

## **Some Useful Scripture Texts (The Biblical Basis for Some Catholic Beliefs and Practices)**

**2 WITNESSES.** Deuteronomy 17:5; Matthew 18:16. Two witnesses are required to put someone to death. Jesus bears the part of both witnesses (as God the Father did in Genesis 17:17) in spiritual life and death situations, especially in the Gospel of John (John 3:3; 5:24; 6:32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51; 10:1 are a few examples). The Greek "Amen, Amen", when translated, is usually rendered in English as "Verily, Verily", or "I tell you the truth", or "I solemnly assure you." It is more than just an affirmation of truth, it is a solemn oath.

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK.** Mark 6:13; James 5:13-16. In James 5:14, the "elders of the church" are the presbyters (from which we get the word priest). James 5:16 is a summary of the 3 verses preceding (some translations even begin this verse with "therefore" which is a giveaway that it is a summary because that's what it is there-for). Since it is a summary, when it says to confess your sins to each other, it is referring to the characters immediately preceding; the sick and the presbyter (priest) who is referred to here as the righteous man. It is the priest who does the anointing and hears the confession and forgives the sin. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 refers to this ministry of reconciliation which was the reason Jesus became man. The Apostles were our Lord's ambassadors to men; they were to apply to the people the reconciliation obtained by Jesus Christ -- which is done mainly through the sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick and Penance.

**ASSUMPTION.** Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11. In both of these cases a bodily assumption has occurred. Mary's assumption is not described in Holy Scripture, possibly because it occurred after these books were written, possibly because she was a woman and/or possibly because the sacred writers didn't think it important. Hebrew tradition has it that Moses was also assumed bodily into heaven (Deuteronomy 34:6 says that God buried Moses and no one knows where his grave is). This may explain why Moses and Elijah both appeared to Jesus at the transfiguration in bodily form; both were already in bodily form in heaven.

**BAPTISM.** Romans 6:2-4. Baptism forgives all sin.

**BAPTISM = CIRCUMCISION / INFANT BAPTISM.** Colossians 2:11-12. This verse tells us that baptism is the rite of initiation into the Christian family of God, just like circumcision was the rite of initiation into God's family for the Hebrew male (Genesis 17:11). The circumcision of the flesh left a visible sign of the covenant for all to see, baptism is a circumcision of the heart which only God can see. Since the Hebrew male was circumcised on the 8th day of its life (Genesis 17:12), can we do less for our children?

**BAPTISM = SALVATION.** Mark 16:16; John 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21.

**BIBLE ALONE (*SOLA SCRIPTURA*).** 2 Thessalonians 2:15; John 20:30; John 21:25; 2 John 12; 3 John 13-14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Timothy 3:15; Matthew 18:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6. 2 Thessalonians 2:15 tells us to hold fast to all the teachings of the Church (nowhere in Holy

Scripture does it say that all teachings have been recorded although the Church does agree at all the basic teachings are contained therein). John 20:30, 21:25, 2 John 12 & 3 John 13-14 reaffirm that not all teachings have been recorded. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that the Old Testament is inspired (the New Testament hadn't been written yet and the canon wasn't decided for several hundred more years). It tells us that it is useful for teaching it doesn't limit scripture to being the only source of information (see next verse comment). The superabundance of scripture and tradition is fuller than the bare necessities of scripture alone. 1 Timothy 3:15 tells us that it is the Church, not the Bible, which gives us all the truth and provides the basis for determining truth or falsity (none of the Church teachings are in conflict with Holy Scripture). Matthew 18:18 again tells us that the Church is the final authority. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 is a final reminder to live in accordance with all the teachings which have been given to us (whether by word of mouth or by letter). We are not to be distracted by those who would try to limit the teachings of the Church. When asked "Where in the Bible does it say that you are to ...?" perhaps we ought to counter "Where in the Bible does it say that we are not to ...?"

**BORN AGAIN.** John 3:3-5. "... unless he is born again ...". The Greek word *anōthen* is translated in 3:3 as "again" and in 3:31 as "from above" and "from heaven". The meaning is clarified in 3:5 as "water and spirit" -- baptism. Put into context, John 1 tells us of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist and the descent of the Holy Spirit; John 2 tells us of the wedding feast at Cana where water in stone jars used for ceremonial washing (*baptismois* in Greek) is changed into wine, John 3 tells us of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus and then 3:22 tells us that Jesus and His disciples went into the countryside and baptized. This whole section is about baptism; in fact, baptism of repentance like John the Baptist did, because sacramental baptism as we know it today was not directed by Jesus until Matthew 28:19 (after the resurrection).

