

## Session 22: Divisions Among Christians

**HYMN:** To Jesus Christ, our Sovereign  
King



To Jesus Christ, our sov'reign King,  
Who is the world's salvation,  
all praise and homage do we bring,  
and thanks and adoration.

Christ Jesus, Victor!  
Christ Jesus, Ruler!  
Christ Jesus, Lord and Redeemer!

Your reign extend, O King benign,  
to every land and nation,  
for in Your Kingdom, Lord, divine,  
alone we find salvation.

Christ Jesus, Victor!  
Christ Jesus, Ruler!  
Christ Jesus, Lord and Redeemer!

To You and to Your Church, great  
King,  
we pledge our hearts' oblation,  
until before Your throne we sing  
in endless jubilation.

Christ Jesus, Victor!  
Christ Jesus, Ruler!  
Christ Jesus, Lord and Redeemer!

**PRAYER:** See Eph 1:22-22.

Let us pray: O God,  
grant us a spirit  
of wisdom and insight  
to know You clearly.  
Enlighten our innermost vision,  
that we may know the great hope  
to which You have called us,  
the wealth of Your glorious heritage  
to be distributed among the members  
of the Church,  
and the immeasurable scope  
of Your power  
in us who believe.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with You  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen

**READING:** 2 Tim 4:1-5  
A Reading from St. Paul's Second  
Letter to Timothy

I charge you  
in the presence of God  
and of Christ Jesus,  
Who will judge  
the living and the dead,  
and by His appearing  
and His kingly power:  
proclaim the word;  
be persistent,  
whether it is convenient  
or inconvenient;  
convince,  
reprimand,  
encourage,  
with all patience and teaching.

For the time will come  
when people will not tolerate  
sound doctrine but,  
following their own desires  
and insatiable curiosity,  
will accumulate teachers  
and will stop listening to the truth  
and will be diverted to myths.

But you — be self-possessed  
in all circumstances;  
put up with hardship;  
perform the work of an evangelist;  
fulfil your ministry.  
The Word of the Lord  
— *Thanks be to God*

**IN BRIEF: WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES**

Divisions among Christians  
are the result of human sins,  
for which, often enough,  
people on both sides were to blame.

However, people who are brought up  
in communities  
that are already separated  
from the Church  
are not guilty  
of the sin of the separation.

Accordingly,  
the Catholic Church accepts them  
with respect and affection  
as brothers in Christ —  
for their Baptism makes them  
members of His Mystical Body. —

## Session 22

Much holiness and truth  
can be found in these communities,  
such as the Scriptures,  
supernatural life,  
faith, hope, charity,  
and other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, the Catholic Church  
views any other religion  
as a search for God  
and considers any goodness and truth  
found there  
to be a gift from God  
and a preparation for the Gospel.

Nevertheless, she asserts  
that God continues to call  
the whole of humanity together  
into His Son's Church.  
In fact, she claims  
that all salvation  
comes from Christ the Head,  
through the Church,  
which is His Body.

This claim does not lessen  
the Church's sincere respect  
for other religions,  
but it rules out the idea  
that one religion  
is as good as another.

Therefore, no one could be saved  
if he knew that Christ had founded  
the Catholic Church  
and refused either to enter it  
or to remain in it.

However, people who,  
through no fault of their own,  
do not know Christ and His Church  
may be saved  
in ways that only God knows,  
if they sincerely seek Him  
and try to do His will.

In her relations with Judaism,  
the Church never forgets  
that God chose the Jews  
as His own people  
and gave them the law,  
the covenants, and the promises.  
Moreover,  
when God's Son became a Man  
for our salvation,  
He became a Jew.

As for Muslims,  
the Church acknowledges  
that God's plan of salvation  
includes all those  
who acknowledge the Creator

and adore the one, merciful God,  
our Judge on the last day.

### BIBLE READING

Dn 1-14

This week you will read  
how three young men  
preferred death by fire  
to the abandonment of God's will.

"If our God,  
Whom we serve,  
can save us  
from the white-hot furnace  
and from your hands,  
O king,  
may He save us!"  
they said.

"But even if He will not,  
know, O king,  
that we will not serve your god  
or worship the golden statue  
that you set up."

Next week we will discuss  
just what we mean by "God's Will."

## Divisions Among Christians

### Introduction

At His Last Supper, Jesus prayed for His apostles. Then He added, "I do not pray for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; I pray that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. I have given them the glory You gave Me that they may be one, as We are One — I living in them, You living in Me — that their unity may be complete."<sup>1</sup>

But the unity of Christ's Church has been broken repeatedly. There are now tens of thousands of different Christian denominations in the United States alone.

### Diversity

Christ sent *eleven* apostles<sup>2</sup> to preach the Gospel to all nations.<sup>3</sup> From the start, then, there was diversity in the Church — bringing "richness," but also danger.<sup>4</sup>

Peter went to Antioch and then Rome. Historians think that Matthew preached to the Hebrews; Andrew was martyred at Patras, in Achaia, now Greece; John went to Ephesus in Asia Minor; Thomas, to India or perhaps Parthia, now Iran; Philip, to Asia Minor; Bartholomew, to Armenia; and Simon and Jude, to Persia, now Iran.

As they went, the apostles handed on their powers to their successors.<sup>5</sup> For example, they elected Matthias to succeed Judas;<sup>6</sup> Paul ordained Timothy.<sup>7</sup> Thus there grew up the various local or *particular* "churches"<sup>8</sup> or "dioceses." Each had its own language, its own style of celebrating the Sacraments, and its own bishop, whose powers could be traced back to one of the apostles.

But before long, disagreements arose, sometimes causing divisions called *schisms*.<sup>9</sup> Occasionally, individuals or groups would *apostasize*<sup>10</sup> — abandon Christianity completely. As time went on, some people began to drift away from the truth.

