

The Path through the Forest

The Catholic Church and the Bible, Being the third part of The Catholic Religion Proved by the Protestant Bible

By a Catholic Evangelist and others

Catholic Truth Society of Oregon No.102 (1953)

Catholic Doctrine Is Derived From These Four Sources:

1. What the Bible explicitly or implicitly teaches.
2. Available Bible material is clarified or complemented or confirmed by truths derived from Sacred Tradition. These are often historical records (or oral tradition) such as the writings of the Fathers, inscriptions in the Catacombs, early rules and regulations of the Church.
3. The guidance of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ promised to His Church (John 14:16 and 26). This provides guidance to the Church's Magisterium or Teaching Authority.
4. Our Lord's own presence in the Church, according to His specific promise. (Matt. 28:20).

Why There Are So Many Churches

Today there are so many Protestant churches because there is so much different interpretation of the Bible; there is so much different interpretation of the Bible because there is so much wrong interpretation of the Bible. And there is so much wrong interpretation because the system of interpreting it is radically wrong. You cannot have one fold and one shepherd, one faith and one baptism, by letting every man and every woman distort and pervert the Scriptures to suit their own pet theories.

BIBLE VANDALISM

In our day, there is no whim, fad or fancy that some one does not claim to prove from the Bible. Almost any man or woman is conceited enough to set himself up as a competent interpreter of the word of God. "I think the Bible means this, therefore it does mean this," is their modest position. These men and women want it thoroughly understood that our forefathers in the faith were all fools that for the last nineteen hundred years or more, the Christian world was in inky darkness. With them, however, light has come into the world. The truth is that no book in the world today is falsified, distorted, misapplied one tenth so much as the Holy Scriptures.

VARIOUS INSTANCES

Some, like the early heretics, will prove from the Bible that Christ is only God and not man. Others, like modern Unitarians, will prove from the Bible that Christ is only man and not God.

Some denominations will prove from the Bible that in the New Law, Christ shared his priesthood with NO ONE. Others will prove from the Bible that in the New Law, even the women are priests;

hence the name Presbyters or priests, from which "Presbyterian" is derived, is a non-gender specific word (according to these interpreters).

One sect will prove from the Bible that baptism is unnecessary for children, but is necessary for adults. Others will prove from the Bible that baptism is necessary for no one; that it is only a ceremony, an initiation such as is required when one joins a lodge. (The 'Salvation Army' Church does not even believe, on its interpretation of the Bible, that any Baptism is necessary at all!)

Campbellites or "First Christians" (named after Alexander Campbell who is regarded, with his brother, Thomas, as the founder of Churches bearing the names of 'Churches of Christ' – founded in 1813) will prove from the Bible that to be really baptized, one must be totally immersed in water. Others prove from the Bible that the whole thing is unnecessary and ought to be abandoned.

Russellites (named after Charles Russell, died 1916, whose chief legacy is the Jehovah Witnesses phenomenon,) prove from the Bible that there is going to be a millennium, a thousand years when every one will get a second trial.

Calvinists (named after the 16th century Swiss 'reformer') prove from the Bible that a large part of mankind do not even get a first trial, but are predestined to damnation irrespective of their merits.

BIBLE IS MISTREATED

Some sects prove from the Bible that eternal punishment is going to be meted out to nearly every one, but the little handful of their particular false sect is going to escape. But others prove from the Bible that everyone is going to be saved. To even murderers, adulterers, and those who rob widows and orphans-and never repent-will Christ hold out His arms and say: "Come, Blessed of My Father, and possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Reduced to practice their theory means this: Read the Bible and believe as you like; if you like Martin Luther's theory, follow it; if you prefer John Calvin's Christianity, embrace it. If you think that Alexander Campbell, or Dowie, (John Alexander Dowie, the founder of the Zion churches of Africa and Illinois between 1896 and 1908) or Mrs. Eddy, (the founder of the 'Christian Science' religion in 1879, or the Adventists (founded by William Miller and Mrs. White in the 1840's) have "discovered" the truth, have succeeded in doing what Christ must have failed to do, then take them as your guide. If the theory of none of these persons suits you, make up one yourself.

RECENT FALLACIES

Mrs. Eddy will prove from the Bible that man is all soul, the body is practically a delusion, and does not really exist, "Bible Students"(and their Jehovah Witness off-shoots) will prove from the Bible that the soul is all delusion you really have none. When you die, your soul knows not anything: the soul which God gave Adam was only air and nothing more

In the Bible, we are told to serve the Lord in fear and trembling and so we have the shakers, (there was a Shaker religious movement begun in 1747,) the mourners and the weepers. Again in the Bible, we are told to 'rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice'. And so we have the singers and the jumpers and the rollers. Surely you would think that there is a sufficient variety to suit every one, but it seems not, for new sects are springing up constantly.

