



Defending the Faith

A Brief Introduction to Explaining Key Topics of our Catholic Faith

S·A·P·O·S·T· P·A·V·L·V·S·V·B·I·



Existence of God

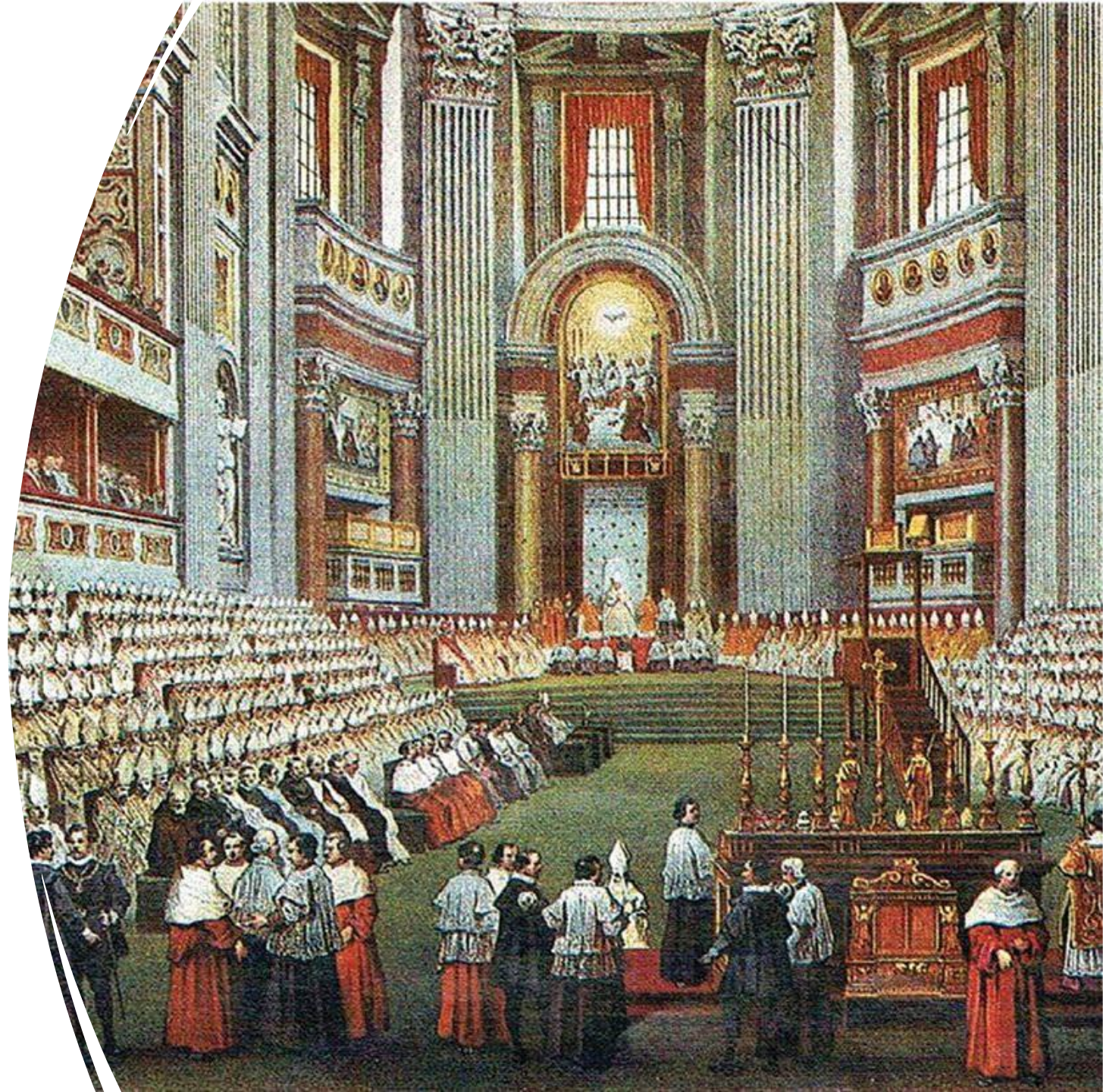
“Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse...”

Romans 1:20

First Vatican Council (1869 – 1870)

“The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things, by the natural power of **human reason** : ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. It was, however, pleasing to his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal laws of his will to the human race by another, and that a supernatural, way. This is how the Apostle puts it: ‘In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.’”

- “On Revelation”, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, emphasis added





In other words...

You do not need the gift of faith to recognize that God exists!

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We are made with a “God-gene”

- God put an innate religious sense into us – we are created to seek Him, to know Him!
- Every culture throughout all of history has had religion. Why? Because we have a desire to seek after the truth of God.
- “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” – St. Augustine, *Confessions*

So how *can* we know that
God exists?





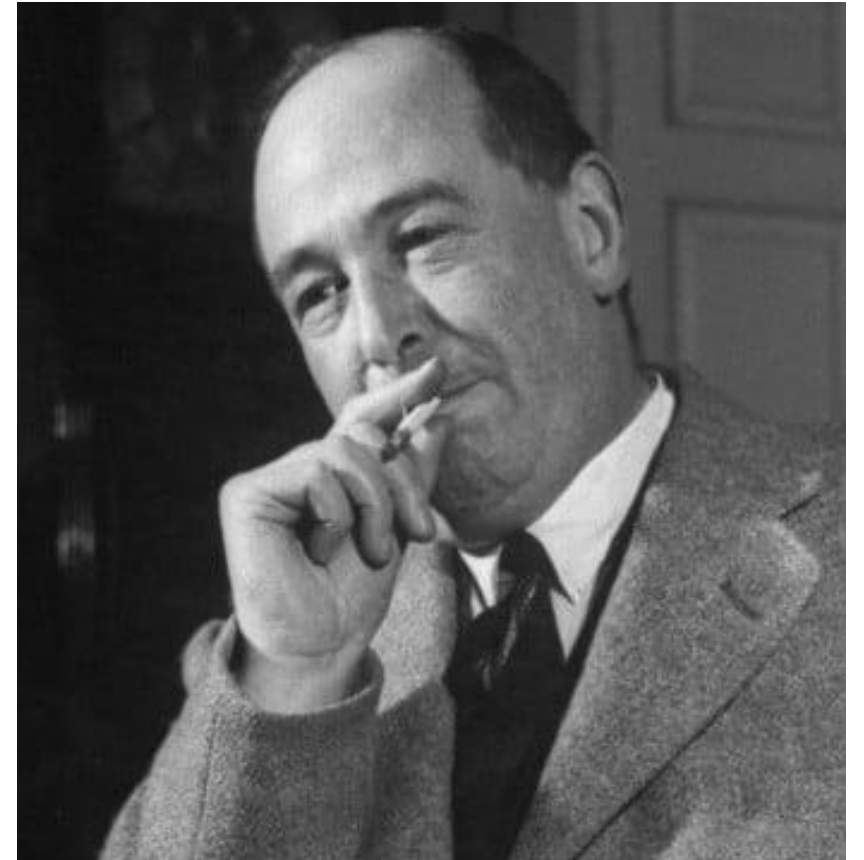
ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY

DISPROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE

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C.S. Lewis

- C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) was a British writer and Christian theologian who is known for his Christian apologetics. His work helped bridge the gap between skepticism and faith. He began as an atheist and became a great apologist for Christianity.
- His work, “Mere Christianity”, defends the Christian faith by addressing the existence of God, the nature of Christ, and the problem of evil



Proof: Unquenchable thirst for happiness

“The Christian says, 'Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. *If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.* If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or to be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that country and to help others to do the same.”

Proof: Sense of Justice

Everyone has innate sense of justice – that evildoers should be punished for their sins/crimes. Yet, this life's punishments – even death, does not seem to do justice to everything. Revenge does not give peace. Death does not solve all justice.

It points to our desire for true justice to be met - a justice that is only possible beyond death (heaven/hell, final judgment). There's got to be more to this life!



In other words...

We all want to be happy. Yet happiness fades once we obtain it and we find ourselves desiring something else.

God has put into our hearts a hunger for happiness that does not seem to ever be satisfied?

It points to the fact that we are not made for happiness in this world. We can only be satisfied in the next.

