

The Catholic Chronicles

Comprising

*The Holy Eucharist
The Sacrifice of the Mass
Salvation According to Rome
What Did Vatican II Really
Change?*

*by
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1981?
Last Days Ministries*

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“But whoever eats from My body and drinks from My blood, there is everlasting life for him, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My body is truly food, and My blood is truly drink.”

John 6:54-55

Introduction

A young Catholic believer recently asked me, “What are Protestants still protesting about anyway?” The question caught me off-guard, and at the time I had to answer, “I don’t really know . . . nothing, I guess.” Well, my on-the-spot answer really bothered me, and it started gnawing away at me. What were Martin Luther, the Huguenots, the Anabaptists, the Quakers and the multitudes of others protesting anyway when they broke away from the Church of Rome? What did they suffer untold persecutions and martyrdoms for? I had to find the answer. . . and when I found it, I knew I had no choice but to share it.

So beginning with this issue, we are publishing a series of articles dealing with the Roman Catholic Church. Never has a more frightening task been set before me than editing this series of articles. For I am certainly no expert on the subject—until lately I have never done much reading on it, I carry no degrees in church history, nor do I even come from a Catholic background. In fact, nothing at all qualifies me for this task—except for this one fact: *I am sure God has told me to do it!*

There has never been such wide-spread acceptance of Catholicism among Protestants and evangelicals as there is today. I don’t mean that there are large numbers of main line evangelicals becoming Catholics. But today, for the first time in church history, an increasing number of Protestants are regarding the Roman Catholic Church as simply another valid Christian denomination. Meanwhile, gleeful shouts of “unity” are being heralded world-wide in ecumenical gatherings, festivals and conventions. (This is especially true among charismatics.)

I believe there has never been such a crucial need to ask these possibly disturbing questions: “Are the heresies of Romanism that brought about the Reformation still alive in the modern Roman Church, or are these doctrinal discrepancies now settled?” Or worse

yet, “Should the scriptural issues that brought about the spilling of oceans of martyrs’ blood now be considered ‘unimportant’?”

In pursuing this subject, I want to make it *completely* understood that neither I nor anyone else at Last Days Ministries have anything at all personally against Catholics. We know of many loving, committed and sincere believers among their ranks. In fact, there are quite a few who receive our newsletter, even a priest in New England who corresponds with me regularly (and if you are reading this now—I love you!). No, it isn’t Catholics themselves that we will be taking an in-depth look at, scrutinizing in the light of scripture, but the Roman Church as a whole—her history, doctrines, theology and traditions.

It’s not that all the many so-called “Protestant” denominations have such perfect doctrines or spotless histories—there are crazy theologies galore, a few even bordering on heresy. But nowhere has such departure from scriptural truth been so tolerated, accepted and made into tradition and pillars of church doctrine as in the Roman Catholic Church.

I can already hear the cries of “division!” And I am grieved to the heart that many will see this effort as such. But I am convinced in my spirit that we have nothing at all to fear from the truth, for Jesus has promised us that it will set us free! (John 8:32). We are not attacking, but examining. We are not angry but deeply concerned. We are not on the “war-path”, but on the path of the search for what is right. And we are not out to divide anything but to “divide accurately the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE I

The Holy Eucharist

One might wonder why, in a scriptural look at the doctrines of the Catholic Church, I would choose this subject—The Roman Interpretation of the Lord’s Supper (more commonly known as “Communion”) for the first of the “Catholic Chronicles.” Most Protestants¹ would expect me to deal with what they might consider the more obvious departures from biblical foundation such as—the worship of and prayers to the Virgin Mary, the infallibility of the pope, purgatory and prayers for the dead, or the history of the torture and burning of accused “heretics” and such like that—and no doubt in future installments we shall look in-depth at each of these.

But for this first article I believe that we should get right to the root, before we begin exploring the branches of Roman Doctrine and practice. And any Catholic who has even a small knowledge of his church knows that the central focus of each gathering (known as the “Mass”) is **the Holy Eucharist**.

The Eucharist

The word “Eucharist” is a Greek word that means “thanksgiving.” In the gospel accounts of the Last Supper, Jesus is described as “giving thanks” before breaking the bread (Luke 22:19), and so this word became a proper name for the Lord’s Supper in the early Catholic Church. Today, it is more commonly associated with the elements in communion, especially the host or “wafer,” although the ceremony itself is still called “The Holy Eucharist.”

¹- Today, Protestants are considered to be members of any church or church-group outside the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox churches.

Now, you might be wondering why I'm taking so much time and effort to explain something as harmless as the ceremony known around the world as communion. If you've ever been to a church at all, (Protestant *or* Catholic), you've probably taken part in a communion service. So why make all this fuss about bread and wine? Why? Because that's where the similarity between evangelical communion services and the Roman Catholic Mass ends—at the bread and the wine!

Transubstantiation

That 18-letter word above is a complete theological statement—and the name of a doctrine, out of which springs the most astounding set of beliefs and practices that has ever been taught in the name of religion. Very, very few people know what the Catholic Church actually believes and teaches concerning this subject, and I am convinced that even fewer Catholics realize themselves what they are taking part in. From earliest childhood, “This is the body of Christ” is all they've ever heard when the priest gingerly placed the wafer on their tongue. And as they grew up, it was such a natural and normal part of religious life, that their minds never even questioned the fact that Jesus Christ, **Himself**, was actually in their mouth!

It might be hard for you to believe, but that's exactly, **literally**, what “transubstantiation” means. The Roman Catholic Church teaches their flocks that the bread and the wine used in the Mass actually, **physically**, turn into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ after the priest blesses them during the liturgy (ceremony). Although this in itself might shock you, it is really only the beginning. For the implications and practical conclusions of this doctrine are absolutely mind-boggling.

Exclusive Authority

For example, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that since their

priests are the only ones who have the authority from God² to pronounce the blessing which changes the elements of communion into the actual body and blood of Jesus, that they are the only church where Jesus “**physically resides**” even now! Let me quote a letter written to one of the girls in our ministry from a devoted Catholic:

“To explain the Catholic Church would take volumes, but basically the Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ when He was here on earth. It is the only church founded by Jesus. The greatest asset of our church is that we have Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist—He is really here, body, soul and divinity. He is God and in His omnipotence can do anything He wishes, and He decided to remain with us until the end of the world in the form of the host³ in Holy Communion.”

If you think this is just the isolated opinion of someone on the fringe of the church, or that the Catholic Church as a whole does not really believe or teach this, I beg you to read on. For not only is this the official teaching of Rome, but according to irreversible church decree (called dogma), anyone who does not hold to this belief, in the most explicit detail, is accursed and damned forever!

The Council of Trent

When Europe was electrified by the eloquent preaching of the sixteenth century reformation, the Roman Catholic hierarchy gathered together her theologians who worked for three decades on the preparation of a statement of faith concerning transubstantiation.

²- Passed down through “Apostolic Succession” from Peter the apostle—the supposed “first pope.”

³- The “wafer” [which ‘becomes’ Jeshua’s (Jesus’) flesh. It is a circular sun-shaped disc which is not to be broken, unlike the unleavened bread that Jeshua broke at the Last Supper. Host is from the Latin word *hostia* which literally means “**victim**.”]

This document remains, to this day, the standard of Catholic doctrine.

As the Second Vatican Council commenced in 1963, Pope John XXIII declared, “I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent.” What did the Council of Trent decide and declare? Some of the first sections are as follows:

CANON I: “If anyone shall deny that the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore entire Christ, are truly, really, and substantially contained in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist; and shall say that He is only in it as a sign, or in a figure—let him be accursed!”

CANON II: “If anyone shall say that the substance of the bread and wine remains in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .—let him be accursed!”

CANON VI: “If anyone shall say that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is not to be adored in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, even with the open worship of Latria, and therefore not to be venerated with any peculiar festal celebrity, nor to be solemnly carried about in processions according to the praiseworthy and universal rites and customs of the Holy Church, and that He is not to be publicly set before the people to be adored, and that **His adorers are idolaters**,—let him be accursed!”

The Worship Of The Host

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the

earth.⁴ You shall not bow down to them nor serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God...

- The Second Commandment Exodus 20:4-5

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” - John 4:23

In Canon VI, a rite of worship called “Latria” was spoken of. This is not just an “ancient custom,” it is thoroughly practised today in many Masses. After the bread has been supposedly “changed” into Christ by the priest, it is placed in a holder called a monstrance. And before this monstrance the Catholic must bow and worship⁵ the little wafer as God! Sometimes they have processions where they solemnly march, as the congregation bows and offers praise and worship—to this piece of bread!

The Roman teaching that Jesus Christ is physically present in each morsel of bread creates many other doctrinal and practical problems. For instance, when the service is over, what happens to all those leftover wafers that have been “changed into Christ?” Do they change back into bread again when the priest goes home? I’m afraid not. For according to Canon IV of the Council of Trent, **they stay flesh!** And don’t think that 400 year-old decree is just some dusty old manuscript in a museum case somewhere—it still is completely adhered to and passionately practised. As an example, here is a passage from an official Catholic home instruction book, copyrighted 1978:

“Jesus Christ does not cease to exist under the appearances of bread and wine after the Mass is over. Furthermore, some hosts are usually kept in all Catholic churches. In these hosts, Jesus is physically and truly present, as long as the appearances of bread remain.

⁴ - NASV reads, “You shall not make for yourself an idol.”

⁵ - This act is called “genuflecting” by Catholicism.

*Catholics therefore have the praiseworthy practice of 'making visits' to our Lord present in their churches to offer Him their thanks, their adoration, to ask for help and forgiveness: in a word, to make Him the center around which they live their daily lives."*⁶

That is an absurd interpretation of how to make Jesus the centre of your daily life!

When Did This Teaching Begin?

The teaching of transubstantiation does not date back to the Last Supper as most Catholics suppose. It was a controversial topic for many centuries before officially becoming an article of faith (which means that it is **essential to salvation** according to Rome). The idea of a physical presence was vaguely held by some, such as Ambrose, but it was not until 831 AD. that Paschasius Radbertus, a Benedictine Monk, published a treatise openly advocating the doctrine. Even then, for almost another four centuries, theological war was waged over this teaching by bishops and people alike, until at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 AD., it was officially defined and canonized as a dogma⁷ by Pope Innocent III.

Church historians tell us that when this doctrine first began to be taught, the priests took great care that no crumb should fall—lest the body of Jesus be hurt, or **even eaten by a mouse or a dog!** There were quite serious discussions as to what should be done if a person were to vomit after receiving the sacrament. At the Council of Constance, it was argued that if a communicant spilled some of the blood on his beard, both beard and the man should be destroyed by

⁶ - "The Spirit of Jesus" Catholic Home Study Instruction Course. Book #3, p.92.