### Heresies, schisms

The earliest *heresies*<sup>11</sup> were about Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church has always taught that He is one and the same Person as God the Son: truly, fully, and perfectly God and truly, fully, and perfectly Man, possessing the nature of God and the nature of man.<sup>12</sup> However,

- Paul of Samosata (200-275), Bishop of Antioch 260-268, held that Jesus is God's Son by adoption, not by nature.<sup>13</sup> The Church deposed Paul from his see<sup>14</sup> and condemned his heresy in synods<sup>15</sup> at Antioch 264-266.
- Arius (256-336), a priest of Alexandria in Egypt, taught that God the Son was of a different "substance" from the Father. The Church condemned this heresy at the first ecumenical<sup>16</sup> council of Nicaea in 325. (The Nicene Creed, written at this council, says that the Son of God is "consubstantial"<sup>17</sup> with the Father."<sup>18</sup>)

1 Jn 17:20-23

2 See Mt 10:2-4; Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16; Jn 1:35-49.

3 See Mt 28:19-20.

4 See CCC 814.

5 See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?"

6 See Acts 1:15-26.

7 See 2 Tim 1:6.

8 See Acts 15:41; 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:1,19, 11:8,28, 12:13; Gal 1:2; 1 Thes 2:14; Rv 1:4, 2:29, 3:22.

9 From the Latin *schisma*, from the Greek *skhisma*, from *skhizein* ("tear," "rend").

10 From the Latin *apostasia*, from the Greek *apostasis* (a "revolt," "standing-off.")

11 From the Latin *haeresis*, from the Greek *hairesis*, from the Greek *hairao* ("I grasp," "I take away").

12 See CCC 467. Also see the talk on "Who is Jesus Christ?"

13 See the talk on "Who is Jesus Christ?" The Church deposed Paul from his diocese in 268.

14 Or diocese.

15 Assemblies of churchmen meeting under the Church's authority; from the Latin *synodus*, from the Greek *sunodos* ("meeting"); from the Greek *sun* ("together") plus *hodos* ("road, way, journey").

16 From the Latin *ecumenicus*, from the Greek *oikoumene* ("the whole inhabited world"). An ecumenical council includes all the Church's bishops, including the Bishop of Rome as their head.

17 "Of the same substance" or "nature."

18 See the talk on "God: Unity and Trinity."

- Nestorius (386-451), Bishop of Constantinople (now Istanbul) 428-431, said that Christ was two Persons — a human person joined to God the Son.<sup>19</sup> The Church condemned this heresy at the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431.
- Various monophysites<sup>20</sup> claimed that Christ had only one nature, the divine nature — that He was not truly human.<sup>21</sup> The Church condemned this heresy at the fourth ecumenical council, at Chalcedon in 451.

These last two heresies led to schisms, separating the churches in Syria, Egypt, and Ethiopia from the others.

### 'Orthodox' churches

Most of the apostles preached in countries where Greek was spoken. Our earliest copies of the New Testament are in Greek and so are the writings of the early Church Fathers.<sup>22</sup> Even in Rome, Greek was the Church's language up to the third century. Until the Second Vatican Council,<sup>23</sup> there was still some Greek left in the Mass: *Kyrie eleison* ("Lord, have mercy") and *Christe eleison* ("Christ, have mercy").

After the third century, differences in practice began to widen between the Greek-speaking East and the Latin-speaking West. For example, the East began to use leavened bread<sup>24</sup> at Mass, while the West, following Jewish practice, continued to use unleavened bread.<sup>25</sup>

However, all the churches<sup>26</sup> still acknowledged the Pope's primacy.<sup>27</sup> When disagreements arose, the Pope acted as moderator "by common consent."<sup>28</sup> For example, in about 858, during a dispute about who should be Patriarch<sup>29</sup> of Constantinople, one of the disputants asked Pope Nicholas I to send delegates.

Nevertheless, disagreement between Rome and Constantinople<sup>30</sup> continued, sowing the seeds of separation. For example, Constantinople began to question the Church's insertion of the word *Filioque*<sup>31</sup> ("and the Son") in the Nicene Creed.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, in 1054, a papal "legate" ("delegate") declared the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicate<sup>33</sup> and the Patriarch responded by declaring the Pope excommunicate.<sup>34</sup> From this date, the schism between the Catholic Church and what came to be called the Eastern Orthodox<sup>35</sup> Churches was complete.

Today, Orthodox Churches differ from the Catholic Church in the following ways:

- They deny the Pope's jurisdiction over the whole Church and his infallibility in matters of faith and morals;<sup>36</sup> they accept him only as the Latin Patriarch.<sup>37</sup>
- They do not say *Filioque* in the Nicene Creed.<sup>38</sup>
- They admit divorce after adultery or prolonged desertion, although reluctantly.<sup>39</sup>

19 See the talk on "Who is Jesus Christ?"

20 From the Greek *monos* ("single") plus *physis* ("nature").

21 See the talk on "Who is Jesus Christ?"

22 The "Fathers of the Church" are considered to be special witnesses to the faith because they lived not long after Christ. In the Western, or Latin, Church, there were 39, ending with Isidore of Seville (560-636); in the Eastern, or Greek, Church, there were 49, ending with John of Damascus (675-749).

23 1962-1965

24 That is, bread which has been made to rise with yeast.

25 See Ex 12:8,14-15,17-20; 1 Cor 5:6-8.

26 Except those in schism.

27 See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?"

28 See Pope John Paul II: *Ut Unum Sint*, 94.

29 From the Greek *patriarches* ("father of a race"), the title (from the sixth century on) for the bishop of one of the five chief dioceses: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem.

30 The dispute was exacerbated by the question of whether the new churches of Bulgaria should be more closely associated with Rome or with Constantinople.

31 Latin for "and the Son." The original wording said "I believe in the Holy Spirit ... Who proceeds from the Father." See the talk on "God: Unity and Trinity" and its Appendix 2.

32 At the Council of Toledo Spain, in 589.

33 Michael Cerularius

34 Pope Leo IX

35 From the Greek *orthos* ("right") plus *doksa* ("opinion").

36 See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?"

37 They themselves honour the Patriarch of Constantinople as the "first among equals," but their various churches are more or less *autocephalous* (from the Greek for "self-governing").

