints in heaven by making statues in their honor. The making and use of religious statues is a *thoroughly* biblical practice. Anyone who says otherwise doesn’t know his Bible.”¹²

¹² “Do Catholics Worship Statues?” A Catholic Answers tract (<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/do-catholics-worship-statues>)

Holy images

1159 The sacred image, the liturgical icon, principally represents Christ. It cannot represent the invisible and incomprehensible God, but the incarnation of the Son of God has ushered in a new "economy" of images:

Previously God, who has neither a body nor a face, absolutely could not be represented by an image. But now that he has made Himself visible in the flesh and has lived with men, I can make an image of what I have seen of God . . . and contemplate the glory of the Lord, His face unveiled.²⁷

1160 Christian iconography expresses in images the same Gospel message that Scripture communicates by words. Image and word illuminate each other:

We declare that we preserve intact all the written and unwritten traditions of the Church which have been entrusted to us. One of these traditions consists in the production of representational artwork, which accords with the history of the preaching of the Gospel. For it confirms that the incarnation of the Word of God was real and not imaginary, and to our benefit as well, for realities that illustrate each other undoubtedly reflect each other's meaning.²⁸

1161 All the signs in the liturgical celebrations are related to Christ: as are sacred images of the holy Mother of God and of the saints as well. They truly signify Christ, who is glorified in them. They make manifest the "cloud of witnesses"²⁹ who continue to participate in the salvation of the world and to whom we are united, above all in sacramental celebrations. Through their icons, it is man "in the image of God," finally transfigured "into his likeness,"³⁰ who is revealed to our faith. So too, are the angels, who also are recapitulated in Christ:

Following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her) we rightly define with full certainty and correctness that, like the figure of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable and holy images of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our inviolate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the venerated angels, all the saints and the just, whether painted or made of mosaic or another suitable material, are to be exhibited in the holy Churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, walls and panels, in houses and on streets.³¹

1162 "The beauty of the images moves me to contemplation, as a meadow delights the eyes and subtly infuses the soul with the glory of God."³² Similarly, the contemplation of sacred icons, united with meditation on the Word of God and the singing of liturgical hymns, enters into the harmony of the signs of celebration so that the mystery celebrated is imprinted in the heart's memory and is then expressed in the new life of the faithful.

2501 Created "in the image of God,"²⁹³ man also expresses the truth of his relationship with God the Creator by the beauty of his artistic works. Indeed, art is a distinctively human form of expression; beyond the search for the necessities of life which is common to all living creatures, art is a freely given superabundance of the human being's inner riches. Arising from talent given by the Creator and from

man's own effort, art is a form of practical wisdom, uniting knowledge and skill,²⁹⁴ to give form to the truth of reality in a language accessible to sight or hearing. To the extent that it is inspired by truth and love of beings, art bears a certain likeness to God's activity in what he has created. Like any other human activity, art is not an absolute end in itself, but is ordered to and ennobled by the ultimate end of man.²⁹⁵

2502 Sacred art is true and beautiful when its form corresponds to its particular vocation: evoking and glorifying, in faith and adoration, the transcendent mystery of God - the surpassing invisible beauty of truth and love visible in Christ, who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature," in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."²⁹⁶ This spiritual beauty of God is reflected in the most holy Virgin Mother of God, the angels, and saints. Genuine sacred art draws man to adoration, to prayer, and to the love of God, Creator and Savior, the Holy One and Sanctifier.

2503 For this reason bishops, personally or through delegates, should see to the promotion of sacred art, old and new, in all its forms and, with the same religious care, remove from the liturgy and from places of worship everything which is not in conformity with the truth of faith and the authentic beauty of sacred art.²⁹⁷

Idolatry

2112 The first commandment condemns polytheism. It requires man neither to believe in, nor to venerate, other divinities than the one true God. Scripture constantly recalls this rejection of "idols, (of) silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see." These empty idols make their worshippers empty: "Those who make them are like them; so are all who trust in them."⁴² God, however, is the "living God"⁴³ who gives life and intervenes in history.

2113 Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon."⁴⁴ Many martyrs died for not adoring "the Beast"⁴⁵ refusing even to simulate such worship. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God.⁴⁶

2114 Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God. the commandment to worship the Lord alone integrates man and saves him from an endless disintegration. Idolatry is a perversion of man's innate religious sense. An idolater is someone who "transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God."⁴⁷

The Catholic Church, despite what misinformed outside appearances may indicate, clearly condemns idolatry in any form, in writing for all to see. One must only look to see the face of God.

VENERATION OF THE SAINTS

RELICS

STATUES

SALVATION HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

ORIGINAL SIN

SOLA FIDE or FAITH + WORKS?

Sola Fide (Faith alone)

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; ⁹ it is ***not from works***, so no one may boast.

Perhaps the one verse most quoted by Protestants to justify the idea that faith alone is all we need.

I'm going to start this session with a personal anecdote. I have spent some time going to various area churches and performing song and sometimes a little preaching. I play some gospel music and some contemporary Christian songs. I keep it generic, denominational wise, but I always let them know, because they ask what church I attend, that I am Catholic. Some know before I arrive, some are surprised to learn, and all are usually surprised that Catholics sing the same songs as they do.

On one such occasion my wife accompanied me to a Seniors Club meeting I was invited to attend at a little Baptist Church down in Laurens, South Carolina. There was a gathering of thirty five or forty seniors along with their newly minted twenty seven year old pastor and his lovely young wife.

I was introduced and said a few words about myself and began my performance. I did a few fun secular songs and got their feet stomping and hands clapping and even some singing along. I moved into some traditional gospel, then to some contemporary Christian and everyone was having a grand time, even the young pastor and his wife.

But to illustrate how careful we must be, I made a single little slip when I announced the song "Communion" and noted that this was the single most important part of our beliefs...

"This is the body, this is the blood
Broken and poured out, for all of us

And in this communion, we share in His love
This is His body, this is His blood”

Nobody really noticed it except the pastor. As I was singing, I saw his eyes go dark. His body language became defensive and his face clearly showed his displeasure at my song choice and especially my theology.

I finished up with three or four more pieces, but his mood never changed and when finally he offered a closing prayer for the evening, he laid great emphasis in saying “...and we know Lord that salvation is by FAITH ALONE and NOT by any works we are required to perform!”

My own reaction was guilt that I had offended him, since I always try quite hard not to offend. But my poor wife was furious. She didn’t show it to these very nice people, but she made sure we beat a hasty retreat and for the forty five minute drive home she fumed and spouted about his rudeness and arrogance and total lack of understanding. She would write him a letter and tell him off. She would quote scripture and let him know fully the error of his ways!

As soon as we got home she began typing furiously. She asked me for my old Protestant Bible so she could quote from the pastor’s Bible. She looked up James and found the passage:

James 2:14-26

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? ¹⁷ So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ Indeed someone may say, “You have faith and I have works.” Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble. ²⁰ Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works. ²³ Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called “the friend of God.” ²⁴ See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? ²⁶ For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

I could hear her typing furiously and flipping pages and now and then she would call out a question for me and suddenly her pace slowed and stopped and I heard a sigh and I could feel the tension leave the house and she said almost under her breath, “I guess I can’t send this, huh.” She had come upon the verses in the next chapter, most especially verse 18:

James 3:13-18

¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show his works by a good life in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ Wisdom of this kind does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits,

without inconstancy or insincerity. ¹⁸ ***And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.***

This is a great example of the necessity to read ALL the words, to understand everything in its context and to live our lives as an example of the whole truth of the scriptures. This is a twofold lesson. The one my wife learned about being loving and kind, even to those who insult you or your beliefs and the lesson about the mistaken belief that salvation can be earned simply by faith and nothing else.

James, by the way is my wife's favorite book. She loves it for it's clear, down to earth, and cautious advice.

Many Protestants hold to the idea that all you have to do is profess your faith and acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ and you will be guaranteed a place in Heaven. Another phrase often connected to this belief is "***Once saved always saved***", the idea that once you have been saved, nothing you can do after that will delete your salvation from the book of lists. There will be only the final judgment at which your entrance to Heaven is a forgone conclusion.

James makes it pretty clear that to have faith, you must also perform works to demonstrate your faith. Martin Luther wanted to remove James from the Bible, ostensibly because of these very chapters, but he would have had to remove quite a bit more to expunge this idea from the Bible, including the passage quoted at the beginning of this session. Let's look at it in context:

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; ⁹ it is not from works, so no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus ***for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.***

In the very next verse, *Sola Fide* falls apart.

This is a prime example of picking, choosing and interpreting Bible verses out of context for your own predetermined understanding. Interpreting verses to fit your own ideas. Remember to read ALL the words and if you still don't understand what is being said, search for an authority to explain it to you. And what authority would that be? (See the session on the "The Authority of the Church")

The further danger of verse picking comes from the many verses that can be found to contradict what it is you might be trying to get the scriptures to say. Let's look at a few:

Romans 2:5-8

⁵ By your stubbornness and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God, ⁶ ***who will repay everyone according to his works:*** ⁷ ***eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through perseverance in good works,*** ⁸ but wrath and fury to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that ***each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body,*** whether good or evil.

2 Corinthians 11:15

¹⁵ So it is not strange that his ministers also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. ***Their end will correspond to their deeds.***

1 Peter 1:17

¹⁷ Now if you invoke as ***Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works***, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning,

Colossians 3:24-25

²⁴ knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance; be slaves of the Lord Christ. ²⁵ ***For the wrongdoer will receive recompense for the wrong he committed, and there is no partiality.***

Revelation 20:12-13

¹² I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. ***The dead were judged according to their deeds***, by what was written in the scrolls. ¹³ The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. ***All the dead were judged according to their deeds.***

Romans 2:2-8

² We know that the judgment of God on those who do such things [Judging others] is true. ³ Do you suppose, then, you who judge those who engage in such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you hold his priceless kindness, forbearance, and patience in low esteem, unaware that the kindness of God would lead you to repentance? ⁵ By your stubbornness and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of wrath and revelation of the just ***judgment of God***, ⁶ ***who will repay everyone according to his works***: ⁷ eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality ***through perseverance in good works***, ⁸ but wrath and fury to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; ⁹ it is not from works, so no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his handiwork, created in Christ ***Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.***

Philippians 2:12-13

¹² So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, ***work out your salvation with fear and trembling.***

We can clearly see that the Bible teaches us that we must constantly do good works lest we be judged that we have not and woe to those who have not.

We can further see what Christ himself has to say about the subject:

Matthew 3:8-10

⁸ ***Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.*** ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰ Even

now the ax lies at the root of the trees. ***Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.***

Luke 3:8-9

⁸ ***Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance;*** and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ⁹ Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. ***Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.***"

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶ Just so, ***your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds*** and glorify your heavenly Father.

Matthew 21:28-32

²⁸ "What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir,' but did not go. ³¹ ***Which of the two did his father's will?" They answered, "The first."*** Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. ³² When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but not do what I command? ⁴⁷ ***I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them.*** ⁴⁸ That one is like a person building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when the flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who listens and does not act is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, it collapsed at once and was completely destroyed."

