

## Jesus-The Only Way

1. John 6:45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' **Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.**
2. **John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.**
3. Galatians 4:22-31
  - a) For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. **Now this is an allegory:** these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in travail; for the children of the desolate one are many more than the children of her that is married." Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now. But what does the scripture say? "Cast out the slave and her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." So, brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.
4. CCC 2110
  - a) The first commandment forbids honoring gods other than the one Lord who has revealed himself to his people.
5. CCC 2112
  - a) The first commandment condemns polytheism. It requires man neither to believe in, nor to venerate, other divinities than the one true God.
6. CCC 2113
  - a) Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God.
7. CCC 2114
  - a) Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God. An idolater is someone who "transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God."
8. 1 Timothy 2:5-6
  - a) For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time.
9. Matthew 12:30
  - a) He who is not with me is **against me**, and he who does not gather with me scatters.
10. John 12:48
  - a) He **who rejects me and does not receive my sayings** has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day.
11. John 3:5

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- a) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
12. Mark 16:16
  - a) He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
  - b) **CCC 183 Faith is necessary for salvation. The Lord himself affirms: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16).**
13. CCC 178 We must believe in no one but God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
14. John 4:22
  - a) You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, **for salvation is from the Jews.**
15. Ephesians 4:4-6 There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, **one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God** and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.
16. CCC 159
  - a) **159 Faith and science:** "Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, **God cannot deny himself**, nor can truth ever contradict truth." "Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conservator of all things, who made them what they are."
17. Pope Benedict XVI in his apostolic exhortation, "Verbum Domini", "in a world which often feels that God is superfluous or extraneous, **we confess with Peter that He alone has 'the words of eternal life'".**
18. To explain the finality and completeness of Revelation, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quotes a text of Saint John of the Cross: "**In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word—and he has no more to say...** because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, **he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son. Any person questioning God or desiring some vision or revelation would be guilty not only of foolish behavior but also of offending him, by not fixing his eyes entirely upon Christ and by living with the desire for some other novelty**" (No. 65; Saint John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 22*).
19. CCC 1427 **Jesus calls to conversion.** This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. **Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.**
20. Acts 4:10, 12

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- a) be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. **And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."**
21. Since it occurs after the close of Public Revelation the Church distinguishes the content of such particular revelations to individuals from the deposit of the Faith by calling it *private* revelation. The test of its authenticity is always its consistency with Public Revelation as guarded faithfully by the Catholic Church. For example, alleged revelations which propose to improve upon, correct or entirely supplant Public Revelation are rejected by the Church as inauthentic, regardless of the claims made for them. **Such revelations include those of Mohammed in the Koran, Joseph Smith in the Book of Mormon, the writings of new age mystics, psychics and the like.** <http://www.ewtn.com/expert/answers/apparitions.htm> Answered by Colin B. Donovan, STL
22. James 2:19
- a) **You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble.**
23. Galatians 1:8
- a) **But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach (to you) a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed!**
24. Matthew 11:27 No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and **anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.**
25. Matthew 7:13-14
- "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. **And those who find it are few.**"
26. 1 Corinthians 16:22
- a) If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed.
27. 2 Corinthians 11:2
- a) I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to **her one husband.**
28. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4
- a) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if some one comes and **preaches another Jesus than the one we preached**, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or **if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted**, you submit to it readily enough.
29. CCC 1790-1791
- a) A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. If he were deliberately to act against it, he would condemn himself. Yet it can happen that moral conscience remains in ignorance and makes erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed.
- b) This ignorance can often be imputed to personal responsibility. This is the case when a man "takes little trouble to find out what is true and good, or when

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conscience is by degrees almost blinded through the habit of committing sin." In such cases, the person is culpable for the evil he commits.

### 30. CCC 2092

- a) There are two kinds of *presumption*. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit).

### 31. CCC 431

- a) In the history of salvation God was not content to deliver Israel "out of the house of bondage" by bringing them out of Egypt. He also saves them from their sin. Because sin is always an offence against God, only he can forgive it. For this reason Israel, becoming more and more aware of the universality of sin, will no longer be able to seek salvation except by invoking the name of the Redeemer God.

### 32. Genesis 17:18-19, 21

- a) And Abraham said to God, "O that Ish'mael might live in thy sight!" God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year."

