

CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS

Has anyone ever been asked “Have you been saved?” or “have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?”

Has anyone ever had the Jehovah Witness’s knock on your door?

Has anyone ever been verbally attacked because of your Catholic beliefs?

Has anyone ever heard somebody make fun of and attack the Catholic Church? We see this on TV, the internet, at school, and ect.

Has anyone every wished that they knew more so that they could defend our Church and what we believe?

Has anyone ever had to defend a Catholic belief to a friend or relative?

If you answered Yes to any of these then you should become familiar with **CATHOLIC APOLOGTEICS!**

What is apologetics? Apologetics is a reasoned defense of something. In this case, apologetics is explaining and defending our Catholic faith to others. Today we are seeing Christianity attacked by the secular world. We must be able to defend our beliefs against everyone!

1Peter 3:15, "Be ready always with an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope that is within you."

Why should I become interested in apologetics? So we can teach, explain, defend, and spread our Catholic faith to others. By learning Catholic apologetics we also learn more about our Faith and become more familiar with the Bible.

We Learn:

10% of what we read.

20% of what we hear.

30% of what we see.

50% of what we both see and hear.

70% of what is discussed with others.

80% of what we experience personally.

95% of what we TEACH to someone else.

Clearly, **TEACHING** is by far the best way to learn... → Apologetics!

How do I practice & learn catholic apologetics? You learn apologetics by reading the Bible, The Catechism of The Catholic Church, and other Catholic books . There are also many other resources such as Catholic Radio/TV, your local parish priest, and various Catholic websites which are very useful for learning what the Catholic Church Teaches. You don't have to know everything to use apologetics.

What if I don't know the Bible all that well? You might be surprised how much of the Bible you already know since as a Catholic you hear various parts of it every time you attend Mass. You don't have to memorize the Bible to practice and apply apologetics, but you need to understand what the Bible actually says and what it doesn't say.

What if I am asked a question or quoted a scripture verse that I can't explain? Don't worry, there is an answer. The easiest thing to do is to say "I don't know the answer, but I will find out and get back with you". Just remember, our Catholic faith does not contradict the bible and there is always a logical answer for even the most difficult question. Read the verses you are quoted because they are probably being interpreted wrong.

What is the best way to use apologetics? When using apologetics to defend our faith we should always be polite and courteous to the other person. Never get angry or insult their religious affiliation. Even if you explain your Catholic views to someone he/she may not really be open to hearing what you have to say.

Things to remember when engaging in Apologetics:

The Bible is a Catholic “Book”. The Church compiled it. There is nothing in it which contradicts our Faith.

History is on our side. The Documents of the Early Church and the Writings of the Saints prove that our Faith is the same Faith that has been handed down since Jesus established His Church.

Most Protestants don't know as many Bible verse as you think! You know more than you realize!

Always read any Bible verse quoted to you. You'll find that the verse is being misread or being read out of context.

A few last things.....

Don't be offended when someone confronts you on a Catholic teaching. More than likely the person is just concerned about your salvation. This is a good thing. Again, your job as a Catholic is to explain to the best of your ability what the Catholic

Church actually teaches. Most non-catholics do not really understand what the Catholic Church teaches.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen "There are not more than 100 people in the world who truly hate the Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they perceive to be the Catholic Church."

Many times when you are discussing our Faith with non-Catholics you will get asked a question and before you can even finish giving the answer to the question you will be asked another question and then another. Do not move onto another topic until you are happy with your answer to their question.

A protestant wants to be a good protestant for the same reasons that a good catholic wants to be a good Catholic; that is they love Christ and want to be fully united with him. Before someone converts they must understand that they will not lose anything by becoming a Catholic, but instead they will be entering into a deeper relationship with Christ through the Church which he founded.

When we discuss our faith with non-Catholics we should keep in mind that only the Holy Spirit can move someone to convert to the Catholic Church. All we can hope to do is to instill in their mind that there is more to Christianity than their current faith tradition offers.