All these claim to prove their version of Christianity from the Bible; all these are willing to swear that their little handful are the only ones who are right and that every one else is wrong. Christ's

Church for more than nineteen hundred years was a complete failure, but fortunately they have finally come to set it aright. Meanwhile the Bible itself warns us:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but... shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." - (2 Tim. 4:3).

Again, referring to the epistle of St. Paul, the Prince of the Apostles tells us:

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Peter. 3:16).

CHRIST'S TRUTHS CHANGELESS

For whosoever preaches any other but the accepted Christian faith of past centuries, by that very fact proves himself to be a false teacher, a false prophet, who as Christ says, "Comes in the garb of a shepherd, but inwardly is a ravening wolf." The true faith must be and necessarily has been believed, as St. Augustine puts it: "Semper et ubique;" - i.e. always and all over - by at least the vast majority of Christians. Of that accepted Christian faith, therefore, we can say what St. Paul did of his own teachings: "Though an angel from heaven preach to you a different doctrine, let him be accursed."

Here are ten children. Give them all the same simple problem in arithmetic. Imagine that each gives you a different answer. Of these ten answers, you know that at least nine are wrong. Perhaps also the tenth. Here are four hundred sects. Here are 33,800 sects. Ask them all to solve the problem, "What does the Bible teach?" Each gives you a different answer. But you know that only one can really be correct. All the rest are wrong. Two and two are always four. There are a thousand wrong answers to every problem, but only one correct reply.

PARABLE OF THE FOREST

PARABLE: Picture to yourself a marvelously beautiful and gigantic forest, a thousand miles in width and length.

APPLICATION: In the parable, the New Testament is this dramatically impressive forest composed of numberless giant trees. Each one of these trees represents; let us say, a verse or set of verses of the Bible; there are as many trees in that forest as groups of verses in the Old and New Testaments.

PARABLE: In preparation for this forest, men reclaimed a desert which was watered, irrigated, so that on it the giant trees could be grown. After the period of preparation, a first installment of giant trees was planted; then, after another interval, a second, a third, and others until the great forest was completed.

APPLICATION: The beginnings of the New Testament fit into this picture. The first ten years of the Church's history was the time of preparation during which not a line of the New Testament had been written. Then ten years after our Lord's Ascension, St. Matthew wrote the first Gospel; St Paul wrote his first canonical letter about 49 A.D. Following St Matthew's Gospel were the Gospels according to St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, together with other inspired books; the last of these was written about 100 A. D.

PARABLE: Thereafter, for a time, adversities and setbacks hampered the project; other trees, imitations of the kind desired, took root alongside those originally planted; after another interval, with the return of more favorable circumstances, the new-giant thousand-mile-square forest was carefully cleansed, pruned and extraneous growths removed.

APPLICATION: After the New Testament books were written came the greatest of the persecutions, during which other books, thought by many to be inspired, were written, and to a greater or lesser extent, were so regarded by the early Christians. With Constantine in 313, compilation of the New Testament began. Finally in 397 A. D., it was put under one cover by a council of the Catholic Church at Carthage and endorsed by the Pope in Rome (Successively they were popes St Siricius, St Innocent and St Boniface.)

PARABLE Meanwhile, even before the forest had grown, in order that humans might find their way in safety through the desert, and later through the forest, a carefully constructed and guarded path was provided which travelers could follow through the otherwise impenetrable desert and woods. The travelers, moreover, were given directions, supplementary information, to guarantee safety on their journey.

APPLICATION: In the parable, the path through the great forest and desert is the divine authority of Christ's visible Church, which enables men properly to understand the Word of God, instead of being prey to man-made theories. The supplementary information which the travelers received are reliable historical records, such as the writings of the Fathers, the inscriptions in the catacombs, the rules and regulations of the early Church - all of which are called Tradition. (Note that we use a capital 'T' when speaking of this information.

PARABLE: Later in our parable, come other men, who scorn to follow the safe path cut out through the otherwise trackless forest; these enter the forest, admire its gigantic proportions and other thrilling beauties, but with nothing to guide them, are quickly lost in the forest; some soon die of want; others eke out a miserable existence, subsisting on herbs, plants and other insufficient foods which the forest supplies. Others, however, wander long through the trackless areas, until they discover the guiding path, which they follow in safety.