**BROTHERS OF JESUS.** Matthew 12:47-50. Brethren/brothers in the Hebrew language applies to cousins and other close relatives. Hebrew has no words for these close relatives so 'brothers' is used. Greek (the language of the New Testament writings) does have words to distinguish between these close relatives, but the books were written by Hebrew men from the Hebrew way of looking at things. If Jesus had any blood brothers, the welfare of His mother, Mary, would not have been entrusted to the beloved disciple, John (his cousin), in John 19:26-27. See also the point paper entitled *Was Jesus An Only Child?*.

**CHURCH IS VISIBLE.** Matthew 5:14; Mark 4:30-32. The Church founded by Jesus the Christ is a visible, not invisible, society.

**CONCUPISCENCE.** Romans 7:8-25. Concupiscence is the desire to do sinful things. It is the result of the original sin of Adam and Eve.

**CONFESSION.** John 20:19-23. This event takes place on the first Easter Sunday. This is the first action Jesus takes when He returns to His disciples. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (NIV) means that just as Jesus was sent by the Father with full authority to bring about reconciliation between man and God, so also are the Apostles given this same full authority. Verse 22 is a sacrament in one verse: An outward sign (he breathed on them)

instituted by Christ (He who did the breathing) to give grace (receive the Holy Spirit). "If you forgive..." the power to forgive sins is explicitly given to men to act in Jesus' place [He who hears you, hears me ...] (Luke 10:16)]. This leads us to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and the discussion under ANOINTING OF THE SICK above.

**CRUCIFIX.** John 3:14-15. This is the reason we have a crucifix which displays a crucified Christ still on the cross. This scene refers us back to Numbers 21:5-9 for a fuller description of the event and to 2 Kings 18:4 where the bronze serpent is destroyed because it, rather than God, had become an object of worship (we must always be careful to recall that the crucifix reminds us of the crucified Christ). 1 Corinthians 1:23 tells us that we preach Christ crucified (not Christ resurrected, or Christ in the manger). Jesus could not separate his resurrection from his death [Father, if it is your will take this cup from me (Luke 22:42)] and neither can we. It was through Christ's willing sacrifice upon the cross that heaven was opened for us and it became possible for us to share in His eternal resurrected life.

**DRINK WINE.** 1 Timothy 5:23. Nowhere does the Bible say that drinking is a sin! It does warn numerous times against overindulgence. This verse tells us that a moderate drink can even be healthful; something modern day science is also showing. It is known that Jesus drank wine, and was even accused of being a drunk. The Passover meal (including the last supper) was celebrated in the spring; grapes were harvested in the fall. It is impossible to keep grape juice from fall to spring without fermenting (especially when you consider that there was no means of pasteurization or refrigeration). Grapes kept from fall to spring are called raisins, and one doesn't get juice from them.

**EUCCHARIST.** John 6:51. See also the point paper entitled *Are the bread and wine really the Body and Blood of Jesus?*

**FAITH ALONE (*SOLA FIDE*).** James 2:24; Matthew 7:21-24; 2 Peter 3:16; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 2:6-13; Philippians 2:13. The summary is simply this: You must not only believe, you must live out that belief; not because you have to, but because you want to. If your faith does not cause you to change your behavior to live as Christ wants you to, you don't have faith, but only an association of convenience (when it is convenient for you). See JUSTIFICATION below.

**FATHER, CALL NO MAN.** Matthew 23:9; Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 John 2:13-14; Acts 7. Mat 23:9 is the oft quoted verse by fundamentalists who criticize Catholics for calling their priests by the title of "father". Read in context, it is clear that the sacred writer is referring to the 1st Commandment and warning against diminishing dependence upon God. The very next verse in many translations [including the New International Version (NIV) says "nor are you to be called 'teacher'" although these same fundamentalists have Sunday school teachers. Talk about selective reading of verses! Eph 3:14-15 tells us that all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is derived from God the Father who provides the perfect example to which we are all to strive. 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 1 Corinthians 4:15, & 1 John 2:13-14 are all examples of where the sacred writers have referred either to themselves or others as "fathers". In Acts 7, St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, addresses the Sanhedrin. During this address, St.

Stephen calls people "father" 17 times. It was not because he called others "father" that he was stoned, but because of his Christian witness.

