

ANSWERING BASIC QUESTIONS OF FAITH "FROM ZERO TO THE EUCHARIST"

Taken from the Italian series presented by Friar Volantino.



EVERY LAST THURSDAY
of EACH MONTH at 6.30 pm
BEGINNING THURSDAY 27th OF MARCH

OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY CATHOLIC CHURCH
8594 EAST MAIN ST. HOUMA LA.
vocations@poorfriars.net

Catechesis No. 4

WHY BE CATHOLIC?

Respecting Orthodox, Protestant-Evangelicals, Jehovah W., etc...

Why listen to Mary the Mother of Jesus? - 9.

To gear up ones pace towards heaven.

Why recognize the Body of Jesus
in the Living Eucharist? - 8.

Why feed on the Eucharist? - 7.

Why confess oneself with a Catholic Priest? - 6.

When God sees our hearts all the same?

Why go to Church? - 5.

Rather than pray at home.

Why be Catholic? - 4.

Respecting Orthodox, Protestants, and Jehovah's W., etc.

Why be Christian? - 3.

Respecting Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, etc.

Why and How to trust the S. Scripture? - 2.

Why and How to believe in God? - 1.

Why is there Suffering? - 0.



In these evenings, we'll read and try to explain some passages of the

- **Word of God (AT, NT)**
- **Teaching of the Catholic Church (from the Fathers of Contemporaneity)**
- **Personal experiences ...**

Introduction:

- "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (cf. Jn 14,6).
But someone could say, also I believe and follow Jesus, why be Catholic?
- "To Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph3,21).
- But what does the word "generation" intend?
- "They went out from us, but they were not really of our number; if they had been, they would have remained with us." (1Jn 2,19)
- "I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt 16,18-19).
- "They also, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again". (Rm11,23)

Orthodox

- (historical notes). 2
- The figure of the Petrine Primate? 2
- True Sacraments or certain Sacraments? 3

Protestants/Evangelicals

- (historical hints). 3
- Only faith without deeds? 4
- Only the Word without Tradition? 4
- Only Grace or also Good Will? 4
- Is the intercession of the Saints and our Lady wrong? 5
- Is Jesus' presence in the Eucharist permanent or not? 5
- Is the Hierarchy of the Church necessary? 6
- Is celibacy necessary? 6
- Predestination of the elect and the damned? 7

Jehova's Witness

- (historical notes). 7
- Do the prophecies that haven't happened have a little or great weight? 8
- Statues or no statues? (topic that has been discussed also with the Protestants) 8
- Gesù è solo Figlio di Dio ?, o è anche Dio ? 19
- Si può o non si può donare il sangue? 19
- Si può andare di casa in casa o no? 20
- Cross - or - Pole?, where has Jesus died? 10
- Trinity yes or no? 11
- What is the name of God, Yhwh or Yehowah? 11
- Will Paradise be on this earth or in Heaven? 11
- Does purgatory exist yes or no? (a topic that has been also discussed with Protestants) 12
- Does hell exist yes or no? (are there people in it ?) 12
- Ma i malvagi risorgeranno o si dissolveranno? 24
- Who are those who are on the right or on the left of the Lord? 14
- Did Jesus have brothers yes or no? (a topic that has been also discussed with Protestants) 14
- View of the Bible and of the PCB – about far-fetched interpretation of Scripture

Mormons

- (historical notes). 16
- Do they have the laying on of hands of the Apostles? 16
- Polygamy yes or no?, according to Revelation or according to the State? 17
- Did Jesus during his earthly life have wives yes or no? 18
- Are there any other public revelations further than the canonical books of the Bible? 18

ORTHODOX

Brief Historical outline...

The Eastern Schism (1054)

- The mutual distrust also grew with the battle of influence between the Byzantines and Latins in Southern Italy. Several years before the schism the diplomatic relations between Rome and Byzantium were absent and they did not recite the name of the pope during the liturgical offices.
- In 1052, Michael Cerularius, patriarch of Byzantium at the time (from 1043-1058), closed churches in his jurisdiction in which they celebrated the Latin rite. In 1053, the Eastern Church suggests the impossibility of its union with the Church of Rome by forwarding various topics including his rejection of the use of unleavened bread during Mass, the suppression of the Alleluia during Lent, and etc ...
- To clarify things Pope Leo IX sent the legate Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida to Byzantium, as well as the Chancellor of the Roman Church Frederick of Lorraine and the Archbishop Pietro of Amalfi. The patriarch excluded them from his communion. Then [...] they put down a bull of excommunication against the patriarch on the altar of the church of Hagia Sophia (16th July 1054), then leaving the church, they shook off the dust from their sandals according to the word of Jesus and left. Michael Cerularius summoned later a synodal condemnation of the work of the papal legates, accusing the church of Rome of many errors among which also the addition of the Filioque in the Creed and the mention of the Holy Spirit at the end of the Gloria in excelsis, the prohibition of marriage for priests and etc.. Some Orthodox theologians also argue that Jesus had brothers coming from a first marriage of St. Joseph.
- The first resolution to the differences in the 2nd Council of Lyon (1274) and the successive refusal of the Orthodox.
- The second resolution of the differences in the Council of Florence (1439)
- Further refusals of the Orthodox and the siege of Constantinople (1453).

a. Word of God

Old Testament

The figure of the Petrine Primate?

1. "There shall be one shepherd for them all; they shall live by my statutes and carefully put into practice my decrees"! (**Ex 37,24**).

New Testament

The Petrine Primate

2. "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". (**Jn 10,16b**). And who is this Shepherd of which Jesus speaks of?
3. "Peter [...]. Be Shepherd to my sheep!" (**Jn 21,16**). In the Biblical Greek Text "BGT" – very similar to the "Codex Vaticanus" of Jn 21,16, the word "ποιμανε" [an imperative present active verb 2nd person singular, pronounced as "Poi-main"] is usually presented to us a "tend to", when more precisely, it should read as "**be shepherd**".
4. "I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (**Mt 16,18**).

b. Teachings of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

One must stay in communion with the Church of Rome

5. St. IRENAEUS of LEONE (Bishop and Martyr, 130 - † 202) : "It's with the Roman Church, that all the other Churches, and all the faithful must stay in agreement, because of the Authority of its origin" (**St. IRENAEUS**, *Against Heresies*, book III, Chap. 3, par. 2).

The Bishop of Rome as primate also over the Bishop of Constantinople.

6. 1st COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (381): "The bishop of Constantinople will have the primate of honor after the bishop of Rome". (1st COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *Can. 3*), and that also comes confirmed in the COUNCIL OF Chalcedon of 451.

Medieval Era

Universal Primate of the Bishop of Rome

7. COUNCIL OF FLORENCE (1439): "We define that other than the holy apostolic see and the Roman Pontiff have the primate over all of the earth; that the same Roman Pontiff is the successor of the blessed Peter prince of the apostles and true vicar of Christ, head of all of the church and father and master of all Christians; that to him, in the blessed Peter, the full power to tend to, uphold and govern the universal church has been given to, just as the rest is said in the Acts of the of the ecumenical councils and in the sacred canons" (**COUNCIL OF FLORENCE**, 6th SESSION)

Modern Era

8. 1st VATICAN COUNCIL (1869-1870) : "If therefore, someone will say that it is not for the institution of the same Christ Lord, that is divine right, that the blessed Peter always has successors in the primate over all the church; or that the Roman pontiff is not the successor of the blessed Peter in this primate: let them be anathema" (1st VATICAN COUNCIL, *Dogmatic Constitution, Pastor Aeternus*, Chap. II, paragraph. 3)

What authority do Bishops who are not under the authority of the Pope have?

9. 2nd VATICAN COUNCIL (1963-1965): "But the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is understood together with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter as its head. The pope's power of primacy over all, both pastors and faithful..." (2nd VATICAN COUNCIL, *Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium*, No. 22)

c. Personal Experience

10. "The story of the Orthodox who a Catholic Friar made notice that an Orthodox Patriarch does not pronounce his statements for the whole world as the Pope does in the Catholic Church."

True Sacraments or certain Sacraments?

a. Word of God

New Testament

11. "Who eats my body and drinks my blood has eternal life!" (**Jn 6,54**). But administered by who?
12. "I will give you things that are holy..., those that are certain!" (**Jn 13,34 b**). But in what Christian Confession?

b. Teachings of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

13. SAINT IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (Bishop and Martyr, † 107): “Let the Eucharist that be realized under the Bishop or he whom he’s given the office be retained -certain- oh brothers” (SAINT IGNATIUS of ANTIOCH, Letter to the Smyrnaeans, 8: PG 5, 713)

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

14. JOHN PAUL II (POPE 1978 -†2005): “Let the Eucharist that be realized under the Bishop or he whom he’s given the office be retained -certain- (says Saint Ignatius of Antioch) oh brothers’ and likewise (continues John Paul II), every celebration of the Eucharist that is done in union with not only one’s bishop but also the Pope”. (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter: Ecclesia de Eucharistia, No. 39 b, in: All the Encyclicals of John Paul II, Edit. LEV, Vatican city 20052, pgs. 1620-1622).

c. Personal experience

15. “The vision of a certain Catholic we know; of Jesus and the Catholic communion or the sword (of their own scriptures)”.