38 See the talk on "God: Unity and Trinity" and its Appendix 2.

39 See the talk on "Matrimony."

- They believe that Mary was born subject to original sin and not freed from its effects until the Annunciation.<sup>4 0</sup>
- They believe in Mary's Assumption only as a tradition, not as a dogma.<sup>4 1</sup>
- They do not believe in Purgatory.<sup>4 2</sup>
- They do not believe in indulgences.<sup>4 3</sup>

However, the Orthodox *do* agree with Catholics in the following major areas:

- They recognize the powers of each other's priests and bishops.<sup>4 4</sup>
- They celebrate all seven Sacraments.<sup>4 5</sup>
- They venerate Mary and the saints.<sup>4 6</sup>
- They foster monasticism (the life of monks and nuns).<sup>4 7</sup>
- They teach fundamentally the same theology.

All who believe in Christ and are baptized<sup>4 8</sup> enjoy a certain "communion" with the Catholic Church. With the Orthodox Churches, "this communion is so profound" that very little is needed before we can celebrate the Eucharist together.<sup>4 9</sup>

### Eastern 'rites'

Between 1182 and 1930, more than a dozen groups of Eastern Orthodox came back into full communion with the Catholic Church.<sup>5 0</sup> However, they still celebrate the Sacraments in the Eastern style.

These people are said to belong to different *rites* in the Catholic Church. There are six major rites — Alexandrian, Antiochene, Armenian, Byzantine,<sup>5 1</sup> Chaldean, and Latin — with various subdivisions.

The Lower Mainland is mostly Latin-rite, but there are three other rites:

- *Ukrainian*: a subdivision of the Byzantine rite, currently without a bishop or *eparch* and administered by Eparch David Motiuk of Edmonton. The diocese or *Eparchy* of New Westminster covers British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territory north of BC. They have five churches: Holy Eucharist Cathedral in New Westminster, Descent of the Holy Spirit Church in Chilliwack, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Richmond, Holy Cross Church in Surrey, and Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Vancouver.
- *Melkite*: also a subdivision of the Byzantine rite, whose bishop is Eparch Ibrahim Milad Jawish BS<sup>5 2</sup> of Saint-Sauveur de Montréal. Their parish, St. George's Mission, shares St. Francis de Sales Church in Burnaby.
- *Chaldean*: whose bishop is Eparch Robert Saeed Jarjis of Mar Addai of Toronto. Their parish, St. Paul Chaldean Catholic Parish, shares St. Andrew Kim Church in Surrey.

### Protestantism

"Protestantism" — sparked by Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), and Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) — is "the system of Christian faith and practice based on acceptance of the principles of the Reformation."<sup>5 3</sup>

Luther, a German, the son of a miner, was educated at the Cathedral School of

40 Pope Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception a dogma December 8 1854. See the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

41 Pope Pius XII declared the Assumption a dogma November 1 1950. See the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

42 See the talk on "Death and the End of the World."

43 See the talk on "The Communion Among the Saints in the Body of Christ."

44 See the talks on "What is the Catholic Church?" "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice," and "Sin and Forgiveness."

45 See the talk on "Grace and the Sacraments."

46 See the talks on "Mary and Joseph" and "Bearing Witness: Living as a Catholic."

47 See the talks on "Catholic Spiritualities" and "Consecrated Life."

48 See the talk on "Baptism and Confirmation."

49 See CCC 838. Also see the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

50 However, in 1946 and 1948, two of them re-united themselves with the Orthodox. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Uniat Churches."

51 Originating in Constantinople, now Istanbul, which was built on the site of the Greek city Byzantium.

52 "Basilian Salvatorian" (Melkite)

53 *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Protestantism"

Magdeburg, at Eisenach, and at Erfurt University, where he studied the liberal arts and then law. In 1505 he entered the monastery of the strict Augustinian Hermits at Erfurt, in fulfilment of a vow made in terror during a thunderstorm. He was ordained a priest in 1507 and the following year sent to lecture on moral philosophy at the recently founded university of Wittenberg. There he became a doctor of theology and professor of Scripture, a post he held until his death.

The chief factor in the development of Luther's teaching seems to have been his own passionate and melancholy nature. Anxiety about his own salvation caused him many scruples, and when his religious life failed to bring him confidence and relief, he gave up celebrating Mass and reciting the Liturgy of the Hours.<sup>54</sup>

Zwingli, born in Wildhaus Switzerland, was educated at Berne, Vienna, and Basle. He was ordained a priest in 1506 and served as pastor of a parish in Glarus for the next ten years. In 1516 he left for Einsiedeln, where he encountered abuses connected with pilgrimages to the famous shrine. On December 11 1518 he was elected "People's Preacher" at the Old Minster in Zurich, where he remained for the rest of his life, working to implement his political and religious ideals.<sup>55</sup>

Calvin, born at Noyon in Picardy France, began his Church career at the age of 12. He studied theology in Paris 1523-1528, but from 1527 on he seems to have doubted his priestly vocation and probably his Catholic faith. His final break with the Church appears to have occurred after a religious experience in 1533.

He visited Basle in 1535, intending to devote his life there to study, but on a visit to Geneva in 1536 he agreed to stay to promote the Reformation. His efforts included obliging all Genevans to swear a profession of faith approved by the town council. He was expelled from Geneva in 1538, but returned in 1541 and devoted himself to establishing a theocratic regime on Old Testament lines, with dancing and games prohibited and even purely religious offences severely punished. By 1555, he was the uncontested dictator of the city and remained so until his death.<sup>56</sup>

### Reformation

Apparently, the original purposes of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin were to *reform* the Catholic Church, whose practices had indeed become corrupt.

- As recently as 1378, three men had each claimed to be Pope and excommunicated their rivals.
- From 1309 to 1376, the Pope, Bishop of Rome, had lived in Avignon, in France, in scandalous luxury.
- Popes were installing their children and other relatives in Church offices and selling Church positions.
- Priests were abandoning celibacy, which had been mandatory in the Latin rite since the eleventh century.
- Priests were charging for their services; in fact, the Sacrament of the Sick was becoming known as the "rich man's sacrament."
- Marital infidelity, illegitimacy, and superstition were common among the laity.<sup>57</sup>

### Revolution

In general, the reformers did not "set out to destroy Catholicism" or to establish "some other united counter-religion," says Catholic historian Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953).<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, their protests eventually hardened into denials of

- the authority of the Church.<sup>59</sup>
- the full implication of membership in Christ's Mystical Body.<sup>60</sup>
- the sacrificial character of the Mass.<sup>61</sup>

54 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Luther, Martin."