⁷ - A "Dogma" is a teaching or doctrine that can never be reversed or repealed. Roman Catholicism claims that their dogmas are equal in authority to the Bible.

burning!^{8,9}

How Rome Views the Bible

Before we proceed to look at what the Bible has to say on this subject, it is important to understand the official Catholic view of the Scriptures. According to *their own* unquestionable decree, they hold that **“Church tradition has equal authority with the Bible.”** This is not just a theological view, but it was made an article of faith by the same Council of Trent in 1546! And again, this view is completely held by the Church today:

“The teachings of the Church will always be in keeping with the teachings of the Scripture...and it is through the teaching of the Church that we understand more fully truths of sacred Scripture. To the Catholic Church belongs the final word in the understanding and meaning of the Holy Spirit in the words of the Bible.”

And explaining the premise used in interpreting the Bible:

“...usually, the meaning of the Scriptures is sought out by those who are specially trained for this purpose. And in their conclusions, they know that no explanation of the Scriptures which contradicts the truths constantly taught by the infallible Church can be true.”¹⁰

Any thinking person can see how such a mode of interpretation can

⁸ - The Other Side of Rome, p.21.

⁹ - By the end of the eleventh century, lest someone should spill God's blood, some in the church began to hold back the cup from the people, and finally in 1415, the Council of Constance officially denied the cup to laymen. Today, by decree of the Vatican, churches may now offer the cup optionally to communicants. -Jeshua *never* made drinking the wine representing His Blood optional.

¹⁰ - “The Spirit of Jesus,” pp.94-95.

be dangerously used to manipulate Scripture to mean absolutely anything at all! Who has not observed this of the various cults? The Moonies, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses **all** back up their false teachings with “new revelations” and “inspired interpretations” of the Scriptures—each claiming that the Holy Spirit revealed these new truths to their founders. They open themselves to all kinds of deception when they *judge the Bible* by what their church or pastor teaches, instead of judging what their church or pastor teaches **by the Bible!**

Catholic Proof-Texts Explained

With this in mind, we will briefly discuss the two main passages of Scripture that the Roman Church uses while trying to show that Jesus Himself taught transubstantiation.

“But whoever eats from My body and drinks from My blood, there is everlasting life for him, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My body is truly food, and My blood is truly drink.” John 6:54-55

Catholics are taught here that Jesus is explaining how He is literally offering them His flesh and blood, so that they may have eternal life by physically eating Him. With just a little study of the whole passage (verses 27-71), it is clear that Jesus was not talking about physical, but spiritual food and drink.

Food is eaten to satisfy hunger. And in verse 35 Jesus says, *“He who comes to Me shall never hunger.”* Now, Jesus is not promising eternal relief from physical hunger pains. He is, of course, speaking of the spiritual hunger in man for righteousness and salvation. And He promises to those who will “come to Him” that He will satisfy their hunger for these things **forever**—therefore, to **come to Him** is to “eat”! (See also Matthew 5:6, 11:28; John 4:31-34.)

We drink also to satisfy thirst, and again in verse 35 Jesus tells us, *“He that believes on Me shall never thirst.”* Therefore, to **believe on Him** is to “drink”! (See also John 4:13-14.) No one can say that Jesus was here establishing the eating and drinking of His literal flesh and blood to give eternal life, for in verse 63 He says, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”* Thus Jesus makes clear what we should be eating and drinking to have eternal life—His Words! (See also Matthew 4:4.)

Matthew 26:26 and 28: *“This is My body...this is My blood.”* Catholics base their whole religious system on their interpretation of these two verses. They adamantly teach that right here, Jesus is pronouncing the first priestly blessing that mysteriously changes the bread and wine into His body and blood. The absolute folly of such a conclusion is proved by this one observation: **He was literally still there before, during and after they had partaken of the bread and the cup!** He was not changed into some liquid and bread - His flesh was still on His bones, and His blood still in His veins. He had not vanished away to reappear in the form of a piece of bread or a cup of wine!

Let’s look closer at His words. No one can deny that here we have figurative language. Jesus did not say *touto gignetai* (“this has become” or “is turned into”), but *touto esti* (“this is,” i.e., “signifies,” “represents” or “stands for”).¹¹ It is obvious that Jesus’ meaning was not literal but symbolic! And He wasn’t the first in the Bible to claim **figuratively** that a glass of liquid was really “blood.”

One time, David’s friends heard him express a strong desire for water from the well of Bethlehem. In spite of extreme danger, these men broke through the enemy lines of the Philistines and brought the water to him. When David found out that these men had risked their

¹¹ - If I held up a picture of my son and said, “This is my son,” I am certainly not saying that the actual picture is literally my son.

lives in this way, he refused to drink the water, exclaiming, “*Is not this the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?*” (2 Samuel. 23:17)

Throughout the gospels we find similar metaphorical language: Jesus referring to Himself as “the Door,” “the Vine,” “the Light,” “the Root,” “the Rock,” “the Bright and Morning Star,” as well as “the Bread.” The passage is written with such common language that it is plain to any observant reader that the Lord’s Supper was intended primarily as a memorial and in no sense a literal sacrifice. Indeed, Jesus says “*Do this in remembrance of Me.*” (Luke 22:19)

True Pagan Origins

Where did this teaching and practice **really** come from? Like many of the beliefs and rites of Romanism, transubstantiation was first practised by pagan religions. The noted historian Durant said that belief in transubstantiation as practised by the priests of the Roman Catholic system is “one of the oldest ceremonies of primitive religion.”¹² The syncretism and mysticism of the Middle East were great factors in influencing the West, particularly Italy.¹³ In Egypt, priests would consecrate most cakes which were supposed to become the flesh of Osiris.¹⁴ The idea of transubstantiation was also characteristic of the religion of Mithra whose sacraments of cakes and haoma drink closely parallel Catholic Eucharist rites.¹⁵

The idea of eating the flesh of deity was most popular among the people of Mexico and Central America long before they ever heard of Christ. When Spanish missionaries first landed in those countries, “their surprise was heightened, when they witnessed a religious rite

¹² - *The Story of Civilization*, p.741.

¹³ - *Roman Society From Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, by Dill.

¹⁴ - An ancient Egyptian god of the lower world and judge of the dead - *Encyclopedia of Religions*, Vol.2, p.76.

¹⁵ - *Ibid.*

which reminded them of communion...an image made of flour...and after consecration by priests, was distributed among the people who ate it...declaring it was the flesh of deity...”¹⁶

So Why Do They Teach It?

Before concluding our first chronicle, the question needs to be asked, “Why does the Roman Catholic Church need to have such a doctrine—why do they think that Jesus wants them to **Physically eat Him?**” That is what truly puzzled me as I read astounded through the catechism and doctrinal instruction books. But the answer to that question is a sad one. As I said before, the implications and practical conclusions of the teaching of transubstantiation are substantially worse than the doctrine itself—and like a great web spun by an industrious spider, Rome’s teachings spiral out from this central hub like the spokes of a wheel.

In the next **Catholic Chronicle** we will look intently at the next direct result of transubstantiation in official Catholic systematic theology: “**The Sacrifice of the Mass**”

¹⁶ - Prescott’s *Mexico*, Vol. 3. And what do we conclude? Satan knew part of God’s plans, and tried to *get in first* with his counterfeits.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE II

The Sacrifice of the Mass

- Jesus Dies Again -

In Chronicle I, we thoroughly examined the doctrine of transubstantiation—its history, practice and real meaning. But we have waited for this second article to answer the question: **Why?** Why must there be present in the Mass the literal body and blood of Jesus? What purpose does it serve?

The answer is found in these startling words:

“The sacrifice of the Mass is the same sacrifice of the cross, for there is the same priest, the same victim, and the same offering.”¹⁷

And in the words of Pope Pius IV...

“I profess likewise that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory¹⁸ sacrifice for the living and the dead.” (From the fifth article of the creed of Pope Pius IV.)

That is the incredible truth! The Roman Catholic Church teaches that in every Mass, in every church, throughout the world (estimated at up to 200,000 Masses a day) that Jesus Christ is being offered up

¹⁷ - *The Roman Catholic Sacrifice of the Mass*, by Bartholomew F. Brewer, PhD

¹⁸ - Propitiatory—conciliatory, to soothe the anger of, to win or regain the goodwill of, to appease, placate or make friendly, to reconcile - Webster's *New World Dictionary* and Harper's *Bible Dictionary*.

again, **physically**, as a sacrifice for sin (benefiting not only those alive, but **the dead**¹⁹ **as well!**) Every Roman Mass is a re-creation of Jesus' death for the sins of the world. **It is NOT a symbolic re-creation!** But a literal, actual offering of the flesh and blood of the Lord to make daily atonement for all the sins that have been daily committed since Jesus was crucified almost 2,000 years ago.²⁰

That's why the elements²¹ must become physically Jesus' body and blood, so that they can be once again offered for sin:

“The Holy Eucharist is the perpetual continuation of this act of sacrifice and surrender of our Lord. When the Lord's Supper is celebrated, Christ again presents Himself in His act of total surrender to the Father in death.”²²

“He offers Himself continually to the Father, in the same eternal act of offering that began on the cross and will never cease.”²³

“The Mass is identical to Calvary—it is a sacrifice for sin—it must be perpetuated to take away sin.”²⁴

The catechism of the Council of Trent required all priests to explain that not only did the elements of the Mass contain flesh, bones and nerves as a part of Christ, **“But also a WHOLE CHRIST.”**²⁵ Thus it

¹⁹ - “it is appointed for the children of men to die once, and after their deaths the judgement,” Hebrews 9:27

²⁰ - *The Catholic Home Instruction Book* #3, p.90.

²¹ - The bread and the wine.

²² - *The Spirit of Jesus* pp.89-90, Imprimatur: John Joseph Cardinal Carberry, Archbishop of St. Louis.

²³ - *Sons of God in Christ* Book 4, p.117.

²⁴ - *For Them Also*, pp.289-299.

²⁵ - *Encyclopedia of Religions*, Vol.2, p.77.

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is referred to as “the Sacrifice of the Mass” and as “a **renewal** of the sacrifice of the cross.”²⁶

The Council Of Trent On “The Sacrifice Of The Mass”

As we shared in Chronicle I, the Council of Trent was called to clarify and standardize Catholic doctrine in response to the challenges of the Reformation. The canons on this subject (passed in Session XXII. Cap II.) are as follows:

1. “If anyone shall say, that in the Mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, or that what is offered is nothing else than Christ given to be eaten, let him be anathema.”²⁷

2. “If anyone shall say that in these words, ‘This do in remembrance of Me,’ Christ did not make the apostles priests, or did not ordain that they themselves and other priests should offer His body and blood, let him be anathema.”

