

“There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved.”
(Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215.)

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/B8-unam.asp>

Boniface VIII, Unam Sanctam, 1302

THE BULL *UNAM SANCTAM* , 1302

The following English translation of 'Unam' is taken from a doctoral dissertation written in the Dept. of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, and published by CUA Press in 1927.

UNAM SANCTAM (Promulgated November 18, 1302)

Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to maintain that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic. We believe in her firmly and we confess with simplicity that outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins, as the Spouse in the Canticles [Sgs 6:8] proclaims: 'One is my dove, my perfect one. She is the only one, the chosen of her who bore her,' and she represents one sole mystical body whose Head is Christ and the head of Christ is God [1 Cor 11:3]. In her then is one Lord, one faith, one baptism [Eph 4:5]. There had been at the time of the deluge only one ark of Noah, prefiguring the one Church, which ark, having been finished to a single cubit, had only one pilot and guide, i.e., Noah, and we read that, outside of this ark, all that subsisted on the earth was destroyed.

We venerate this Church as one, the Lord having said by the mouth of the prophet: 'Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword and my only one from the hand of the dog.' [Ps 21:20] He has prayed for his soul, that is for himself, heart and body; and this body, that is to say, the Church, He has called one because of the unity of the Spouse, of the faith, of the sacraments, and of the charity of the Church. This is the tunic of the Lord, the seamless tunic, which was not rent but which was cast by lot [Jn 19:23-24]. Therefore, of the one and only Church there is one body and one head, not two heads like a monster; that is, Christ and the Vicar of Christ, Peter and the successor of Peter, since the Lord speaking to Peter Himself said: 'Feed my sheep' [Jn 21:17], meaning, my sheep in general, not these, nor those in particular, whence we understand that He entrusted all to him [Peter]. Therefore, if the Greeks or others should say that they are not confided to Peter and to his successors, they must confess not being the sheep of Christ, since Our Lord says in John 'there is one sheepfold and one shepherd.'

Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

“The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal; but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can profit by the sacraments of the Church unto salvation, and they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remain within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church.” ([*Pope Eugene IV, the Bull Cantate Domino, 1441.*](#))

The Council of Trent

The Seventh Session

*The canons and decrees of the sacred
and ecumenical Council of Trent,*

Trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 53-67.

[Page 53] Celebrated on the third day of the month of March, MDXLVII.

DECREE ON THE SACRAMENTS

1. **CANON IV.-If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification;-though all (the sacraments) are not indeed necessary for every individual; let him be anathema.**

2. The Council of Trent

The Fourteenth Session

*The canons and decrees of the sacred
and oecumenical Council of Trent,*

Ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 92-121.

[Page 92]

SESSION THE FOURTEENTH,

Being the fourth under the Sovereign Pontiff, Julius III., celebrated on the twenty-fifth of November, MDLI.

ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENTS OF PENANCE AND EXTREME UNCTION

CHAPTER V.

On Confession.

CANON VI.--If anyone denieth, either that sacramental confession was instituted, or is necessary to salvation, of divine right; or saith, that the manner of confessing secretly to a

priest alone, which the Church hath ever observed from the beginning, and doth observe, is alien from the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention; let him be anathema.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH
LUMEN GENTIUM
SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS
POPE PAUL VI
ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964

CHAPTER I

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

15. The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter. (14*) For there are many who honor Sacred Scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and a pattern of life, and who show a sincere zeal. They lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and Saviour. (15*) They are consecrated by baptism, in which they are united with Christ. They also recognize and accept other sacraments within their own Churches or ecclesiastical communities. Many of them rejoice in the episcopate, celebrate the Holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion toward the Virgin Mother of God.(16*) They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits. Likewise we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them too He gives His gifts and graces whereby He is operative among them with His sanctifying power. Some indeed He has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood.

<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/salvation-outside-the-church>

Salvation Outside the Church

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, following historic Christian theology since the time of the early Church Fathers, refers to the Catholic Church as "the universal sacrament of salvation" (CCC 774–776), and states: "The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men" (CCC 780).

Many people misunderstand the nature of this teaching.

Indifferentists, going to one extreme, claim that it makes no difference what church one belongs to. Certain radical traditionalists, going to the other extreme, claim that unless one is a full-fledged, baptized member of the Catholic Church, one will be damned.

