

Back To Basics

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: LEGACY OF APOSTASY

Johnie Edwards

The Roman Catholic Church is an apostate church with handed-down doctrines known as tradition! Catholicism has been known to accept human tradition over Bible teaching as their authority!

CATHOLICISM AND APOSTASY. There is no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church and apostasy go hand in hand! The word “legacy” tells us that something has been handed down from the past. Apostasy says that one has deserted the faith. In New Testament days, “...the mystery of iniquity doth already work” (2 Th. 2:7). One only has to look at Catholicism to know that handed-down teachings of the Roman Church is an abandonment of many Bible doctrines. Jesus said He would build His church on the grand ledged truth that He is the Son of God (Mt. 16:16-18). The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says, “...this church will be built on Peter.” Misusing Scripture, the Catholic Church tells us that Peter was a Pope and “...is presently employed solely to denote the Bishop of Rome, who, in virtue of his position as successor of St. Peter, is the chief pastor of the whole Church, the Vicar of Christ upon the earth” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*). The Bible does not teach this false doctrine!

DOCTRINAL CHANGES. The Catholic Church has made many changes in their teaching over the years. At one time, Catholics were not allowed to eat meat on Friday; that has been changed; they must abstain from Friday-meat-eating only during the Lenten season. At one time, they taught that Bible baptism is by immersion, which is correct (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Then they began to say, allowing sprinkling for baptism, “now it is different!” Sprinkling, for baptism, was not fully accepted by them until the 13th century. They introduced mechanical instrumental music into their worship during the 8th century. Yet, the Bible teaches vocal music (Heb. 2:12; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); as the kind of New Testament music to be used in the church. And the list could go on and on.

WHY THE CHANGES? If a religious body believes the Bible to be the infallible word of God, then there can never be any changes made. Whatever the Bible said yesterday, it says today and from now on. The “word of God...liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:23). Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mt. 24:35). “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON SIN AND PURGATORY

David Eldridge

As we examine the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church, we note the error they teach concerning the subjects of sin and purgatory. The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are at odds with the teaching of the Bible.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON SIN. The Roman Catholic Church espouses the doctrine of original sin. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states, “The will of Adam acting as head of the human race for the conservation or loss of original justice is the cause and source of original sin.” Yet, the Bible teaches no such thing as original sin. There is no “sin nature” passed on from Adam, nor do children inherit the guilt of their father’s sins. The truth is: “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son...and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself” (Ezek. 18:20).

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON DEGREES OF SIN. The Roman Catholic Church teaches degrees of sin—i.e. mortal and venial sins. The *Catholic Word Book* defines mortal sins thusly: “Involving serious matter, sufficient reflection and full consent—results in total alienation from God, making a person dead to sanctifying grace...and subject to everlasting punishment.” Venial sin is defined as “a lesser violation which injures friendship with God (but does not dissolve it).” Thus, the Catholic

doctrine is that some sins are worse than other sins. Once again, Catholic doctrine stands contrary to Bible doctrine. The Bible teaches no such thing as degrees of sin—sin is sin! “The wages of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23). “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas. 1:15). Any sin, not just certain sins, will result in eternal separation from God in the fire of hell.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON PURGATORY. The Roman Catholic Church’s doctrine of purgatory is equivalent to a second chance for those who die guilty of so-called venial sins. The *Catholic Word Book* states that purgatory is: “The state or condition in which those who have died in the state of grace suffer for a time before they are admitted to the glory and happiness of heaven. In this state and period of passive suffering, they are purified of unrepented venial sins, satisfy the demands of divine justice for temporal punishment due for sins, and are thus converted to a state of worthiness of the beatific vision.” However, the Bible teaches that after death comes the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Furthermore, the Lord will “reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment” (2 Pet. 2:9). At death, one’s eternal destiny is unchangeably sealed.

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NEW TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS OF APOSTASY

John Isaac Edwards

That there has been a departure from the faith comes as no surprise. Our Savior and His apostles foretold of a falling away.

MATTHEW 7:15-20. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves....by their fruits ye shall know them.”

ACTS 20:28-30. For three years Paul warned the brethren in Ephesus of apostasy. “Take heed... For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4. “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come (the day of Christ, v. 2), except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” Apostasy was already at work at the time Paul issued warning, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...” (2 Th. 2:7).

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-2. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” Celibacy and abstinence from meats are cardinal doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

These predictions anticipated abandonment of truth. Certainly such a falling away was realized in the development and formation of the Roman Catholic Church. We have titled this special issue of *Back To Basics*, The Roman Catholic Church: Legacy of Apostasy, seeking to call attention to what it is. This is done with the deepest of compassion for those who have been blinded by the god of this world, in an effort “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified...” (Acts 26:18).

