

EARLY CHURCH WAS NOT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Roman Catholicism admits that it is not like the early Church. How can these differences be explained? Rome following the idea of Cardinal Newman claims that the apostles gave Roman Catholic Doctrine but left it up to the Church to clarify it and understand it and work out the implications. This idea is based on total fabrications.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

In Cardinal John Henry Newman's Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine he acknowledged that the Church of Rome different from the Early Church but held that Protestantism was not identical to the Early Church. According to him the Early Church was the same religion as Roman Catholicism and that the Church learned more about the gospel through time and eventually it came to teach explicit Roman Catholic doctrine. The primitive Church evolved not into Roman Catholicism but into clarified Catholicism.

He gave seven tests to show when a genuine development has taken place for it can happen that some developments are not developments at all but errors. Among the tests is the idea that there must be a basic doctrine that implies other ones so that they can be developed from it and that another that this basic doctrine must come from the apostles to be a real development.

Another is that the development must fit the other revealed doctrines. Another is that the development must be logically derived from the basic root doctrine.

Another is that the development be the only possible one for trouble would ensue if a doctrine implied two or three different things. Another is that the development must have taken the simplest road to be genuine. For example, the simplest implication of a doctrine should be the accepted one.

Another is that the developing be done by or validated by the legitimate authorities in the Church. The doctrine must be meant to be developed as well. For example, if you say that the doctrine of original sin implies baptism is necessary for infants to get rid of it then the problem is proving that original sin meant to imply that. Perhaps God wipes the sin after it appears without baptism or perhaps it will not be pardoned until the child is able to renounce sin or perhaps if the child dies God will send it to Limbo from where it can go to Heaven if it chooses. For a doctrine to be really open to development it would have to explicitly say that it is just a root. The example we have given fits absolutely none of the rules and yet it was a "developed" doctrine that is one of the foundation stones of Roman Catholicism. It proves that Roman Catholicism is wrong and a hoax. It really did alter and add to the Christian faith.

Despite the opposition when they first came out, Newman's ideas were locked into the Church's official stance at the Second Vatican Council (page 210, The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought).

It is a fact that few if any of the Catholic developments are in harmony with these rules. The Church says it has to understand doctrines better all the time meaning that the way a doctrine was stated before could be inaccurate so it has to be improved. When Hell used to be thought of as a fire with demons with horns in it under the earth that could have led to the development of misleading doctrines, say that Hell will one day break out on earth and that demons have bodies and that the sinners there deserve to burn as if their despair is not enough. The rules are useless except for exposing the sham of Roman Catholicism.

The Development of Doctrine is a meaningless hypothesis for it opens the way to invent new doctrines. For example, the early Church insisted that sin committed after baptism had to be paid for in penance. Newman argued that the Church when dealing with this idea came to discover that it implied that indulgences, merits, purgatory, prayers, and masses for the dead should be believed in. But it could be argued that death is the punishment that deals with the debt. The Bible says that is what death is for (Romans 6:23). And it could be that God will be strict and instead of sending you to purgatory he will miraculously and secretly amplify your last agony at the point of death to pay off the debt in full. And it could be that we can't help the souls in Purgatory. Newman was lying. And when religion is full of mystery – it cannot explain an all-good God allowing evil to happen despite having the power to stop it - what sense does it make to say that the debt of penance infers these things for what it infers may be beyond our grasp of logic and inconceivable to our human earthly logic?

Newman knew that if the early Church taught salvation through the blood of Jesus and that anybody who is a sincere Christian and accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour is in this Church which is an invisible communion that that was enough to identify it with Protestantism for that is Protestantism reduced to its bare essentials. Even Catholics have an invisible true

Church like that the Protestants believe in so it is nonsense to point to an organisation and call it the true Church for it could be run by secret apostates. Yet Newman needs an impeccable organisation to make his system work and to prove that the system directs one to faith in the visible Roman Catholic Church. See the point? Jesus said that the Church would never be destroyed but the Vatican could apostatise meaning that those who are true to the Church as it used to be would be the true Church though they no longer have an infallible head. The Church says that infallibility belongs to the Church as a whole though it is only exercised through Episcopal councils of the Church so a break-off of laypeople could then function as infallible if they are the true faith. So pointing to an organisation like Newman did as the holder of the true developments does not work for he is begging the question: he assumes the Catholic hierarchy are the guardians of the faith which need not be right. The Catholic Church has been frequently accused of apostasy by its own. Even by Newman's standards, the Church must have left the faith and the true Church in the middle of the nineteenth century when it made the Immaculate Conception a dogma for it is neither in early tradition or implied by it. The Development of Dogma idea suggest that a new dogma can occur to a school in the Church and if the Church won't exalt that dogma to dogma-hood then the school can leave the Church and do it itself and become the true Church. Church means a teaching body and community. The idea of a true Church is impossible to accept for parts of the Church will have greater closeness to the truth than will the official heads for there are many things not definitively settled. The section will be a truer Church or body of teaching than the mainstream Church.

