

# CRITICAL COMPARISONS ON BEING RIGHT WITH GOD

## THE BASIS OF TRUTH

### God's written Word of Truth From the Bible

#### The Bible alone is the standard for truth

Scripture cannot be set aside.

—*John 10:35*

Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth.

—*John 17:17*

That you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written.—*1 Cor 4:6*

Every word of God is tested; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Add nothing to his words, lest he reprove you, and you be exposed as a deceiver.

—*Prov 30:5-6*

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

—*2 Tim 3:16-17*

God must be true, though every human being is a liar.

—*Rom 3:4*

## SALVATION BY GRACE

### God's written Word of Truth

#### Salvation is by grace alone through faith

They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus.

—*Rom 3:24*

By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.

—*Eph 2:8-9*

For if, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ.

—*Rom 5:17*

I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

—*Gal 2:21*

## ONE MEDIATOR

### God's written Word of Truth

#### In salvation Jesus Christ alone mediates

For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human.

—*1 Tim 2:5*

Jesus Christ...There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.

—*Acts 4:10,12*

### Beliefs of a Sincere Catholic From the 1994 Catechism

#### Truth is based on Scripture, tradition, and the Pope

Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other.

—*CCC para 80*

Sacred Scripture...and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God.

—*CCC para 81*

The Church...does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.

—*CCC para 82*

The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful—who confirms his brethren in the faith—he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.

—*CCC para 891*

### Beliefs of a Sincere Catholic

#### For salvation, grace is a help given through the Sacraments

The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. “Sacramental grace” is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.—*CCC para 1129*

One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience.

—*CCC para 1493*

Grace is the help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming his adopted sons. It introduces us into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life.

—*CCC para 2021*

### Beliefs of a Sincere Catholic

#### In salvation Mary also mediates

Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation...Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the [Roman Catholic] Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.

—*CCC para 969*

## ORIGIN OF FAITH

### God's written Word of Truth From the Bible

#### Salvation is the gift of God and comes by the Word of God

Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved.

—*Acts 16:31*

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.

—*Eph 2:8-9*

To you has been granted, for the sake of Christ, not only to believe in him but also to suffer for him.

—*Phil 1:29*

Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

—*Rom 10:17*

### Beliefs of a Sincere Catholic From the 1994 Catechism

#### Faith comes through the Mother Church

It is the Church that believes first, and so bears, nourishes and sustains my faith.

—*CCC para 168*

Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother.

—*CCC para 169*

“Believing” is an ecclesial act. The Church’s faith precedes, engenders, supports and nourishes our faith. The Church is the mother of all believers. “No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother.”

—*CCC para 181*

## ICONS

### God's written Word of Truth

#### God hates idolatry

You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them.

—*Exo 20:4-5*

He proclaimed to you his covenant, which he commanded you to keep: the ten commandments, which he wrote on two tablets of stone... You saw no form at all on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire. Be strictly on your guard, therefore, not to degrade yourselves by fashioning an idol to represent any figure.

—*Deut 4:13,15,16*

## GOD: THE ONLY ALL HOLY ONE

### God's written Word of Truth

#### God is the only all Holy One and the only source of holiness

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!” they cried one to the other. “All the earth is filled with his glory!”

—*Isaiah 6:3*

Who will not fear you, Lord, or glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

—*Rev 15:4*

There is no Holy One like the LORD; there is no Rock like our God.

—*1 Sam 2:2*

I am the LORD, this is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols.

—*Isaiah 42:8*

### Beliefs of a Sincere Catholic

#### Catholics venerate images

The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes [forbids] idols. Indeed, the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype, and whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it.

—*CCC para 2132*

Basing itself on the mystery of the incarnate Word, the seventh ecumenical council at Nicaea (AD 787) justified...the veneration of icons—of Christ, but also of the Mother of God, the angels, and all the saints. By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new “economy” of images.

—*CCC para 2131*

### Beliefs of a Sincere Catholic

#### Mary is also the all Holy One and source of holiness

By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the “Mother of Mercy,” the All Holy One.

