

Is Roman Catholicism Counterfeit Christianity? PGN

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COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY?

A Critical Look at Roman Catholicism

INTRODUCTION

I write this mainly for the benefit of my many Roman Catholic friends. So often I have wanted to engage them in theological questions, but found, to my sorrow, I could not. I found that Roman Catholic laity and religious alike took my earnest desire to delve into God's Word as an affront. I was called "anti-Catholic", and accused of "Catholic-bashing". Some people became very angry with me, and others dissociated, never to be seen again. As you may imagine I have had many discussions with my sincere, conservative Roman Catholic wife, which are usually very frustrating for both of us. I am president of a nondenominational prolife organization, which seems to operate best if we tiptoe around sensitive but vitally important differences. Having been brought up to "dissect the Word" and "feed on Him in our hearts", I felt a growing sense of disloyalty to God's truth as I was carefully taught by some of the greatest Christian teachers of our day and the reality I found in my walk with Jesus.

This booklet contains some of the critical points of belief that I have wanted to bring up with Roman Catholics. I have tried to write in the least offensive, most illuminating way I can. I hope that this brief book is considered with an open heart and mind, resulting in good discussion. Although I have often been insulted by things Roman Catholics have said and inferred, I have tried hard not to let these personal hurts affect my expressions and discourse. Of course the errors and wrongs I comment on apply to many other denominations and sects. I hope all who find that if "the shoe fits", they will wear it long enough to find both shoes that God provides, and wear them for many fruitful, joyful

miles. Yet I know that no one will come unless God the Father draws him, and no one will understand unless they are ready and the Holy Spirit opens their eyes. “For people can't come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me ...”(John 6:44)

This is also written for patients who must know by now that the physicians licensing body does not allow me to share Christ's gospel. It is also written for friends whose church or religious beliefs leave them hungry and yearning to know God personally. For all those who are earnestly seeking to know God, I hope the contrasts between scripture and the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” [CCC]¹ will reveal the essence of Christianity and the source of the irreconcilable centuries old debate between bible believing Christians [BBCs]² and Roman Catholics[RCs].³ In this essay I compare what the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” teaches with what Christ taught as recorded in scripture. I trust that readers will see and acknowledge the profound differences. Of course some of these fundamental errors are found in other “Christian” churches.

I have experienced great contrasts in the Roman Catholic Church. I taught at St. Felicité Hospital in Paris, a place of joy and serenity. I have attempted to treat an alcoholic bisexual (practicing) priest. From earnestly worshipping, God-fearing people, to uncovering the effects of sexual abuse, rape and abortion by the religious in residential schools, I have encountered some of the best and worst of Roman Catholicism. There are good and evil people in every organization, but I have wondered how Roman Catholicism tolerated such awful misconduct by its clergy and hierarchy, not only to survive but also to grow for so many centuries. Was God approving, overlooking, and being patient or

uninterested? Was Roman Catholicism a counterfeit Christianity that God permitted to provide an opportunity for His children to sharpen their discernment skills? But this is not just a courteous debate among theological scholars. More often it was bitter dissention, persecution and war. It appeared that Christians were fighting Christians but were they really? Or was RCC a tool of the evil one used to lead people away from God, while apparently trying to teach about God? Is the best deception the one that is fundamentally wrong but looks as if it is right? These are not esoteric or academic questions for me. They are everyday difficulties.

As I was establishing our Christian mission to use psychological therapy with the Gospel in the hope that deeply damaged people would be healed and come to know Christ, I taught and trained people in many monasteries, convents and seminaries. I found some RCs wanted to use the treatment program but did not want to be known as Christians in case they wouldn't obtain government grants. Others liked to use Hope Alive counseling, but didn't see the necessity of depending on Christ as Saviour and healer. I discerned that few Roman Catholic trainees trust only in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Most believed they needed to perform the seven sacred rituals. They seem to trust more in their performance of sacraments in the "economy of salvation," They hope the grace of Christ will get them into heaven after a purifying in the fires of purgatory. The underlying uncertainty about their salvation seemed to increase their determined defense of RC dogma and RC institutions. It appeared to me that for so many, the RCC had to be right because it was what they trusted most.

At Mount Joy College, we needed to insist that all those we trained were Christian for many reasons. Since this was a Christian mission, similar to a Christian hospital, we needed a mission statement but more importantly we needed a statement of faith. Together with the leaders of our program and in consultation with Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians, I selected, and compiled what we agree were the essential basic scriptures that define a Christian.⁴ Yet I soon found that some Roman Catholics could not agree and others agreed but wouldn't sign it as their statement of faith. I began to wonder if any Roman Catholics were Christian. When I studied the Catechism of the Catholic Church and compared it with scripture, I had to conclude it would be impossible to accept all that the Roman Catholic Church taught and be a Christian. Then I began to see the connection between the errors taught by the Roman Catholic Church and wrongs it perpetrated throughout its history. I may be wrong, and if proved wrong by scripture, I will readily admit it.

I desire real fellowship with Roman Catholic friends but not at the expense of what scripture teaches. I cannot deny my Lord and His complete work of salvation for the sake of any relationship. How I wish RCs had the certain knowledge of salvation in Christ and the joy and peace, which can only come from having God's Spirit living in them forever!

To answer the question, is Roman Catholicism counterfeit Christianity for myself, I carefully studied the most recent version of their catechism and compared that to scripture using the New International Version and The New Living Translation (mainly because these seemed to be accepted and read by Roman Catholics.) The more I read the more I saw glaring differences, part quotes, misquotes and misinterpretations. Then I discovered that many RCs didn't know what was in their Catechism and others didn't

accept everything it said. And yet as I understand the dogma of the RCC, one has to believe all of it. I have come to my conclusion, but you the reader need to make your own decision. After all, it is a matter of life and death.

John writes urgently, “Come away from her, my people, do not take part in her sins, or you will be punished with her.” (Revelation 18:4) If as many Protestants believe, her refers to the RCC, then this scripture implies that there are some Christians in the RCC. I write this with the same sense of urgency, appealing to my friends to read this and consider what scripture shows are the fundamental errors of the Roman Catholic Church so that they stop trusting an institution and come out to know Christ as Saviour and Lord. Theirs can be the peace, vigor, good health and salvation only in and only through Christ. All it takes is just enough faith to trust Him and accept Him as Lord and Saviour. He did all the hard work and freely gave us everything we could ever need. There is no other way and nothing else is required. “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish.” (John 11:25-26). “This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” (Romans. 1:17)

For all who put human ideas before God’s word, Paul writes, “But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves.” (Romans 1:17-18) If they push the truth away, “God let them go ahead and do whatever shameful things their hearts desired.”(Romans 1:24) “They are fully aware of God’s

death penalty for those who do these things, yet they go ahead and do them anyway. And, worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.” (Romans 1:32) Thus all depravity starts with a refusal to acknowledge that Christ came to reconcile us. He gave us the salvation He bought with His sacrifice when we believed Him. Believing and teaching there is another way to God other than only in Christ and only through Christ, will lead to all kinds of depravity. But arrogant, rebellious, ignorant humans want to justify themselves as being smart and good.

Since people are attracted to truth, at least until they learn that it means they must change, the devil’s best trick is to distort the truth just enough to mislead people. The closer to the truth the lie is, the more easily seeking people will be attracted and turned from the truth. The closer to the truth, the more likely the distortion will be believed. Thus, a counterfeit Christianity is most misleading and damaging if it looks and sounds like the Christianity that Jesus taught. There are millions of people who are hoping they are going to heaven through the Roman Catholic Church, when in fact they are being led away from salvation. I hope this booklet will help bring some to the truth in Christ. Narrow minded am I? If this was my idea, you could rightly call me bigoted, rigid, etc. But it is Jesus who said, “The highway to hell is broad and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way. But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

But you say Roman Catholicism isn’t easy, it is stringent and exacting. Yes, it requires careful obedience but it is very easy on human pride. “These rules may seem wise

because they require strict devotion, humility, and often severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.” (Colossians 2:23) You can enter God’s kingdom only through the narrow gate of Christ and pride gets in the way. The pride arises whenever anyone thinks they are making it to heaven by doing anything, e.g. works or suffering, to merit salvation. Sadly, RCC by teaching the necessity of doing the “sacraments” for the “economy of salvation” creates the belief one must impress God but it leaves no inner sense of peace and security of salvation for no one can be sure they have done enough. People feel they must try harder and harder to the end of their days. They end up both very anxious about their eternal future and proud of all they have accomplished for God.

Even the Pope asks that people pray for him after death. Why? Because although he accepts people’s praise and adulation as “Holy Father”, he isn’t sure he is going to heaven when he dies. Surely if he is holy, then there is no doubt in his or his followers mind that he is going to heaven. As for me, I know for certain that I am a child of God and although death may be a difficult transition, it will catapult me into my real home in the close presence of God, my Saviour and Friend. Do I know this because I think I am worthy? Absolutely not. It is only because my trust in Jesus as my Saviour at an early age, thank you Jesus, gave me son-ship and eternal salvation. My duty now is to live a life of joy, praise, thanksgiving and service to my Lord and all my neighbours. Even my ability to trust was given to me by God. My understanding comes through my God-loving parents. Knowing and trusting are gifts, totally unmerited. If ever I am proud, I certainly shouldn’t be. I invite anyone to remind me, I don’t deserve any favours from God.

If I have accomplished anything for His glory, I must give Him the credit. I must thank Him for the privilege of being, maybe a sergeant, in the most elite corps in the universe, and getting to chat with the Ruler of All as my friend any time I want. I couldn't have it better. I have a powerful enemy to sharpen me and a much more powerful Friend to teach, sustain and protect me in the battles. All these and so much more, as a gift. Why anyone would want to slave and fret with some counterfeit religion is beyond me.

Based on my previous experience, it won't surprise me if Roman Catholics are irritated or even enraged by these writings. I hope they will remember the old adage: "Pay closest attention to the message that most annoys you." Roman Catholics who understand the seriousness of heresy, and have burned "heretics" at the stake, don't often see the possibility that they could be heretical themselves. They could see it clearly, were it not for a well-indoctrinated blindness that makes them believe the Roman Catholic Church is the true church and it is the only route to heaven. The resulting arrogance and obstinacy makes it so hard for so many of them to believe that they have distorted God's good news and led millions away from knowing Christ as Saviour and Lord.

If it is such a serious matter to misrepresent God and lead people away rather than to reconciliation with Him, why aren't more people protesting? At the largest Christian bookstore in our city, there are no learned tomes, treatises, biographies or fiction that would confront the errors of Roman Catholic theology. Why are writers and booksellers so reluctant to confront the errors of Roman Catholicism? Is it a fear they will lose

business, or possibly their life? Is it a desire to be accepted and to accept for unity's sake? Is it out of indolence, apathy, or lack of conviction that they fail to realise that to be a Roman Catholic, they must believe the Roman Catholic catechism?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has much dogma that is incompatible with God's gospel. An example is their belief in the necessity of all Roman Catholics to go to purgatory after death in order to "undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven."^(CCC 1030) Private communication informs me that the present Pope wishes to let the idea of purgatory die out. Some wag has observed if there is now no purgatory, then the Roman Catholic Church must repay all those who spent hard earned cash for candles and indulgences in order to spend less time there. Belief in purgatory, "this final purification of the elect"^(CCC 1031) negates the completed work of Christ. It insults God. Anyone who believes the Roman Catholic Catechism believes in purgatory, and anyone who believes in purgatory cannot be a Christ-saved believer.

In the introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "John Paul, Bishop" writes, "Guarding the deposit of faith is the mission which the Lord entrusted to his Church, and which she fulfills in every age." "On that occasion [Jan 25 1985, at the "extraordinary assembly" he called], the Synod Fathers stated: "Very many have expressed the desire that a catechism or compendium of all catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed, that it might be, as it were, a point of reference for all the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in various regions."⁵ "For this reason we thank the Lord

whole-heartedly on this day when we can offer the entire Church this reference text...”

(Since this catechism from which I quote represents “all catholic doctrine”, I feel fairly sure that I am commenting on what RCs believe.) “A catechism should faithfully and systematically present the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition in the Church and the authentic Magisterium, as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors and saints of the Church, to allow for a better knowledge of the Christian mystery ... It should take into account the doctrinal statements which down the centuries the Holy Spirit has intimated to his Church.”⁶ For most BBCs these statements alone point to a critical divergence. When Jesus said “Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.” (John 15:15) and “. He (Holy Spirit) will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.” (John 14:26), it is very difficult to believe there was more to be added by the “Fathers” etc.

Who then is a Roman Catholic? By logical definition, they are anyone who accepts the “Catechism of the [Roman] Catholic Church”. Yet not infrequently those who call themselves Roman Catholic tell me that they don’t believe everything in the RC Catechism, particularly about purgatory. So then you ask, why don’t they join some Christian church that has a statement of faith that is more compatible with their own? Others tell me they are staying in their RC church so they can introduce others to Christ and help them work through the misconceptions of the church. For others I believe the real reason is that having been so well indoctrinated, they stay with the RCC as a safety net; just in case justification by faith isn’t enough. Maybe they should demonstrate their faith is in Christ alone by not even giving the appearance of trusting in a church or church

dogma. So when I write about Roman Catholics I am referring to those who accept the RC Catechism and the RC dogma as truth, especially as the right way to God.

There are many indications that we are coming to the end of this age, if not to the end of all human time. I appeal to all my Roman Catholic friends, Hope Alive trainees, and relatives of those who I hold dear, please read this booklet with an open mind. I have been Christ's servant and child for sixty-eight years. In that time I have grown to love and respect Him more and more. I lack formal training in theology, but I delve deeply in the Word of God. I have been taught by great theologians, had long discussions with Christians of many denominations and sought the guidance of God's Spirit. Best of all, I know the Author well. As Paul writes, "But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ."^(1 Corinthians 2:16) When we have Christ's Holy Spirit living in us, we think like Christ, and with that many things become clear.

The following issues showing the difference between the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Holy Bible (usually New Living Translation) are arranged alphabetically, not in order of importance.

APPARITIONS

Scripture

- Joel quotes the Lord as saying, “I will pour out my spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. In those days I will pour out my Spirit, even on servants, men and women alike.”^(Joel 2:28-29) There is no question that God speaks to people in special revelations, but they are usually when those people are asleep.
- There is no indication in scripture that this is confined to special people at certain times. This applies to all people, “even on servants”.
- There is an impassable gap between heaven and all other regions where the human spirit may dwell, that cannot be crossed in any manner by anyone. “And besides, there is a great chasm (Greek: megachasma) separating us. Anyone who wanted to cross over to you from here is stopped at its edge, and no one there can cross over to us.”^(Luke 16:26) Jesus, in a parable, put this statement as coming from the mouth of Abraham, but it is His teaching.
- Mary, as a human, is subject to all the conditions that apply to all humans.
- The devil may masquerade as an angel of light. “Even Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light.”^(II Corinthians 11:14) He can easily appear as a saint or Mary. As Mary he is even more convincing when he tells people to adore only Christ, as the apparition in Medjugorje is wont to say.
- The witch (medium) of Endor “brought up” in a vision that only she could see, one of the most respected prophets of the Old Testament, Samuel. “When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, "You've deceived me! You are Saul!" "Don't be afraid!" the

king told her. "What do you see?" "I see a god coming up out of the earth," she said. "What does he look like?" Saul asked. "He is an old man wrapped in a robe," she replied. Saul realized that it was Samuel, and he fell to the ground before him. ^(I Samuel 28:12-14) Do you think a witch could disturb the rest of a servant of God? Who gave her the power to reach into heaven and bring Samuel to earth? The witch saw Samuel as an old man while in the reality of heaven Samuel has ageless youth. She saw him "coming up out of the earth". That is not where Samuel would be.

- Saul in his fear and unbelief did not recognize these four features indicating the vision could not have been Samuel so he "fell to the ground" before a demon masquerading as a wise and powerful prophet. The demon was very convincing and through the witch, it misled Saul into believing that Israel was doomed. Satan laughed. Saul was so convinced of defeat, he led his despairing and weak army to defeat and death. He did not courageously rely on the all-triumphant God of Israel. King Saul fulfilled his own worst expectations. It resulted in his doom, and the doom of many good men with him, including his loving sons. ^(I Samuel 31:6) You may ask: why did good Jonathan have to die? God only knows, but it appeared he had divided loyalties. He should not have been supporting his father Saul when it was apparent God's Spirit had left him.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Even Roman Catholic Popes are ambivalent about the apparitions of Mary. Some are approved, and some are not, e.g. Medjugorje.

- Roman Catholics believe “Since all the faithful form one body, the good of each is communicated to the others.... We must therefore believe that there exists a communion of goods in the church. Therefore the riches of Christ are communicated to all members through the sacraments.”^(CCC 947) “So it is that the union of the wayfarers with the brethren who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted, but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the church, this union is reinforced by the exchange of spiritual goods.” “Exactly as Christian communion among our fellow pilgrims brings us closer to Christ, so our communion with the saints joins us to Christ.”^(CCC 957) -----That we can give the dead spiritual goods and they us is without scriptural support and ignores the fact that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...”^(James 1:17)
- The idea that “the Church” should be able to “accumulate” sanctity or faith or wisdom should have resulted in a much higher degree of holiness and wisdom in present day believers – the evidence of which is sadly lacking!
- “Communion with the dead – because it is holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins, she offers her suffrages for them. Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective.”^(CCC 958) -----There is no scriptural support for this and it counters scripture. “For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.”^(I Timothy 2:5)
- There would be no “sleep in the peace of Christ” if our family and friends in heaven could see our struggles and hear our groans here on earth. Certainly they couldn’t rest

knowing what's going on here. There is no indication in the Bible that we should pray for the dead. The Bible specifically prohibits communication with the spirits of the dead. "And do not let your people ... function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. Anyone who does these things is an object of horror and disgust to the LORD."^(Deuteronomy 18:10 – 12) Why? Because we cannot distinguish between devils masquerading as angels of light and those who are the spirits of the departed, or angels. "Even Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light."^(II Corinthians 11:14)

- To make sure we don't get confused about angels, God orders them to tell us who they are and what their purpose in coming to us is when we confront them. "Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news!"^(Luke 1:19)
- "Communion of saints", though found in a creed, is not found in any Bible, even those with the apocrypha. In more recent versions, "saints" is translated as "Christians" for it is clear that all Christians are saints and that there are no saints who are not Christians.

