

# WHY BE CHRISTIAN?

With respect for

**JEWS, MUSLIMS, HINDUS, BUDDHISTS, TAOISTS, CONFUCIANISTS, etc... ?**

Catechesis n. 3 "From zero to the Eucharist ..." on how to go gradually to the Party without end!

Cathedral of Noto – Saturday 28 December 2013 / 20:30-21:30

We will read and try to explain some passages of the

- **Word of God (OT, NT)**
- **Teaching of the Catholic Church (from the Fathers to Now)**
- **Experiences...**



(INTRODUCTION :

- **Why?..** ... (cf. John 14:6)

- and **how to dialogue with them ?**, Cf. John10:16 and the contemporary Magisterium (below)

## VARIOUS MAGISTERIAL DIRECTIVES on INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

### 1 – POPE PAUL VI

- 1.1 – The three ways in *Ecclesiam suam*, introductory to dialogue on the origin of Scripture.
- 1.2 – Conditions for, and characteristics of, a peaceful dialogue.
- 1.3 – Circular structure of the dialogue, "ecclesiocentric".

### 2 – VATICAN COUNCIL II

- 2.1 – Rays of Truth are also in other religions, in *Nostra Aetate*
- 2.2 – Some directives on interreligious dialogue, starting from *Dignitatis Humanae*

### 3 – POPE JOHN PAUL II

- 3.1 – The Spirit is also *extra Ecclesiam* [outside the Church], in *Redemptoris Missio*
- 3.2 – The Spirit prepares the Mission, in *Dominum et Vivificantem*
- 3.3 – Searching for the treasures in religions, in *Redemptor Hominis*
- 3.4 – Overcoming the "Extra Ecclesia nulla salus" with "Sine Ecclesiae nulla Salus"

### 4 – POPE BENEDICT XVI

- 4.1 – Christ is the only Savior for all humankind – in and through the Catholic Church
- 4.2 – Always highlight the indispensable aspects of our Christian identity
- 4.3 – Jesus Christ is the apex of the story of salvation, as well as of the dialogue with other religions.)

## SUMMARY

	Pag.
<b>1. WHY BE CHRISTIANS?</b>	3
<b>2. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for JEWS?</b>	6
<b>3. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for MUSLIMS?</b>	7
<b>4. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for HINDUS?</b>	9
<b>5. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for BUDDHISTS?</b>	11
<b>6. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for TAOISTS?</b>	13
<b>7. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for CONFUCIANISTS?</b>	14
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	15
<b>CONCEPT MAP for INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE</b>	16

## 1. WHY BE CHRISTIANS?

### Word of God

#### OLD TESTAMENT

- ✓ *"I will let him who [walks uprightly] look upon the salvation of God" (cf. Ps 50:23).*
- ✓ *"That [your] way may be known upon earth, [your] saving power among all nations" (Ps 67:2) [RSVCE]*
- ✓ *"All the nations you have made shall come to bow before you, Lord, and give honor to your name" (Ps 86:9).*
- ✓ *"Turn to me and be [saved], all you ends of the earth, for I am God; there is no other! (Is 45:22).*
- ✓ *"I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" (Is 49:6).*
- ✓ *"They [will] all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one accord" (Zeph 3:9).*
- ✓ *"They shall all have one shepherd" (Ezek 37:24).*
- ✓ *"All the Gentiles shall know that there is One who redeems and delivers" (1 Mac 4:11).*

#### NEW TESTAMENT

- ✓ *"I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd!" (John 10:16).*
- ✓ *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).*
- ✓ *"Everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord'" (Acts 2:21).*
- ✓ *"There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).*
- ✓ *"He has made known to us the mystery of his will [...], a plan [...] to sum up all things in Christ [ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ] in heaven and on earth" (Eph 1:9-10).*
- ✓ *"Until all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ" (Eph 4:13).*
- ✓ *"There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human" (1Tim 2:5).*
- ✓ *"There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save or to destroy" (Jam 4:12).*

### Teaching of the Catholic Church

#### PATRISTIC AGE

##### THE LOGOS SPERMATIKOS, THE WORD OF GOD [JESUS], HAS SOWN HIS SEEDS OF TRUTH IN EVERY CULTURE

- ✓ --- **ST. JUSTIN** (Martyr, † 165 ): *"And [we know that] those of the Stoic school — since, so far as their moral teaching went, they were admirable, as were also the poets in some particulars, on account of the seed of reason [the Logos] implanted in every race of men — were hated and put to death, — Heraclitus for instance, and, among those of our own time, Musonius and others. For, as we intimated, the devils have always effected, that all those who anyhow live according to the verb and flee from evil, be hated. And it is nothing to be astonished if the devils are proved to cause those to be much worse hated who live not according to a part only of the verb sower [among men], but by the knowledge and contemplation of the whole Verb, which is Christ. And these demons, having been shut up in eternal fire, shall suffer their just punishment and penalty. For if they are even now overthrown by men through the name of Jesus Christ, this is an intimation of the punishment in eternal fire which is to be inflicted on themselves and those who serve them. For thus did both all the prophets foretell, and our own teacher Jesus teach. (ST. JUSTIN, Second Apology, VIII. Translated by Marcus*

Dods and George Reith. From *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, Buffalo, NY, Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885; Rev. & ed. for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0127.htm> [accessed 01/15/20]

--- **Justin**, defined by *Fides et Ratio* as the “pioneer” of positive encounters with philosophical thought (although marked by cautious discernment) (cf. *Fides et Ratio*, n. 38), insisted [...] through the theory of the “*semina Verbi*” that throughout history the Spirit of God sows fragments of truth that are been completed in Christ who is the Logos, the fullness of truth (A. SABETTA, Dispensa: *Fede e ragione. Analisi storiche e prospettive per il presente*. Facoltà di Teologia PUL - II ciclo, corso 10511. A.A. 2012-13, p. 12 [unpublished translation by pfgsm]).