3. “If anyone shall say that the sacrifice of the Mass is only of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice performed on the cross, but not propitiatory; or that it is of benefit only to the person who takes it, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be accursed.”

4. “If anyone shall say that a blasphemy is ascribed to

²⁶ - “A Catholic Word List” p.45.

²⁷ - Anathema—The strongest denunciation of a person that can be made in the ancient Greek (the original language of the New Testament). Literal meaning: “devoted to death.” A thing or person accursed or damned - Webster’s *New World Dictionary* and Harper’s *Bible Dictionary*.

the most holy sacrifice of Christ performed on the cross by the sacrifice of the Mass—let him be accursed.”

But Is This The Belief Of Rome Today?

If any be in doubt as to the modern Roman position, we shall quote the recent (1963-1965) Second Vatican Council:

“At the Last Supper...our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of His body and blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross...” p. 154, The Documents of Vatican II, Walter M. Abbott, S.J.

The catechism books teach that the reason the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of Calvary is because the victim in each case was Jesus Christ.²⁸ In fact, they refer to the bread of the Eucharist as the “host,” which is the Latin word *hostia* which literally means “**victim**.”²⁹

Why “The Sacrifice” Of The Mass?

We will now quote the church’s own contemporary literature to fully answer this question (taken from the book, *This is the Catholic Church*, published by the Catholic Information Service, Knights of Columbus, Imprimatur.³⁰ Most Reverend John F. Whealon, Archbishop of Hartford:

“Sacrifice is the very essence of religion. And it is only through sacrifice that union with the Creator can be

²⁸ - “*The New Baltimore Catechism*” #3, Question 931.

²⁹ - Webster’s *New World Dictionary*.

³⁰ - “Imprimatur—Sanction or approval. Specifically, permission to print or publish a book or article containing nothing contrary to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church” - Webster’s *New World Dictionary*.

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perfectly acquired. It was through sacrifice that Christ Himself was able to achieve this for man. It is only through the perpetuation of that sacrifice that this union may be maintained.

What makes the Mass the most exalted of all sacrifices is the nature of the victim, Christ Himself. For the Mass is the continuation of Christ's sacrifice which He offered through His life and death. Jesus then, is the priest, the offerer of the sacrifice. But Christ was not only the priest of this sacrifice (of the Cross), He was also the victim, the very object itself of this sacrifice.

The Mass is thus the same as the sacrifice of the cross. No matter how many times it is offered, nor in how many places at one time, it is the same sacrifice of Christ. Christ is forever offering Himself in the Mass."³¹

But Jesus Said "It Is Finished!"

Every true believer loves the sound of these words: "*It is finished!*" (*John 19:30*). For it is the wonderful exclamation that the Lord's suffering was finally over—He had fulfilled His mission! Jesus had lived a life of sorrow, bearing the burden of a world gone mad. He had been rejected by everyone, even His closest friends. He had lived a perfect life before men and God, and His reward on earth was to be laughed at, spat upon, beaten beyond recognition and finally nailed to a cross. But He had submitted willingly, because it was the will of His Father to offer Him as the satisfaction of the penalty for all the sin in the world—past, present and future!

But here, in the words of a Roman Catholic priest, is the "true meaning" of the words "it is finished!":

³¹ - pp.20-24

“These words do not declare that His sacrifice was finished, but that He had finished His former, normal, earthly life and was now fixed in the state of a victim...He then began His everlasting career as the perpetual sacrifice of the new law.”³²

Hence, according to Rome, Jesus must be forever dying for sin, “**perpetually.**”

Have you ever wondered why in every Catholic Church they still have Jesus up on the cross? Every crucifix with Jesus portrayed as nailed to it, tells the whole Catholic story—**Jesus is still dying for the sins of the world!**³³ But that’s a lie! We need only look to the Scriptures to see the truth.

Back To The Book

The epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the “once for all time” sacrifice of Christ on the cross, not a daily sacrifice on altars. The Bible repeatedly affirms in the clearest and most positive terms that Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary was **complete in that one offering**. And that it was never to be repeated is set forth explicitly in Hebrews, chapters 7, 9 and 10:

“and there is no need for Him to offer up sacrifices every day, as those high priests did, first for their own sins and then for the people’s, for this One did it once for all time when He offered up His Life.” (7:27). “...but with His own blood He entered the Holy House that one time, and He achieved everlasting redemption.” (9:12).

³² - *The Sacrifice of Christ* by Fr. Richard W. Grace.

³³ - [Ed- In doing all of this, Satan continues to revel in his one moment of apparent triumph over God’s Son Jeshua (Jesus).]

“not that He should offer Himself many times, like the high priest does when entering the Holy House every year with blood that is not his. Otherwise He should have suffered many times since the creation of the world; but now, at the end of the age, He has offered Himself once, sacrificing Himself to destroy sin. And ... in this way also the Messiah was offered once, and He sacrificed Himself for the sins of many. He will appear a second time, without our sins, for the salvation of those who are expecting Him.” (9:25-28). “...For it is His will that we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jeshua the Messiah this one time. For every high priest who stood and ministered everyday and offered those sacrifices from ancient times that were never able to cleanse sins. But He offered one sacrifice for sins forever, then He sat at the right side of God, and He remains there until His enemies are placed as a footstool under His feet. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (10:10-14).

Notice that throughout these verses occurs the statement “once for all time” which shows how perfect, complete and final Jesus’ sacrifice was! **His work on the cross constituted a once-only historic event which need never be repeated and which in fact cannot be repeated.** As Paul says, *“knowing that the Anointed, having been raised from the house of the dead, dies no more. Death has no further dominion over Him. For when He died, He died to sin once for all; but now that He lives, He lives to God.” (Romans 6:9 & 10).* Any pretence of a continuous offering for sin is worse than vain, it is blasphemy and true fulfilment of the Scripture, *“if they would sin again and seek to be renewed in conversion once more and to impale the Son of God once more, they have become contemptible.” (Hebrews 6:6).*

Jesus—The *Only* High Priest

Jesus not only became the perfect sacrifice for sin, but after being accepted by God as having totally fulfilled the requirements of the old covenant, He became “*the mediator of a better covenant*” (Hebrews 8:6). That means that Jesus is the high priest of every true believer! “*For One is God and One is Mediator between God and the children of men, the Son of Man; Jeshua the Anointed.*” (I Timothy 2:5).³⁴

The Bible teaches that the priesthood of Jesus Christ is unique: “*You are the priest forever according to the image of Melchizedek.*”³⁵ “*But this One, because He is everlasting, His priesthood does not pass away.*” (which means that it cannot be transferred to another!) (Hebrews 7:17 & 7:24).

But Roman Catholicism teaches that the apostles were ordained by Jesus Himself (at the Last Supper) to perpetuate the coming sacrifice He would make on the cross. And that this ordination has been handed down through the centuries to the current generation of priests. Therefore, Rome teaches that her priests actually operate and discharge the priesthood of Jesus Christ, and that they are called “other Christs” (**alter Christus**).³⁶

This explains the great adulation and honor heaped upon the Roman priest. The French Catholic Saint John Vianney said that:

“Without the priest the Death and Passion of Our Lord would be of no avail...Where there is no longer any

³⁴ - [Ed- This means that Jeshua is the ONLY mediator between us and His Father. We **all** go directly to Him. Therefore the entire Roman priesthood—which places itself over the rest of the brethren—is a lie and a contradiction of Scripture.]

³⁵ - Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7:17.

³⁶ - In Latin. Anti-Christs in the Greek also means other christs.

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priest there is no sacrifice, and where there is no sacrifice there is no religion... See the power of the priest; out of a piece of bread the word of a priest makes a God. It is more than creating the world.”

“If I were to meet a priest and an angel, I should salute the priest before I saluted the angel. The latter is the friend of God; but the priest holds His place....After God, the priest is everything.”³⁷

[Ed- No modesty wasted here.] What humiliation for Jesus Christ, for the Bible says “*God has highly exalted Him and He has also given to Him the Name which is greater than all names,*” (Philippians 2:9)

But Isn't Rome Changing?

Today, many are expressing hope that Rome is turning toward scriptural Christianity. They point to the many reforms of Vatican II³⁸ and also to the ever-widening charismatic renewal. True, these things appear to be a positive sign of change, and many are thrilled by them, but most fail to realize that these changes are only superficial. For Rome could never reject the sacrifice of the Mass—just streamline it enough to keep the truth of its meaning hidden. Pope John XXIII made it clear that His Church is bound “to all the teachings of the Church in its entirety and preciseness, as it still shines forth in the act of the Council of Trent and First Vatican Council...”³⁹

It is clear that the whole of Roman teaching and belief is founded on this premise of the continual sacrifice of Christ for sin:

³⁷ - *Catechism on the Priesthood* by St. John Vianney (A.D. 1786-1859)

³⁸ - i.e., Such as Masses performed in the common language rather than exclusively in Latin, the relaxation of taboos such as eating meat on Friday, etc.

³⁹ - *The Documents of Vatican II*, Abbot, S.J.

“It should be easy to see why the Mass holds such an important place in the Church’s life. **The Mass is the very essence of the Church.** Within it the Church’s life, and the Church’s very existence is centered. **If there were no Mass, there could be no Catholic Church.** The Mass is our act of worship, an act which we know to be really worthy of God, because it is the sacrifice of God’s own Son.

“What the sacrifices of the old law were unable to accomplish—what no other form of human worship can accomplish—**the Mass performs: Perfect atonement is made for sin.**

“The souls of men yet unborn, together with those now living and those who have come into existence since Christ’s sacrifice, all have need of the salvation which Christ has won for us. It is through the Mass as well as through the other sacraments that the effects of Christ’s salvation are applied to the souls of men.”⁴⁰

It is made thoroughly clear that Rome will forever put its faith in the Mass for the eternal forgiveness of sins. To remove this belief from her system of theology would be like knocking out the pillars of a great edifice—**the whole building would come tumbling down!**

Paul’s Extreme Warning

As I sat stunned, reading all the “Let them be accursed” threats of the Council of Trent, I could not help but think how their curses would only fall back on their own heads—for the words of our brother Paul call out across the centuries:

⁴⁰ *This Is The Catholic Church* pp.24-25.

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“But if even we, or an angel from heaven, preach to you things outside of what we have preached to you, he will be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8).

Not only does Paul warn that an angel from heaven should not be heeded while preaching ‘different doctrine’ but he gives the ultimate warning—“...if even **we!**” Paul strictly warned the Galatians to not even listen to him—the chief apostle and master of true doctrine—if he should reverse himself on any of the fundamental teachings of the gospel. How much more then, should we reject the appalling traditions and practices of a system that is not only unbiblical, but is actually steeped in mysticism, bordering dangerously on the occult!