S·A·P·O·S·T· P·A·V·L·V·S·V·B·I·

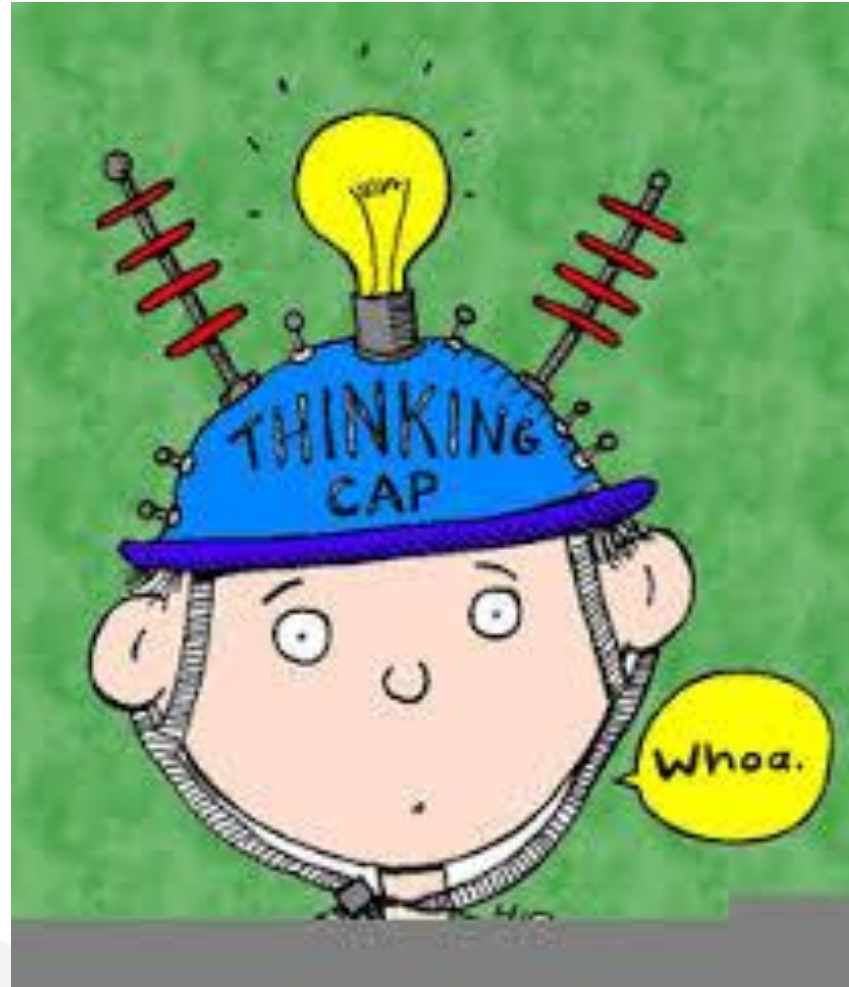
St. Thomas Aquinas

- **Feast day:** January 28
- **Patron:** of students and all universities
- **Birth:** 1226
- **Death:** 1274
- **Canonized:** Pope John XXII in 1323

Thomas Aquinas was an Italian philosopher and theologian known as the Angelic Doctor. His works show him to be a brilliant lecturer, a clear thinker and an Aristotelian. In an age which was uncomfortable with the notion that the universe could be known apart from revelation, he pioneered the use of the Greek philosophy that featured the power of reason to demonstrate that God and his universe could be understood by reason guided by faith.



Put on your thinking caps!



Prepare to use...your reason!



**Aquinas'
5 Proofs for God's Existence**

First Proof: By Motion

Saint Thomas's first proof is based principally on cause and effect. To phrase it like Isaac Newton, "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." Although Newton wasn't even born for close to another four hundred years, Aquinas had a good understanding of the same general principle: **nothing acts unless it is first acted upon.**

For Saint Thomas, this provokes a question: **What is the first thing to put other things in motion?**

While he framed it using terms like *motion*, there's still an understanding in modern science that energy is not created or destroyed but is simply moved and transferred. And when Saint Thomas looked at this chain of cause and effect through motion (or potential and kinetic energy), he recognized that at some point, there necessarily had to be *something that was not acted upon*. Something had to move first, **and that something had to have moved without something else moving it.**

This argument is commonly referred to as the argument of "the unmoved mover," one that points to a source of motion that was not initially acted upon, a movement that began by itself. This source of movement is the one that set all things in motion, and, as such, had to exist prior to and outside the constraints of that which was set in motion.

This "unmoved mover," Saint Thomas says, is God.

A modern explanation...

Let us look at proof one with the simple analogy of a **train**. If a train goes by, one can explain that the tenth train car is pulled by train car nine, which is pulled by train car eight, and so on. Then we can say the train car one is the cause of the train moving; however, one could then ponder, “Where did train car one come from?” Then where did the parts come from, the metal, and we can infinitely regress to where did the planet come from? Where did the universe come from? In the words of Aquinas, “but this cannot go on to infinity, because there would be no first mover, and consequently no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand.”



Proof 2:

The Argument from Efficient Cause

Saint Thomas's second argument is also based on the idea of causality. Similar to the first argument, the argument from "efficient cause" is based on the idea of cause and effect. This time, the cause and effect Saint Thomas refers to is **existence itself**.

Nothing, he explains, can cause itself to exist. "In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known . . . in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself" (Summa Theologica I, q. 2, a. 3, co.).

To be the cause of itself, the argument proceeds, the object in question would need to **exist prior to its own existence**. And because that isn't possible, everything that exists must have been brought into existence by something else.

This, of course, cannot go on infinitely. To see causes as infinitely reaching, Saint Thomas says, would be to inevitably arrive at absurdity. **The universe is not infinite**, and the cause and effect that we see in existence had to have a beginning.

This beginning, or "efficient cause," is referred to by humanity as God.

A modern explanation...

Everything that exists was caused to exist; fire causes heat, rain causes crops to grow, your parents caused you! If a lump of clay is sitting on the table in front of you, it's not going to shape itself into a vase. That's impossible, and unless you form the clay yourself it's just going to sit there. So since everything that is created needs a cause, there must be a first, ultimate cause, which we call God.



Proof 3:

The Argument from Necessary Being

The saint's third argument is an examination of "possibility and necessity."

The core of this argument lies in the possibility of nonexistence. "We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be" (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 2, a. 3, co.), Saint Thomas tells us. Everything we see has the potential to not exist. This is true of all things in the natural world.

Following this, Aquinas examines the necessary conclusion reached by this possibility: It is impossible for things with a potential for nonexistence to have always existed. He argues that something that has an end, even if it's only potential (i.e. the thing still exists), must have had a beginning.

From here, Saint Thomas draws into infinity: If everything that exists had a point in time where it didn't exist, then (following his previous argument of cause and effect) nothing would exist now, since there would have been nothing to bring something else into existence. This means that something has to exist that **has no potential for nonexistence**, and something that is necessary in and of itself.

This necessary being was not brought into existence, since it has no possibility for nonexistence. It is without beginning, and it is (again, back to Proof 2) the cause of all things that exist.

This necessary being, Aquinas says, is God.

A modern explanation...

The computer or smartphone that you use did not exist at some point in the past, it had to be put together and created. The same is true with creation! It exists now, but at some point it had to come into existence, which every reasonable scientist in the world would admit. And since 'nothing' can't become 'something,' there must be something that exists by its own power that makes everything else to exist. And . . . that would be God.

Or...

Because objects in the world come into existence and pass out of it, it is possible for those objects to exist or not exist at any particular time. However, nothing can come from nothing. This means something must exist at all times. This is God.

Proof 4: The Argument from Gradation

Saint Thomas observes the natural order as having qualities of goodness, truth, nobility, and so on. The things in the natural world are “more” or “less” good, they are “more” or “less” true, and the same with all similar qualities of nobility, complexity, etc.

These qualities, he observes, are necessarily compared to the “maximum” of that quality; “a thing is said to be hotter,” he says, “according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest” (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 2, a. 3, co.). Every quality has a maximum, to which all things possessing that quality must be compared.