--- **Clement** of Alexandria affirms that upon all people, especially those who employ their time in reasoning (that is, philosophers), “a certain divine effluvium (fragrance) has been poured out;” that is to say, that there is some sort of divine presence, comparable (we might say) to the “seeds of truth” of which Justin speaks, which enabled the philosophers to admit that there is only one God and that He is immune to corruption and generation, distinct from the material reality (VI, 68,2-3). Precisely because they received some “sparks of the divine Logos”, the Greeks made audible some accents of the truth; and it couldn’t have been otherwise, because without the Logos of the truth, it would be like wanting to walk without feet (VII, 74,7-75,1) (A. SABETTA, Dispensa: *Fede e ragione. Analisi storiche e prospettive per il presente*. Facoltà di Teologia PUL - II ciclo, corso 10511. A.A. 2012-13, p. 27 [unpublished translation by pfgsm]).

#### THE ULTIMATE TRUTH IS SOUGHT ABOVE ALL AMONG THE CHRISTIANS

- ✓ --- **St. Augustine of Hippo** (Bishop and doctor of the Church; 354 - † 430): “The true religion is not sought among the confusion of pagans, the doings of heretics, the weakness of the schismatics, or the blindness of others... but only among those who are called Christians.” (ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Vera Religione*, V.9)
- ✓ “There is no doubt that God concedes the knowledge of the Gospel to those whom his mercy has decided to snatch from damnation, and they will believe after they have heard the Good News.”  
(ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Correptione et Gratia*, c. 7)

#### MEDIEVAL AGE

##### WHAT IS THE FRUIT AND THE GOAL FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES? (ACCORDING TO SOME IN THE MIDDLE AGES?)

- ✓ --- **St. Thomas Aquinas** (Priest and Doctor of the Church; 1225 - † 1274): St. Thomas, discussing Christological salvation (Σωτηρία Χριστοῦ), speaks about the necessity of instructing all in the Mystery of Redemption completed by our Lord for everyone on earth: “After the coming of our Lord [says Thomas], given that the mystery of redemption has been accomplished and has been preached corporeally and visibly, all people are bound to believe in this truth in an explicit way; if anyone should lack someone to instruct him, God Himself would give him a revelation of it.”  
(ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, III, dist. 25, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2)  
--- “God Himself would give him a revelation of it,” as happened with the Roman centurion: an Angel of God pointed him to St. Peter, so that Peter might reveal words to him through which he and all his family would be saved (cf. Acts 11:13ff).

#### MODERN AGE

##### THE NECESSITY OF ANNOUNCING SALVATION TO THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW OF IT

- ✓ --- **St. Francis Xavier** (Priest; 1506 - † 1552): “I have not stopped since the day I arrived. I conscientiously made the rounds of the villages. I bathed in the sacred waters all the children who had not yet been baptised. This means that I have purified a very large number of children...”  
(ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, “Letters” to Saint Ignatius, 20 October 1542 and 15 January 1544, in: Office of Read., 3 December.)

#### POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

##### THE DIVINE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

- ✓ --- **Bl. Pius IX** (Pope from 1846 to 1878): “But how many wonderful and shining proofs are ready at hand to convince the human reason in the clearest way that the religion of Christ is divine and that [...] therefore nothing exists more definite, more settled or more holy than our faith, which [...] has been established by the birth, life, death, resurrection, wisdom, wonders and prophecies of Christ Jesus, its divine author and perfecter! [...] This faith grew famed and notable by the foretellings of so many prophets, the lustre of so many miracles, the steadfastness of so many martyrs, and the glory of so many saints!” (BLESSED PIUS IX, Encyclical *Qui Pluribus*, 9 November 1846, n.8.)

- ✓ --- **ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN** (1801 - †1890): “[Christianity] is a ‘Revelatio revelata’ [revealed revelation]; it is a definite message from God to man distinctly conveyed by his chosen instruments [...]; and therefore to be positively acknowledged, embraced, and maintained as true, on the ground of its being divine, [...] as absolutely certain knowledge, certain in a sense in which nothing else can be certain, because it comes from Him who neither can deceive nor be deceived.” (ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, Ch. 10. New Impression; Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903. <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/index.html> [accessed 01/28/2020]).

#### THE 4 CONDITIONS FOR, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF, A PEACEFUL INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

- ✓ --- **ST. PAUL VI** (Pope from 1963 to 1978): THE 4 CONDITIONS: “Moreover, the very fact that [someone] engages in a dialogue of this sort [between the Church and the world] is proof of his consideration and esteem for others, his understanding and his kindness.” (ST. PAUL VI, Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, n. 79)
- ✓ THE 4 CHARACTERISTICS: “Dialogue, therefore, is a recognized method of the apostolate. It is a way of making spiritual contact. It should however have the following characteristics: 1) **Clarity** before all else; the dialogue demands that what is said should be intelligible [...]. 2) Our dialogue must be accompanied by that **meekness** which Christ bade us learn from Himself [...]. 3) **Confidence** is also necessary; confidence not only in the power of one’s own words, but also in the good will of both parties to the dialogue [...]. 4) Finally, the **prudence** of a teacher who is most careful to make allowances for the psychological and moral circumstances of his hearer”. (ST. PAUL VI, Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, nn. 81, 83-84)

## 2. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for JEWS?

### TaNak

#### NEVIIM

- ✓ *“But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, least among the clans of Judah, From you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; Whose origin is from of old, from ancient times” (Mi 5:1) (Matt 2:1 “Jesus was born in Bethlehem” – the ruler of Israel.)*
- ✓ *“Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and make you come up out of them, my people!” (Ezek 37:13).*  
--- Jesus came and he resurrected Lazarus (**John 11:14, 43-44**); the son of the widow of Nain (**Luke 7:11-17**), and also the daughter of Jairus (**cf. Mark 5:35-43**)...so why haven't many recognized Him?

