

Christian Church/Catholic Church: What's the difference? (Short Answers to Frequently Asked Questions)

- 1. Are Christians and Roman Catholics the same?** Not all Christians are Roman Catholics. However, Roman Catholics who believe in Jesus Christ in faith are Christians. It is that faith that qualifies someone as a Christian regardless of what church they are in. There are true believers and false professors in every church. We believe in the same God, the Trinity, heaven and hell, and the same moral principles as affirmed in both the Old and New Testaments. There is more in common than there are differences.
- 2. How are your Christian beliefs and Roman Catholic beliefs different?** The approach we take in a Christian Church is that the Bible is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and Scripture. The Roman Catholic approach is that church tradition carries the same weight as Scripture. We believe that salvation (entrance into heaven) is a gift of God entirely by His grace and good works follow out of a responsive heart. We reject Roman Catholic teachings that might imply that saving grace can be imparted any other way or by any work of man, however good it may be.
- 3. What is the difference between a Catholic Bible and the Bible that other Christian Churches read (for example the New King James Bible)?** The Roman Catholic Bible includes several books that were added in the 16th century and placed in the middle of their Bible. We reject the authority of these books because they were not endorsed as Scripture by Jesus, the Apostles, or the early church.
- 4. Why don't all Christians believe/follow the Pope hierarchy?** Non-Catholics believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. The Bible says nothing about papal authority, so we reject the concept. What Scripture does give us is two offices in the church only; namely elders and deacons. Since a primary function of an elder is to pastor a church, Pastor is used interchangeably with Elder.

- 5. Do you believe in the sacrament of confession?** No. The Bible explicitly says that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and men. We are also told to confess our sins to God several times in the New Testament.
- 6. Do you believe there are there priests in a Christian church?** Yes, but in an entirely different sense. The Bible teaches us that we are all priests in the sense that we no longer need a human mediator between us and God because Jesus Christ has already provided a perfect once and for all sacrifice for sins.
- 7. Why isn't infant baptism recognized? Why are people re-baptized/born again?** We believe that Christian baptism is an outward act of obedience resulting from a conscious inward decision to become a Christian. Since an infant cannot make such a decision, we reject infant baptism. Jesus teaches us that we need to have both a physical and a spiritual birthday to enter heaven.
- 8. Do you believe in saints? Why or why not?** Yes, but not in the same sense as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. Saint comes from a word that means set apart one. According to the Bible, every believer is a saint. We don't make celebrities of mere men and women. Jesus Christ is the one Celebrity.
- 9. How is our service different than a Catholic Mass?** The sermon drawn from a Bible text is the central part of the service. We do not follow a liturgy.
- 10. Why isn't your service called a mass?** The central part of the Catholic mass is what is known as the Eucharistic sacrifice in which Jesus is mystically sacrificed at each mass. This is known as transubstantiation. We reject this because Jesus' sacrifice is affirmed by Scripture as a once and for all sacrifice that does not need repeating.
- 11. What is speaking in tongues? Do all Christian churches have people who speak in tongues?** Tongues was a temporary gift given to the early church to validate the gospel message of Jesus Christ and as a sign to unbelieving Israel of impending temporal and spiritual judgment. A few Catholic churches and many other Christian

churches believe the gift is for today. We, and many other churches, believe that tongues is not for today.

12. **Is Sunday School at a non-Catholic Christian church the same as CCD at a Catholic church?** Yes and No. It is in the sense that it is religious education based on Jesus. It is not in the sense that it is more focused on Scripture and less on Sacraments.
13. **Do you make your First Communion, First Penance and Confirmation at a Christian church? Why/why not?** No. None of these were ordained by Jesus. The only sacraments that were are Baptism and Communion.
14. **Do you have communion every week?** Yes. Although the frequency of Communion is never spelled out in Scripture, we follow the practice of the early church in doing so. Most non-Catholic churches do not.
15. **Who can partake of the elements of Communion in your church?** All believers in Jesus Christ who are not out of fellowship with Him as a result of habitual sin they intend to continue committing may partake of Communion.
16. **The communion bread at your church is not the same as the hosts at the Catholic church, what is it?** We use unleavened bread as a reminder of the Last Supper and a symbol of the sinless Son of God, Jesus.
17. **Do you serve wine or grape juice at communion time?** We serve grape juice only, so as not to present a problem for anyone who may have a problem with alcohol. We do this out of love and respect for any such brothers and sisters.