The following quotations from the Church Fathers give the straight story. They show that the early Church held the same position on this as the contemporary Church does—that is, while it is normatively necessary to be a Catholic to be saved (see CCC 846; Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 14), there are exceptions, and it is possible in some circumstances for people to be saved who have not been fully initiated into the Catholic Church (CCC 847).

Notice that the same Fathers who declare the normative necessity of being Catholic also declare the possibility of salvation for some who are not Catholics.

These can be saved by what later came to be known as "baptism of blood" or "baptism of desire" (for more on this subject, see the Fathers Know Best tract, [The Necessity of Baptism](#)).

The Fathers likewise affirm the possibility of salvation for those who lived before Christ and who were not part of Israel, the Old Testament People of God.

However, for those who knowingly and deliberately (that is, not out of innocent ignorance) commit the sins of heresy (rejecting divinely revealed doctrine) or schism (separating from the Catholic Church and/or joining a schismatic church), no salvation would be possible until they repented and returned to live in Catholic unity.

Ignatius of Antioch

"Be not deceived, my brethren: If anyone follows a maker of schism [i.e., is a schismatic], he does not inherit the kingdom of God; if anyone walks in strange doctrine [i.e., is a heretic], he has no part in the passion [of Christ]. Take care, then, to use one Eucharist, so that whatever you do, you do according to God: For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the union of his blood; one altar, as there is one bishop, with the presbytery and my fellow servants, the deacons" (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 3:3–4:1 [A.D. 110]).

Justin Martyr

"We have been taught that Christ is the first-begotten of God, and we have declared him to be the *Logos* of which all mankind partakes [John 1:9]. Those, therefore, who lived according to reason [Greek, *logos*] were really Christians, even though they were thought to be atheists, such as, among the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus, and others like them. . . . Those who lived before Christ but did not live according to reason [*logos*] were wicked men, and enemies of Christ, and murderers of those who did live according to reason [*logos*], whereas those who lived then or who live now according to reason [*logos*] are Christians. Such as these can be confident and unafraid" (*First Apology* 46 [A.D. 151]).

Irenaeus

"In the Church God has placed apostles, prophets, teachers, and every other working of the Spirit, of whom none of those are sharers who do not conform to the Church, but who defraud themselves of life by an evil mind and even worse way of acting. Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace" (*Against Heresies* 3:24:1 [A.D. 189]).

"[The spiritual man] shall also judge those who give rise to schisms, who are destitute of the love of God, and who look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church; and who for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason which occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, destroy it—men who prate of peace while they give rise to war, and do in truth strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel. For they can bring about no ‘reformation’ of enough importance to compensate for the evil arising from their schism. . . . True knowledge is that which consists in the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place [i.e., the Catholic Church]" (*ibid.*, 4:33:7–8).

Clement of Alexandria

"Before the coming of the Lord, philosophy was necessary for justification to the Greeks; now it is useful for piety . . . for it brought the Greeks to Christ as the law did the Hebrews" (*Miscellanies* 1:5 [A.D. 208]).

Origen

"[T]here was never a time when God did not want men to be just; he was always concerned about that. Indeed, he always provided beings endowed with reason with occasions for practicing virtue and doing what is right. In every generation the wisdom of God descended into those souls which he found holy and made them to be prophets and friends of God" (*Against Celsus* 4:7 [A.D. 248]).

"If someone from this people wants to be saved, let him come into this house so that he may be able to attain his salvation. . . . Let no one, then, be persuaded otherwise, nor let anyone deceive himself: Outside of this house, that is, outside of the Church, no one is saved; for, if anyone should go out of it, he is guilty of his own death" (*Homilies on Joshua* 3:5 [A.D. 250]).

Cyprian of Carthage

"Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress [a schismatic church] is separated from the promises of the Church, nor will he that forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is an alien, a worldling, and an enemy. He cannot have God for his

Father who has not the Church for his mother" (*The Unity of the Catholic Church* 6, 1st ed. [A.D. 251]).

"Let them not think that the way of life or salvation exists for them, if they have refused to obey the bishops and priests, since the Lord says in the book of Deuteronomy: 'And any man who has the insolence to refuse to listen to the priest or judge, whoever he may be in those days, that man shall die' [Deut. 17:12]. And then, indeed, they were killed with the sword . . . but now the proud and insolent are killed with the sword of the Spirit, when they are cast out from the Church. For they cannot live outside, since there is only one house of God, and there can be no salvation for anyone except in the Church" (*Letters* 61[4]:4 [A.D. 253]).