Wrongs

- Apparitions seen in different parts of the world have resulted in long and expensive pilgrimages. Unfortunately those pilgrims are not looking for Christ, but some blessing vicariously gained through closer contact with the sight and words of the apparition to a select few.

- Jesus said if he is reported to be here or there, don't go looking for Him. When he arrives it will be in such splendour that everybody will see him simultaneously.
 "Reports will reach you that the Son of Man has returned and that he is in this place or that. Don't believe such reports or go out to look for him. For when the Son of Man returns, you will know it beyond all doubt. It will be as evident as the lightning that flashes across the sky."^(Luke 17:23-24)
- The Roman Catholic error regarding apparitions and their belief in "the communion of saints" encourages communication with the spirits of the dead. This has left many in such agony of doubt about whom they are seeing or hearing that they are driven to severe anxiety or depression.
- People are tacitly encouraged by the RCC to make pilgrimages to hear the words of Christ and know His mind, when through salvation and just by asking, they can have God's Spirit living in them.
- Those who don't have Christ's Spirit within to protect them are open to being possessed by demons when they communicate with spirits. "Do not rely on mediums and psychics, for you will be defiled by them. I, the LORD, am your God."^(Leviticus 19:31)

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture

- God communicates Himself. He wants us to know Him. Humans record and pass on His message. Christ is the Word; the image and words of God. “In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God.” (John 1:1)
- Jesus relied on and quoted scripture. “Then he said, "This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes!" (Luke 4:21) “Jesus replied, "It is written in your own law... And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered.” (John 10:34,35)
- Peter, Paul and others, when preaching, referred to Scripture, not to tradition.(Matthew 19:18-19, 26:31, Mark 7:6-7, Mark 9:12, Luke 22:37, John 6:45, Acts 2:17-36, Acts 8:31-35, Acts 13:27, Romans 3:10-18, I Corinthians 14:21, Hebrews 1:7-13)
- Jesus denounced tradition as binding people, laying burdens upon them and nullifying the laws of God. “They crush you with impossible religious demands and never lift a finger to help ease the burden.” (Matthew 23:4) Religious tradition is a gradual accretion of human opinion about God, codified and made binding on others who don't have the opportunity or the ability to understand where it is going wrong. “As such, you break the law of God in order to protect your own tradition. And this is only one example. There are many, many others.” (Mark 7:13)
- The authorities of Jesus' day quoted each other. That's why Jesus' preaching was so different. “They were amazed at his teaching, for he taught as one who had real authority--quite unlike the teachers of religious law.” (Mark 1:22)

- Although there are apparent inconsistencies in the Bible, for a many-authored book written over a long period of time, there is amazing agreement. The disagreements are good indications that these were different authors at different times, writing from a different perspective. Just as minor differences between witnesses in court convince the judge their testimony is authentic and not contrived, so these differences can help convince us of the authenticity of scripture. There is, from a scientific point of view, very good “inter-observer reliability”. It can only be explained by the fact the scriptures were inspired by God’s Holy Spirit. “So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will continue to live in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us. I have written these things to you because you need to be aware of those who want to lead you astray. But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you all things, and what he teaches is true--it is not a lie. So continue in what he has taught you, and continue to live in Christ. (I John 2:24-27)
- Christians don’t need others to teach them when they are taught directly by God. “In those days, I will pour out my spirit even on servants, men and women alike.” (Joel 2:29) “But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day,” says the Lord. “I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbours, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me,” says the Lord.” (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

- Every Christian must sincerely desire to know the truth, all truth, beautiful and disturbing. Each one must not studiously ignore it, or superficially read scripture and live how they wish. Since the church is Christ's body and His Spirit is supervising the growth of His Church, God will make sure we don't err as long as we honestly seek the truth and honour Him. Christians individually and collectively (His church) are the temple of the Holy Spirit. "Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?"^{I Corinthians 6:19}
- God will keep his temple clean. He always has. "Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? God will bring ruin upon anyone who ruins this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you Christians are that temple." (I Corinthians 3:16-17)
- God's Spirit will lead us individually into all truth. Speaking to all His disciples, Jesus says, "He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."^(John 14:17) "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me." (John 16:13-14)
- There is only one truth. Einstein was right in persisting with his Unified Field Theory. Quantum mechanics, which searched for parallel realities and therefore parallel truths, proved to be wrong. The truth is amazingly simple and incredibly profound, e.g. Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$. In the same way, "a little child shall lead them" into the Kingdom of God.^(Isaiah 11:6)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- The Roman Catholics believe that the Spirit will “lead her into all truth.” “As she has done for the canon of Sacred Scripture and for the doctrine of the faith, the Church, by the power of the Spirit who guides her "into all truth," has gradually recognized this treasure received from Christ and, as the faithful steward of God's mysteries, has determined its "dispensation." Thus the Church has discerned over the centuries that among liturgical celebrations there are seven that are, in the strict sense of the term, sacraments instituted by the Lord.”^(CCC 1117) -----Thus, the church, its councils and canons, determines what the laity should believe. “Guides her into all truth” is a deliberate misquoting of scripture. They are trying to find support for their position that the Roman Catholic Church is the source and interpreter of truth for God’s people. That gives the RC hierarchy enormous power.
- Spoken to all his disciples, God said his Holy Spirit will lead individuals into all truth. This leads to a unity of Christ’s family that comes from love and truth, not from coercion or domination. “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me.” (John 16:13-14)
- Roman Catholics wrongly believe that there was no scripture for the early Church and so Christians relied on tradition. Sometimes they did and it created huge problems. There was so much dissension among Christians pulling his empire apart that Constantine convened three all-Christian councils and paid for the transportation and

accommodation of the delegates. Early Christians relied on the Israelite history, laws and prophets, which were carefully kept and reproduced by highly educated scribes. Mark, the earliest gospel, writes, “The good news of Jesus Christ--the Message! - begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.” (Mark 1:1-2, The Message)

- Paul indicated that his letters should be read in other churches. “After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them.”^(Colossians 4:16) There is historic evidence that these letters and others circulated widely in the early church. Peter referred to Paul’s letters then in circulation. “This is just as our beloved brother Paul wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him-- speaking of these things in all of his letters.”^(II Peter 3:15-16)
- As “Steward of God’s mysteries” the RCC clings to the opaque, pretending they know God more intimately while Christ and Paul indicate they came to declare the mysteries of God to everyone equally. “This fulfilled the prophecy that said, “I will speak to you in parables. I will explain mysteries hidden since the creation of the world.”^(Matthew 13:35) “In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.”^(Colossians 3:11) Jesus spent considerable time explaining the whole counsel of God. Peter in Acts 2, “Let me explain this to you.” In Hebrews 5:11, we read, “hard to explain because you are slow”. Paul writes I Cor. 13:2 “fathom all mysteries”. All Christ’s disciples must do the same. The Roman Catholic Church admits that it has gradually discerned (added) “liturgical celebrations” that were never known or practiced by the early Christians.

- The Apocrypha of the Bible most Roman Catholics use (46 books of Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament) ^(CCC 138) refers to dragons – there is no evidence such creatures were ever on earth. They are imaginary, contained in books that are predominantly fables. In the introduction to Judit and Tobbit, the official RC version, (American Standard Version) of the bible states these are “novels”.
- “We believe all "that which is contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed.”^(CCC 182) and yet Roman Catholics also believe “God is the author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors; he acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error his saving truth.”^(CCC 136) Both these statements cannot be true.
- Much is made of Mary’s “magnificat” as if it were unique, but it closely resembles the song of Hannah ^(1 Samuel 2:1-10) which she would have learned at an early age. These both have their roots in Sarah’s praise, ^(Genesis 21:6-7), the blessing for Rebekah ^(Genesis 24:60) and Miriam’s song. ^(Exodus 15:21)

Wrongs

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains more from tradition and more quotes of Jerome, Augustine, and Councils, etc. than it does from the Bible.
- Believing tradition, Roman Catholics are more open to accept untruth, and therefore miss salvation, especially if they do not read their church’s history, which includes 28 “false popes”.

- Religious traditions often arise from man's desire to be the controller if not the centre of worship. It nullifies the Law of God.
- The authority of truth for RCs becomes temporal authority. If people don't agree with officially determined dogma they are deemed to be heretics and were liable to be burned at the stake.
- Tradition obscures truth and God. Mysteries only benefit (temporarily) the mystery holder. The holder or unfold of mysteries has a unique position and can use it powerfully.
- What are the correct traditions for Roman Catholicism can only be debated and selected by their hierarchy. There are some traditions that are now an acute embarrassment to Roman Catholics, e.g. Papal edicts to burn heretics, conquest and forced conversions.
- Tradition adds to the power of popes and councils, not God's ordinary people.

BAPTISM

Scripture

- Baptism comes from the Greek word ‘baptizo’ which means ‘to plunge’ or ‘to immerse’. It symbolizes our burial with Christ. “For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized.” (Colossians 2:12) It was foreshadowed by the children of Israel being baptized, i.e. passing through the Red Sea and also through the Jordan River to the Promised Land, i.e. to new life. “As followers of Moses, they were all baptized in the cloud and the sea.” (I Corinthians 10:2)
- Baptism is the outward manifestation of a profound inward truth. It is a sign, or symbol of death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ.
- Baptism is a proclamation of the Gospel both so profound it baffles the learned and so simple, intellectually handicapped people understand.
- The truth of death to sin and resurrection in Christ is so deep and so important, there is no better way of telling the world than with this symbolic behaviour.
- Baptism shows the world what Christ has done for us, not what the church or the minister is doing for us. Christ has done it all. Our joy is accepting His gifts and eternally thanking Him.
- We are all commanded to be baptized, and to baptize others. “Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” (Acts 2:38) “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

- Baptism is ordered because we cannot, must not keep God's glorious gospel to ourselves.
- Baptism is to declare one's salvation, to show a person has "died and is reborn with Christ." Those who were once doomed to die are now saved through their faith in Christ.
- Baptism is a witness to tell the world and must be public. It is required to illustrate to everyone what has happened to Christ's newly adopted child.
- Jesus reiterated how important it was to tell the world by the sign of baptism and by one's verbal and behavioural testimony. You must tell the world what wonderful things Christ has done for you. "So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God--all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God."^(Romans 5:11)
- The people Jesus healed in His early ministry were told to keep quiet. Why? Because they couldn't help but express the joy, relief and freedom they had found through Christ. Christ knew their jubilation would get Him and them into trouble and He needed to make His ministry last as long as possible.
- Jesus told the leper to go and show the priests so they could officially pronounce that the person was healed. He wants the world to know how He cleansed and saved us. We must not keep such good news to ourselves.
- John baptized to show the beginning of a change of life. It was a vow to a new beginning. "John the Baptist ... was preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had turned from their sins and turned to God to be forgiven."^(Mark 1:4)

- "I baptize with water those who turn from their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is far greater than I am--so much greater that I am not even worthy to be his slave. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ^(Matthew 3:11)
John knew the essential difference between water baptism indicating repentance and water baptism that signified a person was reborn through faith in Christ and now had God's Holy Spirit within them.
- Jesus baptizes to show new life has already begun. John's baptism was of the Old Testament. Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit. This is symbolized by going under water (earth) and rushing to the surface, newborn in Christ.
- We are born of water (amniotic fluid) making us human, and then reborn with God's spirit making us new creatures. "Jesus replied, "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. So don't be surprised at my statement that you must be born again."^(John 3:5-7)
- We can't be a Christian without being human. We must be born of water of our mother, not in an artificial uterus or from cloning. We cannot be a Christian without having God's Spirit within us (born of the Spirit). It is God's love and life-giving Holy Spirit within us that makes and defines us as His sons and daughters. Without His Holy Spirit within us for eternity, no affirmation, vow or baptism will make us a Christian. There is absolutely no value in immersion unless it is to declare what the Lord has done for us. It is an insult to Christ for humans to try to save themselves with rituals when He prayed, suffered, died and rose for us. Praise to the Lord! He did

it all. What we must do is acknowledge our sins and need of salvation. Then in faith we accept God's Anointed One as Saviour and as Lord.

- Submersion is required because it symbolizes death and resurrection. This is why John baptized "where there was much water".^(John 3:23)
- It is necessary to be baptized with Christ; die, be buried and resurrected in Him, not because it makes one a Christian or a member of any church, but to show to all the world this most remarkable truth; "I have been saved and cleansed from sin by identifying with Christ in His death and resurrection."
- Having publicly declared our faith and how Christ saved us, we will continue to explain to ourselves and to others what Christ has done. Baptism more solidly and rationally fixes our faith. Since there were witnesses, both sympathetic and cynical, they will help hold us to our confession of faith in Christ.
- Baptism doesn't save. It declares to the world, "I am saved". "I want the world to know. I want you all to know it was by faith in Jesus Christ; in his sacrificial death and resurrection. Because I suspect it is hard for you to comprehend, let me show you (symbolically) how it happened."
- One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, "Don't be afraid. Speak out, don't be silent."^(Acts 18:9) God commands baptism because we must declare him – we must speak out and show what he has done in our lives.
- Baptism is not the beginning of our life in Christ. It is a demonstration that we have been reborn by the incoming of Christ's spirit. This happens at the moment we believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

- I see no reason that we should not be baptized as many times as we need to show others what Christ has done for us except that it might confuse people about our salvation. Since we are saved only once, so we should show by baptism we are saved, only once.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- There is no evidence of infant baptism anywhere in the Bible. Everyone in a household who were baptized were all adults. “Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who had heard the message...Then Peter asked, "Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”^(Acts 10:44,46-48) In a Jewish household, a child is not considered a capable human being until they reach adulthood. People were counted as members of the household after they became adults, that is after the bar mitzvah at twelve.
- Infants were dedicated, but not baptized, e.g. Jesus, John, Samuel, etc. “...so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.”^(Luke 2:22)
- God does not accept anyone that does not come of their own choice. That’s why Christ says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”^(Revelation 3:20) Infant baptism forces unwitting infants into the Roman Catholic Church. Jesus does not accept forced conversions.
- Jesus will not force nor should anyone else try to force entry into God’s kingdom.

- “The baptismal water is consecrated by a prayer of epiclesis (either at this moment or at the Easter Vigil). The Church asks God that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized in it may be “born of water and the Spirit.”^(CCC 1238) “In Baptism we use your gift of water, which you have made a rich symbol of the grace you give us in this sacrament.”^(CCC 1217) “By this symbolism Baptism signifies communion with Christ's death.”^(CCC 1220) Roman Catholics claim that their priests have the power of turning natural water into something that is ‘supernatural’. Claiming this power mainly profits and empowers the priests. Whereas God uses the natural things, water, rivers, ponds and pools with which to symbolically signify what has already happened.
- “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”^(Mark 16:16) is quoted by the Roman Catholics, but then they go on to state, “Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ...”^(CCC 977) No, baptism is the declaration of our salvation already bought, offered and accepted. We must declare that we are now Christ’s and show what transpired so others may also know that joy. It is so wrong to keep this good news to ourselves, that Christ orders us to make this declaration.

Jesus told the healed leper to show himself to the priests, to “declare he was healed.”^(Luke 5:14) We must declare we are God’s and we have been saved by Christ. The baptism is a public declaration of an inner change. “Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved.”^{Mark 16:16} We are not saved by baptism. We declare to the world that we have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ by symbolically demonstrating what and why it happened. Only those who have been saved can make this declaration. Those who have

been saved will naturally want to make this declaration. The joy is so strong inside them, that if they suppress and contain the good news in general and the gospel's effect on them in particular, they begin to implode. If new Christians don't want to be baptized, one wonders if they are truly God's children. It would be like being adopted into a rich and famous family and then pretending you were not one of them or insisting on being called by your old name. Of course you would want to make a public declaration, "I am now the governor's child!" This is especially true if you were concerned about the lives of others.

Roman Catholics believe "Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, ..." ^(CCC 405) "The most holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification: ... Thus the whole organism of the Christian supernatural life has its roots in baptism." ^(CCC 1266) "Baptism makes us members of the body of Christ..." ^(CCC 1267) "Justification is conferred in baptism, the sacrament of faith." ^(CCC 1992) ----- Interestingly, the RC catechism then goes on to quote Romans 3:21-26 which clearly states, "...the righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. ...they are justified by His grace as a gift...that He justifies him who has faith in Jesus." ^(CCC 1992) Somehow they don't see the contradiction. We are justified through faith in accepting Christ's death for us. "For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved." ^(Romans 10:9-10)

Wrongs

- The Roman Catholic Church has used and distorted scripture to justify forced recruitment of children, infant baptism into their church.
- The Roman Catholic Church has also condoned forced conversions, e.g. the Spanish Jews.
- The Roman Catholics confuse conversion to the Roman Catholic Church with the essential inner change of salvation, rebirth.
- Counting all the infants baptized in the Roman Catholic Church gives the wrong impression of their size and strength.
- Roman Catholics don't see or feel the necessity of salvation because they have been baptized as an infant. This creates false security.
- Too many Roman Catholics believe they are secure in the Church, and do not seek to have their security in Christ.