Luke 8:15

¹⁵ But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, ***and bear fruit through perseverance.***

Matthew 25:31-46

The Judgment of the Nations.

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, ³² and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit

you?’⁴⁰ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, **whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.**’⁴¹ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,⁴³ stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’⁴⁴ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’⁴⁵ He will answer them, ‘**Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.**’⁴⁶ **And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”**

Matthew 7:21

²¹ **“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”**

Matthew 19:16-21

¹⁶ Now someone approached him and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?”¹⁷ He answered him, “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. **If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.**”¹⁸ He asked him, “Which ones?” And Jesus replied, “ ‘You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness;¹⁹ honor your father and your mother’; and ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”²⁰ The young man said to him, “All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?”²¹ Jesus said to him, **“If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

Galatians 5:4-6

⁴ You are separated from Christ, **you who are trying to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**⁵ For through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness.⁶ For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but **only faith working through love.**

John 14:21

²¹ **Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me.** And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

And what are Christ’s commandments? The law of course, the commandments handed down by God to Moses on the mountain, but also those things He taught us on Earth.

How can we read these passages and NOT know that we must constantly do good works for our fellow man in order to retain our place in Heaven.

Not the use of the word retain, because, yes, we are saved by our faith, but we must constantly demonstrate our faith (as in James) to **retain** our salvation. We have to work at it always or else we may go off to eternal punishment,

Last, let us consider these often read passages:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

¹ If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.² And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all

faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, ⁵ it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, ⁶ it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. ⁹ For we know partially and we prophesy partially, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. ¹² At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. ¹³ So **faith**, hope, love remain, these three; **but the greatest of these is love.**

Think about this last statement. "The greatest of these is love." Faith is listed first, yet it states clearly that love is greater than faith or hope. IF this is so, how can we be saved by faith alone? We must first consider love, the greatest of the three. What does love propagate but good works, good deeds, love for our fellow human beings and the keeping of God's commandments.

Protestants will say, "Well of course we must love one another, that is one of Christ's commandments." And they are correct, but that love must manifest itself in the good works we are also commanded to do, not because God told us to, but because we love, not only Him, but by extension, His people, our Earthly brothers and sisters.

We must also keep in mind that when we fall back on these good works, when we become involved selfishly in our individual lives, we stray from these good works and become in danger of being judged. The center of sin is I, as in sIn. We must be constantly aware that we need to remove ourselves from our relationship with Jesus and put others ahead of ourselves. It is clear that our salvation is a gift, and we usually accept that gift with gladness, but we must also remember that we can easily abuse, misplace or even lose a gift.

The scriptures tell us that the gift of salvation must be appreciated, protected, and nurtured throughout our lives in the care of our fellow man... The theology of sola fide is therefore clearly not biblical.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The freedom of faith

160 To be human, "man's response to God by faith must be free, and... therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. the act of faith is of its very nature a free act." "God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth. Consequently they are bound to him in conscience, but not coerced. . . This fact received its fullest manifestation in Christ Jesus." Indeed, Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. "For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom... grows by the love with which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself."

The necessity of faith

161 Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. "Since "without faith it is impossible to please (God) " and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life 'But he who endures to the end.'"]

Perseverance in faith

162 Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicated to St. Timothy: "Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith." To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church.

Faith - the beginning of eternal life

163 Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below. Then we shall see God "face to face", "as he is". So faith is already the beginning of eternal life: When we contemplate the blessings of faith even now, as if gazing at a reflection in a mirror, it is as if we already possessed the wonderful things which our faith assures us we shall one day enjoy.

164 Now, however, "we walk by faith, not by sight"; we perceive God as "in a mirror, dimly" and only "in part". Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.

165 It is then we must turn to the witnesses of faith: to Abraham, who "in hope... believed against hope"; to the Virgin Mary, who, in "her pilgrimage of faith", walked into the "night of faith" in sharing the darkness of her son's suffering and death; and to so many others: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

953 Communion in charity. In the sanctorum communio, "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself." "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." "Charity does not insist on its own way." In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion.

1475 In the communion of saints, "a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things." In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.

1694 Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, Christians are "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord. Following Christ and united with him, Christians can strive to be "imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love" by conforming their thoughts, words and actions to the "mind . . . which is yours in Christ Jesus," and by following his example.

Charity

1822 Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

1823 Jesus makes charity the new commandment.⁹⁶ By loving his own "to the end,"⁹⁷ he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." And again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."⁹⁸

1824 Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God and his Christ: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love."⁹⁹

1825 Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies."¹⁰⁰ The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our enemies, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself.¹⁰¹

The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: "charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1826 "If I . . . have not charity," says the Apostle, "I am nothing." Whatever my privilege, service, or even virtue, "if I . . . have not charity, I gain nothing."¹⁰³ Charity is superior to all the virtues. It is the first of the theological virtues: "So faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But the greatest of these is charity."¹⁰⁴

1827 The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which "binds everything together in perfect harmony";¹⁰⁵ it is the form of the virtues; it articulates and orders them among themselves; it is the source and the goal of their Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love.

1828 The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of the children of God. He no longer stands before God as a slave, in servile fear, or as a mercenary looking for wages, but as a son responding to the love of him who "first loved us":¹⁰⁶

If we turn away from evil out of fear of punishment, we are in the position of slaves. If we pursue the enticement of wages, . . . we resemble mercenaries. Finally if we obey for the sake of the good itself and out of love for him who commands . . . we are in the position of children.¹⁰⁷

1829 The fruits of charity are joy, peace, and mercy; charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion: Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.

2013 "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity."⁶⁵ All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that . . . doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.

2447 The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God:

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?

The word Purgatory or its equivalent does not appear anywhere in the Bible in any version of the Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic or Latin translations. The word itself is from the Latin *purgare*, to purge, the root of *purgatorius*, purifying, or to purify, later anglicized to *purgatory*. And applied by the Catholic Church to that place where souls not quite condemned to Hades are sent to be purified in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

The concept is simple. Only a perfect, sinless soul may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. One must be as perfect as God himself to abide with Him.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines purgatory as a "purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven," which is experienced by those "who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified" CCC 1030.

It notes that "this final purification of the elect . . . is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" CCC 1031.

Revelation 21:27 tells us that *"nothing unclean will enter it, nor any [one] who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Matthew 5:48

⁴⁸ *So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ *Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

James 3:2

² *for we all fall short in many respects. If anyone does not fall short in speech, he is a perfect man, able to bridle his whole body also.*

Oh, oh. I'm pretty sure I'm in trouble. But knowing that we are sinners, and God being an ever loving God who only wants us to be with Him for eternity has given us an escape from Hell card. We call it Purgatory. So what then is the Biblical basis for the concept of Purgatory if it's not even found in the Bible? Well, there is quite a bit of evidence there as a matter of fact.

1 John 5:16-17

¹⁶ *If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray.* ¹⁷ *All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not deadly.*

Well, that's a start, we can pray for each other to ask God's forgiveness for sins. At least for non deadly sins.

But what about deadly sins? We know as Catholics that we can go to confession and have our sins forgiven if we are truly repentant. But according to the Scriptures, this is not always enough. Even when your sins are forgiven, we may have to do penance.

2 Samuel 12:13-14

¹³ *Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan answered David: "For his part, the LORD has removed your sin. You shall not die,"* ¹⁴ *but since you have utterly spurned the LORD by this deed, the child born to you will surely die."*

Even though God completely forgave David for his sin, David was punished by the loss of his son. And although Jesus died for our sins, He Himself still holds us accountable for them and warns us of future penance:

Matthew 12:36

³⁶ *I tell you, on the day of judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak.*

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ *it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment.*

That seems pretty clear that Heaven is not a free ride.

Matthew 25:31-32

³¹ *"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."*

If our judgment does not occur directly at our death, where do we hang out until Jesus shows up to separate us, the goats from the sheep? We call it purgatory.

PURGATORY (FIX THIS)

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That seems pretty clear that Heaven is not a free ride.

Matthew 25:31-32

³¹ "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

2 Maccabees 12:44-46

⁴⁴ for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. ⁴⁵ But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. ⁴⁶ Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.

If our judgment does not occur directly at our death, where do we hang out until Jesus shows up to separate us, the goats from the sheep? Catholics call it purgatory.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

III. The Final Purification, or Purgatory

1030All 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.

1031The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:⁶⁰⁷ (954, 1472)

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this

age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.⁶⁰⁸

1032This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.”⁶⁰⁹ From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.⁶¹⁰ The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead: ([958](#), [1371](#), [1479](#))

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their father’s sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.⁶¹¹

HELL

HEALTH AND WEALTH GOSPEL?

HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON, NOT A FORCE

DIVINITY OF JESUS

TIME OF SECOND COMING UNKNOWN

DEUTEROCANON OR APOCRYPHA?

BEHAVIOR CONTRACEPTION

HOMOSEXUALITY

DRINKING WINE

CONFUSION OVER THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The scriptures containing the Ten Commandments are identical in chapter and verse in the Catholic and Protestant bibles, differing only in the language used in the translation, but in no way different in content. Let's compare them side by side:

The Protestant King James Version:

Exodus 20:1-17

- ¹ And God spake all these words, saying,
-
- ² I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
-
- ³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
-
- ⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
-
- ⁵ Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;
-
- ⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
-
- ⁷ Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
-
- ⁸ Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
-
- ⁹ Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
-
- ¹⁰ But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
-
- ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
-
- ¹² Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
-
- ¹³ Thou shalt not kill.
-
- ¹⁴ Thou shalt not commit adultery.
-
- ¹⁵ Thou shalt not steal.
-
- ¹⁶ Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
-
- ¹⁷ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

The Catholic New American Bible, revised edition

Exodus 20:1-17

- ¹ Then God spoke all these words:
-
- ² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
-
- ³ You shall not have other gods beside me.
-
- ⁴ You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;
-
- ⁵ you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation;
-
- ⁶ but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.
-
- ⁷ You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain.
-
- ⁸ Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy.
-
- ⁹ Six days you may labor and do all your work,
-
- ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your work animal, or the resident alien within your gates.
-
- ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.
-
- ¹² Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
-
- ¹³ You shall not kill.
-
- ¹⁴ You shall not commit adultery.
-
- ¹⁵ You shall not steal.
-
- ¹⁶ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
-
- ¹⁷ You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Notice that in both versions, if you read them carefully, there actually appear to be thirteen separate commandments. “The precise numbering and division of these precepts into “ten commandments” is somewhat uncertain. The traditional designation as “ten” is not found here but in [Exodus 34:28](#) and also [Deuteronomy 4:13](#) and [10:4](#), where these precepts are alluded to literally as “the ten words.” That they were originally written on two tablets appears in [Exodus 32:15–16](#); [34:28–29](#); [Deuteronomy 4:13](#); [10:2–4](#). Traditionally among Catholics and Lutherans, verses 1–6 are considered as only one commandment, and verse 17 as two. The Anglican, Greek Orthodox, and Reformed Churches count verses 1–6 as two, and verse 17 as one. In [Deuteronomy 5:21](#), “Wife” and “Possessions” are separated re. coveting.

