

In Christian apologetics one has to constantly address the question, "Is the Roman Catholic Church Christian?" Or put another way, "Are those who believe the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church Christian?" Ultimately, the question is, "Will we see those who answer 'yes' to the previous question in heaven?" The bottom line of all that follows is that the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is NOT a Christian Church by the standard of God's own word. What follows is a posting I made to an internet apologetics board and much of is borrowed from other sources. However, I cannot now remember those sources to give them credit! How much is theirs and how much is mind is beyond my memory!

Incase you have ever been told, the RCC does NOT believe in salvation by grace alone through faith alone by the finished atonement of Jesus Christ alone is TAUGHT by God's word consistently, clearly, and concretely throughout the ENTIRETY of Scripture. The RCC's disagreement with God's word is evident in the following:

At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the declarations of which are still in force, the Roman Catholic Church formally condemned the biblical doctrine of faith alone and grace alone. Consider the following declarations of Trent: "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12). OR how about: "If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 24). Clear enough?

At Vatican II, in its most formal and authoritative statements since Trent, Rome has continued to deny that salvation is by grace alone through Christ's atonement alone through faith alone without works or sacraments. Consider the following statements of the authoritative Vatican II Council of the mid-1960s, called by Pope John Paul XXIII and attended by more than 2,400 Catholic bishops:

"For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, 'the work of our redemption is accomplished,' and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Introduction, para. 2).

"As often as the sacrifice of the cross by which

'Christ our Pasch is sacrificed' (1 Cor. 5:7) is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out" (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter 1, 3, p. 324).

"... [Christ] also willed that the work of salvation which they preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical [ritualistic] life revolves. Thus by Baptism men are grafted into the paschal mystery of Christ. ... They receive the spirit of adoption as sons" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Chap. 1, I, 5,6, pp. 23-24).

"From the most ancient times in the Church good works were also offered to God for the salvation of sinners, particularly the works which human weakness finds hard. Because the sufferings of the martyrs for the faith and for God's law were thought to be very valuable, penitents used to turn to the martyrs to be helped by their merits to obtain a more speedy reconciliation from the bishops. Indeed, the prayers and good works of holy people were regarded as of such great value that it could be asserted that the penitent was washed, cleansed and redeemed with the help of the entire Christian people" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences, chap. 3, 6, pp. 78,79).

Clear in the 1500's, still clear in the 1900's!

Underlying all of these pronouncements is the theological error in which ROME DENIES SALVATION BY GRACE ALONE IN ITS DEFINITION OF JUSTIFICATION. Rome's gospel is a confused combination of many things:

- of faith plus works,
- of grace plus sacraments,
- of Christ plus the church.
- of grace redefined to include works.
- of justification confused with sanctification.
- of imputation confused with impartation.

You see, the RCC views justification not as a once-for-all legal declaration whereby the sinner is declared righteous before God and is granted eternal life as the unmerited gift of God, but as a PROCESS whereby the sinner is gradually saved through participation in the sacraments. There is no eternal security in the Roman gospel because salvation allegedly depends partially upon a man's works. According to RCC theology, Christ purchased salvation and gave it to the RCC to be distributed to men through its sacraments. This is not only a false gospel, it is a blasphemous usurpation of Christ's position as only Lord and Savior and Mediator. The authoritative "Addis and Arnold Catholic Dictionary," with the Imprimature (ecclesiastical authorization for printing) of E. Morrough Bernard, 1950, says

justification "consists, not in the mere remission of sins, but in the sanctification and renewal of the inner man by the voluntary reception of God's grace and gifts" This dictionary plainly states that the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is contrary to that of the Bible, noting that "the Council of Trent was at pains to define most clearly and explicitly the Catholic tradition on the matter, placing it in sharp opposition to the contrary tenets of the Reformers." Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia, published in 1991, defines justification as "THE PROCESS by which a sinner is made righteous, pure and holy before God." "Justification in the Catholic Tradition comes about by means of faith in Christ, AND in a life of good works lived in response to God's invitation to believe. ... That works are clearly required in the New Testament for union with Christ is seen in the many parables such as the Good Samaritan, Lazarus and Dives, and others" (emphasis added).