Pray! Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you when you are defending your Catholic Faith!

So.....Tonight we are going to Practice Apologetics!

- We will split up into groups.
- Your group will be asked a question in which you will have to defend our Catholic beliefs.
- Your group will be given bible verses and other information which you will use to come up with a response defending the Catholic belief.
- Tonight we will deal with mostly with questions we might get from Protestants.
- Recall that in general most Protestants believe that the Bible is the Sole Rule of Faith (Sola Scriptura) and that once you are saved (Sola Fide) you cannot lose your salvation. Both of these theologies were created by Martin Luther when he split from the Catholic Church.
- **When you answer a question you can always approach the question in three ways:**
 1. **Common sense approach** (No Scripture used).
 2. **Biblical Defense** (Use Scripture verses to defend the Catholic Position).
 3. **Ask them a question** when we are done answering their question!

Best way is to answer a question is by using all three approaches. May not be possible if you are talking to an atheist, agnostic, Muslim, Jehovah Witness, Mormon, etc....

EXAMPLE:

First..... I want to show you an example of Apologetics and what is expected of your group:

You will be asked a question like: Why do you Catholics worship statues when the Bible states that you should not worship any image? “Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:4).

Catholic Response:

Common Sense Approach:

- Having or making images does not go against scripture and does not equate to worshipping idols. Statues in Catholic Churches are simply art that reminds us of Jesus, The Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and other saints and angles. Catholics do not worship these statues in any way. We all have photos of our family members, but we obviously do not worship the photo or the family member. Catholic statues and art simply remind us of our heavenly family members.

Notice no Bible verses were used in this defense.

Biblical Response:

- “And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.” (Num 21:8-9)
- “On them he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold evenly applied upon the carved work.” (1 Kings 6:35)
- “and on the panels that were set in the frames were lions, oxen, and cherubim. Upon the frames, both above and below the lions and oxen, there were wreaths of beveled work.” (1 Kings 7:29) Solomon's temple: statues and images.

Follow up questions:

- Can you show me any Catholic document that says we are to worship statues?
- If God demanded that certain images be made what is wrong with our statues?
- Don't you have pictures of your family members in your house? Mary, the saints, and the Angels are all part of our Heavenly family!

- Do you put up a Nativity scene at Christmas? If so, do you worship the figurines?

Question: Why do you Catholics worship a piece of bread on Sunday? I know you believe that the bread turns into Jesus' body but that cannot happen. It's only a symbol of the last supper and there's no way we can actually eat the Body of Christ!

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is bread which comes down from heaven that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, "Truly truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed'" (John 6:47-55).

"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever." This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. (John 6:56-64)

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant of my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats

and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died". (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

(Last supper) "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."(Luke 22:19-20)

" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24:35-36)

(Last supper) "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28).

Are you saying that God cannot turn bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ if He wanted to?

Didn't the early Christians die for this belief?

There is evidence in history: Saint Justin Martyr was a Christian apologist, born in A.D. 100. He converted to Christianity in A.D. 130 and taught and defended the Christian religion in Asia Minor and at Rome, where he suffered martyrdom about the year 165. In his work titled "First Apology" which was addressed to the Roman Emperor, he defended the beliefs of the early Church and explained what happened during Christian worship. During the Early Church, Christians were persecuted by the Romans and accused of practicing cannibalism because they ate and drank of the Body and Blood of Christ. Saint Justin Martyr, in his "First Apology" explains to the Roman Emperor the practices of the Church, specifically the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. His writings clearly show that the early Church believed that the Eucharist was the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ just as the Catholic Church teaches and believes today.

Excerpt from the First Apology (AD 130) of St Justin Martyr (Ch 66): This food is called among us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation.

Question: Why do you Catholics believe that Mary was sinless? Mary was just a sinner like you and me. There is nothing in the Bible that states that Mary was sinless and after all doesn't Paul state in Romans that "all have sinned" and "none is righteous" so therefore Mary couldn't have been born free from original sin.