PROTESTANTS and EVANGELISTS

Brief historical outline

The founder: Martin Luther (1483-1546) In 1517 Luther affixed his 95 theses’ to the door of the church of the castle of Wittenberg.

Doctrinal Points: - He affirmed that to be saved, all that is necessary is: only faith and no deeds; only the Scripture and no Tradition (for him, “the Bible and individual interpretation of the Word of God was the only authority valid); only grace and no good will.

- According to him, one needs to abolish the hierarchy, the magisterium, ministerial priesthood (the sacraments, done in exception for baptism and the meal), reverence of Our Lady and of the Saints.

The excommunication:

- In 1518 Pope Leo X invited Luther to present himself to Rome, but he refused the invitation, appealing himself to a general Council.

- In 1520 Pope Leo X condemns the erroneous doctrine of Luther (in the papal bull “Exsurge”)

- In 1521 before the refusal of Luther to subdue himself, the Pope excommunicates him.

- The princes of Germany defend Luther (also for political reasons: desiring independence in their relationship from the emperor Charles the Vth and the Pope)

Other doctrinal points on Protestants: Protestants and Evangelicals also dispute:

- The existence of purgatory.

- The Devotion to sacred images and statues.

Luther’s written words towards the end of his life:

“Do you think that all the masters of the past didn’t know? Maybe our fathers were all fools? Only you’ve been inspired by the Holy Spirit in these last times? God would’ve let his people err for so many years?.. How many times my heart has trembled, it has punished me and reproved me with its unique and very strong argument. Only you’ve been wise? All the others would have been wrong and would have made mistake for such a long time? And if you were wrong and drag with you many people into error, how many will be damned in all eternity? (M. LUTHER, Werke, Edit. Official of Weimar of 1883, in: LEMONNIER MICHEL, Storia della Chiesa. From Pentecost to our days, Edit. Isg, Vicenza 2002 2, pg. 320).

Various breakoffs that then followed the protestant reform (cf. FAMILY TREE of those separated from the Catholic Church):

The Churches that derive from the Protestant reform of the XVI century are generally called Evangelical Churches (that is all Protestants).

Amongst them different branched have been formed:

- the Lutherans, are different confessional communities that (in their own state, regional and ecclesial articulations or books) refer to Martin Luther

- I Luterani, sono varie comunità confessionali che (nelle loro articolazioni statali, regionali, ecclesiali o libere) si rifanno a

- The communities of faith that gather the doctrine of Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and of Jean Calvin (1509-1564) are called “reformed” (in Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and France) and “Presbyterian” in the Anglo-Saxon countries (England and the United States).

- Puritanism derives from Calvinism, that developed in England, Scotland and North America. Unlike the Anglicans, that give great importance to the worship, the Puritans give priority to a strict personal morality.

- From Puritanism derived Independents, Baptists and Quakers.

- Also the preaching of Philip Jacob Spener contributed to spread the evangelical movement, he was the founder of German Pietism, and also the teaching of John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder of Methodism, which is derived from an Association founded in Oxford in 1729 by some religious Anglicans. Methodism is today one of the largest free churches in the United States.

- In the 2nd half of the nineteenth century various groups called Pentecostals, influenced by Methodism and by Baptism, broke away from the American movements of sanctification. They attribute their emotional-enthusiastic devotion to the Holy Spirit, recalling the experience of Pentecost (Acts 2).

- Founded in 1831/2 by the Baptist William Miller (USA), Adventists are waiting for the end of the world...

- You’ll find all the other denominations at the end of this file or at the end of these systematically ordered notes in the “Family tree of Churches and Denominations.

ONLY FAITH WITHOUT DEEDS?

a. Word of God

New Testament

16. “Faith without deeds is dead!” (Jm 2,26).

17. “Wrath and fury to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness. Yes, affliction and distress will come upon every human being who does evil, Jew first and then Greek. But there will be glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, Jew first and then Greek.” (Rm 2,8-10).

18. “For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.” (Eph 2,10).

b. Teachings of the Catholic Church

Medieval Era

19. ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA (1195 - † 1231): “Preaching is effective.. when deeds speak.. we’re rich in words and lack in deeds.. Let’s do Deeds or bear Fruit that are worthy of Conversion (cf. Lk 3, 8 - 9; Mt 3, 8 - 10), otherwise we will be cursed by the Lord, because He cursed the fig tree full of leaves but without fruit! (that is, only words without deeds)”. (Cf. ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, Office of Read. 13th June).

Modern Era

20. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): *"It is absolutely true to affirm that faith without deeds is dead and useless". (COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session VI, Chap. VII.).*
21. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): *"Human beings [...] are renewed, as the Apostle says, day by day.. through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified, as it is written; He that is just, shall continue to do just deeds; and again, Don't wait to be justified until you die; and also, Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (COUNCIL OF TRENT, VITH session, Chap. X.).*

ONLY THE WORD WITHOUT ECCLESIAL TRADITION?

a. Word of God

New Testament

22. Yes it's true that it's written: *"I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, so that you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written" (1Cor 4,6)*
23. But it's also written: *"Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours." (2Thes 2,15) and,*
24. *"We instruct you, brothers, in the name of (our) Lord Jesus Christ, to shun any brother who conducts himself in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition they received from us." (2Thes 3, 6) and,*
25. *"there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation" (2Pt 1,20)*

b. Teachings of the Catholic Church

Modern Era

26. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): *"No one, relying on his own skill, shall,--in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, bending the sacred Scripture to his own views, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church (has always) interpreted it, whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures, or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers". (COUNCIL OF TRENT, IVTH session).*

ONLY GRACE OR ALSO GOOD WILL?

a. Word of God

New Testament

27. *"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Lk 2,14)*
28. *"For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ... that your eager willingness may be matched by your completion of it out of what you have". (2Cor8,9-12)*

b. Teachings of the Catholic Church

Modern Era

29. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): *"If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.". (COUNCIL OF TRENT, VITH session Canon 9).*

Is Jesus' Presence in the Eucharist permanent or not?

a. Word of God

New Testament

30. Jesus said, *"Take and eat; this is my Body.. this is my Blood of the covenant" (Mt 26,26-28).* He says this is my Body, this is my blood, but he doesn't say that it is such only for a while... Indeed the same Scripture explains:
31. *"Blood of an eternal covenant!" (Heb 13,20).*
32. *"Because my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink!" (Jn 6,55).Eternally! (cf. Heb 13,20).*

b. Teachings of the Catholic Church

Modern era

33. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): *"If someone says that after the Consecration there is no Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, but only in the use of it, while one receives it and not before or after; and that after Communion the real body of the Lord does not remain in the hosts or in the consecrated parts, that are kept safe and remain, let him be anathema." (COUNCIL OF TRENT, XIIIth Session, Canons on the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, 4).*

c. Personal Experiences

34. *"The story of the little girl who wanted to pray in the Church where Jesus is".*

Is the intercession of the Saints and our Lady wrong? (This topic is debated also by the Jehovah's Witness and so on..)

a. Word of God

Old Testament

35. The Lord says: *"If they were prophets, if the word of the Lord were with them, then they would intercede with the Lord of hosts" (Jer 27,18).*
36. *"You (Moses) speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die." (Ex 20,19);*
37. *"Since you are a pious woman, pray for us" (Jd 8, 31);*
38. *"Intercede for us with the Lord... Perhaps the Lord will act for us in accord with his wonderful works by making him withdraw from us." (Jer 21,2);*
39. *"All the people said to Samuel : "Pray to the Lord your God for us, your servants, that we may not ..." (1Sam 12,19);*
40. *"All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers". (Act 1,19) (Remembering that St. Paul was persecuting Christ whilst he aggressed the Christians "Why do you persecute me?" Act 26,14)*

New Testament

Jesus; head and Body?

41. "There is only one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, Himself human" (1Tm 2,5).
But is Jesus Christ only the Head?, or does he also have the Body that completes in himself that what lacks in the sufferings of the Body?
42. "Now I rejoice – says the Apostle Paul – in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church" (Col 1,24),
43. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.. through us !" (2Cor 5,19-20).
44. "That all might believe through him (John the Baptist)" (Jn 1,7).

Our Lady

45. "A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth... She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne... Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus." (Rev 12,1-2.5.17);
Therefore: Are you allied with that woman? If so, then you possess the true witness of Jesus. Maybe you're not allied with this woman? Then you must be careful, maybe you're about to be allied with the dragon... (with all due respect).
46. Mary interceded for the miracle of Wine: (cf. Jn 2,3).
47. Before everything was fulfilled, Jesus said to the - disciple -: "Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home." (Jn 19,26-27). Therefore have you welcomed Mary into your home or in your life? If so, then you're a disciple of Jesus.

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

Christ who intercedes can't the whole Christ (HEAD & BODY – cf. Col 1.18.24)? (cf. Post Modern Era – Only Jesus Saves?)