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ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Marc W. Gibson

“**E**very plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted” (Mt. 15:13). These words of warning from the Lord Jesus should give us sufficient reason to carefully investigate the churches that exist today. Jesus said that He would build His church (Mt. 16:18). The true church can trace its origin to Jesus and the apostles. Its pattern can be found written on the pages of the New Testament. Any church that cannot find itself described therein is a false church destined to be uprooted by God’s judgment. The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the true church today. We will investigate the origin of its major features and see if this church has been planted by Christ or by man.

ITS NAME. No Scripture teaches that the name of God’s people should be “Roman” or “Catholic.” “Roman” refers to the governmental seat of this church in the city of Rome, which was decided, not by God, but by a political struggle many centuries ago between the bishops of leading cities. “Catholic” means universal. Though the Bible uses the word “church” in the universal sense of all the saints of God on earth, it is not part of any name given to the true church. Rather, the New Testament church wears the name of Christ and God (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2). “Roman Catholic” is a name that originated with man, not God.

ITS ORGANIZATION. The origin of an interconnected structure of worldwide churches overseen by bishops and archbishops headed by a universal pope is not found in the blueprint of the New Testament. It is found in the pages of human history after the time of the apostles of Christ. Books of men must be consulted to find this information (such as the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, et. al.) because it is not in God’s Book. This organizational structure began to take shape in the second century AD when a distinction was made between the elders of a congregation and the bishop.

This presiding bishop assumed greater authority over the other elders, which was a violation of the divinely authorized church organization that has a plurality of elders with equal authority in each individual congregation (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28). As time went on, the Bishop in a church in a large city became known as a “Metropolitan,” and a Metropolitan in the largest city became known as the “Patriarch.” Eventually, five major Patriarchs emerged by AD 454: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. The Bishop of Rome won a struggle for prominence, and Boniface III had the title of “Universal Bishop” conferred upon himself in AD 606, thus establishing the papacy. None of this is revealed or authorized in the New Testament. It originated in the mind and prideful ambitions of men.

ITS COUNCILS. Various councils were convened by the ruling bishops to decide matters of doctrine (drawing up creeds) and expose heretics. It began with the council of Nicea (325) followed by Carthage (418), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451). Ignoring the fact that the Scriptures are fully sufficient to guide us into all truth (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3), these men continued to depart from the authority of God to fully implement a human denomination guided by human creeds in a vain attempt to serve God (Mt. 15:8-9).

ITS DOCTRINES. The doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism are of men, having arisen after the completion of the New Testament. A few examples include the worship of images and relics, holy water, canonization of dead saints, celibacy of priests, rosary, purgatory, and papal infallibility. Such doctrines are unknown in the New Testament, and go beyond the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9). They do not cause one to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Such departures from the faith are described as “deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1).

ITS AUTHORITY. The Roman Catholic Church gives lip service to the Bible, but denies that it is an all-sufficient guide for man today. Roman Catholic decrees and traditions are regarded as having as much authority as the Bible, and, if they come into conflict, the Bible is usually pushed aside in favor of the position of the “mother” church. Jesus said that His word would judge us in the last day, and this word is fully revealed in the Bible (Jn. 12:48; 16:13; Jude 3). The Roman Catholic Church obtains its authority from man, not God.

ITS HUMAN ORIGIN. Jesus identified only two possible sources of authority: God or man (Mt. 21:25). The major features of the Roman Catholic Church cannot be found in the Bible. It is not of God, but of man. To identify and oppose the errors of men is not a case of being mean or ugly, but an

honest, determined effort to call men out of that which will condemn their souls to eternal damnation. To close one’s eyes to the truth will only make the judgment day more tragic (Mt. 7:21-23).

It cannot be denied that the Roman Catholic Church is a worldwide religious organization filled with millions of members and has been in existence for many centuries. But these things are not the measure of what is right in God’s eyes. That is determined by doing the will of the Father in Heaven. To do this, one must leave the Roman Catholic Church and become a member of the church you can read about in the Bible—the church that Christ built!

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ORGANIZATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Joe R. Price

The organization of the Roman Catholic Church is a *maze of complexity*. Developed through centuries of apostasy, its arrangement is a behemoth of interlocking levels of ecclesiastical and political power. Yet, the Bible speaks nothing of the Roman Catholic Church and its vast organization. It is a departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3). The organization of the New Testament church is a *model of simplicity*. Independent congregations accomplish their God-given work without universal arrangement and oversight (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). The complexity of Catholicism and the simplicity of the New Testament church are seen by observing the organizational structure of the Roman Catholic Church.