Paul is quoting the Old Testament here (Psalms 14:3 - "They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none that does good, no, not one.") which talks about the evildoers who do wrong and are sinners and that there is also Gods people who are righteous. Paul is obviously talking about evildoers and not all people. Later in Rom 3 Paul talks about the Generation of the righteous.

"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Luke 1:41-43).

"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name'" (Luke 1:46-49).

"for he who is mighty has done great things for me" (Luke 1:49) May Speaking..

"the prayer of a righteous man has great power in it's effect" (James 5:16)

"Hail, full of Grace! The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28) The Angle Gabriel speaking to Mary.

Martin Luther had the belief of Mary's Immaculate Conception, Luther's words: "It is a sweet and pious belief that the infusion of Mary's soul was effected without original sin; so that in the very infusion of her soul she was also purified from original sin and adorned with God's gifts, receiving a pure soul infused by God; thus from the first moment she began to live she was free from all sin" (Sermon: "On the Day of the Conception of the Mother of God," 1527).

Don't we inherit original sin from our parents? If Mary was born with original sin then wouldn't Jesus have been born with original sin?

Mary was the Mother of God (Jesus). If you could create your own mother as Jesus did would you create her with or without sin?

God created Adam and Eve without sin so doesn't it make sense that he also created Mary the Mother of Christ without sin as well.

Isn't Mary, who brought Jesus our savior into this world, greater than Eve who brought sin into this world.

God would never allow Mary to be susceptible to the temptations of the devil and therefore able to commit sin. It makes no sense that God would have allowed Mary to commit sins since she was Jesus' mother and caregiver. It makes perfect sense that God protected Mary from the devil by creating her without the stain of original sin.

Objection: You Catholic shouldn't call your Priest "Father". It goes against what the Bible says.

Calling a priest Father does not conflict with Matt. 23:9. We are not putting the priest above God, but simply using the word "Father" to mean teacher or spiritual father.

Have you ever called your Dad "Father"? When you did were you putting your earthly Father above God?

There are 124 instances in the Bible where the word "father" is used to describe someone other than God.

Matt 23:9 is simply a re-statement of the first commandment "You shall have no other gods besides me".

St. Paul calls Abraham father in (Rom 4:12): "and likewise the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but also follow the example of the faith which our father Abraham had before he was circumcised."

St Paul says in (1 Cor 4:15): "For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Paul is referring to himself as a spiritual father not God.

"And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopota'mia, before he lived in Haran," (Acts 7:2)

Objection: I could never be a Catholic because the Catholic Church teaches that we must work our way into heaven. I believe that all we must do is to believe and have faith. Works have nothing to do with salvation. We are saved by Faith Alone. I was saved when I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart as my personal Lord and Savior.

"You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (James. 2:24). **(THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THE WORDS "FAITH ALONE" APPEAR IN THE BIBLE)**

"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is **love**. "(1 Cor 13:13)

" and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor 13:2)

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

"Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17)

"Jesus said to him "If you would be perfect go and sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven, and come, follow me." (Matt. 19:21)

(Jesus speaks to the disciples) "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire." (Matt 5:22)

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt 6:14-15)

The "Our Father" prayer says that unless you forgive the sins of others God will not forgive yours. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us".

"I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt 12:36-37)

"But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." (Acts 15:11)

Whenever Jesus speaks of judgement He always says that we will be judged by what we have done or haven't done (See Matt 25:31- 46 above). Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus ever say that we will be judged by our Faith Alone.

If non-catholics want to believe that it is faith alone that saves then they must believe that works must accompany faith and be participating in the grace that God has called us to. After all the Bible states that faith must contain works or it is dead! A dead faith is an incomplete and non saving faith.