Something is cold or warm in that it is relatively closer to the lowest possible temperature or the highest. Likewise, Aquinas argues, there must be something that is maximally good, beautiful, and that exists in the highest possible form.

Again, he observes, this is what we call God.



**I'M THE
GOODEST DOG!!**

A modern explanation...

Observing a hierarchy of qualities like goodness or beauty in the world implies a perfect standard of goodness, which would be God. For example, comparing different levels of intelligence in animals points to the existence of a higher intelligence.

Proof 5: Argument from Design

The fifth and final proof in this article of the *Summa Theologica* is taken from the design of natural law, what we refer to today generally as the laws of physics.

Things without intelligence (which Aquinas calls “natural bodies,” by which he means anything that lacks intellect, such as nonhuman animals, plants, and inanimate objects) “act for an end,” which is a way of saying that they follow the laws of the natural world. These things act in the same way almost always, unless acted upon by a different force, to achieve the same end.

A rock, dropped from a certain height, will always be pulled by gravity in the same way toward the ground. Likewise, all natural things follow the laws set out for them, not “fortuitously” as Aquinas explains, but by design.

And if all things without intellect reach their end “by design,” then there is a necessity that there exists an intelligent being that directs these nonintellectual things.

The forces of the natural world work together in such harmony that, to Saint Thomas, there must be an intelligent force behind them to direct them to their ends. Out of chaos came order, and order requires intelligence.

A modern explanation...

The intricate complexity and purpose in nature, like the human eye, indicates an intelligent designer, which is God. Considering the complex mechanisms of the human body, it seems unlikely to have arisen purely by chance.

An acorn will always grow into an oak tree and the sun will always cause plants to grow as long as there is water and oxygen. The world has order and our universe obeys certain laws, St. Thomas uses the example of an arrow that is fired by an archer. The arrow will only fly through the air and hit the target if it is directed by an archer, and what directs our universe to act the way it does with knowledge and intelligence is what we call God.





COULD YOU BE

MORE OBVIOUS?

memegenerator.net

The background of the image shows a classical building facade with two statues on top. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on a black rectangular box with a white border.

Atheism

The belief there was once absolutely nothing. And nothing happened to the nothing until the nothing magically exploded (for no reason), creating everything and everywhere. Then a bunch of the exploded everything magically rearranged itself (for no reason whatsoever), into self-replicating bits which then turned into dinosaurs.

And they mock your beliefs.



The Divinity of Jesus

Then Thomas responded to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” – John 20:28

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord...

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.” – C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*


Jesus claimed to be God (i.e. John 8:57-59). His claim is either true or false. If it is true, then, *ipso facto*, He is God. If the claim is false, then either He said it knowing it was false, in which case He is a liar, or He said it not knowing it was false, in which case He was mad. Therefore, we are left with three logical options:

He is either God, or a liar, or a lunatic.

To say Jesus was a liar will seem quite a stretch for most people (even unbelievers), particularly if they think He was a great moral teacher. A great moral teacher would not, by definition, lie, and certainly not tell a lie of such magnitude as to claim to be God when He wasn't. If he is a liar, we should not trust anything He says!

To say Jesus was a lunatic is also a stretch, since His teaching would appear to be the quintessence of sanity—and, of course, a great moral teacher is, again by definition, sane.

So if He was not a liar and not a lunatic, the only other logically possible conclusion is that **He is God**.



The Early Church was the Catholic Church

*“And I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build
My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” –*

Matthew 16:18

A photograph of the Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican, featuring the large bronze statue of St. Paul in the foreground. The statue is shown in profile, holding a cross and a scroll. In the background, the facade of the basilica is visible, adorned with several smaller statues of saints on the roofline. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text "The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist" is overlaid in a bold, black, serif font across the center of the image. At the bottom left, a portion of a Latin inscription is visible: "S. APOST. PAVLVS. V. B...".

The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

S. APOST. PAVLVS. V. B...



“Father, my son goes to a non-Catholic church. They even have Communion once a month there. I’m just happy he’s going somewhere. As long as he loves Jesus...it’s all the same to me!”

A photograph of the exterior of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy. The image features a large, detailed marble statue of St. Paul in the foreground, holding a cross and a scroll. The background shows the ornate facade of the basilica with several other statues on the roofline. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the image.

But is our teaching on Holy Communion the same as the Protestant churches?

NO!

S·APOST· PAVLVS·V·BI

Biblical Foundation

“The Jews then argued among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ 53 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; 54 he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.’” – John 6:52-58

What the Church teaches...

“At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. Faithful to the Lord's command the Church continues to do, in his memory and until his glorious return, what he did on the eve of his Passion: "He took bread. . . ." "He took the cup filled with wine. . . ." The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ...” CCC 1333

S·A·P·O·S·T· P·A·V·L·V·S·V·B·I·

What the Church teaches...

The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation." – CCC 1376

**But what
did the first
Christians
believe?**





St. Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius was the second Bishop of Antioch, Syria, a disciple of St. John the Apostle, and was consecrated Bishop by St. Peter, the first Pope.

Ignatius is the first to use the word “Catholic” to describe the Body of Christ, the Church, wherever it is gathered around a bishop assisted by his priests and deacons: “Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”

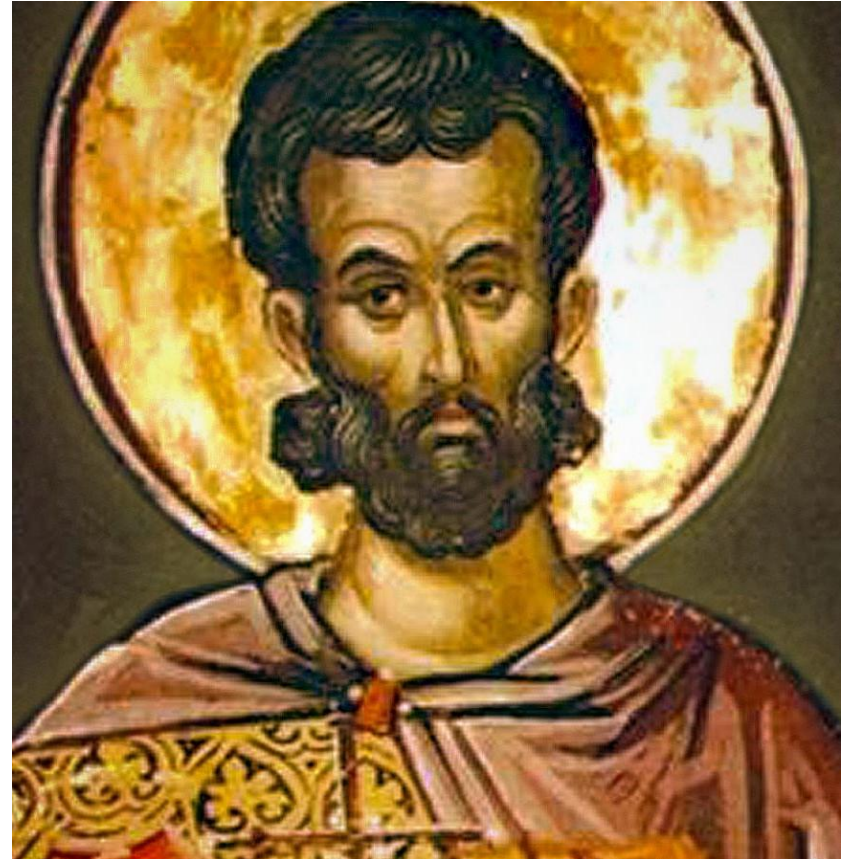
Around A.D. 107, during the reign of the Emperor Trajan, Ignatius was wrongfully sentenced to death because he refused to renounce the Catholic faith. He was taken under guard to Rome where he was to be brutally devoured by wild beasts in a public spectacle. During his journey, his travels took him through Asia Minor and Greece. He made good use of the time by writing seven letters of encouragement, instruction and inspiration to the Christians in those communities.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

- “They [the Docetists] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2–7:1 [A.D. 110]).
- “I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible (Letter to the Romans 7:3 [A.D. 110]).”