THE HIERARCHY. Hierarchy means sacred rule, and the term has been used since the sixth century to “denote the totality of ruling powers in the Church” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Hierarchy”). This hierarchal power exists “for the guiding of man

to his eternal salvation” (*Ibid.*). The hierarchy of order administers matters relating to public worship and the sacramental services while the hierarchy of jurisdiction formulates and administers the laws of the Catholic Church (*Ibid.*). Catholic hierarchy is not in the Scriptures. Following the New Testament pattern, Christians organize themselves into local congregations that function under the oversight of elders (bishops, pastors) and are served by deacons (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

THE POPE. The pope (“papa”) is considered the Vicar (agent) of Christ, holding “supreme headship of the Church on earth” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Vicar of Christ”). The pope is viewed as the “Holy Father,” the Roman Pontiff and the successor of Peter (whom Catholics say was the first pope). In contrast, the Bible teaches Christ, not a man, is the head of His church (Col. 1:18; Mt. 28:18; 23:9). The Roman papacy rebels against the authority of Christ.

THE CARDINALS. A cardinal is “a dignitary of the Roman Church and counsellor (sic) of the pope.” It is “the usual designation of every priest belonging to a central or episcopal church” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Cardinal”). Cardinals are the administrators of the Catholic hierarchy. The New Testament church has no central church and thus, no place or need for Cardinals to administer it.

THE ROMAN CURIA. This is the governing administration of the Catholic hierarchy: “Strictly speaking, the ensemble of departments or ministries which assist the sovereign pontiff in the government of the Universal Church. These are the Roman Congregations, the tribunals, and the offices of Curia” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Roman Curia”). The Curia is composed of committees of cardinals called congregations; for example, the Congregation of the Sacred Consistory, the Congregation of the Inquisition, the Congregation of the Holy Office and the Congregation of the Sacraments. Thus, the Catholic Church is a Church composed of Churches. The New Testament church is composed of Christians, not churches. Christians compose local churches (Acts 2:47; Heb. 12:23; Eph. 2:16-22; 1 Cor. 1:2).

THE ROMAN TRIBUNALS. These are the judicial instruments of the Catholic Church, judging crimes and violations of Church law. New Testament churches (congregations) did not organize tribunals to judge right and wrong. Under the oversight of its own elders, each church is expected to judge righteous judgment concerning sin and error in its midst (1 Cor. 5:1-5; Rom. 16:17; Ti. 3:10-11).

APOSTOLIC LEGATES. The Pope is also considered the Head of State who rules over the Roman Catholic Church’s government. As such he sends representatives to governments around the world. These ambassadors represent the interests of the Catholic Church among the nations. No such legates are found in the New Testament church, for Christ’s kingdom is not of this world (Jn. 18:36).

THE COUNCILS. These are assemblies of bishops arranged into three types: General council

(these are called by the pope and composed of all Catholic bishops in the world. Its actions on doctrine and discipline must be approved by the pope); Plenary or National Council (bishops in a country; its actions must be approved by the pope); and Diocesan or Provincial Council (composed of bishops in a province, it applies the decrees passed on by the other councils). New Testament churches are lead by their own shepherds (bishops, elders), not by provincial, national or general councils (Acts 28:20; 1 Pet. 5:2).

THE EPISCOPACY. In the hierarchy of Catholicism, this is the governance of churches by bishops and archbishops. Catholicism is structured with a plurality of churches under one bishop. In the New Testament, the opposite is true: one church is under a plurality of bishops (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

THE PRELATES. These bishops hold ecclesiastical offices and exercise jurisdiction within dioceses and Catholic institutions—there are also honorary prelates (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Prelate”). Again, such titles and offices are completely foreign to the Bible; they are human innovations that corrupt the “pattern of sound words” given by the apostles of Christ (2 Tim. 1:13).

RELIGIOUS ORDERS. “These organizations in the Catholic Church are societies bound by vows.” Orders are numerous for both men (priests) and women (nuns). There are not religious orders in the New Testament. Christians are bound together by a common faith and salvation (Ti. 1:4; Jude 3). Christ warns against binding ourselves to the traditions of men (Mt. 15:1-11).