"When we say, 'Do you believe in eternal life and the remission of sins through the holy Church?' we mean that remission of sins is not granted except in the Church" (*ibid.*, 69[70]:2 [A.D. 253]).

"Peter himself, showing and vindicating the unity, has commanded and warned us that we cannot be saved except by the one only baptism of the one Church. He says, 'In the ark of Noah a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. Similarly, baptism will in like manner save you' [1 Peter 3:20-21]. In how short and spiritual a summary has he set forth the sacrament of unity! In that baptism of the world in which its ancient wickedness was washed away, he who was not in the ark of Noah could not be saved by water. Likewise, neither can he be saved by baptism who has not been baptized in the Church which is established in the unity of the Lord according to the sacrament of the one ark" (*ibid.*, 73[71]:11).

"[O]utside the Church there is no Holy Spirit, sound faith moreover cannot exist, not alone among heretics, but even among those who are established in schism" (*Treatise on Rebaptism* 10 [A.D. 256]).

Lactantius

"It is, therefore, the Catholic Church alone which retains true worship. This is the fountain of truth; this, the domicile of faith; this, the temple of God. Whoever does not enter there or whoever does not go out from there, he is a stranger to the hope of life and salvation. . . . Because, however, all the various groups of heretics are confident that they are the Christians and think that theirs is the Catholic Church, let it be known that this is the true Church, in which there is confession and penance and which takes a health-promoting care of the sins and wounds to which the weak flesh is subject" (*Divine Institutes* 4:30:11–13 [A.D. 307]).

Jerome

"Heretics bring sentence upon themselves since they by their own choice withdraw from the Church, a withdrawal which, since they are aware of it, constitutes damnation. Between heresy and schism there is this difference: that heresy involves perverse doctrine, while schism separates

one from the Church on account of disagreement with the bishop. Nevertheless, there is no schism which does not trump up a heresy to justify its departure from the Church" (*Commentary on Titus* 3:10–11 [A.D. 386]).

Augustine

"We believe also in the holy Church, that is, the Catholic Church. For heretics violate the faith itself by a false opinion about God; schismatics, however, withdraw from fraternal love by hostile separations, although they believe the same things we do. Consequently, neither heretics nor schismatics belong to the Catholic Church; not heretics, because the Church loves God; and not schismatics, because the Church loves neighbor" (*Faith and the Creed* 10:21 [A.D. 393]).

"[J]ust as baptism is of no profit to the man who renounces the world in words and not in deeds, so it is of no profit to him who is baptized in heresy or schism; but each of them, when he amends his ways, begins to receive profit from that which before was not profitable, but was yet already in him" (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists* 4:4[6] [A.D. 400]).

"I do not hesitate to put the Catholic catechumen, burning with divine love, before a baptized heretic. Even within the Catholic Church herself we put the good catechumen ahead of the wicked baptized person . . . For Cornelius, even before his baptism, was filled up with the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:44–48], while Simon [Magus], even after his baptism, was puffed up with an unclean spirit [Acts 8:13–19]" (*ibid.*, 4:21[28]).

"The apostle Paul said, 'As for a man that is a heretic, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him' [Titus 3:10]. But those who maintain their own opinion, however false and perverted, without obstinate ill will, especially those who have not originated the error of bold presumption, but have received it from parents who had been led astray and had lapsed . . . those who seek the truth with careful industry and are ready to be corrected when they have found it, are not to be rated among heretics" (*Letters* 43:1 [A.D. 412]).

"Whoever is separated from this Catholic Church, by this single sin of being separated from the unity of Christ, no matter how estimable a life he may imagine he is living, shall not have life, but the wrath of God rests upon him" (*ibid.*, 141:5).

Fulgentius of Ruspe

"Anyone who receives the sacrament of baptism, whether in the Catholic Church or in a heretical or schismatic one, receives the whole sacrament; but salvation, which is the strength of the sacrament, he will not have, if he has had the sacrament outside the Catholic Church [and remains in deliberate schism]. He must therefore return to the Church, not so that he might receive again the sacrament of baptism, which no one dare repeat in any baptized person, but so that he may receive eternal life in Catholic society, for the obtaining of which no one is suited

who, even with the sacrament of baptism, remains estranged from the Catholic Church" (*The Rule of Faith* 43 [A.D. 524]).