St. Justin Martyr

- Lived from 100 – 165 AD.
- Justin was a convert to Catholicism after years of studying various pagan philosophies.
- As a young man, he was principally attracted to the school of Plato. However, he found that the Catholic religion answered the great questions about life and existence better than the philosophers.
- Upon his conversion he continued to pursue philosophy and became the first Christian philosopher. He combined the Christianity with the best elements in Greek philosophy. In his view, philosophy was a pedagogue of Christ, an educator that was to lead one to Christ.
- Justin is known as an apologist, one who defends in writing the Christian religion against the attacks and misunderstandings of the pagans. Two of his so-called apologies have come down to us; they are addressed to the Roman emperor and to the Senate.
- For his staunch adherence to the Catholic Faith, Justin was beheaded in Rome in 165.



St. Justin defending the Eucharist...

- “And 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 Savior, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, *so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of his word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.* For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, said, ‘This do in remembrance of me, *this is my body*’; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, he said, ‘*This is my blood*’; and gave it to them alone (*First Apology, 66*).” – A.D. 151

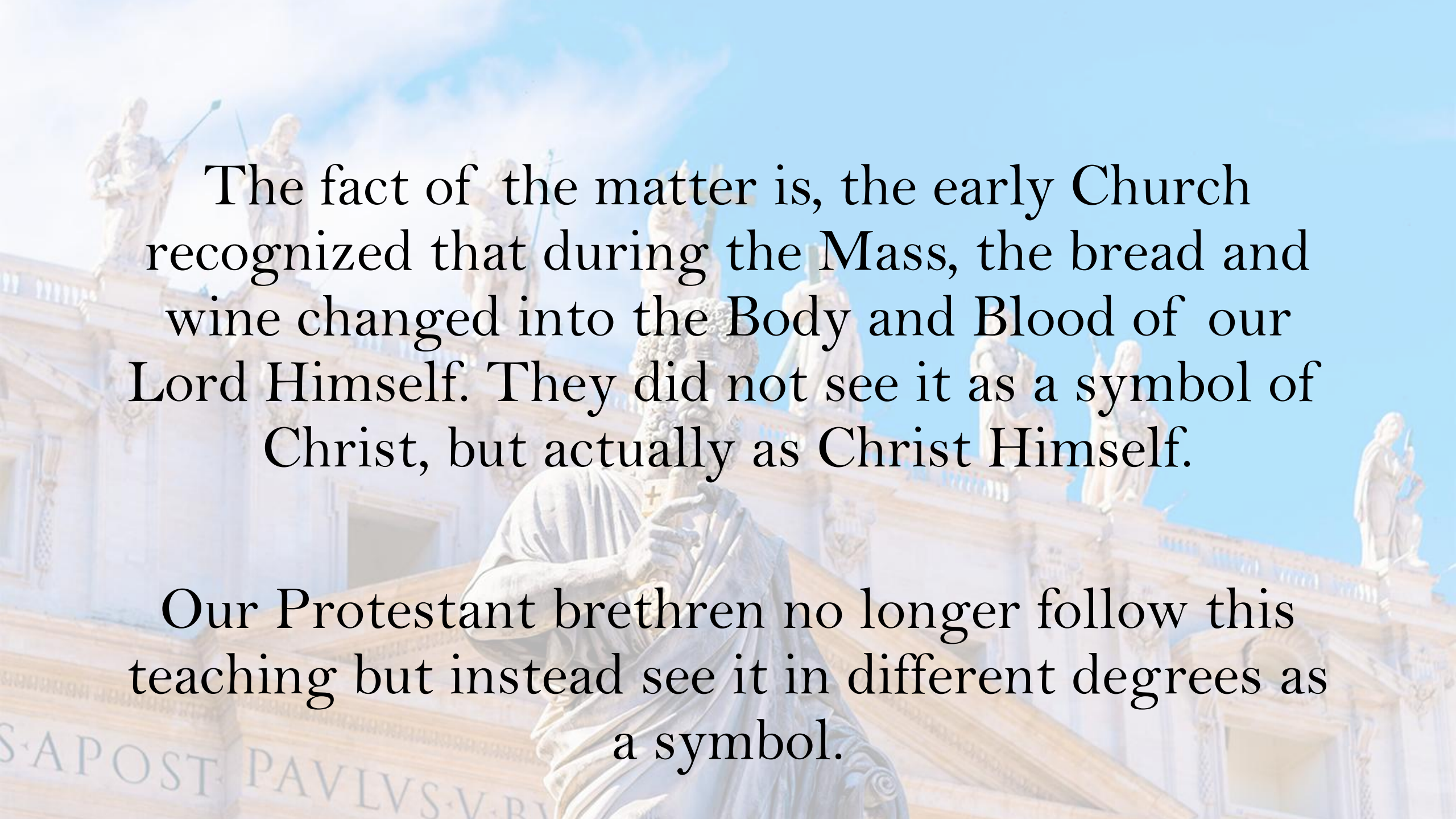
St. Irenaeus

He was the Bishop of Lyons in the 2nd century and was especially concerned with correcting the Gnostics, who took their name from the Greek word for “knowledge.” Claiming access to secret knowledge imparted by Jesus to only a few disciples, their teaching was attracting and confusing many Christians. After thoroughly investigating the various Gnostic sects and their “secret,” Irenaeus showed to what logical conclusions their tenets led. These he contrasted with the teaching of the apostles and the text of Holy Scripture, giving us, in five books, a system of theology of great importance to subsequent times.



Irenaeus on the Eucharist...

- “If the Lord were from other than the Father, how could he rightly take bread, which is of the same creation as our own, and confess it to be his body and affirm that the mixture in the chalice is his blood?” (*Against Heresies* 4:33–32 [A.D. 189]).
- “He has declared the chalice, a part of creation, to be his own blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as his own body, from which he gives increase unto our bodies. When, therefore, the mixed chalice [wine and water] and the baked bread receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist, the body of Christ, and from these the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they say that the flesh is not capable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life—flesh which is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord, and is in fact a member of him?” (*ibid.*, 5:2).

The background features a classical building facade with several statues on a balcony. In the foreground, a large, detailed statue of a man with a beard and a crown, holding a cross, is visible. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

The fact of the matter is, the early Church recognized that during the Mass, the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord Himself. They did not see it as a symbol of Christ, but actually as Christ Himself.

Our Protestant brethren no longer follow this teaching but instead see it in different degrees as a symbol.

THIS IS SORT OF LIKE MY BODY

#THINGS JESUS NEVER SAID

quickmeme.com

COME TO THE CATHOLIC SIDE



WE HAVE JESUS

A wide-angle photograph of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy, taken from a street-level perspective. The basilica's massive dome and classical facade are the central focus, set against a warm, golden sunset sky. The foreground shows the street lined with classical buildings and ornate street lamps. The text 'The Primacy of Rome (The Papacy)' is overlaid in white serif font on the central part of the image.

The Primacy of Rome (The Papacy)

Biblical Foundation...

“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do men say that the Son of man is?’ 14 And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ 15 He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ 16 Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ 17 And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon, son of John! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 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.’ 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.” – Matthew 16:13-20

“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.’ 16 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.’ 17 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. 18 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.’ 19 (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’” – John 20:15-19

What the Church teaches...

- "The sole Church of Christ [is that] which our Savior, after his Resurrection, entrusted to Pēter's pāstoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it... This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him." – CCC 816
- "For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God." – Second Vatican Council



“But come on, Father, wasn’t the Papacy a medieval invention to control our lives?”

A photograph of the Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican, featuring a large bronze statue of St. Paul in the foreground. The statue is shown from the waist up, wearing a draped garment and holding a scroll. The background shows the ornate facade of the basilica with several statues on the roofline. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text "Let's ask the early Church!" is overlaid in the center in a bold, black, serif font. At the bottom left, a portion of a Latin inscription is visible: "S·APOST· PAVLVS·V·B".

Let's ask the early Church!

S·APOST· PAVLVS·V·B

Pope St. Clement I

Clement of Rome was the third successor of Saint Peter, reigning as pope during the last decade of the first century. He's known as one of the Church's five "Apostolic Fathers," those who provided a direct link between the Apostles and later generations of Church Fathers.

Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians was preserved and widely read in the early Church. This letter from the bishop of Rome to the Church in Corinth concerns a split that alienated a large number of the laity from the clergy. Deploring the unauthorized and unjustifiable division in the Corinthian community, Clement urged charity to heal the rift.



From Pope Clement I's letter to the Corinthians...

- “Owing to the sudden and repeated calamities and misfortunes which have befallen us, we must acknowledge that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the matters in dispute among you, beloved; and especially that abominable and unholy sedition, alien and foreign to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-willed persons have inflamed to such madness that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be loved by all men, has been greatly defamed. . . . Accept our counsel and you will have nothing to regret. . . . If anyone disobey the things which have been said by him [God] through us [i.e., that you must reinstate your leaders], let them know that they will involve themselves in transgression and in no small danger. . . . You will afford us joy and gladness if being obedient to the things which we have written through the Holy Spirit, you will root out the wicked passion of jealousy” (*Letter to the Corinthians* 1, 58–59, 63 [A.D. 80]).

More of the Church Fathers...

Ignatius of Antioch

“Ignatius . . . to the church also which holds the presidency, in the location of the country of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of blessing, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthy of sanctification, and, because you hold the presidency in love, named after Christ and named after the Father” (*Letter to the Romans* 1:1 [A.D. 110]).

- “You [the church at Rome] have envied no one, but others you have taught. I desire only that what you have enjoined in your instructions may remain in force” (*ibid.*, 3:1).

More of the Church Fathers...

- **St. Irenaeus**

- “But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the succession of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, that church which has the tradition and the faith which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. With that church, because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world, and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition” (Against Heresies 3:3:2 [A.D. 189]).

More of the Church Fathers...

- **Eusebius of Caesarea**

- “A question of no small importance arose at that time [A.D. 190]. For the parishes of all Asia [Minor], as from an older tradition held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should be observed as the feast of the Savior’s Passover. . . . But it was not the custom of the churches in the rest of the world . . . as they observed the practice which, from apostolic tradition, has prevailed to the present time, of terminating the fast [of Lent] on no other day than on that of the resurrection of the Savior [Sunday]. Synods and assemblies of bishops were held on this account, and all, with one consent, through mutual correspondence drew up an ecclesiastical decree that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be celebrated on no other but the Lord’s day and that we should observe the close of the paschal fast on this day only. . . . Thereupon [Pope] Victor, who presided over the church at Rome, immediately attempted to cut off from the community the parishes of all Asia [Minor], with the churches that agreed with them, as heterodox. And he wrote letters and declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicate. But this did not please all the bishops, and they besought him to consider the things of peace and of neighborly unity and love” (*Church History* 5:23:1–24:11).

St. Cyprian of Carthage

Cyprian lived in the third century. Highly educated and a famous orator, he became a Catholic as an adult. He distributed his goods to the poor, and amazed his fellow citizens by making a vow of celibacy even before his baptism. Within two years he had been ordained a priest and was chosen, against his will, as Bishop of Carthage.

Cyprian complained that the peace the Church had enjoyed had weakened the spirit of many Christians and had opened the door to converts who did not have the true spirit of faith. When the Decian persecution began, many Christians easily abandoned the Church. It was their reinstatement that caused the great controversies of the third century, and helped the Church progress in its understanding of the Sacrament of Penance.

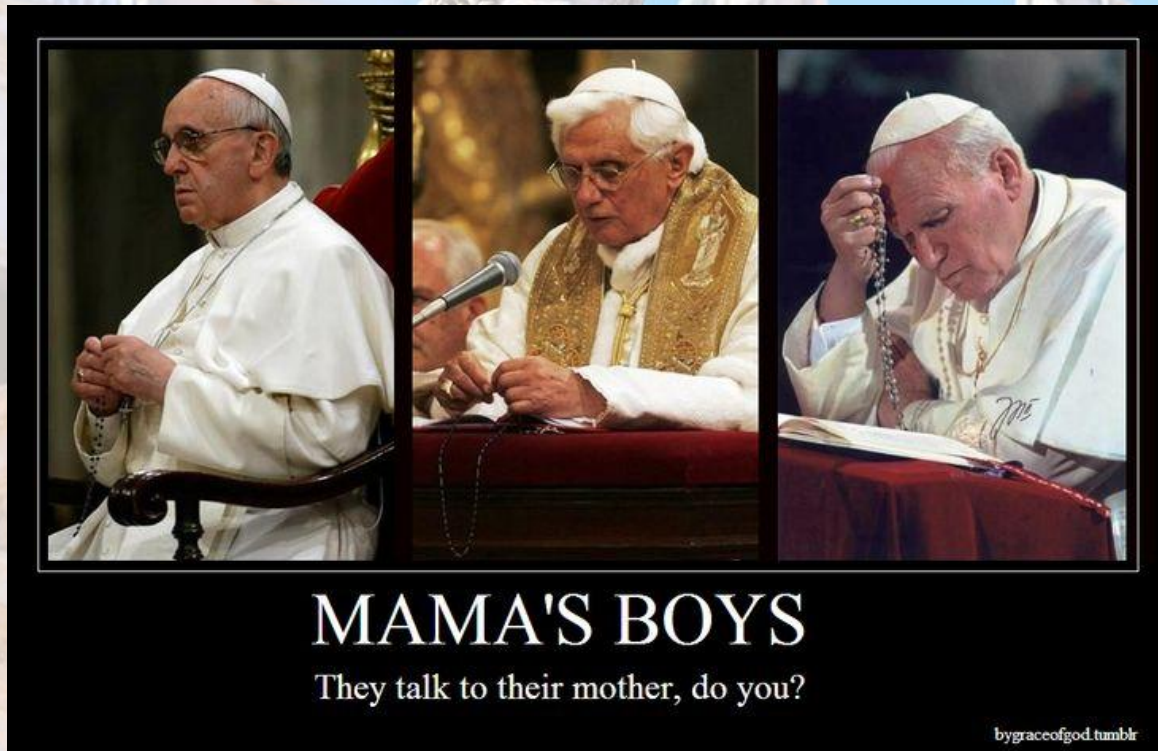


What St. Cyprian says of the papacy...

“The Lord says to Peter: ‘I say to you,’ he says, ‘that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. And to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever things you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, they shall be loosed also in heaven’ [Matt. 16:18–19]). . . . On him [Peter] he builds the Church, and to him he gives the command to feed the sheep [John 21:17], and although he assigns a like power to all the apostles, yet he founded a single chair [cathedra], and he established by his own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were also what Peter was [i.e., apostles], but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair. So too, all [the apostles] are shepherds, and the flock is shown to be one, fed by all the apostles in single-minded accord. If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he [should] desert the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?” (*The Unity of the Catholic Church* 4; [A.D. 251]).