48. ST. CLEMENT I (Pope from 88 to † 97): "The head without the feet is nothing, as also the feet without head are nothing. Even the smallest members of our body, are necessary and useful for the whole body; more so all of them submit to the same aim (1 Cor 12, 21)". (ST. CLEMENT Pope, Off. of Read. 23 November)

Our Lady and the Saints intercede for us so far as..

49. ST. JOHN DAMASCENE (Bishop, 650 - † 749): "Above all let's venerate those to whom God has revealed himself. He the only Saint who rests among the saints (cf. Is 57,15) as the Mother of God and all the saints. These are the ones who by their will.. and the help of God, have become similar to God insofar as it was possible for them... they are really called gods (cf. Ps 83,6) not by nature, but.. as red-hot iron is called fire not by nature.. but by participation.. indeed He said : "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lv 19,2)". (Cf. ST. JOHN DAMASCENE, in the Wednesday's Audience 06th May 2009 of Pope B. XVIth)

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

Devotion and intercession to the Saints; yes or no?

50. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: "The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were "put in charge of many things." Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world." (CCC 2683)
51. II VATICAN COUNCIL (1963-1965): "The Church has always believed that the apostles and Christ's martyrs who had given the supreme witness of faith and charity by the shedding of their blood, are closely joined with us in Christ, and she has always venerated them with special devotion, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy angels. The Church has piously implored the aid of their intercession. To these were soon added also those who had more closely imitated Christ's virginity and poverty, and finally others whom the outstanding practice of the Christian virtues and the divine charisms recommended to the pious devotion and imitation of the faithful." (II VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, No. 50)

Is the Hierarchy of the Church necessary?

a. Word of God

Old Testament

52. "The next day Moses sat in judgment for the people, who waited about him from morning until evening. When his father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he inquired, "What sort of thing is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone while all the people have to stand about you from morning till evening?" Moses answered his father-in-law, "The people come to me to consult God. Whenever they have a disagreement, they come to me to have me settle the matter between them and make known to them God's decisions and regulations." "You are not acting wisely," his father-in-law replied. "You will surely wear yourself out, and not only yourself but also these people with you. The task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now, listen to me, and I will give you some advice, that God may be with you. Act as the people's representative before God, bringing to him whatever they have to say. Enlighten them in regard to the decisions and regulations, showing them how they are to live and what they are to do. But you should also look among all the people for able and God-fearing men, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and set them as officers over groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. Let these men render decisions for the people in all ordinary cases. More important cases they should refer to you, but all the lesser cases they can settle themselves. Thus, your burden will be lightened, since they will bear it with you. If you do this, when God gives you orders you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." Moses followed the advice of his father-in-law and did all that he had suggested. He picked out able men from all Israel and put them in charge of the people

as officers over groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. They rendered decisions for the people in all ordinary cases. The more difficult cases they referred to Moses, but all the lesser cases they settled themselves.” (Ex 18, 13-26)

New Testament

Of the Pope:

53. “Peter [...], Tend to my sheep!” (Jn 21,16). In the Biblical Greek Text “BGT” – very similar to the “Codex Vaticanus” of Jn 21,16, the word “ποιμᾶναι” [an imperative present active verb 2nd person singular, pronounced as “Poi-main”) is usually presented to us a “tend to”, when more precisely, it should read as “**be shepherd**”.
54. “Simon (Peter)... you must strengthen your brothers” (Lk 22,32) In the Biblical Greek Text “BGT” – very similar to the “Codex Vaticanus” of Jn 21,16, the word “στήρισον” [an imperative aorist active verb 2nd person singular from στηρίζω pronounced “sterizo”) is usually presented in English as “Established”, when more precisely it should read as “**Confirm**” – just as written in 1Pt 5,10)

Of Bishops:

55. “Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, in which you tend the church of God.. (Act 20:28) In the Biblical Greek Text “BGT” – very similar to the “Codex Vaticanus” of Jn 21,16, the word “ἐπισκόπους” [an accusative masculine plural noun pronounced “episkopos”) is usually presented in English as “Overseers”, which in fact is the true meaning of the word “**Bishop**”

Of Priests:

56. “Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching.” (1Tm 5,17)
57. “For this reason I left you in Crete so that you might set right what remains to be done and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you” (Tt 1,5)

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Modern era

58. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): “If any one saith, that, in the Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy by divine ordination instituted, consisting of bishops, priests, and ministers; let him be anathema” (COUNCIL OF TRENT, XXIIIth Session, Canon on the Sacrament of Holy Orders, Can.6).

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

59. Answer from the CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH: “According to Catholic doctrine, these Communities do not enjoy apostolic succession in the sacrament of Orders, and are, therefore, deprived of a constitutive element of the Church. These ecclesial Communities which, specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood, have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery[19] cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, be called “Churches” in the proper sense.” (Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Responses to some questions regarding certain aspects of the doctrine on the Church).

Is celibacy necessary?

a. Word of God

New Testament

60. He answered, “Not all can accept [this] word, but only those to whom that is granted For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it. (Mt 19,11-12) (cf. Lc20, 34-36).
61. Then Peter said, “We have given up our possessions and followed you.” He said to them, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive (back) an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.” (Lk 18,28-30)
62. “Indeed, I wish everyone to be as I am, but each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. Now to the unmarried and to widows, I say: it is a good thing for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire.” (1Cor 7, 7-9)
“I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband... So then, the one who marries his virgin does well; the one who does not marry her will do better.” (1Cor7, 32-24. 38)

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

63. SYNOD OF ELVIRA (300-303): “the following prohibition to bishops, to priests and to (transitory) deacons has been overall decided: that they abstain from their wives and do not generate children; who would have done so must be distanced from the clerical state!” (SYNOD OF ELVIRA, Can 33 Denzinger 119)

Medieval Era

64. SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA (1195-† 1231) “When Moses (as the book of Exodus recounts, cf. Ex 4, 24-26) took off with his wife and children towards Egypt to go to free the people of Israel, an Angel wanted to kill him; only when he sent his wife and children back did the Angel let him continue... Like so is for priests who pretend to free the people of God from the slavery of the devil, the Lord will face them and kill them if they do not separate from their wife and children” [to serve the Lord fully like St. Peter who called to this ministry, left immediately his wife! Cf. Mt 19, 27-30; Mt 8, 14] (cf. ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, Sermons, Sunday Vth after Pentecost)

Modern era

65. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): “If any one saith, that clerics constituted in sacred orders, or Regulars, who have solemnly professed chastity, are able to contract marriage, and that being contracted it is valid, notwithstanding the ecclesiastical law, or vow; and that the

contrary is nothing else than to condemn marriage; and, that all who do not feel that they have the gift of chastity, even though they have made a vow thereof, may contract marriage; let him be anathema: seeing that God refuses not that gift to those who ask for it rightly, neither does He suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able". (**COUNCIL OF TRENT**, XXIVth Session, Can.9).

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

66. Pope Pius XII (Pope from 1939 - † 1958): "The doctrine establishes.. the superiority of virginity and of celibacy over marriage.. it was solemnly defined as a dogma of faith in the Council of Trent (Session XXIV, Can 10: COD 755) and always agreeing taught by the holy fathers and by the doctors of the Church!" (**POPE PIUS XII**, Encyclica "Sacra Virginitas", 1954)
67. II Vatican Council (1963-1965): "Students ought rightly to acknowledge the duties and dignity of Christian matrimony, which is a sign of the love between Christ and the Church. Let them recognize, however, the surpassing excellence of virginity consecrated to Christ, so that with a maturely deliberate and generous choice they may consecrate themselves to the Lord by a complete gift of body and soul." (**II VATICAN COUNCIL**, decree on "Priestly formation". *Optatam totius*, No. 10b)

Predestination of the elect and the damned?

a. Word of God

New Testament

68. "Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for, in doing so, you will never stumble." (**2 Pt 1,10**)
69. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." (**Mt7,21**)
70. "Many are invited, but few are chosen" (Mt 22,14) As St. Augustin says here below, the elect are the ones who have followed he Lord's Call right up to the very end.

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

71. ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (Bishop, 354 - † 430): « "Those he called, he also justified. This statement may disconcert us and make us question if really all the called are also justified. Especially when we read elsewhere: Many are called but few are chosen. Since, however even the elect are called, it is clear that there are no justified who are not called, although not all who are called, but only those who are called according to the predisposition, as is was said above, intending as predisposition the God's plan and not man's plan. The same Apostle explains what be the meaning of the phrase according to the predisposition when he says: Because those who he knew beforehand, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. What follows is that not all who are called are called according to the predisposition that is part of the foreknowledge and predestination of God. He predestined in his foreknowledge only those of whom he knew they would believe and follow his call, that is, those who he calls the elected. It is true though that many, although they were called, do not answer; but there is no one who can come if he was not called." (SAINT AUGUSTINE Bishop, Expositions of some phrases of the Letter to the Romans, no. 47)

Modern era

72. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563): "No one, moreover, so long as he is in this mortal life, ought so far to presume as regards the secret mystery of divine predestination, as to determine for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate; as if it were true, that he that is justified, either cannot sin any more, or, if he do sin, that he ought to promise himself an assured repentance; for except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God hath chosen unto Himself." (**COUNCIL OF TRENT**, VIth Session, Chap. XII).