55 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Zwingli, Ulrich."

56 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Calvin, John."

57 See William Whalen: *Separated Brethren*, Chapter III.

58 Hilaire Belloc: *The Great Heresies*, "What Was the Reformation?"

59 See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?"

60 See CCC 2008-2010; see also the talk on "The Communion Among the Saints in the Body of Christ."

Accordingly, "the chief characteristics of original Protestantism, common to all its denominations,"<sup>6 2</sup> came to be:

- *Scripture alone* (in Latin, *sola Scriptura*): acceptance of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth. In contrast, the Catholic Church also recognizes Sacred Tradition and claims the power and the duty to interpret both authentically.<sup>6 3</sup>
  - *faith alone* (in Latin, *sola fide*): the doctrine that we are made just, or righteous, by faith alone, since the deeds of fallen human beings are worthless in God's eyes. In contrast, the Catholic Church holds that our good deeds are meritorious once we have become members of Christ's Mystical Body at Baptism.<sup>6 4</sup>
  - the *universal priesthood* of believers. The Catholic Church teaches that all the baptized share Christ's priesthood, but that the Mass is a sacrifice, which can be offered only with an ordained priest.<sup>6 5</sup>
- In general, Protestantism tends<sup>6 6</sup>

- to stress God's transcendence.
- to emphasize the effects of the Fall and original sin.
- to deny the power of the human intellect to obtain knowledge of God.
- to minimize liturgy.
- to put preaching and Bible reading before the Sacraments.
- to reject asceticism<sup>6 7</sup> for its own sake, but to uphold a high, often austere, standard of personal morality.

However, the Protestant principle of "private judgement" in the interpretation of Scripture has led to great variety in doctrine and practice.<sup>6 8</sup>

For example, the Catholic Church has always held that at the Consecration of the Mass, bread and wine are changed substantially<sup>6 9</sup> into Christ's Body and Blood, so that only their appearances remain.<sup>7 0</sup> In contrast,<sup>7 1</sup>

- Luther said that the bread and wine continue to co-exist with Christ's Body and Blood.<sup>7 2</sup>
- Zwingli said that the bread and wine are unchanged.
- Calvin agreed that the bread and wine are unchanged, but said they communicate the "power" or "virtue" of Christ's Body and Blood.<sup>7 3</sup>

It has been estimated that Protestants today interpret what Christ said at His Last Supper in about 100 different ways. Some agree with one or other of the reformers, while others have no communion service at all.

### Henry VIII

Anglicans are often called Protestants, but Anglicans object. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin left the Catholic Church for religious reasons, but King Henry VIII (1491-1547) separated England from the Church in 1534 for political reasons only.

In fact, Henry's book "Defence of the Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther"<sup>7 4</sup> had earned him the title "Defender of the Faith" from Pope Leo X in 1521. (Pope Paul III revoked the title in 1543, but the English Parliament re-awarded it to Henry in 1544, and English monarchs still hold it. To this day, British coins are stamped "FD" — *Fidei Defensor*.)

61 See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice." Protestants define worship as "songs, prayers, and a sermon"; Catholics define it as "the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus" (Scott and Kimberly Hahn: *Rome Sweet Home*, 8, "Kimberly").

62 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Protestantism."

63 See the talks on "Divine Revelation" and "What is the Catholic Church?"

64 See the talks on "Baptism and Confirmation" and "The Communion Among the Saints in the Body of Christ."

65 See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

66 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Protestantism."

67 Spiritual effort or exercise in the pursuit of virtue; from the Greek *asketikos* ("given to exercise").

68 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Protestantism."

69 "Transubstantiated"

70 See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

71 See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "Eucharist."

72 The doctrine of *consubstantiation*.

73 The doctrine of *virtualism*.

74 In Latin, *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum Adversus Martinum Lutherum*.

When Henry's older brother Arthur died in 1502 with no children, Pope Julius II gave Henry a dispensation to marry Arthur's widow,<sup>75</sup> the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon. The couple had two children: a son Henry, who lived only seven weeks, and a daughter Mary.

However, Henry fell in love with one of his wife's ladies-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn. Moreover, in order to avoid a repetition of the "War of the Roses" (1450-1485), he wanted a legitimate male heir. Accordingly, he asked Pope Clement VII to declare his marriage to Catherine null.

When the Pope said he could not, Henry had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which stated that "the Bishop of Rome hath not by Scripture any greater authority in England than any other foreign bishop" and declared the King of England to be "sole head of the Church in England."

Notice: not "head of the Church of England," but "head of the Church" — the Catholic Church — "in England." Like the Protestants at the beginning of the Reformation, Henry had no intention of starting a new church.

The Act of Supremacy required anyone holding public or church office to take the Oath of Supremacy. When Bishop John Fisher of Rochester and Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas More refused, Henry had both beheaded. (See the award-winning movie *A Man For All Seasons*, based on Robert Bolt's play of the same name, taken from the records of Will Roper, More's son-in-law.)

As "head of the Catholic Church in England," Henry got Archbishop Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury to declare his first marriage null, and he married Anne Boleyn. Anne bore him another daughter, Elizabeth, before he had Anne beheaded on the charge of adultery.

In the next few years, Henry suppressed some 600 monasteries, seizing their riches and executing hundreds of bishops, nobles, monks, and lay men and women. However, the only *doctrine* he ever challenged was the primacy of the Pope.<sup>76</sup>

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### Edward VI

After Anne Boleyn's execution, Henry married Jane Seymour, who died in 1537 soon after the birth of a son, Edward VI.<sup>77</sup> Edward was only nine when his father died, so his maternal uncle, Edward Seymour, a Protestant, became regent.