NIHIL OBSTAT: I have concluded that the materials presented in this work are free of doctrinal or moral errors.
Bernadeane Carr, STL, Censor Librorum, August 10, 2004

IMPRIMATUR: In accord with 1983 CIC 827 permission to publish this work is hereby granted.
+Robert H. Brom, Bishop of San Diego, August 10, 2004

Pope Pius IX:

"Here, too, our beloved sons and venerable brothers, it is again necessary to mention and censure a very grave error entrapping some Catholics who believe that it is possible to arrive at eternal salvation although living in error and alienated from the true faith and Catholic unity. Such belief is certainly opposed to Catholic teaching. There are, of course, those who are struggling with invincible ignorance about our most holy religion. Sincerely observing the natural law and its precepts inscribed by God on all hearts and ready to obey God, they live honest lives and are able to attain eternal life by the efficacious virtue of divine light and grace. Because God knows, searches and clearly understands the minds, hearts, thoughts, and nature of all, his supreme kindness and clemency do not permit anyone at all who is not guilty of deliberate sin to suffer eternal punishments."

8. Also well known is the Catholic teaching that no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church. Eternal salvation cannot be obtained by those who oppose the authority and statements of the same Church and are stubbornly separated from the unity of the Church and also from the successor of Peter, the Roman Pontiff, to whom "the custody of the vineyard has been committed by the Savior." [4] The words of Christ are clear enough: "If he refuses to listen even to the Church, let him be to you a Gentile and a tax collector;" [5] "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you, rejects me, and he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me;" [6] "He who does not believe will be condemned;" [7] "He who does not believe is already condemned;" [8] "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." [9] The Apostle Paul says that such persons are "perverted and self-condemned;" [10] the Prince of the Apostles calls them "false teachers . . . who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master. . . bringing upon themselves swift destruction."

QUANTO CONFICIAMUR MOERORE , 1863

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, 10 August, 1863, in the eighteenth year of Our Pontificate.

Pope John Paul II

"For those, however, who have not received the Gospel proclamation, as I wrote in the Encyclical Redemptoris Missio, salvation is accessible in mysterious ways, inasmuch as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the Church, but nonetheless always in relation to her (cf. RM 10). It is a mysterious relationship. It is mysterious for those who receive the grace, because they do not know the Church and sometimes even outwardly reject her. It is also mysterious in itself, because it is linked to the saving mystery of grace, which includes an essential reference to the Church the Savior founded." John Paul II All Salvation Comes Through Christ

Pope John Paul II

"The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only 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. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an 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. For such people 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 which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation." -Pope John Paul II REDEMPTORIS MISSIO

Pope John Paul II

"On the other hand, it is true that some kind of communion, though imperfect, exists among all those who have received Baptism in Christ." -Pope John Paul II REDEMPTORIS MISSIO

Pope John Paul II

"The fact that the followers of other religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people."¹⁰⁰ -Pope John Paul II REDEMPTORIS MISSIO

Pope John Paul II

"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." All Salvation Comes Through Christ

Pope John Paul II

"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. 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)." All Salvation Comes Through Christ

Pope John Paul II

"Since Christ brings about salvation through his Mystical Body, which is the Church, the way of salvation is connected essentially with the Church. The axiom extra ecclesiam nulla salus"--"outside the Church there is no salvation"--stated by St. Cyprian (Epist. 73, 21; PL 1123 AB), belongs to the Christian tradition. It was included in the Fourth Lateran Council (DS 802), in the Bull Unam Sanctam of Boniface VIII (DS 870) and the Council of Florence (Decretum pro Jacobitis, DS 1351). The axiom means that for those who are not ignorant of the fact that the Church has been established as necessary by God through Jesus Christ, there is an obligation to enter the Church and remain in her in order to attain salvation (cf. LG 14). For those, however, who have not received the Gospel proclamation, as I wrote in the Encyclical Redemptoris Missio, salvation is accessible in mysterious ways, inasmuch as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the Church, but nonetheless always in relation to her (cf. RM 10). It is a mysterious relationship. It is mysterious for those who receive the grace, because they do not know the Church and sometimes even outwardly reject her. It is also mysterious in itself, because it is linked to the saving mystery of grace, which includes an essential

reference to the Church the Savior founded.

In order to take effect, saving grace requires acceptance, cooperation, a yes to the divine gift. This acceptance is, at least implicitly, oriented to Christ and the Church. Thus it can also be said that sine ecclesia nulla salus--"without the Church there is no salvation." Belonging to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, however implicitly and indeed mysteriously, is an essential condition for salvation." All Salvation Comes Through Christ

Pope John Paul II

"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.