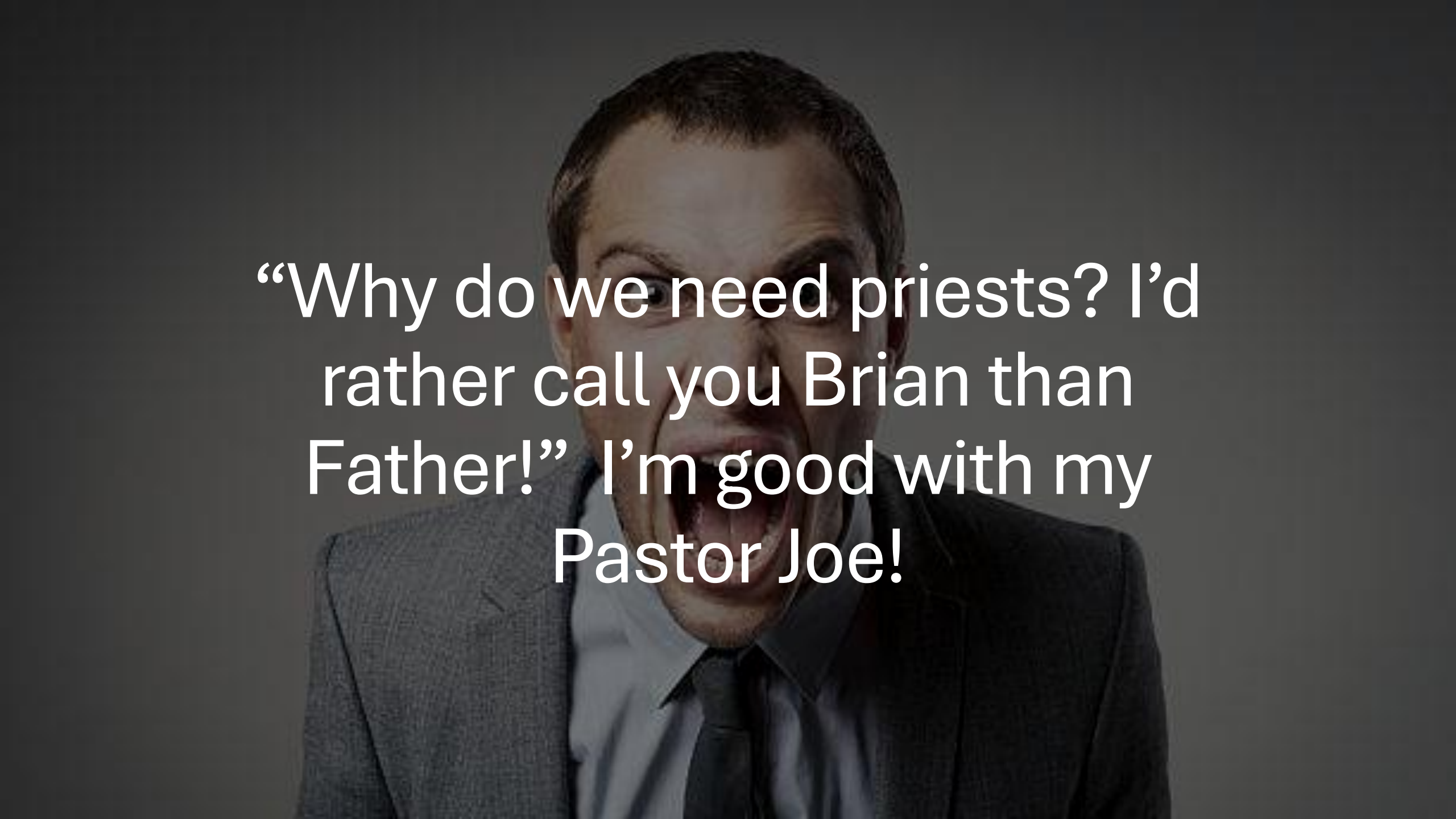
In summary...

If someone asks why do you follow the Pope, you can reply, “Because Jesus wants me to! He set it up that way! History shows this!”





The Church is Hierarchical

A man in a grey suit, white shirt, and dark tie is shown from the chest up, shouting with his mouth wide open and eyes wide. The background is a plain, light grey color. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

“Why do we need priests? I’d rather call you Brian than Father!” I’m good with my Pastor Joe!

Biblical Foundation...

- The Sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred in three ranks of clergy: bishops, priests, and deacons. All three ranks are mentioned in the New Testament.
- Bishops have the care of multiple congregations and appoint, ordain, and discipline priests and deacons. They sometimes appear to be called “evangelists” in the New Testament. Examples of first-century bishops include Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. 5:19–22; 2 Tim. 4:5; Titus 1:5).
- Priests are also known as “presbyters” or “elders.” In fact, the English term “priest” is simply a contraction of the Greek word *presbyteros*. They have the responsibility of teaching, governing, and providing the Sacraments in a given congregation (1 Tim. 5:17; Jas. 5:14–15). They are spiritual fathers.
- Deacons are the assistants of the bishops and are responsible for teaching and administering certain Church tasks, such as the distribution of food (Acts 6:1–6).

What the Church teaches...

“The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, ‘each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ.’ While being ‘ordered one to another,’ they differ essentially. In what sense? While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace—a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit—the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.” – CCC 1547



Did bishops, priests, and deacons exist in the early Church?

St. Ignatius of Antioch

“Now, therefore, it has been my privilege to see you in the person of your God-inspired bishop, Damas; and in the persons of your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and my fellow-servant, the deacon, Zotion. What a delight is his company! For he is subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbyters as to the law of Jesus Christ” (Letter to the Magnesians 2 [A.D. 110]).

“Take care to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles, and with the deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the business of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from the beginning and is at last made manifest” (ibid., 6:1).

More from Ignatius...

“Take care, therefore, to be confirmed in the decrees of the Lord and of the apostles, in order that in everything you do, you may prosper in body and in soul, in faith and in love, in Son and in Father and in Spirit, in beginning and in end, together with your most reverend bishop; and with that fittingly woven spiritual crown, the presbyterate; and with the deacons, men of God” (ibid., 13:1–2).

“It is necessary, therefore—and such is your practice that you do nothing without the bishop, and that you be subject also to the presbyters, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope, in whom we shall be found, if we live in him. It is necessary also that the deacons, the dispensers of the mysteries [sacraments] of Jesus Christ, be in every way pleasing to all men” (Letter to the Trallians 2:1–3 [A.D. 110]).

“He that is within the sanctuary is pure; but he that is outside the sanctuary is not pure. In other words, anyone who acts without the bishop and the presbyterate and the deacons does not have a clear conscience” (ibid., 7:2).

In summary...

We have deacons, priests, and bishops to lead us because Christ set up His Church that way. The hierarchy is as old as the Church because Christ established the Sacrament of Holy Orders as the means of governance in the Church.

S·A·P·O·S·T· P·A·V·L·V·S·V·B·I



The early Church was the Catholic Church!

“Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” – St. Ignatius of Antioch

A large, open Bible is the central focus, resting on a dark, possibly black, surface. The Bible is open to a page with visible text, though the text is not legible. The background is a grand, dimly lit cathedral interior with high, vaulted ceilings, arched windows, and ornate chandeliers. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a solemn and reverent atmosphere. The overall scene is slightly blurred, emphasizing the Bible as the primary subject.

Where did the Bible come from?

How the Bible was compiled...

The Old Testament books were written well before the time of Christ, and all of the New Testament books were written by roughly the end of the first century A.D. But the Bible as a whole was not officially compiled **until the late fourth century**. It was the Catholic Church who determined the list of books (“canon”) of the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. After all, the Bible is not a self-canonizing collection of books, as there is no table of contents included in any of the books.

Although the New Testament canon was not determined until the late 300s, books the Church deemed sacred were early on proclaimed at Mass, and read and preached about otherwise. Early Christian writings outnumbered the 27 books that would become the canon of the New Testament. The bishops of the Church, by a process of spiritual discernment and investigation into the liturgical traditions of the Church spread throughout the world, had to draw clear lines of distinction between books that are truly inspired by God and originated in the apostolic period, and those which only claimed to have these qualities.

How the Bible was compiled...

The process culminated in 382 when the Council of Rome, which was convened under the leadership of Pope Damasus, promulgated the 73-book scriptural canon. The biblical canon was reaffirmed by the regional councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397), and then definitively reaffirmed by the ecumenical Council of Florence in 1442.

Finally, the ecumenical Council of Trent solemnly defined this same canon in 1546, after it came under attack by the first Protestant leaders, including Martin Luther.