JEHOVA'S WITNESS

Brief historical outline

A Cult that separated from the Adventists in 1879 and began in Pittsburgh (USA) with the aim to announce the upcoming advent of heaven on earth.

The Founder: Charles Taze Russell (1852 -1916)

- Born in Pennsylvania (USA) and educated by his parents in Presbyterian religion, Russell was then in contact with the Congregationalist Church, also studying the doctrines of Oriental Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Hinduism.
- Then, he disapproved the Congregationalist doctrine of eternal hell, and joined the teaching of the Adventist Jonas Wendel according to whom hell does not exist and affirmed that the true date of the Parousia, that is the Second Coming of Christ would have been in 1874.
- Russell founded a Bible study group in 1870 whose members got then the nickname "Bible Students". Russell decided that the only textbook for their beliefs would be only the Bible.
- After the year 1874 that Wendel had prophesied as the final coming of Christ, Russell met Nelson H. Barbour the Seventh-day Adventist who claimed that from 1874 an invisible presence of Jesus Christ had begun to prepare a group of elected who were taken up to heaven in 1878 in sight of the very end of the world that according to new calculations made together with Russell would have taken place in 1914. But when the prophecy that was planned for the year 1878 failed, Russell and Barbour gave often contradictory explanations and so they separated from each other.
- In 1879, Russell founded the journal "Zion Watch Tower".
- In 1881 in order to organize his Bible study groups he founded the "Zion Watch Tower Society".
- Russell acknowledged that he didn't know the Hebrew language and he was contradictory about Greek when answering the various questions he was asked.
- The Bible of the J.W. is not translated from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts, but it was "conformed" to an English Bible. When, in 1914, the prophecy of the end of the world did not come true, he immediately fixed another date in 1916, when he died.

The first Successor: J. F. Rutherford (1869-1942) :

- After Russell's death Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford succeeded him in 1917, as the second president of the Watchtower Society, who, rejecting various teachings of Russell, he made significant changes, that then stirred up divisions.
- One of the reasons for these divisions was the official name of "Jehovah's Witnesses" that was taken up in 1931.
- Rutherford changed the date of 1874 (in which according to Russell the invisible presence of Christ began) to 1914.
- He inaugurated evangelism from door to door.
- According to him the cross was a pagan symbol because Christ died on a stake.
- He fixed a new date for the end of the world: 1925.

Preaching :

- The J.W. spread their magazines through door to door preaching, "The Watchtower" and "Awake!" printed in more than one hundred languages.
- The headquarters is located in Brooklyn (New York), where various local congregations send reports on the work of witness carried out by nearly six million of their faithfuls in over two hundred countries.

Doctrine :

- Russell shares with Adventists groups, in the perspective of millenarianism, the expectation of the Kingdom of God to be extended to earth.
- According to the J.W., the seven days of creation, mean that the world should last 49,000 years. Now 48,000 years have already passed. It is important that there are 1000 years of earthly paradise. Before this millennium Armageddon will come (which is the final battle between God and the Antichrist in which Jehovah will destroy all enemies). After the "millennium" of heaven on earth, Satan will be released and will stimulate people to rebel, but that will not last long because they will be destroyed forever, while the righteous will live forever in heaven some others in the Earthly paradise. Indeed, for the J.W. humanity is divided into "sons of God" who are the "anointed", that is, 144,000 together with the first one who is Jesus, they will reign in heaven with Christ. They are only adult males who have lived a perfect JW lifestyle; Then there are the "grandchildren of God" or the "other sheep" or rather the "large crowd" that are the other JWs, who live in the earthly paradise; Finally, there are the "goats", all those who are not J.W., that are the rebels.
- The immortality of the soul is denied (the dead will rise at the beginning of the millennium, and the wicked will be dissolved).
- The existence of hell and of purgatory is denied.
- The J.W. say that Christ is the Savior, but he is not God, or rather "a god" with the small "g" as they write in the prologue of John. In Russell's teaching Jesus had received the gift of divinity only after he died on the Cross. Before he incarnated Jesus was the archangel Michael. There are many other "gods" that they say means powerful, including also Satan.
- God is not One in three people because a three-headed deity is nothing but a monster. The Holy Spirit is not a person of the Trinity, but the manifestation of divine power.
- The cult involves only baptism by immersion, the annual celebration of the death of Jesus Christ on Nisan 14th, the reading of the Bible.
- The J.W. refuse military service, voting, swearing, and blood transfusions.
- According to them, Mary had other children after Jesus.
- As mentioned above, Russell believed that 1874 was the year of the second coming of Christ and that is the year in which he began the period of the invisible presence of Christ. Then forty years later he said there was the beginning of 'Armageddon, the beginning of the "millennium" scheduled for 1914. Subsequently other dates have been established (1916, 1925, 1975), but today they talk rather of imminence than of a specific date.

Ecumenism J.W. ? : The J.W. do not participate in the ecumenical Council of Churches.

Do the prophecies that haven't happened have a little or great weight?

a. Word of God

Old Testament

73. As explained here above in the brief historical recount, the various prophecies of the Jehovah's Witness on the "end of the world" objectively have never come true, therefore: "Know that, even though a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if his oracle is not fulfilled or verified, it is an oracle which the Lord did not speak. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously, and you shall have no fear of him." (Dt18, 22)

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

74. In the Catholic Church rather we can observe that the prophecies of Saints and of Our Lady have always happened, as for example those of Fatima where they happened to an amazing precision: The end of the 1st World War / the imminent death of Jacinta and Francesco and the long life of Lucia who lived almost to 100 years of age / the attempted assassination of St. John Paul II / "in the end My Immaculate heart will Triumph" – where then the USSR fell on the 8th of December, 1091 – the day of the feast day of the Immaculate Heart of Mary... (cf. Prophecies of Fatima, subsidiary video N.14, in www.fratipoveri, <https://vimeo.com/20531880>, 24.01.2014)

Statues or no statues?

a. Word of God

Old Testament

75. "The Lord will lead you. There you shall serve gods fashioned by the hands of man out of wood and stone, gods which can neither see nor hear, neither eat nor smell. Yet there too you shall seek the Lord, your God; and you shall indeed find him when you search after him with your whole heart and your whole soul." (Dt. 4, 27b-29)
76. "In the ark you are to put the commandments which I will give you. "You shall then make a propitiatory of pure gold, two cubits and a half long, and one and a half cubits wide. Make two cherubim of beaten gold for the two ends of the propitiatory." (Ex 25 17-18)
77. "The Dwelling itself you shall make out of sheets woven of fine linen twined and of violet, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim embroidered on them... You shall have a veil woven of violet, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen twined, with cherubim embroidered on it". (Ex 26, 1.31)
78. "The Lord said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover." Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered. (Nm 21, 8-9)

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

79. ST. JOHN DAMASCENE (Bishop, 650 - † 749) "In other times God was never represented in images. . but given that God has been seen in the flesh and lived amongst mankind, I represent what is visible to God. I do not venerate the physical material but the Creator of the physical material, who became physical material for me." (ST. JOHN DAMASCENE, *Contra Imaginum calumniatores* I, 16 Ed. Kotter p. 89-90)
80. IND COUNCIL OF NICAIA (787): "One of these (ecclesiastical traditions) in harmony with the preaching of the Gospel is the production of representational art; as it provides confirmation that the becoming man of the Word of God was real and not just imaginary, and as it brings us a similar benefit. For, things that mutually illustrate one another undoubtedly possess one another's message.. We decree with full precision and care that, like the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways, these are the images of our Lord, God and savior, Jesus Christ, and of our Lady without blemish, the holy God-bearer, and of the revered angels and of any of the saintly holy men. The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salutation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration {latria} in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that given to the figure of the honored and life-giving cross.." (IND COUNCIL OF NICAIA, Definition, No. 5)

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

- St. MAXIMILIAN M. KOLBE "He asked a prisoner who was with him in the concentration camp of Auschwitz to draw 2 images, one of Jesus and one of Our Lady. He always carried them with him, even at the risk of being discovered and punished in a terrible way.. he could not say without contemplating them often" (see St. MAXIMILIAN M. KOLBE, *the Knight of the Immacolata*, pg. 103).
81. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: "In the Old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with the bronze serpent [Cf. Nm 21, 4-9; Wis 16, 5-14; Jn 3,14-15] , the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim [cf. Es 25, 10-22; 21.30; 1Kgs 7, 23-26]." (CCC 2130)

c. Personal Experiences

82. (The story of the mechanic who held an image of his Lord - and the Jehovah's Witness who approached him).

Jesus is God or only the Son of God?

a. Word of God

Old Testament

83. "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace" (Is 9,5)

New Testament

84. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." (Mt 1,23)
85. "And the Word became flesh... The only Son, God". (Jn 1, 14.18)
86. "Thomas answered (Jesus) and said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (Jn 20,28)
87. "I you do not believe that I AM (cf. Ex 3,14), you will die in your sins." (Jn 8,24)

88. "From them (the patriarchs), according to the flesh, is the Christ, God who is over all be blessed forever. Amen." (**Rm 9,5**)
 89. "Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God.." (**Phil 2,5-6**)

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

Patristic Era

90. 1ST COUNCIL OF NICAIA (325) "We believe in one God the Father all powerful, maker of all things both seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten begotten from the Father, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came to be, both those in heaven and those in earth..." (1ST COUNCIL OF NICAIA, Profession of Faith.)