### Teaching of the Catholic Church

#### POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

##### CONCILIAR DECLARATION ON JUDAISM

- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** (1962 - 1965): *“Israel according to the flesh, which wandered as an exile in the desert, was already called the Community of God (Neh 13:1; Num 20:4; Deut 23:1). So likewise the new Israel which while living in the present age goes in search of a future and abiding city (cf. Heb 13:14) is called the Church of Christ (cf. Acts 20:28). For He has [...] established the [...] Church so that for each and all it may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity.”*  
(VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, n. 9)
- ✓ *“As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues-such is the witness of the Apostle. In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and “serve him shoulder to shoulder” (Soph. 3:9)[..] The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.”* (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, nn. 2,4)

### 3. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for MUSLIMS?

#### Koran

##### SURAS

- ✓ *“When they were given the example of the son of Mary, your people turn away [...] saying: ‘our gods aren’t better than him?’ [...] When Jesus came with evident proof he said: ‘I came to you with Wisdom to show you part of what you didn’t agree with. Fear God and obey me!’ says Jesus.”*  
(S. XLIII, 66, Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])
- ✓ *“Oh people of the Book! You will do nothing good until you put into practice the Torah and the Gospel.”*  
(cf. S. V, 68, traduzione a cura di A. Bausani, Ed. Radici BUR, Milano 2006 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ *“He sent down the Pentateuch [Law of Moses] and the Gospel [of Jesus] before this, as guide to mankind, He has revealed the discernment.”* (S. III, 3, Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])
- ✓ *“Those who turn their back as apostates after guidance was clearly shown to them, satan has instigated them and buoyed them up with false hopes.”*  
(S. XLVII, 25, Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an Inc. 1<sup>st</sup> US Edition 2011)
- ✓ *“Nearest among them in love to the Believers you will find those who say, ‘We are Christians’: because among these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world<sup>2</sup>, and they are not arrogant.” (Sura V,82) “and this, their prayer God has rewarded them with Gardens, with rivers flowing underneath their eternal home. Such is the recompense of those who do good. But those who reject faith and belie Our signs, they shall be companions of hellfire.”*  
(S. V, 85-86, Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an Inc. 1<sup>st</sup> US Edition 2011)
- ✓ *“Announce to the believers the good news: oh believers! You are the auxiliaries of God as was Jesus son of Mary, who said to the Apostles, “Who will be my auxiliaries in God?” the Apostles said, “We are the auxiliaries in God.” A group of the children of Israel believed, a group did not believe. We have supported it... they believed, who achieved Victory!”. (S. LXI, 10-14, Sûra<sup>tu</sup> âlSaff (I ranghi), traduzione e apparati critici di Gabriele Mandel, testo fronte Arabo-Italiano, Ed. UTET, Torino 2014, pp. 281-282 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])*
- ✓ *“‘Certainly, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the messenger of God’. However, they neither killed him nor crucified him; so it seemed to them.”*  
(S. IV, 157, Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])  

--- The much discussed Sura IV, 157 of the Koran just cited would seem to say that Jesus did not really die on the Cross. But are we sure that the text is trying to say that? We’ll see better a few lines ahead. Anyhow, we can say for your information that on the basis of this passage (above) of the Koran and various interpretations, the following hermeneutical exegesis was born within the Islamic tradition: that Jesus, instead of dying on the Cross, ascended directly into heaven, and that in the place of Jesus either Judas Iscariot or one of the Apostles was sacrificed instead of Jesus; and so Jesus – according to this tradition – not only didn’t die on the cross and ascended directly into heaven before death (like Elijah and Enoch) but indeed at the end of times (given that in the Sura XIX,33 it’s also written that Jesus had to die) he will come again, then he will die and then later Resurrect and ascend into heaven. All this is absurd, however, since the opposite of this interpretation is also written in the Koran:
- ✓ *“Oh Jesus, I will make you die, and then I will raise you up to me, and I will purify you from the unfaithful”*  
(S. III, 55, Testo: A. BAUSANI [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

#### ACCORDING TO THE KORAN, DID GOD HAVE A SON OR NOT?

- ✓ *“And say: ‘Glory to God, to whom a son has never been attributed, who has no associates in his reign, and no one to protect from disgrace. Proclaim his greatness highly.’”*  
(S. XVII, 111 - Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])  
*“To whom a son has never been attributed:” here the word “attributed” stands for “taken” (yattàhcd): “he has not taken a son.”*  
*So it is true – God has not taken a son, because “God” – as the Gospel of John says – “so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him might have eternal life” (John 3:16).*

<sup>1</sup> Another translation: “You are founded on nothing until you compare yourselves with the Torah and the Gospel”(cf. S. V,68, G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

<sup>2</sup> In ‘Testo-Fronte’ translations from the Italian version ( G. MANDEL) it says “Priests and monks”

- ✓ *“(God says:) We will send Our Spirit to them, who through her will be made similar to a man... He said: ‘I am only one sent by the Lord to give you a pure son.’ She said, ‘How can I have a son, if no man has touched me and I am not a loose woman?’ He said: ‘So it will be! The Lord has said: “This is easy for me, and we will make him a sign for the peoples and a mercy on Our part.” The matter has been decided.”*  
(S. XIX, 17.19-21 - Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])
- ✓ *“We did aforetime send Messengers before you: of them there are some whose story We have related to you, and some whose story We have not related to you. It was not (possible) for any Messenger to bring a Sign except by the leave of God: but when the Command of God issued, the matter was decided in truth and justice, and there perished, there and then, those who stood on Falsehood.”*  
(S. XL, 78. Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an Inc. 1<sup>st</sup> US Edition 2011)
- ✓ *“Glory/Peace is on me the day that I was born, the day that I died and the day that I shall be raised up to life!”*  
(S. XIX, 33. Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL [unpublished translation by pfgsm])
- ✓ *“The Jews... and Christians... who believe in God and the Last Day, and work righteousness: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve”* (S. V, 69, Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an Inc. 1<sup>st</sup> US Edition 2011).

## Teaching of the Catholic Church

### POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

#### CONCILIAR DECLARATION ON ISLAM

- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** (1962 - 1965): *“But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind. [...] Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel [...] so that they may finally have life. But often men, deceived by the Evil One, have become vain in their reasoning’s and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie [...]. 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 (Mark 16:15), the Church fosters the missions with care and attention.”*  
(VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, n. 16)
- ✓ --- **BENEDICT XVI** (Pope from 2005 to 2013): *“Muslims [...] have the right to receive our firm and humble witness to Jesus Christ. To be able to give it with persuasive strength, however, requires a serious effort [...]. This dialogue presumes a solid knowledge of one’s own Catholic faith!”*  
(BENEDETTO XVI, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 13-14/11/2006 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

## 4. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for HINDUS?

### Shruti/Smriti

#### VEDA

(here we find some elements of a natural salvation)

