

Other Parts of the Christian Tree

Roman Catholicism
Eastern Orthodoxy



<https://www.biblword.net/what-is-christianity-about/>

Can Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox be Christians? Yes-Those who receive Jesus Christ as their personal savior will be saved.

Weekly Homework Guide

Week Two-Roman Catholicism

What's The Difference?

By Fritz Ridenour

- **Sola Scriptura** means “Scripture alone.” Sola Scriptura was a major battle cry of the Protestant Reformation.
- During the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Roman Catholic Church rebuffed Sola Scriptura of the Protestant reformation and retained the right and power to interpret the Holy Scriptures according to what it believed the Bible said.

Questions

1. Read Matthew 16:13-20
 - a. What do you think Jesus meant when He told Peter that upon *this* rock I will build My church?

 - b. What do you think Jesus meant when He told Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven would be given to him?
2. How do you think the Council of Trent interpreted this scripture passage?
3. How do you think the Protestant Reformers of the 16th century interpreted this passage?
4. Read Ephesians 2:8-10
 - a. How are we saved from sin?

 - b. Do *works* play a role in the salvation process? Explain.

So What's The Difference By: Fritz Ridenour

Chapter Two: Roman Catholicism: The One True Church?



<http://h0lytrinity.blogspot.com/2012/03/is-roman-catholic-doctrine-of-virgin.html>

- PLUMB LINE: 1 Cor. 15:3,4

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...he was buried...he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Sola Scriptura or the Bible Plus Tradition?

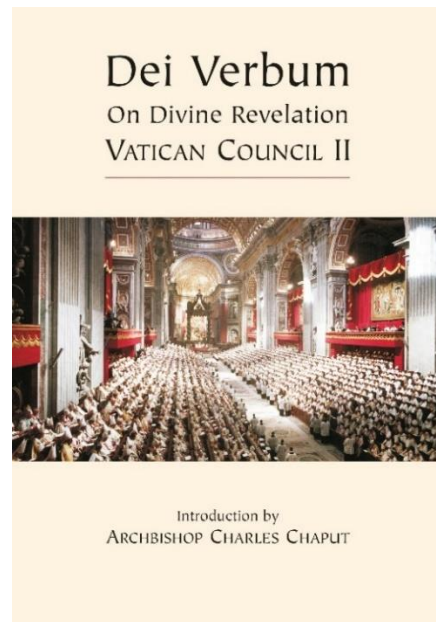
Question one: What is Sola Scriptura?

- **Sola Scriptura** means "Scripture alone" and was one of the major battle cries of the Protestant Reformation
- Council of Trent (1545-1563)-The Roman Catholic Church rebuffed Sola Scriptura of the Protestant reformation and retained the right and power to **interpret** the Holy Scriptures according to what it believed the Bible said.



<http://hoyenhistoria.blogspot.com/2015/01/january-26-council-of-trent-explains.html>

- During Vatican Council II (1962-1965), the claims of Trent were simply upheld in a little different form.
- Among the Vatican Council II documents is the “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” (**Dei Verbum**).



<https://www.ctsbooks.org/product/dei-verbum/>

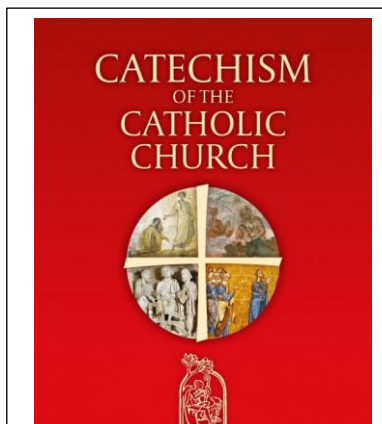
- This recognizes the Catholic Church assumes the correct approach to Scripture plus the traditions handed down from Catholic bishops (Sacred Tradition).

Question Two: Why is Sola Scriptura so important?

- Evangelical Protestants believe that all the things we need to know, believe and practice are clearly stated in the Scriptures, which are given by **inspiration** of God.
- Roman Catholics maintain that the Bible is a “church-based book” since the Church wrote or at least determined what comprised the New Testament.
- Evangelical Protestants say the Church discovered the New Testament as the **Holy Spirit** made clear which writings were authoritative and inspired.

Read Scripture, Yes-Interpret It, No

- The Dei Verbum document states that the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and **interpreting** the Word of God.
- Matthew 16:13-20 gives the Catholic Church the claim for scriptural interpretation
- “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this **rock** I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
- According to the **Catechism** of the Catholic Church, Jesus named Peter the “rock” of his Church.



<https://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/books/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/>

- The Roman Catholic Church feels that Peter and the other apostles are the foundation of the Church.
- Therefore, all authority rests within the Roman Catholic Church.
- Jesus does not say directly that He will build his Church upon **Peter** himself, but upon “this rock.”
- The Greek text clearly refers to Peter as **petros** (meaning a small stone) and to “this rock” as *petra* (meaning a very large Gibraltar-size rock).