Conclusion

The Definition Of A “Cult”

Now I am sure that many of you who have been reading this might have been wondering if (and when) I would use this word. Today, the word “cult” is thrown around without much thought. People seem much too eager to use it to describe any individual or group that doesn’t exactly agree with them. But I do not, and will not use the word lightly. As far as I can see from the Bible, a person is only in danger of being grouped with “false brethren” by tampering with three very basic issues of biblical truth.⁴¹

- 1) Who Jesus is:—Son of God, God the Son, Creator of the universe.
- 2) What He came to do—to die once for all, for the sins of mankind, then rise from the dead as the eternal high priest of all true believers.
- 3) How a person directly benefits from Christ’s death for sin—he is accounted as righteous through a total faith and rest in the work of

⁴¹ - These are greatly condensed for this example.

Christ, and becomes the possessor of God's free gift—eternal life (**salvation.**)

The Roman Catholic Church has been considered a true Christian faith, mainly because it is known that their theology is generally correct on point #1. But as we have pointed out in these two chronicles, they are perilously shaky on the atonement—Christ's substitutionary death for sinners - #2. And if there is any doubt left at all as to whether or not the Roman Church is authentically and biblically **Christian**, there will be a complete and thorough study of the Roman view on how one obtains salvation in our third installment of "*The Catholic Chronicles*".

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE III

Salvation According to Rome

Introduction

To say we've received a lot of mail lately would be quite an understatement! With prayerful thanksgiving, we have read letter after letter from those who have been touched with freedom through the truth. As the letter-section shows, many for the first time are seeing the true light of salvation through Jesus, *and only through Jesus!*

We also greatly appreciate the time and effort many took to scrutinize our efforts through *Catholic Chronicles I & II*. . .

Before we begin with "Chronicle III", we want to repeat again what is on all of our hearts here at Last Days. We really, really love Catholics! It is our *only* motive for publishing this series of articles. We realize that many cannot help but see this as anything other than an "attack" on their church. Many have said, "Why are you picking on my religion?" But God knows our hearts, we will only do what He commands. People have written saying, "We *know* that the Holy Spirit has told you to write these articles!" While others have said just as assuredly, "We know that God has definitely *not* told you to do this!" So who are we to believe? We are held accountable only to do that which we believe in our hearts God has told us to do. With this in view, we proceed with our examination of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice in our third Catholic Chronicle:

Salvation According to Rome

How blessed it is to know Jesus! His love, His mercy, His righteousness, **His forgiveness!** He has promised to “*cast all our sins into the depths of the sea*” (Micah 7:19) and that “*As far as sunrise is from sunset, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*” (Psalm 103:12).

This is the **Good News!** (That’s the literal meaning of the word “gospel”—good news!) This is what the true church of our God has the privilege of proclaiming... “*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set those who are oppressed free with forgiveness,*” (Luke 4:18).

The reason I begin this article on the Roman Catholic view of salvation with such rejoicing in my Saviour is because I have just finished reading a mountain of official Roman church literature on the subject, and I can honestly say, I have never had such joy in my heart of hearts about the finished work of Christ. As I scoured each page and read of penance, confession, venial and mortal sins, indulgences, purgatory, etc., I then had the infinite pleasure of searching the Scriptures to see what they had to say on these fundamental Catholic doctrines.

Oh what relief my soul found in the Scriptures! What holy joy! What clarity of light I saw, as the simple brilliance of God’s mercy shone into my mind. If there is anything more beautiful than God’s love and patience with man, it has never been revealed to mortals!

All this to say that I am bogged down with the information I have accumulated, and I will probably have to cover it all in this, Chronicle III, briefly touching on each subject, while always coming back to the main question: “According to Rome, how can a man or woman be saved from the consequences of his sinful nature and

actions, and how can they gain assurance that they are in a right standing before God?”

If the future permits, I will come back in another installment and cover some of these subjects (particularly, purgatory and indulgences) in far greater depth and detail. It is our desire to see people find the true salvation that Jesus dies for—therefore, we must deal with that great (and most important) subject wholly, before taking the time to supply other necessary (and most revealing) subject matter.

The Catholic Teaching on Sin

Before we can understand what Catholics are taught about salvation, we must first see what they are taught they need to be saved from. In Matthew, the angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph in a dream about his betrothed, Mary, saying *“And she will bear a Son, and she will call His name Jeshua, for He will save His people from their sins.”* (Matthew 1:21).

Today, many evangelicals toss around the term “saved” without much thought. “When did you get saved?” someone might ask. It’s almost like a title, or a badge that a person wears to prove that he’s become part of the club—the “saved” club. Others are under the impression that when a person talks of being “saved”, they are talking about being saved from many different things—sickness, death, the devil, hell, etc. But when the angel of the Lord used that precious word to prophesy that Jesus would fulfil all the predictions of the prophets, he made very clear what Jesus was coming to save His people from—**their sins!**

In official Roman Catholic theology, this too is the main thing that people are taught they need to be saved from—their sins. But the only thing that Catholic and evangelical teachings have in common on the subject of sin...is the spelling! For when a Catholic talks about

his “sins”, you must find out first if he is talking about “mortal” sins, or “venial” sins. And then you must ask him “how do you get rid of them?” The answer given will likely confound a non-Catholic. For words like “faith”, “repentance”, even “Jesus” will usually be missing in the answer. Instead, a whole new list of other words will have to be learned, defined and understood before the evangelical can fully grasp how a Catholic is taught his sins (and the penalty for them) can be cancelled out.

Mortal and Venial Sins

The first of these unfamiliar words are the names of the two groups Rome has separated all sins into. Now if you’re a Catholic, you might be wondering why I’m making such a big deal—for the dividing of sins into two distinct categories (each with their own set of consequences **and** remedies) has been part of Catholic doctrine for a long, long time.

According to Rome’s definition, mortal sin is described as “any great offense against the law of God” and is so named because “it is deadly, killing the soul and subjecting it to eternal punishment.” Venial⁴² sins, on the other hand, are “small and pardonable offences against God, and our neighbour.” Unlike mortal sins, venial sins are not thought to damn a soul to hell, but with the committing of each venial sin, a person increases the length of his stay in the purifying fires of a place called “purgatory.” (Look **that** word up in your Bible dictionary—you’ll find it right next to “venial”!) [*ED- See the Update at the end of this section which addresses widely reported changes to purgatory made by John Paul II in 1999 - CHCoG*]

Now, there is no agreement among the priests as to which sins are mortal and which are venial, but they all proceed on the assumption

⁴² - Venial—easily excused or forgiven; pardonable - *American Heritage Dictionary*.

that such a distinction does exist. The method of classification is purely arbitrary. What is venial according to one may be mortal according to another.

According to Rome, the pope is infallible in matters of faith and doctrine.⁴³ He should then be able to settle this important matter by accurately cataloguing those sins which are mortal as distinguished from those which are venial. However, there are some definites in the “mortal” category: blatantly breaking one of the ten commandments, practically all sexual offences (whether in word, thought or deed) and a long list of transgressions which have changed throughout the centuries.

For instance, until Vatican II⁴⁴ it was a mortal sin to attend a Protestant church, to own or read a Protestant Bible, or to eat meat on Friday! Oh, and it’s still a mortal sin to “miss Mass on Sunday morning⁴⁵ without a good excuse” (which means that considerably more than half of the claimed Roman Catholic membership throughout the world is **constantly in mortal sin!**) Venial sins include things like thinking bad thoughts, having wrong motives, losing your temper, etc. - things that do not necessarily “lead into actual sin” but still, nevertheless, are sins that need to be eradicated in some way.

What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible makes no distinction between mortal and venial sins. **There is in fact, no such thing as a venial sin. ALL SIN IS MORTAL!** It is true that some sins are worse than others, but it is also true that all sins if not forgiven bring death to the soul. The Bible simply says: *“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23)* and *“The*

⁴³ - A subject which we hope to cover in a future chronicle.

⁴⁴ - A Roman church council that met between 1963-1965.

⁴⁵ - “Sunday obligation” can also be fulfilled by attending a Saturday evening Mass.

soul that sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4).

James says: “*For whoever keeps all the Instructions, and stumbles in one thing, he is condemned by all the Instructions.*” (2:10). He did not mean that the person who commits one sin is guilty of all other kinds of sin, but that even one sin not atoned for shuts a person completely out of heaven and subjects him to punishment, just as surely as one misstep by the mountain climber plunges him to destruction in the canyon below.

In the light of these biblical statements, the distinction between mortal and venial sins is shown to be completely absurd. In fact, the very act of classifying sins into “greater and lesser” is immoral in itself. We know how quick human nature is to grasp at any excuse for sin. Rome seems to be saying “these sins are really bad! But those? Well...you can get away with a few of them and not really suffer too much.” Speaking of “getting away” with something, let’s get right down to how Rome teaches you can “get rid of” your sins.

Confession

The Catholic system starts to get real complicated when we begin to look at the ways one can erase both their mortal and venial sins. “Two kinds of punishment are due to mortal sin: eternal (in hell forever), and temporal (in purgatory). Eternal punishment is cancelled by either baptism⁴⁶ or confession to a priest.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ - Which is only allowed once in a person’s life - and if a person were to die immediately after baptism, Rome says he will go “straight to heaven.” Otherwise, the only other conditions by which a Catholic may be assured he will go directly to heaven immediately upon death, is to die a “saint” (a completely perfect and sanctified person), or to die a martyr’s death. All others must do some time in purgatory.

⁴⁷ - Baptism is also the only case where all sin is washed away, and both the eternal and temporal punishments due to sin are cancelled.

The *Baltimore Catechism* defines confession as follows: “Confession is the telling of our sins to an authorized priest for the purpose of attaining forgiveness.” The important words here are “authorized priest.” And to be genuine, a confession must be heard, judged and followed by obedience to the authorized priest as he assigns a penance, such as good works, prayers, fasts, abstinence from certain pleasures, etc. A penance may be defined as “a punishment undergone in token of repentance for sin, as assigned by the priest” - usually a very light penalty.

The *New York Catechism* says, “I must tell my sins to the priest so that he will give me absolution.”⁴⁸ A person who knowingly keeps back a mortal sin in confession commits a dreadful sacrilege, and he must repeat his confession.”

The Priest's Role

Canon law 888 says: “The priest has to remember that in hearing confession he is a judge.” And the book *Instructions for Non-Catholics*⁴⁹ says: “A priest does not have to ask God to forgive your sins. The priest himself has the power to do so in Christ’s name. Your sins are forgiven by the priest the same as if you knelt before Jesus Christ and told them to Christ Himself.”⁵⁰

*“The priest forgives the **guilt** of mortal sins which save the penitent from going to hell, but he cannot remit the **penalty** due for those sins, and so the penitent must atone for them by performance of good works which he prescribes. The penitent may be, and usually is, interrogated by the priest so that he or she may make a full and proper confession. Stress is placed on the fact*

⁴⁸ - Absolution—release from punishment; acquittal; remission of sins declared officially by a priest - Webster’s Dictionary.

