

Other Religions and Non-Christian Thought

Uptown Church
Week 8: Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism: The Basic Idea

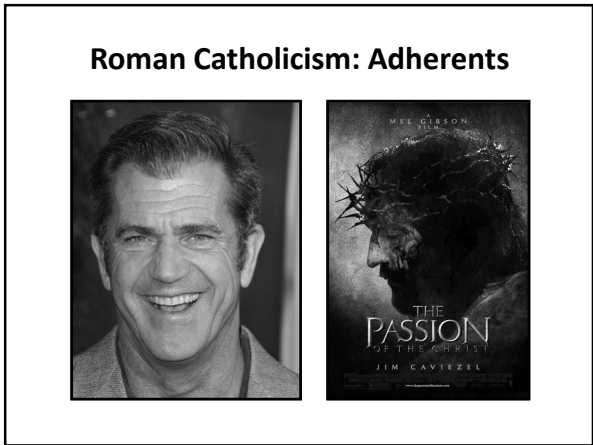
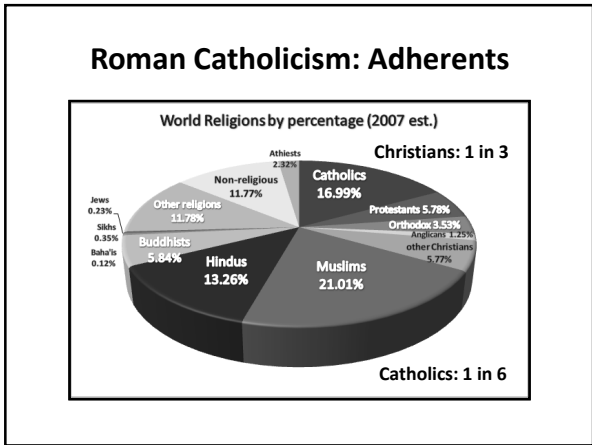
Salvation comes through Christ **and** the RCC.

“There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation.”

Canon 1, Fourth Lateran Council (1215)

“The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and instrument of the communion of God and men.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1995)



- ### A Brief History of Roman Catholicism
- Increasing prominence of the Bishop of Rome
 - Permanent split with Eastern Church (1054)
 - Protestant Reformation (16thC)
 - Counter-Reformation: Council of Trent (1545-63)
 - First Vatican Council (1869-70)
 - Official declaration of papal infallibility
 - Second Vatican Council (1962-65)
 - Openness to salvation outside the RCC

Roman Catholicism: Theology

- There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- God is a transcendent, perfect, spiritual being
 - God is all-powerful, all-good, and all-knowing
- God created the universe *ex nihilo*
- God created for his glory and our happiness
- God is in providential control of history
- God is intimately involved in human affairs
- We can have a personal relationship with God

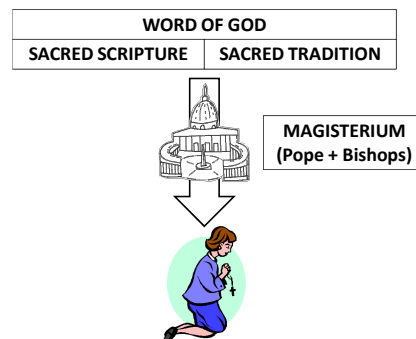
Roman Catholicism: Anthropology

- Humans were created by God in his image
- We have bodies and souls that survive death
- Our purpose in life is a relationship with God
- We are born sinful by nature (original sin)
 - There was a historical fall into sin at the beginning
- There will be a final judgment and afterlife
 - Good Catholics will go to heaven (via purgatory)
 - Some others will go to heaven and the rest to hell

Roman Catholicism: Knowledge

- Both natural revelation and special revelation
- Two forms of the Word of God
 - Sacred Scripture (including the Apocrypha)
 - Sacred Tradition
- Magisterium gives authoritative interpretation
 - Christians have no right to “private interpretation”
 - Pope and Magisterium can pronounce infallibly
 - Official teachings of RCC are binding on Christians

Roman Catholicism: Knowledge



Roman Catholicism: Ethics

- Morality is based on the revealed will of God
- Christian ethics derived from three sources:
 - Natural Law / Scripture / Tradition
- Conservative social ethics (esp. sexual issues)
 - Marriage is sacred and divorce is always sinful
- Human life is sacred from conception
 - Opposition to abortion and capital punishment
 - Artificial birth control is not acceptable

Roman Catholicism: Salvation

- Our basic problem is... *sin*
- The solution to the problem is... *sanctification*
- Justification based on *inherent* righteousness
 - We are justified by faith *and* meritorious works
 - Only by divine *grace* can we *merit* eternal life
- Baptism regenerates and removes original sin
- Sacraments provide more sanctifying grace
- Passion of Christ purchased a ‘fund’ of grace

Evaluating Roman Catholicism

Theoretical Tools:

- Tool #1: Consistency
- Tool #2: Explanation
- Tool #3: Experience
- Tool #4: Coherence



Practical Tools:

- Tool #5: Conscience
- Tool #6: 'Livability'
- Tool #7: Fulfillment
- Tool #8: Hope



Tool #1: Consistency

- Can we be saved by grace *and* by works?
 - Grace and works are *antithetical* in the NT

"Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness." (Rom. 4:4-5)

"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." (Rom. 11:6)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

Tool #1: Consistency

- What does the Bible teach about justification?
 - Whose righteousness should we put our trust in?
- The teaching of Paul: Rom. 4:4-5; Phil. 3:4-9
- The teaching of Jesus: Luke 18:9-14
 - *Pharisee*: trusted in his own righteousness
 - Note: he credited his righteousness to *divine grace*!
 - *Tax Collector*: didn't trust in his own righteousness
 - Which of the two men was "justified" (v. 14)?

Tool #8: Hope

- Can Christians have assurance of salvation?
 - What point in our lives determines our destiny?
- Roman Catholic view:
 - Justifying faith does not guarantee salvation
 - Justification is progressive and can be lost
- New Testament view:
 - Justification is a decisive act of God (Rom. 5:1-11)
 - Justification guarantees salvation (Rom. 8:30-39)