**GUARDIAN ANGELS EXIST.** Tobit 12:12; Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15.

**IDOL WORSHIP (STATUES).** Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:8-9; Exodus 25:18-22; Exodus 37:7-9; Numbers 21:8-9; 1 Kings 7:18-36; 2 Chronicles 3-5. Ex 20:4 & Deut 5:8-9 are the 1st Commandment (2nd Commandment as Protestants number them) however only 5 chapters later in Exodus (25:18-22) while Moses is on Mount Sinai to receive the stone tablets the first time, God commands the making of cherubim images (images of something in heaven above). Exodus 37:7-9 documents the fabrication of these images according to God's command. In Numbers 21:8-9 God commands Moses to make an image of a serpent (snake) (something on the earth beneath the heavens). [Remember that this image was destroyed in 2 Kings 18:4 because it had become an object of worship] 1 Kings 7:18-36 documents the building of the first temple in Jerusalem by King Solomon. This temple was decorated with images of pomegranates, lilies, a sea, bulls, lions, oxen, cherubim, palm trees, and probably some other images I have missed. These were all fashioned for the glory of God, not as objects of worship. It is obvious from all the above, that neither God nor the Hebrews interpreted the first (second) Commandment as prohibiting the making of images which point to the glory of God. Remember, photography hadn't been invented yet and a statue is nothing more than a 3-dimensional picture. No one (except maybe some remote tribes of in the dark recesses of the jungle) has a problem with carrying around and displaying photographs and/or paintings of their relatives; either living or dead. We must always approach this issue with tenderness and understanding because Protestants do not have a sacrifice (the Eucharist) to offer to God as Catholics do and consequently their worship consists of offering prayers, praise and songs to God; the very things they see Catholics offering to the Saints. It's like when Moses wanted to take the Israelites out of Egypt to offer sacrifices to God; the sacrifices they were to offer were the gods of Egypt. No one seems to have a problem using the image of a fish (something in the waters below) as a symbol for Christ.

**INCENSE.** Exodus 30:1-9; Leviticus 16:12-13; Numbers 7:26; Luke 1:9; Revelation 8:3-5. In Exodus 30:1-9 (before the golden calf) God commands Moses to offer incense. The remaining Old Testament verses and Luke 1:9 show this command being carried out. Today, very few Protestant churches offer incense although there is no scriptural command to stop this practice. In fact, Revelation 8:3-5 shows that in the heavenly liturgy which takes place in the eternal now (independent of time), incense is offered to God.

**JUSTIFICATION.** Romans 2:6-13; James 2:24. Justification is the process by which a sinner is made righteous, pure and holy before God. Justification in the Catholic tradition comes about by means of faith in Christ, and in a life of good works lived in response to God's invitation to believe. Protestant doctrine (especially Lutheran and Presbyterian) holds that faith alone is sufficient. See FAITH ALONE above. It is important to understand how terms are used in this discussion. Catholics use the term "salvation" to refer to the whole process from its beginning in faith, through the whole Christian life of the works of love on earth, to its completion in heaven. Most Protestants speak of salvation as the initial step; like getting

into Noah's ark of salvation, not the whole journey. By "faith" Catholics mean only one of the three necessary 'theological virtues' (faith, hope and love), faith being intellectual belief. To most Protestants faith means accepting Christ with your whole heart and soul. Thus, Catholics use 'salvation' in a bigger sense and 'faith' in a smaller sense than their Protestant brethren. Catholics and Protestants, each using their own unique definitions, are really arguing the same side of the question.

**MAN WILL BE JUDGED ON HIS MERITS.** Matthew 7:12; Romans 2:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 11:15; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:13. Each man will be judged upon how well he lived as a member of God's family. If they do what God desires, they are His children and receive His inheritance.

**MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN.** Luke 1:28. Mary is addressed by the archangel Gabriel in terms "full of grace" which reflect the state of her soul. Mary's womb contained God incarnate for nine months God and sin can not coexist.

**MARY'S PERPETUAL VIRGINITY.** Luke 1:34. Mary is not asking for a lesson in reproductive biology, she knows where babies come from. The archangel Gabriel has said that she will (future tense) bear a son, not that she is already pregnant. She is betrothed to Joseph and if marital relations are planned, the expected result would be a child. Her response makes sense only if a vow of perpetual virginity is involved.

**MASS STIPEND.** Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 9:13-14.

**ONCE FOR ALL.** Hebrews 7:27. Jesus died on the cross one time, for all persons, for all time. He shed His blood and suffered that one time only. He is not re-sacrificed at every Mass but His once-for-all sacrifice is re-presented (as opposed to represented) at the Mass. Revelation 5:6 shows this re-presentation in the heavenly liturgy in the eternal now (for all time) of heaven. It is to this re-presentation that we are joined at each and every Mass.