The complex organization of the Roman Catholic Church is a monument to the apostasy of men. The simple New Testament order of independent congregations is a tribute to the “simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

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CATHOLIC SACRAMENTS

Donnie V. Rader

Catholics practice seven sacraments. A sacrament is a visible sign by which the grace of God is conveyed to one's soul (*Faith of Our Fathers*, 218). Paul said that grace is received through righteousness (Rom. 5:21). "The seven sacraments would too narrowly restrict the flow of God's grace to man" (Paul Matthews, *Basic Errors of Catholicism*, 70). Catholics claim that the sacraments were instituted by our Lord, while admitting that they are not found in the New Testament. In fact, they were unknown for twelve centuries (*Catholic Dictionary*, Addis and Arnold, 734). The Council of Trent defined the sacraments for all Catholics (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIII, 298).

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM. The purpose of this sacrament is to cleanse from original sin. Sprinkling is used to baptize. Infants are baptized as well as adults. Catholics believe that the water used is blessed by the Holy Spirit. There are 15 steps in the ceremony of sprinkling a baby (including a sponsor for baptism that becomes the "god-parent").

Contrasted to the Bible: There is no original sin (Ezek. 18). If original sin is taken away at baptism, then why does the next generation become guilty of Adamic sin? Baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:3-4). Baptism is for penitent believers (Acts 2:36-38). There was no such 15 step ceremony to baptism in the New Testament (Acts 8).

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION. This is to impart strength to live the Christian life. It is administered when a child is about 7 years old.

Contrasted to the Bible: There is nothing like this in the New Testament. We are strengthened through the word (Acts 20:32). Thus, any Christian can have the strength to do what God demands (Phil. 4:13), without this sacrament.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE. This is where the Catholic confesses his sin to the priest, who has the power to forgive sins. This involves more than public sins, but the inner most secrets of one's life.

Contrasted to the Bible: Christians who sinned in the New Testament were told to repent and pray (Acts 8:22), confess to God (1 Jn. 1:9) and confess to one another sins that were committed before others (Jas. 5:16). Furthermore, every Christian is a priest (1 Pet. 2:5), thus no special powers were in one man.

SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION. This is where the priest prays for and anoints one who is in danger of dying. It is for the dying to receive "plenary indulgence" or full pardon from sin. It is called "extreme" since it is the "last." It only works if the patient dies. If he lives, he will have to do it over again when he nears death.

Contrasted to the Bible: There is nothing like this in the New Testament (1 Pet. 4:11). If one is sick, he is instructed to call for the elders to pray for him that he may recover, not die (Jas. 5).

SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS. This is the means by which priests are ordained. This involves the "tonsure" which is where some hair is cut off the candidate to signify that he is taken from the world (laity) and has entered the clergy. This requires celibacy. A priest has power nearly equal with Christ in that he has power to bless anyone and anything and forgive sins.

Contrasted to the Bible: All Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5). That means married men can be priests. Women also can be priests. No Christian had the power to forgive sins. No such distinction between clergy and laity is found in the Bible.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY. A “lawful” marriage is a marriage that is lawful according to the Council of Trent. They allow a “Pauline Privilege” which means a Catholic married to a non-Catholic can leave the marriage at any time and be free to remarry. However, one whose mate commits fornication cannot divorce and remarry. No Catholic can marry a non-Catholic without permission.

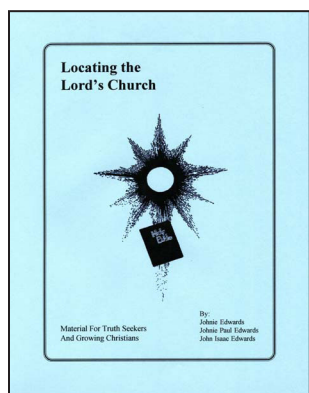
Contrasted to the Bible: The law of Christ is the law in force (Mt. 19:4-9), not the Council of Trent. Jesus allowed divorce for fornication (Mt. 19:9). Believers married to unbelievers were told to stay together, not leave and remarry (1 Cor. 7:10-13).

SACRAMENT OF MASS / HOLY EUCHARIST. Catholics believe that when they partake of the bread and wine, that it literally becomes the body and blood of Jesus. This is called “transubstantiation.” They

also teach that in the Mass, Christ is sacrificed again and again.