CELIBACY

Scripture

- Christ, in the discussion about adultery, acknowledged that some eunuchs are made by man, and some are born that way, i.e. made by God, (born with lower a sex drive).
(Matthew 19:12)
- Paul acknowledged that some should dedicate themselves to a very difficult task with a high risk of mortality by being celibate. ^(I Corinthians 7:1) To be celibate is a choice and must be voluntary. The RCC force celibacy by making it a condition of being a priest.

- The Scripture also acknowledges that some may keep their betrothed at a distance, and not marry. ^(1 Corinthians 7:37)
- However, Paul emphasized that neither a husband nor a wife are to refrain from heterosexual intercourse except by mutual consent, and then only for short periods of fasting and prayer. ^(1 Corinthians 7:3-5) To withhold sex invariably creates disharmony and power struggles that lead to many temptations. To withhold heterosexual intercourse throws the partner into turmoil and temptation. The prostate and testes are exocrine glands that unless emptied regularly, swell as if the ducts were obstructed. The swelling results in pain, searching for someone else with whom to empty the seminal fluid, an increased likelihood of infection and cancer and eventually atrophy of the hormone and fluid secreting cells.
- Jesus was called “Rabbi”. In His day rabbis had to be married. Does it upset one’s faith to think of Jesus as a married man? Certainly not mine. It is written that he was tempted in all points like we were. “This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin.” ^(Hebrews 4:15) It is hard to believe that he knew anything about many temptations if he wasn’t a married man and a father. On the other hand, it could be one other way because Christ often broke with tradition.
- God’s original intention, the first commandment was “Be fruitful and multiply.” ^(Gen 1:28) There were no exceptions stated at that time. It applied to all creatures for all times. Only with the recent idea of “overpopulation” have people tried to find ways to distort sex and avoid procreation. Presently the world is in economic recession because of population implosion. It is not possible to run a free-market economy

with a declining population. Even if there was a population explosion, the universe is available to us. There is no lack of resources or space. Human are just lacking courage. God wanted a huge garden with an infinite variety of individuals as His friends. “A growing population is a king’s glory, a dwindling nation is his doom” Pr. 14:28.

- All creatures were brought into the ark as pairs. The survival of nearly every species depends on mating, bonding and co-creating progeny.
- Men’s prostate and testes are exocrine glands which if not excreted build up physical and psychological tension. That tension results in anger, sexual fantasies and lusts that men need not be exposed to if they are happily sexually sated. Jesus said woe to him by whom temptations originate. “How terrible it will be for anyone who causes others to sin. Temptation to do wrong is inevitable, but how terrible it will be for the person who does the tempting. Mt. 18:7.
- Masturbation is no solution for the celibate man’s sexual tension because through operant conditioning, like Narcissus, he falls in love with himself and eventually drowns in his/her self love. Self love is damaging to spiritual, mental and physical health. Ref. The Law and the Essence of Love.
- Among some conservative RCs the ideal marriage, especially later in life, is sexless with the couple sleeping in separate beds. This is not the way God intended couples to live. He enjoys them enjoying each other sexually. He reunites them after they were made male and female.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- There is no indication anywhere in scripture that any ministry can be confined to only those who are the clergy. There is no scriptural support for the idea that ministers of the gospel must be celibate. Yet Roman Catholics believe “All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain celibate "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." (CCC 1579) “In the East (eastern churches) as in the west, a man who has already received the sacrament of holy orders can no longer marry.” (CCC 1580)
- Paul, as single, (if he was single and that has never been proved) never claimed to be a model but just one way of being a minister. “This is only my suggestion. It’s not meant to be an absolute rule. I wish everyone could get along without marrying, just as I do. But we are not all the same. God gives some the gift of marriage, and to others he gives the gift of singleness.” (I Corinthians 7:6-7)
- Paul, if he was a member of the Sanhedrin and it seems he was, had to be married. “The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.” (Acts 22:30) “Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.” (Acts 23:6) Therefore, writing as he did later indicated he was writing as a separated man. “Now I say to those who aren’t married and to widows—it’s better to stay unmarried, just as I am.” (I Corinthians 7:8)

- Because the Roman Catholic priests must be celibate and only they had the ecclesiastical power, it was easy to convince people that the best Christians are celibate. Consequently, it was thought that those who lived sexually active lives were weak and less godly.
- The heroes of the Old Testament were very sexual men with many children.
- Roman Catholics believe Peter was the first pope. Peter was certainly married.
Mk.1:30.

Wrongs

- Christ never intended us to live in opposition to our to the impulses of our bodies.
Our human body is a wonderful, intricate, mostly automatic machine that we should honour and nurture. Just as God honoured Christ's body by raising it from the dead, so we should honour this amazingly designed and carefully constructed part of ourselves. "By His power, God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?"(1 Corinthians 6:14-15)
- Going without sex is like holding your breath. To go without sex can only result in severe conflict and contradictions that produce mental anguish.
- The Roman Catholic Church appears to adhere to the Platonic idea that the flesh was evil. Certainly it felt that way if one was constantly tempted to "sin" with a woman. To a celibate man the desire for sex was sin that could only be countered with self-

flagellation. The desire for sex is only lust if it is prolonged fantasized sex with someone who is not your mate.

- Some of the net effects of celibacy were:
 1. Masturbation, which results in “self(love)ishness. Because it was so common it had to be tacitly condoned by the priests, but there is no question from a psychological point of view that masturbation tends to produce selfish attitudes and focus, and eventually narcissism.
 2. Castration to avoid so many conflicted feelings.
 3. Mental torment. Priests may become preoccupied with sex. Humans tend to focus on any frustrated natural desire. Celibacy hinders a person’s worship rather than aids it. While meditating, celibate people may have very distracting sexual fantasies.
 4. Homosexuality is common in some seminaries. In spite of concerted effort, it is difficult to weed out.
 5. Pedophilia involving mostly the religious sexually abusing boys (The National Catholic Register, mid-March 2004) has contributed to lifelong conflicts and lack of development for the victims.
 6. Pregnant nuns and housekeepers. There is a support group for the ignored, unwelcome children of priests and nuns.
 7. Children who are denied the knowledge of their fathers, who are priests.
- Priests cannot properly advise about marriage or family life having not had the experience. Yet they try to.
- Priests sometimes preach what they themselves cannot practice.

- Some conservative Roman Catholics still believe celibacy in marriage is a good thing.
- Many priests and nuns taught sexual inhibition rather than exuberant joy.
- Nuns “married to Christ” in a “wedding” are cheated of their God-given desire for a husband and children resulting in bitterness and sometimes illness.

THE CHURCH

Scripture

- The Church Universal (catholic) is the body and the bride of Christ. "...Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Saviour ... to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ^(Ephesians 5:23, 25-27) Christ's church is composed of every Christian everywhere, all the time. Christians are all those who have God's Spirit within them. He gives His Spirit to all those He adopts as His children. His Spirit is His imprint in us, like a "genetic imprint". Because we have His Spirit in us, our body is His body, the temple of His Spirit, individually and collectively. "Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?" ^(I Corinthians 3:16)
- Christ's church is not confined to any place of worship at any time. It is certainly not contained in an ornate building with a steeple.
- While on earth, Christ used any space to teach and worship. He preferred mountains to synagogues. Since everything belongs to Him, everywhere is His place of praise and worship.
- Early Christians worshipped openly, partly because worshipping in public is a powerful witness of God's love and grace to everyone passing by. They used whatever place was convenient and weren't interested in building "churches". "They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity..." ^(Acts 2:46)

- Some early Christians worshipped behind locked doors because of fear. They still do.
- God's kingdom doesn't have any other outward manifestation than the individual Christian's love and service for his brothers, sisters and neighbours and the world.
"Jesus replied ...the kingdom of God is among you."^(Luke 17:20-21)
- Christ never instituted a hierarchy. The church is His body, and He is in charge of every part of His body. "No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body, which is the church. And we are his body."^(Ephesians 5:29-30)
- The church is not of this world, otherwise Christ's soldiers would fight to defend it.
"Then Jesus answered, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."^(John 18:36) Christ is quite capable of defending, disciplining and instructing His own church.
- Christ is the only High Priest of His church, He needs no other. "That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God."^(Hebrews 4:14)
- "We are writing to the church of God in Corinth..."^(1 Corinthians 1:2) Paul was clear that no congregation or group of congregations was a church, but a group of believers from the universal church meeting at a particular place. The often stated claim that the RCC was the original Catholic Church from which all other churches branched off, is historically absurd. The Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Orthodox etc. churches either predated the RCC or was in existence at the same time. For all other Christians it is deeply offensive that the RCC usurped the prerogative of calling itself "the Catholic Church" and considers all others, at best, "estranged brethren". All Christians are priests and brothers on an equal basis. "And now Christ is building

you, as living stones, right into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please Him because of Jesus Christ... You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, His very own possession... Dear brothers and sisters, you are foreigners and aliens here.” (1 Peter 2:5,9,11) “And you have caused them to become God's kingdom and His priests. And they will reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:10)

- The money spent to erect an elaborate structure, should be spend on the poor.
- God already has created the places where it is easiest to be worshipful, the deserts. woods, mountains and valleys. It is where Christ usually met with his disciples. These are the places I prefer to meet with Jesus.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Initiated by vanity and power, promoted by Satan and a desire to control God, some Christians began to build structures in which to worship. Gradually they were called churches. These became increasingly ornate. Their construction was too often at the expense of the poor.
- Ancient and modern cathedrals may draw many people, mostly now as tourists, not as worshippers. They come to admire and praise the building, the builders and the architect, not God.
- “This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Could you ever build me a temple as good as that? Could you build a dwelling place for me?”(Isaiah 66:1) Roman Catholics have instituted buildings, a hierarchy and forms of worship, which they state all people must belong to. “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.”^(CCC 846) -----The context clearly implies the Roman Catholic Church.

- Roman Catholics may like to believe that all other Christian churches split off from it. This is historically not correct. Donatus and others at the time Constantine made Christianity the state religion, refused to go along with the major changes which included infant baptism and Christianity as the state religion. His followers remained true to the early church. It was the Roman Catholic Church which split off. The Coptic’s date their church from AD 46 when Mark went to Egypt to preach the Gospel.⁷ The Coptic Christians have history of a continuing church from the earliest times and they have their own Pope. Ulfila, who invented the German alphabet and translated both Old and New Testaments, was the son or grandson of Christians captured by the Goths from neighbouring Roman towns. They were thus evangelized by ordinary people, and not missionaries of any church.⁸
- The Roman Catholics recognize there are ‘two traditions’. “A custom of the Roman church facilitated the development of the western practice:”^(CCC 1291) “The practice of the eastern churches gives greater emphasis to...”^(CCC 1292) For a large portion of

Christian history the eastern or Orthodox Church was more powerful, more Christian, more roundly attacked from all sides.

- Emperor Constantine convened the first three councils of the early Church. The bishop of Rome was not present at the first council, in Nicaea in AD 325, so how could he have presided?⁹

Wrongs

- The devil rejoices in the confusion that arises in the minds of most people between Christ's definition of His Church, His Kingdom, and the human definition of the church, namely a building or an organization.
- Many people join the Roman Catholic Church not to be part of His kingdom, but to be encased in the false assurances of that apparently powerful institution.
- An inordinate amount of money, effort and thought go into building and maintaining churches that should go into evangelizing and disciplining people. A tour guide insisted there is 4 tons of gold gilding the ceiling of the Basilica in Rome. Whether this is true or not doesn't matter that much. It still results in the alienation of large numbers of poor people who can't understand why God should be honored in this (false) way while they are starving.
- Roman Catholics, being sure of their "church tradition and apostolic succession", are very reluctant to debate theology and more likely to accuse people who want to help them examine what they believe as "catholic-bashers".
- RCs believe that outside "The Church", there is no salvation. ^{(CCC 845)?} "Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on

earth, is necessary for salvation... 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.” (CCC 846) -----Christ made it plain that if we are His children, we are part of His body, which is the church. We become part of the church when we become part of Christ, which occurs when we are reborn. The RCCs teach that it goes the other way - you become part of the church, and that is how you become part of Christ. This is a profound error, but it makes good sense to the average human who is more interested in becoming part of an organization than he is becoming part of Christ.

CLERGY

Scripture

- Jesus came to earth to show us who God is and how God does things. He was a radical. Nothing, anywhere, at any time was good enough. It could all be better. That radicalism was nowhere more apparent than in the structure of His church and the people who served Him.
- After castigating ‘the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees’, Jesus taught His disciples, “They enjoy the attention they get on the streets, and they enjoy being called ‘Rabbi.’ Don't ever let anyone call you ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters. And don't address anyone here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father. And don't let anyone call you ‘Master,’ for there is only one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” ^(Matt 23:7-12) The human desire is for hierarchy, but Jesus made it very clear. “...all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters.” Christians are: disciples, servants, warriors, brothers, ambassadors, priests, kings etc. of Christ but not Rabbis or Masters.
- At the crucifixion of Christ, God tore apart the curtain sealing off the Holy of Holies. ^(Matthew 27:51) God made it clear that from then on Jesus was the only priest that was necessary; the only mediator between man and God. Thereafter, all His sons and daughters, made pure by the shed blood of Christ, are priests and kings. “...For you were killed, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and

language and people and nation. And you have caused them to become God's Kingdom and His priests. And they will reign on the earth."^(Rev 5:9-10)

- “And now God is building you, as living stones, into His spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests, who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please Him because of Jesus Christ.... for you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, His very own possession.” ^(I Peter 2:5, 9) It's apparent that now there is one high priest, Christ Himself, and everybody who belongs to Christ are priests, all on the same level.
- “We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ Himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!" ^(II Corinthians 5:20)
- “As God's partners, we beg you not to reject this marvellous message of God's great kindness.” ^(II Corinthians 6:1)
- Jesus sent out 72 disciples (indicating His command is for all Christians). “And I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.” ^(Luke 10:19)
- We are all given gifts, and there is no particular gift that is more important than the other. “And now, dear brothers and sisters, I will write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of us, for I must correct your misunderstandings about them.... Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us. A spiritual gift is given to

each of us as a means of helping the entire church.” (I Corinthians 12:1,4-7) “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit. (I Corinthians 12: 12-13) “Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.” (I Corinthians 12:27) Paul then enumerates them, “Here is a list of some of the members that God has placed in the body of Christ...” (I Corinthians 12:28) but it’s like we would a list of other people, not to indicate that one is more important than the other; 1) apostles, 2) prophets, 3) teachers, etc. “So God has put the body together in such a way that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other equally.” (I Corinthians 12:24-25) Then Paul states, “...let me tell you about something else that is better than any of them!” and that is love. (1 Corinthians 12:31)

- In the great reversal, Jesus says, “But many who seem to be important now will be the least important then, and those who are considered least here will be the greatest then.” (Matt 19:30) “It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.” (I Corinthians 12:11) Who gets which gifts is decided only by God. This is not the decision of some committee, board or prelate.
- Speaking of the Old Testament priests, the writer of Hebrews states: “They serve in a place of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven.” (Hebrews 8:5) “The day will come," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the

people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors... I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts.”

(Jeremiah 31:31-33) This new agreement is fundamentally different, requiring a new order and a totally different priesthood. “But God himself found fault with the old one when he said: “The day will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah... I will be their God, and they will be My people. And they will not need to teach their neighbours, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me. (Hebrews 8:8,10-11)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- “The saving mission entrusted by the Father to His incarnate Son was committed to the apostles and through them to their successors: they receive the Spirit of Jesus to act in His name and in His person.” (CCC 1120) -----Jesus made it very clear that His mandate and mission was to everyone to preach the Gospel.
- “The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church... Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers.” (CCC 1545) -----The others are all of His people, not a privileged or select few.
- “The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ.” (CCC 1551)-----Christ gave His power to all His sons and daughters, and it certainly wasn’t through any ‘holy orders’ or laying on of hands. It was only through His Holy Spirit.

- “This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts in persona Christi Capitis:...” Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is truly made like to the high priest and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ Himself...the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ.” (CCC 1548) ----Christ acts in the Spirit in all of us, all the time. He is more apparent if we allow Him to work, than if we suppress the prompting of the Holy Spirit and go our own way.
- “Whilst not having the supreme degree of the pontifical office, and notwithstanding the fact that they depend on the bishops in the exercise of their own proper power, the priests are for all that associated with them by reason of their sacerdotal dignity...to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament.” (CCC 1564) ----As noted above, we are all priests in God’s kingdom, and there is no hierarchy.
- “He continues to act through the bishops.” (CCC 1575) ----God acts through all of us, prompting some at times and others to greater or lesser tasks, all of which are equal in God’s sight, certainly not just through the bishops.
- “The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers and his friends, and that they in return owe him love and obedience.” (CCC 1567) ----Note that though they are supposedly his ‘brothers and his friends’, the obedience goes only one way. Christ made it very explicit that we owe obedience is only to Him.
- “At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons...” (CCC 1569) ----Jesus made it very clear there is no hierarchy; we are all brothers and sisters.

- “The essential rite of the sacrament of Holy Orders for all three degrees consists in the bishop's imposition of hands on the head of the ordained.” ^(CCC 1573) -----It is critical that Christ only ordains us and commissions us. No laying on of hands does anything, except to signify what Christ has already done.
- “Only priests (presbyters and bishops) can give the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, using oil blessed by the bishop, or if necessary by the celebrating presbyter himself.” ^(CCC 1530)----- Christ heals, and He heals at His own desire and discretion.
- “The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. While this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of grace...” ^(CCC 1550) “The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ.” ^(CCC 1551) -----
-Christ is the source of all power, and He gives it when He pleases. It is clear that the Roman Catholic Church wants to make sure that the Eucharist, even when celebrated by drunken, debauched, sexually abusing priests is just as good as if done by any good priest. In this way they are not out of countenance at the idea of 28 false popes. Yet consider this; twenty-eight false popes over any period of time ordaining 500 bishops, who each ordain 200-300 priests, and you have some idea of the number of falsely ordained priests.
- “Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees...” ^(CCC 1593) -----Once again, Roman Catholic tradition attempts to nullify the laws of God.
- “Only a baptized man (vir) validly receives sacred ordination." The Lord Jesus chose men (viri) to form the college of the twelve apostles...” ^(CCC 1577) -----In fact, there

were at least 14 apostles; Paul and Barnabas considered themselves apostles, and there may have been others. Certainly there was no college. The apostles scattered widely, Thomas to India, Mark to Egypt, etc.