Post Modern (or Contemporary) Era

91. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: "For this reason the apostles confess Jesus to be the Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1,1); as 'the image of the invisible God'" (**CCC 241**)

Cross or Pole? Where did Jesus die?

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

92. "Whoever does not carry his own cross (σταυρός)¹ and come after me cannot be my disciple!" (**Luke 14:27**).
 93. "The message of the cross (σταυρός) is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (**1Cor 1:18**).
 94. "The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a cross (xylon)²" (**Act 5:30**).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

CONTEMPORARY AGE

95. --- **MONS. L. MINUTI** (a brilliant explanation on video): "Cross or pole ?, Mons. L. Minuti shows in this video how the Jehovah's Witness have several times falsified different Greek Dictionaries of a certain importance several times. Their aim was to demonstrate that "Stauros or Xylon" does not mean Cross at all but only pole and so on... He says that by proving this to several Jehovah's Witnesses, they've returned back to the Catholic Church." (MONS. L. MINUTI, Cross or pole? P.3, in: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSWSGsyAZQw>, [31-03-2014]). (Video unfortunately only in Italian)

Trinity... Yes or No?

a. Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

96. "The LORD appeared to - Abraham - by the oak of Mamre.. Looking up, he saw three men.. and bowing to the ground, he said: "My Lord if!" (**Gen 18:1.2.3**).

NEW TESTAMENT

97. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (**Matt 28:19**).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

PATRISTIC AGE

98. **ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN** (Bishop, 330 - †390): "This I give you.. the One Godhead and Power, found in the Three in Unity, and comprising the Three separately, not unequal, in substances or natures, neither increased nor diminished by superiorities or inferiorities;.. the infinite conjunction of Three Infinite Ones, Each God when considered in Himself;.. the Three One God when contemplated together;.. No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendor of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One". (ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN, *Orationes*, 40, 41: PG 36, 417).

POST-MODERN AGE (OR CONTEMPORARY)

99. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: The Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the "consubstantial Trinity" [Concilio di Costantinopoli II (553): Denz. -Schönm., 421]. The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: "The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e. by nature one God." [Concilio di Toledo XI (675): Denz. -Schönm., 530]. "Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature." [Concilio Lateranense IV (1215): Denz.-Schönm., 804]" (CCC 253).

¹ - **Stauros / σταυρός** (male noun)

- According to the Greek-Italian Dictionary of Franco Montanari (used also in High Schools) means: pole, peg, cross (FRANCO MONTANARI, Vocabolario della Lingua Greca (GI), Loescher Ed., Torino 2004, pg. 1959).
- According to the Greek-Italian Dictionary of Lorenzo Rocci (used also in High Schools) means: pole, palisade, cross. (LORENZO ROCCI, Vocabolario Greco Italiano, Società Ed. Dante Alighieri, 1943, pg. 1699).

² - **Xylon / ξύλον** (male noun)

- According to the Greek-Italian Dictionary of Franco Montanari (used also in High Schools) means: wood, timber, tree, tree wood, wooden object, cotton tree, stick, rod, stick, bench, table, seat, reserved seat, perch, pillory, strains, pole, cross. (FRANCO MONTANARI, Vocabolario della Lingua Greca (GI), Loescher Ed., Torino 2004, pg. 1434).
- Secondo il famoso Dizionario Greco-Italiano di Lorenzo Rocci (usato anche nei Licei Classici) significa: legno, pezzo di legno, tronco, stipite, albero, pianta, cotone, ceppo, bastone, verga, mazza, clava, pertica, stecca, gogna, croce, pastoia, tavola, banco, sedile, fila, vascello, tronco. (LORENZO ROCCI, Vocabolario Greco Italiano, Società Ed. Dante Alighieri, 1943, p. 1299).
- (RICERCA ETIMOLOGICA di stauros e xylon iniziata da FRÀ VOLANTINO e approfondita da FRÀ GIUSEPPE M.G., Licenziando al Biblico di Roma, con spunto iniziale tratto dalla preziosa ricerca non indifferente di MONS. L. MINUTI, *Croce o palo ? P.3*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSWSGsyAZQw>).

What is the name of God, YHWH or YEHOWAH?

a. Word of God (exegetical analysis)³

OLD TESTAMENT

100. "This is the beginning of the heavens and the earth at their creation. On the day when the Lord (YHWH) God made the earth and the heavens there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the Lord (YHWH) God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the ground." (Gen 2:4-5)
101. "God replied to Moses: 'I am who I am!' Then he added: 'This is what you will tell the Israelites: I Am has sent me to you.' God spoke further to Moses: 'This is what you will say to the Israelites: The Lord (YHWH), the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you'. This is my name forever; this is my title for all generations.'" (Ex 3:14-15)

1. Initially the correct form had to be: "YAHAWEH" which is a verb in the future form that means "He (will) let exist; He (will) let become; He (will) let be" with a clear reference to God the creator of all, the cause of everything (cf. Gen 2:4-5).
2. The correct pronunciation has been lost (since vowels were never written) and is no longer known!
3. Beginning from the age of the second Temple (or rather after the exile in BABYLON, around 515 B.C.) the Name YHWH was unpronounceable publicly in the Reading of the Scripture. Therefore, because it was unpronounceable, the Masoretes wanted to add to the consonants "YHWH", the vowels of "ADONAI", therefore the result was: YĀHŌWĀH.
4. But as in the Hebrew text the brief form of the name YHWH (cf. Ps 68: 5.19) was already YĀH, therefore the Masoretes wanting to avoid to pronounce the Divine name YĀH did not write the exact form YĀHŌWĀH but they wrote the wrong form: YEHŌWĀH using at the beginning of the word the most insignificant that they knew, i.e. the Shewà. But this is not an indication of the name of God, but only a wrong pronunciation, wrong and inexact. During the Renaissance Christians did not understand this lesson of the Masoretes (and neither do the Jehovah's Witnesses even now), no or did they consider it, and since then they believed that YEHŌWĀH was the exact form of the name YHWH not knowing that it was instead the wrong form. (cf. FRIAR GIUSEPPE M.G.-J., Licentiate at the Pontifical Biblicum University of Rome)⁴

Will heaven be on earth?

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

102. "Christ.. ascended into heaven and took prisoners captive" (cf. Eph 4:8).
103. "Our Homeland... is in the heavens" (Phil 3:20).
104. "For we know that if our earthly dwelling,* a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heavens." (2Cor 5:1).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

PATRISTIC AGE

105. St. AMBROSE OF MILAN (Bishop, 339 - † 397) : "Peace reigns up there in Heaven.. where we will celebrate the rest from our trials (and) enjoy the great Saturday". (ST. AMBROSE, bishop / Off. Read. Sat. 2nd week of Lent)
106. St. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (Bishop, 354 - † 430) : "Enjoy and exult because great is your reward in heaven (homeland)... therefore those who enjoy the goods of the spirit will in time experience this great reward, but it's there that it'll be made real in every sense: when also all that is subject to death will obtain the immunity of death." (ST. AUGUSTINE, Disc. Mont. Lib. A cap. 15, 15)

EPOCA POST-MODERNA (O CONTEMPORANEA)

107. II VATICAN COUNCIL (1963-1965) : "Already the final age of the world has come upon us (1 Cor 10;11; SLC pg. 402c) and the renovation of the world is irrevocably decreed and is already anticipated in some kind of a real way; for the Church already on this earth is signed with a sanctity which is real although imperfect. However, until there shall be new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells (2Pt 3;13). the pilgrim Church in her sacraments and institutions, which pertain to this present time, has the appearance of this world which is passing". (II VATICAN COUNCIL, DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION Lumen Gentium, No. 48).

Does Purgatory exist?

a. Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

108. "The LORD.. casts down to Sheol and brings up again." (1Sam 2:6).
109. "He made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin." (2Mac 12:46).

NEW TESTAMENT

110. "Christ.. in the spirit.. also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah" (1Pet 3:18-20) ;
111. "The gospel was preached even to the dead that... they might live.. in the estimation of God I" (1Pt 4,6).

³ FRA GIUSEPPE M.G.-J., Licenziando al Pontificio Istituto Biblico a Roma ; Cfr. G.J. BOTTERWECK – H. RINGGREN., Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Gran Rapids 1977).

⁴ "I will try to explain the Name of YHWH in a simple way (there would be many things to say, but I will limit myself to the heart of the matter in a simple comprahensible way).

- The etymology of the name יהוה – YHWH has been discussed a lot. We will limit ourselves to the name יהוה – YHWH is generally presented as a verbal form derived from the root word הוה (HWY), later היה (HWH) meaning "exist, being, to become, in process of becoming [also: to be at hand]. If we add a "Yod" to היה (HWH) at the beginning one has the tetra gram יהוה – YHWH, that would be a future verb and taking these vowels: יהוה "Yahaweh" [that would be in poor words a singular future masculine, in a Hifil way], with the meaning of: "He (will) let exist; He (will) let become; He (will) let be" with a clear reference to God the creator of all, cause of all causes. Precisely this form יהוה "Yahaweh", that we repeat would be a "future" verb, is the one that is most widely accepted today.

