

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

A POSITION PAPER ON ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Jesus Christ exhorts His people to be “the salt of the earth,” and warns that savorless salt is worthless (Matthew 5:13). Salt is distinctive and contrasts with other seasonings — it enhances, but is never overwhelmed. Although it is an irritant in a wound, it cleanses and heals.

Our Saviour also said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). We believe that truth must be proclaimed even when the established religious community minimizes the importance of doctrinal exactness. That is how the “salt” retains its savor.

We have only love for Roman Catholics who, like Protestants, need the liberating truth of God’s Word. Since the theological system of Roman Catholicism is incompatible with historic Christian orthodoxy, Roman Catholic families seeking admission to HCS are entitled to an explanation.

To resolve this matter would fill volumes. Therefore, only a few highly important contradictions will be cited.

PRAYER

Roman Catholicism teaches that Mary and deceased saints intercede for men, maintaining that we should offer prayers unto God through them. This is in stark contrast to what Scripture teaches. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5). Christ taught that “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). To teach that someone may reach God via Mary (or any other person) – when Christ taught that He is the only way to the Father – deceives people and sends them to a source which cannot help.

THE MASS

The Mass is central to Roman Catholic ritual and is presented as nothing less than the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. “In the Mass, no less than on Calvary, Jesus really offers his life to his heavenly Father” (*The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism*, question 1269). Scripture teaches that “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:28). From the cross Jesus Christ said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), signifying that His work and sacrifice were complete, that nothing more was needed. To teach that Christ is offered again in the Mass sharply disagrees with His words. It diminishes Christ’s work and looks away from Calvary, focusing instead on a daily ritual and an imagined physical presence of Christ in bread and wine.

SALVATION

Scripture teaches that “the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:4-5). “For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Roman Catholicism explicitly teaches that sins are cleansed and guilt removed by religious rituals performed by men. “What are the effects of baptism? The effects of baptism are the removal of the guilt of sin and all punishment due to sin, conferral of the grace of regeneration and the infused virtues, incorporation into Christ and his Church, receiving the baptismal character and the right to heaven” (*The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism*, question 1151).

SCRIPTURE

How has the Roman Church strayed so far from Scripture’s clear teaching? The digression has come via the error of “sacred tradition.” Catholicism teaches that “both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are the inspired word of God, and both are forms of divine revelation. Sacred Scripture is divinely inspired writing, whereas Sacred Tradition is the unwritten word of inspired persons” (*The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism*, question 60). But Scripture itself concludes with the warning that adding to God’s Word is a serious, damning error. “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18).

The Pharisees of Christ’s day established sacred traditions which they enforced as Scripture. Christ’s indictment of them is appropriate today: “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matthew 15:6).

In recent decades great efforts have been made to unite Protestantism and Catholicism in religious endeavors. Irreconcilable doctrinal distinctions have been ignored in the name of charity and morality. Ultimately, that compromise is neither charitable nor moral.

Scripture is the ultimate authority in defining morality. To ignore scriptural truth for the sake of unity, and to condone a unity which Scripture condemns, is immoral. And to instruct others to ignore or violate Scripture in any matter is uncharitable. Doctrinal exactness is a necessary first principle in any Christian endeavor.

When man-made notions of morality are substituted for doctrine, those who strive for theological precision are said to be “out of step” with the religious mainstream . . . but that precision is the very essence of the believer’s “saltiness.”

The Evangelical Methodist Church and its ministries are, without apology, “out of step” with today’s religious mainstream. We celebrate the Protestant Reformation and honor the spiritual leaders who exposed error and paid dearly, even with their very lives.

At Harford Christian School, we warn our students of the disobedience and spiritual danger inherent in modern ecumenism. Our emphasis is to carefully and meticulously research the truth and not to give any credence to anyone who contradicts God’s Word.

We encourage the reader to research the distinctions that separate Catholicism from historic orthodoxy. The reading materials are numerous and we will gladly provide and/or recommend sources.