

## **OUTSIDE THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH THERE IS NO SALVATION FROM HELL AND NO POSSIBILITY OF GOING TO HEAVEN**

The Roman Catholic Church says that as Christ is Christianity strictly speaking Jesus being the only way to God means in practice that the Church is the way to God.

The huge majority of those who dismiss or ignore or deny the truth claims of Christianity are from other religions. As it claims to be the truth, this makes Christianity raise a rather nasty question. "Are they doing it on purpose?" Also if Jesus is the uncompromising way, truth and life so is his religion then it follows that there is no such thing as ignoring or dismissing. Its rejecting. It is sectarian to even raise the question of whether it is the people of the other religion's fault.

Jesus said that Buddha and the other religious spiritual leaders were thieves and robbers in John 10,

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

8 All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

The Roman Catholic faith calls itself the one, true Church. Church means called out assembly. It is an assembly of faith. "Whatever is not from [Christian] faith is sin" says Romans 14:23. Since sin blocks you from entering Heaven there is no salvation outside the faith community.

"If any one single person, formerly professing the true faith, falls afterwards into some damnable heresy, what ever that person was before his fall, he is, how ever, after it, no longer a member of the Church of Christ : in like manner, if a whole nation of people, formerly professing the faith and worship of Christ, does afterwards apostatize from the faith and doctrine of Christ, to Arianism, for example, Nestorianism, or some other damnable heresy or idolatry, that nation, after its apostasy, is no longer any part of the Church of Christ" The Protestant's Objections to Points of Catholic Doctrine or the Protestant's Trial, New York, P J Kenedy, Publisher to the Holy Apostolic See, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House, 1902.

The Holy Roman Church, founded by the word of our Lord and Savior, firmly believes, professes, and announces that nobody outside the Catholic Church, neither heathen nor Jew, neither a non-believer or one separated from the unity will share in eternal life, but rather will be given over to the eternal fire that is prepared for the devil and his angels (Neuner/Roos, The Faith of the Church in Documents of Teaching Pronouncements, no. 381). It could not be clearer - if the text meant only those who knowingly reject the faith it would read, The Holy Roman Church, founded by the word of our Lord and Savior, firmly believes, professes, and announces that nobody who knowingly rejects the Catholic faith or the unity of the Catholic Church will share in eternal life, but rather will be given over to the eternal fire that is prepared for the devil and his angels.

Some believe that only God knows who really belongs to his Church for there are many phoneyes. The Roman Catholic Church strangely admits that there are many fake Catholics in its midst but still, inconsistently, says that the true Church is visible and you can see who is part of it. The Church believes that Catholics who are automatically excommunicated, that is Catholics who put themselves outside the Church by having beliefs that contradict the Church (heretics) and those who

procure an abortion and Catholics who only pretend to be Catholics are not really Catholics. We can see most Catholics have excommunicated themselves so what sense does it make to talk about a visible Church? The Catholic Church claims to be this one true visible Church which, as with the Mormon Church, is clear evidence that it is not. The bigotry alone of claiming to be the true Church is enough evidence that it is not the true Church.

The Church agrees with the ancient dogma that outside the Church there is no salvation. You will not be saved from sin and you will not be saved from damnation forever in Hell.

This doctrine was traditional teaching from the time of Cyprian in particular. St Augustine's disciple, Fulgentius wrote, "The holy Roman Church with firmness believes, confesses and teaches that none of the people who are outside the Catholic Church, not only the pagans, but also the Jews, and heretics and schismatics, can receive eternal life and they will go into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and those angels of his. They will be saved only if they are gathered into the Church before they die." The Council of Florence in 1442 used this formula to proclaim this to be a dogma of the Church.

To get around this dangerous and divisive and fanatical teaching, some Catholic theologians patronisingly say that if you are a sincere believer even in atheism and mean well and do good you are a Catholic without knowing it. To try and put people in a box like that shows bigotry. It is like, "I hate John being a Hindu so I need a way to call him a Catholic."

Today's Church accepts that a person may not be a formal Catholic - not a visible member of the Church - but a Catholic in reality who does not know it yet. So the Hindu who is a bad person is not a Catholic and the one who is good and holy is. At least the doctrine teaches that it is possible to be Catholic without being an official one. It is better than the nasty view some hold that if a person is once an official Catholic they are always one.

The teaching that an atheist can be an unconscious Catholic even if never baptised is regarded by the Church as error for the atheist is said to be an idolater. He is attached to things not God. The Church says it is mistaken to think an atheist can have a relationship with God and therefore be able to enter Heavenly Glory to be with God forever.

The sweetness and light some Catholics lavish on the sincere is really an attempt to force sincere people into the Church. A case of, "You are sincere therefore you belong to my in-group and you are part of it whether you care to see it or not." It actually demolishes the Church. The Church then becomes a label. It becomes humanity not a religion. It makes the Church a mere religious and spiritual luxury. It diminishes the importance of having a formal Christian ethos. It discourages prospective converts. Why bother becoming Catholic if you are Catholic anyway?

And if I form a silly religious sect tomorrow called the Only True Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with two formal members would it not be ridiculous to say that all sincere people are members of this Church though they are not formal members? Would it not be arrogant? Am I saying that all unrepentant sinners are Satanists and united to the Church of Satan though they are not formal Satanists?

Today the Church says that those who are invincibly ignorant of the Roman Catholic Church and follow the best light they have will be saved. Those who can investigate if the Roman Catholic Church is the true Church and don't join it will be damned for their negligence. But the question then arises, why the Roman Catholic Church? Why not the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and the countless other sects of Christianity that boast that they have the truth? What is so special about Roman Catholicism that it should get special consideration? Yet the Church cannot deny any of this for to say those who can investigate the Roman Church and don't can be saved is to deny, "Outside the Church, there is no salvation", in every sense. It is denied in the most liberal interpretation possible and in the most rigid interpretation possible as well.

