

# ***STAND FIRM AGAINST ROMAN CATHOLICISM***

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## **I. INTRO**

1. There are many things we have in common.
  - i. Apostles Creed
  - ii. Nicene Creed
  - iii. Chalcedonian Creed
2. I have some good friends who are Roman Catholics. This is in no way meant to offend them. I will try my best to accurately represent their views.
3. I am very thankful for Roman Catholics; and for the benefit of living in a RC community.
  - i. We fight together on many political and social issues, such as abortion, limited government, Biblical marriage, the importance of the family, and Biblical morality.
4. But there are some significant differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics. These differences make it impossible...
  - i. To join the Catholic Church.
  - ii. For a Protestant to marry a Catholic.

## **II. FOUR BIG DIFFERENCES**

### **1. MARY**

- i. Roman Catholics
  1. Primary Marian Dogmas:
    - a. Immaculate conception (established in 1854): Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin from the moment of conception.
    - b. Complete sinlessness: Mary never sinned.
    - c. Perpetual virginity: Mary never had sexual relations, before or after giving birth to Jesus. She is called the Ever-virgin.
    - d. Bodily assumption: Immediately after death Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory.

2. Other erroneous beliefs about Mary:

a. She is prayed to:

- i. The **Lumen Gentium** (dogmatic constitution of the church) says, “the Blessed Virgin is invoked (prayed to) in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.”
- ii. Catholics believe that Mary can hear all the prayers of the people all over the world, simultaneously, thought and spoken, in different languages.
- iii. The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** says we can “entrust all our cares and petitions to her.”
- iv. The **CCC** says, “The Church rightly honors the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of Mother of God to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs.”

b. She assists God in salvation and spiritual growth:

- i. The **Credo of the People of God** says that Mary “cooperates in the birth and development of divine life in the souls of the redeemed.”
- ii. **Pope Leo 13<sup>th</sup>** said, “No man goeth to Christ by by His mother.”
- iii. The **Catholic Catechism of the Church** says she “delivers our souls from death.”
- iv. The **Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma** says, “Mary, by her spiritual entering into the sacrifice of her divine son for men, made atonement for the sins of man.”

c. She is waiting and preparing a home for you (Handbook for Today’s Catholic).

3. Titles applied to Mary in the Roman Catholic Church:

a. The Blessed Virgin

- b. Advocate
- c. Helper
- d. Benefactress
- e. Mediatrix
- f. Queen over all things
- g. All holy one
- h. Mother of God and our mother
- i. The new Eve
- j. The seat of wisdom
- k. Queen of the apostles
- l. The mother of the members of Christ
- m. Spouse of the Holy Spirit
- n. Queen of angels
- o. Queen of prophets
- p. Mother of the Church
- q. Mother of divine grace
- r. Mirror of justice
- s. Morning Star
- t. Gate of heaven
- u. Queen of peace
- v. Queen of the universe
- w. Cause of our joy
- x. Glory of Israel
- y. Ark of the covenant
- z. Refuge of sinners

ii. Protestants

1. The Marian Doctrines: Immaculate conception; complete sinlessness; perpetual virginity; bodily assumption.
  - a. Not found in Scripture:
  - b. Contradict Scripture: Complete sinlessness and perpetual virginity.
    - i. Mary was a sinner:
      1. **Romans 3:23** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

2. At one point Mary through Jesus was out of his mind and tried to stop Him from His ministry.
  3. **Mark 3:20-21** “20 Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. 21 When his family heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, “He’s out of his mind.”
  4. Verses 31 and 32 (of Mark 3) specify that Jesus’ “family” included is mother.
- ii. Mary was not a perpetual virgin.
1. **Mark 3:32** “A crowd was sitting around him and told him, “Look, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside asking for you.”
  2. Jesus had at least six siblings. **Matthew 13:55-56** “55 Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, aren’t they all with us? So where does he get all these things?”

2. Praying to Mary:

- a. Not found in Scripture.
- b. Contradicts Scripture.
  - i. All prayer in Scripture is directed to God.
    1. **Matthew 6:9** “Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.”
  - ii. We are invited to pray directly God through Jesus Christ:
    1. **Hebrews 4:15-16** “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has

been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.”