- “Amongst those various offices which have been exercised in the Church from the earliest times the chief place, according to the witness of tradition, is held by the function of those who, through their appointment to the dignity and responsibility of bishop, and in virtue consequently of the unbroken succession going back to the beginning, are regarded as transmitters of the apostolic line.” (CCC 1555) -----With 28 false popes, and three popes reigning at one time, and one pope who was politically appointed at the age of twelve, how can they claim that there is “unbroken succession”.
- “By virtue, therefore, of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, bishops have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors.”(CCC 1558) -----Many bishops have had independent thoughts at the institution of papal infallibility. There were many that strongly differed.
- “As Christ's vicar, each bishop has the pastoral care of the particular Church entrusted to him...” (CCC 1560) -----Christ’s church is in the care of Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit cleanses and directs and disciples.
- “...the lawful ordination of a bishop requires a special intervention of the Bishop of Rome, because he is the supreme visible bond of the communion of the particular Churches in the one Church and the guarantor of their freedom.” (CCC 1559) -----Only Christ is supreme. It was on Christ that the church was founded. “You are my witnesses--is there any other God? No! There is no other Rock--not one!” (Isaiah 44:8)

Wrongs

- The setting aside of certain people as the clergy has had a major impact on a number of denominations. It is not the way Christ wanted it. It appears to be an attempt to replicate the hierarchy of the Old Testament church, which God clearly pointed out, was not good enough. The basic problem is that people forget that the church is Christ's body, cleaned, directed and made pure by Christ's Spirit who is powerful but patient. To make any hierarchy in any part of His body is from lack of faith in Christ and an insult to the Spirit of God.
- The clergy become isolated and insulated; they lose touch with the common people and don't really know how to empathize or support them.
- The clergy feel power and exercise that power in very selfish ways. A man, who lived on a farm, told me that when the priest came to visit, he was expected to quickly butcher and prepare any pig that the priest pointed to. Power corrupts. The clergy's belief they have power over souls has corrupted many.
- Some priests were self-chosen because they found there was no other avenue to obtain education, recognition or power, but they had to pretend they were chosen by God.
- The priests frequently interfered with human affairs. Christ made it clear that church and state were separate. "Well, then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to him. But everything that belongs to God must be given to God." (Matthew 22:21)
- Some priests became lazy. Having a sinecure and with no need to respond to the needs of the congregation, they idled away their hours in carousing or philandering.

- The congregation becomes passive, feeling they only need to support the clergy rather than exercising to their utmost the gifts that God has given them, even to contradicting the clergy.
- When clergy preach, even when their words are true and faithful, they produce conditioned passivity in the congregation. The congregation are not really expected to do anything that they haven't been doing before.
- The clergy too frequently feel beyond rebuke except by their bishops, and consequently many wrongs and abuses have gone unchecked.
- The vow of obedience frightens priests into submission. Even when scriptures teach them that much in the Roman Catholic Church is wrong, they go on teaching Roman Catholic dogma.
- The clergy has interposed itself between God and man, thereby precluding reconciliation and healing. "Harden the hearts of these people. Close their ears, and shut their eyes. That way, they will not see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn to me for healing." (Isaiah 6:10)
- "How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you won't let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and you won't go in yourselves.... Blind guides! How terrible it will be for you!" (Matt 23:13,16)
- "Then you say, 'We never would have joined them in killing the prophets.' In saying that, you are accusing yourselves of being the descendants of those who murdered the prophets." (Matt 23:30-31) How often the Roman Catholic Church has hounded, tortured, and burned the prophets of God, especially those who sought to

demonstrate the wonder of God in creation, and those who strove to translate the word of God into the vernacular so that people could read it and learn.

CONFESSION AND PENANCE

Scripture

- We are to confess our faults to one another. “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” ^(James 5:16) This confession is part of reconciliation. We confess to each other and to God the hurt we do to each other, not to the priest.
- If we hurt another person, it is ultimately a hurt to God and so we must confess every hurtful act of commission or omission to God. “Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.” ^(Psalm 51:4)
- Christ is the only intermediary, intercessor and advocate. Standing beside God, He speaks for us as we stand before God. We can stand before God because the temple curtain is torn, and we are able to come in to the Holy of Holies wearing a white robe of righteousness given to us by God because of our accepting His Messiah as our Saviour.
- We apologize to the one we have wronged. If we don't take the initiative, they are to rebuke (confront) us. “I am warning you! If another believer sins, rebuke him; then if

he repents, forgive him.” (Luke 17:3) They must forgive us when we repent, if they wish to be forgiven.

- In the act of reconciliation, we must confront, confess, apologize, forgive seek to heal, help or compensate. Healing flows from that.
- If there are difficulties or unresolved interpersonal conflicts between us, then we must correct it right away. “So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” (Matthew 5:23-24) We have to make it right with those we hurt and are hurt by, before we go to church. (I have never seen this practiced in any church).
- When Christ was asked, He clearly stated which is the first and most important commandment, “Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39) These are the first and second most important commandments. All the law and the prophets are contained in them. Therefore the most grievous sins are to break the first and second most important commandments.
- People seldom confess the fact that they have ignored Jesus, their best friend all day long. They haven’t talked to God, enjoyed His company and told others about Him even though He is standing right beside them.
- There is no way in which any sacrifice other than Christ’s, will pay for our sins.

- Unless we forgive sins against us, we are not forgiven. “And forgive us our sins-- just as we forgive those who have sinned against us.” (Luke 11:4) It is a rule of the universe.
- What is not forgiven on earth is not forgiven in heaven. It is bound and binding. So all Christ’s children must forgive. Speaking to all his disciples, Jesus said, “But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:15) “I tell you this: Whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18)
- “Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come fearlessly into God's presence, assured of His glad welcome.” (Ephesians 3:12) No Christian needs an intermediary other than Christ. With Christ standing beside us, we come fearlessly into God’s presence. It is through Jesus, given a clean robe and standing erect, we can tell God what wrongs we have done and are assured of His forgiveness. It is because Christ died for us and because we are His children, that God so readily forgives us.
- “We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6) Those in Christ’s church are only those who have His Spirit, regardless of what they may call themselves.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- “Only God forgives sins.” “Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.” (CCC 1441) “But he entrusted the exercise of the power of absolution to the apostolic ministry which he charged with the ‘ministry of

reconciliation” (CCC 1442) -----There is no scriptural basis for this. Only God can forgive sins, for He is the only judge. “...The Father of mercies is the source of all forgiveness.” (CCC 1449) By the prayer or the statement of the priest to the sinner is “...and I absolve you from your sins...”. If a priest says this, he is either usurping the prerogative of God, or he is assuming that God has forgiven that person when he has no knowledge of that.

- “Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably.” (CCC 1447)
- “Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance:” (CCC 1456)
- “According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year”. (CCC 1457) “The words ‘bind and loose’ mean: whomever you exclude from your communion will be excluded from communion with God.” “Reconciliation with the church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.” -----Clearly to the Roman Catholics, “you” means the Roman Catholic Church. According to them, to be reconciled with God, one has to be reconciled with the Roman Catholic Church.

Wrongs

- Too often priests are blind leaders of the blind, and won't allow others into God's presence. “They are blind guides leading the blind, and if one blind person guides another, they will both fall into a ditch.” (Matthew 15:14)
- The idea that people must confess to a priest adds to the clergy's immense power.

- With information from confessed sins, priests know an awful lot about other people that they could divulge. This puts people in perpetual fear of them. “I know they are not supposed to but what if he told one other person, my shame would soon be all over town.”
- When they have sinned against somebody, RCs are confessing to the wrong person if they confess to a priest.
- Since confession is necessary in order to be forgiven, then the priest has all the more power.
- Not infrequently, in order to do their obligatory confession, people make up sins for the priest to hear, especially young people. This dishonesty begins a trend toward greater hypocrisy. “The priests get fed when the people sin and bring their sin offerings to them. So the priests are glad when the people sin!” (Hosea 4:8)
- Since confessing to the priest does nothing when our sins are against people we hurt and always against God, there is no real reconciliation either with the person we hurt or with God who we insulted.
- Penance implies we must pay or suffer for our sins. Christ suffered for all and paid more than enough for our ransom. To then try to make our own payment, insults God. It is like the prisoner telling the judge who is about to unconditionally release him after someone paid \$20,000,000 to set him free. “Thank you, your Honour, but I know that wasn’t quite enough. Here is my 10 cents to bring it to the necessary total.”
- The immense power to excommunicate from “the church” and thereby to ban from communion with God has left millions trembling and Kings standing in the snow waiting to be seen by the bishop.

ETERNAL SECURITY

Scripture

- When we are born of water (the amniotic fluid of the human uterus), we become a human. When we are reborn of God's spirit we become a child of God forever. "Jesus replied, 'the truth is no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the spirit. Humans can only reproduce human life. The Holy Spirit gives new life from Heaven. So don't be surprised at my statement that you must be born again.'"

(John 3:5-7)

- When you are born a new creature of God, you cannot be unborn and lose your status as His child. Jesus states, "No one can pluck them out of My hand." (John 10:28)
- The 'prodigal son' was truly a child of his father but rebellious and selfish. He grabbed his share of the estate and wandered far away from home. He squandered all his father's good gifts trying to have fun. (There is no evidence he got them back.) But, alienated from his father, he becomes very hungry for all the rich food and love his father regularly gave him. The father is not anxiously waiting, but confidently expecting. He knows the prodigal will return because he is a son and can never really forget or deny it. He also knows his son will have to recognize his hunger, sooner or later. That is why he stands at the end of his farm's driveway gazing down the road. That's why he could see his son coming from far away. He is not surprised when his son comes slowly around the bend in the road. He knew he would get hungry when he was away from his father's table. The young man, as soon as he comes to his senses and realizes he is starving for genuine love and joy, and how hungry he is for his father's good food and warm fellowship, hurries back to where he belongs. On the

way he composes and rehearses an abject little confession. It doesn't impress his father at all. What impresses his father is that he came back, and that is worth celebrating. "To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man." "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet.'" (Luke 15:11-22)

You will note, this young man was called nothing but son. He never lost his status as son.

- Any of God's children only hurt themselves when they wander away from their Father. They soon discover they are going in the wrong direction. Sooner or later they realize any route away from home is a dead end.
- When we become a child of God we are securely part of His family forever. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family--calling him "Father, dear Father." For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children." (Romans 8:14-16)
- "Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:28-29)
Believing takes some effort because faith requires action, but it is the only work required by God. Not all the supposed merits gained through performing the rituals of the "economy of salvation" will gain anyone any part of salvation. (CCC 1095)
- No one can pluck His children out of Jesus' hands because His Father is greater than all. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. So no one can take them from me." (John 10:28-29) No one means absolutely no one, not even ourselves. We cannot pluck ourselves out of the sacred scarred hands of Jesus.
- "However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do what I want. And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them to eternal life at the last day. For it

is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life--that I should raise them at the last day." (John 6:37-40) Christ has a solemn duty to keep, to guard all of His children forever. He will not let them go even if they deny Him 3 or 300 times.

- When we become a Christian we are given the Spirit of God which is God's deposit of hope and assurance. "For it has pleased God to tell his people that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. For this is the secret: Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in his glory." (Colossians 1:27) So now we know that as soon as we leave our bodies we will be fully united with Christ and see Him as He is.
- We are given forgiveness, eternal life, God's Holy Spirit, and son-ship, the moment we acknowledge Jesus, God's anointed one as our Saviour and Lord. Once we thus become part of God's family we are in it forever. We can't renounce being God's child even if we momentarily want to or are coerced or tortured into doing so.
- As a result of our 'eternal security', we have:
 1. Courage. We are not afraid that by renouncing our faith in Christ under torture, we would lose our son ship. If that were so, we would avoid any situation which might entail that possibility. It could be argued that Matthew 10:33 refers to 'backsliding Christians' but we must remember Peter denied his Lord three times but was not disowned by Christ. Besides, there were no Christians during Christ's lifetime; only after Pentecost.
 2. Peace. There are no more struggles for salvation. Our eternal life is assured.

3. Joy. We can thankfully, joyfully live the rest of our lives praising God for what he has done, and will continue to do.
4. Serve. Seek to serve God not out of fear that we will lose our salvation, but out of gratitude and love, knowing we owe him everything.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- With the Roman Catholics, there must be continual cleansing from sin, otherwise one doesn't find grace in the 'economy of salvation'. One must have the Eucharist. "For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins." (CCC 1393)
- There is one of the inconsistencies in the CCC. "The Eucharist is not ordered for the forgiveness of mortal sins. That is proper to the sacrament of reconciliation. The Eucharist is properly the sacrament for those who are in full communion with the church." (CCC 1395)
- According to the Roman Catholics, if you are excommunicated, you lose your salvation. This is something the priests, bishops and pope can do. "Certain particularly grave sins incur excommunication, the most severe ecclesiastical penalty, which impedes the reception of the sacraments and the exercise of certain ecclesiastical acts, and for which absolution consequently cannot be granted, according to canon law, except by the Pope, the bishop of the place or priests authorized by them. In danger of death any priest, even if deprived of faculties for hearing confessions, can absolve from every sin and excommunication." (CCC 1463)

- “Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds. It is based on our faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.” (Romans 3:27-28)

Wrong

- Many early councils have debated what should be done with those Christians who in the early church renounced their salvation when faced with the threat of being eaten by lions, burned, crucified, etc. Should these people be taken back into the church? The council of Nicaea (AD 325) attempted to decide. It was a futile exercise and created great dissension. There is no question that once a person is Christ's, they are always Christ's no matter what they do or say. Yet others considered them apostate, to be excommunicated and shunned. The only unforgivable sin is blaspheming God's Holy Spirit which is to deny Christ as Saviour and Lord. “Anyone who blasphemes against me, the Son of Man, can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.” (Matthew 12:32)
- Any church or denomination that denies the eternal security that Christ gives, robs God's children of their rightful peace and joy. "I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.” (John 14:27)

THE EUCHARIST

Scripture

- The why determines the who and the how. With respect to the Eucharist, there are three reasons why it is done.
 - 1) First and most important, "...to REMEMBER Me."
 - 2) To show forth or ANNOUNCE what Christ has done.
 - 3) To SHARE with each other.
- Remembering "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) "In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by the shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." (I Corinthians 11:24-25) "This night had been reserved by the LORD to bring his people out from the land of Egypt, so this same night now belongs to him. It must be celebrated every year, from generation to generation, to remember the Lord's deliverance." (Exodus 12:42)
- Jesus instituted the 'Lord's Supper' during the Passover. On both occasions, the emphasis was on remembering what the Lord had done and what he was about to do. The problem is that although humans have a good brain that can remember many things very well, they forget, and they need to be reminded to remember. We have Remembrance Day, November 11th to remember the armistice that ended the First World War, and the sacrifice through suffering and death of men who fought that war (including my father). We have Thanksgiving to remember the care and kindness God showed to the Pilgrims when they first came to the new land of North America. Throughout the bible, over and over God's people are told to remember and not

forget. Eg. (Gen. 31: 50, Exo. 20:8, Num. 15:39, Deu. 15:15, Jdg. 8:34, Ps. 77:11, Isa. 46:8, Mrk. 8:18, Lk. 24:6, Joh. 16:4, Rev. 2:5)

➤ The problem is that humans do forget because:

1) the memory is too painful.

2) They are too proud. They would like to think that they did it, or somebody else did it, or it was a natural occurrence, but not God.

3) They don't want to give God the credit.

➤ The bible is to remind us of God's dealing with humans over the many centuries.

These things are written so that we will remember and learn. "Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises." (Romans 15:4) "Remember the word that I said to you..." (John 15:20) Remembering is vital to our psychological and spiritual healing and growth.

➤ The created world does not forget. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord." (Psalms 22:27) The psalmist states, "I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember Your wonders of old." (Psalm 77:11) The children of Israel were constantly reminded to remember God's commandments. "...to those who remember His commandments..." (Psalm 103:18). David frequently asked the Lord to remember him, but not his sins. "Do not remember the sins of my youth..." (Psalm 25:7). God constantly said he would not forget his covenant, even when humans sinned. "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you..." (Ezekiel 16:60) God reminds people to remember their history and their evil ways, so they had better thank him. He also stated they must not remember the sinful past nor their

temptations. "...nor remember Egypt anymore." (Ezekiel 23:27). And God states that he will remember our sins and iniquities no more when we confess. "...and I will never again remember their sins." (Hebrews 8:12, 10:17)

- Jesus was constantly reminding his disciples, "Don't you remember the five loaves..." (Matthew 16:9) "Remember what happened to Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:32) Paul writes that we must remember the words of the Lord. "You should remember the words of the Lord..." (Acts 20:35) Jesus states that he will send us the Spirit who will remind us of what he taught us. "...that you may remember that I told you of them." (John 16:4) "He...will remind you of everything I myself have told you." (John 14:26) Paul also wanted to be remembered, "...that you remember me in all things..." (I Corinthians 11:2). Paul wanted us to remember the poor, and those in prison, and the fact that he was imprisoned. "...we should remember the poor..." (Galatians 2:10). "Remember those in prison ..." (Hebrews 13:3). "Remember my chains." (Colossians 4:18) Paul frequently reminded Christians of the history of Israel. "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David..." (II Timothy 2:8). We are also taught to remember those who rule over us so that we will pray for them and have peace. "Remember your leaders..." (Hebrew 13:7) And at the end of all time the records will be opened, and what we have done brought out to our remembrance. "And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done." (Revelation 20 :12)
- There are some things that we should forget, and there are some things that we should not forget. We should not forget what the Lord has done. "Be very careful never to forget what you have seen the LORD do for you." (Deuteronomy 4:9). "Be careful

not to forget the covenant of the LORD...” (Deuteronomy 4:23). “...be careful that you do not forget the LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:12). And we cannot forget how the children of Israel provoked the Lord. “...never forget how you provoked the LORD...” (Deuteronomy 9:7).

