

“There are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:7-12). St. Paul, therefore, strictly forbids any change of the gospel, which he preached. All the Apostles preached that gospel long before the New Testament was written. It included a great deal more than the fragmentary narratives contained in the New Testament. At the end of his gospel, St. John expressly says, “But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (Jn. 21:25). St. Paul admonishes the Thessalonians, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thess. 2:14). “Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us” 2 Tim. 1:13-14).

Really, it is incomprehensible that any educated person can hold that the Bible is the sole rule of faith, and that reason, and private opinion is the sole interpreter. St. Paul emphasizes the necessity to *stand fast* and *to hold the traditions*, not to listen to another gospel, not to be tossed to and fro, and carried away by every wind of doctrine. “Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds” (Eph. 4:17).

The true Church positively teaches with divine authority what we must believe and do in order to be saved. Our private opinion must be in conformity with the tenets of the infallible Church. It would be the height of arrogance to presume that God's teachings and God's means of salvation should depend upon their being accepted or rejected by a poor sinner. God teaches and we must believe. He commands and we must obey. He points out the way of salvation and we must follow His directions.

The authority to teach and to command Jesus Christ lodged with the Apostles and their rightful successors in office. Our duty is to believe and obey. This is the ordinance or rule of faith established by God. No person, not even an angel from heaven, has the right to interpret Holy Scripture in any sense different from the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

Any denomination maintaining that the Bible is the sole rule of faith and conceding to every fallible person the right to interpret the written revelations as he pleases is essentially different from the Church which Jesus Christ founded and of which St. Paul was one of the Apostles.

“Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1:4-6).

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Pamphlet 334

The Catholic Church

Jesus Christ the Originator of Christianity and the Founder of the Catholic Church

Hundreds of years before the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth to Him at Bethlehem and the angels of heaven and a wonderful star announced His advent, the divinely inspired prophets of all specifically and in much detail foretold the signs of the time, the circumstances of the birth, and the entire life story of Jesus Christ.

The elements of nature obeyed His voice: He calmed the storm on the sea, changed water into wine, twice miraculously multiplied the loaves of bread, and heal all kinds of disease. The bouncing waves of the raging sea served Him as a solid pathway as He walked over them and hastened to His frightened disciples. “It is I; do not be afraid” (Jn. 6:20).

He spoke with divine authority as He pointed out the way of salvation. Even His enemies declared, “No man ever spoke like this man!” (Jn. 7:46). “And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” Matt. 7:28-29).

Jesus drove out evil spirits. “And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ” (Lk 4:41).

“And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him” (Matt. 10:1-4).

These twelve Apostles Jesus sent out to preach His gospel, to help in saving souls. He appointed St. Peter as the visible head of the entire Church. When St. Peter made a public profession of his faith and said to Jesus, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death * shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:16-19).

At the sea of Tiberius in the presence of Thomas, Nathaniel, John and James, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.” (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, “Follow me” (Jn. 21:15-17). Lambs and sheep constitute the entire flock. Jesus loved to call himself the Good Shepherd. St. Peter was to feed His flock, that is to say, St. Peter was appointed by Him to be the visible supreme head of the Church.

Jesus founded one Church. He called it the Kingdom of Heaven and compared it to a

vineyard, to a grain of mustard-seed, to a garden, to a field, to a sheepfold, to a flock, to a net, to a banquet, to a house built on a mountaintop. All these figures, as well as His direct words to St. Peter, indicate that His Church is one. He founded one Church only for the salvation of the world. As a matter of fact, every student of the Bible must know that Christ established but one Church. After Jesus had labored and preached and manifested His divinity by miracles, He was sentenced to death because of His assertion, “I am the Son of God” (Matt 27:43). He died for the redemption of the world. As He had repeatedly foretold, He by His own omnipotence rose on the third day from the dead. By His glorious resurrection He gave to the world convincing proof that He is God. For forty days after His resurrection He appeared to His disciples and spoke to them of the Kingdom of God, of the coming of the Holy Spirit, of the primacy of St. Peter, and of many other important things.

Shortly before His ascension into heaven Jesus said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Jesus is with His Church. Hence His Church must last to the end of the world. It must continue throughout all time. If so, then His Church is still in existence. And so it is. History bears witness to the fact that the Church, which Jesus founded, is still extant. The Church, which Jesus founded, is the only divine Church, is the only one, which can save mankind. His Church is God-made, all other churches are man-made. They are human in origin and in effect. All who earnestly desire to be saved must belong to the Church, which Jesus Christ instituted and of which He plainly said, “The gates of hell would not prevail against it.”

It will not do to say that the Church of which the Apostles were the first bishops and teachers,

was the true Church, no that Church continues to be the only true Church. Jesus remains with it. “Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world.” Neither may any person belonging to a new religion imagine that his church can save him, because it bears some resemblance to the Church Jesus founded almost 2,000 years ago. No, the saving Church is not *like* it, but is *identical* with the Church of which Jesus is the founder. God established only one Church for the salvation of mankind. In that Church all the necessary means of salvation are found. Whosoever refuses to be a loyal member of the true Church and thus deliberately deprives himself of the means of salvation will be lost. “He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:15-16).

A purely natural organization, started by man, can never produce supernatural results. That is the true Church of which the incarnate Son of God is the founder, which bears the undeniable mark of historical continuity. It is the same Church with the same unalterable doctrines, the same necessary and helpful means of grace, the same divine sacraments, the same holy sacrifice of the Mass and everything the same which Jesus Christ ordained as necessary for salvation. The visible head of that Church must be the legitimate successor of St. Peter, vested with the same authority to feed the entire flock of Christ. Above all, the true Church must date back to Christ. Any church, which is of a later date, is not the Church, which Jesus founded, not the one which is to continue all days to the end of time. In matters of religion it will no do simply to follow the fashion of the day, as so many seem to think. There is only one saving Church, which Jesus founded almost 2,000 years ago. “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matt. 18:17).