3. Mary has no role in salvation or spiritual growth:
  - a. Not found in Scripture.
  - b. Contradicts Scripture:
    - i. Mary is not needed for salvation: **1 Timothy 2:5** “For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus”
    - ii. Mary is not needed for spiritual growth: **2 Peter 1:3** “His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”
4. Mary is not preparing a home for us in heaven:
  - a. **John 14:2-3** “2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.”
5. The titles given to Mary.
  - a. Not found in Scripture.
  - b. Contradict Scripture:
    - i. Advocate: **1 John 2:1** “My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one.”
    - ii. Mediatrix: **1 Timothy 2:5** “For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus”

- iii. Helper: **John 14:26 (ESV)** “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”
- iv. Seat of wisdom: **Colossians 2:3** “In him [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
- v. Morning star: **Revelation 22:16** “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and descendant of David, the bright morning star.”
- vi. Gate of heaven: **John 10:7** “Jesus said again, ‘Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.’”

## 6. Conclusion

- a. Roman Catholics are guilty of Mary Worship.
- b. They deny this, but their actions contradict their words.
- c. The Bible refers to greed as idolatry – the worship of money. Greedy people deny that they worship money, but their actions contradict their words. In this same way, Roman Catholics, without realizing it, worship Mary.
- d. This is evident in the 17 festival days annually dedicated to her and the 50 Hail Mary prayers in the set of prayers known as the rosary.

## 2. AUTHORITY

### iii. Roman Catholics

- 1. On the surface, Roman Catholics appear to have the same view of Scripture as Protestants: Scripture is inspired by God, utterly truthful and reliable, infallible, reflecting the words and the mind of God.
- 2. In the latter part of the Middle Ages, Catholics insisted that God had given his deposit of truth to the church, and that there were two sources of divine revelation.

3. Two sources of divine revelation: The Bible plus tradition. Scripture alone is not sufficient. Scripture is not the only authority for the church.
  - a. The Bible.
  - b. Tradition: The official teachings of the Magisterium (the teaching office of the church – made up of the pope and bishops). These teachings were supposedly handed down orally to the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church from the apostles.
4. Papal infallibility.
  - a. Who is the pope?
    - i. The leader of the Roman Catholic church is the pope (from the Latin papa, which means father).
    - ii. The Supreme Pontiff (another word for bishop).
    - iii. Bishop of Rome.
    - iv. Vicar of Jesus Christ: Vicar literally means “one serving as a substitute or agent.” The pope as vicar of Christ acts for and in the place of Christ.
    - v. Successor to Peter.
    - vi. Exercises authority over the 3,250 bishops in the church.
  - b. Infallible
    - i. When he speaks ex cathedra (Latin, from the chair) on issues pertaining to faith and morals, he is infallible. He can neither deceive nor be deceived.
    - ii. The **Second Vatican Council** states that the pope “enjoys the infallibility in virtue of his office, when as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful... he proclaims in an absolute decision a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.”

5. Only the Magisterium (the pope and the bishops together) are authorized to interpret Scripture.

iv. Protestants

1. One source of divine revelation: The Bible.
2. Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone.
  - a. **Ron Rhodes** said, "Protestants believe Scripture alone speaks with God's voice and is authoritative in matters of faith and practice."

3. 2 Primary Applications of Sola Scriptura:

a. Sufficiency of Scripture:

- i. The Bible is all we need for faith and practice.
- ii. **ESV Study Bible**, "God does not require or prohibit anything of Christians that is not contained in Scripture either explicitly or by implication."
- iii. **ESV Study Bible**, "Scripture alone is absolutely authoritative for doctrine and practice, and following Scripture alone is sufficient to please God in all things."

iv. We must not add to Scripture:

1. **Deuteronomy 4:2** "You must not add anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, so that you may keep the commands of the Lord your God I am giving you."
2. **Proverbs 30:5-6** "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Don't add to his words, or he will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar."
3. **Revelation 22:18-19** "18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. 19 And if



anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.”

b. Authority of Scripture:

i. All creeds, confessions, catechisms, and doctrines must submit to the teaching of Scripture.

ii. We must not elevate human tradition above Scripture:

1. **Mark 7:8** Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition.

2. **1 Corinthians 4:6** "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other."

3. **Colossians 2:8** "Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ."

4. The pope is not infallible:

a. **Romans 3:23** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

b. The Bible alone is infallible. **Psalms 19:7** "The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise."

5. Martin Luther: The leader of the Protestant Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the many ways the Roman Catholic Church had departed from Scripture, On All Saints

Even, 1517, he posted 95 theses on the door of the chapel, in Wittenberg, Germany, challenging his opponents to a debate at the university where he was teaching. In 1521, the Diet of Worms (an imperial council of clergy and statesman chaired by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V) convened to decide the fate of Luther. Luther was commanded to recant. **He replied**, “Unless it can be shown from the Scriptures how I am wrong, my conscience is led bound to the word of God. I cannot and I will not recant. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen. (paraphrase).” These actions and words of Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation.