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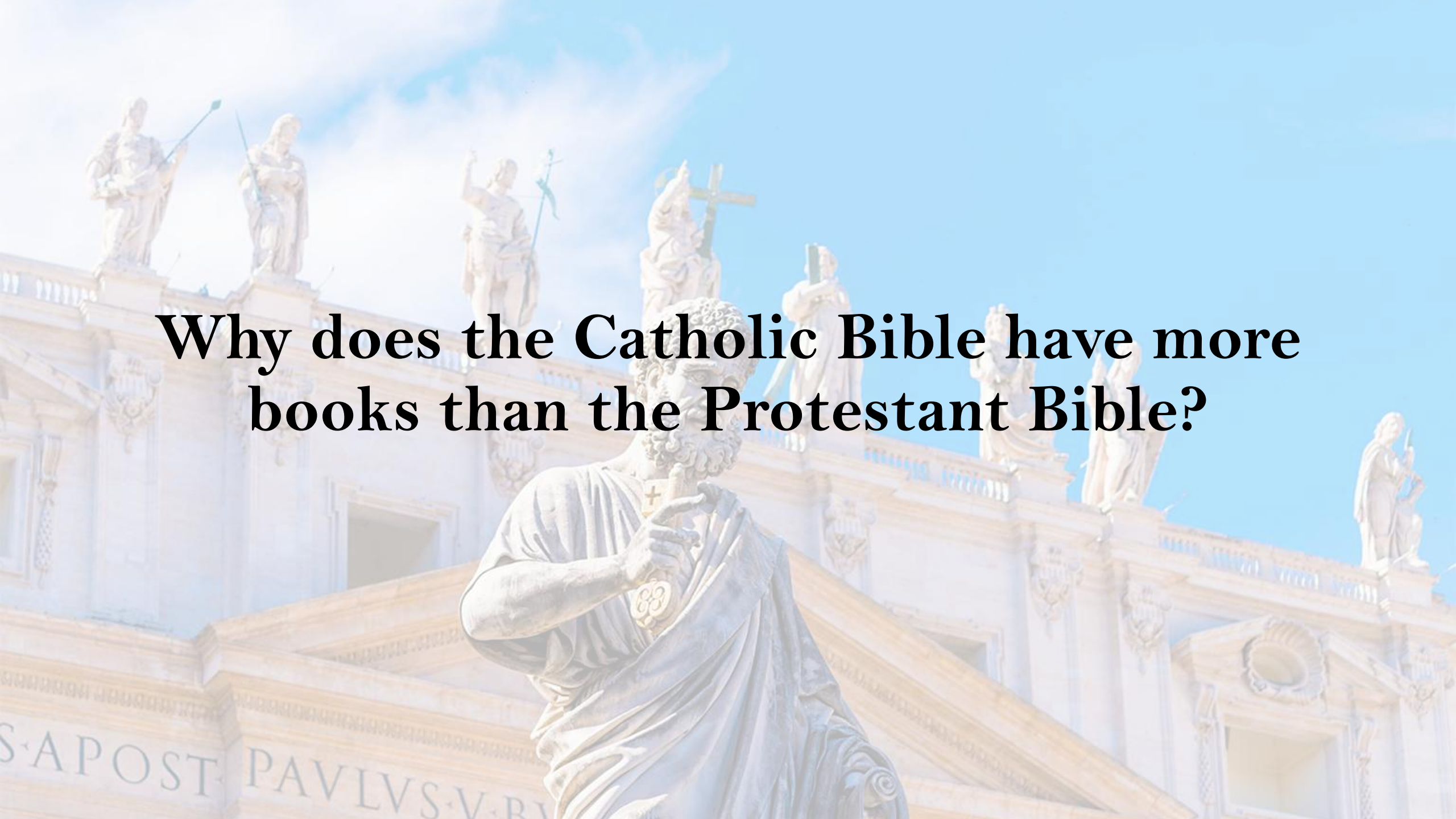
Which means...

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The image is a composite. The background is a photograph of a classical building facade, likely a church or cathedral, with several statues on the roofline. The sky is a clear, bright blue. In the center, there is a black rectangular box containing a photograph of an antique, leather-bound book with a decorative cover. The book is shown at an angle, highlighting its thickness and the texture of the leather. The text is overlaid on this central box.

The **BIBLE** is a

CATHOLIC BOOK



Why does the Catholic Bible have more books than the Protestant Bible?

S·APOST· PAVLVS·V·BI



Catholics have 73 books of the Bible; Protestants have 66. Catholic Bibles contain 7 more books in the Old Testament (1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach, Wisdom, Baruch, Tobit, and Judith).

These are called the deuterocanonical books or the “apocrypha.” Beginning with Martin Luther, the Protestants rejected the books for several reasons, two of which we will focus on here. The first was a “problematic” passage in 2 Maccabees, and the second was their desire to go “back to the sources”—*ad fontes*—which to them meant using the same books that the Jews had decided upon.

2 Maccabees included a reference to prayers for the dead, a practice that the Catholic Church had encouraged for assisting the souls in purgatory. Luther had had a protest of the sale of indulgences to remove the temporal punishment due for already forgiven sins—punishment that must be paid before a soul would be fit to enter heaven. Luther and the Reformers rejected purgatory, so all that was connected with it also had to go: indulgences, prayers for the dead, and the communion of saints (which includes those both living and deceased in Christ).

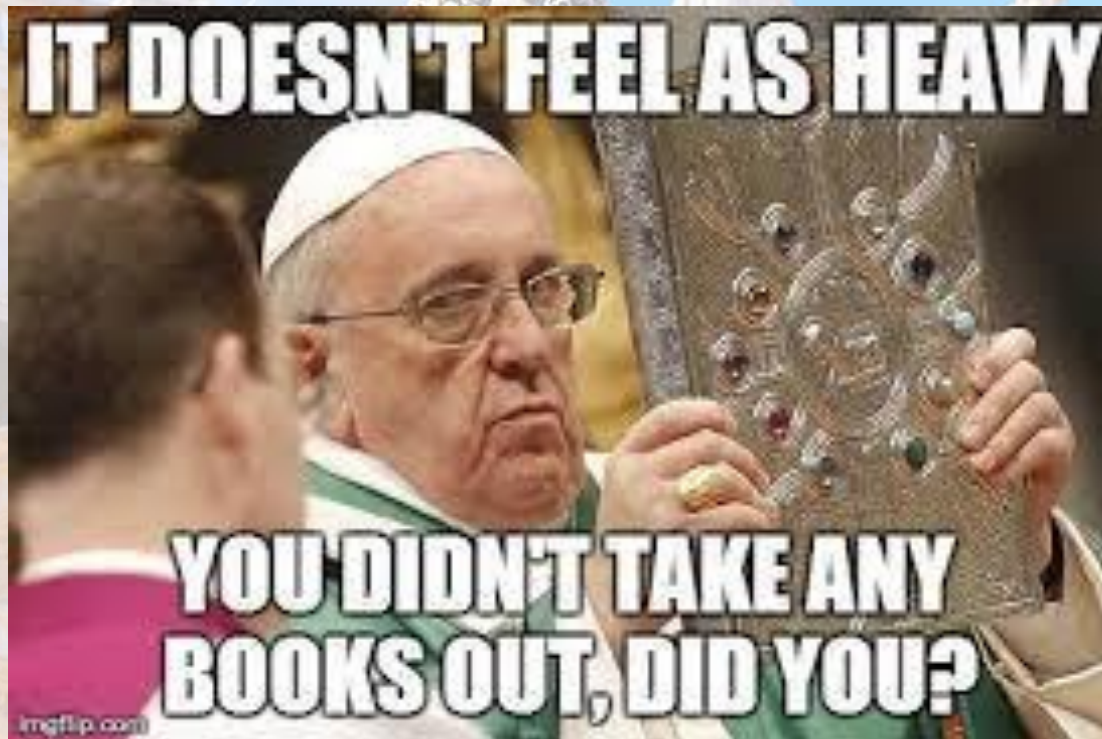
The Reformers pointed out that these seven books were not included in the Jewish Hebrew Bible. For that reason, they argued, the books should not be accepted by Christians. Yet at the time of Christ, the Apostles and other New Testament writers can be seen quoting from the Greek translation of the Scriptures. The Deuterocanonical books were in the Greek version.

The background of the image shows a classical building facade with several statues on a balustrade. A large, central sculpture of a seated figure, possibly a saint or a historical figure, is prominent. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on this scene.

Ultimately, because Catholicism is true, the Church Christ founded, and not the Jews, possessed the authority and divine guidance to discern the Old Testament canon.

The Church's careful discernment of the canon settled on including the deuterocanonical books. The books were consistently included in the canon from the 300s through the 1400s. In fact, the ecumenical council of Florence in the mid-1400s reaffirmed their inclusion in the Old Testament canon. This was long before Martin Luther and the first Protestants and lends further evidence that the Church accepted these books as inspired and did not "add" them to the canon in response to the Reformation, as many Protestants claim.

Make sure you have a Catholic Bible!



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The Sacraments



What are the Sacraments?

Sacred Scripture speaks in many places of the seven distinct rites of salvation that are today called “sacraments.”