Saved by Faith or Faith Plus “Works”?

- Protestants rely on **sola fide** (faith alone) for their source of salvation.
- The Catholic believes that the Christian must rely on faith plus good works.
- The Seven **Sacraments**:
 - **Baptism**-erases original sin. The believer keeps sanctifying grace only through “spiritual battle” (good works)
 - **Confirmation**-Filling of the Holy Spirit-this happens at age 12
 - **The Holy Eucharist**-Holy Communion-transubstantiation (elements are transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ)



<https://denvercatholic.org/a-deeper-desire-for-the-eucharist/>

- **Penance**-confession of sins to a priest and the reconciliation for those sins by the sinner
- **Anointing of the Sick**-formerly called extreme Unction-prayer and anointing of the sick or dying believer in the faith of the Church
- **Holy Orders**-Catholic ministers are ordained at three levels: bishops, presbyters (**priests**) and deacons
- **Matrimony-marriage**-divorce and remarriage cut the Catholic off from Eucharistic communion but not from the Church

- The Holy Eucharist and Penance are two very significant **differences** between the Protestants and Roman Catholics.
- Christians do not need continuing forgiveness (Heb. 9:27-10:14)
- Christians do not need **penances**-Catholics believe in “mortal sins” (grave offenses) and “venial” sin (less serious offenses).
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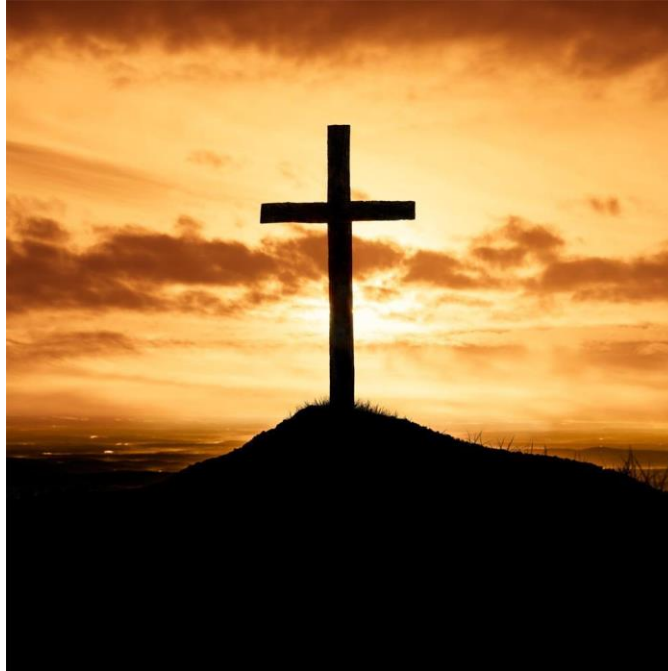
<https://www.catholic365.com/article/6357/the-sacrament-of-penance-and-sanctifying-grace.html>

- Romans 3:23 states that all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace (Eph. 2:8-10).
- Our works are a result of our faith.

How do Catholics view salvation?

- Catholics believe that Christ's blood has become the instrument of **atonement** for the sins of all men. However, they insist that faith in what Christ did on the cross in and of itself is not enough.

Christ's Atonement for Sin



<https://www.cruciformcoc.com/sermons/the-cross-is-at-the-center/>

- Catholics believe that justification and sanctification are the same process.
- Faith in Christ is the beginning of salvation which lays the foundation for justification. The Catholic will then build on this foundation by doing **good works**.
- Justification translates in the Greek as dikaios-this means “to recognize” or “to be declared righteous”
- Salvation comes by only one way-**faith** in what Christ did for them on the cross (Rom. 3:21; 10:4; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9; John 5:24; John 3:16; John 6:25-29)
- This will clear up misconceptions of James 2:14-26
- Faith is not just a declaration of the mouth (James 2:19)

How do Catholics and Protestants View Sanctification?

- Protestants see sanctification as the progressive work of growing in Christ and becoming a **mature** Christian.
- Works are very important to the evangelical Protestant and to the Roman Catholic, but each views works differently.

- Evangelical Protestants believe they are fully **justified** (declared righteous) through faith in Christ and that this naturally leads to the fruit of good works, as they grow in the Christian life as God has planned for them to do (Eph. 2:8-10).
- Catholics, however, do not believe that faith alone provides justification but that they must **work** for justification all their lives.
- Catholics blend justification and sanctification together as one process.

What is Purgatory?

- Catholics believe that they do not pay sufficiently the temporal punishment for their sins through their acts of penance while on earth. They still expect to face punishment for sins in **purgatory**, a special place of cleansing where payment for sins is completed and believers are made fit for heaven.



<https://aspoonfulofsugardesign.blogspot.com/2021/07/purgatory-prayers-help-10000-souls.html>

- Part of the Catholic reasoning for purgatory is that, because sinners have failed to make themselves perfect, they could not be happy with an all-perfect God (Rev. 21:27)
- Purgatory is not a torture chamber but is a place where the soul submits to the burning, purifying love of God.
- The soul sheds itself of immature self-love, and the real self emerges **perfected**.