—*CCC para 2677*

From the [Catholic] Church he learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary.

—*CCC para 2030*

The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God “the All Holy” (Panagia) and celebrate her as “free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.”

—*CCC para 493*

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

It’s impossible to truly know God if you cling to teachings that contradict what God says about himself! Many former Catholics have discovered what it takes to be right with God. Listen: “For our sake [God] made [Jesus] to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). Christ was personally All Holy, yet as our substitute, he became legally responsible for our sins. God made him to be sin by transferring our sins to him, then punishing him for those sins. Now Christ’s righteousness is put to the credit of anyone who truly believes in him. Being right with God is the gracious act whereby a believing sinner has Christ’s perfect righteousness credited to him! “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works” (Eph 2:8,9).

Jesus’ resurrection from the grave proved that his mission to accomplish our salvation was complete. Now, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom 10:13). If you cling to teachings and traditions that contradict God’s truth, you do so at your eternal peril. Do what so many have done before you—turn to God in faith alone for salvation, based on Christ’s death and resurrection. As the Holy Spirit convicts you, express to God your heartfelt belief in Christ’s death on your behalf. Then, having received the gift of eternal life, live your life in praise of God’s grace (Eph 1:6) and in continual thanksgiving to him! □

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## IN VAIN THEY DO WORSHIP ME

The Bible shows us that many Catholic teachings and practices are specifically forbidden by Jesus himself. Note carefully the following warnings that he gave to the religious leaders of his day about vain worship, vain tradition and vain repetitions, and see how these all apply to Catholicism today.

**Vain Worship**—“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt 15:8,9). All worship is indeed vain when it’s based upon the commandments of men rather than the Bible.

**Vain Tradition**—“Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matt 15:6). Valid tradition is based upon Scripture and confirms Bible truth. Vain tradition is based upon man’s teachings and violates God’s Word. In Catholicism, tradition is consistently elevated above Scripture. This results in vain worship (no matter how sincere) and makes the commandment of God of no effect.

**Vain Repetitions**—“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Matt 6:7). A basic part of Catholic worship is the frequent repetition of The Rosary. Its origin is clearly tied to heathen religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. The words of Christ should be taken seriously. □



**“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”  
“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”  
(Heb 10:17; John 8:32)**

**P**URGATORY is where the Roman Catholic Church sends the souls of its best children to be purged of their venial (“lesser”) sins in its “devouring flames” before they can enter heaven. The Catholic Church makes slaves of her people upon earth, and after death makes “merchandise” of their souls (2 Peter 2:3).

While Christians trust in nothing but the blood of Jesus to purify and “cleanse them from all sin” (1 John 1:7), Roman Catholics are taught they must be purified by the fires of purgatory—“After death they undergo purification [in purgatory], so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (CCC 1030).

The strong public sentiment that is everywhere found against obtaining money under false pretenses should apply to the Roman Catholic priests who extort money from deceived relatives for masses, which they pretend will better the condition of the dead. This is an imposition that should be earnestly condemned.

The priest who tells a suffering husband that his dead wife is in a place called purgatory, and that his prayers, to be paid for with cash in hand, are necessary for the release of her soul from these man-made “devouring flames,” is surely an impostor and ought to be counted with those who obtain money under false pretenses. The church that maintains this species of dishonesty should be held in disrepute by all honest people, regardless of their religion.

There is no system of gambling, no species of fraud, more brazen or barefaced than this priestly game of playing upon the love and tender memories of bereaved people to cheat them out of their oftentimes hard-earned and scanty wages. Yet these nefarious operations are sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church, and are practiced daily in every part of the world where this Church exists and operates. The wounds of sorrowing and heart-broken relatives are made to bleed afresh by the constant demands of the Church to insure rest and refreshment for their beloved dead.

A Catholic has the fear of the fires of purgatory brought before him by the priests all the days of his life. He is told that its terrors can be avoided by paying money, and by performing good works, by which he earns indulgences. After he dies, his relatives are levied upon for years for funds to employ a priest who pretends to pray him out of purgatory.