The present form of the commands is a product of a long development, as is clear from the fact that the individual precepts vary considerably in length and from the slightly different formulation of [Deuteronomy 5:6-21](#) (see especially vv. [12–15](#) and [21](#)). Indeed they represent a mature formulation of a traditional morality. Why this specific selection of commands should be set apart is not entirely clear. None of them is unique in the Old Testament and all of the laws which follow are also from God and equally binding on the Israelites. Even so, this collection represents a privileged expression of God’s moral demands on Israel and is here set apart from the others as a direct, unmediated communication of God to the Israelites and the basis of the covenant being concluded on Sinai.” (from the *New American Bible revised edition as published on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops web site*)

How do we arrive at the magic number ten?

Exodus 34:28

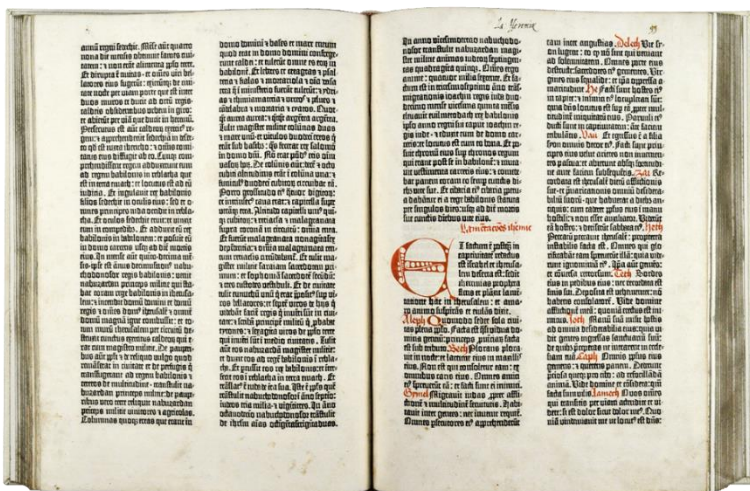
28 So Moses was there with the LORD for forty days and forty nights, without eating any food or drinking any water, and he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten words.

Deuteronomy 4:13

[13](#) He proclaimed to you his covenant, which he commanded you to keep: the ten words, which he wrote on two stone tablets.

Exodus 10:4

[4](#) The LORD then wrote on the tablets, as he had written before, the ten words that the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me.



It is important to remember that the chapters and verses we know today did not appear in the original scriptures and there is no authoritative basis for the divisions we now use in the Bible. The chapter and verse divisions were added to the Bible for the sake of convenience by a priest named Stephen Langton who divided the Bible into chapters in the year A.D. 1227, so the division of the commandments was never about the verses, but about the commands themselves.

According to the Catechism, paragraph **2066**:

"The division and numbering of the Commandments have varied in the course of history. The present catechism follows the division of the Commandments established by St. Augustine, which has become traditional in the Catholic Church. It is also that of the Lutheran confessions. The Greek Fathers worked out a slightly different division, which is found in the Orthodox Churches and Reformed communities."

Not until the paraphrased or abbreviated versions of the Ten Commandments became popular after the reformation, did Protestants adopt the Orthodox versions in use today that separate Idolatry from One God.

By accepting the separation of verses 3 and 4 as two different commandments, some Protestants helped justify their division from the Catholic Church by claiming that the statues of saints and angels were graven images forbidden by a specific commandment, whereas the commandment itself, read in its full context is clearly intended to prohibit the creation of idols of worship. The misconception is perpetrated by those who do not have a full understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and mistake veneration and intercession for worship.

THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Part Three, Life In Christ

Section Two, the Ten Commandments

"Teacher, what must I do... ?"

2052 "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" To the young man who asked this question, Jesus answers first by invoking the necessity to recognize God as the "One there is who is good," as the supreme Good and the source of all good. Then Jesus tells him: "If you would enter life, keep the commandments." And he cites for his questioner the precepts that concern love of neighbor: "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother." Finally Jesus sums up these commandments positively: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."¹

2053 To this first reply Jesus adds a second: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."² This reply does not do away with the first: following Jesus Christ involves keeping the Commandments. The Law has not been abolished,³ but rather man is invited to rediscover it in the person of his Master who is its perfect fulfillment. In the three synoptic Gospels, Jesus' call to the rich young man to follow him, in the obedience of a disciple and in the observance of the Commandments, is joined to the call to poverty and chastity.⁴ The evangelical counsels are inseparable from the Commandments.

2054 Jesus acknowledged the Ten Commandments, but he also showed the power of the Spirit at work in their letter. He preached a "righteousness [which] exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees"⁵ as well as that of the Gentiles.⁶ He unfolded all the demands of the Commandments. "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill.' . . . But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."⁷

2055 When someone asks him, "Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?"⁸ Jesus replies: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets."⁹ The Decalogue must be interpreted in light of this twofold yet single commandment of love, the fullness of the Law:

These paragraphs and those through paragraph 2082 fully explain the teachings of the Catholic Church on the Ten Commandments based on the fullness of the scriptures.

All this of course leads us to the root of the misunderstanding of the Ten Commandments, ***"Idolatry."***

We've just explored and explained the scripture in the Ten Commandments and hopefully cleared up the misconceptions there based on scripture and the teachings of the Church.

Catholics, of course, do not worship Mary, and the saints, or their icons, statues or paintings. But to the uneducated, the evidence might appear to prove otherwise.

The image shown to the right is actually titled "Catholic Idolaters" and is found on an avidly anti-Catholic web site. So, given the outward evidence, the misinformation disseminated by many anti-Catholic pundits, web sites and even preachers from the pulpit, it certainly appears that Catholics do indeed worship idols.



From the standpoint of a person raised through the Protestant Church, having grown up in Church buildings without statues, photos, paintings and often not even stained glass windows, the contrast can be startling. If you grew up in a Church similar to that to the right, along with a Protestant understanding of the Ten Commandments as discussed previously...



...we might easily understand why worshipping in a Church such as the one pictured here might be a little intimidating, or at least lead easily to incorrect conclusions.

So what do you say to a Protestant friend who asks about the Catholic preoccupation with statues and idols?



IDOLATRY

Exodus 20:3-6

³ You shall not have other gods beside me. ⁴ ***You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;*** ⁵ ***you shall not bow down before them or serve them.*** For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; ⁶ but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

As we have seen, this is the scripture used today by many Protestants to object to the use of statues, icons, and other images by the Catholic Church. But as we've also shown before, you have to read **all** the words.

Then why do Catholics have an abundance of statues, paintings and icons of religious figures and symbols in their Churches? Why do Catholics make statues and graven images?

Because God told them to. Several times. Clearly, explicitly and in great detail he told them to make statues and adornments in honor of Him.

AFTER God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, in **Exodus 25:18-20** he tells Moses:

¹⁸ Make two cherubim of beaten gold for the two ends of the cover; ¹⁹ make one cherub at one end, and the other at the other end, of one piece with the cover, at each end. ²⁰ The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, sheltering the cover with them; they shall face each other, with their faces looking toward the cover.

In **Numbers 21:8-9** *⁸ ...the LORD said to Moses: Make a seraph and mount it on a pole, and everyone who has been bitten will look at it and recover. ⁹ Accordingly Moses made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever the serpent bit someone, the person looked at the bronze serpent and recovered.*

Since by God's command, one had only to look at this graven image of a snake to be healed from snake bite, God makes it clear that created images are acceptable for ritual use as well as simply for decoration.

In **1 Kings 6:23-29** we read: ²³ *In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim, each ten cubits high, made of pine.* ²⁴ *Each wing of a cherub was five cubits so that the span from wing tip to wing tip was ten cubits.* ²⁵ *The second cherub was also ten cubits: the two cherubim were identical in size and shape;* ²⁶ *the first cherub was ten cubits high, and so was the second.* ²⁷ *He placed the cherubim in the inmost part of the house; the wings of the cherubim were spread wide, so that one wing of the first touched the side wall and the wing of the second touched the other wall; the wings pointing to the middle of the room touched each other.* ²⁸ *He overlaid the cherubim with gold.* ²⁹ *The walls of the house on all sides of both the inner and the outer rooms had carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers.”*

In **1 Chronicles 28:18-19** David gives the plans for the temple to his son Solomon including a description of cherubim to guard the Ark of the Covenant: ¹⁸ *the refined gold, and its weight, to be used for the altar of incense; and, finally, gold to fashion the chariot: the cherubim spreading their wings and covering the ark of the covenant of the LORD.* ¹⁹ *All this he wrote down, by the hand of the LORD, to make him understand it—the working out of the whole design.”*

So here’s the conundrum: Why would God tell Moses not to make ANY kind of image in Exodus 20, and then turn around and give specific instructions on the creation of holy images?

Because the prohibition against images is against **IDLOLS** to be worshipped as gods and the prohibition against worshipping any tangible artifact as any God other than the one true God of Israel.

All of the passages above can be used to refute the absolute ban on graven images so strictly enforced by many Protestants. At the same time, you might ask a Protestant friend questioning Catholic practices if there is a picture of Jesus in their bible, or other book or publication and ask why this is not contrary to Protestant interpretation of the commandments.

Just as we may have a photograph of a deceased relative, a favorite aunt or uncle, a grandparent or even a deceased mother or father that we speak to affectionately or even ask for help with a problem in our lives, Catholics retain images of holy figures such as Jesus, Joseph, Mary and the saints to remind us of their holiness and give us strength in our own faith journey.

“The Church absolutely recognizes and condemns the sin of idolatry. What anti-Catholics fail to recognize is the distinction between thinking a piece of stone or plaster is a god and desiring to visually remember Christ and the saints in heaven by making statues in their honor. The making and use of religious statues is a *thoroughly* biblical practice. Anyone who says otherwise doesn’t know his Bible. ¹³

¹³ “Do Catholics Worship Statues?” A Catholic Answers tract (<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/do-catholics-worship-statues>)

Part Three, Life In Christ

Section Two, the Ten Commandments

Chapter One

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"

Article IV "You Shall Not Make For Yourself A Graven Image . . ."

2129 The divine injunction included the prohibition of every representation of God by the hand of man. *Deuteronomy* explains: "Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure. . . ." ⁶⁶ It is the absolutely transcendent God who revealed Himself to Israel. "He is the all," but at the same time "he is greater than all his works." ⁶⁷ He is "the author of beauty." ⁶⁸

2130 Nevertheless, already in the Old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with the bronze serpent, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim. ⁶⁹

2131 Basing itself on the mystery of the incarnate Word, the seventh ecumenical council at Nicaea (787) justified against the iconoclasts the veneration of icons - of Christ, but also of the Mother of God, the angels, and all the saints. By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new "economy" of images.

2132 The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, "the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype," and "whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it." ⁷⁰ The honor paid to sacred images is a "respectful veneration," not the adoration due to God alone:

Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is. ⁷¹

In other words, we know that the picture of Grandmother on the mantle is not really Grandmother, but a representation that reminds us of who the real person was on earth, and who they are as an immortal soul in Heaven.

This is the fine point that leads to the next part of the question, "Isn't praying to the saints worshipping them?"

“The mass is all bells and smells, pomp and circumstance, mumbo jumbo and strange rituals that have nothing to do with the love of Jesus, much less anything biblical.”