- God has made us so that we don't forget. To forget is to become oblivious. God does not want us to be oblivious of who He is, what He has done for us or who we are. The mother does not forget her child. “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast?” (Isaiah 49:15) We must not forget all the benefits of the Lord. “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” (Psalm 103:2) We cannot forget his word, statutes, precepts, law, commandments or Jerusalem. “...and not forget your word.” (Psalm 119:16) “I will never forget your commandments.” (Psalm 119:93). “I will not forget your law.” (Psalm 119:109) “I do not forget your precepts.” (Psalm 119:141). “I have not forgotten your law.” (Psalm 119: 153). “...I have not forgotten your commands.” (Psalm 119:176). The Jews will not forget Jerusalem. “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.” (Psalm 137:5). They will not forget Kristallnacht.
- The Lord sometimes threatens to forget us, which is sending us to hell. “Therefore behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you...” (Jeremiah 23:39). “I will never forget the wicked things you have done!” (Amos 8:7).
- Remembering is not a passing thought but contemplating the details and the meaning of an experience. It is sharing memories, e.g. “Hey, remember when our old dad used to sneeze so loud it stopped everyone in their tracks for blocks around.” And so did Christ's disciples, “They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer.”

(Acts 2:42). Thus by symbolically re-enacting the Lord's death, we share, we show and we remember.

- The Lord said, "As often as you do this, remember Me." He may have been alluding to the Passover meal, but that would not make sense since Christians normally didn't celebrate the Passover meal. This would more probably mean an everyday meal, in which the bread was broken and wine mixed with water was drunk, which was probably almost every meal. The Lord wants us to remember Him all the time, in everyday activities. Whenever we sit down to a meal, to thank, to bless, to share, to show, and to remember each time. Jesus came to show that we could live a spiritual life all our life, not just the times in church as the Israelites were wont, and many Christians are wont to do. By not recognizing the symbolic significance of this, people detract from the real meaning.
- The memorial meal is symbolic. When Christ said, "This is my body. Take and eat," He didn't literally take up a piece of his flesh, a finger to give to his disciples. That would have been ridiculous and repugnant.
- God invoked many sanitary laws just to make sure flesh was not connecting with flesh. Some natives of the South Pacific transmitted a terrible virus that destroyed their brains when they ate each other's brains in cannibalism.
- After the difficult discourse of John 6, Jesus recognized that his disciples were really upset because it sounded like he was suggesting cannibalism. "I assure you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you." (John 6:53). At the end of the same teaching Jesus says, "Does this offend you? Then what will you think if you see me, the Son of Man, return to heaven

again? It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But some of you don't believe me." (John 6:61-64). Christ was making it very clear that what he was saying was spiritual. The whole lesson was about ingesting and incorporating Him as a spirit.

- Humans have great difficulty understanding spiritual things. God sent Christ to provide demonstrations of these things. But people's hearts are hard, and they miss the point altogether. It is not what humans do. It is what God does in everything. By missing the spiritual point, humans demean what God does. They want to take credit for it. It is arrogant when human think not on what God does in "the breaking of the bread", but what they do in blessing it, or offering the wine and the bread, i.e. grain that they want to take credit for. It was Cain's critical mistake. Cain did not realize that in making a sacrifice of his garden's produce, he was thinking of himself and what a good gardener he was. He had the wrong attitude and the Lord rejected his worship. Instead of trying again he killed his brother.
- God wants us to demonstrate his spiritual values and processes all the time, naturally, in everything we do. After all Christ is spirit, who is eternal. (2 Cor?)
- If Christ is in our life, He must be in all of our life, not remote or in a special place or sanctuary. Certainly he was not locked up in a little box. Christ is indivisible, one whole person always in the presence of God.
- God is a spirit and those who worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and truth. Christ is spirit. Those who eat, (incorporate) Him must do it in spirit.

- In baptism we witness to the Lord's burial and resurrection and our identification with him, attesting to our salvation. In the Meal of Remembering, we are witnessing to Christ's suffering and death, and the fact that his blood sealed the new covenant.
- It is the spilling of his blood that sealed the new covenant. "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you--an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you." (Luke 22:20) We remember the sealing of the new covenant by the shedding of His blood. We don't do it by drinking a little wine.
- God became very angry with the Israelites when they preformed the rite and forgot the meaning of it. God did not want the blood of bulls or goats, he didn't need to eat animals; He is a spirit. We must worship him in spirit and in truth. "...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23) Saul sacrificed to God but didn't wait for Samuel. Samuel got very angry. Why? Not because he should have waited for Samuel who was more important anyhow, but because he didn't wait for Samuel's blessing. It is the blessing. Our sacrifice is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, not of blood or meat of goats, bulls, or wine.
- There is no miracle in making wafers into the body of Christ, or wine into his blood; the miracle is Christ himself. "And all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ." (I Corinthians 10:4)
- We demonstrate how we have already incorporated Christ, taking Him into us spiritually, by eating bread and drinking wine while remembering Him.
- By the Memory Meal, we recognize the new covenant and honour it. The new covenant was written in his flesh and sealed with his blood.

- When we eat the Eucharist, we remember Jesus in his agony, his pain, His suffering, His feeling abandoned, and His death. This makes all our eating times, every day even more significant.
- Once having incorporated Christ, his spirit living in us, we don't need to keep doing it. He fills every part of our body; you can't have more than we already have which is 100%.
- When Christ is in us, he is wholly present, not just bits of him.
- As recorded in Luke, there are 2 cups. You would think that those who want to emulate Christ would have a cup before and a cup after the eating of the bread, but I have never seen this done.
- The Meal of Remembering is a time of worship. However, it's not what we are doing; it is what our spirit in Christ is doing.
- It is silly to have such reverence for a piece of bread that might fall to the floor and be eaten by a mouse, or a drop of wine that is lost on the sleeve of the priest when the priest wipes his mouth. Any piece of Christ cannot be confined to time and space. He is spirit, and we must worship him in spirit and truth. We perform these rituals, which hopefully will help us remember. To believe that the ritual itself has any saving power absolutely insults God and keeps us from understanding the truth.
- “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit.” (I Corinthians 12:12-13) “And all of them ate the same miraculous food, and all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they

all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.” (I Corinthians 10:3-4). “Then he took a cup of wine, and when he had given thanks for it, he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves.” (Luke 22:17) And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, “Each of you drink from it...” (Matthew 26:27) All Christians are united in Christ’s body. To eat the bread and drink the wine of the meal while remembering Christ is to show how we are united together in Christ by incorporating his life. “When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the blood of Christ? And when we break the loaf of bread, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the body of Christ? And we all eat from one loaf, showing that we are one body.” (I Corinthians 10:16-17)

- “For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.” (I Corinthians 11:26) What we do is a proclamation of what God has already done for us. We want the world to see, and we are announcing to the world that Christ’s death occurred. In baptism, we are announcing to the world not only his death but his resurrection. We show it as best we can through these simple demonstrations, which point to the real thing, which is spiritual.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- “...and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; “thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament.” (CCC 1337) (That quotation

comes from the council of Trent in 1562) No, Jesus commanded his disciples, all those that are his children to celebrate the Eucharist.

- “Christ calls himself the bread of life, come down from heaven.” (CCC 1338) ----
-Christ calls himself the rock, the gate, the fountain, the shepherd, the way, the light, the water of life, etc. He is not just the bread of life. These are symbols Jesus used to express the many dimensions of the fullness and the richness of God in the person of Christ. We can partake of all these through God’s Spirit living in us. We can only gradually gain these characteristics spiritually because that is their true reality. Could we gain any of God’s rock solid consistency by blessing then swallowing a stone, or His life-giving joy by drinking some consecrated water? Of course not. We could try to demonstrate to the world God has given all of these attributes and much more in Christ by a ritual in which we symbolically incorporated these objects to show to spiritually unperceptive people what God has done. But if people don’t perceive the spiritual significance of eating bread and drinking wine, they certainly would not get it if we chipped off a piece of rock and attempted to swallow it.
- "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (CCC 1339) The reason we pause while eating bread and wine is threefold – to remember Christ, to proclaim Christ, and to share with each other some of the many blessing the Lord has freely given us. Luke records that Jesus followed the Jewish tradition – there was a cup before and a cup after the bread. (Luke 22:17-20) If the Roman Catholic Church is emulating Christ, you might ask why they don’t have a cup before and a cup after eating the bread.

- “Jesus gave the Jewish Passover its definitive meaning.” (CCC 1340) This is true. The nation of Israel passing through the Red Sea was a type of baptism and resurrection. It was celebrated year by year to remember that great event. In the same manner, our supper to the Lord is to remember what Jesus did. The celebration is not the substance; it is a symbol of the substance. It doesn't accomplish anything. Yet it reminds us of the greatest event in history.
- “The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ;” (CCC 1333) -----Nothing should be written in any way to surpass our understanding. God wants us to understand everything, and if we don't, we must keep trying.
- “From the beginning the Church has been faithful to the Lord's command. Of the Church of Jerusalem it is written: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. . . . Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts.” (CCC 1342) (Acts 2:42, 46) -----The breaking of the bread was not the Eucharist, it was having a meal. They had the meal in their homes. It either means that the Eucharist was celebrated in people's homes, or else that the daily meal was the Eucharist. Jesus said “Whenever you do this...” he was indicating the common meal. He wanted us to remember him in the events of daily life. When God tore the curtain of the temple in two, it was to show that there was no distinction between our religious and the daily life. Man must worship God in every aspect of his being and every point in his time. It is as if Jesus was saying, “Whenever you walk in these particular woods, where we

have so often walked and talked, remember me.” There was greater significance in the meal of bread and wine, however because we eat and drink so often. We should remember Jesus, just as often. in the most common part of our daily lives, i.e. eating bread and drinking water mixed with wine. Since throughout most of human history there was no chlorine, fluorine or iodine to kill bacteria in water, it was a public health measure to put some wine into drinking water to sterilize it. Thus everyone drank wine. Of course in pubs and for feasts the wine was undiluted.

- “It was above all on "the first day of the week," Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, that the Christians met "to break bread." (CCC 1343) ----- In fact, it's quite clear that they were daily breaking bread in their homes, “day by day”. They went to church, “attending the temple together” and had a meal “breaking bread in their homes” every day, not just the first day of the week.
- Quoting Justin Martyr, “He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.” (CCC 1345) ----- There is no evidence of any attempt to change the substance of the bread and wine. The eucharistian was giving thanks.
- “...the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.” (CCC 1346) ----- It is obvious that the RCs have added to St. Justin Martyr the words ‘the consecratory thanksgiving’. It is not in what he wrote. It is certainly not in scripture.

- Roman Catholics acknowledge that, “the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, the "one mediator between God and men." who "by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified," that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross. (CCC 1544)
- “The Eucharist occupies a unique place as the "Sacrament of sacraments": "all the other sacraments are ordered to it as to their end.” (CCC 1211) “The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation.” (CCC 1333) ----
- Roman Catholics seem not to understand that the body of Christ is spirit. So the only way to take him into yourself is spiritually. The power to make an ordinary piece of bread and a bit of wine in to the body and blood of Christ is certainly surpassing understanding. It creates all sorts of scientific and intellectual hurdles. Eventually they can only be dealt with by saying it is a mystery. God does not like mysteries. He wants to declare himself, he wants us to know him, and He encourages investigation and discovery. He doesn't want anything or anybody to suppress understanding Him and His creation.
- “The unleavened bread that Israel eats every year at Passover commemorates the haste of the departure that liberated them from Egypt; the remembrance of the manna in the desert will always recall to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God...” (Deut 8:3, CCC 1334) ----- There is no question that the Passover was to commemorate, to remember, to understand the significance of an even many thousands of years ago. In the same way, Jesus wanted us to celebrate and remember an event that took place thousands of years ago. Understand,

- during the Passover, there are usually seven cups. The gospels record one, except Luke who records a cup of wine before and after the bread.
- “The "cup of blessing" at the end of the Jewish Passover meal adds to the festive joy of wine an eschatological dimension: the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.” (CCC 1334) ----- So in eating our daily meal, we remember Christ’s death and look forward to His coming again.
 - “The Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as viaticum... received at this moment of "passing over" to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection...” (CCC 1524) ----- The seed of eternal life is Christ’s spirit within us, not a piece of bread. The power of Christ’s resurrection is his Holy Spirit living within us, a gift that guarantees us eternal life.
 - “The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church.” (CCC 1545) Indeed, Christ died once for all; he does not need to be broken as bread in a ritual that supposedly involves his real flesh and blood ever again. What we must do is to remember what he has done.
 - “For Christ suffered once the just for the unjust...” (I Pet 3:18) We cannot keep making Christ did over and over by breaking His real flesh. That notion completely negates the whole gospel.

Wrongs

The RCC teaching on the Eucharist is very misleading. People pop a bit of bread into their mouth and sip a little wine, then return home with the hope this will get them into heaven. It won't.

The intellectual twists that are required to comprehend the RCC teaching, tends to put logical and scientific thinking people off.

By resacrificing Christ over and over they are drinking damnation to themselves.

The RCC Eucharist has so influenced Christian thinking, that millions are deprived of the daily joy of remembering Christ and His Sacrifice everyday of their lives.

HIERARCHY

Scripture

- Jesus appointed 12 apostles which eventually became 14 or 15 with the addition of Paul, Barnabbas and others. But most of his instructions were to all his disciples. After all, disciple means those who are being disciplined. They were his followers, learning from Him and being corrected by Him.
- Jesus was intent on making sure that the usual hierarchies that his disciples were accustomed to were not adopted in His church. (Matt 23:7-12)
- Jesus frequently said the last should be first and the first should be last. He emphasized that all his disciples were brothers, and they should call no man father or master, because after all He was their only father, master, Lord, Saviour, etc.
- Jesus left no organization for his church. Why? Because it is his church, and he is the one and only head, and his church is looked after by him through the direction of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus' mandate was for everyone to go into the world and preach the gospel. (Matt 28:18-20) It is important to note that he commands them to teach these new disciples to obey all the commands. Who were these disciples? It wasn't just the twelve. Obviously it included the two walking on the road to Emmaus, namely Cleopas and his companion, the women who followed Him and many others. (Luke 24:18, 34)
- Jesus command is for all of us to minister. "The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit...and heal the sick. As you heal them, say, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.'" (Luke 10: 1, 9)

- Jesus commands us all to love. Loving is meeting another's needs, particularly their spiritual need to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. This is a mandate that all Christians must follow.
- Jesus lived and taught a radically different attitude and lifestyle. Jesus was far from being a conservative; it's hard to understand how any Christian could be a conservative if they follow Jesus. He wanted everything to change for the better.
- Jesus taught us not to be attached to titles or materials but to travel light. "Don't take along any money, or a traveler's bag, or even an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road." (Luke 10:4) After all, this world is not our home. We are traveling through to our real home, the sooner the better.
- Jesus taught us through what he himself did. "Jesus traveled through all the cities and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And wherever he went, he healed people of every sort of disease and illness." (Matthew 9:35)
- Jesus considered John to be greater than any Old Testament prophet because he introduced the New Kingdom, but any Christian was greater than John; why, because they have the Holy Spirit living in them.
- When Jesus gave the great commissions and great prohibitions, he was speaking to all his disciples. "About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Which of us is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called a small child over to him and put the child among them. Then he said, "I assure you, unless you turn from your sins and become as little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew

18:1-3) Why? Because getting in to the kingdom of heaven requires a child-like trust. Religious and rich people find that very difficult.

- Speaking to all his disciples, Jesus says, “I tell you this: Whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18) At any one time, Jesus had from five hundred to three thousand in his audience.
- Paul, on giving directions to the early Christians, made it clear that it was important that they establish a court of their own church members, not to rely just on the apostles for a decision and certainly not take each other to a pagan court. “Therefore, if you have disputes about such trivial matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church” (I Cor. 6:2).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- The RCC unabashedly supports a hierarchy, a pyramid at the top of which is the Pope. “The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful." "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.” (CCC 882) ----- It is small wonder that RC faith will bow to the bishop and kiss the ring of the Pope. There is nothing in scripture, and there was nothing among the early Christians that in any way resembled this hierarchy or the Pope. There were certainly councils of bishops, but at the first one, Nicaea, AD 325, the Roman bishop was not even present. The

fundamental error is that Christ is the head of his church, and his spirit exercised the power unhindered. Christ has never given that power to any person.

- “The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the "rock" of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock. "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of apostles united to its head."(CCC 881) ----- Throughout scripture, Christ is the rock, and the only rock. When he said “Upon this rock I will build my church.” (Matthew 16:18) he was pointing to himself. Peter was a stone, a smart, impetuous, ambivalent, rocky fisherman.
- The rock that destroyed the nations in Daniel’s dream, a “rock [that] was cut from a mountain by supernatural means,” was Christ. (Daniel 2:34)
- The rock that Moses struck that produced the living water was Christ. (Numbers 20:11)
- The rock on which the wise man built his house was Christ. (Matthew 7:24-25)
- The ‘stumbling stone and rock of offence’ was Christ. (Romans 9:33)
- The rock that followed the Israelites in the desert was Christ. “For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.” (I Corinthians 10:4)
- When David wrote “I wait quietly before God, for my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.” “My salvation and my honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.” (Psalms 62:1-2,7) He was not writing about Peter.