##### SALVATION THROUGH THE EARTH OR CERTAIN PLANTS:

- ✓ --- **ATHARVAVEDA** (4th Veda): *“Be thou enriched, O [Earth], with oblations, here among us is thine allotted portion. Free – hail to thee! – from sin those here and yonder.”*  
(ATHARVAVEDA, *magical hymns VI*, 84.2. Translated by Ralph T.H. Griffith. Hinduwebsite.com: <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredsceipts/hinduism/athar/avbook06.asp#av06084> [accessed 14 January 2020])
- ✓ *“Still conquering, banishing the curse, mighty, with thy reverted bloom. Thee [the apamarga, a plant used in magical rites] and all Plants have I invoked: Hence let it save us [from this evil]! was my prayer.”*  
(IBIDEM, IV, 17.2. Translated by Ralph T.H. Griffith. Hinduwebsite.com: <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredsceipts/hinduism/athar/avbook04.asp> [accessed 14 January 2020])

#### UPANISHAD

(Here we find some Philosophical meditations and soteriological [salvific] developments)

##### INERTIA AND DARKNESS LEAD TO “THE WORLD OF THE ANCESTORS” WHILE REFLECTIVE MEDITATION LEAD TO “THE WORLD OF THE GODS”

- ✓ *“Those who are guided by the ritual knowledge (karman) proposed by the *tamas* (inertia, darkness) will go into the world of the ancestors; while those who are guided by reflective meditation will go into the world of the gods (*devaloka*)”. (Cfr. UPANIṢAD, traduzione a cura di Raphael, Ed. Bompiani, Milano 2010, nota 7, p. 807, unpublished translation by pfgsm).*

##### CONTEMPLATING HOW MUCH THE ONE OF FIXED INTELLIGENCE HOLDS, ONE CAN BE DEFINITELY FREED FROM REBIRTH

- ✓ *“The city with the eleven gates [maybe the 11 organs of the body] belongs to the one unborn, to the one of fixed intelligence [this could possibly recall Jesus, (the Logos = Reason, etc.), given that he hadn’t yet been born]. Contemplating these things, the wise man suffers no more; he is saved from ignorance; and he is definitively freed from rebirth!”*  
(UPANIṢHAD, Traduzione a cura di Raphael, Ediz. Bompiani, Milano 2010, p. 847, unpublished translation by pfgsm)

#### BHAGAVAD GITA

(Similarities to the logic of St. Justin – the Word who sows in every culture)

##### THE DOCTRINAL TEXTS SHOULD BE THE INSTRUMENT TO DO GOOD AND REACH THE SUPREME GOAL

- ✓ *“The Blessed Lord said... : There are three kinds of doors to hell for which a man may be lost: passion, anger, and greed. Man should abandon this threesome! So freed from these three gates of darkness, o son, man fulfills his own good and finally reaches the supreme goal. He who, rejecting the precepts of the doctrinal texts, lives only to satisfy his own desires, does not reach perfection, or happiness, or the supreme goal. Therefore, the doctrinal texts should be for you the instrument of knowledge in determining what one should and should not do!” (BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ, *Il canto del glorioso Signore*, X, 38-39, a cura di Piano Stefano, Ediz. San Paolo, Milano 1994, glossario, p. 201 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])*
- ✓ *The god Kṛṣṇa supposedly said, “I am the seed [...] of all beings, also this am I; [...] only partially have I revealed to you the unfolding of my power” (Ibidem, p. 201 [unpublished translation by pfgsm]).*  
--- Here we see the ‘Logos Spermaticos’, the ‘*semina verbi*’ of St. Justin, that manifests itself in every culture and likewise in every religion (such as this one). We also clearly see the insufficient nature of the ‘extra-Christian’ revelation, when we read that not everything has been revealed; but *when the Holy Spirit comes to us, He will reveal all the Truth* (cf. John 16:13), at least the Saving Truth – which is to say, He revealed it at Pentecost more than 2000 years ago.

- ✓ *“A fool does not succeed in freeing himself from sleep, from fear, from sadness, from slothfulness, and from excitement. Listen to me now... the three types of joy... in which the man finds delight thanks to an assiduous and constant practice (...) in which results in the end of pain... Listen to the duties of Brāhmaṇa, and also of the sutra... or destroyer of the enemies... By performing the action which by nature is his*

responsibility, man does not stain himself with any fault..., supreme perfection is reached through renunciation!... which consists in the freedom from the bondage of action.” (Cfr. BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ, Il canto del glorioso Signore, XVIII, 35-49, p. 273-277).

## Teaching of the Catholic Church

### POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

#### CONCILIAR DECLARATION ON HINDUISM

- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** (1962 - 1965): *“In Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.”*

(VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, n. 2)

--- DAL FERRO says that in Hinduism the books don't have the “author's signature” (Cf. GIUSEPPE DAL FERRO, in: Tesi di Licenza *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 45).

--- KARL RAHNER affirms that their sacredness derives from the having codified the experience of the religious search of a people, not deprived of the action of the Holy Spirit Who works in all peoples and in all religions.

(cf. KARL RAHNER, in Licentiate Thesis: *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* of Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 45)

--- DAL FERRO says that the descent of god as an avatar could be for the sake of the ascent of man to his divine house! (Cfr. GIUSEPPE DAL FERRO, in: Tesi di Licenza *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 46).

## Personal Experiences

### MEDITATIONS

#### SIMILARITY BETWEEN 3 OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HINDUISM AND THE 3 PERSONS OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

- ✓ *“Among the many Hindu gods, 3 of the principal and superior gods particularly stand out:*
- BRAHMAN: *the creator god (similar characteristic to God the Father)*
  - VISHNÙ: *the god incarnated in history (similar characteristic to that of the Son)*
  - SHIVA: *I am the destroying spirit and ... (similar characteristic to that of the Holy Spirit)*

The Hindu faith was formed in a period more or less contemporaneous with that in which Abraham called his 3 guests ‘My Lord’ (cf. Gen 18)

We can think, therefore, of a kind of ‘heavenly internet’ that wanted to prepare various peoples in various places of the earth for the gradual knowledge of the Trinity.”

