

Catholics are Guilty of Image Worship

The Essentials: God is love, infinite love, beyond all our understanding. Idolatry confuses the creator and creature and that is bad for only uncreated infinite love matters. Even if it does not exist it still matters. If infinite love ideally should exist and does not anything that substitutes it with something inferior or shabby is still bad. And religious belief says it matters because it exists. An image of divine love cannot be anything like divine love. Using images means your reaching out to God stops at his representation. Using a saint to represent God is putting a stop before the representation of God. Nothing can convey the greatness of God.

Catholicism says saints do not get the full honour that God gets and you can give the saints honour by honouring their statues and images. If it really believes that when why not give an image of God FULL worship for it will to God anyway? It knows from the Bible that this would be a step too far and idolatry. I am talking about an image of God as opposed to an image of Jesus. Even though the Church regards Jesus as God in human flesh it says it does not honour his image as if it were God himself. If your heart is fixed on God you won't need props such as images. And also, you simply CAN'T need them. If you love your wife, you won't need her to be healthy and beautiful to help you love her. Thus image worship is always idolatry. The Christian God is supposed to be the true God. Catholics have the true God if that is true and they turn away from him and use props to substitute for him. Thus they are worse than the idolaters among the pagans for those idolaters didn't know any better. And yet their worship was classed as an abomination. So what does that say about the Catholic worship????? Idolatry is a problem because its the worship of something that is not God and also because it is about controlling how you worship instead of caring how God or any deity wants to be worshipped. It is possible to intend to be a good person and worship the wrong thing. But you cannot be a good person if you engage in worship that is all about doing what you want. That is not worship however good it feels.

Cursed be anyone who makes an idol or casts an image, anything abhorrent to the Lord, the work of an artisan, and sets it up in secret. —Deuteronomy 27:15.

This condemns not just idolatry but using an image to help in worship. Jeremiah 10 condemns the use of a tree as an object of worship. Evidently an idol could be anything not just a statue.

Deuteronomy refers to setting up a secret image and condemns that. Notice that worship is not explicitly mentioned in relation to the image. But the worship of images or using images to help worship - be it God or fake gods - is implicitly condemned.

It is easy for a person to honour a saint and an image without caring about God or without using them to get closer to God. And it is even easier for them to tell themselves that they are doing it for God. We see nothing to persuade us that Catholics intend their honouring of saints to be really about honouring God. They see the glory of men and women but that is not the same thing as seeing that of God. They are not putting their attention on God but at best they are putting it on what God has made of the saints. Sounds like the message of Paul in Romans 1 where he says that all see that God exists and they still go and adore what he has made instead of him. If you really adored God as he is said to deserve, you would rejoice so much and adore him so thoroughly that there would be no need for images. The use of images and prayers to saints is a sign that one wants to be religiously distracted from God. God is supposed to be personal - he has personality and loves us. He is also supposed to be seen as if he were goodness itself. The Christian is meant to combine and reconcile these two approaches. To pray to a saint because they manifest the goodness of God blocks that reconciliation. You need to encounter God directly to do it.

The Catholics may say that they do not pray to images or likenesses for they can neither see or hear or help them. Does that mean they would pray to them if they could see and hear and help? Isaiah 41:22 says a pagan god that cannot foretell things to come is not a god at all. Clearly you are expected to get a prediction that comes true if you are presented with something such as a statue or communion wafer that is claimed to be God.

It is interesting how the Jews like the Protestants never used sacred images in their homes even as reminders of God. They did not set them up in their synagogues or Temples. That is enough to show that Catholicism is on shaky ground by using images. The Jews and the Protestants are probably right to think images are banned. And if God gave the Bible to the Jews as they say, then the Jews were in a position to know that when God banned images he meant it.

WHAT IS IDOLATRY?

What is idolatry? Idolatry is simply the worship of what is not divine as divine. It is treating something as God when it is

not. Anything can be an idol – a statue or even a mental picture.

Idolatry is the worship of what is not God as sacred. It's a violation of the right God has to be worshipped. The Bible God condemns it severely.

Idolatry is popularly assumed to refer to people thinking images see and hear and help them and deserve to be worshipped as gods.