- In none of his sermons or letters does Peter refer to himself as the rock. Rather he is emphatic that the Rock is Christ. “And as you come to him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him.” (I Pet. 2:8)
- There are over 60 references to the Rock in scripture and they all refer to Christ. The RCC takes one disputed scripture and builds on it their empire.
- Knowing humans and anticipating what happened, the Holy Spirit of God inspired a number of writers to clearly state that there is no other rock and there never will be. Eg. “no other Rock, I know not one” (Isa.44;8)
- The RCC believe that “The holders of office, who are invested with a sacred power, are, in fact, dedicated to promoting the interests of their brethren, so that all who belong to the People of God . . . may attain to salvation.” (CCC 874) ----- Peter writes this to all Christians, “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood. (I Pet. 2:5) & v9 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,....” &v.10 “but now you are the people of God” We are all the holders of this “holy office” not just the pope.
- “To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charisma of infallibility in matters of faith and morals.” (CCC 890) “The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, ...The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops... This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.” (CCC 891) ----- No human is infallible, and no utterance human’s make under any circumstance can be infallible. Infallibility is always a prerogative of God; Adam and Eve wanted the knowledge of good and evil, and with it came death.

- “The bishops, as vicars and legates of Christ, govern the particular Churches assigned to them by their counsels, exhortations, and example, but over and above that also by the authority and sacred power" which indeed they ought to exercise so as to edify, in the spirit of service which is that of their Master.” (CCC 894) “The power which they exercise personally in the name of Christ, is proper, ordinary, and immediate, although its exercise is ultimately controlled by the supreme authority of the Church.” (CCC 895) “The term 'laity' is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church.” (CCC 897) ----- I have not found in the CCC anywhere how the pope is “ultimately controlled by the supreme authority of the Church”. Christ is always the supreme authority of His church and He has not shared that with anyone. He doesn't need to.
- “In the Church, "lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power [of governance] in accord with the norm of law." (CCC 911) ----- It is very clear that the laity have no authority except that which can condescendingly be given to them by the bishops. “The state of consecrated life is thus one way of experiencing a "more intimate" consecration...” (CCC 916) There is nowhere in the bible that places one vocation above another or makes one person more intimate with Christ. Christ came to show all of us how to live with God intimately in every aspect of our lives.

Wrongs

- The pyramid of the RCC emulates the world that Christ so taught against. In some respects, it's trying to emulate the hierarchy of the priesthood of ancient Israel, but it is far off that.
- As in Jesus' day, the priests who did the most sacred functions were chosen by lot or assigned by rota, so everyone participated.
- The idea of a pyramid makes sense to the average man, but the church is not supposed to conform to the thinking of humanity, but humanity to the totally different structure of Christ's church.
- The RCC hierarchy perpetuated feudalism, and still does. The church backs wealthy people and gives honors to the rich and famous. It isn't surprising that most of those sainted were Italians who have no reason to be more saintly than other races of people.
- The bishops have mansions, and the cardinals have palaces with servants and gold-plated cutlery. (
- I have been a guest.) The hierarchy gives a totally wrong impression of God's kingdom.
- Christ strove so hard to help his disciples understand how different his kingdom was. He repeatedly reminded them that the kingdom of God was within them. It was not evidenced by a hierarchy.

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

Scripture

- Jesus told His disciples “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you refuse to forgive, then they are unforgiven.” (bound). (John 20:22-23) If there is no repentance and reconciliation, a person is bound to their sins, and also bound to those who won’t forgive them. This is true for everyone. The Lord’s Prayer states, “Forgive us as we forgive those who sin against us.” (Luke 11:4) We have to forgive others otherwise we are bound to them and they to us with the effects of that sin. Forgiveness frees us. Unforgiveness binds. It is a basic principle; a part of the Universal Law of Love.
- Until we forgive we are not forgiven. We bind ourselves and bind others when we don’t forgive in a type of dungeon. It’s like having to hold the door shut to keep the person imprisoned. Neither they nor we can walk in the sunshine.
- This is why reconciliation is so important and so difficult.
- Jesus states, “I will open the doors that no man can shut and shut the doors that no man can open.” Only Christ can do this. He has the key of David. “I will give Him the key to the house of David--the highest position in the royal court. He will open doors, and no one will be able to shut them; he will close doors, and no one will be able to open them.” (Isaiah 22:22) ““Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the one who is holy and true. He is the one who has the key of David. He opens doors, and no one can shut them; he shuts doors, and no one can open them.” (Revelations 3:7) Only Jesus has keys to the Kingdom, for the Kingdom is His.

- Jesus is speaking to all his disciples: “I tell you this: Whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18) “Then He breathe on them, (the disciples, not just the apostles. At least Cleopas was there with the apostles. (Lk. 24:17). “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you refuse to forgive them, they are unforgiven.” (John 20:23) In neither of these instances is Peter or the apostles particularly mentioned. Christ has given these instructions to all of His human servants.

- Peter considered himself an elder among elders, distinguished by having witnessed Christ’s sufferings and being older. I asserted that Christ was the Head Shepherd. “And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share his glory and his honour when he returns...and when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honour. You younger men, accept the authority of the elders.” (I Peter 5:1, 4-5) Peter’s main concern in this chapter is to emphasize the necessity of humility which is not seen in the pomp and opulence of Roman Catholicism. “...And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble." So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you.” (I Peter 5:5-6)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Roman Catholics seem not to believe that only God forgives sins. “Who does this man think he is?” the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to each other. "This

is blasphemy! Who but God can forgive sins?" Those Jews were quite correct and had good reason to be upset with Jesus. Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you think this is blasphemy? Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk'? I will prove that I, the Son of Man, have the authority on earth to forgive sins." (Luke 5:21-24) Yet Roman Catholics state, "Further by virtue of His defined authority, he gives this power to men to exercise in his name." (CCC 1441) "But he entrusted the exercise of the power of the absolution to the apostolic ministry which he charged with the ministry of reconciliation." (CCC 1442) ----- There is no scriptural support for this. RCs cannot avoid the obvious that by forgiving and absolving sins they are committing blasphemy. They are usurping God's prerogative.

- God gives us the right, responsibility and the obligation to forgive sins committed against us. But he does not give us the power to forgive the sins of others against others or their sins against God.
- "In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church." (CCC 1444) ----- There is no scriptural support for this. Christ whose body is the church is the only one who can reconcile us to God.
- "And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you lock on earth will be locked in heaven, and whatever you open on earth will be opened in heaven." Roman Catholics quote Matthew 16:19 out of context, and believe that it applies only to Peter. The interpretation must be in the context in which Chapter 18 clearly indicates Jesus is addressing His disciples, all those being taught and disciplined by

Him. "I tell you this: Whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven." (Matthew 18:18) As the Catholics have themselves recognized, "...be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole scripture." (CCC 112) The whole scripture makes it clear this was an injunction to all of Jesus' disciples. How many disciples were there? It varied. Paul states that after his resurrection, Christ appeared to more than 500 of his followers. "After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now." (I Corinthians 15:6)

- The RCC recognizes the immense power and authority that derives from being able to forgive sins which they believe is vested in the "apostolic succession", namely in the Pope. "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head." (CCC 1444) For this they quote tradition (Lumen Gentium 22) "There is no offence, however serious, that the church cannot forgive." (CCC 982) "Priests have received from God a power that He has given neither to angels nor archangels...God above confirms what priests do here below." (CCC 983) ----- In this way the Roman Catholic Church makes God servant to its priests. "(Christ) entrusted to them his power of sanctifying." (CCC 1087) for which they quote John 20:21-23 which says nothing at all about the apostles sanctifying anyone. Jesus refers to "my brothers" (John 20:17) who were all his disciples. "He spoke to them again and said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you refuse to forgive them, they are unforgiven." (John 20:21-23)

- Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the Scriptures. So practice and obey whatever they say to you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach. They crush you with impossible religious demands and never lift a finger to help ease the burden. Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear extra long tassels on their robes. And how they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the most prominent seats in the synagogue! They enjoy the attention they get on the streets, and they enjoy being called `Rabbi.' Don't ever let anyone call you `Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters. And don't address anyone here on earth as `Father,' for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father. And don't let anyone call you `Master,' for there is only one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- It is believed by many that there were twelve apostles when in fact there were at least 14. This included Paul and Barnabbas. "...nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was." (Galatians 1:17) "I am saying all of this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles." (Romans 11:13) One was chosen by a roll of the sacred dice to replace Judas. "So now we must choose another man to take Judas's place. It must be someone who has been with us all the time that we were with the Lord Jesus-- from the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us into heaven. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus' resurrection." So they nominated two men: Joseph

called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they all prayed for the right man to be chosen. "O Lord," they said, "you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen as an apostle to replace Judas the traitor in this ministry, for he has deserted us and gone where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and in this way Matthias was chosen and became an apostle with the other eleven." (Acts 1:21-26) "He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers." (Ephesians 4:11) It appears from this scripture that God continued to appoint apostles. Who will be the twelve apostles in heaven? Only God knows. He said those places were reserved by His Father.

- Although Jesus gave His apostles the privileges of following him about and the opportunity to know his inner thinking, there are no instructions to the apostles that do not apply to all his disciples, which are the whole church of God.

Wrongs

- The Popes had power that made emperors tremble. In one instance, the pope kept a king standing in the snow for days, worrying about whether he would be excommunicated, before granting him an audience. Jesus made it very clear that his kingdom was not of this world. "Then Jesus answered, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) Only Christ decides who is in His kingdom and their names are written by angels in the Lamb's Book of Life. "Nothing evil will be allowed to enter--no one who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty--

but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.” (Revelation 21:27)

- The “unbroken apostolic succession” is historically not true. There were 28 false, defrocked popes. The youngest was appointed politically at the age of 12 and was one of the most notorious. (“The Popes of Rome)
- The Roman Catholic Church has used the idea of “apostolic succession” to command and retain immense power.
- The Roman Catholic ideas of priesthood, hierarchy and church have very badly confused people about what is God’s kingdom. Many are attracted to the Roman Catholic version of the Kingdom of god because it has visible structure, hierarchy and power. Jesus said, in reply to Pilate, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." Pilate replied, "You are a king then?" "You say that I am a king, and you are right," Jesus said. "I was born for that purpose. And I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true." (John 18:36-37)
- Many people have turned to the priests of the Roman Catholic Church to confess their sins and be absolved instead of confessing to God and being forgiven by Him. Because confessing to a priest does not bring Christ’s forgiveness, RCs tend to repeatedly confess the same sin, vainly seeking Christ’s peace.

MARY

Scripture

- Mary was a lovely, God-fearing maiden, probably about sixteen. Through one genealogy, it appears she was related to Joseph through David. “Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary” (Matthew 1:16) “Jesus was known as the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Heli.” (Luke 3:23) It was very unlikely that Joseph had two fathers, so one of them was probably the father of Mary.
- She was married to Joseph and was a wife in every sense of the word. Their marriage was not consummated until after Jesus was born. “He brought Mary home to be his wife, but she remained a virgin until her son was born.” (Matthew 1:24-25)
- Before being married, Joseph and Mary were betrothed. In ancient Jewish times, this was a formal public ceremony. Having sex with a betrothed woman was considered adultery.
- She was the right person at the right time and place. Like Joseph, she was obedient.
- She was a sinner who needed Christ as her Lord and Saviour, just like everybody else. “For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.” (Romans 3:23) “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6) When scripture says all, that means everyone without exception. Mary was born a sinner, not just that she had an ever present tendency to be selfish and rebellious but that her very nature was inadequate for heaven. She had to be reborn like everyone else. Neither she, nor her mother, were immaculate. Those who say so make out that the scripture lies.

- She was “very blessed” by being picked to become the mother of Jesus. Every maid in Israel dreamed of the possibility of being a mother to a Joshua or Jesus. To be picked by God, and spoken to by a mighty angel was indeed an extraordinary blessing, and nobody could or will forget it.
- She probably had seven children, five sons, Jesus being the oldest and possibly two daughters. “He's just the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us.” (Mark 6:3) Since having seven children is considered very (lucky) blessed by Jews, Mary was doubly blessed.
- These were not cousins as the RCs assert. Cousin is a different word and appears 7 times in most bibles, e.g. “And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months' pregnant!” (Luke 1:36, The Message) "Your cousin Hanamel son of Shallum will come and say to you, `Buy my field at Anathoth. By law you have the right to buy it before it is offered to anyone else.' " (Jeremiah 32:7, NLT)
- She was not sinless; Mary was rebuked by Jesus on at least two occasions.
 - 1) "But why did you need to search?" he asked. "You should have known that I would be in my Father's house." But they didn't understand what he meant.” (Luke 2:49-50)
 - 2) "How does that concern you and me?" Jesus asked. "My time has not yet come." (John 2:4) But his mother manipulated him into doing it because she told the servants to “do whatever he tells you,” good Jewish mother that she was.

- God can and does use ordinary people to do his work. They only need to trust and obey.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- The Roman Catholics give many special prerogatives and titles to Mary, which are not found in the Bible.
 1. “Mediatix”. Roman Catholics, having acknowledged that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man, also call Mary “mediatrix”. “Therefore the blessed virgin is invoked in the church under the titles of advocate, helper, benefactress and mediatix.” (CCC 969) Roman Catholics don’t seem to be bothered by this contradiction.
 2. “From ancient times, the blessed virgin has been honoured with the title “Mother of God” (CCC 971) Unquestionably, Mary was the mother of Jesus, but she is not the mother of God. To claim to be so would make her equal with God. When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, the Jews knew he was claiming to be equal with God and it astonished them. “But the time is soon coming when I, the Son of Man, will be sitting at God's right hand in the place of power." They all shouted, "Then you claim you are the Son of God?" And he replied, "You are right in saying that I am." (Luke 22:69-70)
 3. There are no marital and therefore no filial ties in heaven. Jesus says there is no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven. “For when the dead rise, they won't be married. They will be like the angels in heaven.” (Matthew 22:30)

4. Mother of the Church. God is both father and mother. We don't need a mother when God is all in all to us.
5. Roman Catholics believe Mary was pure. No, she made fundamental errors, and used Jesus for her own purposes. "Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son...The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians" (CCC 966) ---- Roman Catholics don't seem to understand that no human is sinless. "No one is good - not even one." (Romans 3:10) "For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:23) Part of our imperfection is having a body that is not suited to heaven. We all need a new body, even Jesus. We will all have a new body that can stand being immersed in the rigours of the glories of God. One tradition believed by many Roman Catholics is that the body of Mary is in Southern Turkey, buried near her son John.
6. Roman Catholics believe Mary has perpetual virginity. (CCC 510) ----- Since Mary bore Jesus vaginally, it tore her hymen. Having no hymen is the evidence throughout all the ages that a woman is no longer a virgin. In the Middle Ages, if there was no blood on the sheets of the marriage bed, the woman was accused of not being a virgin and the marriage could be annulled.
7. Roman Catholics believe she is "Queen of Heaven." This comes from a misunderstanding of Rev 12:1, "Then I witnessed in heaven an event (sign) of

great significance. I saw a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head.” ----- It’s to be noted this was a sign of an event in heaven, not on earth. Obviously there are no dragons down here that we know of. As a sign, it symbolized something that could not otherwise be properly expressed.

8. They give Mary special devotion. “This very special devotion ...differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the Incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit.” (CCC 971) ----- Yet this devotion becomes prayers to Mary for special help, kisses, flowers, candles, bowing at her statues, etc.
9. “Thus she is a "pre-eminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church.” (CCC 967) ----- There are some good things about Mary, but she isn’t unique. When Jesus said we are all brothers, he meant all of us. “Don’t ever let anyone call you ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters. And don't address anyone here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father.” (Matthew 23:8-9) When he addressed his mother from the cross, he called her, “Woman,” not “Mother.” “When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Woman, he is your son." (John 19:26)
10. When confronted by the sceptics who said, “Your mother and brother are outside waiting to talk to you,” Jesus said, “Who are my mother and brother? Those who are obedient.” (Matt 12:46 – 50)

11. Holiness. “We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ.” (CCC 975) ----- Nobody but God is holy. All Christ’s children have imputed righteousness and holiness, and are looked upon by God as not guilty of a crime because of Christ’s death on our behalf. He knows and we know we did commit many sins of omission and commission.

Wrong

- In many Catholic churches there are pictures and images, stained glass, etc. of a young-looking Mary alongside a young-looking Jesus. Children may consider them pictures of Mr. and Mrs. Jesus.
- Catholics bow before statues of Mary as an act of devotion that looks very like idol worship. God hates idol worship.
- All Mary’s titles mislead people from the simple truth that it isn’t the pure but the obedient that God uses. They don’t have to be perfect or sinless. They just have to be willing, e.g. Abraham, David, Paul, etc.
- They pray to Mary as an intercessor and mediatrix. Christ is our one and only Mediator. To say He needs the help of Mary, saints or family who are in heaven is to deeply insult Him. “For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.” (I Timothy 2:5) We can speak directly to God for we are His children. Jesus supports, as our oldest brother, friend, Saviour and our Lord in our concerns and petitions.

JESUS AS A CHILD

Roman Catholics seem to enjoy the traditional tales of Jesus as a child, particularly those in which He performs some childlike but wise miracles. (Ref “Christ the Lord: out of Egypt” by Anne Rice In one of these fanciful tales written by Ms Rice, Jesus while with His parents in Egypt, inadvertently killed some larger child who was bullying Him. Then in the heat of a bitter inter family dispute, Jesus quietly brings him back to life.