**PAPACY.** Matthew 16:13-19, John 21:15-17. In Matthew 15:18, the Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) word *kepa* is translated into Greek as *petros* (small stone) for "Peter" and *petra* for "rock". The different words in Greek are not to make a distinction between Peter and the rock, but simply take account of the fact that *petra* is a feminine word and is therefore not suitable for the name of a man. In Aramaic, only one word exists. This is the first recorded naming of any individual as "Rock" in world history. Matthew 15:19 draws on the Old Testament imagery of Isaiah 22:21-22. This imagery would be familiar to 1st Century Christians but is all but lost to us today. The keys are the symbol of authority and he who has the keys has the authority (given to him by the owner of the keys, the king) to determine who will enter the house (or kingdom); in other words, he makes the rules. The 'keeper of the keys' was a perpetual office as is evidenced by Isaiah 22:21-22; when vacated, someone would be appointed to fill the vacancy. The authority symbolized by the keys given to Peter by Jesus, is reaffirmed in John 21:15-17 after the resurrection when Jesus, the Good Shepherd, entrusts His entire flock to Peter (and Peter's successors). Earlier, in John 10:15-16, Jesus has said there is only one flock and only one shepherd. He did not leave His earthly flock to wander without an earthly shepherd.

**PILLAR OF TRUTH.** 1 Timothy 3:15. The Church, *not the Bible*, is the pillar of truth.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.** 2 Maccabees 12:44-45.

**PRIESTLY DUTY.** Romans 15:16. Paul exercised priestly duty (calls himself a priest).

**PRIVATE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.** 2 Peter 1:20; Acts 8:30-31; 2 Peter 3:16; 1 Timothy 3:15. See also BIBLE ALONE above.

**PURGATORY.** Matthew 12:32; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Hebrews 12:29; Revelation 21:27; 1 Peter 3:19; 2 Maccabees 12:46. Matthew 12:32 infers that there is a place, neither heaven or hell, wherein sins will be forgiven in the age to come. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 talks of the fire of judgment and how one's life will be judged based on the foundations laid by Christ, losing what is impure and keeping that which is pure. Hebrews 12:29 again reaffirms that God's love consumes what is impure (Deuteronomy 4:24). Revelation 21:27 tells us that nothing impure shall enter heaven (which is the reason for the purifying fire of judgment). 1 Peter 3:19 tells us of Jesus' preaching to the spirits in prison. What prison? The abode of the dead (Hebrew: *sheol*, Greek: *hades*, Latin: *purgatio*, English: *purgatory*). Finally, 2 Maccabees 12:44-45 gives a very clear example but, sadly, it is not in the Protestant Bible. See Josephus' (shortly after A.D. 70) *Discourse To The Greeks Concerning Hades* for a discussion of the abode of the dead and the Hebrew understanding at the time of Christ, at least the understanding of a man who was both a pharisee and an historian.

**RELICS.** Acts 5:15; 19:11-12. Not only were relics used during the time of the apostles, they were effective in bringing about miracles.

**SACRIFICE.** Malachi 1:11. The last book of the Old Testament says that God expects incense and pure offerings to be brought to His name. Who is the one who is empowered to offer offerings to God? The priest. Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices (Romans 8:3). The high priest entered the Holy of Holies only once a year with an offering for his sins and the sins of the people (Hebrews 9:7 & Leviticus 16:2) and then only for a short period and then he left. Jesus, our High Priest, entered through the altar of the cross and never left. As High Priest, Jesus had to have something to offer; himself. He never left the Holy of Holies because He is continually making his perfect offering to God the Father in our behalf (Revelation 5:6).

**SAINTS, INTERCESSION OF.** Tobit 12:12; 2 Maccabees 15:14; Revelation 5:8; 8:4. Holy Scripture clearly shows that the saints intercede for us before the throne of God.

**SECOND COMING, TIME UNKNOWN.** Matthew 24:44; 25:13; Mark 13:35; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3. No one can confidently predict the imminent Second Coming.

**SIN TYPES.** 1 John 5:16. Describes mortal and not mortal (venial) sin.

**SUCCESSION.** Acts 1:20; Isaiah 22:21-22. Acts 1:20 describes the selection of a successor to Judas and quotes Psalm 69:25 & Psalm 109:8. The declaration that a successor is to be chosen is made by Peter, the Chief Apostle (Pope). The perpetuity of an office with successors is also shown in Isaiah 22:21-22. The Bishops we have today are all successors of the Apostles.

**TRADITION.** 2 Timothy 3:16. See discussion under BIBLE ALONE above.