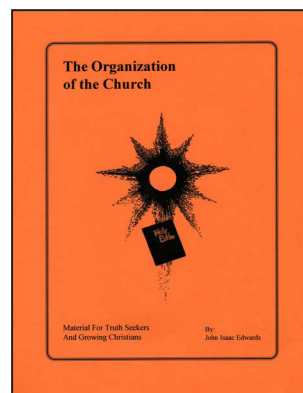
Contrasted to the Bible: In Matthew 26, while Jesus was still in His fleshy body and had blood running through His veins, He gave His disciples “bread” and “fruit of the vine” telling them these were His “body” and “blood.” The disciples were not shocked or baffled. They understood the figurative language, just like Jesus is the “door” and the “vine.” If the bread being called His body means that it literally becomes His body, would the fact that we are said to be “one bread” as we partake (1 Cor. 10:17) mean that we transform into the bread? If not, why not? Jesus was offered once, never to be sacrificed again (Heb. 9:25-28).

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Craig Thomas

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WHAT ARE SACRAMENTALS? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1677) says, “Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church.” A Catholic scholar (M. D’Ambrosio) says they’re another way God “communicates his truth to us...” The *Catholic Encyclopedia* tells us sacramentals may include certain “blessed acts or things.” The “acts” would include certain ritualistic prayers; e.g., praying the rosary, making the sign of the cross, bowing, etc. “Things” can be a host of objects: crosses, crucifixes, candles, beads, bells, medallions, statues, salt, holy water, prayer cloths, pictures, oils, ashes, rocks, beans, etc. You can even get “holy water” in a “spray bottle” that promises to rid “the evil one...anywhere that [it]...has been sprayed!”

WHAT DO SACRAMENTALS DO? The *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Roman Catholic Sacramental* (sic) *Foundation* claim, among other things, sacramentals: A) “arouse the piety of the faithful”; B) “secure the sanctification of the faithful”; C) “distinguish the members of the Church from heretics”; D) “drive away evil spirits”; E) “effect delivery of the soul from sin and the penalties

thereof”; F) can “be employed to obtain temporal favors”; and G) are “more powerful than purely private prayer.” One sacramental (the “Holy Brown Scapular” of the Carmelite Order) promises, “Whoever dies clothed in this shall never suffer eternal fire.” And, “no other devotion renders our salvation so certain” (*The Bride and the Dragon*).

WHAT’S WRONG WITH SACRAMENTALS? Sacramentals are the corrupt fruit of centuries of human tradition and superstition gone wild (Mt. 15:9). God’s word is “truth” (Jn. 17:17) and the basis of our “faith” (Rom. 10:17), not physical objects, even though they’re “blessed.” Satan “flee[s]” when we “submit to God” and “Resist the devil,” not through beads or spraying “Holy Water” about the house (Jas. 4:7). Prayer, confession, and repentance deliver “from sin and the penalties thereof” (1 Jn. 1:7-9; Acts 8:22), not wearing medals or praying to a “saint” using a “prayer” cloth, card, or magnet. God hears our prayers and they’re effective (Jas. 5:16; 1 Jn. 3:22; 5:14-15) without resorting to the adoration of “images” (Ex. 20:4-5). If one desires to “never suffer eternal fire” let him hear and heed the words of Christ (Jn. 12:48; 1 Jn. 2:3-5; 2 Th. 1:8), not trust the “Holy Brown Scapular.”

Those putting their faith in sacramentals face a hopeless situation. Don’t fear! There’s even a sacramental package for “Hopeless Situations,” it’s the “Mary Undoer of Knots Package!” It’s “One of the most POPULAR packages!” (www.cukierski.net). How sad that people put their faith in such hocus-pocus (2 Tim. 4:4) and not in God’s eternal word (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

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THE PAPACY

Randy Blackaby

Roman Catholicism's pope is chief pastor of the whole church, Vicar of Christ on earth, and Archbishop of Rome (*Catholic Encyclopedia*). When he speaks on such issues as faith and salvation, he is said to be "infallible." He bears trappings of a king, accepts obeisance, including prostration before him and kissing of his foot. As supreme teacher, his role is to establish what the faithful are to believe. He sets forth creeds, establishes catechisms, declares what is heresy and may declare the meaning of natural law as it affects family and social life. He alone can canonize saints, issue indulgences, and tax clergy and church members. He also can create or suspend church laws. He presumes to hold the power of prophet, priest and king—just as our Lord Jesus. The *New York Catechism* says, "The pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth...He is the infallible ruler, founder of dogmas, author of and judge of councils; the universal ruler of faith, the arbiter of the world, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by no one, God himself on earth."

WHERE DID THIS CONCEPT ORIGINATE?