(cf. FRIAR VOLANTINO VERDE, *work in progress*)

#### REGARDING THE BELIEF IN MANY GODS, WHAT DO JESUS AND THE PSALMS SAY?

- ✓ *“To the unjust who believe in many gods, we can remember the words of Jesus:*  
*‘I have said: you are gods, you are sons of the Most High. But you will die like men, you will fall like all the powerful!’ (cf. Ps 82:6-7). If...*  
*‘I have told you that you will die in your sins, if you do not believe that I Am’ (cf. John 8:24)*  
*‘All the gods prostrate themselves before him!’ (cf. Ps 97:7b).” (PFSGM, work in progress)*

## 5. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for BUDDHISTS?

### TRI-PITAKA

#### LONG SUTRAS (IN SUTTA PITAKA)

##### SAKKO, KING OF THE GODS, WAS ILLUMINATED BY THE THRICE-HOLY ONE:

- ✓ *“Sakko, king of the gods, with his retinue... of thirty-three gods... said: ‘I am the disciple of the Sublime... until the final and total illumination’ – and then he said to the Sublime (three times successively): ‘Honor to the holy and perfect Sublime... Honor to the holy and perfect Sublime... Honor to the holy and perfect Sublime!’”* (Cf. CANONE BUDDHISTA. *Discorsi lunghi* (Dīgha Nikaaya), XXI, *Sakapana Suttanta, Le domande di Sakko re degli dei, nn. 1,8. II,7.10*, a cura di FROLA EUGENIO, Ediz. Laterza, Bari 1961, pp. 637. 640 [unpublished translation by pfgsm]).

--- So here, too, the gods (or the “god of gods”) of the Buddhists, according to the words of Buddha, are illuminated by the thrice-Holy One! (Cf. Is 6:3) So, too, Buddha, who is not the light but only the illuminated one (said with all the respect we ought to have toward other faiths!).

##### REGARDING THE NOBLE EIGHT-FOLD PATH AND THE UPRIGHT SEARCH FOR THE TRUE LIGHT:

- ✓ *“Oh monks, what is the noble truth about the way that leads to the end of pain? It’s the eight-fold noble way, o monks, and that is: upright opinion, upright intention, upright words, upright actions, upright ways, upright practice, upright knowledge, upright concentration [...]. Behold, o monk, the one who practices these four pillars of knowledge for seven years; of these two fruits, one fruit follows: either wisdom about the visible elements of the world, or knowledge of an existence without return.”* (CANONE BUDDHISTA, *Discorsi lunghi* (Dīgha Nikaaya), XXII *Satipatthana Suttanta, n.19-22, La base della consapevolezza*, a cura di Frola Eugenio, Ediz. Laterza, Bari 1961, pp. 628. 667 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

--- Unlike Buddha himself, who could not have fully encountered Jesus since He had not yet entered into history, a true Buddhist – if he is truly upright – will finally find the true illumination: namely, Jesus, the true Light of the Cosmos (cf. *John 8:12*), the greatest grace; for 400 years before Buddha our beloved David wrote, “the Lord is a sun and shield; He concedes grace and glory and does not refuse the good to those who walk with uprightness” (cf. *Ps [83]:12*).

#### MIDDLE SUTRAS (IN SUTTA PITAKA)

##### BUDDHA IS NEITHER GOD, NOR A SEMI-GOD, ETC.; HE IS THE ILLUMINATED ONE, NOT THE LIGHT

- ✓ --- **MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA:** “Who are you? (a Brahman asked him) - Are you a god? Are you a spirit, Are you a prophet, Are you an angel, Are you a type of devil?’ He answered in his human wisdom: ‘I am not a divine being, nor a semi-god, nor a spirit, nor a human being; I am Buddha’, that is, the illuminated one. Then, before the perplexity of his disciples and the people, he continued by comparing his personality to the lotus flowers, saying: ‘As a blue, red or white lotus germinates in the mud and, once it has reached the surface of the water, finds itself spotlessly dry from the water, so I, having been born and raised in this world, have overcome the world and live spotless of the world. Therefore, Brahman, I am Buddha’ (that is, the illuminated one). It is interesting to note – as some scholars explain – that the noble lotus flower, in order to rise beyond the surface and open itself and blossom, needs at least one ray from the sun and therefore a ray of light that comes from outside itself. Anthropologically, therefore, the illumination of Buddha is not the fruit of human strength, but comes from a supernatural intervention.” (MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA, III, 6, in: JAE-SUK LEE, *Il pellegrinaggio del Buddhismo verso una Realtà maggiore. Avatamsaka sūtra del Buddhismo Mahāyāna*, in ANCONA GIOVANNI [ed.], *Avvento di Dio-esodo dell'uomo. Il pellegrinaggio della fede*, Ediz. Vivere In, Roma 2000, p. 87 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

--- Therefore, as we have heard from Buddha himself and from someone who is an expert in the matter, Buddha is not God, nor the Son of God, much less the Light of the world, but only someone who was raised towards the light. Jesus, on the other hand, is the Light of the world who descends from heaven to illuminate those who were in darkness (cf. *Luke 1:79; Matt 4:16*) and lead them gradually to himself.

**IF YOUR MIND IS FREE IN EVERY SENSE, YOU WILL NO LONGER RETURN TO THE CYCLE OF BIRTH AND AGING:**

- ✓ --- **DHAMMAPADA:** *“Abandon the things of the past, abandon the things to come, abandon the things that are in between, the present, when it tends towards the other shore of being. – If your mind is free in every sense, you will no longer return to the cycle of rebirth and aging!”* (CANONE BUDDHISTA. *Discorsi brevi, Dhammapada*, n. 346, a cura di Pio Filippini - Ronconi, Ediz. UTET, Torino 2004, pp. 624-625 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

**HE WHO IS WITHOUT STAIN... HAS REACHED HIS FINAL BODY, HE IS THE GREAT MAN:**

- ✓ --- **DHAMMAPADA:** *“The one who has reached the consummation of existence, who no longer fears, whose thirst [for pleasures and evil desires] has disappeared, who is without stain, who has severed the goad of existence: this is the final body of such a one [with which he is clothed]... he has reached his final body, he will be called the Great Sage and the Great Man!”* (Cf. *Ibidem*, nn.351-352ss, p. 141 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