MILLIONS LOSE THEIR WAY

APPLICATION: In this part of the parable, those who scorn to follow the path which leads to safety, are the so-called reformers, who reject the accepted Christian faith of nineteen and more centuries and, each one for himself, sets out to explore the beautiful but trackless, limitless forest of Holy Scripture. Inevitably they lose their way; some of these perish, in the sense that they lose their faith entirely; others, as members of innumerable sects, subsist meagerly on the imperfect, defective diet of a little truth and much error. All of these are on the path to hell. Others, however, after wandering aimlessly about, are fortunate enough to find the correct path which Christ and Christ's Church had mapped out for them; these are the converts to the original or Catholic Church. Joyfully these pursue their journey, until, in the words of the well-known hymn, they are: Safe, safe at last the dangers past, Safe in their Father's home.

APPENDIX

“THERE IS NO SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH”

For an understanding of this last statement let us consult the following:

Outside The Church There Is No Salvation

Question: What does this Church Statement mean?

Answered by Colin B. Donovan, STL

The doctrine that "Outside the Church there is no salvation" is one that is constantly misinterpreted by those who won't submit to the Magisterium of the Church. Faith does not depend upon our ability to reason to the truth but on our humility before the Truth presented to us by those to whom Christ entrusted that task. This is why the First Vatican Council taught that it is the task of the Magisterium ALONE to determine and expound the meaning of the Tradition - including "outside the Church no salvation."

Concerning this doctrine the Pope of Vatican I, Pius IX, spoke on two different occasions. In an allocution (address to an audience) on December 9th, 1854 he said:

"We must hold as of the faith, that out of the Apostolic Roman Church there is no salvation; that she is the only ark of safety, and whosoever is not in her perishes in the deluge; we must also, on the other hand, recognize with certainty that those who are invincible in ignorance of the true religion are not guilty for this in the eyes of the Lord. And who would presume to mark out the limits of this ignorance according to the character and diversity of peoples, countries, minds and the rest?"

Again, in his encyclical *Quanto conficiamur moerore* of 10 August, 1863 addressed to the Italian bishops, he said:

"It is known to us and to you that those who are in invincible ignorance of our most holy religion, but who observe carefully the natural law, and the precepts graven by God upon the hearts of all men, and who being disposed to obey God lead an honest and upright life, may, aided by the light of divine grace, attain to eternal life; for God who sees clearly, searches and knows the heart, the disposition, the thoughts and intentions of each, in His supreme mercy and goodness by no means permits that anyone suffer eternal punishment, who has not of his own free will fallen into sin."

These statements are consistent with the understanding of the Church contained in the documents of Vatican II, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as well as explaining why the rigorist position of Fr. Feeney (that all must be actual members of the Catholic Church to be saved) has been condemned by the Magisterium. It is ironic that precisely those who know their obligation to remain united to the Magisterium, and thus on whom this doctrine is morally binding, keep themselves from union with the Roman See on this point.

NO SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

By Fr. William Most

It is a defined doctrine that there is no salvation outside the Church.

Yet, as the Holy Office pointed out in condemning Fr L. Feeney (in Denzinger Number DS 3866 - Denzinger has collected and categorized Church documents and is the standard reference point when referring to Church teachings) we must understand this the way the Church means it, not by private interpretation.

First we find that the Church insists many times over that those who through no fault of their own do not find the Church, but keep the moral law with the help of grace, can be saved:

Lumen gentium (Vatican II) paragraph 16 says: "For they who without their own fault do not know of the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but yet seek God with sincere heart, and try, under the influence of grace, to carry out His will in practice, known to them through the dictate of conscience, can attain eternal salvation." John Paul II in his Encyclical on the Missions (Redemptoris missio) in paragraph 10 says the same [underline added]: "For such people [those who do not formally enter the Church, as in Lumen Gentium 16] salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church." We underline the word "formally" to indicate that there may be something less than formal membership, which yet suffices for salvation. A similar thought is found in Lumen Gentium paragraph 14 which says "they are fully incorporated" who accept all its organization..." We will show presently that there can be a lesser, or substantial membership, which suffices for salvation [But which falls short of full incorporation into His Church].

What should we say about a line in Lumen Gentium paragraph 8? "This Church, in this world as a constituted and ordered society, subsists in the Catholic Church... even though outside its confines many elements of sanctification and truth are found which, as gifts proper to the Church of Christ, impel to Catholic unity."