A dead Roman Catholic is never forgotten by the priest while his relatives have a penny that can be extorted from them. If they had no money, or would not pay for masses, the souls of the dead may, so far as the priests are concerned, be left to suffer in the “devouring flames” of purgatory for hundreds and thousands of years. These are called the forgotten souls in purgatory, on behalf of which “All Souls’ Day,” November first of each year, was instituted. On this day a fervent appeal is made to the general public of the Roman Catholic Church to contribute money for the priestly prayers and the solemn “Requiem Mass” said on that day for the suffrage of those “poor souls” forgotten by their relatives.

How well the Saviour’s words describe the Roman Catholic priests, bishops, and popes—“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (*Math 23:14*).

A woman in Mexico who had lost her only son was robbed of \$5,000, practically all she had, by a priest who was engaged to deliver his soul from purgatory. After the money was gone, he was asked if the son was now in heaven. He only said that the son was now somewhat better off, leaving the poor mother to her grief.

The priest, in order to get more money out of his deceived people, has two masses—high mass and low mass. The high mass costs from ten dollars to one thousand dollars or more, according to the display of flowers, candles, and the number of priests taking part. It is sung in a loud tone of voice. The low mass costs about five dollars. Only six candles are used, and it is said in a low voice, always in Latin.

It is high money, high mass; low money, low mass. The essence of the low fraud is that though the laity are told that the low mass is just as good as the high, yet they are made to believe that the high mass is far superior. They will scrape together enough money for a high mass, believing it will get the suffering souls from purgatory sooner.

Death does not end all with the Roman Catholic Church. A member cannot avoid his church dues by dying. His estate or friends have to pay on and pay forever. Even the tax collector gives up a dead man; but the Catholic Church—never. It retains its grip on its followers long after their bodies are reduced to ashes. The priestly threat that the soul is suffering atrocious pains burning in the “devouring flames” of purgatory, and will remain there for a long time, will bring the last dollar out of the pocket of the sorrowing mother, whose only daughter is detained in that fiery prison. She scrapes together scanty means, denies herself every comfort, in order to purchase prayers for the soul of her dead darling.

These sums stolen from the pockets of thousands of superstitious religious slaves every day and almost every hour around the world are hoarded to enrich the Roman Catholic Church. Purgatory is a downright, naked, barefaced falsehood—an invention of man, inspired by Satan for the destruction of souls.

Purgatory and the mass, both false doctrines, are the two pillars which sustain the most colossal racket in existence, for without them there would be no Roman Catholic Church. It is the most lucrative system ever invented by clever men, by which the Roman Church continually augments its wealth and property holdings, while its populations are kept correspondingly in abject poverty, as seen in all Catholic countries.

The Bible mentions no such place of expiation where souls are released through suffering and the prayers of those living on earth. The doctrine of purgatory affords Catholics a way of compensating for an easy, self-indulgent life. Those who know there is a way to compensate for the pleasures of sin are more likely to indulge and enjoy. When the danger of hell is removed by confession to a priest, and only a temporal punishment for sin remains, immediate pleasure is the frequent choice over distant suffering. Sin loses much of its fear when there is a way to make compensation by penance in this life or purgation in the next life.

Purgatory is also attractive to priests for it increases their importance. Without priests offering sacrifices for souls suffering in purgatory, Catholics would have no hope. Since the work of priests can only produce partial forgiveness, the Catholic religious system is said to save sinners only from hell, but not purgatory. When a Catholic dies he is given hope that sin and punishment can be expiated through the power of the priest.

Catholic theology teaches that the sacrifice of Christ only makes sinners savable. By his death the gates of heaven were opened (*CCC 637*). Accordingly, the work of salvation has been entrusted to the Catholic Church and its priests (*CCC 982*).