“Catholics don’t even read the Bible in Church”

...and on the face of it, it may appear to many Protestants that Catholics do not read the bible, because, just look at Catholics filing into church. Nobody even carries a Bible. Nobody opens a bible in mass to follow along with the priest, but go to nearly any Protestant Church and you’ll see that the majority of church goers carrying their own personal Bible, book marked, margin noted and tattered from use. When the pastor starts to preach he will often site scripture and invite the congregation to read along.

There are many people, simply misinformed, who believe that Catholics don’t read the Bible in church or that Catholicism is not a scriptural religion or even that the Church tries to “suppress” the scriptures from its members. This simply couldn’t be further from the truth. First, the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” the very document that explains the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church, contains at least 2,829 references to scripture¹⁴ so the actual teachings of the church are highly based on scripture. And while it’s true Catholics don’t sit in the pews with their Bibles in hand and turn to a verse invoked by the priest during a sermon (or in our case a homily), the entire Catholic service (called the Mass), nearly every word spoken or sung from the opening song to the final blessing and recessional hymn is based on scripture.

One thing we all need to remember is that the Church is not from the Bible, but rather, the Bible is from the Church. At the time of Christ, the Bible as we know it didn’t even exist. Yes, the Jewish laws existed, the Torah and the various other scriptures totaling 46 writings now included in the Old Testament.

It was not until about 367 AD that St. Athanasius came up with a list of 73 books for the Bible that he believed to be divinely inspired, including 27 various writings then commonly in use to be included as the New Testament. This list was approved by Pope Damasus I in 382 AD, and was formally approved by the Church Council of Rome in that same year.

Later Councils at Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD) ratified this list of 73 books. In 405 AD, Pope Innocent I wrote a letter to the Bishop of Toulouse reaffirming this canon of 73 books. In 419 AD, the Council of Carthage reaffirmed this list, which Pope Boniface agreed to.

It was not until 1454 that the bible was massed produced on a printing press and bound into a single volume by Johannes Gutenberg.

The Council of Trent, in 1546, in response to the Reformation removing 7 books from the canon (canon is a Greek word meaning “standard”), reaffirmed the original St. Athanasius list of 73 books.

In the Catholic Church, there are direct readings from these scriptures at every mass (which are outline below) and a most amazing fact is that every Catholic Church, (or Parish) in the entire world, reads the

¹⁴ See the Catechism of the Catholic Church got to <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm> scroll down on the left to the index of citations.

same scriptures as every other parish every single day. In fact, if a person were to attend daily mass seven days a week for three years, they would hear virtually the entire Bible read from Genesis to Revelation.

The term "Mass" may be derived from the Late Latin word *missa* (dismissal), a word used in the concluding formula of Mass in Latin: "*Ite, missa est*" ("Go; it is the dismissal"). In antiquity, *missa* simply meant 'dismissal'. In Christian usage, however, it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word 'dismissal' has come to imply a 'mission'. The definition has come to encompass the entirety of the Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church. These few words succinctly express the missionary nature of the Church.

However, my intent here is not a theological discussion of the components of the mass, but rather an enlightenment of the actual scriptures upon which every word of the Catholic Mass are based.

THE CATHOLIC SUNDAY MASS AND ITS RELATION TO THE BIBLE.

First, there are four obvious, specific readings of scripture at every Sunday Mass and on special feast days. (These are the readings heard daily by Catholics worldwide.) they are:

1. An Old Testament Reading
2. A Responsorial Psalm (usually from Psalms, but sometimes from other scriptures)
3. A New Testament reading (Usually from the Epistles)
4. A Gospel Reading

During the week at daily mass there are three readings:

1. An Old Testament Reading
2. A Responsorial Psalm (usually from Psalms, but sometimes from other scriptures)
3. A Gospel Reading

These readings are chosen by the Church and published well in advance so that on each day, all of the readings complement each other and help form a cohesive teaching from the scriptures. So as you can see, Catholics do read from the Bible in church every day...

...But there is much, much more!

For the purposes of this discussion, we will use the teachings and readings from a typical Sunday Mass.
So, let's start the mass:

THE BEGINNING

At the very beginning of the Mass, some parishes start by ringing the Sanctus Bells.¹⁵ Immediately we sing an introitum (Latin for "entrance") sometimes called the processional or welcoming hymn. It is a song with lyrics often taken from Scripture and most often from scripture relating to the readings and the liturgy for the day. During this singing, the Priest, Deacons, and other celebrants and servers approach the altar. When all are assembled and the song is finished the priest opens the continuing prayer of the mass with

¹⁵ <http://www.adoremus.org/0305SantusBells.html>

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” While the Priest and the congregation perform the sign of the cross.

Luke 3:21-22

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.” (ref. Father, Son and Holy Spirit appear together)

Matthew 28:19

¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

...and all respond **“Amen”**

Throughout the Mass you'll find several uses of **“Amen”** which literally means “This is the truth, I believe this, I stake my life on it”

Biblical references:

Romans 11:36

³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

1 Chronicles 16:36

³⁶ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Let all the people say, Amen! Hallelujah.

Matthew 26:13

¹³ Amen, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of, in memory of her.”

Revelation 5:14

¹⁴ The four living creatures answered, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Immediately following this, the Priest greets the congregation with a variation of **“The Lord be with you.”** Or sometimes **“The peace of the Lord be with you.”** The same salutation that we find in the Gospels and many of Paul’s writings:

Luke 24:36

³⁶ While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

2 Corinthians 13:13

¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with all of you.

1 Chronicles 22:11

¹¹ *“Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you succeed in building the house of the LORD your God, as he has said you shall.*

Ephesians 1:2

² *grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 1:2

² *grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Numbers 6:26

²⁶ The Lord look upon you kindly and give you **peace!**

To which the congregation responds with another Pauline address, **“And with your Spirit.”**

2 Timothy 4:22

²² *The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with all of you. Annunciation*

Galatians 6:18

¹⁸ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.*

Philippians 4:23

²³ *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

Philemon 1:25

²⁵ *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

But most importantly, throughout the scriptures, when the Lord is delivering an important message to someone, His Angel or messenger begins by reassuring that the Lord is with you or has found favor with you;

Judges 6:12

¹² *When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”*

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ *In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”*

These always occur when the Lord is asking something momentous of someone. Therefore, in the mass, the phrase is repeated four times at the beginning of a new and more momentous part of the mass.

After the greeting the entire congregation publicly confesses to God and to each other that they have sinned:

“I confess to Almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do. Through my fault, through my fault through my most grievous fault. Therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-virgin, all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the Lord our God”

We are encouraged by the scriptures to confess our sins to each other and beg forgiveness.

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.

1 Corinthians 11:28.

²⁸ A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup.

In this way we prepare ourselves for the breaking of the bread (another name for the Mass, the actual essence of the mass)

Acts 2:46

⁴⁶ Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart

During the spoken confession we reference and appeal to several Scriptural passages:

“I confess to almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters...

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.

That I have greatly sinned...

1 Chronicles 21:8

⁸ Then David said to God, “I have sinned greatly in doing this thing. Take away your servant’s guilt, for I have acted very foolishly.”

In my thoughts and in my words...

Matthew 5:28

²⁸ But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

James 3:6

⁶ The tongue is also a fire. It exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body and setting the entire course of our lives on fire, itself set on fire by Gehenna.

In what I have done, and what I have failed to do...

James 4:17

¹⁷ *So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, it is a sin.*

Luke 10:30-37

³⁰ *Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. ³² Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. ³³ But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. ³⁴ He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' ³⁶ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" ³⁷ He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

Through my fault, through my fault through my most grievous fault.

While making this public confession we put our fist to our breast (either once or thrice) in imitation of the tax collector who beat or struck his breast in anguish over sinning against God.

Luke 18:13

¹³ *But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'*

Therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-virgin, all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters to pray for me to the Lord our God

1 Thessalonians 5:25

²⁵ *Brothers, pray for us too.*

Revelation 5:8

⁸ *When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

Revelation 8:4

⁴ *And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.*

The priest then asks God for His forgiveness:

"May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life."

Matthew 9:2-8

² *And there people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Courage, child, your sins are forgiven."*

Matthew 18:18

¹⁸ *Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

John 20:22

²² *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit.*

John 20:23

²³ *Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."*

THE KYRIE

Next we sing or say the Kyrie: "**Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy**" or sometimes in Greek, "**Kýrie Eléison, Christe Eléison, Kýrie Eléison**", which we find prayed by those in the Old Testament:

Baruch 3:2

² *Hear, LORD, and have mercy, for you are a merciful God; have mercy on us, who have sinned against you:*

Psalms 85:8

⁸ *Show us, LORD, your mercy; grant us your salvation.*

Isaiah 33:2

² *LORD, be gracious to us; for you we wait. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of trouble!*

Psalms 4:2

² *Answer me when I call, my saving God. When troubles hem me in, set me free; take pity on me, hear my prayer.*

Psalms 25:11

¹¹ *For the sake of your name, LORD, pardon my guilt, though it is great.*

Psalms 31:9

⁹ *You will not abandon me into enemy hands, but will set my feet in a free and open space.*

Psalms 41:5

⁵ *Even I have said, "LORD, take note of me; heal me, although I have sinned against you.*

Psalms 51:3

³ *Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love; in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.*

Psalms 57:2

² *Have mercy on me, God, have mercy on me. In you I seek refuge. In the shadow of your wings I seek refuge till harm pass by.*

Tobit 8:4

⁴ *When Sarah's parents left the bedroom and closed the door behind them, Tobiah rose from bed and said to his wife, "My sister, come, let us pray and beg our Lord to grant us mercy and protection."*

And in the New Testament:

Matthew 9:13

¹³ *Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."*

Matthew 9:27

²⁷ *And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed [him], crying out, "Son of David,* have pity on us!"*

Matthew 15:22

²² *And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon."*

Matthew 17:15

¹⁵ *and said, "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic and suffers severely; often he falls into fire, and often into water.*

Matthew 20:30

³⁰ *Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "[Lord,] Son of David, have pity on us!"*

Mark 10:47

⁴⁷ *On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."*

Luke 16:24

²⁴ *And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'*

THE GLORIA

The Kyrie is succeeded by the Gloria. It is also spoken or sung as a form of worship and adoration to God, and includes numerous Scriptural passages both referenced and taken word-for-word:

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will.**Luke 2:14**

¹⁴ *"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

We praise You. We bless You. We adore you. We glorify You. We give You thanks for Your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God almighty Father.

Revelation 7:12

¹² and exclaimed: "Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Revelation 19:6

⁶ Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: "Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, [our] God, the almighty."

Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father: you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. You take away the sins of the world,

John 1:29

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

receive our prayer.

Romans 8:34

³⁴ Who will condemn? It is Christ [Jesus] who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord.

Revelation 15:4

⁴ Who will not fear you, Lord, or glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

You alone are the most high Jesus Christ

Luke 1:32

³² He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,

Psalms 83:19

¹⁹ Let them know that your name is LORD, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father

2 John 1:3

³ Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son in truth and love.