⁴⁹ - Primarily for use by those who are joining the Roman Catholic Church.

⁵⁰ - *Instructions for Non-Catholics*, p.93.

that any sin not confessed is not forgiven, any mortal sin not confessed in detail is not forgiven, and that the omission of even one sin (mortal) may invalidate the whole confession. Every loyal Roman Catholic is required under pain of mortal sin to go to confession at least once a year.⁵¹ But even after a penitent has received pardon, a large, but unknown amount of punishment remains to be suffered in purgatory.”^{52, 53}

Technically, venial sins need not be confessed since they are comparatively light and can be cancelled by good works, prayers, extreme unction,⁵⁴ etc., but the terms are quite elastic and permit considerable leeway on the part of the priest. It is generally advised that it is safer to confess supposed venial sins also since the priest alone is able to judge accurately which are mortal and which are venial. The *Baltimore Catechism* says: “When we have committed no mortal sins since our last confession, we should confess our venial sins or some sin told in a previous confession for which we are again sorry, in order that the priest may give us absolution.”⁵⁵

What chance has a poor sinner against such a system as that?

As an example, a minister friend of mine who was brought up in the Catholic Church, tells the story of how his older brother went to confession every single week and confessed the same sin to the same priest and was given the same penance in order to receive absolution.

⁵¹ - Although monthly confession is said to be more satisfactory.

⁵² - *Roman Catholicism*, pps. 197-199.

⁵³ - The doctrine of purgatory rests on the assumption that while God forgives sin, His justice nevertheless demands that the sinner must suffer the full punishment due to him for his sin before he will be allowed to enter heaven.

⁵⁴ - One of the seven sacraments also known as “anointing of the sick” or “the last rites,” and administered when a person is near death.

⁵⁵ - *The Baltimore Catechism*, p. 329.

This went on week after week, year after year. One day, while on a trip from home, he decided that he would not break his pattern of going to weekly confession, so he went to another Catholic Church in the city he was visiting. He went into the confession box and confessed the same sin to a different priest. He began with “Forgive me Father for I have sinned,” and then began confessing the sin once again, but this time he was shocked when the priest said: “But my son, that’s not a sin!” My friend’s brother got up, and hurried out the door, and from that day on he has never stepped foot in any church again.

Historical Development

We search the Bible in vain for any word supporting the doctrine of “auricular confession.”⁵⁶ It is equally impossible to find any authorization or general practice of it during the first 500 years of the Christian era. Not a word is found in the writings of the early church fathers about confessing sins to a priest or to anyone except God alone. Auricular confession is not mentioned once in the writings of Augustine, Origen, Nestorius, Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostem, or Athanasius—all of these and many others apparently lived and died without ever thinking of going to confession. No one other than God was thought to be worthy to hear confessions or to grant forgiveness.

Confession was first introduced into the Catholic church on a voluntary basis in the fifth century by the authority of Leo the Great. But it was not until the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 under Pope Innocent III that private auricular confession was made compulsory and all Roman Catholic people were required to confess and to seek absolution from a priest at least once a year. If they did not obey this command, they were pronounced guilty of mortal sin and damned for

⁵⁶ - The official title for confession to an authorized priest in a confession box. It is called “auricular” because it is spoken secretly, into the ear of the priests.

eternity to hell.⁵⁷

Can A Priest Forgive Sins?

The Scriptures teach that “*only God can forgive sins*” (Mark 2:7). “*The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins*” (Matt. 9:6).

Dr. Zachello tells of his experience as a priest in the confessional before leaving the Roman Church, in these words:

“Where my doubts were really troubling me was inside the confessional box. People coming to me, kneeling down in front of me, confessing their sins to **me**. And I, with the sign of the cross, was promising that I had the power to forgive their sins. I, a sinner, a man, was taking God’s place. It was God’s laws they were breaking, not mine. To God, therefore, they must make confession; and to God alone they must pray for forgiveness.”⁵⁸

In fact, the only word in the Bible about confessing sins to anyone other than God is found in James: “*But you, confess your offences to one another, and you must pray for one another to be healed, for the power of prayer of a righteous man is great.*” (5:16). It is obvious that our Lord meant what He says in Revelation: “*and You have made them a Kingdom and priests and kings to our God; and they shall reign over the earth.*” (Rev 5:10). Peter says: “*But you are a people chosen to be priests for the kingdom, a holy nation, a redeemed assembly that can proclaim praises to Him who called you from darkness into His marvellous light;*” (1 Peter 2:9). Indeed, the only mention of New Testament believers being **priests** is used in a context where **all** true believers are included, not just a select few. That is why James could say that we should confess our sins “*to one*

⁵⁷ - *Roman Catholicism* p. 199.

⁵⁸ - *Roman Catholicism* p. 203.

another”.

Catholics love to quote the verse in John 20:23 to prove that priests do have the power to “forgive and retain” sins. *“If you forgive anyone’s sins, they will be forgiven to them; if you retain anyone’s, they will be retained.”* The powers of forgiving and retaining sins were given to the apostles as proclaimers of the Word of God. As we have just pointed out, all Christians are “priests” in New Testament teaching. And what ‘specialists’ do we have? *“And God has established in His congregation: first apostles, after them prophets, after them teachers, after them workers of miracles, after them gifts of healing, helpers, leaders, and various languages.”* (I Corinthians 12:28). Matthew 20:25 to 28 explains that we are not to have anything remotely like the Catholic hierarchy dominating their congregations.⁵⁹

Jesus was telling His followers that when someone truly repented, they were given the authority to declare that person’s sins were forgiven **by God!** And if an individual, or group did not receive them and the forgiveness they offered in the name of Jesus, then they were instructed to *“shake the dust off their feet”* as a protest against them, and warn them that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them (Matthew 10:14-15). In other words, if a person rejected the apostles’ preaching of the gospel, they had the right to tell that person that his sins were not forgiven, because they had rejected God’s only provision for atonement of sins. *“Whoever hears you hears Me, whoever rejects you rejects Me, and whoever rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”* (Luke 10:16). This power to forgive and retain sins, contrary to Rome’s teaching, belongs to everyone who preaches the true gospel of salvation.

⁵⁹ - [Ed- the original text was: “As we have just pointed out, there are no Christian “priests” in New Testament teaching and doctrine. Pastors, yes. Deacons, yes. Apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, yes. Priests, no!” This contradicts the previous paragraph.]

Penance

In the Roman system, penance is one of the seven sacraments.⁶⁰ The *Baltimore Catechism* defines penance as “the sacrament by which sins committed after baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest.”⁶¹ Another catechism published in New York says, “the priest gives penance to help me to make up for the temporal punishment I must suffer for my sins. The penance given to me by the priest does not always make full satisfaction for my sins. I should therefore do other acts of penance...and try to gain indulgences.”⁶² And in *Instructions for Non-Catholics*, we read: “After confession some temporal punishment due to sin generally remains. You should therefore perform other acts of penance also so that you may make up for these punishments, and avoid a long stay in purgatory.”⁶³

Penance as a System of Works

Here indeed is salvation by works. For penance, as the catechism says, involves confession on one’s sins to a priest and the doing of good works as the **only way** by which sins committed after baptism can be forgiven. The Church of Rome thus demands acts of penance before She grants forgiveness, inferring that the sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient to atone fully for sin and that it must be supplemented to some extent by these good works.

But what God demands is not acts of penance but **repentance**, which means turning away from sin, [Ed- which means *keeping the*

⁶⁰ The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction.

⁶¹ *The Baltimore Catechism*, p. 300.

⁶² Indulgences are remissions of so many days or months or years of punishment in purgatory—a subject which we will cover in depth in a future chronicle.

⁶³ *Instructions for Non-Catholics*, p. 95.

Instructions of God (Revelation 12:17)].

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to Jehovah, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:7).

The easy way in which the Church of Rome deals with sin is seen in this doctrine of penance. The penitent receives pardon on comparatively easy terms. He is assigned some task to perform, usually not too hard, sometimes merely the recital of a given number of “Hail Mary’s.” The result is that he has few qualms about resuming his evil course. It shocked Martin Luther when he read in the Greek New Testament edited by Erasmus that Jesus did not say “do penance” as had been translated by the Roman Church, but “repent.”

Penance versus Repentance

Penance is a wholly different thing from gospel repentance. Penance is an outward act. Repentance is of the heart. Penance is imposed by a Roman priest. Repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit. What God desires in the sinner is not a punishment of oneself for sins, but a change of heart, a real forsaking of sin, shown by a new life of obedience to God’s commands.

In short, penance is a counterfeit repentance. It is the work of man on his body; true repentance is the work of God in the soul. The **Divine Word** commands “*Rend your heart and not your garments*” (Joel 2:13). Penance is “rending the garments”—an outward form without inward reality.

While Romanism does teach that Christ died for our sins, it also teaches that His sacrifice alone was not sufficient, and that our sufferings must be added to make it effective. In accordance with

this, many have tried to earn salvation by fasts, rituals, flagellations and good works of various kinds. But those who attempt such a course always find that it is impossible to do enough to earn salvation.

Dr. C.D. Cole says

“Romanism is a complicated system of salvation by works. It offers salvation on the installment plan, then sees to it that the poor sinner is always behind in his payments, so that when he dies there is a large unpaid balance, and he must continue payments by sufferings in purgatory, or until the debt is paid by the prayers, alms, and sufferings of his living relatives and friends. The whole system and plan calls for merit and money from the cradle to the grave and even beyond. Surely the wisdom that drew such a plan of salvation is not from above.”⁶⁴

The Biblical Teaching on Good Works

Good works, of course, are pleasing to God and they have an important and necessary place in the life of the Christian. They naturally follow if one has true faith, and they are performed out of love and gratitude to God for the great salvation that He has bestowed.⁶⁵ Good works, in other words, are not the cause and basis of salvation, but rather the fruits and proof of salvation - “*not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His own love He gave us Life, through the washing of the birth that is from above and the renewing of the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:5). The born-again Christian produces good works as naturally as the grapevine produces grapes. They are a part of his very nature. He

⁶⁴ - *Roman Catholicism* pps. 257-258.

⁶⁵ - [Ed- our article *Free to Obey God* discusses this in detail.]

performs them not to **get** saved, but because he **is** saved.