Sacraments are efficacious signs, instituted by Christ and entrusted to His Church, that give grace (God’s divine life).





A little history...

- In the early Church, the word “mystery” was used analogously with “sacrament.” In the Eastern rites of the Church, sacraments are still referred today to as the “Holy Mysteries.”
- Perhaps in order to separate themselves from the pagan mystery rites of the other religions of its day, the West adopted primarily the word “sacrament” for these rites, though still referring to them as “mysteries” in the liturgy.
- A “sacrament” in Roman secular usage was an oath that soldiers made. Because one made promises or oaths at their Baptism (Do you reject Satan...do you believe in God the Father Almighty...”), this word was taken on.



From whom did the Sacraments originate?

JESUS!

The Church teaches that Christ instituted each of the Seven Sacraments. We find in the New Testament references to the Sacraments during the public ministry of Christ and then references to them after Christ's death and resurrection.

Baptism: For example, Jesus tells Nicodemus “unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. On Pentecost, Peter baptizes several thousand people.

Confirmation: Before Easter, Jesus tells the Twelve to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. He teaches them many truths about the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost, Peter and the other Apostles receive the Holy Spirit for their mission. The Apostles also lay hands on the baptized and give them the Holy Spirit.

Holy Eucharist: Jesus multiplied the loaves and the fish, he changed water into wine; he said, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you”. The night before He died he instituted the Eucharist. He celebrates it again on Easter afternoon for the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The Apostles celebrate the “breaking of the bread” for the first Christians after Pentecost.

Penance: Jesus forgives sinners during his public ministry; on Easter night he gives the Apostles his power to forgive sin: “Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them. Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained”.

Anointing of the Sick: During his public ministry, Jesus heals the sick and even anoints them with oil. After Easter, James tells the “presbyters of the church” to pray over the sick and anoint them with holy oil.

Holy Orders: Jesus formed the 12 Apostles and the 72 Disciples to share in his ministry. He commissioned them to preach, to cast out demons, to heal the sick. He commanded the Apostles to celebrate the Eucharist. “Do this in memory of me”. After Pentecost, they exercised this ministry with power and shared it with other men through the “laying on of hands”.

Matrimony: Jesus attended a Wedding Feast at Cana and taught about the indissolubility of the marriage bond. After Pentecost, Paul repeated this teaching and provided direction on the marriage of Christians.

The Sacraments are from Jesus!

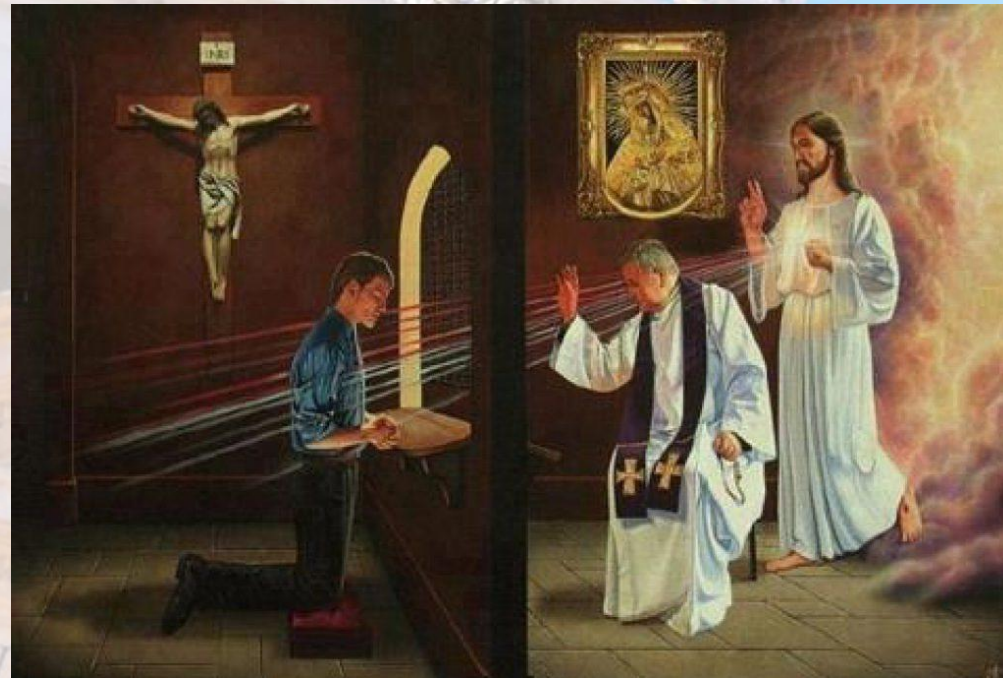
If the correct matter (stuff) and form (words) are used, if the minister intends to do what the Church does in the celebration of this Sacrament, and if the recipient places no barrier or obstacle, then the Sacrament confers grace because the primary minister of the Sacrament is Christ.

Put another way, because the primary minister of the Sacrament is Christ, the lack of worthiness on the part of the minister or a less-than-perfect approach to the Sacrament by the recipient does not hinder the grace the Sacrament offers. It is Christ who imparts the grace in the person of the minister who is acting in His person!

This teaching is called “**ex opere operato**.” “From the work having been worked!”

Ultimately...

- The Sacraments are an act of Christ and an act of the Church. The Church administers Christ's Sacraments, though it is Christ acting through the minister.
- Therefore, each Sacrament is an encounter with Christ.



Yet our disposition matters!

- The Sacraments communicate the grace of Christ *ex opere operato* (simply by doing the correct rite), but they only bear fruit of conversion and charity in the recipient's life based on the dispositions with which he/she receives the Sacrament.
- The grace we receive from the Sacraments depends on how we approach each Sacrament.
- For example, if we approach Holy Communion or the Sacrament of Confirmation while being in the state of mortal sin, we do not receive the graces of each Sacrament. In fact, to receive Holy Communion while being in the state of mortal sin is a sacrilege.

What makes a Sacrament valid?

- The **celebrant** must have the power to administer the Sacrament, which he receives in Ordination (consecration) and the faculty (mission) to administer the Sacrament. Some Sacraments can be performed by lay people (we'll get to that!), but most can only be performed by the ordained...
- The **matter** of a sacrament is the essential symbol or gesture that, along with the form, expresses the core sacramental action.
 - It's usually the *stuff* of the sacrament (i.e. water, oil, bread, wine, etc)
- The **form** of a Sacrament is the formula – the essential words of prayer – during the sacramental celebration that define or give form to the symbols or gestures that are used.
 - “I baptize you in the name of the Father...”
 - “For this is my Body...”
- The **intention** of the celebrant must be to do what the Church intends.
 - Even a minister without faith validly administers a Sacrament as long as he intends to do what the Church intends in the administration of the Sacrament. For example, a priest who has lost his faith validly absolves from sin as long as he wills to do what the Church intends. An unbelieving nurse in a hospital validly baptizes if he/she intends to do what the Church intends.

Some Sacraments impress a “character.”

- Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders each impress a spiritual and indelible character, a “mark” on the human person. The Character is...
- A sign that configures: A sign that configures the Christian to Christ, the High Priest. The baptismal character configures the baptized to Christ in the mystery of His sonship. The confirmation character configures the confirmed to Christ in the mystery of his baptism (mission). The character of Holy Orders configures a man to Christ in the mystery of his headship over the Church. The Sacramental Character is an enduring sign of consecration to God. It calls the recipient to an ever deeper union with Christ and transformation in Him.
- A sign that distinguishes: A sign of the celebration of the Rite of the Church that builds up the Church. The baptized is distinguished from the non-baptized; the confirmed from the non-confirmed; the ordained from the non-ordained; each rank of the ordained is distinguished from the other two ranks.
- A sign that disposes: In so far as it empowers the faithful in relation to certain acts of worship and indirectly disposes them for the reception of sanctifying and actual graces.
- A sign that obliges: The character brings with it certain obligations regarding the Christian life. The character also obliges the recipient to worship in the state of sanctifying grace.
- Because the imposition of the Character is an act of the Eternal Father through Christ in the Spirit, the Character is **indelible**. The common teaching of the Church is that the Character of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders endure into eternity and inhere in the recipient in heaven or hell.