However, if the atonement of Christ were ever taught as the once-offered, perfect sacrifice for all sin that saves completely, Roman Catholic priests would be out of a job. They would have to look for another career, because the people would know “there is no more offering for sin” (*Heb 10:18*). Why is there no more offering for sin?—“*by one offering* he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (*Heb 10:14*).

The Scriptures teach in no uncertain terms that Christ’s *one sacrifice* completely finished the work of redemption accomplishing our eternal salvation—“But this man, after he had offered *one sacrifice* for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God...But now *once* in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself...By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*...Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (*Heb 9:12,26; 10:10,12*).

Many Catholics call Jesus their Savior, but they do not know what a Savior does. A Savior is one who saves. He cannot save sinners and yet leave sinners unsaved, or half-saved, or just savable. “Call his name JESUS: for *he shall save* his people from their sins” (*Math 1:21*). Anyone who does not believe that Christ has completely saved him, has not completely trusted Christ to save him.

The Word of God states with all authority that we’re “not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (*1 Peter 1:18-19*). “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth us from all sin*...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us of *all unrighteousness*” (*1 John 1:7,9*).

The Bible never speaks of a *place* where one can go to be purified from his sins; rather, it always speaks of a *person* to whom we can go—Jesus Christ! Those who refuse to trust Christ to cleanse them from sin are condemned: “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (*John 3:18*).

There are only two paths: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (*John 3:36*). As long as there is a “great gulf fixed” (*Luke 16:26*), not one soul will ever pass out of the “devouring flames” into God’s presence. “There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus” (*Rom 8:1*). Right now! and forevermore!—“*No condemnation!*” That certainly eliminates the flames of purgatory!

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (*Psalms 103:12*). “*Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more!*” (*Heb 10:17*). If God no longer remembers the sins of those in Christ, he certainly will not punish them for those sins! “Thou wilt cast *all their sins* into the depths of the sea” (*Micah 7:19*). Those sins are forever gone!—put away under the blood of Jesus “who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (*1 Peter 2:24*).

Christ came into the world “to put away sin” (*Heb 9:26*), “to make an end of sins” (*Daniel 9:24*). It’s done! It’s over! “It is finished!” (*John 19:30*). It’s “complete” (*Col 2:10*) for every believer! “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *will not impute sin*” (*Rom 4:7-8*). Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (*Math 11:28*), and “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (*John 6:37*). He’s “*able to save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by him” (*Heb 7:25*).

Would you be saved from all of your sins? Trust him—and like the thief on the cross, you too, can have peace in his promise, both now, and in the hour of death—“Today, shalt thou be with me in paradise” (*Luke 23:43*). □

## ARE YOU RIGHT WITH GOD?

**W**hat devout Roman Catholic doesn’t want to be right with God? If you’re a Catholic, can you say without a doubt that you are right with God at this very moment? Perhaps you’re thinking, “Well, I’m following the teachings of the Church on how to be right with God.” Then would you agree that those beliefs should match God’s written Word, the Bible? Perhaps your answer is “No” or “I’m not sure.” Wouldn’t you like to *know* for peace of mind *now*...and for *eternity*?

Whatever your answer, you may be in the position that I was in as a dedicated Catholic priest. After years of study for the priesthood in Ireland and Rome, followed by 22 years as a priest, I was *never sure* that I was right with God. As a devout Dominican, I always tried to be right with God through following and believing the Catholic Church. I taught those under my care to do the same. But as sincere as I was and as hard as I tried, I never achieved any peace about being right with God.

Finally I discovered that it’s not only possible to be right with God, but that God would have us to be secure in that position! So I urge you to do what I did—compare the teachings of the Catholic Church on this vital question with the words of the Holy Bible.

Here are *six important comparisons*: under each topic, I present the written Word of God (in the Catholic *New American Bible*) alongside the official teaching of the Catholic Church (taken from the 1994 *Catholic Catechism*).

Your eternal destiny—heaven or hell—depends on how you understand and respond to the truths in these topics. If you feel unqualified for such a study, draw strength from these words of Scripture: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and he will be given it” (*James 1:5*). God would have you to know the truth about knowing him!