The Holy Spirit came into Jesus “As he was praying” when John baptized Him. There is no record of Jesus being filled with God’s Spirit of wisdom and power before then. He would have been a vulnerable human. That is why God sent armies of angels to protect Him until He had God’s power which He received by choice. This occurred when He humbly asked John to baptized him with the baptism of repentance which is what John was doing at that time. It was then that God announced Jesus was His beloved Son with whom He was well pleased.

MYSTERIES

Scripture

- Jesus came to explain God, to show us who God is. When we see Jesus, we see God. When we hear Him, we hear God. When we know Him, we know God. “Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.” Jesus replied, “Philip, don’t you even know yet who I am, even after all the time I have been with you? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So why are you asking to see Him?” (John 14:8-9)
- God desires that we know Him. He doesn’t want our sacrifices or our efforts; He wants us to know Him. His desire for Adam and Eve was that they would talk, walking together in a magnificent garden. Over many centuries, they would gradually get to know God and all that God knows. It would take eternity to know everything God knows.
- “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you do, because He lives with you now and later will be in you.” (John 14:16-17) All who have God’s Spirit, His children (Christians) will be led into all truth. Jesus made this promise to all His disciples. “But when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13) When Jesus says “you” He means all of you, not some of you who are special or “her”, the RCC as they are wanting to believe. God wants everyone to come to the truth. He encourages exploration and investigation. He especially blesses His children with the gift of His Spirit of truth.

- Truth always agrees with truth. Einstein’s lifelong pursuit of the Unified Field Theory opposed the mathematical mysteries of quantum mechanics. Einstein won. It is now generally accepted that there is one real reality. Our job and joy is to discover it.
- The truth will set us free. Mysteries enslave us in ignorance. Ignorance eventually ends in depravity. (Romans 1:18-32)
- “I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.” (John 15:15)
- ““But I will send you the Counsellor --the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will tell you all about me. And you must also tell others about me because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26) This was clearly spoken to all His disciples, not just the apostles. “...He now showed the disciples the full extent of His love.” (John 13:1)
- “The disciples came up and asked, "Why do you tell stories?" He replied, "You've been given insight into God's kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn't been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight. In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it, listen till they're blue in the face and not get it. I don't want Isaiah's forecast repeated all over again:
 “Your ears are open but you don't hear a thing.
 Your eyes are awake but you don't see a thing

The people are blockheads!

They stick their fingers in their ears so they won't have to listen;

They screw their eyes shut so they won't have to look,

so they won't have to deal with me face-to-face

and let me heal them..”

(Matt 13:10-15 - The Message)

- Paul who was an apostle, not one of the twelve, who writes, “As you already know, God has given me this special ministry of announcing His favour to you Gentiles. As I briefly mentioned earlier in this letter, God Himself revealed His secret plan to me. ... And this is the secret plan: The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God's children..... I was chosen to explain to everyone this plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.”

(Ephesians 3:2,3,6,9) “And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words as I boldly explain God's secret plan that the Good News is for the Gentiles, too.”

(Ephesians 6:19)

- “For it has pleased God to tell His people that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. For this is the secret: Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in His glory.” (Col 1:27)
- When people desire to know, God reveals. When they choose to be ignorant, they get what they ask for. “He replied, “You have been permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. But I am using these stories to conceal everything about it from outsiders, so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled:” (Luke 8:10)

- God tantalises and stimulates our curiosity. He uncovers our inherent desire to know and then when we follow up by asking Him to reveal Himself. He does it most gladly.
- To know God is to know everything. However, if people choose to not know God, they will not only remain in ignorance, but their darkness gets deeper and deeper until that's all they have.
- In this life there will always be things we don't know (mysteries) for how could we in this brief lifetime learn all there is to know about God. Yet God encourages us to seek diligently, enquire into every thing. To discover is a privilege and an obligation. Every discovery raises more questions than it answers. That paradox entices a true researcher to go deeper.
- God encourages exploration and research. He rewards those who make discoveries, especially when they are used for everyone's benefit.
- God says “
- “...seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7) All that is required of us is the faith that promotes our determination and the lack of ambivalence that shows we truly do want to know, regardless of the implications.
- “But when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, God's mysterious plan will be fulfilled. It will happen just as He announced it to His servants the prophets.” (Revelations 10:7)
- "Why are you so amazed?" the angel asked. "I will tell you the mystery of this woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns... And now understand this: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills of the city where this woman rules.” (Revelations 17:7, 9) Many Protestants believe “the great prostitute” is the

Roman Catholic Church that rules from the seven hills of Rome. “And the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is sitting represent masses of people of every nation and language....And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.” (Revelation 17:15, 18)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- RCs emphasize mysteries. They believe that only the priest, doctors and fathers of their church can understand and explain the mysteries of God. Having the explanation to these mysteries gives priests enormous power.
- “*The altar*, around which the Church is gathered in the celebration of the Eucharist, represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the altar of the sacrifice and the table of the Lord.” Quoting St. Ambrose, they state, “The altar represents the body [of Christ] and the Body of Christ is on the altar.” (CCC 1383)---- Although greatly revered, this statement only obfuscates the simple truth of Christ’s sacrifice for us.
- “The *Holy and Divine Liturgy*, because the Church’s whole liturgy finds its center and most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament; in the same sense we also call its celebration the Sacred Mysteries.” (CCC 1330) ----- Why not call remembering Christ in the breaking of bread and drinking wine the “Sacred Revelation”? Because that is what it is. No one knew until Christ died and rose again, just how righteous God was going to reconcile sinful man to Himself.
- “The mysteries of Christ’s life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments, through the ministers of his Church, for “what was visible

in our Saviour has passed over into his mysteries." (CCC 1115) ----- Why would Christ make mysterious something He died to declare?

- “In her we contemplate what the Church already is in her mystery on her own "pilgrimage of faith," and what she will be in the homeland at the end of her journey.” (CCC 972)

Wrongs

- If there are supposed to be God-ordained mysteries, one shouldn't try to discover what's behind them, lest one upset God or discover something we shouldn't know. It is so much like a child wanting and not wanting to know whether or not his mother has cancer.
- The centuries long suppression of intellectual enquiry by the RCC in order to maintain the mysteries eventually resulted in the burning of heretics and the suppression of science. Galileo who discovered so much was judged by the RCs as a heretic. It took a recently appointed committee eleven years to reverse that judgement.
- RC suppression of curiosity, science and investigation promoted ignorance which resulted in:
 - i) Illness. We could have discovered cures for many illnesses long ago.
 - ii) Drudgery. Long hours of work with little time or energy left to seek and praise God.

- iii) Feudalism. Obviously those who understood were much more important and it was expected that the workers labour long hours to support the educated few.
 - iv) Slavery.
 - v) No universal education.
- The concept of mysteries kept people from seeking God directly. “Mysteries” stop communion with God. It interferes with our friendship with God.
 - “Mysteries” resulted in dependence upon the priests to explain God, rather than calling on God’s Spirit who He gave us so freely and delving into His word in scripture.
 - The RC clergy, by holding to themselves the solution to “mysteries” has promoted the false clergy-laity dichotomy.
 - Because of the many “mysteries” sustained and promoted by the Roman Catholic Church, many Roman Catholics do not know what they believe. They do not know scripture because they had a clergy-inspired fear to dissect and discern.
 - Terming something a mystery usually encourages inquiry, like a whodunit novel. And so it should. To then suppress that curiosity results in severe mental conflict.
 - Since God’s Spirit is continually declaring God and His creation, constantly revealing God and His word, always divulging who God is, to then promote mysteries results in pseudo secrets; people trying to hide to themselves and others what they know to be true.

- Most importantly, maintaining mysteries meant suppressing the knowledge of God's word, the bible from being translated into the vernacular. It meant the persecution of Wickliffe and others who did the translations in spite of the RCC edicts.

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

By no means was papal infallibility accepted by all Catholics at the time it was instituted.

A Dr. John J. I. Von Dollinger, professor of theology in the University of Munich states:

“As a Christian, as theologian, as historian, as citizen, I cannot accept this doctrine. I cannot do so as a Christian because: it is incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel and with the lucid sayings of the Christ and the apostles; it wishes to establish the kingdom of this world, which Christ declined to do, and possesses sovereignty over the congregations, which Peter refused for everyone else, as well as for himself.

I cannot do so as a theologian because the whole genuine tradition of the church stands irreconcilably opposed to it.

I cannot do so as a historian, because as such I know that the persistent endeavours to realise the theory of a universal sovereignty has caused Europe extremes of bloodletting, distracted and ruined whole countries, shaken to it's foundations the beautiful organic edifice of the constitution of the older church, and begotten, nursed, and maintained the worst abuses in the church.

Finally, I must reject it as a citizen, because with its claims on the submission of states and monarchs and the whole political order of things to papal power, and by the exceptional position claimed by it for the clergy, it lays the foundation for the endless and fatal discord between the state and the church, between the church and laity.”

Ref: Dollinger, Dr. Johann Joseph Ignaz Von. Declarations and Letters on the Vatican Decrees 1869-1887, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1891.

PURGATORY

Scripture

- God's laws of love are more solid and unchanging than gravity. This is because moral law predated and supersedes physical laws. Humans were designed before the universe. The universe was created to comfortably house and nurture humans that God designed before the foundations of the world. Permanence and purity require each other. I believe God is permanent because He is pure.
- The why comes first and then the how? God's desire for human friends preceded His design of humans, which preceded His construction of the universe which was designed for them. The universal law of love which governs all interpersonal relationships was in effect before the laws and the fundamental forces that govern energy and matter. "Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment, for it is an old one you have always had, right from the beginning. This commandment--to love one another--is the same message you heard before. Yet it is also new. This commandment is true in Christ and is true among you, because the darkness is disappearing and the true light is already shining." (I John 2:7-8)
- Sin and death go together – imperfection always results in decay. As soon as sin entered our world, our universe began to decay. Whenever God's Law of Love is broken, humans begin to die. They become self destructive. They start killing each other. To have eternity, there must be purity. Therefore there must be a re-creation of the human who is both imperfect and rebellious, so individuals are fit and ready to stand before God in a newly recreated universe. "Those who sin are opposed to the law of God, for all sin opposes the law of God." (I John 3:4)

- To become perfect (sinless) in the eyes of the Great Judge, a person must be forgiven for every rebellious and selfish deed, every narcissistic thought, every instance they ignored their Creator. Everyone will die in and because of his or her sin (imperfection). “Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image.” (Genesis 9:6)
- Sin produces death which is a permanent separation from life. Dead people exist but they are permanently alienated from the Author of life. God constructed humans with an undying spirit. Therefore in hell sinners experience an indescribably horrible existence without life; their awareness of their existence compared to what they don’t have, life in Christ, is the fires of hell.
- The fires of hell do not purify, they consume and separate from life.
- Hell is separation from God, which is what people by rejecting God are asking for. It isn’t what God wants. After God repeatedly pleads with them and waits for them to choose Him, He eventually gives them what they wanted, existence without God. He accepts their choice which is to acknowledge the human prerogative of choosing.
- Since the moral law of love cannot be broken without the consequence of death, the Great Judge created a way out for humans, i.e. the substitutionary death of His pure son, Jesus the Messiah.
- The pride of Adam and Eve was essentially, “If we can do it our way and get away with it, we will be like God. We could then blithely ignore his law. That would be power.”
- “For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them.” (Hebrews 9:9)

- “Under the old system, the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people’s bodies from ritual defilement. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit Christ offered Himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. That is why He is the One (the only one) who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance that God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of sin they had committed under the first covenant.” (Hebrews 9:13–15) “For Christ has entered into heaven itself to appear now before God as our Advocate.” (Hebrews 9:24) “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God...” (I Peter 3:18) “And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time He will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for Him.” (Hebrews 9:27-28)
- “This good news tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. (Romans 1:17) “Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they have been born of God.” (I John 3:9)
- God required purification gained not by suffering, not by sacrifice, not by extreme effort or doing good deeds, but in no other way than Christ’s death atoning for our sins, could we be made right with God. When we are made right with God, we are made completely pure in His sight. Therefore we can be called “holy” even when we

know we are sinners. “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” (II Corinthians 5:21) “God alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made Christ to be wisdom itself. He is the one who made us acceptable to God. He made us pure and holy, and he gave himself to purchase our freedom.” (I Corinthians 1:30)

- “And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us... And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the Day of Judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we are like Christ here in this world.” I John 4:13,17)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- “All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.” (CCC 1030) ----- Indeed we require holiness to enter heaven, but it is given to us. It is not because we are purified in purgatory but because Christ in His holiness gave us garments of His righteousness.
- “The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect.... The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory...” (CCC 1031) ----- Indeed this is a doctrine from the Catholic Church. It is not in scripture. “As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire.” (Quoting St. Gregory the Great) Purgatory is a horrible insult to Christ. It is saying,

“Your plan, your death, your gift are not good enough. I can do it my own way even if it takes an eternity of suffering.”

- “The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.” (CCC 1032) ----- The scripture is clear that each man must pay for his own sins.
- “...We may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast” (CCC 1036). ----- There is no way we can merit salvation, eternal life or heaven. It is absolutely a gift from start to finish. “God saved you by his special favour when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.” (Ephesians 2:8)
- Logically, if a RC has God's Holy Spirit permanently living in them, when they go to purgatory they would be taking Him with them to “purifying fire”.
- RCs seem to miss the whole old testament teaching and example of substitutionary death. The scapegoat driven into the wilderness after the sins of the congregation were placed on it's head by the high priest. This was a clear symbolic representation of Christ and His sacrifice for us.

Wrongs

- These errors lead to the belief that one can suffer in advance of purgatory and thereby diminish one's time in “purifying fire”. For some RCs this means that they can benefit by living a miserable life on earth. This usually means dragging into that misery those they live with.
- RCs dreading purgatory cannot enjoy life or the peace of knowing their sins are all forgiven, past, present and future. They cannot enjoy a daily fellowship with God

because they must fear Him. They cannot know or express the joy of knowing they are forgiven freely. They cannot express the gratitude they should.

- RCs serve Christ out of fear, not love. Can anything have a loving, beneficial outcome that is not motivated by love?
- Some RCs believe they can give their intense suffering from illness, etc. to another person so the beneficiary won't need to spend so much time in purgatory. They think it is a wonderful gift but the whole idea hideous.
- Out of this dogma of purgatory grew the idea of indulgences; paying into Roman Catholic coffers money that was claimed would help release friends and family from purgatory. This is extortion; the like of which is a criminal offense in most countries. This money was extorted by guilt ('how could you let your loved ones suffer'). Money for indulgences extracted from unsuspecting people through threats and promises helped pay for the building of St. Peter's Cathedral. Some of it went into the pockets of priests.
- The RC doctrine of purgatory is very misleading. It gives people the idea they have a second chance; it is like telling people they can buy pleasure now and pay with pain later.
- This doctrine keeps people from understanding God's way of salvation. If being Roman Catholic requires agreeing with the catechism of the RC Church, which requires believing in purgatory, RCs will not find God's salvation. No one can believe in getting into heaven through suffering in purgatory and believe in Christ as the only and complete Way. Salvation is only through Christ by God's plan, not by the doctrines formulated by any religious group.

SACRAMENTS

Scripture.

- We do not initiate or perform anything that is essential to our salvation. We are only required to believe. By engaging in certain rituals we can only show forth what God has done.
- Humans are always trying to usurp God's prerogative. Satan's temptation is so subtle, "You can be like gods." Trying to be god-like was the original sin.
- The Old Testament sacrifices pointed to what Christ would do as High Priest. In baptism, we show we identified in His death and resurrection; in the Eucharist, we show Christ was broken for us. "Under the old covenant, the priest stands before the altar day after day, offering sacrifices that can never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down at the place of highest honour at God's right hand." (Hebrews 10:11-12)
These actions (some call rituals) are powerful messages depicting by what we do better than the words we say, what God has accomplished. It is very misleading to state or imply that by performing these rituals we are any better in God's sight.
- "Since we have been united with Him in His death, we will also be raised as He was... For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also share His new life. We are sure of this because Christ rose from the dead, and He will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. He died once to defeat sin, and now He lives for the glory of God." (Romans 6:5, 7-10). According to the Roman Catholics, in the Eucharist Christ is sacrificed over and over, while the scriptures say He will never die again.

- During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness... a remarkable sign of this is the fact that Jesus received sinners at his table.” The fact is that it is Christ’s table. Since he is the host, he is the one who determines who may eat at his table, and drink with him.
- Everything in the Old Testament that God ordained, the colors of clothes, the sizes of buildings, the shapes of vessels are all significant in discerning what Christ was about to do and the significance of what he did do.
- All sacrifices ended with and in the sacrifice of Christ. “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit...” (I Peter 3:18)
- With a ritual, we don’t do anything. We can only show what Christ has done for us. “In the same way, He took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by the shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.” (I Corinthians 11:25-26)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Roman Catholics understand to some extent the significance of signs and symbols, but believe there is a reality beyond that. “In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols.” (CCC 1146)

- “As she has done for the canon of Sacred Scripture and for the doctrine of the faith, the Church, by the power of the Spirit who guides her "into all truth," has gradually recognized this treasure received from Christ and, as the faithful steward of God's mysteries, has determined its "dispensation." Thus the Church has discerned over the centuries that among liturgical celebrations there are seven that are, in the strict sense of the term, sacraments instituted by the Lord.” (CCC 1117) ----- The word ‘sacrament’ is nowhere in scripture. The Lord didn’t institute ritual that did anything but show what He has already done. The Spirit of God leads us all into truth. Why might you ask are there 7 sacraments and not 8 or 9.
- The baptism of Jesus, John’s disciples and those before Him was to indicate repentance. The baptism after Pentecost was to show salvation had already come to the one being baptized.
- “Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life...” (CCC 1210) ----- The important thing is that the Roman Catholic Church thinks it has been led into all truth which means discerning these seven sacraments. In fact these come from RCC tradition.
- “The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*.” (CCC 1129). One would ask then, what if one missed or skipped one of these sacraments, e.g. Holy Orders or Matrimony, is salvation foregone? If one needs to participate in all 7, what happens then to celibate priests?