During Edward's short reign (1547-1553), the sacrificial character of the Mass was denied and cut from the new ordination rite. Throughout England, altars (required for sacrifice) were smashed and replaced with tables (for a memorial meal).<sup>78</sup>

Accordingly, Pope Julius III (in 1554) and Pope Paul IV (in 1555) both declared Anglican ordination null.<sup>79</sup> When its validity was questioned again in the 19th century, Pope Leo XIII decreed that it be once more "most carefully examined"<sup>80</sup> by a group of competent Catholics, but their conclusion was the same.

The Edwardine ordination rite, the Pope said, contained "no clear mention" of sacrifice, consecration, priesthood, or "the power of consecrating and offering sacrifice." Even where parts of the Catholic ordination rite had been retained, "every trace of these things" had been "deliberately removed and struck out."<sup>81</sup>

The Edwardine rite had been used from 1559 until 1662. After that, the Anglicans had amended it, the Pope noted, but the change had been insufficient and had come "too late, as a century had already elapsed."<sup>82</sup> For 103 years,

75 Then within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity.

76 See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?"

77 Henry had no other children, but he married three more times: Anne of Cleves, whom he never lived with; Katherine Howard, whom he beheaded for alleged adultery; and Catherine Parr, who outlived him.

78 See Edward Cardwell: *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England*, Volume 1, XXI, XXIV. "The form of a table shall more move the simple from the superstitious opinions of the Popish Mass unto the right use of the Lord's Supper. For the use of an altar is to make sacrifice upon it: the use of a table is to serve for men to eat upon" (Thomas Cranmer: *Works*, "Miscellaneous Writings and Letters," Appendix XXXIX "Reasons why the Lord's Board should be after the form of a table than that of an altar," First Reason).

79 A priest is defined to be one who "offers sacrifice" (John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Priest").

80 See Pope Leo XIII: *Apostolicae Curae*, 23.

81 See Pope Leo XIII: *Apostolicae Curae*, 30.



Anglican clergymen had been ordained by clerics who had had no intention of conferring priestly powers. By 1662, then, "the hierarchy had become extinct" in England; "there remained no power of ordaining."<sup>83</sup>

Accordingly, in 1896, Pope Leo reiterated that "ordinations carried out according to the Anglican rite have been, and are, absolutely null and utterly void."<sup>84</sup>

### Mary I and Elizabeth I

When Edward VI died unmarried at the age of 16, Catherine's daughter Mary succeeded him. Mary was Catholic, like her Spanish mother, and she tried hard to bring England back to the Catholic faith, putting Protestants to death and earning the title "Bloody Mary."<sup>85</sup> For three years, England was reunited with Rome, and Pope Julius III sent Cardinal Reginald Pole to England as his legate.<sup>86</sup>

However, Mary was married to the hated King Philip II of Spain, then England's military and economic enemy, and she failed. When she died in 1558, her half-sister Elizabeth, Anne Boleyn's daughter, succeeded her.

Elizabeth cut the ties with Rome, abolished the Mass, and declared herself "supreme governor" of the Church in England. The Thirty-Nine Articles of Anglican belief promulgated in 1663 affirmed *sola Scriptura*<sup>87</sup> and denied Catholic teaching about Purgatory,<sup>88</sup> transubstantiation,<sup>89</sup> the sacrifice of the Mass,<sup>90</sup> the authority of the Church,<sup>91</sup> and the seven Sacraments.<sup>92</sup>

In 1570, Pope Pius V declared Queen Elizabeth excommunicate all Anglicans and the Queen began to actively suppress all non-Anglicans. From 1584 on, it was high treason to be a Catholic priest in England; the penalty was death by hanging, drawing, and quartering.<sup>93</sup>

### Anglicanism today

Anglicans claim to have avoided what they call the "additions of Romanism and the subtractions of Protestantism." They regard themselves as one of four "branches" of Christendom: along with Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Old Catholics.<sup>94</sup>

In the United States, the Anglican Church is called *Episcopalian* because, unlike many Protestant denominations, it still has bishops.<sup>95</sup> Worldwide, it now holds such a range of belief that it is more often called the Anglican Communion. It includes:

- High Anglicans, who differ from Catholics on little except papal primacy.
- Low or Evangelical Anglicans, whom Catholics would call Protestants.
- Broad or Modernist Anglicans, who accept Christ's divinity only vaguely, if at all.

In recent years, the Anglican Communion has moved further away from the Catholic Church by the Church of England's decisions to ordain women priests (November 11 1992) and bishops (November 17 2014).

### Relations with other Christians

The schisms that separated whole communities from the Catholic Church were caused by sin, "for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame."<sup>96</sup>

82 See Pope Leo XIII: *Apostolicae Curiae*, 26.

83 See Pope Leo XIII: *Apostolicae Curiae*, 26.

84 See Pope Leo XIII: *Apostolicae Curiae*, 36.

85 See John Foxe: *Book of Martyrs*.

86 The last Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury.

87 See Article 6.

88 See Article 22.

89 See Article 28.

90 See Article 31.

91 See Article 20.

92 See Article 25.

93 See Richard Challoner: *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*. For a first-hand account of England under Elizabeth, see John Gerard SJ (1564-1637): *Autobiography of a Hunted Priest*.

94 Small national groups that separated from the Catholic Church, starting in protest against the doctrine of papal infallibility defined by Vatican Council I. (See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?")

95 The Latin for "bishop" is *episcopus*.

96 CCC 817

However, those brought up in such communities today cannot be held guilty of the sin. Accordingly, "the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection."<sup>97</sup> If they have been properly baptized, they belong to Christ's Mystical Body, so they are rightly called Christians and Catholics accept them as "brothers in the Lord."<sup>98</sup>

The Church asserts that much truth and holiness — including faith, hope, charity, supernatural life, and the written Word of God — can be found in these "churches and ecclesial communities" and that "Christ's Spirit" uses them as "means of salvation."<sup>99</sup> However, she maintains that their effectiveness comes from "the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church."<sup>100</sup>

## Relations with non-Christian religions

### 1) Judaism

It was the Jews whom God first chose as His people.<sup>101</sup> The first Christians<sup>102</sup> were Jews who recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah.<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, when Pope John Paul II visited Rome's principal Jewish synagogue in April 1986, he called the Jews "our elder brothers in the faith."