The Bible is silent about popes. We can read of congregational elders (also called bishops, shepherds, overseers—1 Tim. 3; Ti. 1), but nothing of hierarchal, worldwide leadership or magisterium. Catholics mostly rest the papacy on tradition, but also cite Matthew 16:18-19. Catholic interpretation makes Peter the rock and thus foundation of the church. In actuality, Jesus' words follow Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," the rock being the object of that confession—Jesus. Jesus told Peter He would give him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and whatever he bound (or loosed) on earth would be bound (or loosed) in heaven. This is viewed as giving Peter

legislative authority in Catholicism, as opposed to Jesus simply referencing the future teaching work of the apostles (accomplished via inspiration of the Holy Spirit). Jesus' instruction to Peter (Jn. 21:15-18) to tend or feed His sheep often is used by Catholics to justify Peter's primacy, though nothing in the context of the passage merits such. But even if Peter had such legislative authority, how do popes acquire such? The Catholic Church teaches (without scriptural support) that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, that the Roman bishop had authority over all others and inherited Peter's primacy. All this is purely based on tradition, not Scripture.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.

- Jesus said to call no one on earth "father" in a spiritual sense (Mt. 23:9-10).
- Jesus is sole kingdom monarch in heaven and earth (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:21).
- Binding and loosing authority also was given to the other apostles (Mt. 18:18).
- Jesus condemned Gentile-style authority, teaching servant model (Mt. 20:20-28).
- Paul asserted he did not get his teaching from any man (Gal. 1:11-17).
- Paul urged unity in Christ, not following human messengers (1 Cor. 1:11-13).
- Paul corrected the fallible teaching and practice of Peter (Gal. 2:11-19).
- Peter taught bishops not to be "lords" over the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- Bishops are to be married men with families (1 Tim. 3:2, 4; Ti. 1:6).
- Peter rejected obeisance (Acts 10:25-26).

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THE VENERATION OF MARY

Paul Sullins

Among the many false doctrines practiced by the Roman Catholic Church is the veneration or worship of Mary. Please notice some things associated with it.

MOTHER OF GOD. The Council of Ephesus first introduced this phrase in 431 AD to refute those who denied that Jesus was equal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. However, the Roman Catholic Church uses the phrase (and others) to exalt Mary to a position God never intended her to have. The Bible nowhere speaks of Mary as being the “Mother of God,” but John 2:1, 3 and Acts 1:14 all speak of Mary as “the mother of Jesus.” She was simply the means through which Jesus, the Son of God, became flesh and entered this earth (Jn. 1:14).

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. According to the Roman Catholic Church, all inherit the sin of Adam at birth. That is, all but Mary, who through a “special miracle” by God was preserved from “original sin.” The Scriptures refute the idea that any human being inherits sin at birth (Ezek. 18:20). It is also suggested that Mary never committed sin. This too is contrary to Scripture (Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10; Rom. 3:10).

PERPETUAL VIRGINITY. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary was “ever-virgin,” that she and Joseph had no other children after the miraculous birth of Jesus. But notice what is said in Mark 6:3, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?” Also compare Matthew 13:54-56 and Luke 2:7.

BODILY ASSUMPTION. On November 1, 1950, Pius XII introduced by way of “ex cathedra” (from the throne), that after Mary’s death her body

and soul were reunited and that she was taken up where she was enthroned as Queen of Heaven. This “assumption” not only lacks any Biblical proof, but there is not one example of the early Christians believing or teaching such!

MEDIATRIX. Last of all, the Roman Catholic Church claims that Mary is Mediatrix or “Mother of all graces” (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 380). The Scriptures teach differently. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...” (Eph. 1:7). 1 Timothy 2:5 states, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...” Can it be said any plainer?

It’s typical of denominations to believe, teach, and practice things for which there is not a “thus saith the Lord.” The veneration of Mary is such a thing, based entirely on tradition and quotes from the uninspired. It is not only vain worship, but is an attempt to rob Jesus of honor and glory that belongs solely to Him.

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THE CATHOLIC CALENDAR

Steven F. Deaton

Roman Catholicism is replete with holy days; ones invented by man, not commanded by God. To cover them all in detail is the work of an encyclopedia. Hence, we will only hit some highlights in this study.

EPIPHANY (January). A celebration of the visit of the Magi (Mt. 2:1-12; 3:13-17).

ASH WEDNESDAY (February/March). Beginning of the Lent season. The faithful Catholic will have ashes placed on his or her forehead to mark the day. Preceded by Fat Tuesday when Catholics gorge themselves on food, alcohol, and immorality before the Lenten fast.

LENT (March/April). A time when Catholics fast from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday; forty days in length. The forty days is supposed to mark the time Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness (Mt. 4:1-11). Some give up habits, others give up foods.

PALM SUNDAY (March/April). Observes the day Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt (Jn. 12:12-19). Beginning of the Holy Week.