- “For this reason no sacramental rite may be modified or manipulated at the will of the minister or the community. Even the supreme authority in the Church may not change the liturgy arbitrarily, but only in the obedience of faith and with religious respect for the mystery of the liturgy.” (CCC 1125) ----- The Church has in fact very significantly changed the liturgy, and admits the gradual accumulation of seven essential “sacraments.”
- “This is the meaning of the Church's affirmation that the sacraments act *ex opere operato*...It follows that "the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God. From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and His Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister.” (CCC 1128) ----- It’s understandable that in attempting to continue the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, it had to get around the problem of the very sinful priests and popes. In this way even the popes later condemned as anti-popes ordinations are not undone.
- The scriptures say that without faith it is impossible to please God. “So you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe there is a God, and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6) We cannot please God by rituals.
- “The liturgical word and action are inseparable both insofar as they are signs and instruction and insofar as they accomplish what they signify.” (CCC 1155) It is the temptation to Eve. You do this and there will be great benefit to you. The Christian acknowledges that Jesus did in all. All to Him we owe.

- Lifting up the cup, the priest invokes “Please accept our offering of bread and wine.”
This is an oblation very reminiscent of the ancient practices of many pagan religions.
If the bread and wine is our Christ, it is His offering, not the gifts of humans.

Wrong

- Those who are faithful to the Roman Catholic Church believe by doing these sacraments, they gain salvation. It is very far from the truth. Salvation only and always comes with child-like faith in Jesus Christ.
- Faithful Roman Catholics believe that the more they do the sacraments, the more sure they are of the grace of their salvation. This is very far from the truth. All grace is unmerited.
- Roman Catholics believe where there are no sacraments, there is no salvation. However, it is clear that the Spirit of God goes wherever He wishes, speaks to whomever He wishes, and uses the word of God, the scripture to enlighten and call whoever He wishes.
- As long as people believe they must have the sacraments, they must have priests. The more Christians, the more priests and so the pyramid of RC is built.
- Sacraments mislead people into believing this is what they must do to gain salvation. They believe in sacraments instead of understanding any form or ritual is pointing out and pointing to the power and grace of God. They only see the priest, they don't see God. They see the power and the privilege of the priest. They don't see the magnificence of God and what He has already done.

SALVATION

Scripture

- Salvation is a gift; a gift that is given to us when we believe. A gift that is totally unmerited, unearned, unwarranted, but necessary for our eternal life, which is our eternal relationship with God. “Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again.” (John 11:25)
- “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) “God saved you by his special favour when you believed. You can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Eph 2:8-10)
- God does not tolerate our pride in taking credit for what He does. Humans are forever usurping the prerogatives of God. Every religion, including Roman Catholicism teaches that if a person continues to gain merit and favour, some day, they should have enough credits to warrant heaven. However no one can be sure of when enough is enough. If only they could be confident they have gained enough points through suffering, good deeds and performing rituals. So they struggle painfully, grudgingly on oblivious to the fact that Christ offered eternal bliss as a gift.
- God does not like human pride, not because he is easily threatened or jealous, but because when we become proud, we lose contact with reality. When we lose contact

with reality we are psychotic. We literally go crazy, for we don't see things as they really are, which is God doing everything throughout history.

- The Old Testaments demonstrates that man could not make it on his own, even when God spelled it out in great detail. They couldn't live the covenant of friendship with Adam, nor obey all the Laws brought through Moses, nor be as trusting as Abraham. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the minor prophets acknowledged that humans couldn't do it on their own. They saw the only way was that God would give them "a heart of flesh", and have His "law written in their mind". How they longed for that salvation, and for His Spirit! "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 11:19) "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the LORD. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33) You will clearly notice that it is God doing it all.
- Salvation is a gift given by God in grace, because of His love though our faith, which is also given. Yet he always gives us the choice to accept or reject His offer. He keeps on offering salvation. Eventually He accepts a choice to reject his offer and closes an individual's or the world's time. Salvation is an expression of his love for all men, but because He desires our friendship, He gives us the choice to accept or reject His offer. "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, that you and your descendants might live! Choose to love the LORD your

God and to obey him and commit yourself to him, for he is your life.” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

- Salvation comes through faith. That faith is just enough belief to ask in expectation that God is, and He rewards those who seek him. Salvation is not proportional to the amount of faith. It is all or nothing. “So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)
- We cannot ask in arrogance or pride, because that in itself would be a work. We can only ask simply as a child, humbly as a sinner and hopefully as a human.
- The belief is just sufficient to put one foot on the bridge that will carry us across the river of death. God does all the rest.
- The gift of salvation grants us son-ship, citizenship, forgiveness for all sins, past, present and future, peace, God’s Holy Spirit living in us, and because of Him, courage, the desire to serve, maturity, protection from evil and love for each other. What more could we possibly want?
- The only work we do is to believe. Believing is effort, but that is the only effort that God requires.
- The works of Christians stem from:
 - 1) Our gratitude to God for His indescribable gift.
 - 2) In obedience to His command that we love Him and our neighbours as ourselves.

“We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters.” (I John 3:16)

3) A desire to become like Christ and expand our faith. "...until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)

- Faith comes first, and then works. "It was by faith that Sara together with Abraham was able to have a child, even though they were too old and Sara was barren. Abraham believed that God would keep his promise." (Hebrews 11:11) "It was by faith that Isaac blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau. He had confidence in what God was going to do in the future It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff...It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid of what the king might do...It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground...It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute did not die with all the others in her city who refused to obey God... Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets." (Hebrews 11:20-32) We walk across a bridge because we believe it will support us. Having crossed the bridge, our belief (faith) in it is strengthened.
- Because salvation is a gift and because it is complete, it only happens once in a person's life.
- Because people are filled with the Holy Spirit at the time God saves them, and because the Holy Spirit is so cleaning and powerful, most people know the moment they were reborn.

- Salvation comes when in faith we accept Christ as the substitute for God's justice in condemning us to death. He was sacrificed for us. "So Christ has become the new high priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered the great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. Once for all time, he took blood into that most holy place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it, he secured our salvation forever. (Hebrews 10:11-12)
- Jesus is the only way to salvation. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6)
- Salvation comes through belief. "But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan--this rebirth comes from God." (John 1:12-13)
- Salvation is wrought entirely by God through Christ. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). "There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God." (John 3:18)
- Through salvation, a person becomes a child of God. They will not, cannot lose their status as heirs, joint heirs with Christ of all that God promises. The prodigal son, stupid, selfish, ignorant man that he was, never stopped being the son of his father. Having turned his back on his father's love, he soon starved and went home to get

proper food and fellowship. Knowing that his son would return, the father waited at the end of the driveway.

- A person is called by God and then must make a critical choice. But once he/she so chooses, he/she becomes a member of God's family and is a son or daughter forever. You may deny your family but you can't get out of it. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. So no one can take them from me." (John 10:28-29)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- The Catholic Church believes in salvation by a combination of faith and works, i.e. the "economy of salvation". "In this age of the Church, Christ now lives and acts in and with his Church, in a new way appropriate to this new age. He acts through the sacraments in what the common Tradition of the East and the West calls "the sacramental economy"; this is the communication (or "dispensation") of the fruits of Christ's Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church's "sacramental" liturgy." (CCC 1076) "...But this also demands that catechesis help the faithful to open themselves to this spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation as the Church's liturgy reveals it and enables us to live it." (CCC 1095) "Celebrated worthily in faith, the sacraments confer the grace that they signify. ...This is the meaning of the Church's affirmation that the sacraments act *ex opere operato* (literally: "by the very fact of the action's being performed") ...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 1127 – 29).

- The works, sacraments, are designated by the RC church and require priests, and so the RCC ensures there will always be a demand for priests, then the hierarchy, structure and dogma of the RCC.
- The Roman Catholics contend that James proves their point. But James states, “Dear brothers and sisters, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone.” (James 2:14) James is clearly saying it isn't faith if there is no expression of it. “Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, "Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well"--but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?” (James 2:15-16) James is indicating it isn't enough to have the thought of faith, “I will do it.” Faith that does not show itself by action is no faith at all. It is dead and useless. James is clearly saying faith isn't an attitude you keep in your head, it is something you do. Faith in a bridge isn't any faith until you step on it, and then proceed to walk across. Love that isn't expressed by meeting a person's needs is no love at all. “But if anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help--how can God's love be in that person?” (I John 3:17) Faith and love always result in action.
- It is interesting that in the Roman Catholic Catechism index, there are five references to salvation, and eighty four to Mary. In fact for any unbeliever or Martian, it would be very difficult to discern how one gains salvation or eternal life by reading the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church.

- It appears that last rites are necessary so that sin may be forgiven the individual at the very end of their life, otherwise they die in sin. But what happens if there is one sin after the last rites, or what if the person doesn't have the last rites? These ideas create more questions than they answer them.
- Curiously, Roman Catholics believe "Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man." (CCC 162) Yet they also believe, "... "I believe", "We believe". It is through the Church that we receive faith and new life in Christ by Baptism." (CCC 168) "No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother. We believe all "that which is contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed."(CCC 181-182)
- The RCC belief in tradition is their acceptance of the human way of doing things.

Wrongs

- It is my experience that when asking any Roman Catholic if they have salvation, they are very unsure. They generally reply, "If God gives me sufficient grace," which they believe comes from doing the rituals assigned by the church. RCs tend to be unsure of if, how and when they gained salvation.
- This uncertainty creates fear, lack of joy, and subservience to the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy.
- Because works are required are required by the RCC "economy of salvation", RCs strive out of fear to please God and to merit salvation but those services have the wrong motivation. Any deed that has the wrong motivation is undone by that misguided motivation. Anything built in anger is soon destroyed by anger. Any

kind deed that is motivated by fear is eventually undermined by resentment.

Anything constructed in love will last

- In attempting to gain the salvation of children by baptizing into the RCC, residential schools for natives were erected and from them many evils came.
- Many millions of people are misled by the RC “economy of salvation.” They live lives in deep fear and superstition. They can only insist on the infallibility of a patently fallible church and work hard to enhance the false glory of that church.
- It seems that many RCs believe there is a kind of second opportunity for salvation by going through purgatory.
- Since salvation comes from an economy, indulgences, part of that economy, were sold to enrich the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and build churches particularly St. Peter’s Cathedral.
- Those who are not sure of their salvation cannot rely on Christ. They cannot enjoy Him. Because they cannot rely on Christ, they insult God by not trusting Him, by thinking His plan, His gift of the sacrifice of His son are not sufficient.
- Without salvation only through Christ, no one can have the peace and confidence he promised. “I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.” (John 14:27) Without the unique joy and peace that salvation in Christ gives, what point is there in being a Christian? No, if you are a Christian you know you are Christ’s, and thus you have joy and peace for eternity.

SIBLINGS

Scripture

- Jesus had four brothers and probably at least two sisters. That would make a family of seven siblings. This is a perfect number in the Jewish way of reckoning.
- As the oldest of the siblings, when his father died or was killed or made a slave, Jesus would have to be responsible for the rest of them.
- As ancient tradition indicates, Jesus would need to provide for his siblings and his mother for as long as that required. This is probably why he didn't begin his ministry until he was thirty.
- "He's just a carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers--James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. What makes him so great?" (Matthew 13:55–56) If the sibling order cited in Matthew and Mark are correct, then James would be the next oldest sibling.
- "Some women were there, watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph), and Salome." (Mark 15:40) This indicates that the apostle James and James the brother of Jesus were distinguished by indicating their mother, in this instance, Mary. It is interesting that Mary was not designated as the mother of Jesus. It is possible that from His teachings, the apostles had dropped the designation. "The next evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James went out and purchased burial spices to put on Jesus' body." (Mark 16:1)
- Jesus siblings were very sceptical. They tried to discourage him, at least at the beginning of his ministry. "and Jesus' brothers urged him to go to Judea for the

celebration. "Go where your followers can see your miracles!" they scoffed. "You can't become a public figure if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, prove it to the world!" For even his brothers didn't believe in him. (John 7:3-5)
"But after his brothers had left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view." (John 7:10)

- "And the only other apostle I met at that time was James, our Lord's brother." (Gal 1:19) It appears that James, the next oldest brother of Jesus not only became a believer but also became an apostle.
- There is reason to believe this James; known as James the Just also wrote the letter James. He introduces himself as "James, a slave of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ" James (1:1) One is made to wonder how often he berated himself on not recognizing his Lord at the first.
- James became the head of the early church (not Peter).
- "In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers." (Gal 2:9)
- James tended to be a legalist, quite possibly through the efforts of his big brother Jesus who worked and paid for his religious education.
- James never claimed this close association with Jesus lest it be used as a way of gaining him prominence in the church.
- James was a compassionate man, and ends his letters by writing, "My dear brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back

again, you can be sure that the one who brings that person back will save that sinner from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.” (James 5:19-20)

- At the council of meeting in Jerusalem, it’s obvious that James conducted the meeting and gave the final pronouncement, “When they had finished, James stood and said, "Brothers, listen to me.... And so my judgment is that we should stop troubling the Gentiles who turn to God.” (Acts 15:13, 19)
- “When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who don't bother with circumcision. But afterward, when some Jewish friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these legalists would say.” (Gal 2:12)
- It is quite likely that the head of the church at that time, it was James the brother of Jesus, because James the apostle had been killed. “About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church. He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword.” (Acts 12:1-2)
- Jesus was tempted in every point like we are. It is quite likely that many of these temptations came from struggling to look after a big family while yearning to start His earthly ministry. In his own family, he learned about family relationships and family obligations. Now we can be sure that Jesus’ knowledge of human temptations is an experiential one.
- James is the only person who was given the title of ‘brother of our Lord’.
- James was entitled an apostle.
- James was martyred by being thrown from the top of the temple, quite possibly from the same spot Jesus was tempted.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- The Roman Catholics claim that because of some possible misinterpretation of ‘brother’, the word should be ‘cousin’ when referring to Jesus’ siblings. However, the word ‘cousin’ appears in the Bible as a separate translation on seven occasions. (Luke 1:36, 58) (see Esther & Mordecai, Jacob & Rachel, Saul & Abner, Barnabas & Mark, etc.)
- Roman Catholics term Joseph as Jesus’ ‘legal’ father. (CCC 532)
- “...Jesus was known as the son of Joseph, Joseph was the son of Heli.” (Luke 3:23)
- When we are adopted, made members of God’s family, He doesn’t call us his ‘legal’ children.
- Jesus was part of a real family, mother, father, brothers and sisters, and in that context, learned obedience like the rest of us from our earthly and our heavenly father. “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered” (Heb. 5:5)
- It’s important that we understand that God doesn’t require our parents to be perfect, just devoted and teachable. God did not require Jesus to be Holy. As for every special task he assigns, God requires His servants to be trusting and obedient.

Wrongs

- The view of Jesus being a single child in a one-parent family detracts from his humanity.
- He was a real man with real temptations.

- Jesus had real dilemmas and real choices.
- All Christians are expected to be 'holy as He is holy'. (1 Peter 1:16) God's expectations of us are not unrealistic. Jesus as a man came to show us it is entirely possible to be holy because we are given a robe of righteousness and because we have God's Holy Spirit living within us, teaching, guiding and disciplining us. Seeing Jesus as a single child in a single parent family makes people think there is no way of matching Jesus' life, and so they don't even try.
- The main object of the Roman Catholic view of Jesus as an only child is to maintain the idea that Mary was a virgin throughout her life. So they distort the scriptures in order to maintain a dogma.
- This is a major distortion of scripture, which throws light on the Roman Catholic attitude towards all of scripture.

SUMMARY

I hope this brief treatise comparing the scriptures and the Roman Catholic Catechism makes it clear that there is a wide divergence. These are not minor but fundamental points. These beliefs and directions obviously influence behaviour. Where there is error, it results in mistreatment, mistreatment that has gone on for centuries. One has to wonder why.

Why would God allow any institution that so clearly misleads people away from his truth and knowing him personally to exist for so many centuries? It is the same question of why would God plant the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in an otherwise perfect garden. Surely it is because God insists that we make difficult choices. He wants us to choose Him rather than being compelled by His power or overawed by His beauty. We must make a clear choice to want to know Him and become His child. To have choices, there must be alternatives. The more unclear the choice, the greater wisdom is required. God allows counterfeits of all kinds to make us really think carefully in deciding what is the genuine gospel. He even allows Satan to parade as an angel of light.

The question is Roman Catholicism counterfeit Christianity, you must answer for yourself. You will have to struggle with some fundamental questions. But be sure you don't suppress the debate in your own mind, or the debate between people. Sadly, this has been one of the fundamental abuses of Roman Catholicism for many centuries. It has suppressed dissent, hidden the scriptures and persecuted the protesters. It is the way with any totalitarian regime. God requires His children not to be intimidated, and not to

accept anything that is imposed upon people, but to examine everything in the light of the knowledge of His scripture and the promptings of His Holy Spirit within us. Maybe it is time once again to remind Protestants there is a good reason to protest. There is much to be protested and corrected. It is small wonder that all attempts at gaining accord between Roman Catholics and Protestants have failed. It is not hard to see why.

Yet we must have discussion whenever possible. There are many sincere, kindly people in the Roman Catholic Church who have been blinded. We cannot reach them if we act in a superior manner. We must be humble because we recognize that whatever we have is ours as a gift we don't deserve.

We cannot be conservative or republican in the sense that we are content with what is.

There is nothing good enough and never will be on this earth until Christ comes to reign.

In the meantime, it is the fearful duty of every Christian to clarify, protect and rectify.

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