This is the theological approach drawn from Christian tradition. The Church's Magisterium has followed it in her doctrine and practice as the way indicated by Christ himself for the apostles and for missionaries in every age." All Salvation Comes Through Christ

Pope Benedict XVI, then Cardinal Ratzinger composed and organized the creation of the new Catholic Catechism that states, "1259 For catechumens who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament."

INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

in their document THE HOPE OF SALVATION FOR INFANTS WHO DIE WITHOUT BEING BAPTISED, state the following, "Rather, as we want to reaffirm in conclusion, they provide strong grounds for hope that God will save infants when we have not been able to do for them what we would have wished to do, namely, to baptize them into the faith and life of the Church."

Pope Benedict

Church canon law says: "Baptism...[is] necessary to salvation in fact or at least in intention," But what happens when a man dies unbaptized? And what happens to the millions of children who are killed in their mother's wombs?

Pope Benedict XVI, then Cardinal Ratzinger: "The question of what it means to say that baptism is necessary for salvation has become ever more hotly debated in modern times. The Second Vatican Council said on this point that "men who are seeking for God and who are inwardly striving toward that which constitutes baptism will also receive salvation.

That is to say that a seeking after God already represents an inward participation in baptism, in the Church, in Christ."

Pope Benedict

"The question of what it means to say that baptism is necessary for salvation has become ever more hotly debated in modern times. The Second Vatican Council said on this point that "men who are seeking for God and who are inwardly striving toward that which constitutes baptism will also receive salvation. That is to say that a seeking after God already represents an inward participation in baptism, in the Church, in Christ."

To that extent, the question concerning the necessity of baptism for salvation seems to have been answered, but the question about children who could not be baptized because they were aborted then presses upon us that much more urgently.

Earlier ages had devised a teaching that seems to me rather unenlightened. They said that baptism endows us, by means of sanctifying grace, with the capacity to gaze upon God. Now, certainly, the state of original sin, from which we are freed by baptism, consists in a lack of sanctifying grace. Children who die in this way are indeed without any personal sin, so they cannot be sent to hell, but, on the other hand, they lack sanctifying grace and thus the potential for beholding God that this bestows. They will simply enjoy a state of natural blessedness, in which they will be happy. This state people called limbo.

In the course of our century, that has gradually come to seem problematic to us. This was one way in which people sought to justify the necessity of baptizing infants as early as possible, but the solution is itself questionable. Finally, the Pope [John Paul II] made a decisive turn in the [1995] encyclical Evangelium Vitae, a change already anticipated by the [1992] Catechism of the Catholic Church, when he expressed the simple hope that God is powerful enough to draw to himself all those who were unable to receive the sacrament."

--Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, God and the World, pp. 401-402

Vatican II Lumen Gentium 15 says, "15. The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter. (14*) For there are many who honor Sacred Scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and a pattern of life, and who show a sincere zeal. They lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and Saviour. (15*) They are consecrated by baptism, in which they are united with Christ. They also recognize and accept other sacraments within their own Churches or ecclesiastical communities. Many of them rejoice in the episcopate, celebrate the Holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion toward the Virgin Mother of God.(16*) They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits. Likewise we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them too He gives His gifts and graces whereby He is operative among them

with His sanctifying power. Some indeed He has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood."

The Catholic Catechism states, "1258 The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament."

The Catholic Catechism states, "1259 For catechumens who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament."

The Catholic 1261 As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,"⁶⁴ allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.

1) Baltimore Catechism:

166 Are all obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved?

a) All are obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved. *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me."* (John 14:6)

2) 167 What do we mean when we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation?" When we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," we mean that Christ made the Catholic Church a necessary means of salvation and commanded all to enter it, so that a person must be connected with the Church in some way to be saved.

3) 168 How can persons who are not members of the Catholic Church be saved? Persons who are not members of the Catholic Church can be saved if, through no fault of their own, they do not know that the Catholic Church is the true Church, but they love God and try to do His will, for in this way they are connected with the Church by desire.

4) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19950531en.html

ALL SALVATION COMES THROUGH CHRIST

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 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" (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.