To the Jews belong "the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law-giving, the worship, and the promises."<sup>104</sup> Moreover, "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable."<sup>105</sup> In compiling the Bible, therefore, the Catholic Church included the Jewish Scriptures, which Christians call the Old Testament.

Today, both Christians and Jews await the Messiah, but Christians recognize Him as Jesus, Lord and Son of God, Who died and rose from the dead 2,000 years ago, while to Jews His "features remain hidden till the end of time."<sup>106</sup>

### 2) Islam

Mohammed, born about 570, lived in Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, where the people were mostly *polytheists*.<sup>107</sup> He claimed that for about 20 years, God ("Allah") and the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and dictated the 200,000-word Koran.

In contrast, Christians claim that with Christ, God's Self-revelation is complete, for what God revealed partially and gradually through the prophets of the Old Testament, He revealed fully, all at once, in Christ His Son.<sup>108</sup>

The Koran, mainly maxims grouped in 114 chapters, expresses the simple theology of Islam<sup>109</sup> that there is only one God, Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet.

Muslims, who claim to hold the faith of Abraham, "adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."<sup>110</sup> They reject the doctrines of the Holy Trinity<sup>111</sup> and the Incarnation,<sup>112</sup> but they honour Jesus as a prophet<sup>113</sup> and Mary as His mother.

### 3) Other religions

Both Jews and Muslims are *monotheistic*; that is, they worship the one, true God.

However, even in non-monotheistic religions, the Church recognizes a "search" for God. She considers "all goodness and truth" found in them to be God's gift and "a

97 See CCC 818.

98 See CCC 818.

99 See CCC 819.

100 See CCC 819.

101 See the talk on "The History of Our Salvation."

102 See Acts 11:26.

103 See the talk on "The History of Our Salvation."

104 Rom 9:4

105 Rom 11:29

106 CCC 840. *Messianic Judaism*, which began in the 1960s and 1970s, combines Christian elements with Jewish practice and terminology; it recognizes Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and God the Son made Man for us.

107 That is, they believed in many gods; from the Greek *polus* ("many") plus *theos* ("god").

108 See CCC 65. Also see the talk on "Divine Revelation."

109 "Islam" means "to submit" to the will of God.

110 CCC 841

111 See the talk on "God: Unity and Trinity."

112 See the talks on "Who is Jesus Christ?" and "The History of Our Salvation."

113 See the talk on "Baptism and Confirmation."

preparation for the Gospel."<sup>114</sup>

### Church authority today

"Rifts" arose in the early Church which St. Paul "strongly censures as damnable." Eventually, "large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church."<sup>115</sup> As we have seen, there were many different reasons — but every disagreement necessarily included a *denial of the Church's authority*.

Even today, the Church teaches *authoritatively*. For example, consider what Pope John Paul II said: "In order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution [or makeup] itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren,<sup>116</sup> I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."<sup>117</sup>

By these words, "the supreme Pontiff Pope John Paul II expressly intends to fulfil his office as successor of Peter," confirming the Church's teaching "by virtue of his apostolic ministry."<sup>118</sup>

When non-Catholic Christians are received into full communion with the Catholic Church, they declare formally, "I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God."

And all Catholics should be ready to say the same. To dissent is, by definition, to be a *protestant*.

### Ecumenism

Ecumenism<sup>119</sup> is "the modern movement toward Christian unity." Protestants began it at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910; the Catholic Church began it at the Second Vatican Council<sup>120</sup> in 1964 and restated its Catholic principles with the declaration *Dominus Iesus*<sup>121</sup> in 2000.

We must all work to recover the unity of Christians, each according to our own gifts — through mutual knowledge, meetings, instruction, conversion of hearts, permanent renewal in the Church, prayer and social service in common, and dialogue among theologians.<sup>122</sup>

There *are* signs of hope.

- In 1964, Pope Paul VI and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras met on the Mount of Olives<sup>123</sup> in Jerusalem and committed the Catholic-Orthodox excommunications of 1054 "to oblivion."<sup>124</sup> In 2014, Pope Francis marked the 50th anniversary of that event by meeting Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew in Jerusalem. In between, there had been 17 meetings between the Vatican and Constantinople.
- Ever since 1964, on November 30, the Feast of St. Andrew (revered as founder of the Greek-speaking churches), the Vatican sends a message to the Orthodox, personally delivered by the Pope<sup>125</sup> or a top Vatican delegate during ceremonies in Istanbul. The Orthodox reciprocate on June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (revered as founders of the Church at Rome).<sup>126</sup>
- In 1995, the Vatican concluded that "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone" (as the Orthodox say) and "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and

114 See CCC 843.

115 See CCC 817.

116 See Lk 22:32.

117 Pope John Paul II: *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 4. See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice," Appendix 3.

118 Vatican: *Presentation Note Accompanying "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis"*

119 From the Greek *oikoumene* ("the whole inhabited world").

120 John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Ecumenism."

121 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: *Lord Jesus*. See the Appendix.

122 See CCC 821. See Joseph Ratzinger: *God and the World*, Part III, 18, "Christian Unity."

123 See Mt 26:30; Mk 11:1, 13:3; Lk 21:37, 22:39.

124 *Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of His Holiness Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I*, December 7 1965

125 John Paul II in 1979, Benedict XVI in 2006.

126 In 1995, 2004, and 2008 Patriarch Bartholomew himself attended.

the Son" (as Catholics say) may both express the truth "if the words translated 'proceeds' actually have different meanings."<sup>127</sup>

- In 2007, the Orthodox stated that "primacy at all levels is a practice firmly grounded in the canonical tradition of the Church," including "primacy at the universal level," even though "the manner in which it is to be exercised" and "its scriptural and theological foundations"<sup>128</sup> are still understood differently.
- In 1999, the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church stated that they now share "a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ."<sup>129</sup> In 2008 the World Methodist Conference joined them.<sup>130</sup>
- Among Protestants, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, and the Pentecostal Charismatic Movement are all working for unity among non-Catholic Christians.