The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought gives a good refutation of Newman's views. I repeat them here with my own observations.

The first problem is that Newman never justified the developments adequately and ignored the fact that the early Church could have been mistaken say in the matter of penance following forgiveness doctrine which denied that God is generous with his forgiveness. It could be said the doctrine was heretical though the Church accepted it and should have known better for it was not an offshoot or anything of its doctrine that God was love and mercy and generosity themselves but contrary to it.

Second, Newman does not think about the Eastern Orthodox claim to be the true infallible Catholic Church even though its system is older than the Catholic one. Catholics will say that perhaps it did not develop enough so the oldness proves nothing. But it is itself-sufficient and that is the refutation of the Catholic reply. If the Church has a sufficient system for getting revelation from God and being a Church of God why should it need to develop into a papal system?

To make the Church the one that has the divine guidance to say what scripture means could and will lead to the Church stopping the Bible from being able to speak for itself. The Church becomes the real authority and the Bible is its subject. It is just like the New Testament doctrine that the Old Testament must be read the Christian way. Without the New Testament our interpretation and understanding of the Old will be radically different. If the Catholic Church officially decides that John 6 is all about the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus and uses its infallibility to see that then we are not allowed to wonder if the doctrine is really taught by the scripture at all. Newman even said that just as the Old Testament has no authority except as interpreted by the New Testament which is the supreme authority giving the Old only a relative authority so the New Testament has only a relative authority because the Church and the pope have the power to decree what it means by the power of the Holy Spirit in them. This is blasphemous. It is a mistake for a Catholic to go to the Bible to prove the papacy when the book is no good without the pope for that is seeing the Bible not as it is or might be but as the pope says it should be seen.

Apparently, the only trace of a development of doctrine in the early Church was its recognition of the view that that ordinations administered by heretics were valid (page 57, Roman Catholic Claims).

The Catholic Church was not revealed lock, stock and barrel by Jesus and the apostles which everybody admits therefore all its new doctrines are not developments but corruptions and should be discarded

KENNY ON THE DEVELOPMENT THEORY

In Anthony Kenny's Religion and Reason we read a good rational assessment of the Catholic Church's new doctrine that she developed over the centuries after Jesus died. This is a summary.

He noted that from the start the Church taught that instead of developing and improving the faith of the Church is unchangeable and complete.

He quoted Paul who condemned anybody who taught anything different (difference here just means difference not necessarily contradiction. Two reports about the same event can be different but that doesn't mean they are contradictory) from what he taught as implying that people who added to the gospel were doing wrong and changing the gospel even if they never contradicted it (Galatians 1:8).

Some centuries later, Pope Simplicius said that the apostolic doctrine has not changed from the time of the apostles to his time. The syllabus of Pius IX in 1864 censured the view that doctrines can develop. Kenny said that this position was completely contradicted by history. To me that shows what an untrustworthy and shifty religion Roman Catholicism is.

He observed that the Church defining doctrines as belonging to the faith of the apostles does not constitute development of doctrine because the idea was that the Church had always held these doctrines and used her infallibility to show that they were binding when they were being challenged. The Church has never defined infallibly that Jesus was a male but if a heresy comes along claiming that Jesus was a woman it will do it then. To me this suggests that the Church is to be believed by Catholics to be always right even when it does not employ its alleged infallibility.

Kenny finds that it is impossible to find any doctrine that was believed until a heresy came along to attack it thus requiring an infallible statement that the doctrine was true. I would correct this to say that this could only be true of doctrines that were very basic and which are in the Apostles' Creed. Kenny wrote that many theologians agree with St Vincent of Lerins that that truth is whatever the whole Church has believed before heresy appeared. If they are correct, this would mean that the only truth we can find is in the Apostles' Creed. But then again, I have to ask, how are we to know what Christians believe? Do a census? Vincent's theory implies that Church infallible declarations are invalid unless there has been worldwide census taken first. Kenny criticises Vincent's view because the Church officially accepted many doctrines that were not unanimously accepted before and today's orthodoxy is tomorrow's unorthodoxy. I would add that since the Church and Christ said that only a tiny number would be true brethren that it makes no sense to talk about the unanimous faith of true Christians being right for nobody knows who they are.

Kenny observed that there has been no unanimous agreement on the Trinity, three persons in one God, until after the Ecumenical Councils which made the doctrine binding and official. Even Newman admitted this. He observed that it couldn't be determined that Father, Son and Spirit were really one person and not three in the theology of the early writers. They could have thought them to be three Gods who were somehow entitled to be called one God in some way like a man and woman can be called one flesh. There were problems with determining what the earliest writers saying Jesus was divine or God meant. Newman confessed that St Hippolytus probably did not believe that Jesus was always God the Son. St Methodius erred on the incarnation.

Pope John XXII denied that the saved go to Heaven immediately after death which was the majority belief in the Church some time before. St Bernard of Clairvaux had taught the same denial as the pope. The Church rejected this doctrine under Pope Benedict XII.