No idolater worships a statue just because it is a statue.

1 The idolater may hold that the entity he or she worships is present in the image. So the image is not worshipped but the being residing in it.

2 Sometimes its thought that the entity or even magical power that needs to be prayed to before the power can work has become the image.

3 The third possible view is that a deity is simply represented by the image and that there is no god or saint inside the image so that the reverence and respect paid to the image is really meant for the divine person depicted.

You can see that 1 and 3 are in every practical sense identical. In both cases the image is a representation of the god. It is just that 1 has the god inside it and the other hasn't.

What about 2 where the deity puts magical power in the image that you can draw on by honouring the image or the idea that the deity is turned into the image just like bread is turned into Jesus in the Catholic faith. Even in those it is not the image that is worshipped but the god. The image is worshipped because it is the God which differs in no practical sense from the idea that the god is inside the image. What if the image is not the god? Then the mistake is not in worshipping a statue but in where the god is. You can honour the king even if you mistakenly think he is in the palace or mistakenly think that the figure you bow before in the fog is him.

It follows then that if idolatry is wrong then all three of these approaches is idolatry and wrong. They stand and fall together. In all three, the image represents the God. That is the main thing. The image wouldn't be used for the god to dwell in if it didn't represent her or him. Also, where the god is is not as important as treating the image as the representation of the god for he can get the worship offered before it whether he is in it or not.

Catholics practice idolatry according to the third approach and also the second for they regard communion as the body of God

IDOLATRY UNAVOIDABLE?

Many people get a nice glow inside them when they pray and think of God. They pray without realising that they are praying to this feeling.

The best theologians say that God is being itself and you cannot talk about what God is only about what he is not. They say that the thought of a God who is in time and like us is idolatry.

If you adore your perception of God, you are not adoring God. Even if your perception is right that is not the point. You are still intending to honour what you think God is not what he is. It would take a miracle for a person to really honour and worship God.

Our hearts deceive us very well. We could think we are adoring him when we are actually adoring a mental and emotional image of him.

When people who pray to God find idolatry so hard to avoid, it must be nearly impossible to honour a saint and pray to a saint without being an idolater. The veneration of saints then must be rejected outright as blasphemous and heretical and corrupting. It is a turning away from the true good which is God.

Imagine then how bad it is that Catholics worship the Eucharist as Jesus Christ! They pretend that a wafer in which no physical change has taken place is still physically changed into the real body and blood of Jesus! That is worse than anything the pagans ever did!

To honour alleged God-men like Jesus, statues of saints and relics is idolatry. God is goodness. So if you sense his goodness and worship what you sense that is true worship. Images and relics and the Jesus God of the Catholics are not

directly focused on goodness. A man who sits with his wife by the fire and ignores her photo is not really honouring her at all. A man who instead of seeing the goodness that is God inside his heart and chooses to focus on some sense object such as Jesus or a communion wafer or a holy statue is rejecting God for sense stimulation. He is not honouring God but only making it look like as if he does. He is not really even honouring true goodness.

Christians objected strenuously when the Catholic Church had people touching images of saints and God and carrying them in procession and kissing them and crowning them. They said this was idolatry and condemned by God in the Bible as false worship. The Catholics responded that those activities were not wrong in themselves and that God was only objecting to honouring images of fictitious gods implying he had no problem with images of him. This answer in effect implies that you may treat an image as if it were God himself and this is fine. But its still degrading idolatry. It implies that worshipping images of God is okay but worshipping images of Zeus is not. It ignores the point that the image is really a substitute for God. An image of God would be more dangerous than an image of a fake god. Why? Because the fake god is a bad counterfeit of God while the other is a better one. The Church says that Satan does far better not to tell lies to mislead believers but to distort and pollute much of the truth they have and he will use even the truth for his own ends. The deceived end up blinded to the reality. If he told them loads of lies instead they would see through them.

