



WORLD RELIGIONS

DENOMINATIONS



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



When *Sola Scriptura* Is Rejected

We have seen that the Protestant Reformation was the culmination of centuries of tension regarding issues of indulgences, purgatory, transubstantiation, etc. We've also seen that each side appeals to different authorities to prove its case. While the Reformers declared the Scriptures alone (*Sola Scriptura*) to be the final authority in matters of faith and practice, the Roman Catholic Church claims that its Tradition is an equal authority to Scripture. This lesson will further examine the divergent views that Protestants and Catholics build on their respective foundations.

I. Roman Catholic Marian Dogmas

A. The Immaculate Conception

1. Declaration of Pope Pius IX (1854)

*Since we have never ceased in humility and fasting to offer up our prayers and those of the Church to God the Father through his Son, that he might deign to direct and confirm our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, after imploring the protection of the whole celestial court, and after invoking on our knees the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, under his inspiration we **PRONOUNCE, DECLARE, AND DEFINE**, unto the glory of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, the honor and ornament of the holy Virgin the Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and increase of the Christian religion, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and in our own authority, **that the doctrine which holds the blessed Virgin Mary to have been, from the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of mankind, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was revealed by God, and is, therefore, to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.** Therefore, if some should presume to think in their hearts otherwise than we have defined (which God forbid), they shall know and thoroughly understand that they are by their own judgment condemned, have made shipwreck concerning the faith, and fallen away from the unity of the Church; and, moreover, that they, by this very act, subject themselves to the penalties ordained by law, if, by word or writing, or any other external means, they dare to signify what they think in their hearts.⁴⁶*

2. Vatican II (1963-1965) on the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

It is no wonder, then, that the usage prevailed among the holy Fathers whereby they called the Mother of God entirely holy and free from all stain of sin, fashioned by the Holy Spirit into a kind of new substance and new creature. Adorned from the first instance of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is, on God's command, greeted by an angel messenger as 'full of grace' (cf. Lk. 1:28) ...Embracing God's saving will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son...preserved free from all guilt of original sin...⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *The Decree of Pope Pius IX on the Immaculate Conception, Ineffabilis Deus* as found in *The Creeds of Christendom* by Philip Schaff (New York: Harper, 1877), pp. 211–212.

⁴⁷ *The Documents of Vatican II* [Chicago: Follett, 1966], Walter M. Abbott, S. J., General Editor, pp. 88, 90.

B. The Assumption of Mary

1. Declaration of Pope Pius XII (1950)

All these proofs and considerations of the holy Fathers and the theologians are based upon the Sacred Writings as their ultimate foundation. These set the loving Mother of God as it were before our very eyes as most intimately joined to her divine Son and as always sharing His lot.

Consequently it seems impossible to think of her, the one who conceived Christ, brought Him forth, nursed Him with her milk, held Him in her arms, and clasped Him to her breast, as being apart from Him in body, even though not in soul, after this earthly life. Since our Redeemer is the Son of Mary, He could not do otherwise, as the perfect observer of God's law, than to honor, not only His eternal Father, but also His most beloved Mother. And, since it was within His power to grant her this great honor, to preserve her from the corruption of the tomb, we must believe that He really acted this way.

*Hence the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination, immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that like her Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages. For which reason, after we have poured forth prayers of supplication again and again to God, and have invoked the light of the Spirit of Truth, for the glory of Almighty God Who has lavished His special affection upon the Virgin Mary, for the honor of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages and the Victor over sin and death, for the increase of the glory of that same august Mother, and for the joy and exultation of the entire Church; by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own authority, **We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.***

Hence, if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willfully to deny or call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic faith...It is forbidden to any man to change this, Our declaration, pronouncement, and definition or, by rash attempt, to oppose and counter it. If any man should presume to make such an attempt, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Selected Documents of Pope Pius XII* (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference), *Munificentissimus Deus* 38, 40, 44-45, 47.

2. Vatican II (1963–1965) on the Assumption of Mary.

Finally, preserved free from all guilt of original sin, the Immaculate Virgin was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory upon the completion of her earthly sojourn...For, taken up into heaven, she did not lay aside this saving role, but by her manifold acts of intercession continues to win for us gifts of eternal salvation... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix...As the most holy Mother of God she was, after her Son, exalted by divine grace above all angels and men. Hence the Church appropriately honors her with special reverence...in all perils and needs, the faithful have fled prayerfully to her protection.⁴⁹

II. Roman Catholic Dogma on Purgatory and Indulgences

A. The Council of Florence (1439)

... if those truly penitent have departed in the love of God, before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for sins of commission and omission, the souls of these are cleansed after death by purgatorial punishments; and so that they may be released from punishments of this kind, the suffrages of the living faithful are of advantage to them, namely the sacrifices of Masses, prayers, and almsgiving, and other works of piety, which are customarily performed by the faithful for other faithful according to the institutions of the Church.⁵⁰

B. The Council of Trent (1563)

Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, following the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught in sacred councils and very recently in this ecumenical council that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful and chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, the holy council commands the bishops that they strive diligently to the end that the sound doctrine of purgatory, transmitted by the Fathers and sacred councils, be believed and maintained by the faithful of Christ, and to be everywhere taught and preached.