The Church strongly taught that usury was forbidden, for centuries. It was sanctioned against far more strongly than birth-control is in our day. Even as late as 1745 it was still teaching it. Nowadays that doctrine is gone.

Kenny observes that the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary was not known before the fourth century and since 1950 Catholics are bound to believe it. This doctrine is one of the worst threats to the idea of an unchangeable faith.

Kenny admits that the idea that the apostolic doctrine might imply new doctrines that the apostles never thought of but he sees that Rome has used this as an excuse to make doctrines that were never really implied at all. They cannot be deduced from what has gone before. Catholics might say that you can deduce from the fact that Mary gave birth to the Son of God that God would raise her body and soul to Heaven to give her special treatment. This raising called the Assumption is infallible Catholic dogma. But what about those people who did as much good for God and did not give birth to him? The Church says that baptised babies who have died have given birth to Jesus in their souls and hearts for he lives in them. Is that not more important than physically giving birth to Jesus? Why should Mary get her special treatment then?

The deduction idea denies that God needs to do or allow bad things to happen for some of his mysterious good purposes. Perhaps he could let Mary rot for it. Thus the idea is blasphemous. This is my observation.

Kenny then cites the teaching of theologians who say that the deduction process works not through logic as we know it but through God's logic which is different to ours and which makes little sense to us for we are not as intelligent as him. He calls this dangerous. It opens the way for the Church to change whatever it likes as long as it pretends it has not changed truth but that God sees how its contradictory doctrines can be reconciled even if we can't or the Church is left able to command whatever evil thing it likes.

Catholics say that if there is no record of a doctrine being ancient it does not matter for it was in oral tradition that was passed down from one generation to the next. Kenny writes that for the fathers and all the great Scholastics the truths necessary for salvation are all in the Bible. Tradition was declared by them not to be a new source of revelation but only a help in interpreting the Bible. The first person to come up with the oral tradition idea was William of Ockham who died in 1349. How could the idea be true when it took that long to appear? Kenny mentions Cardinal Pole attacking with the approval of the Catholic Church the doctrine of Henry VIII which claimed that both scripture and tradition were parallel

sources of revelation. Kenny write that third century and later Christians never appealed to oral traditions and made a little use of liturgical traditions for liturgy was a fixed thing and apparently all believed that the Bible alone had the information about the doctrine the Church of Christ should follow. Origen could not depend on tradition to learn the identity of the true author of the book of Hebrews so he examined its writing style and contents. No good God would use a medium for the transmission of revelation that could not be proven. Anybody could invent a doctrine and say it was known in the early days and was not written down.

Kenny says that the pope can only make infallible doctrines relating to matters which are necessary for salvation. He says there is no way of knowing if a pope only thought he was using his infallibility but was mistaken for the doctrine he was defining was not necessary for salvation. I say then that the popes and Church have no right to say that doctrines like the assumption of Mary into Heaven or whatever are necessary for salvation for if any are, the most basic ones like the deity of Christ, the atonement he offered for us, the resurrection of Christ, Heaven and Hell are the only doctrines necessary. To say that God cares about whether or not we believe that Mary was taken up into Heaven bodily is foolish and blasphemous for it makes him really petty.

To say the pope is right that he can only make new dogmas that are necessary for salvation is to say that the pope must infallibly know what is necessary for salvation first. And then he must infallibly know that he really knows this and is not mistaken. So before the pope can tell us infallibly that Mary was taken bodily up into Heaven he has to infallibly know himself and also know how the dogma is necessary. This requires a vast amount of infallibility as to his own psychological processes and the intricacies of theology. He would need to be very infallible indeed. The Church of Rome would never dare teach such a foolish doctrine but it does teach it by implication.

It is also worth remembering that the Church has always insisted that there were doctrines necessary for salvation. Nowadays it is said that you will lose your salvation if you know that a doctrine is true and refuse to believe it. But that could not possibly have been what the Church meant in the past. The Athanasian Creed for example condemned anybody who denied any of the several articles of faith in it to hell and excommunication. If it had just meant that it would have said so. It meant that sincere or not you would not get into Heaven if you denied anything it said. The Church officially taught for most of its existence that error excluded from Heaven and it was the belief that sincerity was not good enough that led to the persecution of heretics.

The Church often said that certain doctrines were necessary for salvation. This could only mean that sincere disbelief after initial belief would cost one one's salvation for otherwise it would just say that any doctrines true or false that you believe to be true and then reject will exclude from salvation. The Church never went that far for it encouraged pagans and atheists to abandon their doctrines. So doctrines necessary for salvation means exactly what it says, that sincerity is not enough.

Explicit membership in the Church and belief in it is essential in the same way as having a gangrenous foot amputated is necessary.

Conclusion

Roman Catholicism is not the Church supposedly founded by the apostles of Jesus Christ. It tells the worst lies possible to hide this fact.

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