- But on the less the original pronunciation of the Name of God has been lost. Also because at the beginning of the epoch of the second Temple (or rather after the exile into BABYLON, about 515 b.C.) the Name of YHWH it was unpronounceable publicly in the reading of Scripture. Therefore, as it was unpronounceable, the masorites thought of putting the consonants יהוה - YHWH and the vowels אֲדֹנָי - 'ADONAI, to which the result was: יהוה (Yāhōwāh).

- But even though, given that in the Hebrew Text there was the abbreviated form of YHWH, or rather יה' - Yāh (Ps 68:5.19) then the Masorites did not write the exact form יהוה (Yāhōwāh) to avoid pronouncing the Divine name of God יה' - Yāh but they intentionally wrote the wrong form: יהוה (Yehōwāh) using at the beginning of the word a vowel that they knew to be less significant that is the "Shewà". But this does not indicate the name of God but only a viced pronunciation of it; in error and not exact. The Christians of the renaissance (and even up to today the Jehovah's Witness) did not understand this lesson of the Masorites, or didn't take it into consideration, and so they believed that Yehōwāh was the exact form of the name of YHWH not knowing that it was rather the wrong form" (FRIAR GIUSEPPE M.G.-J., Licentiate at the Pontifical Biblical Institute at Rome).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

MIDDLE AGES

112. SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS (1225 - † 1274) speaks about “two hells”, from one it is possible to leave and from another where it’s impossible to leave. The one of which one can possibly leave is Purgatory. And he speaks also about a place of rest where the Patriarchs first rested. (Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *S. th. III* , q. 52, a 2)
113. COUNCIL OF FLORENCE (1439) : “We defend that the souls of who, truly repentant, die in the love of God, before having satisfied for their sins and omissions with worthy fruits of penance, become purified after death with the pains of purgatory; that, so that these pains be relieved the intercessions of the living faithful are useful to them, that is the sacrifice of the Mass, prayers, good deeds and other acts of piety that the faithful use to offer for the other faithful, according to the customs of the Church”. (COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, VIth session, paragraph 16)

Modern era

114. COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563) : “Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this ecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavor that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and every where proclaimed.” (COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XXV, Decree on Purgatory).

Does hell exist?

a. Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

115. “Fire and worms into their flesh, and they will weep and suffer forever!” (Jdt 16:17).
116. “But he will join the generation of his fathers, never again to see the light”.. (Ps 49:20).

NEW TESTAMENT

117. “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.. And these will go off to eternal punishment!..” (Matt 25:41-46).
118. Paul says: “To grant rest along with us to you who are undergoing afflictions, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels, in blazing fire, inflicting punishment on those who do not acknowledge God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal ruin, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power!” (2Thes 1:7-9)

And are there souls in Hell?

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

119. “Being in hell where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.. Abraham replied.. ‘between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ (Luke 16:23.26).
120. “Likewise, Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding towns, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual promiscuity and practiced unnatural vice, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.” (Jude 1:7).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

PATRISTIC AGE

121. St. CLEMENT Ist (Pope from 88 to † 97) : “Envy has brought Datan and Abiram into hell alive because they rebelled against the servant of God, Moses.” (POPE ST. CLEMENT I, Letter to the Church of Corinth, IV, 12, I Sec.)

MIDDLE AGES

122. COUNCIL OF FLORENCE (1439) : “Moses, a man of God had understood in fact for inspiration of the Lord himself, that those rebellious schismatics (Core, Datan and Abiron) would have received a most grave punishment, as then the happenings demonstrated, when the earth itself could not stand them and swallowed them up, for the judgment of God; and like so they fell living into hell”. (COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, VII session, paragraph 2)

The horrendous danger of Hell

MODERN AGE

123. SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES (1567 - † 1622): “Imagine a dark city, drowning in an atmosphere of burning sulfur and sickening stench; then imagine in that scene a crowd of citizens who cannot leave.. those who are damned to hell are like prisoners without escape in that disgraced city. Their senses and all their members are subject to unspeakable torments.. Beyond all these sufferings, there is one greater still, the privation and the pain of the loss of God.. who is denied to their sight forever.. Consider how insupportable the pains of Hell will be by reason of their eternal duration. If the irritating bite of a flea, or the restlessness of fever, makes an ordinary night seem so long and tedious, how terrible will the endless night of eternity be, where nothing will be found save despair, blasphemy and fury!” (SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Philotea. Introduction to devoted life*, part I, chap. XV).

The duty to announce the existence and danger of Hell

POST-MODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) ERA

124. POPE BENEDICT XV (Pope from 1914 to † 1922): “Our ‘Preacher of truth’ (St. Paul) never imagined that he should avoid such subjects of eternal life and eternal fire, because, owing to the corruption of that age, they may have appeared too stern to his hearers. Therefore it is clear how much they are disapproved those preachers who are afraid to touch upon certain points of Christian doctrine lest they should give their hearers offense!” (BENEDICT XV, Encyclical Letter *Humani Generis Redemptionem* No.. 19).
125. POPE PIUS XII (Pope from 1939 to †1958) : “The preaching of the first truth of faith and of the end of times together with the preaching of hell has become more than ever necessary and urgent... the Church has before God and mankind the sacred obligation to announce it and to teach it without any fear just as Christ revealed it... and there’s no historical condition of time that may diminish the rigor of this obligation.” (POPE PIUS XII – discussions of Radio messages, Vol XI pg. 14-15)
126. POPE FRANCIS, (Pope from 2013 to ...) : « And I feel that I cannot finish without saying a word to the great number absent, today, to the great protagonists who are absent: to the men and women involved in the Mafia. Please, change your life, convert, stop and quit doing

evil! And we pray for you... This life that you now live, does not give you pleasure, does not give you joy, does not give you happiness. The power, the money that you have now from so many dirty activities, from so many Mafia crimes, is money and power stained with blood, and you cannot take it with you to the next life. Convert whilst there is still time, so that you don't end up in hell. This is what waits for you if you continue on this path. Cry a little a convert." (POPE FRANCIS, Discussion with the parents of the victims of the Mafia, 21st March 2014, in: Avvenire, *To the mafia; Convert and stop doing evil!*, http://www.avvenire.it/Papa_Francesco/Discorsi/Pagine/papa-francesco-ai-familiari-delle-vittime-della-mafia.aspx, (in Italian) [01-01-2014]).

Hell exists and it is eternal

127. POPE BENEDICT XVI (Pope from 2005 to 2013): "Jesus has come to tell us that he wants us all in Heaven and that Hell, of which little is spoken of, does exist and it is eternal for those who close up their hearts to His love." (POPE BENEDICT XVI, Homily from the 25 March 2007 in the Parish of Santa Felicita and Figli Martiri della borgata di Fiden)
128. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH : "Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either pass through a purification or enter immediately into the beatitude of heaven, or immediately be damned forever." (CCC 1022)

WHO ARE THOSE WHO ARE ON THE RIGHT AND ON THE LEFT OF THE LORD?

(Since the JW's are clearly wrong when saying that only they will go to the right and all the others to the left)

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

129. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his RIGHT, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'.. whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his LEFT, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'.. what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'" (Matt 25:31-45).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

PATRISTIC AGE

130. St. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (Bishop, 354 - † 430): "He will judge the world with justice and all the nations with truth' (Psalm 95:13).. What is this righteousness and truth? He will unite together with His elect because He is alongside them in the tribunal of judgment, but the rest He will separate one from another; for He will place some on the right, others on the left. But what is more just, what more true than all those who've refused to act mercifully before the Judge came shall not expect mercy from the Judge? But those who chose to act with mercy, with mercy shall be judged. It will be said to those who are standing at the right hand: 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" (Matt 25:34). And he attributes merit to their deeds of mercy: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink" (Matt 25:35-40) with what comes after. But those standing on the left what will they be reproached for? That they did not want to do deeds of mercy. And where will they go?: 'Into the eternal fire' (Matt 25:41).. Those who enjoy the good judgment won't be afraid of condemnation. This is justice, this is the truth!" (SAINT AUGUSTINE Bishop, From 'Comment on the Psalms' Ps 96,14.15; in CCL 39,1351-1353 / Off. of Read. XXXIIIth Sunday. O.T.)

Did Jesus have brothers?

(a topic that has been also discussed with Protestants etc..)

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT (Some explanatory signs to understand who Jesus considers brothers)

131. "And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother.'" (Matt 12:49-50)
132. "Looking around at those seated in the circle he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. [For] whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'" (Mark 3,34-35)
133. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it." (Luke 8,21)

DATA THAT SHOW THAT JESUS HAD NO NATAL BROTHERS .

134. "I did not see any other of the Apostles, only James the brother of the Lord." (Gal 1:19).
--- But among the apostles there are only two with the name James:
135. "He appointed the twelve: Simon, whom he named Peter; James, son of Zebedee, and John.. Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean." (Mark 3: 16-18).⁵

--- Therefore the two James Apostles, one son Alphaeus and the other one son of Zebedee, "ipso facto" they are not sons of Saint Joseph and therefore they are not natal brothers of Jesus, but they are however cousins or only spiritual brothers, if we consider the before said passage (cf. Gal 1:19)⁶.