Luke 4:34

³⁴ ...I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

John 14:26

²⁶ *The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.*

Amen ¹⁶

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The liturgy of the Word contains two parts; readings from the sacred scriptures and the Homily (sermon) given by the priest.

The first reading is from the Old Testament. The lector proclaims **“A reading from the book of Ezekiel”** (or appropriate scripture of the day) and begins to read from the proclaimed text. When he has finished reading, the lector proclaims, **“The Word of the Lord”**

John 1:1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 Samuel 3:7

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

1 Samuel 15:10

¹⁰ The word of the Lord came to Samuel:

2 Samuel 7:4

⁴ But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

1 Kings 6:11

¹¹ Now the word of the Lord came to Solomon,

All respond with **“Thanks be to God!”** We should speak these words with great reverence and a full heart for these are God’s very words.

2 Corinthians 9:15

¹⁵ *Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

Romans 6:17

¹⁷ *But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted,*

1 Corinthians 15:57

⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

¹⁶ See scripture relating to **Amen** on page 82

2 Corinthians 8:16

¹⁶ *But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have.*

The next scripture is the **Responsorial Psalm** and is taken directly from the Book of Psalms in the Bible or sometimes from other books as may be appropriate for the day. The cantor and choir sing several verses, with the congregation responding in song after every verse with a common phrase from the Scriptures. The Cantor sings the response, repeated by the choir and the congregation then the cantor sings each verse, followed by the response from the congregation and choir. This is in the tradition of the Jewish practice of singing the psalms in alternating verses between the cantor and the congregation or sometimes two halves of the congregation singing in response to each other. This is one part in the Mass where we as the gathered Church actually repeat God's word back to him in praise.

The second reading is generally from the New Testament epistles, the non-gospel books from sacred Scripture. Again, the lector proclaims "A reading from the book of Philippians" (or appropriate scripture of the day.) and begins to read the passage. And again at the conclusion of the reading the lector proclaims "**The word of the Lord**" and the faithful respond "**Thanks be to God**"

We then sing or recite **the Gospel Acclamation**, which first involves the cantor, choir and congregation singing "**Alleluia, Alleluia.**" Which in Hebrew means "Praise God" or Praise be to God"

Revelation 19:1

¹ [The Rejoicing in Heaven] After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and power to our God,

Revelation 19:3

³ Once more they said, "Alleluia! The smoke goes up from her forever and ever."

Revelation 19:4

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Alleluia!"

Revelation 19:6

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out, "Alleluia! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Tobit 13:17

¹⁷ The gates of Jerusalem will sing hymns of joy, and all her houses will cry, 'Alleluia! Blessed be the God of Israel!' and the blessed will bless the holy name forever and ever."

The Cantor then sings a short verse from Scripture (the antiphon) the cantor, choir and congregation close with "**Alleluia, Alleluia.**"

During this time the priest bows to the altar and says softly or to himself the prayer; "**May the word of the Lord be on my heart and on my lips that I may proclaim this Gospel worthily and Well**". If a Deacon is to read the Gospel, the Deacon will ask the Priest for a blessing and the priest will say the prayer for the

Deacon; **“May the word of the Lord be on your heart and on your lips that you may proclaim this Gospel worthily and Well”**

After the Gospel Acclamation, the Priest and the congregation exchange a formal greeting, similar to the earlier salutations. The priest greets the congregation a second time with: **“The Lord be with you.”** Or **“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you”** to which we respond again, **“And with your spirit”** which signifies a new, elevated part of the liturgy, the actual words spoken by our Lord Jesus.

The Gospel reading is from one of the four Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. The Priest or Deacon proclaims **“A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew”** (or appropriate selection for the day) As he says this, he traces the sign of the cross over the words of the reading.

The Congregation responds, **“Glory to You O Lord.”**

Luke 2:14

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Romans 4:20

²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,

Philippians 2:11

¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

As we say this, we make a small sign of the cross over our forehead, lips and heart. The significance of the threefold signing is that we want to hear the Holy Gospel with an open mind, proclaim it with our lips, and cherish and safeguard it in our hearts. We are imploring the Lord for the grace to receive, acknowledge, and then profess the faith that has been received in the Holy Gospel through our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate.

At the conclusion of the Gospel reading the Priest or Deacon proclaims **“The Gospel of the Lord”** then may kiss the Gospel word with a small prayer **“May the words of the Gospel wash away our sins.”**

Gospel is the English form of the Greek; εὐαγγέλιον or “euangelion”, meaning simply Good News.

Romans 1:1

¹ [Salutation] Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Romans 1:3

³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh

Romans 1:9

⁹ For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers,

1 Corinthians 9:12

12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

And all respond **“Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ”**

Philippians 1:11

11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

1 Peter 1:7

7 so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel reading is followed by the Homily (Greek, "homilia,") delivered by the priest or deacon. It is generally a commentary after the Scripture reading; (distinctly different than a sermon). A sermon can be described as the idea of a chosen topic for which the speaker researches and provides examples of scripture to back up the given theme. A homily is a commentary, a teaching and an explanation of the theology behind a given scripture passage

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH – THE NICENE CREED

After the Homily, the entire congregation makes a profession of faith by reciting the Nicene Creed, in which we find numerous Scriptural references.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

The Nicene Creed is basically a distillation of everything we believe as Catholics about our faith, the existence of God, the Father, His son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, our creation, our salvation and our

core beliefs. It is called Nicene because it was originally adopted in the city of Nicaea (present day Iznik, Turkey) by the First Council of Nicaea in 325. In 381, it was amended at the First Council of Constantinople, and the amended form is referred to as the Nicene or the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Catholics have been reciting it at mass ever since.

So let's break it down scripturally:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty

Ephesians 4:6

⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Matthew 4:10

¹⁰ At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.'"

maker of Heaven and Earth,

Genesis 1:1

¹ In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth

Genesis 14:19

¹⁹ He blessed Abram with these words: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth;

of all things visible and invisible.

Colossians 1:16

¹⁶ For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him.

Hebrews 11:3

³ By faith we understand that the universe was ordered by the word of God, so that what is visible came into being through the invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Corinthians 8:6

⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all things are and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and through whom we exist.

the Only Begotten Son of God,

Luke 1:35

³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

born of the Father before all ages.

Colossians 1:15,17

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or

principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,

John 1:1-2;

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

1 John 5:20

²⁰ We also know that the Son of God has come and has given us discernment to know the one who is true. And we are in the one who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;

John 10:30

³⁰ The Father and I are one."

John 14:9-10

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.

through him all things were made.

John 1:3

³ All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be

John 1:10

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

John 6:38

³⁸ because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me.

Hebrews 2:14

¹⁴ Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. (During this phrase, all bow in respect)

John 1:14

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

Matthew 1:18

¹⁸ Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

Mark 15:15

¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

John 19:16

¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

1 Peter 2:24

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures ⁴ that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures;

Luke 23:46

⁴⁶ Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

Matthew 27:59-60

⁵⁹ Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

Mark 9:31

³¹ He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise."

Acts 10:40

⁴⁰ his man God raised (on) the third day and granted that he be visible,

Luke 24:45-46

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. ⁴⁶ And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day

He ascended into heaven

Acts 1:9-10

⁹ When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. ¹⁰ While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them.

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Colossians 3:1

¹ *If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

Hebrews 1:3

³ *who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

He will come again in glory

Mark 13:26

²⁶ *And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory,*

to judge the living and the dead

2 Timothy 4:1

¹ *I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power:*

Mark 16:19

¹⁹ *So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.*

1 Peter 4:5

⁵ *but they will give an account to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.*

and his kingdom will have no end.

Luke 1:33

³³ *and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

2 Corinthians 3:17

¹⁷ *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*

John 6:63

⁶³ *It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

2 Corinthians 3:6

⁶ *who has indeed qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter brings death, but the Spirit gives life.*

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

John 15:26

²⁶ *"When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me.*

John 16:7

⁷ But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

John 14:16

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always,

who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,

Romans 11:36

³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Hebrews 9:14

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

who has spoken through the prophets.

Ephesians 3:5

⁵ which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,

1 Peter 1:10-11

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and investigated it, ¹¹ investigating the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow them.

2 Peter 1:21

²¹ for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Ephesians 5:27

²⁷ that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 2:20

²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.

Ephesians 4:4

⁴ one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call;

Romans 12:4-5

⁴ For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸ And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins**Ephesians 4:5**

⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Acts 22:16

¹⁶ Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name

Acts 2:38

³⁸ Peter [said] to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:27

²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead**1 Corinthians 15:42**

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible.

Colossians 2:12-13

¹² You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And even when you were dead [in] transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions;

Romans 6:4-5

⁴ We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

⁴ We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

and the life of the world to come.**John 3:16**

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

⁹ For God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

2 Peter 3:13

¹³ *But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

Revelation 21:1

¹ *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*

Amen. ¹⁷

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL, OR GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Here the priest, deacon or lector proclaims **“Let us pray”**

Prayers of a general and specific nature are recited or read aloud such as:

“May our nation’s leaders be strong in their faith and govern our country with the peace of the Lord, ”
We generally pray first for the Church, second for our nation and its leaders, third for our community, fourth for our families, fifth for ourselves and last for the deceased, but prayers can vary specific to seasons, world events or special activities of the Church.

Each prayer is followed by; **“Let us pray to the Lord”** :

1 Samuel 1:10:

¹⁰ *She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly. ”*

1 Samuel 7:5:

⁵ *Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” ”*

Or: **“Lord in Your mercy”** :

Psalm 25:6:

⁶ *Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. ”*

Psalm 119:77:

⁷⁷ *Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight. ”*

Each time the people respond: ”

“Lord hear our prayer.” :

Psalm 5:2:

² *Listen to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you I pray. ”*

Psalm 61:1:

¹ *Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. ”*

¹⁷ See scripture relating to **Amen** previously discussed.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer, the center and summit of the entire celebration is a memorial proclamation of praise and thanksgiving for God's work of salvation, a proclamation in which the Body and Blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit and the people are joined to Christ in offering his Sacrifice to the Father. The Eucharistic Prayer is comprised of all of the rest of the Mass from this point until the concluding rites.

Extending his hands, the Priest says for the third time, raising the importance of the liturgy to a new height;

The Lord be with you.

To which the congregation again responds with;

"And with your Spirit."

The Priest, raising his hands, continues:

Lift up your hearts.

The people respond:

We lift them up to the Lord.

Lamentations 3:41

⁴¹ Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands toward God in heaven!

The Priest, with hands extended, ads:

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

The people respond:

It is right and just.

1 Chronicles 16:8

⁸ Give thanks to the Lord, invoke his name; make known among the peoples his deeds.

Psalm 54:8

⁸ Then I will offer you generous sacrifice and give thanks to your name, Lord, for it is good.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Chronicles 16:34

³⁴ Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever;

Genesis 18:19

¹⁹ Indeed, I have singled him out that he may direct his children and his household in the future to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord may put into effect for Abraham the promises he made about him.