The Bible teaches that only fools deny that there is a God and Romans 1 says all on earth have an impression that there is a God. So the idolater worships idols before he would have it be thought that he has no God. That is his way of dealing with his attraction towards God. He worships God in his idols. But that doesn't mean that God approves of idolatry. On the contrary he reveals that it is the greatest and most dangerous sin possible. The sin may largely consist of a man needing God and refusing to go to him but choosing to quiet the need with a fake god.

The Church says that there are traces of sin in all that we do. We might do a really good and praiseworthy thing but there will be traces of sin in it. It's not perfectly holy or good. It says we have a bias towards serving ourselves and being independent of God. Clearly then we must have a predisposition to idolatry. You would need to be a perfect saint - impossible for even the saints didn't claim to be perfect - in order to honour a statue without being idolatrous. It is more natural to be idolatrous in your venerating the saints than it is statues. It gets worse and worse. The Catholic who venerates an image is one thing but if the image is of a saint the idolatry is multiplied!

CATHOLIC IMAGE WORSHIP

St Thomas Aquinas THE theologian of Roman Catholicism endorsed idolatry as in statue worship and it is definitely idolatry to honour the likes of him as a saint. He said that statues of Jesus can be worshipped like God:

"The honour given to an image reaches to the prototype, i.e. the exemplar. But the exemplar itself--namely, Christ--is to be adored with the adoration of latria; therefore also His image. Consequently the same reverence should be shown to Christ's image as to Christ Himself. Since, therefore, Christ is adored with the adoration of latria, it follows that His image should be adored with the adoration of latria. Whereas we give the adoration of latria to the image of Christ, Who is true God, not for the sake of the image, but for the sake of the thing whose image it is." The Church made him a saint and an idolater cannot be a saint and canonisation is supposedly infallible so this passage is the teaching of the Church and part of what makes the Church the Church.

When you go into a Roman Catholic Church you see images of Jesus and the saints. The faithful come up and kneel before them and adoring address prayers to them as if they were the beings they represented. They light candles before them and touch them as if to absorb some of the magical power they are thought to contain. Priests bless the images to make them vehicles of divine power. This reminds one of witches putting magical power into occult tools such as magic wands and pentacles before they can be used in religious rites.

The Catholic Church claims that its ecumenical councils are infallible when they intend to be. The infallible Council of Trent recommended idolatry in its catechism while claiming to utilize the authority of God, "It is lawful to have images in the church and to give honour and worship unto them. Images are put in churches that they may be worshipped."

Session 25 decreed, "The images of Christ and of his Virgin Mother and of other saints are to be kept and retained especially in Churches. And a due honour and veneration is to be given to them. This is not that any divinity or power is believed to be in them, for which they are to be honoured, or that any prayer can be said to them, or that any trust can be placed in them as was done by the pagans in former days who put their confidence in idols but because the honour that is bestowed on them goes to the original which they picture and represent. Therefore by the images we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads or kneel, we worship Christ and we venerate his saints whose likeness they stand for" (page 235, THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, James Cardinal Gibbons, Forty Ninth Edition, John Murphy and Co Publishers, Baltimore, London, New York, 1897 (TAN Books keep this book in print).

The Catholic Church prays to the blood of Christ. In the prayer called Anima Christi, it prays, "Blood of Christ inebriate

me". And even, "Water from the side of Christ wash me."

The Catholic Church prays, "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in thee".

In the Creed of Pope Pius IV, Catholics are told to say, "I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, of the Mother of God, Ever Virgin, and also of the saints may be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration are to be given them" (page 10, Why I am not a Roman Catholic).

In the Summa of St Thomas, it is written that Catholics must give an image of Jesus the same honour and worship that God gets for Jesus is God (III, 25:3,4). He said that the image should be adored with the adoration due to God. Pope Leo XIII commanded that the schools of philosophy must conform to St Thomas' teaching.

The old Roman Missal instructed in a rubric that one should say a prayer to the cross on Good Friday. The cross was worshipped and called the only hope. On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross which happens on the 14th September the cross is adored as better than the stars and was worthy to bear the body of Jesus and the sweet wood and the sweet nails are adored. This bit is worth citing, "O kindly cross who has obtained attractiveness and beauty from the limbs of the Lord take me from men and restore me to my master." This adores the cross without Christ.