### 33. Genesis 21:9-10,12

- a) Sarah noticed the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing with her son Isaac; so she demanded of Abraham: "Drive out that slave and her son! No son of that slave is going to share the inheritance with my son Isaac!" But God said to Abraham: "Do not be distressed about the boy or about your slave woman. Heed the demands of Sarah, no matter what she is asking of you; for it is through Isaac that descendants shall bear your name.

### 34. Genesis 22:2 He said, "Take your son, **your only son** Isaac

### 35. Baruch 3:23 the sons of Hagar, who seek for understanding on the earth, the merchants of Merran and Teman, the story-tellers and the seekers for understanding, have not learned the way to wisdom, nor given thought to her paths.

### 36. Exodus 12:23

- a) For the LORD will go by, striking down the Egyptians. Seeing the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over that door and not let the destroyer come into your houses to strike you down.
- b) Exodus 12:29-30  
At midnight the LORD slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh on the throne to the first-born of the prisoner in the dungeon, as well as all the first-born of the animals. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was loud wailing throughout Egypt, for there was not a house without its dead.

### 37. Numbers 21:8-9

- a) and the LORD said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover. Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered.

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38. CCC 432
- a) The name "Jesus" signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son, made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins. It is the divine name that alone brings salvation, and henceforth all can invoke his name, for Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation, so that "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
39. John 15:5
- a) I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.
40. John 14:6
- a) Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
    - i) CCC 459
    - ii) CCC1698
41. John 14:9 Whoever has seen **me** has seen **the Father**.
42. John 15:23
- a) Whoever hates me also hates my Father.
43. 1 John 2:22
- a) Who is the liar? Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Whoever denies the Father and the Son, this is the antichrist. No one who denies the Son has the Father.
  - b) CCC675
44. Matthew 10:33
- a) But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.
  - b) CCC1816
45. John 15:22
- a) If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin.
46. Matthew 6:24
- a) No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.
    - i) Luke 16:13
    - ii) CCC2113
47. 1 Corinthians 10:20-22
- a) No, I mean that what they sacrifice, (they sacrifice) to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to become participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. **Or are we provoking the Lord to jealous anger?**
48. Exodus 20:3-5
- a) **You shall not have other gods beside me.** You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the Lord, your God, **am a jealous God**, inflicting punishment...
    - b) Deuteronomy 5:7-9 (Repeats the commandments in Exodus)
49. John 17:6, 9-10, 11, 12, 23

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- a) I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are your, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are. When I was with them I protected them in your name that you gave me. I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may be one. I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as on.
50. John 10:27
- a) My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
51. John 6:37
- a) All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.
52. John 6:40
- a) For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.
53. John 6:44
- a) "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day
54. John 6:65
- a) He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."
55. Philippians 2:9-11
- a) Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bend**, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and **every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.
56. John 5:19
- a) Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.
57. John 5:30
- a) By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.
58. John 15:5
- a) "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- b) CCC859
59. Matthew 7:21-23
- a) Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?" Then I will declare to them solemnly, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers!"
60. Jude 1:4

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- a) For there have been some intruders, who long ago were designated for this condemnation, godless persons, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
61. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 that "there is no God but one." For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth -- as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" -- yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
62. Luke 9:26
- a) Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.
63. 2 Timothy 4:3-4
- a) 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.
64. John 15:15
- a) I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.
65. **Vatican II DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS NOSTRA AETATE PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON OCTOBER 28, 1965**
- a) Paragraph 4 Sentence 13 All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.
66. **DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH *LUMEN GENTIUM* SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964 CHAPTER I I On The People of God**

All the Church's children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail moreover to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged.(13\*)

16. Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel **are related in various ways to the people of God.**(18\*) In the first place we must recall **the people to whom the testament and the promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh.**(125) On account of their fathers this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues.(126) **But the plan of salvation** also includes those **who acknowledge the Creator.** In the first place amongst these there are the Mohammedans, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore **the one** (my words: not **the same**) and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind. **Nor is God far distant** from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things,(127) and as Savior **wills that all men be saved.**(128) Those also **can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own** do not know the Gospel of Christ or His

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Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.(19\*) Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, **without blame on their part**, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them **is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel.(20\*)** She knows that it is given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life. **But often men, deceived by the Evil One, have become vain in their reasonings and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, serving the creature rather than the Creator.(129) Or some there are who, living and dying in this world without God, are exposed to final despair. Wherefore to promote the glory of God and procure the salvation of all of these,** and mindful of the command of the Lord, "Preach the Gospel to every creature", (130) the Church fosters the missions with care and attention.

67. CCC 172 Through the centuries, in so many languages, cultures, peoples and nations, the Church has constantly confessed this one faith, received from the one Lord, transmitted by one Baptism, and grounded in the conviction that all people have only one God and Father.<sup>58</sup> St. Irenaeus of Lyons, a witness of this faith, declared:
68. **173** "Indeed, the Church, though scattered throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, having received the faith from the apostles and their disciples. . . guards [this preaching and faith] with care, as dwelling in but a single house, and similarly believes as if having but one soul and a single heart, and preaches, teaches and hands on this faith with a unanimous voice, as if possessing only one mouth."<sup>59</sup>
69. **174** "For though languages differ throughout the world, the content of the Tradition is one and the same. The Churches established in Germany have no other faith or Tradition, nor do those of the Iberians, nor those of the Celts, nor those of the East, of Egypt, of Libya, nor those established at the center of the world. . ." <sup>60</sup> The Church's message "is true and solid, in which one and the same way of salvation appears throughout the whole world."
70. Ephesians 1:4 as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him.
71. **Romans 8:29-30**
  - a) For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.
72. **"There are many paths which lead to truth, but since Christian truth has a salvific value, any one of these paths may be taken, as long as it leads to the final goal, that is to the Revelation of Jesus Christ".(7) ((7) John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio*, n. 38.)**
73. Faithful to God's word, the Second Vatican Council teaches: "By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines forth in **Christ, who is at the same time the mediator and the fullness of all revelation**".<sup>9</sup> SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei verbum*, 2.
74. **The Christian dispensation, therefore, as the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away, and we now await no further new public revelation before the**



**glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Tim 6:14 and Tit 2:13)”.**<sup>10</sup>  
**CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH DECLARATION**  
**"DOMINUS IESUS" ON THE UNICITY AND SALVIFIC UNIVERSALITY OF**  
**JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH -Joseph Card. Ratzinger Prefect**

**75. Only the revelation of Jesus Christ, therefore, “introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth which stirs the human mind to ceaseless effort”.**<sup>12</sup>

JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio*, 14.

**76. 6. Therefore, the theory of the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which would be complementary to that found in other religions, is contrary to the Church's faith.** Such a position would claim to be based on the notion that the truth about God cannot be grasped and manifested in its globality and completeness by any historical religion, neither by Christianity nor by Jesus Christ. Such a position is in radical contradiction with the foregoing statements of Catholic faith according to which the full and complete revelation of the salvific mystery of God is given in Jesus Christ. Faith, therefore, as “a gift of God” and as “a supernatural virtue infused by him”,<sup>19</sup> involves a dual adherence: to God who reveals and to the truth which he reveals, out of the trust which one has in him who speaks. **Thus, “we must believe in no one but God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.**<sup>20</sup> **For this reason, the distinction between theological faith and belief in the other religions, must be firmly held. This distinction is not always borne in mind in current theological reflection. Thus, theological faith (the acceptance of the truth revealed by the One and Triune God) is often identified with belief in other religions, which is religious experience still in search of the absolute truth and still lacking assent to God who reveals himself. This is one of the reasons why the differences between Christianity and the other religions tend to be reduced at times to the point of disappearance.**<sup>9</sup> In contemporary theological reflection there often emerges an approach to Jesus of Nazareth that considers him a particular, finite, historical figure, who reveals the divine not in an exclusive way, but in a way complementary with other revelatory and salvific figures. The Infinite, the Absolute, the Ultimate Mystery of God would thus manifest itself to humanity in many ways and in many historical figures: Jesus of Nazareth would be one of these. More concretely, for some, Jesus would be one of the many faces which the Logos has assumed in the course of time to communicate with humanity in a salvific way. Furthermore, to justify the universality of Christian salvation as well as the fact of religious pluralism, it has been proposed that there is an economy of the eternal Word that is valid also outside the Church and is unrelated to her, in addition to an economy of the incarnate Word. The first would have a greater universal value than the second, which is limited to Christians, though God's presence would be more full in the second. 10. **These are in profound conflict with the Christian faith.**

**It is likewise contrary to the Catholic faith** to introduce a separation between the salvific action of the Word as such and that of the Word made man. With the incarnation, all the salvific actions of the Word of God are always done in unity with the human nature that he has assumed for the salvation of all people. The one subject which operates in the two natures, human and divine, is the single person of the Word.<sup>32</sup>

**Therefore, the theory which would attribute, after the incarnation as well, a salvific activity to the Logos as such in his divinity, exercised “in addition to” or “beyond” the humanity of Christ, is not compatible with the Catholic faith.**<sup>33</sup>

**11. Similarly, the doctrine of faith regarding the unicity of the salvific economy willed by the One and Triune God must be *firmly believed*, at the source and centre of which is the mystery of the incarnation of the Word, mediator of divine grace on the level of creation and redemption (cf. *Col* 1:15-20), he who recapitulates all things (cf. *Eph* 1:10), he “whom God has made our wisdom, our righteousness, and sanctification and redemption” (*I Cor* 1:30).**

**The Church's Magisterium, faithful to divine revelation, reasserts that Jesus Christ is the mediator and the universal redeemer:** “The Word of God, through whom all things were made, was made flesh, so that as perfect man he could save all men and sum up all things in himself. The Lord...is he whom the Father raised from the dead, exalted and placed at his right hand, constituting him judge of the living and the dead”.<sup>34</sup> **This salvific mediation implies also the unicity of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, eternal high priest (cf. *Heb* 6:20; 9:11; 10:12-14).**

Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions, **serves as a preparation for the Gospel and can only be understood in reference to Christ.**

**There is only one salvific economy of the One and Triune God, realized in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, actualized with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, and extended in its salvific value to all humanity and to the entire universe: “No one, therefore, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit”.<sup>41</sup>**

**13. The thesis which denies the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ is also put forward. Such a position has no biblical foundation. In fact, the truth of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord and only Saviour, who through the event of his incarnation, death and resurrection has brought the history of salvation to fulfilment, and which has in him its fullness and centre, must be *firmly believed* as a constant element of the Church's faith.**

The New Testament attests to this fact with clarity: “The Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world” (*I Jn* 4:14); “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (*Jn* 1:29). In his discourse before the Sanhedrin, Peter, in order to justify the healing of a man who was crippled from birth, which was done in the name of Jesus (cf. *Acts* 3:1-8), proclaims: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (*Acts* 4:12). St. Paul adds, moreover, that Jesus Christ “is Lord of all”, “judge of the living and the dead”, and thus “whoever believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (*Acts* 10: 36,42,43).

Paul, addressing himself to the community of Corinth, writes: “Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as in fact there are many gods and many lords — yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (*I Cor* 8:5-6). Furthermore, John the Apostle states: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (*Jn* 3:16-17). In the New Testament, the universal salvific will of God is closely connected to the sole mediation of Christ: “[God] desires all men to be

saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:4-6).

**It was in the awareness of the one universal gift of salvation offered by the Father through Jesus Christ in the Spirit** (cf. Eph 1:3-14), that the first Christians encountered the Jewish people, showing them the fulfilment of salvation that went beyond the Law and, in the same awareness, **they confronted the pagan world of their time, which aspired to salvation through a plurality of saviours. This inheritance of faith has been recalled recently by the Church's Magisterium:** “The Church believes that Christ, who died and was raised for the sake of all (cf. 2 Cor 5:15) can, through his Spirit, give man the light and the strength to be able to respond to his highest calling, **nor is there any other name under heaven given among men by which they can be saved** (cf. Acts 4:12). **The Church likewise believes that the key, the centre, and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master**”.<sup>42</sup>

14. It **must therefore be firmly believed as a truth of Catholic faith** that the universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. **Bearing in mind this article of faith**, theology today, in its reflection on the existence of other religious experiences and on their meaning in God's salvific plan, is invited to explore if and in what way the historical figures and positive elements of these religions may fall within the divine plan of salvation. In this undertaking, theological research has a vast field of work under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium. The Second Vatican Council, in fact, has stated that: “the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude, but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a participation in **this one source**”.<sup>43</sup> The content of this participated mediation should be explored more deeply, **but must remain always consistent with the principle of Christ's unique mediation:** “Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, **they acquire meaning and value only from Christ's own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his**”.<sup>44</sup> ((44) JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 5. )**Hence, those solutions that propose a salvific action of God beyond the unique mediation of Christ would be contrary to Christian and Catholic faith.**

15. Not infrequently it is proposed that theology should avoid the use of terms like “unicity”, “universality”, and “absoluteness”, which give the impression of excessive emphasis on the significance and value of the salvific event of Jesus Christ in relation to other religions. **In reality, however, such language is simply being faithful to revelation, since it represents a development of the sources of the faith themselves. From the beginning, the community of believers has recognized in Jesus a salvific value such that he alone, as Son of God made man, crucified and risen, by the mission received from the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit, bestows revelation (cf. Mt 11:27) and divine life (cf. Jn 1:12; 5:25-26; 17:2) to all humanity and to every person.** In this sense, **one can and must say that Jesus Christ** has a significance and a value for the human race and its history, **which are unique and singular, proper to him alone, exclusive, universal, and absolute. Jesus is, in fact, the Word of God made man for the salvation of all.** In expressing this consciousness of faith, the Second Vatican Council

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teaches: “The Word of God, through whom all things were made, was made flesh, so that as perfect man he could save all men and sum up all things in himself. The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desires of history and civilization, the centre of mankind, the joy of all hearts, and **the fulfilment of all aspirations**. It is he whom the Father raised from the dead, exalted and placed at his right hand, constituting him judge of the living and the dead”.<sup>45</sup> “It is precisely this uniqueness of Christ which gives him an absolute and universal significance whereby, while belonging to history, he remains history's centre and goal: ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end’ (Rev 22:13)”<sup>46</sup>

### IV. UNICITY AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH

16. The Lord Jesus, the only Saviour, did not only establish a simple community of disciples, but constituted the Church as a *salvific mystery*: he himself is in the Church and the Church is in him (cf. *Jn* 15:1ff.; *Gal* 3:28; *Eph* 4:15-16; *Acts* 9:5). **Therefore, the fullness of Christ's salvific mystery belongs also to the Church, inseparably united to her Lord. Indeed, Jesus Christ continues his presence and his work of salvation in the Church and by means of the Church (cf. *Col* 1:24-27),<sup>47</sup> which is his body (cf. *1 Cor* 12:12-13, 27; *Col* 1:18).**<sup>48</sup> And thus, just as the head and members of a living body, though not identical, are inseparable, so too Christ and the Church can neither be confused nor separated, and constitute a single “whole Christ”.<sup>49</sup> This same inseparability is also expressed in the New Testament by the analogy of the Church as the *Bride* of Christ (cf. *2 Cor* 11:2; *Eph* 5:25-29; *Rev* 21:2,9).<sup>50</sup>

**Therefore, in connection with the unicity and universality of the salvific mediation of Jesus Christ, the unicity of the Church founded by him must be *firmly believed* as a truth of Catholic faith.**

**according to Catholic faith, that the unicity and the unity of the Church — like everything that belongs to the Church's integrity — will never be lacking.**<sup>52</sup> (52) Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, 4; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, 11: AAS 87 (1995), 927.

**The Catholic faithful are required to profess that there is an historical continuity — rooted in the apostolic succession<sup>53</sup> — between the Church founded by Christ and the Catholic Church: “This is the single Church of Christ..**

17. Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.

### V. THE CHURCH: KINGDOM OF GOD AND KINGDOM OF CHRIST

**In fact, the kingdom of God which we know from revelation, “cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church... If the kingdom is separated from Jesus, it is no longer the kingdom of God which he revealed. The result is a distortion of the meaning of the kingdom, which runs the risk of being transformed into a purely human or ideological goal and a distortion of the identity of Christ, who no longer appears as the Lord to whom everything must one day be subjected (cf. *1 Cor* 15:27).**

**In considering the relationship between the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Church, it is necessary to avoid one-sided accentuations, as is the case with those “conceptions which deliberately emphasize the kingdom and which describe themselves as ‘kingdom centred.’ They stress the image of a Church which is not concerned about herself, but which is totally concerned with bearing witness to and serving the kingdom. It is a ‘Church for others,’ just as Christ is the ‘man for others’... Together with positive aspects, these conceptions often reveal negative aspects as well. First, they are silent about Christ: the kingdom of which they speak is ‘theocentrically’ based, since, according to them, Christ cannot be understood by those who lack Christian faith, whereas different peoples, cultures, and religions are capable of finding common ground in the one divine reality, by whatever name it is called. For the same reason, they put great stress on the mystery of creation, which is reflected in the diversity of cultures and beliefs, but they keep silent about the mystery of redemption. Furthermore, the kingdom, as they understand it, ends up either leaving very little room for the Church or undervaluing the Church in reaction to a presumed ‘ecclesiocentrism’ of the past and because they consider the Church herself only a sign, for that matter a sign not without ambiguity”.<sup>76</sup> These theses are contrary to Catholic faith because they deny the unicity of the relationship which Christ and the Church have with the kingdom of God.**

## **VI. THE CHURCH AND THE OTHER RELIGIONS IN RELATION TO SALVATION**

20. From what has been stated above, some points follow that are necessary for theological reflection as it explores the relationship of the Church and the other religions to salvation. **Above all else, it must be firmly believed that “the Church, a pilgrim now 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. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. *Mk* 16:16; *Jn* 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door”.<sup>77</sup> This doctrine must not be set against the universal salvific will of God (cf. *1 Tim* 2:4); “it is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this salvation”.<sup>78</sup>** ((78) JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 9; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 846-847.)

21. **it is clear that it would be contrary to the faith to consider the Church as one way of salvation alongside those constituted by the other religions, seen as complementary to the Church or substantially equivalent to her, even if these are said to be converging with the Church toward the eschatological kingdom of God.**

**One cannot attribute to these, however, a divine origin or an *ex opere operato* salvific efficacy, which is proper to the Christian sacraments.**<sup>88</sup> (88) Cf. COUNCIL OF TRENT, *Decretum de sacramentis*, can. 8, *de sacramentis in genere*: DS 1608.

**Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that other rituals, insofar as they depend on superstitions or other errors (cf. *I Cor 10:20-21*), constitute an obstacle to salvation.**<sup>89</sup> (89) Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 55.

However, “all the children of the Church should nevertheless remember that their exalted condition results, not from their own merits, but from the grace of Christ. If they fail to respond in thought, word, and deed to that grace, not only shall they not be saved, but they shall be more severely judged”.<sup>93</sup> ((93) SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, 14.) One understands then that, following the Lord's command (cf. *Mt 28:19-20*) and as a requirement of her love for all people, the Church “proclaims and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life (*Jn 14:6*). In him, in whom God reconciled all things to himself (cf. *2 Cor 5:18-19*), men find the fullness of their religious life”.<sup>94</sup> ((94) SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Declaration *Nostra aetate*, 2.)

“Indeed, God ‘desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth’ (*I Tim 2:4*); that is, God wills the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth. Those who obey the promptings of the Spirit of truth are already on the way of salvation. But the Church, to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the truth. Because she believes in God's universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary”.<sup>96</sup> ((96) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 851; cf. also 849-856. ) **Inter-religious dialogue, therefore, as part of her evangelizing mission, is just one of the actions of the Church in her mission *ad gentes*.**<sup>97</sup> (97) Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 55; Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, 31.) **Equality, which is a presupposition of inter-religious dialogue, refers to the equal personal dignity of the parties in dialogue, not to doctrinal content, nor even less to the position of Jesus Christ — who is God himself made man — in relation to the founders of the other religions. Indeed, the Church, guided by charity and respect for freedom,**<sup>98</sup> ((98) Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Declaration *Dignitatis humanae*, 1.) **must be primarily committed to proclaiming to all people the truth definitively revealed by the Lord, and to announcing the necessity of conversion to Jesus Christ and of adherence to the Church through Baptism and the other sacraments, in order to participate fully in communion with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, the certainty of the universal salvific will of God does not diminish, but rather increases the duty and urgency of the proclamation of salvation and of conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

In treating the question of the true religion, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council taught: “We believe that this 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. Thus, 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’ (*Mt 28: 19-20*). Especially in those things that concern God and his Church, all persons are required to seek the truth, and when they come to know it, to embrace it and hold fast to it”.<sup>99</sup>

**CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH** DECLARATION "**DOMINUS IESUS**" ON THE UNICITY AND SALVIFIC UNIVERSALITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH -**Joseph Card. Ratzinger** Prefect. *The Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II, at the Audience of June 16, 2000, granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with sure knowledge and by his apostolic authority, ratified and confirmed this Declaration, adopted in Plenary Session and ordered its publication. Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, August 6, 2000, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord.*

77. **COMMENTARY ON THE NOTIFICATION OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH REGARDING THE BOOK TOWARD A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM BY FATHER JACQUES DUPUIS, S.J.**
- a) 5. First of all, faith in Jesus Christ, the sole and universal mediator of salvation for all humanity is reaffirmed. Next, the unicity and universality of Jesus Christ, Son and Word of the Father, the fulfilment of the saving plan of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is reaffirmed. There is no salvific Trinitarian economy independent of that of the incarnate Word. In the second place, the Church's faith in Jesus Christ, the fulfilment and fullness of divine revelation, is reasserted, countering the opinion that the revelation of Jesus Christ is limited, incomplete or imperfect. The seeds of truth and goodness that exist in other religions are gifts of grace of the one mediation of Christ and of his Spirit of holiness. **With regard to the universal salvific action of the Holy Spirit, it is restated that the Spirit working after Jesus' resurrection is always the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father, who works in a salvific way also outside the visible Church. It is therefore contrary to the Catholic faith to hold that the Holy Spirit's salvific action may be more extensive than the one universal salvific economy of the incarnate Word. Furthermore, since the Church is sign and instrument of salvation for all people, the opinion that the various religions are ways of salvation complementary to the Church is rejected as erroneous. Lastly, while recognizing that elements of truth and goodness exist in other religions, there are no grounds in Catholic theology for considering these religions as such as ways of salvation especially since they contain omissions, inadequacies and errors regarding fundamental truths about God, man and the world. Nor can their sacred texts be considered complementary to the Old Testament, which is the immediate preparation for the Christ event.** This *Notification* seeks to underscore the gravity and danger of certain statements which, while apparently moderate, precisely for this reason risk being easily and uncritically accepted as compatible with the Church's doctrine
- b) 6. By the clear indicative/declaratory tone of a magisterial Document — typical of a Declaration or Notification of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and similar to the earlier Decrees issued by the Holy Office — it is intended to communicate to the faithful **that these are not debatable opinions or disputed questions, but rather central truths of the Christian**

- faith**, which are denied or seriously threatened by specific theological interpretations. The tone therefore belongs to the content, since it must be consistent with the particular goal of the text. Adherence to the Person of Jesus, to his words and his mystery of salvation, demands a simple and clear response of faith, like that, for example, found in the Creeds, which belong to the prayer of the Church. The efficacy of the *Notification*, both for its understanding and in its call for an adherence of faith, lies precisely in its tone. The unfortunate fact must be stated that the criticism, coming from various sources, that the general “tone” of *Dominus Iesus* is far different from that of texts such as the Encyclical Letters *Redemptoris missio* and *Ut unum sint*, shows by its very nature that it has failed to take account of the different purposes of these different documents, which, though not identical, are in no way contradictory. The Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, like the present *Notification*, merely intends to reaffirm specific truths of faith and of Catholic doctrine, pointing out the relative degree of theological certainty and thus delineating the sure doctrinal foundations in order to preserve the integrity of the deposit of faith. **“There are many paths which lead to truth, but since Christian truth has a salvific value, any one of these paths may be taken, as long as it leads to the final goal, that is to the Revelation of Jesus Christ”.**<sup>(7)</sup> ((7) John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio*, n. 38.) **Indeed, Christ is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6): “The truth which is Christ, imposes itself as an all-embracing authority.**
78. **8. In this regard, it is helpful to recall a truth which today is often not perceived or formulated correctly in public opinion: the right to freedom of conscience and, in a special way, to religious freedom, taught in the Declaration *Dignitatis humanae* of the Second Vatican Council, is based on the ontological dignity of the human person and not on a non-existent equality among religions or cultural systems of human creation.**<sup>[28]</sup> **Reflecting on this question, Paul VI taught that «in no way does the Council base this right to religious freedom on the fact that all religions and all teachings, including those that are erroneous, would have more or less equal value; it is based rather on the dignity of the human person, which demands that he not be subjected to external limitations which tend to constrain the conscience in its search for the true religion or in adhering to it».**<sup>[29]</sup> Paul VI, *Address to the Sacred College and to the Roman Prelature*: in *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, 14 (1976), 1088–1089. **The teaching on freedom of conscience and on religious freedom does not therefore contradict the condemnation of indifferentism and religious relativism by Catholic doctrine;**<sup>[30]</sup> **on the contrary, it is fully in accord with it.**<sup>[30]</sup> Cf. Pius IX, Encyclical Letter *Quanta cura*: ASS 3 (1867), 162; Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei*: ASS 18 (1885), 170–171; Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quas primas*: AAS 17 (1925), 604–605; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2108; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, 22.
79. Pope John Paul II  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19950531en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19950531en.html)



## Jesus-The Only Way

General Audience " May 31, 1995

The difficulties that sometimes accompany the development of evangelization highlight a delicate problem, whose solution is not to be sought in purely historical or sociological terms. It is the problem of the salvation of those who do not visibly belong to the Church. We have not been given the possibility to discern the mystery of God's action in minds and hearts, in order to assess the power of Christ's grace as he takes possession, in life and in death, of all that "the Father gives him," and which he himself proclaims he does not want to "lose." We hear him repeat this in one of the suggested Gospel readings in the Mass for the dead (cf. Jn 6:39-40).

However, as I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, the gift of salvation cannot be limited "to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all." And, in admitting that it is concretely impossible for many people to have access to the Gospel message, I added: "Many people do not have the opportunity to come to know or accept the Gospel revelation or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions" (RM 10).

We must acknowledge that, as far as human beings can know and foresee, this practical impossibility would seem destined to last a long time, perhaps until the work of evangelization is finally completed. Jesus himself warned that only the Father knows "the exact time" set by him for the establishment of his kingdom in the world (cf. Acts 1:7).

**What I have said above, however, does not justify the relativistic position of those who maintain that a way of salvation can be found in any religion, even independently of faith in Christ the Redeemer, and that interreligious dialogue must be based on this ambiguous idea. That solution to the problem of the salvation of those who do not profess the**

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**Christian creed is not in conformity with the Gospel. Rather, we must maintain that the way of salvation always passes through Christ, and therefore the Church and her missionaries have the task of making him known and loved in every time, place and culture. Apart from Christ "there is no salvation." As Peter proclaimed before the Sanhedrin at the very start of the apostolic preaching: "There is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).**

For those too who through no fault of their own do not know Christ and are not recognized as Christians, the divine plan has provided a way of salvation. As we read in the Council's Decree Ad Gentes, we believe that "God in ways known to himself can lead those inculpably ignorant of the Gospel" to the faith necessary for salvation (AG 7). Certainly, the condition "inculpably ignorant" cannot be verified nor weighed by human evaluation, but must be left to the divine judgment alone. For this reason, the Council states in the Constitution Gaudium et Spes that in the heart of every man of good will, "Grace works in an unseen way.... The Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery" (GS 22).

**It is important to stress that the way of salvation taken by those who do not know the Gospel is not a way apart from Christ and the Church. The universal salvific will is linked to the one mediation of Christ. "God our Savior...wants all men to be saved and come to know the truth. And the truth is this: God is one. One also is the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:3-6). Peter proclaimed this when he said: "There is no salvation in anyone else" and called Jesus the "cornerstone" (Acts 4:11-12), emphasizing Christ's necessary role at the basis of the Church.**

This affirmation of the Savior's "uniqueness" derives from the Lord's own words. He stated that he came "to give his own life in ransom for the many"

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(Mk 10:45), that is, for humanity, as St. Paul explains when he writes: "One died for all" (2 Cor 5:14; cf. Rom 5:18). Christ won universal salvation with the gift of his own life. **No other mediator has been established by God as Savior. The unique value of the sacrifice of the cross must always be acknowledged in the destiny of every man.**

Religions can exercise a positive influence on the destiny of those who belong to them and follow their guidance in a sincere spirit. **However, if decisive action for salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, we must keep in mind that man receives his salvation only from Christ through the Holy Spirit.**

Salvation already begins during earthly life. This grace, when accepted and responded to, brings forth fruit in the gospel sense for earth and for heaven. Hence the importance of the Church's indispensable role. She "is not an end unto herself, but rather is fervently concerned to be completely of Christ, in Christ and for Christ, as well as completely of men, among men and for men." This role then is not "ecclesiocentric," as is sometimes said. The Church does not exist nor does she work for herself, but is at the service of a humanity called to divine sonship in Christ (cf. RM 19). She thus exercises an implicit mediation also with regard to those who do not know the Gospel.

What has been said, however, should not lead to the conclusion that her missionary activity is less needed in these situations--quite the contrary. In fact, whoever does not know Christ, even through no fault of his own, is in a state of darkness and spiritual hunger, often with negative repercussions at the cultural and moral level. The Church's missionary work can provide him with the resources for the full development of Christ's saving grace, by offering full and conscious adherence to the message of faith and active participation in Church life through the sacraments.