Salvation by Grace

Grace, because it is grace, is not given on the basis of preceding merits. By no stretch of the imagination can a man's good works in this life be considered a just equivalent for the blessings of everlasting life. But all men, because of pride, naturally feel that they should earn their salvation, and a system which makes some provision in that regard readily appeals to them. But Paul lays the axe to such reasoning when he says: "*For if Instructions could be given which are able to give life, truly righteousness would have come from the Instructions.*" (*Gal. 3:21*). Time and again the Scriptures repeat that salvation is of grace, as if anticipating the difficulty that men would have in accepting the fact that they would not be able to earn it.

The Council of Trent, in its opposition to the reformer's doctrine of justification by faith, and in defence of its doctrine of penance, declared: "**Whosoever shall affirm that men are justified solely by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ...let him be accursed**".⁶⁶ And the *Catholic Almanac* says, "Penance is necessary for salvation...and was instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sins".⁶⁷

The modern Catholic teachings completely concur: "Many things are necessary for salvation. All these things work together—faith, baptism, the Eucharist, the doing of good works, and others as well. Redemption is one thing, salvation is quite another. There is nothing lacking on Christ's part; there is much to be done on ours."⁶⁸ Also, in a booklet published in 1967, under the sub-heading, "We Must Atone

⁶⁶ - Council of Trent, section 6.

⁶⁷ - *The Catholic Almanac*, pps. 269, 559.

⁶⁸ - *The Apostles Creed*, published by the Knights of Columbus, pps. 18-19.

Too”, it says that “even though the satisfaction of Christ was complete and universal, nevertheless all adult Christians are obliged to imitate their suffering Master and make personal satisfaction for their sins by good works.”⁶⁹ But the apostle Paul in his masterpiece on justification by faith says, “*Therefore, how much more, having now been even more justified by His blood, we will be saved from wrath by Him.*” (Romans 5:9).⁷⁰

“Abraham believed Jehovah, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now to him who labours, his wages are not counted as grace but as that which is owed to him. But to him who does not labour but only believes in the One who justifies sinners, his faith is accounted as righteousness to him” (Romans 4:3-5).

What a significant coincidence it is that this doctrine of justification by faith is given such prominence in the epistle to the Romans, since Rome later became the seat of the papacy!⁷¹ It seems to be written there as if intended as a strong and permanent protest against the errors of the Roman Church.

⁶⁹ - *You Shall Rise Again*, published by the Knights of Columbus, p. 3.

⁷⁰ - See also: Eph. 2:8-10, Rom. 1:17, 3:21, 22, 28, 5:1, 18-19, 11:6, John 3:36, Gal. 2:21, 3:11.

⁷¹ - [Ed—Keith’s oversimplified Protestant statements need to be balanced with those of James: “What good is it, my brethren, if a man says to me that he has faith but he does not have works? Can his faith give him life? If a brother or a sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them: “Go in peace, be warm and be full.” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what good is it? Even so, faith without works is by itself dead. For someone may say to you, “You and I have faith. I have works. Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith through my works.” (James) Jacob 2:14 to 18)) The works that God wants is for us to obey His Instructions and show love, both far from the self-serving penances required by Roman priests.]

Assurance of Salvation

The first consequence of the doctrine of penance (as well as the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences) is that the Roman Catholic, though baptized and confirmed, can never have that assurance of his salvation and that sense of spiritual security which is such a blessing to the true Christian. In proportion as he is spiritually sensitive, the person who holds to a works religion knows that he has not suffered as much as his sins deserve, and that he can never do as much as he should in order to be worthy of salvation.

A dying Roman Catholic, after he has done all that he can do and after the last rites have been given to him, is told that he still must go to purgatory. There he will suffer unknown torture, with no assurance as to how long it will continue, but with the assurance that if his relatives pray for his soul, and pay with sufficient generosity to have candles lit and have special Masses said for him, that his sufferings will be shortened somewhat. (See the Update at the end of this section.)

Oh what a contrast with all of that is the death of the true believer who has the assurance that after he dies, he will be raised into the presence of Christ! (Phil. 1:23 & I Corinthians 15:51 to 55). What a marvellous blessing is the true faith of the Christian, both in life and especially at the time of death!

The Council of Trent even pronounced a curse upon anyone who presumed to say that he had assurance of salvation, or that the whole punishment for sin is forgiven along with that sin.⁷² Such assurance is pronounced a delusion and a result of sinful pride. Rome keeps her subjects in constant fear and insecurity. Even at death, after extreme unction has been administered and after thousands of rosary prayers have been said “for the repose of the soul”, the priest still cannot give

⁷² - *Roman Catholicism* p. 267.

assurance of salvation. The person is never “good enough” but must suffer in the purgatory prison to be purified of venial sins before he can be admitted to the celestial city. No one can be truly happy or truly at peace. And particularly in spiritual matters, the state of doubt and uncertainty continues for one’s whole life, and right into the grave.

But God wants us to be saved, and according to the Bible the Holy Spirit can give us the assurance that we have salvation when we have a true, intimate relationship with the Son of God (I John 5:9-12). But in Romanism, one must work hard for it and must pay dearly for it, and after he has done all the priest has prescribed, he still cannot know whether he has it or not. And through it all, there stands the anathema of the Council of Trent against all who affirm the certainty of their salvation. Hence, there cannot truly be found anywhere a Roman Catholic, consistent to what his church teaches, who enjoys the true assurance of eternal life.

Conclusion

It is obvious by even this brief glimpse into the doctrines of mortal and venial sins, confession, penance, and purgatory, that the Roman Catholic Church has constructed one of the most unbiblical doctrinal systems that has ever been considered “Christian”. The fear, anguish, and religious bondage that such a system of “reward and punishment” creates has tormented millions of lives for centuries, and continues to prey on those who are ignorant of the biblical way of salvation.

To merely call such a system “a cult”, would be to throw it into the vast category of religions and quasi-religions that are currently making the rounds of our college campuses and city streets, snatching up many an unsuspecting youth. No, the Roman Church is not a cult. It’s an empire! With its own ruler, its own laws, and its own subjects! The empire has no borders; it encompasses the globe

with its eye on every person who does not vow allegiance. It calls the members of other faiths “separated brethren”⁷³ and has as its goal the eventual bringing together of everyone under its flag.

I know that many will not be convinced or moved by this article (or any of the others) to make such a conclusion. They are impressed by what they’ve heard about recent stirrings among the Catholics in the “charismatic renewal”. Many evangelicals (especially charismatics) have been thrilled by the reports of Catholics speaking in tongues, dancing in the Spirit, having nights of joy and praise, even attending “charismatic masses”.

Mouths that used to speak out boldly against the Church of Rome have been quieted by the times. It no longer is in vogue to speak of the pope as “the anti-christ”⁷⁴ or the Catholic Church as the “whore of Babylon” (Revelation 17). Now, uninformed Protestants believe that “our differences are not so great”. Ah, that is just what she wants us to think!

I’ve never completely understood why God led me to write these articles. But it becomes more clear with each day of study, and each page of research. Never has something so black and wicked, gotten away with appearing so holy and mysteriously beautiful...**for so long!**

⁷³ - The term used by Vatican II to describe the members of Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant churches.

⁷⁴ - Although the following people unhesitatingly did: Martin Luther, John Bunyan, John Huss, John Wycliffe, John Calvin, William Tyndale, John Knox, Thomas Becon, John Wesley, Samuel Cooper, John Cotton, and Jonathan Edwards.

Update by CHCoG

It was widely reported in the media that in an address by Pope John Paul II on 4 August 1999, the Roman Catholic Church did away with purgatory, making Catholicism more like biblical Christianity. However, this report was false, as the following quotes from his address show. All he did was tweak their old definition of purgatory as a physical place into a state of being. He, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy still twist scriptures to condemn their followers and their deceased loved ones to purification in flames in purgatory. The teaching of purgatory remains one of the papacy's most powerful tool to manipulate their deceived followers. But in John Paul II's own words:

“According to Old Testament religious law, what is destined for God must be perfect. As a result, physical integrity is also specifically required for the realities which come into contact with God at the sacrificial level such as, for example, sacrificial animals (cf. Lev 22: 22) or at the institutional level, as in the case of priests or ministers of worship (cf. Lev 21: 17-23). Total dedication to the God of the Covenant, along the lines of the great teachings found in Deuteronomy (cf. 6: 5), and which must correspond to this physical integrity, is required of individuals and society as a whole (cf. 1 Kings 8: 61). It is a matter of loving God with all one's being, with purity of heart and the witness of deeds (cf. *ibid.*, 10: 12f.)

“The need for integrity obviously becomes necessary after death, for entering into perfect and complete communion with God. Those who do not possess this integrity must undergo purification. This is suggested by a text of St Paul. The Apostle speaks of the value of each person's work which will be revealed on the day of judgement and says: “If the work which any man has

built on the foundation [which is Christ] survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor 3: 14-15)...

“Every trace of attachment to evil must be eliminated, every imperfection of the soul corrected. Purification must be complete, and indeed this is precisely what is meant by the Church's teaching on purgatory. The term does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence. Those who, after death, exist in a state of purification, are already in the love of Christ who removes from them the remnants of imperfection (cf. Ecumenical Council of Florence, Decretum pro Graecis: DS 1304; Ecumenical Council of Trent, Decretum de iustificatione: DS 1580; Decretum de purgatorio: DS 1820). (From <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2HEAVN.H> TM)

Please note this carefully: You have just read John Paul himself confirming that what he is teaching has in no significant way changed the fundamental Catholic teaching on purgatory. The same can be said of Pope Benedict XVI's statement in 2011.

And are Indulgences a thing of the past? NO. There have already been three different Indulgences issued in March 2020 related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rome only pretends to change, as Part IV reveals.

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CATHOLIC CHRONICLE IV

What Did Vatican II Really Change?

Introduction

Again this month, we have been receiving quite a lot of response to our series “The Catholic Chronicles”. It has been completely amazing how many different reactions there have been, especially from Catholics themselves.

Some of the negative reactions ranged from the obvious, “You are doing an injustice to the cause of unity in the body of Christ...” to, “You don’t know what you’re talking about—your articles are completely false...” to, “Yes, it’s true, that’s the way we **used** to believe, but all that’s changed now...” to “You were extremely accurate in your presentation of what we teach, **but you haven’t changed my mind...**”

Don’t get me wrong, the overwhelming majority of our mail has been warmly appreciative of the articles. And every day, testimonies continue to pour in about many who are coming to know Jesus—their lives being completely changed because of the “Chronicles.” **Each and every soul that is being set free is worth reading a mountain of negative mail!**

But getting back to those critical letters, I must admit I did not know what to make of the many different—and often contradictory—reactions to our series, not only from laymen,⁷⁵ but also from priests, nuns and seminary students alike.