HOLY WEEK (March/April). The week leading up to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Begins on Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday.

GOOD FRIDAY. The day of crucifixion.

EASTER SUNDAY. The day of resurrection.

ASCENSION DAY (May). Day celebrating Christ's return to heaven. Observed forty days after Easter Sunday.

FEAST OF ASSUMPTION (August). On the 15th, Roman Catholics celebrate their belief that Mary was taken body and soul into heaven.

MARY'S BIRTHDAY (September). Roman Catholics observed Jesus' mother's birthday on September 8.

ALL SAINTS' DAY (November). A day to honor all saints, known and unknown. The saints in Roman Catholicism are dead people.

ALL SOULS DAY (November). Celebrated on the second day of November, this day is observed by praying for the dead, especially those in Purgatory.

CHRISTMAS (December). An observance of the birth of Christ.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE. The man-made holy days of Roman Catholicism, whether by perverting what is written in the Bible or inventing an entirely new concept, are sinful. Paul said, "You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored in vain" (Gal. 4:10-11). They have transgressed the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9). Hence, the Lord will uproot them one day (Mt. 15:7-14).

Let us determine that all we do will be in the name of the Lord and leave off the traditions of men (Col. 3:17). "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," not the word of men (Rom. 10:17).

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CATHOLIC BOOKS

Greg Litmer

Some of the most frequently asked questions concerning Roman Catholicism have to do with the various books that are peculiarly Catholic. A good many of those questions center upon the Roman Catholic Bible. A study of Roman Catholicism and the Bible is both intriguing and eye-opening.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH CLAIMS IT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BIBLE. From *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 543, we find, “It will be seen, therefore, that though the inspiration of any writer and the sacred character of his work be antecedent to its recognition by the Church yet we are dependent upon the Church for our knowledge of the existence of this inspiration. She is the appointed witness and guardian of revelation. From her alone we know what books belong to the Bible. At the Council of Trent she enumerated the books which must be considered ‘as sacred and canonical’. They are the seventy-two books found in Catholic editions, forty-five in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New.”

THE APOCRYPHA. The extra books in the Roman Catholic Bible are called together, The Apocrypha. Altogether there are 14 apocryphal works that appear in the Old Testament of the Catholic Bibles. These books were never accepted by the Palestinian Jews as being canonical and Jesus and the New Testament writers never quoted from the Apocrypha.

THE LATIN VULGATE VERSION. Since the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church has held that the Latin Vulgate Version of the Scriptures, translated by Jerome in the latter part of the 4th century and the early part of the 5th century, was alone “authentic in public readings, discourses, and disputes, and that nobody might dare or presume to reject it on any pretence” (Session IV, Council of Trent). There have been several revisions of the text

to keep it in touch with developments in textual criticism, but all Roman Catholic translations are based upon the Latin Vulgate version.

OTHER CATHOLIC WRITINGS. Viewing itself as the “appointed witness and guardian of revelation” and asserting that “from her alone we know what books belong to the Bible,” it is interesting that other Catholic writings indicate an attitude toward the Bible that is decidedly less favorable. “The Catholic Church claims that the Bible was not intended to be written (*Plain Facts for Fair Minds*, 26), was not intended to be circulated (*The Faith of Our Fathers*, 66), was not expected to be gathered into one volume (*Our Faith and the Facts*, 348), is not accessible to all (*The Faith of Millions*, 152), does not contain all truth (*A Catechism for Adults*, 52), is not understandable (*Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII*, 227), is not a safe method (*Question Box*, 67), is a dead letter (*Our Priesthood*, 155), and does more harm than good (*Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 274)” (*Catholicism Examined*, Vol. II, Num. 1).

LITURGICAL BOOKS. Liturgical books are books that form the standard by which services, prayers, and ceremonies are judged to be official. Concerning the liturgical books peculiar to Catholicism, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, states, “Our present convenient compendiums—the Missal, Breviary, and so on—were formed only at the end of a long evolution. In the first period (lasting perhaps till about the 4th century) there were no books but the Bible, from which lessons were read and psalms were sung.” Oh, that it had remained so. Satisfaction with the revealed word of God would have prevented the apostasy that became Roman Catholicism.

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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Which Is Correct?

Compare the statements with the verse and circle the one that is right.