--- And therefore the result is that Our Lady had no other children and therefore we can demonstrate the virginity of Mary also from here because Jesus has been born by an extraordinary conception (cf. Luke 1:31-35).

--- For the rest, in Hebrew, as we will demonstrate the word brother meant also a less direct bound of kinship. It's not by chance that Abraham uses the word "Achim" "brothers" (אָחִים 'ahim;) in the Old Testament when speaking about himself and his grandson Lot (Gen 12:5), indeed we read: "Abram said to Lot (his grandson- Gen 12:5): "There shall be no disagreement between me and you.. because we are brothers." (Gen 13:8). Therefore, it is being confirmed by the Word, when speaking about the so called "brothers" of Jesus (your brothers are waiting outside – cf. Matt 12:47) the authors of the Gospels do not strictly mean natal brothers of Jesus, but a kinship in a wider sense, as it has been demonstrated⁷.

⁶ (Cf. Meditation of friar Picchignito , with int. VV).

⁷ (Cf. Meditation of friar Michele , with int. VV).

The Pontifical Biblical Commission's view far-fetched interpretations of Scripture and the Bible

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT:

136. Jesus said to Peter: "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (**Matt 16:19**).
137. Peter will also say because of that: "Know this first of all, that there is *no* prophecy of *scripture* that is a matter of personal interpretation." (**2Pet 1:20**).

--- Yes, *There is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation (2Pet 1,20)*, because the keys of the right hermeneutics (or interpretation) of the things concerning the Kingdom of Heavens (as we've read) have been entrusted only to Peter (or to those who take his place), as indeed Jesus himself then says speaking in plural terms of "you" about the same argument, when saying: *Amen, I say to "you", whatever "you" bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever "you" loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven!" (Matt 18:18)*.

--- Therefore, the safe interpretation of the Scriptures is founded only upon the Pope and to his Bishops in communion with him, as in the case of the Safe Eucharist! (Cf. **JOHN PAUL II**, Encyclical Letter: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 39 b, in: *Tutte le Encicliche di Giovanni Paolo II*, Ediz. LEV, Città del Vaticano 2005², pg. 1620-1622).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

POST-MODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) AGE

THOUGHT OF THE PCB ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE BY THE J.W ETC...

138. --- **Pontifical biblical commission:** "*one has to avoid misleading kind of readings which instead of being docile to the (biblical) text do nothing else than to use it for their limited aims, as it is in the case of some cults, for example the Jehovah's Witness*" (cf. **PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION**, "*Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*", LEV, Città del Vaticano 1993, pg. 107).

MORMONS

(BRIEF HISTORICAL OUTLINE)⁸

Founder : **Joseph Smith (1805 - 1844)**

- Born in Sharon (Vermont, United States) in a family of Presbyterian values.
- In 1820 the fifteen year old Joseph, who had not even received a religious formation, had his first revelation: God appeared to him and exhorted him not to adhere to any of the existing religious communities, because "in his eyes they are all in error".
- During the night of the 21 September 1823 Smith had a vision of the angel Moroni, who had spoken about a book that was written on golden tablets as Smith said. The sacred inscriptions had been buried into a box on mount Cumorah, just a few miles from the property of the Smiths.
- Four years later, on the 22nd September 1827, Smith affirmed that he had had another vision, in which the angel had handed him over the golden tablets. With the help of two "crystals", called *urim and thummim*, the illiterate Smith managed to decipher the texts and to translate them.
- The result of his work is that allegedly he dictated it to one of his secretaries into English, and was printed towards the beginning of 1830 with the title "*The Book of Mormon*".
- on the 6th April 1830, Smith founded the new religious community in Fayette [...].
- Beginning from the year 1838, the community took the name "**Church of Jesus Christ and of the Latter day Saints**" and the founder presented himself as the announcer of a New Revelation.
- Feeling strong because of his popularity, Smith presented himself as a candidate in the US presidency in 1844.
- But he was suspected of some crimes, he was incarcerated in Carthago (Illinois). The process was not held because on June 27 1844, a ferocious crowd assailed the prison and killed Joseph Smith and his brother Hyram.

The first successor: Brigham Young (1801-77)

- from March 1846 to July 1847, he guided 15 000 followers on a march of about 1000 miles towards the depopulated West, until the Great Salt Lake where the Mormons founded **Salt Lake City** (Utah), which is their most important nucleus until now.

Polygamy :

- J. Smith ... was at first firmly for monogamy;
- but then afterwards he had polygamous relationships (the number of his wives has been indicated between 27 and 49) and, in 1843, he introduced polygamy among the ethic precepts of the Mormons.
- In 1862 the Congress of the United States emanated laws against polygamy.
- This practice had been interrupted definitively in 1890 the year in which the Church of Jesus Christ and of the Latter day Saints issued a decree that ended polygamy excommunicating those who practiced it.
- From the schismatic group that was guided by *Woolley* during the 1920's, originate several branches of the *polygamous fundamentalism* that exist today. These are about ten or so and none of them or of those who adhere to it is bound in no way with Church of Jesus Christ and of the Latter day Saints

Doctrine : The 13 articles of faith approved in 1841 represent the doctrinal principles of the Mormons.

- Elohim, God the Father, Christ Jhw, his son, and the Holy Spirit, represent in these three divinities bound by a common aim.
- The similarity between man and God gives witness of the potential identity between the individual itself and God. The soul incarnates into a earthly body so to be then perfected and through the knowledge of the truth to reach the divine essence and the state of being son of God. "*God was once what man is at present; man can become as God is now*".
- Jesus Christ has been united in marriage with Mary, Martha and Mary Magdalene.
- *The bishops have been ordained and chosen by Joseph Smith who, after he had an apparition of the apostles Peter, James and John in a vision as he said, instituted the order of the Superior Priesthood or of the High Priesthood according to the order of Melkisedek (Priesthood of Melkisedek).*

Sacred books : Further than only to the Bible, Mormons refer also to other 3 sacred texts:

- The most important one is the *Book of Mormon*. According to the narrations in that book, that goes from 600 B.C. to 421 A.C., where there have been some Israelites who colonized America squashing the Iraedites who have lived there earlier. Then the Israelites separated in Nephites, who feared God, and Indians (called Lamanites), the rebels. After his Resurrection, Christ went to America, to the Nephites, to bring them other elements of Revelation. Then, during continued fights the Nephites have been almost completely wiped out by the Lamanites; only a few have been saved and among those were the Mormons, the last prophet of the old Covenant, together with his son Moroni. They wrote together the book of Mormon that had been buried by Moroni in 421 A.C.
- The other 2 books of the Mormons, "*The precious pearl*" and the "*Book of the doctrine of the covenant*" contain "prophecies" that had been announced by the charismatic leaders.

Ecumenism MORMONS ? : Mormons do not participate in the *Ecumenical Counsel of the Churches*.

DO THEY HAVE THE IMPOSITION OF THE HANDS OF THE APOSTLES?

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

Even if J. Smith really had a vision, in which the apostles Peter, James and John had appeared to him, as it was said earlier in the above mentioned historical outline, the acknowledgement of the apostles is made in the Bible through a concrete meeting. Indeed Saint Paul says:

- 139.** *"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to confer with Cephas and remained with him for fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles, only James" (Gal 1:18-19).*
- 140.** *"Then after fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas.. and when they recognized the grace bestowed upon me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas their right hands as a sign of partnership, that we should go to the Gentiles.." (Gal 2:1.9).*

---- Therefore, because St. Paul himself explains: "*To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever..*" (**cf. Eph 3:21**), so the task that Jesus has entrusted to the apostles has been always transmitted and maintained within the Church from generation to generation.. And therefore, given that John Smith did not go to meet physically speaking the legitimate and historical successors of Saint Peter and of the Apostles that is the Pope and the Catholic Bishops of his age, so to be able to get in communion with them (as Saint Paul) so to receive also the laying on of hands so then let us remember that it is written : "*Do not neglect - says Paul to young bishop Timothy - the gift you have, which was conferred on you through the prophetic word with the imposition of hands of the presbyterate.*" (**1Tim 4:14**).

⁸(Cf. translated from: GERHARD J. BELLINGER, *Enciclopedia delle religioni. Mormoni*, Ediz. Garzanti, Cernusco 2002², pp. 596-599. ; SEE JOHN A. WIDTSOE, *Priesthood and Church Government*, rev. ed. [1954], 110-11; cf. DOCUMENTARIO VIDEO, *Dottrine dei Mormoni. CinemaVerita.com*, Ediz. Italiana, (In Italian) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIQ1dz1L-PU> [31-01-2014]; cf. WIKIPEDIA, *Joseph Smith*, (In Italian) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith [01-04-2015].