### 3. SALVATION

#### v. Roman Catholics

##### 1. Multiple Steps

##### a. Attaining Salvation:

- i. The Sacrament of Baptism (initial justification).  
A person is born again. Original sin is removed from the soul and in its place sanctifying grace is infused.

##### b. Maintaining Salvation:

- i. The Sacrament of Mass. Skipping Mass is a mortal sin that results in the loss of salvation.
- ii. Do good works to merit the further grace necessary for heaven. According to Catholics, one must actually be righteous to enter heaven.
- iii. The sacrament of Penance.
  1. Two kinds of sins: Venial and Mortal.
  2. Venial sins: (Latin, *venia*, meaning pardon or easily forgiven): lesser sins that do not result in the loss of salvation.
  3. Mortal sins: sins that are conscious, deliberate, and serious, which erase

grace from the soul (such as skipping Mass).

4. If a mortal sin is committed, and the sinner dies before the sacrament of penance, they go to hell.
5. To be re-justified, one needs the sacrament of penance.
6. In the sacrament of penance, the parishioner must confess his sins to a priest, say an "Act of Contrition" – a penitential prayer that indicates personal sorrow for the sins committed, and do acts of penance as instructed by the priest. At this point, grace is restored to the soul.
7. A typical act of penance involves praying ten "our Fathers" and ten "Hail Mary's." The parishioner sits in the pew until this act is completed.

vi. Protestants

1. **Romans 3:22-25** "22 The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. 23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 24 They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as an atoning sacrifice in his blood, received through faith"
2. What is justification? When God saves us, He declares us legally righteous in His sight.
3. Justification is by grace alone:
  - a. Verse 24 "They are justified freely by his grace"
  - b. Salvation is not earned nor maintained through good works or personal righteousness. It is a free gift.
  - c. Why? If we were given what we deserve, it would be death (separation from God).
4. Justification is by faith alone:

- a. Verse 22 “The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”
- b. Verse 24 “God presented him as an atoning sacrifice in his blood, received through faith”
- c. Salvation is not received or maintained through works or rituals such as baptism, Mass, the Eucharist, or Penance.

#### 4. PURGATORY & INDULGENCES

##### vii. Roman Catholics

##### 1. Purgatory

- a. All sins (even venial sins) incur a temporal punishment that must be paid for by the sinner.
- b. One must be actually righteous before going to heaven.
- c. Initial justification (baptism) only saves from eternal punishment.
- d. To pay for your sins, you must either do works of penance in this life, or suffer in purgatory after death.
- e. The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** tells us that “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.” This purification takes place in purgatory.
- f. The **Pocket Catholic Dictionary** says, “The purpose of purgatory is to cleanse one of imperfections, venial sins, and faults, and to remit or do away with the temporal punishment due to mortal sins that have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance.”

##### 2. Indulgences

- a. To shorten your time in purgatory, you gain an indulgence.
- b. Indulgences can be gained by saying prayers, giving alms, performing good works, making the sign of the

cross, visiting Catholic Shrines, and other religious acts.

- c. Once you have gained an indulgence, you can apply it either to oneself, or by saying a prayer it can be applied to the account of a dead loved one in purgatory.
- d. For example, making the sign of the cross can grant a partial indulgence of three years less time in purgatory.
- e. On the inside of the cover of the New St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism published in 1969 there is a prayer. After the prayer, it says the following: "An indulgence of five years. A plenary indulgence on the usual conditions, provided this prayer has been recited daily for a month." This means that by saying the prayer properly, five years is removed from a person's time in purgatory!

#### viii. Protestants

##### 1. Purgatory

a. Not found in the Bible.

b. Contradicts the Bible:

i. Only two eternal destinies.

1. **Matthew 25:46** "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

ii. Eternal life is not received by being righteous, or by atoning for one's sins, but by faith in the atonement of Christ.

1. **Romans 3:22** "The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction."

2. The doctrines of Purgatory and indulgences sparked the Protestant Reformation. There was a Catholic preacher named Johann Tetzel selling indulgences, even for sins not yet committed. "Once the coin into the coffer clings, a soul

from purgatory heavenward springs!” This motivated Luther to write his 95 theses which led to the Reformation.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

1. Roman Catholics are not the enemy, they are the mission field.
2. The most important question to ask a Roman Catholic is: Why should God let you into heaven? When their answer highlights their personal righteousness, their efforts, and their religious involvement, it reveals that their faith is ultimately not in Christ but in themselves. Then you can share the gospel that salvation is by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone. It not in trusting in what we can do for Christ, but in what He has done for us. It is obtained not by working for Christ, but by trusting in the work of Christ for us on the cross.