"The Roman Catholic churches salute you"

or

"The churches of Christ salute you"

Romans 16:16

"The disciples were called Christians"

or

"The disciples were called Catholics"

Acts 11:26

Jesus "is the head of the body, the church"

or

Pope Benedict XVI "is head of the body, the church"

Colossians 1:18

Philip "sprinkled water on" the eunuch

or

Philip "baptized" the eunuch

Acts 8:38

"The son shall bear the iniquity of the father"

or

"The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father"

Ezekiel 18:20

"Ye observe days, and months...I am proud of you"

or

"Ye observe days, and months...I am afraid of you"

Galatians 4:10-11

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

CATHOLIC SERVICES AND SYMBOLS

Mark Mayberry

In Roman Catholicism, one observes an overemphasis on splendor over simplicity, and symbolism over substance. Unscriptural innovations are evident in their worship services and in their symbolism.

CATHOLIC SERVICES. In the Catholic Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist starts with a procession, wherein the bread and wine are brought to the altar and blessed by the priest. Afterwards, the congregation engages in related rituals: reciting the Lord's Prayer, exchanging the rite of peace (Holy Kiss), and singing or reciting the litany of the Lamb of God (Agnus Dei). Then the priest breaks the host (bread) and places a piece in the chalice (wine) in the ritual of commingling. After partaking of the communion, the priest presents the transubstantiated elements to the congregation, and the members receive the consecrated bread. Sacraments identify various rituals believed to impart divine grace. Specifically, the Blessed/Holy Sacrament refers to the elements of the Eucharist, especially the bread or Host. During the Mass, the Eucharistic elements allegedly undergo transubstantiation, in which the bread and wine are converted into the actual body and blood of the Lord, while their physical appearance remains unchanged. Authority for such practices derives, not from God, but from man (Prov. 30:5-6; Mt. 15:9). Evidence exists, not in the realm of observation and science, but in the sphere of imagination and superstition. When Jesus spoke of eating my flesh and drinking my blood, He symbolically portrayed the duty of fully partaking in His doctrine (Jn. 6:48-58). The Lord's Supper is not a reenactment of Calvary, but a memorial of Christ's sacrificial death (1 Cor. 11:23-32). Funeral masses are performed for the dead, wherein prayers are offered for the salvation of the soul(s) of the departed. However, such doctrines

contradict the Biblical principle of individual accountability (Ezek. 18:20). Life demands decision. Today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:1-2; Heb. 3:7-15); tomorrow may be too late (Prov. 27:1; Jas. 4:13-14). The departed dead cannot change their eternal state (Lk. 16:19-31), but await that final day of judgment (2 Cor. 5:6-10; Heb. 9:27-28).

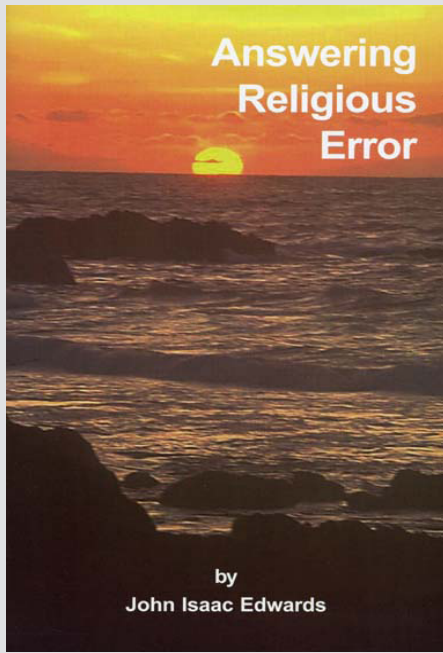
CATHOLIC SYMBOLS. Symbolism pervades Catholic thought. Actions are emblematic: genuflection (reverence), the sign of the cross (trinity), etc. So also are objects: ashes (dust), the cross (salvation), egg (rebirth), incense (prayers), etc. Animals communicate concepts: Lion and Lamb (Jesus Christ), Dove (Holy Spirit), Fish (Christianity), Pelican (Redeemer), Serpent (Satan), etc. In like manner, plants: lily (chastity), olive branches (peace), palm branches (victory), etc. While Jesus used illustrations and parables, symbolism has gone to seed in Catholicism. Representation supersedes reality; motifs overpower the gospel message; images have become objects of veneration and worship. Idolatry inevitably accompanies such excesses (Ex. 20:4-6; Dt. 4:15-20; Acts 17:29).

In contrast with the pomp and pretense of man-made religion, New Testament worship was simple and direct. Through singing, praying, preaching, laying by in store, and observing the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, Christian worship glorifies God and edifies man (Eph. 5:19; Phil. 4:6; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 11:23-26). Instead of recited litanies, closely akin to the "vain repetitions" condemned by Jesus (Mt. 6:7), acceptable worship must be offered in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23-24).

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