My confusion was somewhat eased though, when I received a very

⁷⁵ - Members of the congregation.

enlightening letter from a Catholic theological student. He wrote: “Keith, you have made the mistake of assuming that most Roman Catholics agree on doctrine. As you might guess, the Catholic Church is as fragmented in their beliefs as the many different Protestant denominations. Therefore, your presentation of Roman doctrine will never apply or be valid for all the different groups of Catholics.” The writer then proceeds to divide Catholics in “4 main categories”:

- 1: Traditional Catholics**—Those who like the way the Catholic Church was before Vatican II. They cling to the old forms of worship and do not approve much of any reform.
- 2: Charismatic Catholics**—Those who are part of the ‘Charismatic Renewal’ in the Catholic Church. These are the ones who speak very much like evangelicals, and talk of the ‘born-again experience.’ They are also the most open to establishing unity and fellowship with non-Catholics.
- 3: Liberal Catholics**—These are very much like liberal Protestants. They do not believe in the authority of the Church or the authority of the Scriptures, yet they like to retain their Catholic identity.
- 4: Social Catholics**—Those who were born Catholic, and still identify themselves as Catholics, although they rarely go to Mass (except possibly at Christmas or Easter with their families) and do not have very solid religious convictions.”

I cannot tell you how much this letter, with these four distinct categories, helped to clear up my confusion as to why we received so many varied and contradictory responses from Catholic readers. Nevertheless, I still must say that it doesn’t matter to me what category someone might fit into. I still have to go by what the Vatican currently teaches (and encourages others to teach) as doctrine, if I want to understand what the Roman Catholic Church as a whole “officially” believes. I cannot (God spare me!) answer doctrinal discrepancies or write articles about every Catholic school

of thought. For these are always changing, and differ from country to country, and from culture to culture. It is obvious to any observant traveller that the Catholicism practised in the United States is worlds apart from the religion of the same name practised in South and Central America (and anywhere else in the third world for that matter). No, it is what Rome officially believes and teaches as doctrine and dogma that we must look at—for that is the common denominator for all Roman Catholics world-wide.

In the U.S., things might be very different—people might not go to confession anymore inside an official “confessional booth.” They may sit on a couch with the priest and just share “like a brother to a brother.” But that does not change the fact that Rome still solemnly warns that, *“If you don’t go to confession at least once a year... you have committed a mortal sin, and if you die in that state, you go directly to hell with no hope!”* Yes, there may be guitars at Mass now, there may be more casual dress and the priest may share from his heart or preach a sermon, instead of just conducting a stiff liturgy and ceremony, but the truth has not changed as to the meaning of the Mass—*“The Mass is identical to Calvary—it is a sacrifice for sin—it must be perpetuated to take away sin.”*⁷⁶

It is interesting that many Catholics believe that the Second Vatican Council, conducted from 1962-65, really changed much of Roman Catholic belief. I have received numerous remarks from Catholics complaining that I have used “too many pre-Vatican II materials” in researching my previous chronicles. They point out, for instance, that I quote too much from the “Council of Trent” which was held over 400 years ago.

But did Vatican II **really** change Roman Catholic belief and doctrine? Have any of the fundamental issues that have separated Catholic and evangelical theologians for over four centuries now been reformed to

⁷⁶ - *For Them Also*, pp.289-299

such an extent that true Christians everywhere can now breathe a sigh of relief and say “She has changed! Rome has really changed!” That is what we will be looking into in Chronicle IV – “What did Vatican II really Change?”

We again want to express our purpose for this series of articles: 1) To cause Catholics to see the great, yet simple truths of God’s Word concerning the salvation of their souls and 2) To enlighten true Christians everywhere as to the nature and teachings of the Roman system so that they may be able to secure the conversion of many who are caught up in the various deceptions that are found there.

It is truly from a heart of love that we publish these articles—a love for Catholics—a **love for their souls!**

Chronicle IV

What did Vatican II really Change?

The Roman Catholic Church is very proud of two distinct things: 1) that it has *never changed*, and 2) that it has changed very much! I realize that number 2 seems to contradict number 1, but anyone who has studied church history even briefly will be able to grasp what I’m trying to say.

First, Rome is very emphatic about making clear these ‘unalterable facts’:

A. That she is the original and *only* church founded by Jesus Christ upon the earth.

B. That her head, the pope, has the authority handed down from the

“first pope,” Simon Peter, through “apostolic succession,”⁷⁷ to sit in the place of Jesus as the undisputed leader of all true Christians on earth.

C. That her traditions and interpretations of scripture are the only basis for forming the rules and guidelines that Christians everywhere should live by.

D. And that her dogmas and doctrines, although they can be clarified, enlarged, or restated for the sake of changing times, *can never, ever be abolished, contradicted, or altered.* They form their “*Canon Law.*”⁷⁸

On the other hand, modern Roman Catholics are immensely pleased with the reforms and evolution they have seen in their Church, especially since the cataclysmic “Second Vatican Council” (more commonly know as “Vatican II”). They point to how much has been done to open the way for “all Christians everywhere to finally come together!” This, of course, does seem very exciting, especially since Rome has been largely on the defensive since the Reformation. Starting with the Council of Trent in 1546, there has been one papal decree after another which has made it completely impossible (even forbidden) for Catholics to have any “fellowship” with Protestants.

Ah, but “time heals all wounds” they say, and like everything else, the giant chasm between Protestant and Catholic now seems with the passing of centuries, to appear like just a “little misunderstanding.” And Vatican II, which included such sweeping reforms as allowing

⁷⁷ - The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ ordained the 12 apostles to the priesthood at the Last Supper, and to their successors, the Roman priesthood, Jesus promised and guaranteed His continual presence in their teaching and governing until the end of time.

⁷⁸ - The canon law of the Catholic Church (Latin: *ius canonicum*) is the system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the hierarchical authorities of the Catholic Church.

Mass to be said in the common local language, and no longer forbidding Catholics to read a Protestant Bible, or attend a Protestant church service, seemed to make the differences between Rome and the rest of the fragmented Christian world look very petty.

As you probably might guess, I do not believe this to be the case. In fact, in my research and studies I have only found the opposite to be true. Yes indeed, the Catholic Church is changing! It has probably never changed so much in all its history as during the past generation, but *it has not changed one single, solitary doctrine!* Each and every point of dogma that has alarmed evangelical theologians for the past 400 years remains the same, exactly as written, and in full force!

But because of all the changed garments, all the reformed liturgies and ceremonies, and the resulting freedom of worship, Catholics everywhere (as well as many Protestants) have mistakenly believed that something substantial has really changed! But this is not a surprise; it has happened before many times in history. When you change the key, the instruments, or the rhythm of a song, almost everyone will believe you have a new song. Only those who listen carefully to the lyrics, or who know their music well, will realize that yes, the style is different, *but the song is the same!*

The whole thing seems so sad to me, when I realize how very few there are among Catholics and Protestants who really know what Roman Catholicism teaches. It is truly shocking! And what's even more alarming is the potential for the devil to pull the wool over people's eyes because of their ignorance.

I have received many letters from Catholics in response to the first three Chronicles, which have basically said this: "The Catholic Church has really changed! Why not use the current beliefs and teachings that are a result of Vatican II?" Believe me, in each of my articles, I was doing just that! I would be a fool to be refuting

doctrines and teachings that are no longer being used. But because Catholic worship is based so much on ritual, ceremony, and symbolic outward forms, the average Catholic believes with all his heart that when he sees these surface things altered, that his church has really changed! You have only to look at the documents of Vatican II to see that this is not the case.

The Need for Vatican II

In the early 1960's, the Vatican knew that there was a need to give the Church a facelift. Many of its policies seemed out of place, and most of its forms of worship were stiff and outdated. There was a feeling among the bishops that the Church needed to evolve with the times, and there was also a growing concern that if other Christians in the world were ever going to reunite with Rome, that she was going to have to give herself a more pleasant and appealing appearance. There was also criticism from her own ranks that her doctrines needed to be clarified and "restated" in a more simple and less dogmatic tone than previous councils had done.

Thus the Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII in 1962, and continued under Pope Paul VI until 1965 when it issued "*The Documents of Vatican II*," each on different aspects of church teaching and doctrine. The spirit and attitude of these documents were remarkably different from any the Roman Church had ever produced. They were full of scriptural references, and did not include any blatant "curses" on those who did not agree (as previous councils had done). They were revolutionary in freeing individual parish priests to conduct Masses in the best way they could to reach the local culture and community. This, as well as changes in church administration and religious freedom were the main results of the Council.

In the following years, there were other changes that proceeded out of Rome as a result of the new attitudes which were born from

Vatican II. These included the removal of the strict requirement to refrain from eating meat on Fridays (and also the command to fast during Lent). Although these practices were still encouraged, they were now optional instead of mandatory. The whole Church seemed to be loosening up. And ecumenical leaders the world over were beginning to see the light at the end of the church-unity tunnel.

But in the midst of all this, a few ardent Christians still stubbornly pointed out that although the procedure and the language of the Mass might have changed, the meaning of it still remained very much the same. And though the outward forms and words used by Rome had been altered much, the things she taught and believed had only been confirmed and repeated in the soft and soothing tone of the Vatican II documents.

The Charismatic Movement

And then came the “charismatic renewal” seemingly out of nowhere! With the Pope’s blessing, Catholics were taking part in charismatic Masses, speaking in tongues, prophesying, singing and shouting side by side with evangelical Protestants! Everyone was so excited—they thought, “Now we’ve got the devil licked!” Why, doctrine wasn’t important anymore, *that* was for seminary students and old, stuffy theologians! But as the excitement started to quiet down a little, the Protestants noticed that a few of their Catholic brothers and sisters were still praying to Mary, and were even offering up prayers for their dead relatives in the prayer meetings.

It soon became apparent that unity was not going to be as easy as it had seemed at first. Protestants began to make inquiries, and they started bothering their Catholic friends too much with questions like, “Do you think the Pope is saved?” As you can see, the whole future of the ecumenical movement hinges on this all-important question: *“Can a Roman Catholic be considered a genuine believer according to the Bible, and still believe the things the Roman Church teaches?”*

The Things That Vatican II Did Not Change

To help answer that question, we have prepared a list of teachings and practices that have been adopted and perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church over the last 1600 years. It is important to note that not one of these were altered at all by the Second Vatican Council.

Although many of these beliefs were practised earlier than the dates given, they did not become binding on all Catholics until they were officially adopted by church councils and proclaimed by the Pope as dogmas of faith. Some dates are approximate.