We must not overlook the words in Lumen Gentium paragraph 8 which speak of "this one and only [unica] Church of Christ, which we profess in the Creed..."

Similarly the Decree on Religious Liberty in paragraph 1 says that "it [this decree] leaves untouched the traditional Catholic doctrine about the duty of men and societies to the true religion and the one and only [unica] Church of Christ."

So there really is only one true Church. But really, we still face a difficulty. It seems that some think that Protestant churches are as it were component parts of the Church of Christ. And they think that follows from the words about "subsisting in" and the statement that elements of sanctification can be found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church.

This does not mean that there are other legitimate forms of Christianity. Pope Gregory XVI (DS 2730. Cf. Pius IX, DS 2915 and Leo XIII, DS 3250) condemned "an evil opinion that souls can attain eternal salvation by just any profession of faith, if their morals follow the right norm."

So although people who do not formally join can be saved, as Lumen Gentium paragraph 16 says, and Redemptoris missio paragraph 10 also says, they are not saved by such a faith. It is in spite of it.

Yet we can account for the words about subsisting in and about finding elements of salvation outside. For this we need the help of the Fathers of the Church.

In this way we find a way of filling in on what the Magisterium teaches.

We begin with St. Justin the Martyr who around 145 A. D. in his Apology 1. 46, said that in the past some who were thought to be atheists, such as Socrates and Heraclitus, were really Christians, for they followed the Divine Logos, the Divine Word. Further, in Apology 2. 10 Justin adds that the Logos is in everyone. Now of course the Logos, being Spirit, does not take up space. We say a spirit is present wherever it produces an effect.

What effect? We find that in St. Paul, in Romans 2:14-16 where he says that "the Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature the works of the law. They show the work of the law written on their hearts," and according to their response, conscience will defend or accuse them at the judgment."

So it is the Logos, the Spirit of Christ, who writes the law on their hearts, that it makes known to them interiorly what they need to do. Some then could follow it without knowing that fact. So Socrates: (1) read and believed what the Spirit wrote in his heart; (2) he had confidence in it; (3) he obeyed it. We see this obedience in the fact that Socrates went so far as to say, as Plato quotes him many times, that the one who seeks the truth must have as little as possible to do with the things of the body.

Let us notice the three things, just enumerated: St. Paul in Romans 3:29 asks: "Is He the God of the Jews only? No, He is also the God of the gentiles." It means that if God made salvation depend on knowing and following the law of Moses, He would act as if He cared for no one but Jews. But God does care for all. Paul insists God makes salvation possible by faith for them (cf. Romans chapter 4). Faith in Paul includes the three things we have enumerated which Socrates did.

So in following that Spirit of Christ Socrates was accepting and following the Spirit of Christ, But then, from Romans 8:9 we gather that if one has and follows the Spirit of Christ, he "belongs to Christ". That is, He is a member of Christ, which in Paul's terms means a member of the Mystical Body, which is the Church.

So Socrates then was a member of the Church, but not formally, only substantially. He could not know the Church. So he was saved, not by his false religious beliefs but in spite of them. He was saved by faith, and similarly Protestants and others who do not formally join the Church today are saved not as members of for example, the Baptist church, which some seem to think is an integral part of the one Church of Christ -- no, they are saved as individuals, who make use of the means of sanctification they are able to find even outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church.

Many other Fathers speak much like St. Justin. A large presentation of them can be found in William Most, *Our Father's Plan*, in a 28 page appendix.

Lumen gentium also likes to speak of the Church as a mystery. This is correct, for it is a mystery, since it is only partly visible. It does have visible structure, and no one who knowingly rejects that can be saved.

It has members visibly adhering. But it also has members who belong to it even without knowing that, and without external explicit adherence. Hence there is much mystery, to be known fully and clearly only at the end.

So all other forms of Christianity are heretical and/or schismatic. They are not legitimate.

The Decree on Ecumenism states that the worship and liturgical actions of other Christian bodies 'can truly engender a life of grace and can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation'.

Here is the actual text of the Decree: "In addition, out of the elements or goods by which, taken together, the Church herself is built up and made alive, certain things, or rather many and excellent things can exist outside the visible bounds of the Catholic Church: The written Word of God, the life of grace, faith, hope and love, and other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit and visible elements: all these things, which come from Christ and lead to Him, belong to the one-only Church of Christ.