What should we make of this then? "If it be said that there is no idolatry because it is not the image, but what the image represents that is dealt with, it may be answered that that is precisely the assertion of many of the heathen about their idols. It is absurd to suppose that the Israelites believed that images of wood, or stone, or metal were actually gods; they were visible representations of their objects of worship" (page 12, Why I am not a Roman Catholic).

Catholics who follow the Devotion to Divine Mercy approved by Pope John Paul II pray, "O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in you." Jesus supposedly told the Church to pray this prayer at 3 pm daily. The Church might "explain" that it means, "O Jesus whose heart gushed forth mercy for us when it bled water and blood, I trust in you." But then why doesn't the prayer say that? The words are actually a block to meaning that. They make it difficult to mean that. Most people will find themselves praying to the actual blood and water. The Bible severely warns that people have a predisposition to idolatrous worship. Thus the prayer is dangerous.

The prayer of consecration to Divine Mercy runs, "Jesus, the Divine Mercy, I consecrate my entire life, from this day on, to You without reserve." This is hypocrisy. Even the greatest saints complained how they were unable to reach Jesus' uncompromising ideals. If the prayer really came from God as devotees of Divine Mercy allege, it would run, "Jesus, the Divine Mercy, I want the strength to consecrate my entire life, from this day on, to You without reserve."

Jesus promised that devotees of Divine Mercy who spread the prayers would never go to Hell and he would "particularly defend each one of them at the hour of death." Protestant theologians might see this as an attempt to lull devotees into a false sense of security so that they will be drawn down to Hell forever.

IMAGES NOT NEEDED

The Roman Catholic Church uses images in worship. Catholics will kiss statues as a sign of love for the saint they represent. They hold that honouring the statue is honouring the saint in the same way that kissing your darling's photo is offering love to your darling. They say the honour isn't meant for the photo but the person in it, "Strictly speaking, the worship is not for the image." But it is for the image too! The image benefits from it.

That is a Catholic lie.

Why use pictures of holy beings or statues? Why not get Madonna to dress up as the Virgin Mary and wine and dine her to honour Mary? Because you know that it really is idolatry.

You kiss the photo for yourself to satisfy your feeling of love not to give love. You cannot give a person love this way. It would be like kissing the photo of your loved one when your loved one is with you. That would be strange. The Church says that the saint or God is with you. If that is true, then you don't need images.

Affection can exist without love. You can feel affection for your dog and still maltreat him. The Catholic really must feel affection for the image.

There is no need for images as helps to worship which proves that the veneration of images is idolatrous. If you can't pray without a holy picture it is a bad sign. You should need awareness of God alone. The image is a substitute for the love of God – a bad habit. Catholics say that it would be idolatry to worship the images as if they were the saints and that is wrong and that they are helps in worship. You can pray better the harder you find it to pray for effort is what matters not success to

God. Images reduce the element of sacrifice in prayer.

If you can't pray without images, the Bible God says he understands that and takes your effort to do without statues to be first class prayer for it is the best you can do. Thus, it is idolatry to venerate images for they are not needed. It is a sin to use statues when they lead to what even Catholics would see as idolatry. Actually, that is what the statues are for – to get people to train themselves towards idolatry for they are good for nothing else.

Human nature is irreparably fond of making a God that suits itself. We are prone to idolatry. Accordingly, it is impossible to believe that God would set up a religious system that is so easily abused by those who hide their idolatrous ways.

The early Church used no images in places of worship. It did not use religious pictures and statues. The Council of Elvira in Spain banned the use of holy pictures in Churches. The Church was so against idolatry that there was no way it could even have imagined that bread and wine could be turned into God incarnate! The latter idolatry led to other forms and vice versa.

Uncanny valley means that our brains are wired to recognise real faces. If a face is not real like the face of a doll that unsettles us. It makes us uncomfortable. Yet Catholics and Orthodox adore images with rather disturbing faces or do they? Is this just a way of how humanity has always tried to associate with dark forces in the belief they would get them on their side? Is it a case of you are better off with the Devil you know?

Conclusion

Catholics are idolaters. Catholics are pagans using Christian terminology.

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