Proverbs 21:3

³ *To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.*

The Priest continues with the Preface:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy, through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, your Word through whom you made all things, whom you sent as our Savior and Redeemer, incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin. Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people, he stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion, so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection. And so, with the Angels and all the Saints we declare your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:

Which is broken down scripturally as follows:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,

Ezekiel 18:27

²⁷ *But if the wicked turn from the wickedness they did and do what is **right and just**, they save their lives;*

Ezra 10:11-12

¹¹ *But now, give praise to the Lord, the God of your ancestors, and do his will: separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign women.”* ¹² *In answer, the whole assembly cried out with a loud voice: “Yes, it is our duty to do as you say!*

Ezekiel 33:16

¹⁶ *None of the sins they committed shall be remembered against them. If they do what is right and just, they shall surely live.*

always and everywhere to give you thanks,

1 Thessalonians 5:18

¹⁸ *In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.*

Psalm 30:5

⁵ *Sing praise to the Lord, you faithful; give thanks to his holy memory.*

Psalm 30:13

¹³ *So that my glory may praise you and not be silent. O Lord, my God, forever will I give you thanks.*

Father most holy,

John 17:11

¹¹ And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are.

through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ,

Mark 1:11

¹¹ And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

your Word through whom you made all things,

John 1:1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God

John 1:3-4

³ All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. ⁴ through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race;

Revelation 4:11

¹¹ "Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created."

whom you sent as our Savior and Redeemer,

Jude 1:25

²⁵ to the only God, our savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, power, and authority from ages past, now, and for ages to come. Amen.

2 Timothy 1:10

¹⁰ but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin.

Luke 1:26

²⁶ In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:35

³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

Luke 2:7

⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn son.^[c] She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people,**1 Peter 2:9**

⁹ But you are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

2 Timothy 1:10

¹⁰ but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

he stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion,**Luke 23:33**

³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left.

Luke 23:46

⁴⁶ Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection.**Luke 24:6-7**

⁶ He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day.”

And so, with the Angels and all the Saints we declare your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:**Revelation 7:11-15**

¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They prostrated themselves before the throne, worshiped God, ¹² and exclaimed: “Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” ¹³ Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me, “Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ I said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.” He said to me, “These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ “For this reason they stand before God’s throne and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them.

All recite or sing:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Isaiah 6:3

³ *One cried out to the other: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!"*

Revelation 4:8

⁸ *The four living creatures, each of them with six wings, were covered with eyes inside and out. Day and night they do not stop exclaiming: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come."*

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Mark 11:9-10

⁹ *Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"* ¹⁰ *Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! Hosanna in the highest!"*

At the conclusion of the Holy, Holy, Holy the congregation kneels in a sign of respect, humility, adoration and worship. We show ourselves to be less than the greatness of God by this posture.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

For Catholics, the Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. It is the vital center of all that the Church is and does, because at its heart it is the real presence of the crucified, risen and glorified Lord, continuing and making available his saving work among us. After we have affirmed our faith, the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with a preparatory or offertory song. It is during this song that an offering is usually taken, and the priest begins preparation for the Eucharistic liturgy.

In the ancient church, the people brought bread and wine that they had personally made to offer as gifts for the transubstantiation into the Body and Blood of Christ. We now do this symbolically as someone chosen from the congregation brings the bread and wine to the priest, who places them on the Altar. At the same time, we offer our contemporary gifts to the Church by means of a money offering. We are saying that we offer our gifts as a part of the community of the Church. This is where we as people, figuratively place our gifts on the altar, our time, our talent, our treasure, our prayers.

When he has received the bread and wine for the celebration, the Priest offers prayer of blessing quietly at the altar. These are from the Jewish Passover prayers that Jesus would have prayed at the Last Supper; Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, Hamotzi lechem min haaretz. Hebrew for **"Blessed are you eternal our God, sovereign of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth."** Then holding up the wine he would pray "Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Melech Haolam, borei p'ri hagafen." **"Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine."** Sometimes these prayers are said aloud as the bread and then the wine is held aloft.

“Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.”

Judith 9:12

¹² Please, please, God of my father, God of the heritage of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all your creation, hear my prayer!

John 6:35

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.

the congregation responds:

“Blessed be God forever.”

1 Chronicles 29:10

¹⁰ Then David blessed the LORD in the sight of the whole assembly. David said: “Blessed are you, LORD, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity.

Psalms 89:53

⁵³ Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and amen!

“Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.”

Judith 9:12

¹² Please, please, God of my father, God of the heritage of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all your creation, hear my prayer!

Genesis 14:18

¹⁸ Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was a priest of God Most High.

Luke 22:20

²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.

The Priest then, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly:

“By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”

He then bows to the altar and prays again to himself;

“With humble spirit and contrite heart, may we be acceptable to you O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your site this day, be pleasing to you, O Lord.”

Exodus 29:25

²⁵ Then take them from their hands and burn them on the altar along with the burnt offering for a pleasing aroma to the Lord, a food offering presented to the Lord.

The Priest then turns to the Altar Server for a part of the Mass called the Lavabo. The server pours water over the priest's hands, in connection with the Passover because the leader of the Passover meal washes his hands at this moment in the meal. As he does this he prays;

“Lord wash away my iniquity and cleanse me of all my sins.”

The people then rise as he addresses the congregation;

“Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.”

Daniel 3:39-40

³⁹ *But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received; As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bulls, or tens of thousands of fat lambs,* ⁴⁰ *So let our sacrifice be in your presence today and find favor before you; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.*

To which we respond: **“May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.”**

Psalms 50:23

²³ *Those who offer praise as a sacrifice honor me; I will let him whose way is steadfast look upon the salvation of God.”*

THE EPICLESIS

This is the point in the mass at which the earthly bread and wine are transformed into the heavenly body, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ Himself!

As he extends his hands over the bread and wine the priest earnestly prays:

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, the fount of all holiness.

Ephesians 4:24

²⁴ *and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

Exodus 3:5

⁵ *God said: Do not come near! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.*

Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall,

Hebrews 2:4

⁴ God added his testimony by signs, wonders, various acts of power, and distribution of the gifts of the holy Spirit according to his will.

Exodus 16:13-15

*¹³ In the evening, quail came up and covered the camp. In the morning there was a layer of dew all about the camp, ¹⁴ and when the layer of dew evaporated, fine flakes were on the surface of the wilderness, fine flakes like hoarfrost on the ground. ¹⁵ On seeing it, the Israelites asked one another, "What is this?" * for they did not know what it was. But Moses told them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.*

Luke 1:35

³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, ²⁴ and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The body and blood now transformed, the priest offers the meal to the faithful church by reminding us;

At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion,

Luke 22:41-43

⁴¹ After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." ⁴³ And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him.

he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

Matthew 26:26

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body."

* What is this: the Hebrew *man hu* is thus rendered by the ancient versions, which understood the phrase as a popular etymology of the Hebrew word *man*, "manna"; but some render *man hu*, "This is manna."

Mark 14:22

²² *While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body."*

Luke 22:19

¹⁹ *Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me."*

In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

Matthew 26:27-28

²⁷ *Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.*

Mark 14:23-24

²³ *Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.*

Luke 22:20

²⁰ *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.*

In both the blessing of the bread and of the wine, these would have been the "Baruch Atah" Passover blessings discussed above under the Eucharistic Prayer.

After the words of Consecration, the priest says or may chant:

"The mystery of faith"**1 Timothy 3:9**

⁹ *holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*

1 Timothy 3:13

¹³ *Thus those who serve well as deacons gain good standing and much confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus. The Mystery of Our Religion.*

The which the congregation responds in one of three ways depending on the preference of the Pastor and the music director; All three are acceptable:

Either:

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

Romans 6:5

⁵ For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

Or:

**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

1 Corinthians 11:26

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Or:

**Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

John 8:32

³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Galatians 5:1

¹ For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. Then

the Priest continues:

Therefore O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of his Death and Resurrection, we offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation,

John 6:48

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life.

1 Corinthians 11:26

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

giving thanks that you have held us worthy to be in your presence and minister to you.

Wisdom 3:5

⁵ Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself.

1 Thessalonians 2:12

¹² exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you conduct yourselves as worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Deuteronomy 10:8

⁸ At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to him, and to bless in his name, as they have done to this day.

Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:4-5

⁴ For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.

1 Corinthians 10:17

¹⁷ Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

1 Corinthians 12:11

¹¹ But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes. One Body, Many Parts.

Remember, Lord, your Church, spread throughout the world, and bring her to the fullness of charity, together with Francis our Pope and Robert our Bishop and all the clergy. (or other names appropriate to the time and location)

John 11:51-52

⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, ⁵² and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.

Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection, and all who have died in your mercy: welcome them into the light of your face.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20

²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Psalm 4:7

⁷ Many say, "May we see better times! Lord, show us the light of your face!" Selah

Have mercy on us all, we pray, that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with the blessed Apostles, and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the ages, we may merit to be coheirs to eternal life,

Psalm 119:58

⁵⁸ *I entreat you with all my heart: have mercy on me in accord with your promise.*

Luke 1:35

³⁵ *And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.*

Revelation 5:8

⁸ *When he took it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each of the elders held a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the holy ones. (the saints)*

Matthew 19:29

²⁹ *And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.*

and may praise and glorify you through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ *And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶ *Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.*

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer the Priest takes the chalice and the paten with the host and, raising both, he alone says:

Through him, and with him, and in him,

John 1:3

³ *All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be*

John 1:4

⁴ *through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race;*

Mark 3:14

¹⁴ *He appointed twelve [whom he also named apostles] that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach*

John 6:56

⁵⁶ *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*

O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever.

And all recite: **Amen.**

1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁷ To the king of ages, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, honor and glory forever and ever.
Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The eating and drinking together of the Lord's Body and Blood in a Paschal meal is the culmination of the Eucharist. The themes underlying these rites are the mutual love and reconciliation that are both the condition and the fruit of worthy communion and the unity of the many in the One.

The Lord's Prayer

The congregation stands and the Priest says:

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

Together with the people, he continues:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ *"This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread; ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ¹³ and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.*

The Priest alone continues, saying:

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

From Scripture:

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,

Matthew 6:13

¹³ *and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.*

Psalm 79:9

⁹ Help us, God our savior, on account of the glory of your name. Deliver us, pardon our sins for your name's sake.

graciously grant peace in our days,

Proverbs 3:2

² For many days, and years of life, and peace, will they bring you.

Tobit 12:17

¹⁷ But Raphael said to them: "Do not fear; peace be with you! Bless God now and forever.

Psalm 4:9

⁹ In peace I will lie down and fall asleep, for you alone, Lord, make me secure.

that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress,

1 Kings 8:50

⁵⁰ Forgive your people who have sinned against you and all the offenses they have committed against you, and grant them mercy in the sight of their captors, so that these will be merciful to them.

Psalm 25:7

⁷ Remember no more the sins of my youth; remember me according to your mercy, because of your goodness, Lord.

as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:13

¹³ as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our savior Jesus Christ,

Then all conclude the prayer, acclaiming:

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Jude 1:25

²⁵ to the only God, our savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, power, and authority from ages past, now, and for ages to come. Amen.

THE SIGN OF PEACE

Then the Priest says aloud:

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,

John 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Acts 16:5

⁵ Day after day the churches grew stronger in faith and increased in number.

Psalm 106:1

¹ Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose mercy endures forever.

Exodus 15:18

¹⁸ May the Lord reign forever and ever!