The Church says that it is a very serious sin to decline the opportunity for membership in the Roman Church if you see that it is the one right religion. That is going very far and our instincts tell us that it is bigotry. When you see that, you get sceptical about attempts to stretch the meaning of the word Church to mean all sincere people religious or not and whether they are formal Catholics or not. Why would a God who is so vicious be merciful to sincere people who are not formal Catholics and consider them to be informal Catholics?

Those who will not join the Church even if they believe in it are not terrible people. It is counter-intuitive to imagine that they can be damned forever to Hell for staying out of the Church. It is bigotry pure and simple to imagine such a thing.

Here are the reasons the Church says that not joining when you believe in it is such a serious sin. They are all religious reasons.

The Church is one - to refuse to become united with it is to divide.

Not joining is refusing fellowship with God's people.

It is disobeying God who commands us on pain of retribution to join his Church if we believe.

It is bad example.

It is refusing to enjoy the power of the sacraments to take away sin and make a person holy.

We know people that do not join and we like them and trust them. We do not need a religion trying to malign them by making out they are very bad indeed. How can we take such a vicious faith to be serious about unity? It cares only about the kind of unity that gives it power and splendour.

If you can go to Hell for quitting any faith you believe is the true faith even if it is not, then how can you say that leaving the true faith results in damnation? The true is same of any faith whether it is true or not and if you believe in it. "Don't leave the Church or be damned", cannot apply unless it means more than just going against your belief maliciously.

Vatican II taught, "Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it" (Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium, 14).

The bolded words show that the Church is a faith community. Whoever cherry-picks, picks what they like out of Catholic doctrine and discards the rest, or who chooses what rings true and rejects what he thinks is silly, is implying that he has renounced the Church as it really is. When he speaks he speaks as a sinner and a heretic not a Catholic and its dishonest of him to say he does speak as a Catholic.

Today it is said that God commands all who see the Catholic Church alone is his real Church to join it. To disobey then will keep you out of Heaven unless you repent. That agrees with Catholic doctrine. But some go further. They claim that that is all that outside the Church there is no salvation is saying. But that is not outside the Church there is no salvation. It is saying that the Church is unnecessary for salvation. Obeying the command to join it is what is necessary for salvation. If God commanded you to join Amnesty International it would not follow that Amnesty International can save your soul.

Some imagine that the teaching of no salvation outside the Church is not talking about any person who may be outside the Church officially but about organisations that separate themselves from the Church and become new religions. That is nonsense. It is about individuals and groups both. New Churches always start with an individual!

The Church teaches then that for some formal membership and coming under the duty of obedience to Church law is necessary for salvation. That is sectarianism. It is the love in the heart that should matter.

## THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE

Meeting under the authority of Pope Eugene IV, this Council defined and taught:

[This council] firmly believes, professes, and teaches that the matter pertaining to the law of the Old Testament, of the Mosaic law, which are divided into ceremonies, sacred rites, sacrifices, and sacraments, because they were established to signify something in the future, although they were suited to the divine worship at that time, after our Lord's coming had been signified by them, ceased, and the sacraments of the New Testament began; and that whoever, even after the passion, placed hope in these matters of the law and submitted himself to them as necessary for salvation, as if faith in Christ could not save without them, sinned mortally. Yet it does not deny that after the passion of Christ up to the promulgation of the Gospel they could have been observed until they were believed to be in no way necessary for salvation; but after the promulgation of the Gospel it asserts that they cannot be observed without the loss of eternal salvation. All, therefore, who after that time observe circumcision and the Sabbath and the other requirements of the law, it declares alien to the Christian faith and not in the least fit to participate in eternal salvation, unless someday they recover from these errors.

(Council of Florence, Decree Cantate Domino [1442]; Denz. 712).

Many say that "Outside the Church there is no salvation" should be, "Without the Church there is no salvation." But take a closer look. Think about the good people you know who hated God and religion. Then you will see the bigotry in the statements. And the arrogance.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

This plainly teaches that these disciples could not get the Holy Spirit because they had not heard of him. It denies salvation for those who have not heard the explicit gospel. Fantasies that God is bigger than your errors so he can still work on you are just that fantasies. Note how they were baptised twice and they had to wait to Paul put his hands on them to get the Holy Spirit. Even baptism in the name of Jesus or whatever is ineffectual. It is as if here baptism is a preparation for receiving the Spirit. Some find this important in the light of the John gospel where Jesus says you need water AND the spirit to enter God's kingdom.

Any errors about baptism then block the Holy Spirit which is why Catholic baptism which claims to put the Spirit in is dangerous.

The text certainly claims that in some form, outside the Church there being no salvation is true.

## FINALLY

A truly good religion lets people leave without hassling them or telling them they are doing a terrible thing. It might be tolerable if it said it was a sin but not a grave one. Outside the Church there is no salvation implies that nobody has authentic goodness unless they are joined to the Church in some way. Salvation is about giving a person a good character through God's power and that character stays with them forever which is why they end up having eternal happiness. Some say that outside the Church there is no salvation refers to sects not individuals. This ignores the fact that a sect can have one individual in it. You can be your own church and in fact probably all religious people are more their own god and messiah than you would realise. The attempt to deny that individuals is meant is a scam for saying that while their sect may not lead them to salvation God is able to connect them to himself as an individual so that they are perhaps unawares a member of the true Catholic Church. The doctrine is sectarian - period.

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