The RCC also denies God's definition of Salvation in many other ways.. Not only in most authoritative declarations and not only by its definition of justification, but in many, many, other ways Rome denies the once-for-all sufficiency of Christ's atonement, His sole mediatorship, and the doctrine of salvation through faith alone by grace alone without works as taught by God's word...

Rome denies justification by grace alone BY ITS DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION. The New Catholic Catechism (1994) dogmatically declares: "The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit.' God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism..." (1257).

Rome denies justification by grace alone BY ITS DOCTRINE OF THE MASS, by claiming that in the mass "the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated" and "the work of our redemption is carried out" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy).

Rome denies justification by grace alone BY ITS DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS: "The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. ... The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Saviour" (New Catholic Catechism, 1129).

Rome denies justification by grace alone BY ITS DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY, claiming that "the doctrine of purgatory clearly demonstrates that even when the guilt of sin has been taken away, punishment for it or the consequences of it may remain to be expiated or

cleansed" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy).

Rome denies justification by grace alone and the sole Mediatorship of Christ BY ITS DOCTRINE OF CONFESSION. "One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience" (New Catholic Catechism, 1493). "Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church" (New Catholic Catechism, 1497). "The sacrament of Penance restores and strengthens in members of the Church who have sinned the fundamental gift of ... conversion to the kingdom of Christ, which is first received in Baptism" (Vatican II, Decree on Confession for Religious).

Rome denies justification by grace alone and the sole Mediatorship of Christ BY ITS DOCTRINE OF THE PAPACY: "For 'God's only-begotten Son ... has won a treasure for the militant Church ... he has entrusted it to blessed Peter, the key-bearer of heaven, and to his successors who are Christ's vicars on earth, so that they may distribute it to the faithful for their salvation'" (ellipses are in the original) (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences, Chap. 4, 7, p. 80).

Rome denies justification by grace alone and the sole Mediatorship of Christ BY ITS PRIESTHOOD: "The purpose then for which priests are consecrated by God through the ministry of the bishop is that they should be made sharers in a special way in Christ's priesthood and, by carrying out sacred functions, act as his ministers who through his Spirit continually exercises his priestly function for our benefit in the liturgy. By Baptism priests introduce men into the People of God; by the sacrament of Penance they reconcile sinners with God and the Church; by the Anointing of the sick they relieve those who are ill; and especially by the celebration of Mass they offer Christ's sacrifice sacramentally" (Vatican II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, chap. 2, I, 5, p. 781).

Rome denies justification by grace alone and the sole Mediatorship of Christ BY ITS DOCTRINE OF MARY: "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace" (New Catholic Catechism, 968). "... Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us gifts of eternal salvation. ... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper,

Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (New Catholic Catechism, 969).

Rome denies justification by grace alone and the sole Mediatorship of Christ BY ITS DOCTRINE OF THE SAINTS: "Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin" (New Catholic Catechism, 1475).

Rome denies justification by grace alone and the sole Mediatorship of Christ BY ITS DOCTRINE OF FORGIVENESS THROUGH THE CHURCH: "There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. ... Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin" (New Catholic Catechism, 982).

Rome denies justification by grace alone BY ITS DOCTRINE OF INDULGENCES: "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints. ... Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead" (New Catholic Catechism, 1471).

The bottom line is that Rome has never changed its erroneous doctrinal position or its claims to be the one, true, holy, apostolic church. It is forever engaged, rather, in a clever ploy. It is using the ecumenical movement to bring the separated sons home to the papa (which is the meaning of the term pope). The amazing fact is that Rome has not hidden its goal in ecumenical relations. Consider the following statement from Vatican II: "The term 'ecumenical movement' indicates the initiatives and activities encouraged and organized, according to the various needs of the [Roman] Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity. ... The results will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, ALL CHRISTIANS WILL BE GATHERED IN A COMMON CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST, INTO THE UNITY OF THE ONE AND ONLY CHURCH, which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning. THE UNITY, WE BELIEVE, SUBSISTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS SOMETHING SHE CAN NEVER LOSE" (emphasis added) (Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, chap. 1, 4, p. 416).

God created mankind, gave us His word to use to live rightly with Him, now and in eternity, and the RCC has cleverly embraced the word of God while denying the MOST BASIC of all of its teachings - how to have a right relationship with God.

Eternity is at stake. If the RCC has it's way, you won't be spending it with God.

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