The people reply:

Amen.

The Priest adds:

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The people reply:

And with your spirit.

The Deacon, or the Priest, adds:

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

John 20:19, 21

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Romans 16:16.

¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

And all offer one another a sign, in keeping with local customs, that expresses peace, communion, and charity. In the ancient church it was sometimes the custom at this point for people to leave the church and go to the place of a person whom they may have wronged or to seek them out in the church if they were in attendance and ask them for forgiveness and peace. Mass could be an all-day affair at times!

After a short interval, allowing for the congregants to greet all those around them. The priest holds the host over the paten and breaks it into smaller pieces in imitation and in honor of Christ breaking the bread for the Apostles. He drops a small portion into the chalice and quietly says:

May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

John 6:51-54

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” ⁵² The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?” ⁵³ Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.

While the priest if he is doing this, the congregation recites or sings the Agnus Dei (Latin for "Lamb of God"). We ask Christ to have mercy on us and grant us peace as we recite or sing the words;

**“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the Earth. Have mercy on us,
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the Earth. Have mercy on us,
Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the Earth. Grant us peace.”**

John 1:29

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1:36

³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!”

Matthew 9:27

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Luke 17:13

¹³ they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

Leviticus 26:6

⁶ And I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one shall make you afraid; I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword shall go through your land.

In ancient days, when there may have been several churches within traveling distance from one another, the Bishop would break of this morsel and drop it into the wine and the remaining piece would be given to a runner who would take it to a nearby church where the priest would break off a morsel and drop it into the wine there, and so on until all of the local churches had shared a piece of the same bread signifying the complete unity of the church.

After his private prayers of preparation the Priest genuflects, takes the host and, holding it slightly raised above the paten or above the chalice says aloud:

**Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.**

John 1:29

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1:36

³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"

John 6:51-54

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." ⁵² The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?" ⁵³ Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.*

1 Corinthians 11:29

²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

And together with the people all reply:

"Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

Matthew 8:8

⁸ The centurion said in reply, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.

Revelation 19:9

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These words are true; they come from God."

COMMUNION

After the priest has reverently consumed the Body and Blood of Christ the communicants come forward in reverent procession, and make a preparatory act of reverence by bowing their head in honor of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. They receive Holy Communion standing. The Priest says:

The Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16

¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

Ephesians 4:12

¹² to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

The communicant replies: **Amen**, and receives the host either on the tongue or in the outstretched hands from which he consumes it immediately.

When Communion is ministered under both kinds (bread and wine, body and blood) the minister of the Chalice raises it slightly and shows it to each of the communicants, saying:

The Blood of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16

¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

Hebrews 9:14

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

1 Peter 1:19

¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

The communicant replies **Amen** and receives the chalice in his hands and takes a small sip.

After the distribution of Communion, if appropriate, a sacred silence may be observed for a while, or a psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may be sung.

Prayer after Communion

Then, the Priest says:

Let us pray.

Tobit 8:4

⁴ When Sarah's parents left the bedroom and closed the door behind them, Tobiah rose from bed and said to his wife, "My sister, come, let us pray and beg our Lord to grant us mercy and protection."

All stand and pray in silence. Then the Priest says the Prayer after Communion, at the end of which the people acclaim:

Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

The brief Concluding Rite sends the people forth to put into effect in their daily lives the Mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection and the unity in Christ which they have celebrated. Their mission is to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

Any brief announcements to the people may follow here, but are not a formal part of the liturgy. Some priests may elect not to include pulpit announcements, some do. Then the dismissal takes place. Sometimes this takes a more elaborate form than that given below.

Blessing

This is the culmination of the entire Mass. The time when united in the Eucharist, the entire church is given the commission to take their faith from this Holy place and spread it throughout the world as Christ taught us.

The Priest, therefore says for the fourth time:

The Lord be with you.

The people reply:

And with your spirit.

The Priest blesses the people, saying:

**May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

As all perform the sign of the cross.

The people reply:

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Then the Deacon, or the Priest himself, says:

Either:

Go forth, the Mass is ended.

Isaiah 55:12

¹² Yes, in joy you shall go forth, in peace you shall be brought home; Mountains and hills shall break out in song before you, all trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

Mark 16:15

¹⁵ He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.

Or:

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

2 Timothy, 4:1-5

¹ I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: ² proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. ³ For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers ⁴ and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. ⁵ But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.

Or:

Go in peace.

Luke 2:29

²⁹ "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word,

The people reply:

Thanks be to God.

1 Corinthians 15:57

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:15

¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

In our example above there are references to 98 chapters and 112 verses in the Catholic Mass!

As you can see, every word spoken, every prayer raised to heaven, every tradition, rite, ceremony and sacrament of the mass come directly from the scriptures. There are indeed many more than this that can be found to support the content of the entire mass and of course, those numbers will vary depending on the season, the feast or the special mass. The Easter Vigil contains seven sets of scripture readings as well as the sacraments of confirmation and baptism!

Know that from the beginning of the Church, the Mass, the Church itself rose from the prophesy of the covenants of the Old Testament to be fulfilled by the Covenants of the New Testament, the Word of God, the Son who became man, humbled himself to take on our humanity to redeem us from our sin

Luke 2:51

⁵¹ He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother **kept all these things in her heart.**

The Mass of all ages

1345 As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.

The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.

When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.

Then we all rise together and offer prayers* for ourselves . . .and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.

When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.

Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.

He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.

When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.'

When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.¹⁷¹

1346 The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity:

- the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions;
- the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form "one single act of worship";¹⁷² the Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord.¹⁷³

1347 Is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table "he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them."¹⁷⁴

1348 *All gather together.* Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting *in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis)* presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. All have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose "Amen" manifests their participation.

1349 The *Liturgy of the Word* includes "the writings of the prophets," that is, the Old Testament, and "the memoirs of the apostles" (their letters and the Gospels). After the homily, which is an exhortation to accept this Word as what it truly is, the Word of God,¹⁷⁵ and to put it into practice, come the intercessions for all men, according to the Apostle's words: "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all who are in high positions."¹⁷⁶

1350 The *presentation of the offerings* (the Offertory). Then, sometimes in procession, the bread and wine are brought to the altar; they will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his body and blood. It is the very action of Christ at the Last Supper - "taking the bread and a cup." "The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, when she offers what comes forth from his creation with thanksgiving."¹⁷⁷ The presentation of the offerings at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and commits the Creator's gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices.

1351 From the very beginning Christians have brought, along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist, gifts to share with those in need. This custom of the *collection*, ever appropriate, is inspired by the example of Christ who became poor to make us rich:¹⁷⁸

Those who are well off, and who are also willing, give as each chooses. What is gathered is given to him who presides to assist orphans and widows, those whom illness or any other cause has deprived of resources, prisoners, immigrants and, in a word, all who are in need.¹⁷⁹

1352 The *anaphora*: with the Eucharistic Prayer - the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration - we come to the heart and summit of the celebration:

In the preface, the Church gives thanks to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for all his works: creation, redemption, and sanctification. The whole community thus joins in the unending praise that the Church in heaven, the angels and all the saints, sing to the thrice-holy God.

1353 In the *epiclesis*, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing¹⁸⁰) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit (some liturgical traditions put the epiclesis after the anamnesis).

In the *institution narrative*, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.

1354 In the *anamnesis* that follows, the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him.

In the *intercessions*, the Church indicates that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, and in communion with the pastors of the Church, the Pope, the diocesan bishop, his presbyterium and his deacons, and all the bishops of the whole world together with their Churches.

1355 In the communion, preceded by the Lord's prayer and the breaking of the bread, the faithful receive "the bread of heaven" and "the cup of salvation," the body and blood of Christ who offered himself "for the life of the world":¹⁸¹

Because this bread and wine have been made Eucharist ("eucharisted," according to an ancient expression), "we call this food *Eucharist*, and no one may take part in it unless he believes that what we teach is true, has received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and new birth, and lives in keeping with what Christ taught."¹⁸²

V. THE SACRAMENTAL SACRIFICE THANKSGIVING, MEMORIAL, PRESENCE

1356 If from the beginning Christians have celebrated the Eucharist and in a form whose substance has not changed despite the great diversity of times and liturgies, it is because we know ourselves to be bound by the command the Lord gave on the eve of his Passion: "Do this in remembrance of me."¹⁸³

1357 We carry out this command of the Lord by celebrating the *memorial of his sacrifice*. In so doing, we offer to the Father what he has himself given us: the gifts of his creation, bread and wine which, by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the words of Christ, have become the body and blood of Christ. Christ is thus really and mysteriously made *present*.

1358 We must therefore consider the Eucharist as:

- thanksgiving and praise to the *Father*;
- the sacrificial memorial of *Christ* and his Body;
- the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his *Spirit*.

Thanksgiving and praise to the Father

1359 The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ. Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity.

1360 The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification. Eucharist means first of all "thanksgiving."

1361 The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of praise by which the Church sings the glory of God in the name of all creation. This sacrifice of praise is possible only through Christ: he unites the faithful to his person, to his praise, and to his intercession, so that the sacrifice of praise to the Father is offered *through* Christ and *with* him, to be accepted *in* him.

The sacrificial memorial of Christ and of his Body, the Church

1362 The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body. In all the Eucharistic Prayers we find after the words of institution a prayer called the *anamnesis* or memorial.

1363 In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men.¹⁸⁴ In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them.

1364 In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ's Passover, and it is made present the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present.¹⁸⁵ "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."¹⁸⁶

1365 Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: "This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood."¹⁸⁷ In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."¹⁸⁸

1366 The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its *memorial* and because it *applies* its fruit:

[Christ], our Lord and God, was once and for all to offer himself to God the Father by his death on the altar of the cross, to accomplish there an everlasting redemption. But because his priesthood was not to end with his death, at the Last Supper "on the night when he was betrayed," [he wanted] to leave to his beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands) by which the bloody sacrifice which he was to accomplish once for all on the cross would be re-presented, its memory perpetuated until the end of the world, and its salutary power be applied to the forgiveness of the sins we daily commit.¹⁸⁹

1367 The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: "The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different." "And since 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. . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory."¹⁹⁰

1368 *The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church.* The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value. Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering.

In the catacombs the Church is often represented as a woman in prayer, arms outstretched in the praying position. Like Christ who stretched out his arms on the cross, through him, with him, and in him, she offers herself and intercedes for all men.

1369 *The whole Church is united with the offering and intercession of Christ.* Since he has the ministry of Peter in the Church, the *Pope* is associated with every celebration of the Eucharist, wherein he is named as the sign and servant of the unity of the universal Church. The *bishop* of the place is always responsible for the Eucharist, even when a *priest* presides; the bishop's name is mentioned to signify his presidency over the particular Church, in the midst of his presbyterium and with the assistance of *deacons*. The community intercedes also for all ministers who, for it and with it, offer the Eucharistic sacrifice:

Let only that Eucharist be regarded as legitimate, which is celebrated under [the presidency of] the bishop or him to whom he has entrusted it.¹⁹¹

Through the ministry of priests the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is completed in union with the sacrifice of Christ the only Mediator, which in the Eucharist is offered through the priests' hands in the name of the whole Church in an unbloody and sacramental manner until the Lord himself comes.¹⁹²

1370 To the offering of Christ are united not only the members still here on earth, but also those already *in the glory of heaven*. In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the Eucharist the Church is as it were at the foot of the cross with Mary, united with the offering and intercession of Christ.