Most believers in "Salvation by Faith Alone" do not strictly adhere to this theology. They realize that to do so would not make them a very good Christian in God's eyes. It's hard to imagine how anyone claiming to be a Christian would not help the poor, feed the hungry, care for the sick, pray for their neighbor, and etc. and still make the claim that they are a good Christian simply because they have faith in Christ. Without doing good works they would not be following what Christ taught his Apostles and their faith would be lacking.

As a Catholic I too have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and savior. Am I not saved?

Is going to church a good work?

If you are saved and have faith do you even have to attend church?

Is feeding the poor a work?

Is reading the Bible required for salvation? Is this a work?

The Catholic Church has never taught that we are able to work our way into heaven. Can you show me an official Catholic document that states we must work our way into heaven?

Where does the Bible state that all you have to do to be saved is to accept Jesus as your personal Lord and savior?

Don't the demons and the devil believe in God? Are they saved?

Question: I love everyone and I could not be a Christian because Christians are constantly judging others. Doesn't your Bible say "Judge not, that you be not judged". (Matt 7:1-2)? What gives you the right to judge someone?

People who don't believe in God often try and use our Bible against us. They ignore all the verses that speak of judging right from wrong.

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 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 18:15-17) This verse makes no sense if we are forbidden to judge wrong (sin) from right (truth)!

"Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, You have judged rightly." (Luke 7:43) Jesus speaking to Peter.

"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." (John 7:24)

"Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" (John 7:51)

"But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge "(Acts 4:19)

"And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us." (Acts 16:15)

"I speak as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say." (1Cor 10:15)

"and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32) We are required to judge truth from error. If not how can we be set free?

"who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1Tim2:4) In order to come to the knowledge of truth we must judge right from wrong. If we are unsure what the truth is we look to the Church which is guided infallible by the Holy Spirit to guide us to salvation (See Matt 18:15-17 & & Matt 16:18)

"We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us.

By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1John 4:16)

When someone accuses you of judging are they not also being judgmental? If we are not to judge truth from error then who are they to be judging us! Are they not being hypocritical?

We are not judging others or condemning them to Hell. God's job is to judge, be we must judge what is right from wrong. Everyone does this!

Shall we do away with our justice system because it judges right from wrong?

Have you ever felt unsafe around certain people? Were you judging them?

Question: Why do you Catholics pray to Mary and the Saints? They are all dead and cannot hear you. When you pray to Mary and the Saints you are placing them on the same level as God and committing sin. Jesus is the only mediator between Man and God.

"And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not God of the dead, but of the living . . ." (Mark 12:26-27) . The Saints are not dead they are alive in heaven – more alive than we are on Earth.

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." (Mt 17:1-4), Elijah and Moses “appear” to Jesus and 3 disciples. Was Jesus breaking his Fathers commandment by going against Deut 18:10-12 and calling up the dead? No!

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely . . ." (Heb. 12:1)

"And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5:8)

“And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God.” (Rev 8:3)

”And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel. (Rev 8:4)

Catholics agree that Jesus is the “sole mediator between God and man”. Jesus is the only one who is true God and true man; only by Jesus' blood are we saved; but, as members of Jesus' Body, we can share in His role as mediator as He allows us to.

Moses, Abraham, Job are examples of mediation and intercession between God and man; praying for one another here on earth is an example of mediating and interceding between God and man.

The word “pray” mean to ask.

"Praying" to the Virgin Mary and the Saints is simply asking them to pray for us.

Have you ever asked anyone to pray for you? If so are you placing them above God?

There is no reason to believe that these souls in heaven cannot hear us if God allows them to do so.

The Bible doesn't specifically state that the souls in heaven can hear us, but it also doesn't specifically state that they can't hear us. So, at the very least Catholic's are not going against what the Bible says.

Can you show me a Catholic document that tells us Catholics to worship Mary or the Saints?

Catholic's honor Mary and the Saint we do not worship them.

To pray means to ask. Don't you think Jesus ever ask Mary for something?

One of the 10 Commandments is "Honor your Father and your Mother." Don't you think Jesus honored Mary? If Jesus can honor Mary why can't Catholics?