Since Christ brings about salvation through his Mystical Body, which is the Church, the way of salvation is connected essentially with the Church. The axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*--"outside the Church there is no salvation"--stated by St. Cyprian (Epist. 73, 21; PL 1123 AB), belongs to the Christian tradition. It was included in the Fourth Lateran Council (DS 802), in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII (DS 870) and the Council of Florence (*Decretum pro Jacobitis*, DS 1351). The axiom means that for those who are not ignorant of the fact that the Church has been established as necessary by God through Jesus Christ, there is an obligation to enter the Church and remain in her in order to attain salvation (cf. LG 14). For those, however, who have not received the Gospel proclamation, as I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, salvation is accessible in mysterious ways, inasmuch as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the Church, but nonetheless always in relation to her (cf. RM 10). It is a mysterious relationship. It is mysterious for those who receive the grace, because they do not know the Church and sometimes even outwardly reject her. It is also mysterious in itself, because it is linked to the saving mystery of grace, which includes an essential reference to the Church the Savior founded.

In order to take effect, saving grace requires acceptance, cooperation, a yes to the divine gift. This acceptance is, at least implicitly, oriented to Christ and the Church. Thus it can also be said that *sine ecclesia nulla salus*--"without the Church there is no salvation." Belonging to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, however implicitly and indeed mysteriously, is an essential condition for salvation.

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.

This is the theological approach drawn from Christian tradition. The Church's Magisterium has followed it in her doctrine and practice as the way indicated by Christ himself for the apostles and for missionaries in every age

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm>

-Pope John Paul II

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html

- 5) 9. **"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 salvation. Both these truths help us to understand the one mystery of salvation,** so that we can come to know God's mercy and our own responsibility."

. "Referring to "this messianic people," the Council says; "It has been set up by Christ as a communion of life, love and truth; **by him too it is taken up as the instrument of salvation for all**, and sent on a mission to the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth."

- 6) 10. **"The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only 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. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an 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. For such people 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 which is accommodated 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. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation. For this reason the Council, after affirming the centrality of the Paschal Mystery, went on to declare that "this applies not only to Christians but to all people of good will in whose hearts grace is secretly at work. Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God."¹⁹
20. "The Church is the sacrament of salvation for all mankind, and her activity is not limited only to those who accept her message."
50. "On the other hand, it is true that some kind of communion, though imperfect, exists among all those who have received Baptism in Christ."
55. " I recently wrote to the bishops of Asia: "Although the Church gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all people, this does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ who is 'the way, and the truth and the life.'...The fact that the followers of other religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people."¹⁰⁰ Indeed Christ himself "while expressly insisting on the need for faith and baptism, **at the same time confirmed the need for the Church, into which people enter through Baptism as through a door.**"¹⁰¹ **Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with the conviction that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation.**"¹⁰²
- 7) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/alpha/data/aud19950531en.html
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"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."

"For those, however, who have not received the Gospel proclamation, as I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, salvation is accessible in mysterious ways, inasmuch as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the Church, but nonetheless always in relation to her (cf. RM 10). It is a mysterious relationship. It is mysterious for those who receive the grace, because they do not know the Church and sometimes even outwardly reject her. It is also mysterious in itself, because it is linked to the saving mystery of grace, which includes an essential reference to the Church the Savior founded."

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also be said that sine ecclesia nulla salus--"without the Church there is no salvation." Belonging to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, however implicitly and indeed mysteriously, is an essential condition for salvation.

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.**

This is the theological approach drawn from Christian tradition. The Church's Magisterium has followed it in her doctrine and practice as the way indicated by Christ himself for the apostles and for missionaries in every age

- 8) http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html

DECREE ON ECUMENISM

UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO

3. The brethren divided from us also use many liturgical actions of the Christian religion. These most certainly can truly engender a life of grace in ways that vary according to the condition of each Church or Community. **These liturgical actions must be regarded as capable of giving access to the community of salvation.**

It follows that the separated Churches(23) and Communities as such, though we believe them to be deficient in some respects, have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church.

Nevertheless, our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through Him were born again into one body, and with Him quickened to newness of life - that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is "the all-embracing means of salvation," that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation. We believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, in order to establish the one Body of Christ on earth to which all should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God.

19. It must however be admitted that in these Churches and ecclesial Communities there exist important differences from the Catholic Church, not only of a historical, sociological, psychological and cultural character, but especially in the interpretation of revealed truth.

20. We are aware indeed that there exist considerable divergences from the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning Christ Himself, the Word of God made flesh, the work of redemption, and consequently, concerning the mystery and ministry of the Church, and the role of Mary in the plan of salvation.