If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *The Documents of Vatican II* [Chicago: Follett, 1966], Walter M. Abbott, S.J., General Editor, pp. 90–91, 94.

⁵⁰ Quoted in James White, *The Roman Catholic Controversy*, p. 183.

⁵¹ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1919 ed.), pp. 214, 246.

C. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

1030 *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.*

1031 *The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture [1 Corinthians 3:15; 1 Peter 1:7], speaks of a cleansing fire:*

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come. (Gregory the Great, 6th century)

1032 *This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture [2 Maccabees]... From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead...*

D. Indulgences: The Vehicle of Release

The following quotations are from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994). The quotation marks indicate the Catechism's quotation of a 1967 church document, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina* [the Doctrine of Indulgences]:

1471 *The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance [to be discussed later].*

1. What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.

An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part of all of the temporal punishment due to sin. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.

2. The punishments of sin

1472 *To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a double consequence [emphasis original]. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the "eternal punishment" of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain.*

1473 *The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. While patiently bearing suffering and trials of all kinds and, when the day comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace. He should strive by works of mercy and charity, as well as by prayer and the various practices of penance, to put off completely the "old man" and to put on the "new man".*

3. In the Communion of Saints

1474 *The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his sin and to become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone. "The life of each of God's children is joined in Christ and through Christ in a wonderful way to the life of all the other Christian brethren in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, as in a single mystical person."*

1475 *In the communion of saints, "a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things." In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.*

1476 *We also call these spiritual goods of the communion of saints the Church's treasury, which is "not the sum total of the material goods which have accumulated during the course of the centuries. On the contrary the 'treasury of the Church' is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which Christ's merits have before God. They were offered so that the whole of mankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father. In Christ, the Redeemer himself, the satisfactions and merits of his Redemption exist and find their efficacy."*

1477 *"This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the*

saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission the Father entrusted to them. In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical body."

4. Obtaining indulgence from God

1478 *An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of temporal punishment due for their sins. Thus the Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity.*

1479 *Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.*

E. The Basis of Release: Meritorious Works.

1. The Council Of Trent

Canon XXIV. If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof: let him be anathema.

Canon XXXII. If any one saith, that the good works of one that is justified...does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life— if so be, however, that he depart in grace,—and also an increase of glory: let him be anathema.⁵²

2. Ludwig Ott (renowned Roman Catholic theologian):

The God-Man Jesus Christ, by His vicarious atonement and His merit in the Redemption, achieved the reconciliation of humanity with God in principle and objectively. The Objective Redemption must be accepted by each man so that thereby he may bring to fruition in himself the subjective Redemption. The act of the application of the fruits of the Redemption to the individual man is called Justification...or Sanctification...The fruit of the Redemption is called grace...In the working-out of man's Subjective Redemption, God supports man, not merely by an inner principle, grace, but also by an outward principle, the efficacy of the Church in its doctrine, its guidance of men and its work of dispensing the grace of Christ through the Sacraments.

⁵² *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1919 ed.), Decree on Justification, Chapters V, VI, VII, X, XIV, XV, XVI.

Habitual grace is a constant supernatural quality of the soul which sanctifies man intrinsically and makes him just and pleasing to God. According to the teaching of the Council of Trent, 'no one can be just to whom the merits of Christ's Passion have not been communicated.'...It is a fundamental doctrine of St. Paul that salvation can be acquired only by the grace merited by Christ.

As God's grace is the presupposition and foundation of (supernatural) good works, by which man merits eternal life, so salutary works are, at the same time gifts of God and meritorious acts of man...By his good works the justified man really acquires a claim to supernatural reward from God...A just man merits for himself through each good work an increase in sanctifying grace, eternal life (if he dies in a state of grace) and an increase of heavenly glory.⁵³

3. The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism.

1074 *What is habitual or sanctifying grace?*

Habitual or sanctifying grace is a supernatural quality that dwells in the human soul, by which a person shares in the divine nature, becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit, a friend of God, his adopted child, an heir to the glory of heaven, and able to perform actions meriting eternal life.⁵⁴

III. The Sacraments of Roman Catholicism.

Roman Catholicism has developed an elaborate system of works within which the faithful are to labor during their lifetime in order to earn salvation. The sacraments provide the rungs on the ladder to heaven, beginning in infancy and continuing until death (and, with works of the living faithful on behalf of the departed [see above on Purgatory], even after death).

Below we survey what Roman Catholicism teaches regarding the more well-known and utilized sacraments of the church, Baptism and Eucharist/Mass, and contrast it with the message of God's grace as taught in Scripture.

A. Baptism.

1. The Council of Trent.

On Justification: Chapter IV: ...Justification of the impious is indicated—as being a translation [i.e., change]...And this translation...cannot be effected, without the laver of regeneration, or the desire thereof, as it is written: unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the Kingdom of God.

Canon V: If any one saith, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary unto salvation: let him be anathema.⁵⁵

⁵³ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, IL: Tan, 1974), Book Four, Part I, p. 219; 3.5, p. 222; Book III, Part 2, Chapter 2.III.11.3, p. 190; Book IV, Section 2, Chapter 3.23.2, 3.25.1, pp. 264, 267.

⁵⁴ John Hardin, *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* (Garden City: Image, 1981).

⁵⁵ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper, 1877), Decree on Justification, Chapter IV, p. 91; Canons on Baptism II, V; pp. 122–123.

2. The Code of Canon Law.

Canon 849: *Baptism, the gateway to the sacraments, is necessary for salvation, either by actual reception or at least by desire. By it people are freed from sins, are born again as children of God and, made like to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church. It is validly conferred only by a washing in real water with the proper form of words.*⁵⁶

3. The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism.

1140 *What is baptism?*

Baptism is the sacrament of spiritual rebirth. Through the symbolic action of washing with water and the use of appropriate ritual words, the baptized person is cleansed of all his sins and incorporated into Christ. It was foretold in Ezekiel, “I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you.” (Ezekiel 36:25-26)

1151 *What are the effects of baptism?*

The effects of baptism are the removal of the guilt of sin and all punishment due to sin, conferral of the grace of regeneration and the infused virtues, incorporation into Christ and his Church, receiving the baptismal character and the right to heaven.

1152 *What sins does baptism take away?*

Baptism remits the guilt of all sins, that is, it takes away all sins, whether original sin as inherited from Adam at conception, or actual sin as incurred by each person on reaching the age of reason. No matter how frequent, or how grave the actual sins may be, their guilt is all removed at baptism. All of this is the pure gift of God, since St. Paul writes, “It was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth.” (Titus 3:5)

1153 *What penalties does baptism remove?*

Baptism removes all the penalties, eternal and temporal attached to original and actual sin.

1155 *What is the grace of regeneration?*

The grace of regeneration infuses into our souls the life of grace that Christ won for us by his Death and Resurrection. It is the new birth of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus (cf. John 3:3) and the new creation described by St. Paul. (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17)

⁵⁶ *The Code of Canon Law* (London: Collins, 1983).

1156 *What virtues are infused into the soul at baptism?*

The virtues infused into the soul at baptism are faith, hope, and charity. Among the gifts of grace infused at baptism are the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit, which make possible the practice of the Beatitudes.

1157 *How does baptism incorporate us into Christ?*

*By baptism we become members of Christ's Mystical Body, which is the Church. That is why "By the sacrament of baptism, whenever it is properly conferred in the way the Lord determined and received with the proper dispositions of soul, man becomes truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and is reborn to a sharing of the divine life, as the apostle says: 'For you were buried together with him in baptism, and in him also rose again through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead' (Romans 6:4)."*⁵⁷

B. Eucharist (Mass)

1. Council of Trent

Session XIII: Decree Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Chapter I: On the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. *In the first place, the holy Synod teaches, and openly and simply professes, that, in the august sacrament of the holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things.*

Chapter III: On the Excellency of the Most Holy Eucharist over the Rest of the Sacraments. *And this faith has ever been in the Church of God, that, immediately after the consecration, the veritable body of our Lord, and his veritable blood, together with his soul and divinity, are under the species of bread and wine... Wherefore it is most true, that as much is contained under either species as under both; for Christ whole and entire is under the species of bread, and under any part whatsoever of that species; likewise the whole (Christ) is under the species of wine, and under the parts thereof.*

Chapter IV: On Transubstantiation. *And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which he offered under the species of bread to be truly his own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.*

⁵⁷ Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Ecumenism*, section 22; John Hardon, *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* (Garden: Image, 1981).

Chapter V: On the Cult and Veneration to be Shown to This Most Holy sacrament. *Wherefore, there is no room left for doubt, that all the faithful of Christ may, according to the custom ever received in the Catholic Church, render in veneration the worship of latria, which is due to the true God, to this most holy sacrament. For not therefore is it the less to be adored on this account, that it was instituted by Christ, the Lord, in order to be received; for we believe the same God to be present therein, of whom the eternal Father, when introducing him into the world, says:*

And let all the angels of God worship him, whom the Magi, falling down, adored; who, as the Scripture testifies, was adored by the apostles in Galilee.

Canon I. *If any one denieth, that, in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ; but saith that he is only therein as in a sign, or in a figure, or virtue; let him be anathema.*

Canon II. *If any one saith, that, in the sacred and holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denieth that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood—the species only of the bread and wine remaining—which conversion indeed the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation: let him be anathema.*

Canon VI. *If any one saith, that, in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with the worship, even external of latria; and is, consequently, neither to be venerated with a special festive solemnity, nor to be solemnly borne about in procession, according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of holy Church; or, is not to be proposed publicly to the people to be adored, and that the adorers thereof are idolators: let him be anathema.*

Canon VIII. *If any one saith, that Christ, given in the Eucharist, is eaten spiritually only, and not also sacramentally and really: let him be anathema.⁵⁸*

Session XXII: Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass

Chapter I: On the Institution of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. *Foreasmuch as, under the former Testament, according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, there was no perfection, because of the weakness of the Levitical priesthood; there was need, God, the Father of mercies, so ordaining, that another priest should rise, according to the order of Melchisedech, our Lord Jesus Christ, who might consummate, and lead to what is perfect, as many as were to be sanctified. He, therefore, our God and Lord, though he was about to offer himself once on the altar of the cross unto God the Father, by means of his death, there to operate an eternal redemption; nevertheless, because that his priesthood was not to be extinguished by his death, in the Last Supper, on the night in which he was betrayed,—that he might leave, to his own beloved Spouse the Church, a visible sacrifice, such as the nature*

⁵⁸ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1919 ed.), pp. 126–131, 136–138.

of man requires, whereby that bloody sacrifice, once to be accomplished on the cross, might be represented, and the memory thereof remain even unto the end of the world, and its salutary virtue be applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit,—declaring himself constituted a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech, he offered up to God the Father his own body and blood under the species of bread and wine; and, under the symbols of those same things, he delivered [his own body and blood] to be received by his apostles, whom he then constituted priests of the New Testament; and by those words, Do this in commemoration of me, he commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to offer (them); even as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.

Chapter II: That the Sacrifice of the Mass is Propitiatory, Both for the Living and the Dead. *For inasmuch as in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner the same Christ who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross; the holy council teaches that this is truly propitiatory, and that if we, contrite and penitent, with sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence, draw nigh to God, we obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid. For, appeased by this sacrifice, the Lord grants the grace and gift of penitence, and pardons even the gravest crimes and sins. For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different. The fruits of that bloody sacrifice, it is well understood, are received most abundantly through this unbloody one, so far is the latter from derogating in any way from the former. Wherefore, according to the tradition of the Apostles, it is rightly offered not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those who are departed in Christ but not as yet fully purified.*

Canon I. *If any one saith, that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered is nothing else but that Christ is given us to eat: let him be anathema.*

Canon II. *If any one saith, that by those words, Do this for the commemoration of me (Luke xxii. 19), Christ did not institute the apostles priests; or, did not ordain that they and other priests should offer his own body and blood: let him be anathema.*

Canon III. *If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be anathema.*

Canon V. *If any one saith, that it is an imposture to celebrate masses in honor of the saints, and for obtaining their intercession with God, as the Church intends: let him be anathema.*

Canon VI. *If any one saith, that the canon of the mass contains errors, and is therefore to be abrogated: let him be anathema.⁵⁹*

⁵⁹ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1919 ed.), pp. 176–180, 184–185.

2. The Question and Answer Catechism.

1217 *Is the Eucharist necessary for salvation?*

The Eucharist is necessary for salvation, to be received either sacramentally or in desire. Christ's words, "if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you" (John 6:53), mean that Holy Communion is necessary to sustain the life of grace in a person who has reached the age of reason.⁶⁰

IV. The Scriptures on the Atonement and Our Works.

A. Christ's death was "once for all."

Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:24–28)

...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:10)

"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. (Hebrews 10:16–18)

B. Works-righteousness is contrary to the Gospel.

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. (Romans 3:28)

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." (Romans 4:4–8)

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He

⁶⁰ John Hardon, *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* (Garden City: Image, 1981).

saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:5-7)

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. (Galatians 3:10-13)

*...if **a** law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by **the** law. (Galatians 3:21)*

...if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:21)

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)