**THE GREAT MAN, BECAUSE OF HIS REPEATED ACTION, ROSE BLESSEDLY INTO THE BLESSED WORLD:**

- ✓ *“He [the Great Man], as a result of this action of his, by accumulating it, repeating it, abounding with it – with the dissolution of the body after death, blessedly rose into the blessed world [...] Having passed there, having reached this state, he had this sign of a great man... And because of this work of his, he reached the divine!”* (Cf. CANONE BUDDHISTA. *Discorsi lunghi (Diigha Nikaaya)*, XXX *Lakkhana Suttanta*, I *segni di un grande uomo*, n. 3-5, a cura di Eugenio Frola, Ediz. Laterza, Bari 1961, pp. 890-891 [unpublished translation by pfgsm])

## Teaching of the Catholic Church

### POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

**CONCILIAR DECLARATION ON BUDDHISM**

- ✓ --- **VATICAN COUNCIL II (1962 - 1965):** *“Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing “ways,” comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites [...].The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.”* (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, n. 2)

--- JAE SUK LEE says that in the Buddhist doctrine the law of Cause and Effect (from *Pratītyasamutpāda* [= dependent origin]), especially in the running *Hīna-yāna* (little machine), is considered an eternal truth by means of which all phenomena can be explained. (Cf. JAE SUK LEE, in: Tesi di Licenza *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 53).

--- For ALBERTO ODONE the law of Cause and Effect in Buddhism has an objective value. It is necessary, therefore, to search for that which favors progress in the journey of spiritual purification in order to be saved from a negative effect. (Cf. ALBERTO ODONE, in: Tesi di Licenza *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 53).

--- For ROMANO GUARDINI Buddha shows the Way that subsists even without him...; Christianity, on the other hand, is constituted by Jesus, a historical Personality that determines everything (Cf. ROMANO GUARDINI, in: *Licentiate Thesis, La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 57).

--- GUARDINI, in summary – as Prof. Schütz made note to us – would say that, differently from the logic of the claims of other religions, Christianity – with the figure of Christ – incarnates the Truth, contains it, and makes it present in an active way! (Cf. ROMANO GUARDINI, in: Tesi di Licenza di Fr. V.V., *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo*, A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 57).

## 6. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for TAOISTS?

### TAO-TSANG

#### TAO-TE-CHING (RELIGIOUS TAOISM)

- ✓ **Lao-tzu:** *“Eliminate profit and there will no longer be thieves and brigands [...]. Embrace the rough Wood!”*  
(TAO TE CING, n. 19)
- ✓ **Lao-tzu:** *“The world has an origin, which is considered the mother of the world [...]. Entrust yourself to the mother: until death your person will not be in danger. Close the opening, bar the doors: until the end your person will not run dry. Open the openings, increase your doing: until the end your person will have no salvation.”* (TAO TE CING, n. 52)

#### CHUANG-TZU (PHILOSOPHICAL TAOISM)

- ✓ **Chuang-tzu:** *“When one follows the Tao [the Way] in the world, he [the Taoist] will prosper together with all creation [...]; he will cultivate virtues and [...] after a thousand years, having had his fill of this world, he will go and ascend among the immortals; he will mount the white clouds and reach the dominion of the Emperor of Heaven where afflictions will not touch him and where people are forever freed from disaster.”*  
(CHUANG-TZU V, XII)

### Teaching of the Catholic Church

#### POSTMODERN (CONTEMPORARY) AGE

##### CONCILIAR DECLARATION ON TAOISM

- ✓ --- **St. JOHN PAUL II** (Pope from 1978 - † 2005): *“Asia is also the cradle of the world’s major religions [...including] Taoism [...]. The Church has the deepest respect for these traditions and seeks to engage in sincere dialogue with their followers. The religious values they teach await their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.”*  
(JOHN PAUL II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, 6 November 1999, n. 6)

--- **JAE SUK LEE** says that the ultimate aim of Taoism is union with the Tao. In Taoism, salvation would be union with the Tao, or rather with ‘the all’ (Cf. JAE SUK LEE, in: Licentiate Thesis, *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 60).

--- **JAE SUK LEE** says that the Tao is expressed as mother, insofar as it is the First Cause from which all beings have originated. (Cf. JAE SUK LEE, in: Licentiate Thesis, *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 60).

--- **MALEK** says that Taoism is the only truly Chinese religion that concentrates on salvation in a religious sense. In it, thought (doctrine and meditation) and action (ritual) are always turned towards redemption. (Cf. MALEK, in: Licentiate Thesis, *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 60).

--- **MALEK** says that in Taoism man abstains from every conscious aspiration: “wu-wei”, non-involvement. (This consists in the non-involvement of one’s own will, acting instead in the natural will of the Tao: as water does not rise upwards but descends; it does not make things dirty but quenches thirst; it is not complicated but simple.) Therefore this is non-involvement with respect to ourselves, in order to reach the Tao, or rather the Way (of Life), with an intuitive (meditative) and at the same time ritual journey. When man in the end has reached union with the Tao and therefore the Way (given that Tao means Way), he has reached his aim. (Cf. MALEK, in: Licentiate Thesis, *La salvezza (nelle fonti) delle religioni orientali a confronto con il cristianesimo* di Fr. V.V., A.A. PUL 2012-2013, p. 60).

## 7. WHY BE CHRISTIANS? With respect for CONFUCIANISTS?

### THE 4 BOOKS (The natural way of man as personal and social salvation)

#### THE ANALECTS

- ✓ --- **CONFUCIUS:** *"If you govern, [...] desire what is good and the people will be good [or docile]: for when the wind blows over the grass, it will certainly bend!"* (THE FOUR BOOKS OF CONFUCIUS, *The Analects*, n. 297).
- ✓ --- **CONFUCIUS:** *"Three things are which the wise man has reverential fear: he fears the decree of Heaven, he fears great men, he fears wise words. The vulgar man does not know the decree of Heaven and does not fear it, he is irreverent towards great men and makes fun of the words of the wise."*  
(THE FOUR BOOKS OF CONFUCIUS, *The Analects*, n. 428)