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

POST-MODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) AGE

Apostolic Succession

141. --- II VATICAN COUNCIL (1963-1965): *“That divine mission, entrusted by Christ to the apostles, will last until the end of the world (cf. Matt 28:20) since the Gospel they are to teach is for all time the source of all life for the Church. And for this reason the apostles, appointed as rulers in this society, took care to appoint successors.. They therefore appointed such men, and gave them the order that, when they should have died, other approved men would take up their ministry. Among those various ministries which, according to tradition, were exercised in the Church from the earliest times, the chief place belongs to the office of those who, appointed to the episcopate, by a succession running from the beginning, are passers-on of the apostolic seed. Thus, as St. Irenaeus testifies, through those who were appointed bishops by the apostles, and through their successors down in our own time, the apostolic tradition is manifested and preserved.. And just as the office granted individually to Peter, the first among the apostles, is permanent and is to be transmitted to his successors, so also the apostles' office of nurturing the Church is permanent, and is to be exercised without interruption by the sacred order of bishops. Therefore, the Sacred Council teaches that bishops by divine institution have succeeded to the place of the apostles, as shepherds of the Church, and he who hears them, hears Christ, and he who rejects them, rejects Christ and Him who sent Christ (cf. Luke 10:16).”* (II VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, n. 20)

c. Experiences

142. “Story of two little catholic friars who met two mormons who were ‘evangelizing’ two muslims.”

Polygamy yes or no? According to Revelation or according to the State?

a. Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT

143. In the Old T. polygamy was permitted, or rather to have several wives (cf. Gen 6:2; Gen 37:2; 2Sam 19:6), and also to give her the repudiation document (cf. Matt 19:8), but only because of the hardness of their hearts (Mark 10:5).

NEW TESTAMENT

144. “Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt 19:8).

145. “He said in reply, ‘Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” (Matt 19:4-6.9).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

POST-MODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) AGE

146. II VATICAN COUNCIL (1963-1965): *“Yet the excellence of this institution (marriage and family) is not everywhere reflected with equal brilliance, since polygamy, the plague of divorce, so-called free love and other disfigurements have an obscuring effect.”* (II VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution Gaudium et Spes, n. 47).

Did Jesus during his earthly life have wives?

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

147. “Jesus said – to Mary Magdalen – “do not touch me..”⁹ (John 20:17).

b. Teaching of the Catholic Church

POST-MODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) AGE

148. St. JOHN PAUL II (Pope 1978 -+2005): *“The concrete ideal of the consecrated life is Jesus, a model for all, but especially of priests. He lived a celibate lifestyle, and for this reason he was able to dedicate all his strength to the preaching of the Kingdom of God and to the service of man, with a heart that is open to all humanity, as the founder of a new spiritual generation. His choice was really ‘for the Kingdom of heavens’ (cf. Matt 19:12).”* (JOHN PAUL II, The Rationale of Consecration in Priestly Celibacy, No. 3, General Audience 14th July 1993)

Are there other public revelations other than the canonical texts of the Bible?

a. Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT

149. “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach [to you] a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, and now I say again, if anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one that you received, let that one be accursed!” (Gal 1:8-9).

150. Jesus says: “I warn everyone who hears the prophetic words in this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words in this prophetic book, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city described in this book!” (Rev 22:18-19).

Are there any other public revelations other than the canonical texts of the Bible?

Teaching of the Catholic Church

POST-MODERN (OR CONTEMPORARY) AGE

151. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH, THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE ON FATIMA OF J. RATZINGER:

“The Teaching of the Church distinguishes between public Revelation and private revelations. There is a difference among the two not only regarding the level but also the essence. The term Public Revelation, designates the revealing action of God that is destined to all humankind, that has found its literary expression in the two parts of the Bible: the Old and the New Testament “ (translated from: RATZINGER JOSEPH, Commento Teologico, in : CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH, The Message of Fatima, Magisterium 294, Ediz. Paoline, Milano 2000, pp. 46-47).

152. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH : *“Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other Word than this.. Therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, the Christian economy will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (CCC 65-66).

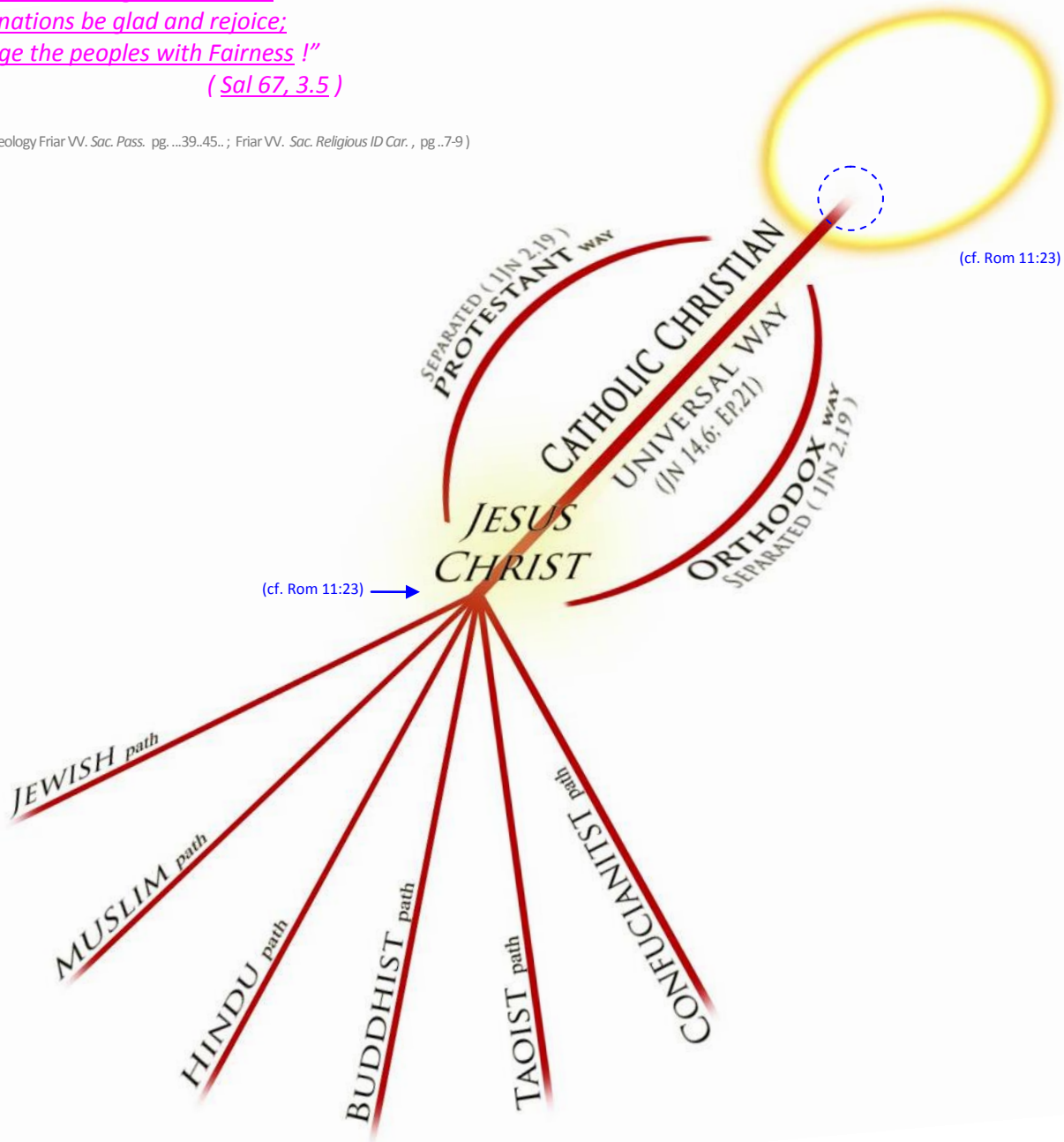
⁹ A more literal translation from Greek: *Μή μου άπτου* (Me mu aptu) = Do not touch me (also in a sexual sense – says a Greek dictionary [Franco Montanari, op. cit.])

CONCLUSION:

- ✓ All roads lead to Rome, if one admits the objective truth of the biblical, historical and magisterial documents.
- ... and Briefly summed up:
- ✓ Those who want to understand shall understand, an upright mind is needed here, that is humble and that has true wisdom, so that it can go - immediately – after death into Heaven!!! (cf. CCC 1022), in the true Holy communion with Jesus as it's been demonstrated here, in these evenings *Cum Deo et Cum Ecclesiae!!!* (cf. Matt 7:21; John 6: 53-54).

*“May your Way may be known on earth,
your Salvation- among all nations!”
.. May the nations be glad and rejoice;
for you judge the peoples with Fairness !”
(Sal 67, 3.5)*

(cf. Docum. Pre Theology Friar VV. Sac. Pass. pg. ...39..45.. ; Friar VV. Sac. Religious ID Car. , pg ..7-9)



NB. In regards to all the passages that we didn't read nor explain, if you're interested in having a deeper knowledge of the topic, according to God and the Church and experience ... you can make an appointment with us at the end of the teaching or through e-mail, and we'll come to your house as far as it's possible. We only have to coordinate and unite some people, who thirst for truth!. You find the e-mail on: www.poorfriars.net – with Christian love “Little Friars of Jesus and Mary”.