Even not a few sacred actions of the Christian religion are carried out among the brothers separated from us... which beyond doubt can really generate the life of grace, and are to be said to be apt to open the entry into the community of salvation."

We notice the things mentioned:

(1) Scripture -- Protestants read it.

(2) The life of grace -- yes, one can reach the state of grace without formally entering the Catholic Church, as Lumen gentium 16 says: "They who without fault do not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but yet seek God with a sincere heart, and try with the help of grace to fulfill his will, known through the dictate of conscience, can attain eternal salvation." Even pagans can do this.

(3) Faith - yes, outsiders can have faith, at least if they are not misled by Luther's great error on what faith is.

(4) Hope and love - again, even a pagan may attain these.

(5) Other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit -- yes, if outsiders reach the state of grace, they also have the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

(6) And visible elements - Baptism if validly given. BUT we must note the next words in the decree: "all these things... belong to the one-only Church of Christ." In other words, it is not a protestant church as protestant that can provide these things - these are things that belong to the Catholic Church, which the Protestants have not completely rejected. So some religious actions are carried out in Protestantism which can really generate the life of grace. Yes, Baptism does that. Reading of Scripture, prayers, and other things enumerated above in the first 6 items can do that. But again, it is not protestant worship as protestant that gives grace -- it is things the Protestants have retained even after breaking with the one-only Church of Christ. As the previous sentence said: "In other words, it is not a protestant church as protestant that can provide these things - these are things that belong to the Catholic Church, which the Protestants have not completely rejected."

So the Decree continues in the next sentence cited above: "they belong to the one-only Church of Christ."

On Salvation Outside the Catholic Church

By Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

SACRAMENT OF SALVATION

The Catholic Church makes claims about herself that are easily misunderstood, especially in the modern atmosphere of pluralism and ecumenism. Among these claims, the most fundamental is the doctrine of the Church's necessity for salvation. Not unlike other dogmas of the faith, this one has seen some remarkable development, and the dogmatic progress has been especially marked since the definition of papal infallibility. It seems that as the Church further clarified her own identity as regards the papacy and collegiality, she also deepened (without changing) her self-understanding as the mediator of salvation to mankind.

The New Testament makes it plain that Christ founded the Church to be a society for the salvation of all men. The ancient Fathers held the unanimous conviction that salvation cannot be achieved outside the Church. St. Irenaeus taught that "where the Church is, there is the spirit of God, and

where the spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace." (Footnote: St. Ireneus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book II, chapter 24, section 1.) Origen simply declared, "Outside the Church nobody will be saved." (Footnote: Origen, *Homilia In Jesu Nave*, 3, 5.) And the favorite simile in patristic literature for the Church's absolute need to be saved is the Ark of Noah, outside of which there is no prospect of deliverance from the deluge of sin.

Alongside this strong insistence on the need for belonging to the Church was another Tradition from the earliest times that is less well known. It was understandable that the early Christian writers would emphasize what is part of revelation, that Christ founded "the Catholic Church which alone retains true worship. This is the fountain of truth; this, the home of faith; this, the temple of God." (Footnote: Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, Book IV, chapter 30, section 1.) They were combating defections from Catholic unity and refuting the heresies that divided Christianity in the Mediterranean world and paved the way for the rise of Islam in the seventh century.

But they also had the biblical narrative of the "pagan" Cornelius who, the Acts tell us, was "an upright and God-fearing man" even before baptism. Gradually, therefore, as it became clear that there were "God-fearing" people outside the Christian fold, and that some were deprived of their Catholic heritage without fault on their part, the parallel Tradition arose of considering such people open to salvation, although they were not professed Catholics or even necessarily baptized. Ambrose and Augustine paved the way for making these distinctions. By the twelfth century, it was widely assumed that a person can be saved if some "invincible obstacle stands in the way" of his baptism and entrance into the Church.

Thomas Aquinas restated the constant teaching about the general necessity of the Church. But he also conceded that a person may be saved extra-sacramentally by a baptism of desire and therefore without actual membership by reason of his at least implicit desire to belong to the Church.

It would be inaccurate, however, to look upon these two traditions as in opposition. They represent the single mystery of the Church as universal sacrament of salvation, which the Church's Magisterium has explained in such a way that what seems to be a contradiction is really a paradox.

Since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 defined that "The universal Church of the faithful is one, outside of which no one is saved," there have been two solemn definitions of the same doctrine, by Pope Boniface VIII in 1302 and at the Council of Florence in 1442. At the Council of Trent, which is commonly looked upon as a symbol of Catholic unwillingness to compromise, the now familiar dogma of baptism by desire was solemnly defined; and it was this Tridentine teaching that supported all subsequent recognition that actual membership in the Church is not required to reach one's eternal destiny.