#### THE INVARIABLE MEANS

- ✓ --- **CONFUCIUS:** *"The courses of the seasons and of the stars happen together without either of them falling into disorder. This is what makes heaven and earth so great! [So, too] only the supreme holiness under heaven is capable of the intelligent illumination and the insightful wisdom which agree to guide the people."* (THE FOUR BOOKS OF CONFUCIUS, *The Invariable Means*, nn. 30-33).  
*For Confucians, the moral way of man is the restoration of the way to heaven.*
- ✓ --- **MENCIUS:** *"He who conforms himself to Heaven will live; he who opposes himself to Heaven will perish"* (I QUATTRO LIBRI DI CONFUCIO, *Meng-Tzu [=Mencio]*, Libro IV, 68)
- ✓ --- **MENCIUS:** *"Wan Chang says: 'Yao gave the empire to Shun, did he not?' 'No' replied Mencius. 'The Son of Heaven cannot give the empire to a man'. Wang Chang answered, 'Very well then, but Shun had the empire. Who gave it to him?' Mencius replied, 'Heaven gave it to him'. Wan Chang continued, 'If Heaven gave it to him, did heaven decree it explicitly?' Mencius answered, 'Heaven does not speak. It manifests its decree with the personal behavior and public activity [of its chosen one]."*  
(THE FOUR BOOKS OF CONFUCIUS, *Meng-Tzu [Mencius]*, Book V, 127)

## Teaching of the Catholic Church

### POSTMODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) AGE

#### CONCILIAR DECLARATION ON CONFUCIANISM

- ✓ --- **INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION:** *"As for Confucius (551-479 B.C.), "Master Kong", he attempts, on the occasion of a period of profound crisis, to restore order by respect for rites, founded on filial piety that must be at the heart of all social life. [...] in which the ritualized relation (the li), which places man into the natural order, [...] The Fathers of the Church, however, do not purely and simply adopt the Stoic doctrine. They modify and develop it. On the one hand, the anthropology of biblical inspiration, which sees man as the imago Dei – the full truth of which is manifested in Christ – forbids reducing the human person to a simple element of the cosmos: called to communion with the living God, the person transcends the whole cosmos while integrating himself in it. On the other hand, the harmony of nature and reason no longer rests on an immanentist vision of a pantheistic cosmos but on the common reference to the transcendent wisdom of the Creator."* (INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *In Search of a Universal Ethic: A New Look at the Natural Law*, nn. 15, 26, 113-114, 116.)

--- **MALÈK** says that Chinese thought is certainly addressed to earthly things, but this attention to earthly things does not exclude the divine, the transcendent and salvation (Cf. MALEK, in: License-Thesis of Friar VV, *Salvation (in the sources) of Eastern religions in comparison with Christianity*, AA PUL 2012-2013, pg. 63)

--- **MALÈK** also says that Confucianism is to be compared to a way that anyone can travel if he wishes... The destination one reaches on this way would be simply the attainment of the fullness of human maturity. The means to achieve full humanity (i.e. "a human salvation") is the knowledge of what is right and the practice of what one has learned in order to reach perfection of oneself (Cf. Malek, in: License-Thesis of Friar VV, *Salvation (in the sources) of Eastern religions in comparison with Christianity*, AA PUL 2012-2013, pg. 63)

--- Only Mencius (372-289 B.C.) - **MALEK** continues - created or resumed the tradition of the periodical return of a savior in the world. But in Neo-Confucianism all hopes of a redemption from beyond were blotted out. (Cf. Malek, in: License-Thesis of Friar VV, *Salvation (in the sources) of Eastern religions in comparison with Christianity*, AA PUL 2012-2013, pg. 64)

--- As the new Confucians have a considerable openness to discussion, **TU WEI MING** starts with a positive approach that could be the following: "What does it mean for a Confucian to be religious?" (Cf. TU WEI MING, in: License-Thesis of Friar VV, *Salvation (in the sources) of Eastern religions in comparison with Christianity*, AA PUL 2012-2013, pg. 64)

## Personal Experiences

- ✓ *An experience of evangelizing about the infallible judgment of God in regards to religions...*
  - ✓ *The story of a "flash" question at Assisi about the difference between the "universal" religions...*
- 

## CONCLUSION

- ✓ Given that we've spoken about salvation in the other religions, we want to ask in the end: "saved" – from what?
- ✓ To explain it briefly, in less technical language, ALL RELIGIONS (if they are truly followed with all one's heart and with honest sincerity) are many paths that lead *towards* God, but not right *into* God (cf. *John 14:6b*). It's as if they lead up to the peak of a mountain, from which THE ONLY WAY or Road that leads right up into God departs (cf. *Acts 4:12*); the name of this Road is Jesus Christ, Who is the only one who can say (and has said), in His own right: "Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ" – "I am the way, the truth and the life," – "and no one comes to the Father except through me!" (cf. *John 14.6*). With good reason God already affirmed of Himself, in the Old: "Turn to me, all you countries of the earth, and you will be saved, because I am God; there is no other!" (cf. *Is 45:22*)

## IN SUMMARY:

- ✓ In the final analysis, to sum it all up after everything we have said regarding salvation in the Oriental religions compared to Christianity, IF SOMEONE ASKED ME, "why are you Christian and not a Jew, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian or Muslim?" I WOULD ANSWER, WITH CHARITY: "Because only Christ (as well as giving me many signs of certainty) has risen from the dead, while the all others (with all due respect!) are dead." Therefore: only a few words are needed for those who use their intelligence well! Amen!
- 

**NB.** In regards to all the passages that we did not read or explain: if you are interested in having a deeper knowledge of the topic, according to God, the Church, and experience, you can make an appointment with us at the end of the catechesis or by email and we will do what we can (even come to your house, if possible!). All we have to do is agree on the details and gather some people who are thirsty for the truth. You can find the email at: [www.poorfriars.net](http://www.poorfriars.net). – with Christian affection, the "Little Friars of Jesus and Mary"

## CONCEPT MAP for INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE <sup>3</sup>

With passages from Scriptures/holy books which vary according to the interreligious or theme:

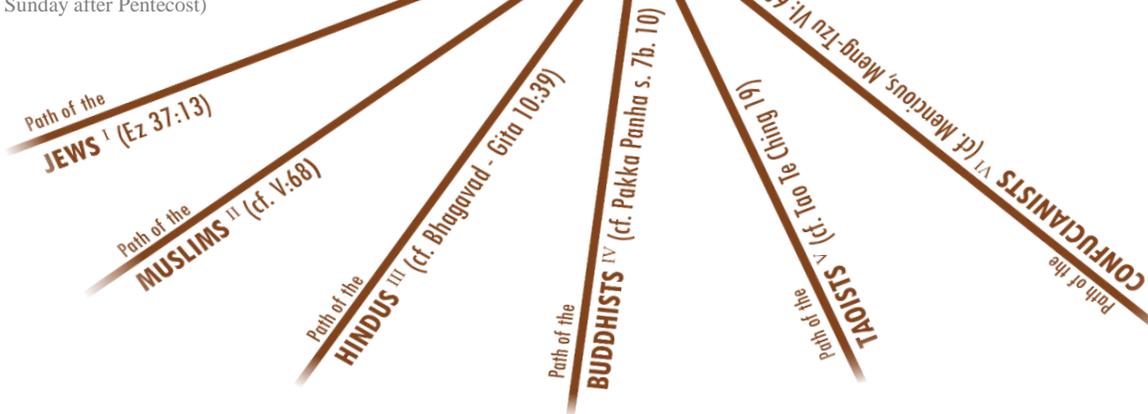
**“May your Way may be known on earth,  
your Salvation among all nations!” (cf. Ps 67:2)**

Pope Benedict XVI says: “The way of dialogue, on which the Second Vatican Council happily set out, should certainly be followed firmly and consistently. But this path of dialogue, while so necessary, must not make us forget our duty to rethink and to highlight just as forcefully the main and indispensable aspects of our Christian identity.”  
(BENEDICT XVI, Wednesday general audience, 11 October 2006)

“The history of salvation culminates in Jesus Christ, and thus he is also the true discriminating point in the dialogue with other religions.”  
(BENEDICT XVI, Wednesday general audience, 8 November 2006)

“PATH in Latin is ‘semita,’ as if to say ‘semis-iter,’ partway, because ‘semitis’ means ‘half.’”  
(ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, Sermons, IX Sunday after Pentecost)

“Thus were the **PATHS** of those on earth made straight, and people learned what pleases you, and were saved by Wisdom” (Wis 9:18) – who is Jesus Christ!  
(cf. 1Cor 1:24)



**I.** God says to the Jews: “you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and make you come up out of them, my people!” (Ezek 37:13)

**II.** Jesus says in the Koran: “Oh people of the Book! You will do nothing good until you put into practice the Torah and the Gospel”\* (Cf. KORAN, Sura V,68, traduzione a cura di A. Bausani, Ed. Radici BUR, Milan, 20094 [unpublished translation by pfsgm]) (\*Another translation: “You are founded on nothing until you compare yourselves with the Torah and the Gospel” (cf. S. V,68 Traduzione Testo-Fronte G. MANDEL)

**III.** The god krsna supposedly said: “I am the seed [...] of all beings, also this am I; [...] only partially have I revealed to you the unfolding of my power!” (Cf. (BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ, *Il canto del glorioso Signore*, X, 38-39, a cura di Piano Stefano, Ediz. San Paolo, Milano 1994, glossario, p. 201 [unpublished translation by pfsgm]). Here we see the ‘Logos Spermaticos’, the ‘semina verbi’ of St. Justin, that manifests itself in every culture and likewise in every religion (such as this one). We also clearly see the insufficient nature of the ‘extra-Christian’ revelation, when we read that not everything has been revealed; but when the Holy Spirit comes to us, He will reveal all the Truth (cf. John 16:13), at least the Saving Truth – which is to say, He revealed it at Pentecost more than 2000 years ago.

**IV.** “Sakko, king of the gods, with his retinue... of thirty-three gods... said: ‘I am the disciple of the Sublime... until the final and total illumination’ – and then he said to the Sublime (three times successively): ‘Honor to the holy and perfect Sublime... Honor to the holy and perfect Sublime... Honor to the holy and perfect Sublime!’” (Cf. CANONE BUDDHISTA. *Discorsi lunghi* (Diigha Nikaaya), XXI, Sakapana Suttanta, *Le domande di Sakko re degli dei*, nn. I,8. II,7.10, a cura di Frola Eugenio, Ediz. Laterza, Bari 1961, pp. 637. 640 [unpublished translation by pfsgm]). So here, too, the gods (or the “god of gods”) of the Buddhists, according to the words of Buddha, are illuminated by the thrice-Holy One! (Cf. Is 6:3).

**V.** The one the Taoists considered divine says: “Embrace the rough wood, lessen your personal interests and passions!” (TAO TE CHING, n. 19 in: TAO, *I grandi testi antichi*, traduzione dal cinese di Tomassini Fausto, Ediz. UTET, Torino 2003 pp. 5-7 [unpublished translation by pfsgm]). For us, embracing this wood means embracing the wood of the cross of Jesus, for the redemption of as many souls as possible for the Resurrection. Embracing the Tao or being united to the Tao (which means “way”) means, for us, walking in the true Way who is Jesus; for us, to embrace the way is to walk in Jesus (cf. 1John 2:6).

**VI.** Confucius’s disciple, Mencius, says: “He who conforms himself to Heaven will live; he who opposes himself to Heaven will perish!” (I QUATTRO LIBRI DI CONFUCIO, *Meng-Tzu [=Mencio]*, Libro IV, 68 [unpublished translation by pfsgm]).

**VII.** Jesus says: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (John 6:51): “I am the resurrection and the life [says the Lord]; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live” (John 11:25). “I am the light of the world,” says Jesus (John 8:12), so “walk while you have the light, so that darkness may not overcome you” (John 12:35)... “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6) – except, indeed, through Jesus, the only Heavenly Way which leads all the way to the Eternal Father Who is in heaven. And so I wish you all a bon voyage on the journey of salvation, in all uprightness and intellectual honesty! – Unless, of course, anyone would prefer to close their eyes to all this light and therefore die for ever or lengthen their journey of purification through the fiery pains of Purgatory. But we wish the best and work for the good of all, in what I hope is a luminous and concrete interreligious dialogue! Amen!

<sup>3</sup> Appendix of the *Dissertatio ad Licentiam*, of friar V.V.: “La salvezza nelle religioni Orientali a confronto col Cristianesimo” (“Salvation in the Oriental Religions as compared with Christianity”).