- 9) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II - UT UNUM SINT - On commitment to Ecumenism

10. " The Council states that the Church of Christ "subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him", and at the same time acknowledges that "many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside her visible structure. These elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism towards Catholic unity".

It follows that these separated Churches and Communities, though we believe that they suffer from defects, have by no means been deprived of significance and value in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church".¹²

13. The same Document carefully draws out the doctrinal implications of this situation. Speaking of the members of these Communities, it declares: "All those justified by faith through Baptism are incorporated into Christ. They therefore have a right to be honoured by the title of Christian, and are properly regarded as brothers and sisters in the Lord by the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church".¹⁷

With reference to the many positive elements present in the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, the Decree adds: "All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to him, belong by right to the one Church of Christ. The separated brethren also carry out many of the sacred actions of the Christian religion. Undoubtedly, in many ways that vary according to the condition of each Church or Community, these actions can truly engender a life of grace, and can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation".¹⁸

Many elements of great value (*eximia*), which in the Catholic Church are part of the fullness of the means of salvation and of the gifts of grace which make up the Church, are also found in the other Christian Communities.

14. The elements of this already-given Church exist, found in their fullness in the Catholic Church and, without this fullness, in the other Communities,²⁰ where certain features of the Christian mystery have at times been more effectively emphasized.

86. The Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, in a fundamental affirmation echoed by the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*,¹⁴¹ states that the one Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church.¹⁴² The Decree on Ecumenism emphasizes the presence in her of the

fullness (*plenitudo*) of the means of salvation.¹⁴³ Full unity will come about when all share in the fullness of the means of salvation entrusted by Christ to his Church.

10) Baltimore Catechism -121. Q. Are all bound to belong to the Church?

A. All are bound to belong to the Church, and he who knows the Church to be the true Church and remains out of it cannot be saved.

Concerning this doctrine the Pope of Vatican I, Pius IX, spoke on two different occasions. In an *allocution* (address to an audience) on December 9th, 1854 he said:

We must hold as of the faith, that out of the Apostolic Roman Church there is no salvation; that she is the only ark of safety, and whosoever is not in her perishes in the deluge; we must also, on the other hand, recognize with certainty that those who are invincible in ignorance of the true religion are not guilty for this in the eyes of the Lord. And who would presume to mark out the limits of this ignorance according to the character and diversity of peoples, countries, minds and the rest?

Again, in his (Pope Pius IX) encyclical *Quanto conficiamur moerore* of 10 August, 1863 addressed to the Italian bishops, he said:

It is known to us and to you that those who are in invincible ignorance of our most holy religion, but who observe carefully the natural law, and the precepts graven by God upon the hearts of all men, and who being disposed to obey God lead an honest and upright life, may, aided by the light of divine grace, attain to eternal life; for God who sees clearly, searches and knows the heart, the disposition, the thoughts and intentions of each, in His supreme mercy and goodness by no means permits that anyone suffer eternal punishment, who has not of his own free will fallen into sin.

"God . . . in His supreme goodness and clemency, by no means allows anyone to be punished with eternal punishments who does not have the guilt of voluntary fault. But it is also a Catholic dogma, that no one outside the Catholic Church can be saved, and that those who are contumacious against the authority of the same Church (and) definitions and who are obstinately (*pertinaciter*) separated from the unity of this Church and from the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, to whom the custody of the vineyard was entrusted by the Savior, cannot obtain eternal salvation."

- 11) Catholic Catechism 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.⁵⁸ St. Irenaeus of Lyons, a witness of this faith, declared:
- 12) Catholic Catechism **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."⁵⁹