1371 The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for *the faithful departed* who "have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified,"¹⁹³ so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ:

Put this body anywhere! Don't trouble yourselves about it! I simply ask you to remember me at the Lord's altar wherever you are.¹⁹⁴

Then, we pray [in the anaphora] for the holy fathers and bishops who have fallen asleep, and in general for all who have fallen asleep before us, in the belief that it is a great benefit to the souls on whose behalf the supplication is offered, while the holy and tremendous Victim is present. . . . By offering to God our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, if they have sinned, we . . . offer Christ sacrificed for the sins of all, and so render favorable, for them and for us, the God who loves man.¹⁹⁵

1372 St. Augustine admirably summed up this doctrine that moves us to an ever more complete participation in our Redeemer's sacrifice which we celebrate in the Eucharist:

This wholly redeemed city, the assembly and society of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice by the high priest who in the form of a slave went so far as to offer himself for us in his Passion, to make us the Body of so great a head. . . . Such is the sacrifice of Christians: "we who are many are one Body in Christ" The Church continues to reproduce this sacrifice in the sacrament of the altar so well-known to believers wherein it is evident to them that in what she offers she herself is offered.¹⁹⁶

The presence of Christ by the power of his word and the Holy Spirit

1373 "Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us," is present in many ways to his Church:¹⁹⁷ in his word, in his Church's prayer, "where two or three are gathered in my name,"¹⁹⁹ in the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned,¹⁹⁹ in the sacraments of which he is the author, in the sacrifice of the Mass, and in the person of the minister. But "he is present . . . most *especially in the Eucharistic species*."²⁰⁰

1374 The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend."²⁰¹ In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained*."²⁰² "This presence is called 'real' - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present."²⁰³

1375 It is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament. The Church Fathers strongly affirmed the faith of the Church in the efficacy of the Word of Christ and of the action of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conversion. Thus St. John Chrysostom declares:

It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us, Christ himself. The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered.²⁰⁴

And St. Ambrose says about this conversion:

Be convinced that this is not what nature has formed, but what the blessing has consecrated. The power of the blessing prevails over that of nature, because by the blessing nature itself is changed. . . . Could not Christ's word, which can make from nothing what did not exist, change existing things into what they were not before? It is no less a feat to give things their original nature than to change their nature.²⁰⁵

1376 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."²⁰⁶

1377 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.²⁰⁷

1378 *Worship of the Eucharist.* In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."²⁰⁸

1379 The tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species. It is for this reason that the tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church and should be constructed in such a way that it emphasizes and manifests the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

1380 It is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to remain present to his Church in this unique way. Since Christ was about to take his departure from his own in his visible form, he wanted to give us his sacramental presence; since he was about to offer himself on the cross to save us, he wanted us to have the memorial of the love with which he loved us "to the end,"²⁰⁹ even to the giving of his life. In his Eucharistic presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us,²¹⁰ and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love:

The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.²¹¹

1381 "That in this sacrament are the true Body of Christ and his true Blood is something that 'cannot be apprehended by the senses,' says St. Thomas, 'but *only by faith*, which relies on divine authority.' For this reason, in a commentary on *Luke 22:19* ('This is my body which is given for you. '), St. Cyril says: 'Do not doubt whether this is true, but rather receive the words of the Savior in faith, for since he is the truth, he cannot lie.'"²¹²

Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more,
See, Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived;
How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;

What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.²¹³

VI. THE PASCHAL BANQUET

1382 The Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood. But the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is wholly directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion. To receive communion is to receive Christ himself who has offered himself for us.

1383 *The altar*, around which the Church is gathered in the celebration of the Eucharist, represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the altar of the sacrifice and the table of the Lord. This is all the more so since the Christian altar is the symbol of Christ himself, present in the midst of the assembly of his faithful, both as the victim offered for our reconciliation and as food from heaven who is giving himself to us. "For what is the altar of Christ if not the image of the Body of Christ?"²¹⁴ asks St. Ambrose. He says elsewhere, "The altar represents the body [of Christ] and the Body of Christ is on the altar."²¹⁵ The liturgy expresses this unity of sacrifice and communion in many prayers. Thus the Roman Church prays in its anaphora:

We entreat you, almighty God,
that by the hands of your holy Angel
this offering may be borne to your altar in heaven
in the sight of your divine majesty,
so that as we receive in communion at this altar
the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,
we may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace.²¹⁶

"Take this and eat it, all of you": communion

1384 The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: "Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."²¹⁷

1385 To respond to this invitation we must *prepare ourselves* for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself."²¹⁸ Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

1386 Before so great a sacrament, the faithful can only echo humbly and with ardent faith the words of the Centurion: "*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea*" ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed.").²¹⁹ And in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the faithful pray in the same spirit:

O Son of God, bring me into communion today with your mystical supper. I shall not tell your enemies the secret, nor kiss you with Judas' kiss. But like the good thief I cry, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

1387 To prepare for worthy reception of this sacrament, the faithful should observe the fast required in their Church.²²⁰ Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest.

1388 It is in keeping with the very meaning of the Eucharist that the faithful, if they have the required dispositions,²²¹ *receive communion when* they participate in the Mass.²²² As the Second Vatican Council says: "That more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's Body from the same sacrifice, is warmly recommended."²²³

1389 The Church obliges the faithful to take part in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days and, prepared by the sacrament of Reconciliation, to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, if possible during the Easter season.²²⁴ But the Church strongly encourages the faithful to receive the holy Eucharist on Sundays and feast days, or more often still, even daily.

1390 Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace. For pastoral reasons this manner of receiving communion has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite. But "the sign of communion is more complete when given under both kinds, since in that form the sign of the Eucharistic meal appears more clearly."²²⁵ This is the usual form of receiving communion in the Eastern rites.

The fruits of Holy Communion

1391 *Holy Communion augments our union with Christ.* The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. Indeed, the Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him."²²⁶ Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."²²⁷

On the feasts of the Lord, when the faithful receive the Body of the Son, they proclaim to one another the Good News that the first fruits of life have been given, as when the angel said to Mary Magdalene, "Christ is risen!" Now too are life and resurrection conferred on whoever receives Christ.²²⁸

1392 What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh "given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit,"²²⁹ preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism. This growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion, the bread for our pilgrimage until the moment of death, when it will be given to us as viaticum.

1393 *Holy Communion separates us from sin.* The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is "given up for us," and the blood we drink "shed for the many for the forgiveness of 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:

For as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If we proclaim the Lord's death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy.²³⁰

1394 As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity *wipes away venial sins*.²³¹ By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him:

Since Christ died for us out of love, when we celebrate the memorial of his death at the moment of sacrifice we ask that love may be granted to us by the coming of the Holy Spirit. We humbly pray that in the strength of this love by which Christ willed to die for us, we, by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, may be able to consider the world as crucified for us, and to be ourselves as crucified to the world. . . . Having received the gift of love, let us die to sin and live for God.²³²

1395 By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist *preserves us from future mortal sins*. The more we share the life of Christ and progress in his friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from him by mortal sin. The Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins - that is proper to the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church.

1396 *The unity of the Mystical Body: the Eucharist makes the Church*. Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body - the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body.²³³ The Eucharist fulfills this call: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."²³⁴

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond "Amen" ("yes, it is true!") and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, "the Body of Christ" and respond "Amen." Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your *Amen* may be true.²³⁵

1397 *The Eucharist commits us to the poor*. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren:

You have tasted the Blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother,. . . . You dishonor this table when you do not judge worthy of sharing your food someone judged worthy to take part in this meal. . . . God freed you from all your sins and invited you here, but you have not become more merciful.²³⁶

1398 *The Eucharist and the unity of Christians.* Before the greatness of this mystery St. Augustine exclaims, "O sacrament of devotion! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!"²³⁷ The more painful the experience of the divisions in the Church which break the common participation in the table of the Lord, the more urgent are our prayers to the Lord that the time of complete unity among all who believe in him may return.

1399 The Eastern churches that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church celebrate the Eucharist with great love. "These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments, above all - by apostolic succession - the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy." A certain communion *in sacris*, and so in the Eucharist, "given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, is not merely possible but is encouraged."²³⁸

1400 Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church, "have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders."²³⁹ It is for this reason that, for the Catholic Church, Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible. However these ecclesial communities, "when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper . . . profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory."²⁴⁰

1401 When, in the Ordinary's judgment, a grave necessity arises, Catholic ministers may give the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, who ask for them of their own will, provided they give evidence of holding the Catholic faith regarding these sacraments and possess the required dispositions.²⁴¹

VII. THE EUCHARIST - "PLEDGE OF THE GLORY TO COME"

1402 In an ancient prayer the Church acclaims the mystery of the Eucharist: "O sacred banquet in which Christ is received as food, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace and a pledge of the life to come is given to us." If the Eucharist is the memorial of the Passover of the Lord Jesus, if by our communion at the altar we are filled "with every heavenly blessing and grace,"²⁴² then the Eucharist is also an anticipation of the heavenly glory.

1403 At the Last Supper the Lord himself directed his disciples' attention toward the fulfillment of the Passover in the kingdom of God: "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."²⁴³ Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist she remembers this promise and turns her gaze "to him who is to come." In her prayer she calls for his coming: "*Marana tha!*" "Come, Lord Jesus!"²⁴⁴ "May your grace come and this world pass away!"²⁴⁵

1404 The Church knows that the Lord comes even now in his Eucharist and that he is there in our midst. However, his presence is veiled. Therefore we celebrate the Eucharist "awaiting the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ,"²⁴⁶ asking "to share in your glory when every tear will be wiped away. On that day we shall see you, our God, as you are. We shall become like you and praise you for ever through Christ our Lord."²⁴⁷

1405 There is no surer pledge or dearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth "in which righteousness dwells,"²⁴⁸ than the Eucharist. Every time this mystery is celebrated, "the work of our redemption is carried on" and we "break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live for ever in Jesus Christ."²⁴⁹

IN BRIEF

1406 Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; . . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and . . . abides in me, and I in him" (*Jn* 6:51, 54, 56).

1407 The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church.

1408 The Eucharistic celebration always includes: the proclamation of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God the Father for all his benefits, above all the gift of his Son; the consecration of bread and wine; and participation in the liturgical banquet by receiving the Lord's body and blood. These elements constitute one single act of worship.

1409 The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.

1410 It is Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant who, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it is the same Christ, really present under the species of bread and wine, who is the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

1411 Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord.

1412 The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper: "This is my body which will be given up for you. . . . This is the cup of my blood. . . ."

1413 By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1640; 1651).

1414 As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.

1415 Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.

1416 Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

1417 The Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion when they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist; she obliges them to do so at least once a year.

1418 Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. "To visit the Blessed Sacrament is . . . a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord" (Paul VI, *MF* 66).

1419 Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharist the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints.