

Is A Catholic Christian An Oxymoron?

By Mike Gendron

Webster's dictionary defines an oxymoron as "a combination of contradictory words," such as jumbo shrimp, tight slacks, silent scream, pretty ugly and same difference. Would you put Catholic Christian into this category? Some would say "no", because they believe Roman Catholicism is a Christian denomination. Others, who know the official teachings of the Catholic Church contradict the essentials of the Gospel, would say "yes." We propose that a Catholic Christian is indeed an oxymoron for two reasons: 1) we are what we believe, and 2) it is impossible for anyone to believe two opposing views simultaneously. I recognize that there may be some Christians attending the Catholic Church but if they have believed the Gospel they are no longer Catholics. Let us consider some of the contradictory beliefs between Catholics and Christians. By definition we will propose a Christian is one who believes the Gospel, while a Catholic is one who believes the official teachings and traditions of his church. (Quotations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are presented in this article with associated paragraph numbers in parenthesis.)

Authority

A Christian believes Scripture has authority over church. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness* (2 Tim. 3:16). *By setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience* (2 Cor. 4:2).

A Catholic believes the Church has authority over Scriptures. The manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church, which exercises the divinely conferred commission, and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God (CCC, para. 119).

Justification

A Christian is justified once by faith because justification is a permanent declaration by God (Romans 8:30). *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness* (Romans 4:5).

A Catholic is justified repeatedly by sacraments and works because he loses the grace of justification each time a mortal sin is committed. The sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification (1446).

Regeneration

A Christian believes he is regenerated at baptism of the Spirit. *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body* (1 Cor. 12:13). *God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth* (2 Thes. 2:13).

A Catholic believes baptism of water imparts divine life, the water of Baptism truly signifies our birth into the divine life (694).

Salvation

A Christian is saved by God's unmerited grace. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast* (Eph. 2:8-9).

A Catholic is saved by meriting the graces needed for salvation. We can merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for the attainment of eternal life (2010).

A Christian is saved **for** good works. *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do* (Eph. 2:10).

A Catholic is saved **by** good works. The sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation (1129).

A Christian is saved for all eternity. *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.* (Eph. 1:13-14).

A Catholic is saved until a mortal sin is committed. Those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell (1035).

A Christian believes salvation is offered to those outside the church. *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us* (2 Cor. 5:20).

A Catholic believes salvation is offered through the Church. Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation. Anyone refusing to enter it or remain in it cannot be saved (846).

A Christian is purified by the blood of Jesus. *The blood of Jesus...purifies us from all sin* (1 John 1:7).

A Catholic is purified by the fires of Purgatory. They undergo purification in Purgatory, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven (1030-31).

Saints and Priests

A Christian becomes a saint when the Spirit baptizes him into the body of Christ. *And He gave some...for the equipping of the saints...the body of Christ* (Eph. 4:11-12).

A Catholic becomes a saint only if the Pope canonizes them. This occurs when he solemnly proclaims that they practiced a heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace (828).

A Christian is a priest. *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God* (1 Peter 2:9).

A Catholic needs a priest. Catholic priests are said to be apostolic successors and guarantee that Christ is acting in the sacraments to dispense divine life (1120-1131).

The Lord's Supper

A Christian believes the Lord's Supper is a memorial. *Do this in remembrance of me* (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

A Catholic believes the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice...the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner (1367).

A Christian receives Jesus once, spiritually, in the heart. *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God* (John 1:12). *God... put his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee* (2 Cor. 1:22).

A Catholic believes he receives Jesus physically, frequently, in the stomach. The body, blood...soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ...is truly, really and substantially contained in the Eucharist (1374-78).

Condemnation

A Christian is condemned by the Roman Catholic Church. Over 100 anathemas have been pronounced against Christians by the Roman Catholic Councils of Trent and Vatican II. These condemnations are still in effect today and can only be lifted if a Christian returns in submission to the authority of the pope.

A Catholic is condemned by the Word of God. *There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day* (John 12:48). *If we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!* (Gal. 1:8; cf. Context of verses 6-9).

These thirteen teachings and traditions of Roman Catholicism demonstrate that a Catholic Christian is indeed an oxymoron. They also affirm how manmade traditions nullify the Word of God (Mark 7:7-13). There are many Evangelicals and Roman Catholics who are unaware of how diametrically opposed Catholic dogmas are to the Word of God. The truth must be told. Catholics who presume they are Christians must be lovingly confronted with the truth. Evangelicals must be educated so they can proclaim the true gospel to Catholics instead of uniting with them under a compromised and diluted gospel.

Whenever you couple God's truth with Satan's lies you produce an oxymoron. Yet the "father of lies" continues to seduce many, who lack discernment, by mixing a little error with truth. In the final analysis, truth mixed with error never hurts the error; it only contaminates the truth. The veneer of truth that covers the false gospel of Roman Catholicism is deceiving not only Catholics but many Protestants as well. Let us persuade Catholics to turn from the error of man's teachings to the truth of God's Word!

God defines truth with His Word (John 17:17). It is objective, authoritative and sufficient! We must use it to expose the evil deeds of darkness, to set captives free from the bondage of deception and to protect God's children from being deceived. The only way we can avoid being deceived is to know the truth of God's Word.