- 13) Catholic Catechism [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. . ."⁶⁰ The Church's message "is true and solid, in which one and the same way of salvation appears throughout the whole world."
- 14) But, more importantly, we can see from the vehemence of Patristic attacks on heretics, e.g., St. Cyprian "Ad Demetrianum," that the Fathers have in mind those who are in bad faith, who culpably reject the Church. They do not seem to think of those who in- culpably fail to find the Church.[27] So from this point on, it becomes largely a question not of doctrine but of objective fact: how many are culpable? Further, this statement was made in 1442, before the 1492 discovery that there was a whole other world. The writers thought that the Gospel had actually reached every creature—it had not--and supposed, as we said, bad faith on the part of those who rejected it.
- 15) On August 9, 1949, the Holy Office, by order of Pope Pius XII, and basing itself on the teaching of Pius XII in his Mystical Body Encyclical "It is not always required that one be actually incorporated as a member of the Church, but this at least is required: that one adhere to it in wish and desire. It is not always necessary that this be explicit . . .but when a man labors under invincible ignorance, God accepts even an implicit will, called by that name because it is contained in the good disposition of soul in which a man wills to conform his will to the will of God." Pius XII had said that a man can be "ordered to the Church by a certain desire and wish of which he is not aware (inscio quodam desiderio ac voto)," that is, the one contained in the good dispositions mentioned by the Holy Office.
- 16) **SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH-DECLARATION IN DEFENSE OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON THE CHURCH AGAINST CERTAIN ERRORS OF THE PRESENT DAY**
 - a) Likewise, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whose task it is to "preserve the doctrine of faith and morals in the whole Catholic world,"(2) intends to gather together and explain a number of truths concerning the mystery of the Church which at the present time are being either denied or endangered. In this it will follow above all the lines laid down by the two Vatican Councils.
 - b) **1. The Oneness of Christ's Church**-One is the Church, which after His Resurrection our Savior handed over to Peter as Shepherd (cf. Jn 21:17), commissioning him and the other apostles to propagate and govern her (cf. Mt 18:18ff.) (and which) He erected for all ages as "the pillar and mainstay of the truth" (cf. 1 Tm 3:15). **And this Church of Christ, "constituted and organized in this world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the Successor of Peter and the bishops in union with that Successor."**(3) **This declaration of the Second Vatican Council is illustrated by the same Council's statement that "it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the general means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained,"**(4) and that same Catholic Church "has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all the means of grace"(5) with which Christ wished to enhance His messianic community. This is no obstacle to the fact that during her early pilgrimage the Church, "embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and

always in need of being purified,"(6) nor to the fact that "outside her visible structure," **namely in Churches and ecclesial communities which are joined to the Catholic Church by an imperfect communion**, there are to be found "many elements of sanctification and truth (which), as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism towards Catholic unity."(7)

- c) 10) But at the same time Catholics are bound to profess that through the gift of God's mercy they belong to that Church which Christ founded and which is governed by the successors of Peter and the other Apostles, who are the depositories of the original Apostolic tradition, living and intact, which is the permanent heritage of doctrine and holiness of that same Church.(11) **The followers of Christ are therefore not permitted to imagine that Christ's Church is nothing more than a collection (divided, but still possessing a certain unity) of Churches and ecclesial communities.** Nor are they free to hold that Christ's Church nowhere really exists today and that it is to be considered only as an end which all Churches and ecclesial communities must strive to reach.

17) 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.

- 18) **5. 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.**
- 19) **Catholic Catechism CCC 846** How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers?³³⁵ Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body: Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches 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, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.
- 20) **Catholic Catechism CCC 847** This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church: Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation

21) **Catholic Catechism CCC 848** "Although in ways known to himself God can lead those who, through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the Gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please him, the Church still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize all men.

My Comments:

In regards to the early Popes and councils stating that "outside the Church nobody can be saved", the Magisterium were talking to those Catholics who were raised Catholic, taught, and knew the Catholic Church was the one true Church, but freely chose to leave it anyway. In those days before and the reformation, there was only the Catholic Church and there were no protestant denominations. The Pope and the Councils were talking to those Catholics who were in the Catholic Church, but left the Church before and during the protestant reformation. This would be like me talking to two different individuals. The first individual was a born and raised Catholic that was taught it was a mortal sin to receive Communion while in mortal sin, like missing mass! Individual "A" missed mass the previous week, but intentionally and knowingly took communion the next Sunday. I knowing this, take "individual A" aside and tell him, "you are in mortal sin". I am correct to do so. However, individual B is a protestant who has never been taught or told that a non-Catholic may not take communion and has never been taught that a Catholic must take communion at least once a year. If I tell this non-Catholic that he is in mortal sin both ways because he has not taken communion in the past year and if he takes communion he is again in mortal sin, I am in error. He did not know. He is ignorant of this and by his ignorance not in mortal sin both ways. So, as you can see, it depends who the author and speaker is talking to and the context of what they are saying. The Popes and councils from centuries ago were talking to Catholics who knew or know that the Catholic Church is the one true Church and knowingly leave it anyway. However, most protestants were never taught and do not believe that the Catholic Church is the one true Church. Because they are unaware of the truth and teaching, they have some level of ignorance of this and are not held accountable by the Church and God.

22)