

# THE 62 PRIMARY ERRORS OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM

BRACKETED NUMBERS ARE REFERENCES TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

## SALVATION

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES

1. Justification is a transformation of the soul in which original sin is removed and sanctifying grace infused [1987-1995].
2. Initial justification is by means of baptism [1262-1274].
3. Adults must prepare for justification through faith and good works [1247-1249].
4. The justified are in themselves beautiful and holy in God's sight [1992, 1999-2000, 2024].  
Justification is furthered by sacraments and good works [1212, 1392, 2010].
6. Justification is lost through mortal sin [1033, 1855, 1874].
7. Catholics guilty of mortal sin are justified again through the sacrament of penance [980, 1446].
8. Salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is a lifelong process [161-162, 1254-1255].
9. Salvation is attained by cooperating with grace through faith, good works, and participation in the sacraments [183, 1129, 1815, 2002].
10. Faith is belief in God and the firm acceptance of all that the Church proposes for belief [181-182, 1814].
11. Sanctifying grace is a quality of the soul, a supernatural disposition that perfects the soul [1999-2000].

### THE BIBLE TEACHES

1. Justification is an act of God in which He declares a sinner to be righteous in His sight, having forgiven his sins and imputed to him God's own righteousness (Romans 3:21-4:8).
2. Justification is by faith alone (Romans 3:28).
3. God justifies ungodly sinners who believe (Romans 4:5). Good works are the *result* of salvation, not the cause (Ephesians 2:8-10).
4. The justified are *in Christ* holy and blameless before God (Ephesians 1:1-14).
5. Justification is the imputation of the perfect righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). In Christ the believer has been made complete (Colossians 2:10).
6. Justification cannot be lost. Those whom God justifies will be saved from the wrath of God (Romans 5:8,9).
7. There is no second justification. Those whom God justifies, He also glorifies (Romans 8:30).
8. Salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is an instantaneous and secure act of God coinciding with justification (Romans 5:9).
9. Salvation is attained by grace through faith apart from works (Ephesians 2:8,9). Good works are the result, not the cause, of salvation (Ephesians 2:10).
10. Saving faith is the entrusting of oneself to Christ as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:8-17).
11. Grace is the undeserved favor of God (Ephesians 1:7,8).

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES

12. The sacraments are necessary channels for the continual infusion of grace. They bestow grace in virtue of the rite performed [1127-1129].
13. Grace is merited by good works [2010, 2027].
14. Venial sins do not incur eternal punishment [1855, 1863].
15. Serious sins must be confessed to a priest [1456-1457].
16. The priest forgives sin as a judge [1442, 1461].
17. When the guilt of sin is forgiven, temporal punishment remains [1472-1473].
18. Acts of penance make satisfaction for the temporal punishment of sin [1434, 1459-1460].
19. Indulgences dispensed by the Church for acts of piety release sinners from temporal punishment [1471-1473].
20. Purgatory is necessary to atone for sin and cleanse the soul [1030-1031].
21. Poor souls suffering in purgatory can be helped by those alive on earth offering up prayers, good works, and the sacrifice of the Mass [1032, 1371, 1479].
22. No one can know if he will attain to eternal life [1036, 2005].
23. Eternal life is a merited reward [1821, 2010].
24. The Roman Catholic Church is necessary for salvation [846].

## THE BIBLE TEACHES

12. The child of God is the constant object of the Father's grace (Romans 5:1,2).
13. Grace is a free gift (Romans 11:6).
14. Every sin is punishable by eternal death (Romans 6:23).
15. Sin is to be confessed directly to God (Ezra 10:11).
16. No one can forgive sin but God alone (Mark 2:7).
17. When God forgives sin, He completely forgives (Colossians 2:13; Isaiah 43:25).
18. Jesus made perfect satisfaction for all sins (1 John 2:1,2).
19. Jesus releases believers from their sins by His blood (Revelation 1:5).
20. Purgatory does not exist. Jesus made purification for sins on the cross (Hebrews 1:3).
21. Those who sleep in Christ need no help. To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).
22. The believer can know that he has eternal life by the Word of God (1 John 5:13).
23. Eternal life is the free gift of God (Romans 6:23).
24. There is salvation in no one but the Lord Jesus Christ, "for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

## THE MASS

25. The Last Supper was a real sacrifice in which Christ's blood was poured out for our sins in the cup [610-611, 621, 1339].
  26. The bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ [1373-1377].
  27. Christ's body and blood exist wholly and entirely in every fragment of consecrated bread and wine in every Roman Catholic church around the world [1374, 1377].
  28. The consecrated bread and wine are heavenly food which help one to attain to eternal life [1392, 1405, 1419].
25. The Last Supper was a Passover meal. Christ's blood was poured out for our sins at the cross (1 Peter 2:24).
  26. The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).
  27. Christ is bodily present in heaven (Hebrews 10:12,13).
  28. The bread and wine are symbols which help one to remember Christ (Luke 22:19).

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## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES

29. God desires that consecrated bread and wine be worshiped as divine [1378-1381].
30. Christ has ordained certain men to a ministerial priesthood to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross [1142, 1547, 1577].
31. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrifice of the cross [1085, 1365-1367]. Only the manner in which it is offered is different [1367].
32. The sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in the Sacrifice of the Mass [1323, 1382].
33. The Mass makes Christ present in His death and victimhood [1353, 1362, 1364, 1367, 1409].
34. At each Mass, the priest re-presents to the Father the sacrifice of Christ [1354, 1357].
35. The Mass is an unbloody sacrifice which atones for the sins of the living and the dead [1367, 1371, 1414].
36. Each Sacrifice of the Mass appeases God's wrath against sin [1371, 1414].
37. The faithful receive the benefits of the cross in fullest measure through the Sacrifice of the Mass [1366, 1407].
38. The sacrificial work of redemption is continually carried out through the Sacrifice of the Mass [1364, 1405, 1846].
39. The Church is to continue the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the world [1323, 1382, 1405, 1407].

## THE BIBLE TEACHES

29. God forbids the worship of any object, even those intended to represent Him (Exodus 20:4,5; Isaiah 42:8).
30. Christ has ordained every believer to a holy and royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices, the praise of their lips, and lives yielded to God (1 Peter 2:5-10; Hebrews 13:15; Romans 12:1).
31. The sacrifice of the cross is a historical event. It occurred once, approximately 2000 years ago, outside Jerusalem (Mark 15:21-41).
32. The sacrifice of the cross is finished (John 19:30).
33. Christ cannot be made present in His death and victimhood, for He has risen and is "alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:17,18; Romans 6:9,10).
34. Christ presented the sacrifice of Himself to the Father "once at the consummation of the ages" (Hebrews 9:24-28).
35. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22).
36. The once-for-all sacrifice of the cross fully appeased God's wrath against sin (Hebrews 10:12-18).
37. Believers receive the benefits of the cross in fullest measure in Christ through faith (Ephesians 1:3-14).
38. The sacrificial work of redemption was finished when Christ gave His life for us on the cross (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 1:3).
39. The church is to proclaim the Lord's death for the salvation of the world (1 Corinthians 11:26).

## MARY

40. Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin from the first instant of her conception (the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception) [490-492].
41. Mary, "the All-Holy," lived a perfectly sinless life [411, 493].
42. Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Christ [496-511].
43. Mary is the Mother of God [963, 971, 2677].
44. Mary is the Mother of the Church [963, 975].

40. Mary, a descendant of Adam, was born in sin (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12).
41. Mary was a sinner; God alone is holy (Luke 18:19; Romans 3:23; Revelation 15:4).
42. Mary was a virgin until the birth of Christ (Matthew 1:25). Later she had other children (Matthew 13:55,56; Psalm 69:8).
43. Mary was the earthly mother of Jesus (John 2:1).
44. Mary is a member of the church (Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 12:13,27).

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES

45. Mary is the co-redeemer, for she participated with Christ in the painful act of redemption [618, 964, 968, 970].
46. At the end of her life, Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven (the doctrine of the Assumption) [966, 974].
47. Mary is the co-mediator to whom we can entrust all our cares and petitions [968-970, 2677].
48. We should entrust ourselves to Mary, surrendering " 'the hour of our death' wholly to her care" [2677].
49. God has exalted Mary in heavenly glory as Queen of Heaven and Earth [966]. She is to be praised with special devotion [971, 2675].

## THE BIBLE TEACHES

45. Christ alone is the Redeemer, for He alone suffered and died for sin (1 Peter 1:18,19).
46. Upon her death, Mary's body returned to dust (Genesis 3:19).
47. Christ Jesus is the one mediator to whom we can entrust all our cares and petitions (1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:13,14; 1 Peter 5:7).
48. We should entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus, surrendering the hour of our death wholly to His care (Romans 10:13; Acts 4:12).
49. The name of the Lord is to be praised, for He alone is exalted above heaven and earth (Psalm 148:13). God commands, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).

## AUTHORITY

50. Peter was the head of the apostles [552, 765, 880].
51. The bishops are the successors of the apostles [861-862, 938].
52. The Pope, as the Bishop of Rome, is the successor of Peter [882, 936].
53. The bishops, with the Pope as their head, rule the universal Church [883, 894-896].
54. God has entrusted revelation to the Roman Catholic bishops [81, 86].
55. The Magisterium is the authoritative teacher of the Church [85-87].
56. The Magisterium is the infallible interpreter of Scripture [890-891, 2034-2035].
57. The Pope is infallible in his authoritative teaching [891].
58. The Magisterium alone has the ability and the right to interpret Scripture [85, 100, 939].
59. Scripture is to be interpreted in the sense in which it has been defined by the Magisterium [113, 119].
60. The Magisterium has the right to define truth found only obscurely or implicitly in revelation [66, 88, 2035, 2051].
61. Scripture and Tradition together are the Word of God [81, 85, 97, 182].
62. Scripture and Tradition together are the Church's supreme rule of faith [80, 82].

50. Christ was the head of the apostles (John 13:13).
51. The apostles had no successors, for to succeed them one needed to be a witness of Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:21,22).
52. Peter had no successor.
53. Christ, the head of the body, rules the universal church (Colossians 1:18).
54. God has entrusted revelation to the saints (Jude 3).
55. The Holy Spirit is the authoritative teacher of the church (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 John 2:27).
56. Scripture is the only infallible interpreter of Scripture (Acts 17:11).
57. God alone is infallible (Numbers 23:19).
58. Every Christian, aided by the Holy Spirit, has the ability and the right to interpret Scripture (Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16).
59. Scripture must be interpreted in the original sense intended by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 3:14-16).
60. No one has the right to go beyond what is written in Scripture (1 Corinthians 4:6; Proverbs 30:6).
61. Scripture is the Word of God (John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:20,21). Tradition is the words of men (Mark 7:1-13).
62. Scripture is the church's rule of faith (Mark 7:7-13; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

## 1. INFANT JUSTIFICATION

**R**oman Catholicism teaches that the soul of each child entering this world is spiritually dead because of Adam's sin. It was to remedy this problem that Jesus died on the cross. The benefits of Christ's death, says the Church, are initially imparted to infants through the sacrament of baptism. It removes *original sin*, the sin inherited from Adam, and pours, or *infuses*, *sanctifying grace* into the soul. By this action the child is brought into a *state of grace*, born again, made a temple of the Holy Spirit, and enrolled as a member of the Roman Catholic Church. The term used by the Church to describe this transformation is *justification*. Each year the Roman Catholic Church baptizes about 16 million children. Most are only a few days old.

## 2. ADULT JUSTIFICATION

**U**nlike infants, who are to be baptized without delay, an adult converting to Roman Catholicism must undergo extensive preparation. The process begins with God, who freely bestows *first actual grace* upon the individual. Should the person choose to cooperate with this grace, he will begin to perform *salutary acts*. These are human actions leading to justification. The first response is *faith*, defined in Roman Catholicism as the firm acceptance of the major doctrines of the Church as summarized in creeds. The second response is the performance of *good works* such as love of God and neighbor, self-renunciation, and obedience to the commandments. When the Church judges that a candidate is properly prepared, it declares the person to be among the *elect* and fit to take part in the Sacrament of baptism. The Roman Catholic Church annually prepares almost two million adults and children over the age of seven for baptismal justification. This is normally accomplished in a program called the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)*.

## 3. INCREASING AND PRESERVING JUSTIFICATION

**A**ccording to Roman Catholicism, initial justification through baptism is only the first step on a long road. If a Catholic hopes to one day enter the gates of heaven, he must diligently seek to *increase* and *preserve* grace in his soul. This is accomplished in a process called *sanctification*, the chief feature of which is participation in *sacraments*. The Church teaches that Christ formally established seven sacraments to serve as the primary channels of God's grace to Catholics: baptism, penance, eucharist, confirmation, matrimony, holy orders, and anointing of the sick. Through the proper performance of a ritual, each sacrament is said to increase sanctifying grace in the souls of prepared Catholics. From the sacraments Catholics can also obtain *actual grace*, which enables them to avoid sin and thereby preserve the grace that they already possess. Actual grace also helps Catholics to do good works by which they earn yet more grace. By the increase of grace received through the sacraments and merited by good works, Catholics are said to be *further justified*.

## 4. REJUSTIFICATION

**T**he Church teaches that there are two kinds of sin. *Venial sins* are minor infractions of God's law such as petty theft or lying about something small. Venial sins weaken a person's spiritual vitality and make the individual more susceptible to temptation. These sins can be forgiven by confessing them in prayer to God with sincere repentance. *Mortal sins* are serious, conscious, and deliberate violations of God's law.

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# HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Millions of sincere Catholics believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the true church established by Christ. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in this pamphlet, the gospel according to Rome is not the gospel taught by Christ and recorded in the Scriptures. It is a different gospel, the mixing of faith plus works for justification, the error condemned in the book of Galatians (Galatians 1: 6-9). How can you help Catholics to see the truth?

## PRAY FOR CATHOLICS

The Bible says that the gospel "is veiled to those who are perishing" (2 Corinthians 4:3). Pray that God would open the eyes of Roman Catholics.

## DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS

Ask God to increase your love for Catholics and to help you to nurture friendships with them. The best opportunities to share your faith usually come early in a new relationship, so don't let them pass.

## STIMULATE THOUGHT

Take the initiative. Speak to Catholics about their religious beliefs. Ask whether they know with certainty what will happen to them when they die. Then offer literature that explains the biblical way of salvation.

## PROMOTE BIBLE STUDY

Encourage your Catholic friends to read the Scriptures, suggesting a starting place. Make sure that they have Bibles that are readable and convenient to use, not oversized family editions. Once a genuine seeker discovers that he can learn directly from the Scriptures, there will be no stopping him.

## ADDRESS THE REAL PROBLEM

Don't let Roman Catholicism become the focus of your discussions. Your Catholic friend's greatest problem is not his church; it is his sin. Explain the biblical meaning of sin and its consequences. Pray that your friend would become genuinely convicted of his guilt.

Next explain the way of salvation. Do so directly from the Scriptures. Since Catholics and non-Catholics use many of the same words but with different meanings, be careful to define your terms.

Go slowly! Do not prematurely lead your friend in a prayer to accept Christ. Wait until the person is clearly under conviction of sin and understands the gospel. Then encourage him to make a decision for Christ, speaking to God in his own words.

## ENCOURAGE A CLEAN BREAK

Help your friend to find a church where the Bible is taught and upheld as the sole standard of the Christian faith. Additionally, explain the value of discarding of everything associated with unbiblical beliefs and practices (Acts 19:17-20). Pray for spiritual liberation and encourage the individual regularly.

## ANTICIPATE TRIALS

Jesus taught that following Him may often involve opposition, particularly from family members (Matthew 10:34-39). Prepare a newly saved Catholic to expect trials.

## CONTINUE TO LEARN

The better you understand Roman Catholicism, the more able you will be able to effectively communicate the gospel to Catholics. Consider reading the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the first official summary of Roman Catholicism in over 400 years. For further information on how you can help Catholics, and a complete biblical analysis of Roman Catholicism indexed to the new catechism, refer to the book from which this quick reference guide was produced: *The Gospel According to Rome* (James G McCarty, Harvest House Publishers, 1995).

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