### Evangelization

Many people, "through no fault of their own," do not know Christ or His Church. Even those who could be expected to know, often, in truth, do not.<sup>131</sup> Such people can achieve salvation by sincerely seeking God and trying to do His will "as they know it through the dictates of their conscience"<sup>132</sup> — for in ways He knows, God can lead them "to that faith without which it is impossible to please Him."<sup>133</sup>

Many people who do know Christ and His Church are not formally Catholic. Such people can be saved by "a grace" that "enlightens" them in a way appropriate to "their spiritual and material situation"<sup>134</sup> — for we cannot exclude "the action of Christ and the Spirit outside the Church's visible boundaries."<sup>135</sup>

Nevertheless, there is only one "Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ."<sup>136</sup> There is no "parallel or complementary" mediation, but only participation in His.<sup>137</sup> The grace that enlightens *anyone* "comes from Him; it is the result of His sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit."<sup>138</sup>

Moreover, its efficacy comes from the "fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church."<sup>139</sup> In this sense, we can say that "outside the Church there is no salvation,"<sup>140</sup> for "the Lord Jesus continues His presence and His work of salvation in the Church and by means of the Church, which is His Body."<sup>141</sup>

We must never think, therefore, "that all religions may be equally valid ways of salvation."<sup>142</sup> In fact, no one could be saved who knew that Christ had founded the Catholic Church and refused "either to enter it or to remain in it."<sup>143</sup>

God the Father wants to call "the whole of humanity together into His Son's Church," where it will rediscover "its unity and salvation."<sup>144</sup> Accordingly, the Church has "the obligation" and "the right" to evangelize.<sup>145</sup>

127 The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: *The Father as the Source of the Whole Trinity: The Procession of the Holy Spirit in Greek and Latin Traditions* (see the talk on "God: Unity and Trinity," Appendix 2).

128 *Ravenna Document*, 43, unanimously approved by the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church during the Commission's tenth plenary session in Ravenna October 8–14 2007.

129 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*.

130 See Joseph Ratzinger: *God and the World*, Part III, 18, "Christian Unity."

131 "There are not over a hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church" (Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: *Radio Replies*, Volume 1, Foreword).

132 CCC 847. See the talk on "God's Will."

133 See CCC 848.

134 *Dominus Iesus*, 20

135 *Dominus Iesus*, 19

136 1 Tim 2:5

137 See *Dominus Iesus*, 14.

138 *Dominus Iesus*, 20

139 *Dominus Iesus*, 16

140 CCC 846

141 *Dominus Iesus*, 16

142 Vatican Summary of *Dominus Iesus*. See the Appendix.

143 CCC 846

144 See CCC 845.

And so do all her members.

On the last day, Jesus will say to those who have neglected the Corporal Works of Mercy,<sup>145</sup> "Out of my sight, you condemned, into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink."<sup>147</sup> Might He not say something similar to those who have neglected the Spiritual Works of Mercy:<sup>148</sup> "I was unenlightened, and you did not enlighten me; I was ignorant, and you gave Me no instruction"?

### 'Servant of unity'

Here the Pope has a special role. Pope John Paul II called himself the "first servant of unity."<sup>149</sup>

"I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard," he said: above all to "find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation.

"For a whole millennium Christians were united in a fraternal<sup>150</sup> communion of faith and sacramental life," he said. "If disagreements in belief and discipline arose among them, the Roman See acted by common consent as moderator. In this way the primacy exercised its office of unity."

"For a great variety of reasons, and against the will of all concerned, what should have been a service sometimes manifested itself in a very different light," he said. But "I recognize that as Bishop of Rome I am called to exercise that ministry.

"I insistently pray the Holy Spirit to shine His light upon us, enlightening all the pastors and theologians of our churches, that we may seek — together, of course — the forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned."<sup>151</sup>

Pope Francis says the same. "It is my duty, as the Bishop of Rome, to be open to suggestions that can help make the exercise of my ministry more faithful to the meaning that Jesus Christ wished to give it and to the present needs of evangelization."<sup>152</sup>

Ultimately, however, uniting Christians in "the one and only Church of Christ" transcends human powers. "We place all our hope in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>153</sup>

### Postscript

"History is not a creed or a catechism: it gives lessons rather than rules." However, "to be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant."<sup>154</sup>

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145 That is, to teach them the Gospel; from the Latin *evangelium* ("gospel"). See CCC 848.

146 Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead (*The Penny Catechism*, 321).

147 Mt 25:41-42

148 Which include "instructing the ignorant" and "converting the sinner" (*The Penny Catechism*, 322).

149 Pope John Paul II: *Ut Unum Sint*, 94

150 "Brotherly"; from the Latin *frater* ("brother").

151 Pope John Paul II: *Ut Unum Sint*, 95

152 Pope Francis: *Evangelii Gaudium*, 32

153 CCC 822

154 John Henry Newman: *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Introduction, 5

## Appendix

Vatican Summary of *Dominus Iesus* ("The Lord Jesus")

Edited slightly for ease of reading

In the lively contemporary debate on the relationship between Christianity and the other religions, some Catholic theologians have argued that all religions may be equally valid ways of salvation. Such theories are based on philosophical and theological presuppositions that have become quite common.

The Declaration *Dominus Iesus* highlights some of them; for example,

- conviction of the total elusiveness and inexpressibility of divine truth, even by Christian Revelation;
- relativistic attitudes toward truth itself, which hold that what is true for some is not true for others;
- assumption of a radical opposition between the logical mentality of the West and the symbolic mentality of the East;
- subjectivism that regards reason as the only source of knowledge;
- a metaphysical emptying of the mystery of the Incarnation;
- the eclecticism of those who, in theological research, uncritically absorb ideas from a variety of philosophical and religious contexts without regard for consistency, systematic connection, or compatibility with Christian truth;
- a tendency to read and interpret Sacred Scripture outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church.