What are indulgences?

- Catholics believe those in purgatory cannot help themselves, but Catholics left back on Earth can enable them to obtain heaven more quickly by praying for

them, offering Mass for them and doing forms of good works, which includes gaining **indulgences**.



<https://www.catholicsun.org/2020/10/28/vatican-extends-time-to-obtain-full-indulgences-for-souls-in-purgatory/>

- According to the Catechism, those seeking indulgences want to shorten their own or someone else's time in purgatory.
- Prayers and **good deeds** are two acts that can be endowed with the privilege of indulgences.
- The Catholic Church uses the power originally given to Peter to bind and loose **sins** (Matt. 16:19).
- Since the church is built upon "Peter," the Church can intervene in favor of individual Christians by opening for them a "treasury" of the merits of Christ and the saints.
- Indulgences means that God is "**indulging**" (being kind to) by giving the believer from an inexhaustible supply of spiritual merits that have accumulated in the Church's treasury through the work of Christ and the prayers and good works of the Virgin Mary and the saints.
- An indulgence is a kind of "pardon for sin" that can be partial or complete.
- A complete indulgence can be granted only by the **pope**.
- A partial indulgence can be granted by bishops, archbishops and cardinals.

- These partial indulgences are usually expressed in units of time-days or years.
- These indulgences **lessen** the time that one will stay in purgatory.

How do Catholics view Mary?

- Early Catholic teachings stated that Mary's **virginity** continued after the birth of Jesus and that she never had any more children.
- Other traditional doctrines include the **Immaculate Conception** (Mary was conceived without sin and lived a sinless life); and the Assumption (Mary was taken up body and soul directly to heaven)
- Beginning in the late nineteenth and continuing into the twentieth century, Mary has held the position as co-mediator with Christ between God and man.

Major differences between Roman Catholics and Evangelical Protestants

- Catholics claim that Scripture and "Sacred Tradition" are **equal** in authority.



<https://thoughtsandprayersforthefaithful.com/2021/07/21/a-motu-proprio-from-pope-francis-on-the-celebration-of-the-latin-mass>

- Protestants say the Bible is the sole guide for faith and practice 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 John 1:9; Romans 3:23-28; Eph. 2:8-9)
- Rome says the teaching authority of the Roman Church has been entrusted to **interpret** the Bible for Catholics, who are not to interpret it for themselves.
- Protestants say that individual Christians can trust the **Holy Spirit** for guidance as they read and interpret the Bible for themselves (John 14:26:2 Tim 3:14-17)

- Catholics teach that Peter was the first pope, and that through apostolic succession other popes have succeeded him each serving as “vicar (substitute or agent of Christ)”
- Protestants believe that Christ is the **foundation** for the church (Catholics misunderstand Matt. 16:19). Peter is translated petros (detached stone) while this “rock” is translated petra (bedrock)
- Catholics teach that the pope is **infallible** when he speaks on matters of faith and morals
- Protestants reply that no human being is infallible, and only Christ is head of the Church (Rom 3:23; Eph. 1:22)
- Catholics claim that salvation is secured by faith in Christ **plus** good works and grace conferred through the seven sacraments of the Church.
- Protestants reply that salvation is secured through **faith alone** in Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross (Rom 3:24; Eph. 2:8,9; John 3:16)



<http://www.skepticalthayne.com/?p=294>

- Catholics blend justification and sanctification into one process, as the believer must work to merit eternal life.
- Protestants believe God justifies the believer by declaring him or her righteous, and that sanctification is a **lifelong** process of becoming holy as God works within. (2 Tim 3:14-17; Eph. 2:8-9)
- Catholics believe they cannot pay for all their sins in this life, and at death they go to **purgatory** for an undetermined time to be made totally fit for heaven.
- Protestants, believing they are justified by faith in Christ and nothing else, trust that they will go straight to heaven where sanctification is complete in Christ’s presence. (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 1:23-24)

Group Discussion Questions

Week Two-Roman Catholicism

Discussion Questions

1. Catholics believe that Matthew 16:13-20 gives the Catholic Church the claim for scriptural interpretation.

Jesus states in John 16:13, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

- A. Jesus claims that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. Do you believe one can understand scripture by relying only upon the Holy Spirit?
 - B. Why do many religions claim their church is the only entity that can interpret the scriptures?
 - C. Have you ever had a discussion with someone from a different faith? Explain.
2. Paul states in 2nd Corinthians 5:6-8, "Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-for we walk by faith, not by sight-we are of good courage. I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."
 - A. Does the above passage suggest that there will be a waiting period after death?
 - B. How does Purgatory fit in with the above passage?
 - C. Have you ever had discussions with someone about life after death? Explain.
 3. Romans 3:23 states, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
 - A. How does the infallibility of the Pope fit in with the above scripture?
 - B. Does God elevate some believers over others?
 - C. Have you ever felt less of a Christian than someone else? Is this scriptural? Explain?