1. Presbyter (or elders) were first called priests by Lucian...2nd century.
2. Prayers for the dead...300 CE (Christian Era).
3. The veneration⁷⁹ of angels and dead saints and the use of images...375 CE.
4. The Mass as a daily celebration was adopted...394 CE.
5. The beginning of the exaltation of Mary, and the first use of the term “Mother of God” by the Council of Ephesus...431 CE.
6. Priests began to dress different from the laity and to wear special clothes...500 CE.
7. Extreme Unction⁸⁰ ...526 CE.
8. The doctrine of purgatory was first established by Gregory the

⁷⁹ - Veneration—profound respect or reverence; worship - *American Heritage Dictionary, Webster’s Dictionary.*

⁸⁰ - Extreme Unction, or “Anointing of the Sick” - one of the seven sacraments, in which a priest anoints and prays for one in danger of death.

Great...593 CE.

9. Prayers began to be offered to Mary, dead saints, and angels...600 CE.

10. The first man was proclaimed “Pope” (Boniface III)...610 CE.

11. Veneration of the cross, images, and relics authorized...788 CE.

12. Holy water, mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest was authorized...850 CE.

13. Veneration of Saint Joseph...890 CE.

14. College of cardinals began...927 CE.

15. Canonization of dead saints, first by Pope John XV...995 CE.

16. The Mass developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance was made obligatory...11th century.

17. The celibacy of the priesthood was decreed by Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VII...1079 CE.

18. The rosary (prayer beads copied from Hindus and Mohammedans) was introduced by Peter the Hermit...1090 CE.

19. The Inquisition⁸¹ of “Heretics” was instituted by the Council of

⁸¹ - Inquisition—the act of inquiring into a matter; an investigation - American Heritage Dictionary. Lucius III decreed that bishops should take action against heretics. A characteristic of this decree was that a suspect, once convicted of being a heretic, was to be handed over to the secular arm for punishment. Before the Inquisition ran its course, historians estimate that 5 to 15 million people lost their lives through torture and execution (From: *A History of Christianity in the World* by Clyde L. Manschreck).

Verona...1184 CE, and was legalized and promoted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 CE.

20. The sale of Indulgences...1190 CE.

21. The seven sacraments defined by Peter Lombard...12th century.

22. The dogma of transubstantiation was decreed by Pope Innocent III ...1215 CE.

23. Confession of sins to the priest at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent III in the Lateran Council...1215 CE.

24. The adoration of the wafer (host) decreed by Pope Honorius III ...1220 CE.

25. The scapular⁸² invented by Simon Stock of England...1251 CE.

26. The doctrine of purgatory proclaimed a dogma by the Council of Florence...1439 CE.

27. Tradition is declared of equal authority with the Bible by the Council of Trent...1545 CE.

28. The Apocryphal Books were added to the Bible by the Council of Trent...1546 CE.

29. The Immaculate Conception⁸³ of Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854 CE.

⁸² - Piece of brown cloth with a picture of the Virgin, supposed to contain supernatural power to protect from all dangers, to those who wear it on naked skin.

⁸³ - This doctrine maintains that the Virgin Mary was in the first instance of her conception of Jesus, preserved from all stain of original sin.

30. Pope Pius IX condemns all scientific discoveries not approved by the Roman Church...1864 CE.
31. Infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals proclaimed by the First Vatican Council...1870 CE.
32. Pius XI condemned the public schools...1930 CE.
33. Pius XI reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is “The Mother of God” ...1931 CE.
34. The dogma of the Assumption⁸⁴ of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius XII...1950 CE.
35. Mary proclaimed the Mother of the Church by Pope Paul VI...1965 CE.

A Scholar Looks at Vatican II

Dr. Loraine Boettner, noted evangelical authority on Roman Catholic doctrine, takes an in-depth look at the documents of Vatican II in the preface to the fifth edition of his book *Roman Catholicism*. Dr. Boettner writes:

“The Second Vatican Council, which closed late in 1965, made changes in the liturgy, administrative practices, and in the matter of religious freedom. It repeated the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church, although it did recognize that other churches contain some elements of truth.

“But Pope John XXIII, who called the first session, and Pope Paul VI, who presided over the later sessions

⁸⁴ - The Catholic dogma that Mary ascended bodily into heaven.

*(as well as several prominent cardinals and theologians), took care to emphasize that **no changes would be made in the doctrinal structure of the Church.** However, Pope Paul did promulgate [declare] one new doctrine, which asserts that 'Mary is the Mother of the Church.' The primary purpose of the Council was to update the liturgy and administrative practices and so to make the Church more efficient and more acceptable to the 20th century world.*

"The introduction of the 'New Mass,' for instance, brought about a change in language—Latin is no longer required, except in the prayer of consecration. But as Protestants, it is not important to us whether the Mass is said in Latin or English or Swahili—it is not the language of the Mass that we object to, it is its content and meaning. (See Chronicle II, 'The Sacrifice of the Mass').

"On previous occasions, Rome has changed her tactics when old methods became ineffective, but she has never changed her nature. In any religious organization, doctrine is the most basic and important part of its structure, since what people believe determines what they do. An official document, 'The Constitution on the Church' prepared by the Council and approved by the Pope, reaffirms basic Catholic doctrine precisely as it stood before the Council met.

*"The doctrine of papal infallibility is restated. We are told that when 'by a definitive act he proclaims a doctrine of faith and morals...his definitions, of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, are justly called, **irreformable** (Article 25). The pope has lost none of his powers. He remains the absolute ruler in the*

Roman Church. But if papal decrees past and present are 'irreformable', what hope is there for real reform in the Church of Rome?

*"The document on the Church repeats in substance the teaching of the Council of Trent that 'priests and bishops are the representatives of God on earth...justly, therefore, **they are called not only angels, but gods, holding as they do the place of authority of God on earth.**' (Catechism of Trent).*

"In fact, no more sweeping claims were made by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), nor by the First Vatican Council (1870), than are made in these documents from Vatican II. Despite all the claims to the contrary, the Council has firmly maintained the doctrine of the primacy of Peter⁸⁵ and of papal succession. In his book, Ecclesiam Suam, Pope Paul expressed his distress because of what some of the 'separated brethren'⁸⁶ say about the pope as the stumbling block in the way of church unity. He said, 'Do not some of them say that if it were not for the primacy of the pope, the reunion of the separated churches with Catholic Church would be easy? We beg the separated brethren to consider the inconsistency of this position, not only in that, without the pope, the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic, but also because without the supreme decisive pastoral office of Peter, the unity of the Church of Christ would utterly collapse.'

⁸⁵ - The doctrine that Christ has given Peter the key role of lawful authority...that Peter would be His chief ambassador, His authentic vicar (pope), and this power continues to be extended to Peter's successors through the ages—the popes.

⁸⁶ - The term used by Vatican II to describe the members of other non-Catholic Christian faiths.

“We must say that at this point we agree with the Pope, at least to this extent, that if the Roman Catholic Church were reformed according to scripture, it would have to be abandoned. But the gross errors concerning salvation still remain. Moreover, the Council did nothing toward removing the more than 100 anathemas or curses pronounced by the Council of Trent on the Protestant churches and beliefs. If there is to be any true unity, surely this would seem the logical place to start.”

Conclusion

We could not find a more fitting conclusion than Dr. Boettner’s:

“The ‘*Constitution on the Church*’ makes it abundantly clear that Rome has no intention of revising any of her basic doctrine, but only of updating her methods and techniques for more efficient administration and to present a more attractive appearance. This is designed to make it easier for the Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant churches to return to her fold. There is no indication that she has any intentions of entering into genuine give-and-take church unity negotiations. **Her purpose is not union, but absorption.** Church union with Rome is strictly a one-way street. The age-old danger that Protestantism has faced from the Roman Church has not diminished; in fact, it may well have increased. For through this less offensive posture and this superficial ecumenicism, Rome is much better situated to carry out her program of eliminating opposition and moving into a position of world dominance. **An infallible church simply cannot repent.”**

Endnote

Keith Green was killed shortly after publishing the Catholic Chronicles. Last Day Ministries stopped publishing them a year or so later. When we asked them why, they said the Knights of Columbus quotes were not official Catholic doctrine and misrepresented the Catholic church. However, they were unable to say what was inaccurate, and we have not found any incorrect information in the series. As they contain essential information that can set people free from the deceptions of the Catholic organisation, and are still valid almost forty years later, we continue to have the Chronicles available on our website. We have updated Keith's King James translation quotes with more modern ones from our Hebrew-Aramaic Bible translation. -*Central Highlands Congregation of God*

Some Other Resources Available at <https://chcpublications.net/>

Publications

The Holy Bible - CHCoG Version - This translation from the original Hebrew and Aramaic is accurate and readable, giving you a clear understanding of how the New and Old Covenants are interlocked and God's message to you.

Everlasting Life is God's Gift - Does the Bible teach that you have everlasting life? If not, how can you receive God's gift of immortality as His child?

Sex, God and Families - Pamphlet exposing the flaws of sexual promiscuity and outlining the benefits of following God's sexual principles.

The Gift of Salvation - Charles Chiniquy, a well-known Catholic priest for 25 years, briefly recounts his experiences that led him to God's Gift of Salvation.

Eastern Meditation and Jeshua the Anointed - Recounts the experiences of a member of CHCP who became a Christian while practising Eastern Meditation.

The Ten Commandments - Explains how the Ten Commandments lay the basis for our relationship with God and how obedience would result in true civilization.

Books of Moses - Fact or Fiction Series - Are the miracles recorded in Genesis and Exodus our true history? Do the facts support Special Creation or the Big Bang & Evolution scenarios? What about the Flood, Babel and the Exodus?

The Sabbath in Scripture - Has God's Seventh-day Sabbath been 'done away with'? What does the Sabbath mean, and does God want us to keep it?

Rome's Challenge: Why do Protestants Keep Sunday? - This Roman Catholic article proves there is no scriptural basis for changing the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, and shows that the Roman Catholic church made the change.

God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah - What does the Bible teach us about God's Calendar? How does it prove that Jeshua kept the Sign of Jonah?

Animals in the Bible - What does God teach us about His animals? Are they intelligent and relational beings?

Spirit, Soul and Body - The Bible teaches that we are composed of a spirit, soul and body. What does this mean, and does it affect our future?

Free to Obey God - How does God change our hearts when His Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside us? What Freedom do we receive as the Children of God?

The Priest, the Woman and the Confessional - Chiniquy, an ex-priest, exposes the dangers of the Catholic auricular confessional, showing how it destroys women, their families and even the priests.

Software

Calculated Biblical Calendar - Calculates the dates of Annual Holy Days, Crucifixion, Flood, Creation, etc, and allows you to test the calendar locally.

Radiocarbon Dating - Calculates the effects that changes in the geomagnetic field and radiocarbon/carbon ratios, etc, on radioactive dating.

Free Library

We have a large range of Christian and Creationist literature, CDs and DVDs that are available for borrowing within Australia. Please contact us for our list.