The International Theological Commission published a document in 1997 entitled "Christianity and the World Religions," which illustrated the lack of foundation for pluralistic theologies of religions, and which reasserted the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Christ and the Church as the source of all salvation, both inside and outside Christianity.

Given, however, the rapid spread of the relativistic and pluralistic mentality, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has intervened with the present Declaration in order to set forth and clarify certain truths of faith.

The Declaration has six sections, which summarize the essential elements of Catholic doctrine on the meaning and salvific value of the other religions.

### **I. The fullness and definitiveness of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Against the theory of the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Declaration reiterates Catholic teaching on the full and complete Revelation of the salvific mystery of God in Jesus Christ.

Consequently, while admitting that other religions not infrequently reflect a ray of the Truth that enlightens all men,<sup>1</sup> the Declaration reaffirms that the designation "inspired texts" is reserved for the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments because these are inspired by the Holy Spirit, have God as their Author, and teach firmly, faithfully, and without error the truth about God and human salvation.

The Declaration also states that we must firmly hold the distinction between theological faith — which is adherence to the truth revealed by the One and Triune God — and belief in other religions — which is religious experience still in search of absolute truth, still lacking assent to God Who reveals Himself.

### **II. The incarnate Logos and the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation**

Against the thesis of a twofold salvific economy — that of the incarnate Word, which would be limited to Christians, and that of the eternal Word, which would be universal and valid outside the Church as well — the Declaration reasserts the unicity of the salvific economy of the one incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father.

Indeed, the mystery of Christ has an intrinsic unity that extends from the eternal

choice in God to the *parousia*:<sup>2</sup> Jesus is the Mediator and the universal Redeemer.

The theory of a salvific economy of the Holy Spirit with a character more universal than that of the incarnate Word, crucified and risen, is erroneous. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the risen Christ, and we cannot place His action outside or alongside that of Christ.

### III. The unicity and universality of the salvific mystery of Jesus Christ

The Declaration reasserts the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ.

At the same time, Christ's unique mediation does not exclude participated forms of mediation of various types and degrees. However, they receive meaning and value only from that of Christ; we cannot understand them as parallel or complementary.

### IV. Unicity and unity of the Church

The Lord Jesus continues His presence and His work of salvation in the Church and by means of the Church, which is His Body.

Therefore, we must firmly believe the unicity of the Church He founded as a truth of Catholic faith. As Catholic faithful, we must profess that there is a historical continuity between the Catholic Church and the Church Christ founded.

There are "many elements of sanctification and truth"<sup>3</sup> that exist outside the structure of the Church — that is to say, in those churches and ecclesial communities which are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church. However, "they derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church."<sup>4</sup>

Churches that do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome remain united to the Catholic Church by the closest bonds: apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative in these churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church.

Ecclesial communities that have not preserved the valid episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery are not churches in the proper sense. Nevertheless, those who are baptized in these communities enjoy a certain communion — although imperfect — with the Catholic Church.

### V. The Church: Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Christ

The mission of the Church is "to proclaim and establish among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and the Church is, on earth, the seed and the beginning of that kingdom."<sup>5</sup>

On the one hand, the Church is the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the entire human race."<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the Church is the "people gathered by the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

The Kingdom of God is not identified with the Church in her visible and social reality. Indeed, "the action of Christ and the Spirit outside the Church's visible boundaries"<sup>8</sup> must not be excluded.

There can be various theological explanations of these statements. Nevertheless, the intimate connection between Christ, the Kingdom, and the Church cannot be denied or emptied in any way.

In considering their relationships, we must avoid one-sided emphases. That is what they do who, speaking about the Kingdom of God, are silent about Christ. That is what they do who put great stress on the mystery of creation, but remain

1 See Vatican II: *Nostra Aetate*, 2.

2 The second coming of Christ.

3 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 8

4 CCC 819

5 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 5

6 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 1

7 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 4

8 Pope John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, 18

silent about the mystery of Redemption, because — they say — those who lack Christian faith cannot understand Christ, whereas we can all find common ground in the one divine reality, whatever name we give it.

#### VI. The Church and the other religions in relation to salvation

Above all, we must firmly believe that "the Church, now a pilgrim on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the Mediator and the Way of salvation; He is present to us in His Body, which is the Church."<sup>9</sup>

We must not set this doctrine against the universal salvific will of God; rather, we must "keep these two truths together: the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind, and the necessity of the Church for this salvation."<sup>10</sup>

For those who are not formally members of the Church, "salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church, but enlightens them in a way appropriate to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of His sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit."<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, the various religious traditions contain and offer religious elements that are part of what "the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, cultures, and religions."<sup>12</sup> However, we cannot attribute to them a divine origin or the *ex opere operato* salvific efficacy of the Christian Sacraments.

With the coming of the Saviour Jesus Christ, God has willed that the Church founded by Him be the instrument of salvation for all humanity. This truth of faith does not lessen the Church's sincere respect for the religions of the world, but at the same time it rules out, radically, indifference "characterized by a religious relativism, which leads to the belief that one religion is as good as another."<sup>13</sup>

#### Conclusion

As the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council taught: "We believe that the one true religion continues to exist in the Catholic and apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus entrusted the task of spreading it among all people. Accordingly, He said to the apostles: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.'"<sup>14</sup>

*In his Angelus address October 1 2000, Pope John Paul II said the following:*

"With the declaration *Dominus Iesus* ("Jesus is Lord") — approved by me in a special way at the height of the Jubilee Year — I want to invite all Christians to renew their fidelity to Him in the joy of faith and to bear unanimous witness that the Son, both today and tomorrow, is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'<sup>15</sup>

"Our confession of Christ as the only Son, through Whom we see the Father's face,<sup>16</sup> is not arrogance that disdains other religions, but joyful gratitude that Christ has revealed Himself to us without any merit on our part. At the same time, He has obliged us to continue giving what we have received and to communicate to others what we have been given, since the Truth that is given and the Love that is God belong to all people."

9 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 14

10 CCC 178

11 Pope John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, 10

12 Pope John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, 28-29

13 Pope John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, 36

14 Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae*, 1

15 Jn 14:6

16 See Jn 14:8.