At the Second Council of the Vatican, both streams of doctrine were delicately welded into a composite whole:

[The Council] relies on sacred Scripture and Tradition in teaching that this pilgrim Church is necessary for salvation. Christ alone is the mediator of salvation and the way of salvation. He presents himself to us in his Body, which is the Church. When he insisted expressly on the necessity for faith and baptism, he asserted at the same time the necessity for the Church which men would enter by the gateway of baptism. This means that it would be impossible for men to be saved if they refused to enter or to remain in the Catholic Church, unless they were unaware that her foundation by God through Jesus Christ made it a necessity.

Full incorporation in the society of the Church belongs to those who are in possession of the Holy Spirit, accept its order in its entirety with all its established means of salvation, and are united to Christ, who rules it by the agency of the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops, within its visible framework. The bonds of their union are the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and fellowship. Despite incorporation in the Church, that man is not saved who fails to persevere in charity, and remains in the bosom of the Church "with his body" but not "with his heart." All the Church's children must be sure to ascribe their distinguished rank to Christ's special grace and not to their own deserts. If they fail to correspond with that grace in thought, word and deed, so far from being saved, their judgment will be the more severe. (Footnote: Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, II, 14.)

Using this conciliar doctrine as guide, we see that the Church is (in its way) as indispensable as Christ for man's salvation. The reason is that, since his ascension and the descent of the Spirit, the Church is Christ active on earth performing the salvific work for which he was sent into the world by the Father. Accordingly, the Church is necessary not only as a matter of precept but as a divinely instituted means, provided a person knows that he must use this means to be saved.

Actual incorporation into the Church takes place by baptism of water. Those who are not actually baptized may, nevertheless, be saved through the Church according to their faith in whatever historical revelation they come to know and in their adequate cooperation with the internal graces of the Spirit they receive.

On both counts, however, whoever is saved owes his salvation to the one Catholic Church founded by Christ. It is to this Church alone that Christ entrusted the truths of revelation which have by now, though often dimly, penetrated all the cultures of mankind. It is this Church alone that communicates the merits won for the whole world on the cross.

Those who are privileged to share in the fullness of the Church's riches of revealed wisdom, sacramental power, divinely assured guidance, and blessings of community life cannot pride themselves on having deserved what they possess. Rather they should humbly recognize their chosen position and gratefully live up to the covenant to which they have been called. Otherwise what began as a sign of God's special favor on earth may end as a witness to his justice in the life to come.

{From: The Catholic Catechism, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1975, pp. 234-236}

Father Hardon is a superb writer, a great thinker, and, many believe, a very holy saint of God. You can access much more of his writings and thought at this site:

<http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/archives.htm#nav>

The Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Archives

A Tribute to Dave Armstrong, Catholic Apologist Founder of the BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR CATHOLICISM web-site

Dave Armstrong writes

I was received into the Catholic Church in 1991 (I was evangelical); My conversion story is in the book Surprised by Truth (1994). Articles I have written have been included in: The Catholic Answer, This Rock, Envoy, and The Coming Home Journal. I have made many nationally-syndicated Catholic radio appearances including Catholic Answers Live and Faith and Family Live.

My website, Biblical Evidence for Catholicism, was online from March 1997 to March 2007. This new blog and website began in February 2004 & contains more than 2550 papers (including more than 50 separate web pages and 650+ dialogues). Sophia Institute Press has published four of my twenty books: A Biblical Defense of Catholicism (2003), The Catholic Verses (2004), The One-Minute Apologist (2007), and Bible Proofs for Catholic Truths (2009). I am co-author (with Dr. Paul Thigpen) of the inserts for The New Catholic Answer Bible (Our Sunday Visitor: 2005), & editor for The Wisdom of Mr. Chesterton: The Very Best Quotes, Quips, and Cracks from the Pen of G. K. Chesterton (Saint Benedict Press / TAN Books: 2009). I am happily married to Judy since October 1984 and have three sons & a daughter.

CONCLUSION

All of our writers have hoped to show you, dear reader that it is the Catholic Church which can provide you with a clear path through the forest of life, the forest of Biblical confusion, and is able to lead you into the uplands of God's heavenly Kingdom. It was for this reason that Our Lord and Saviour gave as his Church, "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (First Timothy 3:15)
