

'LIST OF HERESIES AND HUMAN TRADITIONS ADOPTED AND PERPETUATED BY THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE COURSE OF 1600 YEARS'

This compilation of "List of Heresies" is authored by The Rev. Stephen Testa under copyright of 2000 and is found on line at <http://www.bereancall.org/newsletters/heresy.htm> , or log on to [bereancall.com](http://www.bereancall.com) , then check newsletters, then bring up Tradition of the Catholic Church for the 'heresy' list.

This REBUTTAL is posted by J. D. FOURNIER in response to the allegations of Rev Testa.

Rev Testa lists 41 teachings of the Catholic Church which he claims have no relation to the religion of Jesus Christ as taught in the New Testament. This memo will rebut those allegations.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT AND OVERVIEW

Before challenging each individual statement, it is necessary to have an overview of the Catholic church and scripture. This article will rely on history, culture and scripture. It is presumed the reader is in agreement that Christ was in fact the "Logos" and Messiah and that Christ has two separate and distinct natures, one divine and one human. We also agree with Testa that the books of the New Testament are the same for both Catholics and Fundamentalists.

Christ founded a church—he did not write anything during his lifetime nor did he instruct anyone to write. In fact the church existed about 30 years before Paul's letter [s] to the church in Corinth were written. It was not Christ who designated bishops, presbyters and deacons to be the leaders of the church, those terms were first used by early churchmen {Timothy} to give some structure to the church. However, Christ did establish and give authority to His church as recorded at Matthew 16:18 :

"And so I say to you, you are Peter [rock] and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever you loose shall be loosed in heaven"

Christ's words are the foundation of the church, not the bible—the bible is merely the reflections of early church writers. Matthew 28:18-20 instructs church followers to go and teach all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit. There is also the promise of Christ to be with His church for all time- not abandoning the church between the 2nd and 16th century

The church needed a structure, and if not, and since we are human, and without structure, Christianity would not have survived. What organization does not have a leader? Christ saw to that and chose Peter to lead the church as an organization. The "keys" provision is most important here; it gives the church the authority to make decisions and settle disputes. Without that right, Christianity would have folded in a few years but it was the early bishops and those in apostolic succession to the apostles that carried the church forward. It was important that each early church trace its origin to an apostle or designate of such apostle for legitimacy.

A reading of Paul's epistles finds various churches in disorganization, having problems, undergoing turmoil and these letters were a means of teaching and discipline. In fact during the early years of the church there were about 80 or so writings that circulated and from these writings, the Catholic bishops selected 27 books which make up the present NT canon. This authoritative selection was made at two local Catholic church councils, Hippo and Carthage in the late 4th century, and later confirmed by a eucemenical council.

The writers of what we call the NT had no idea their writings would later be included in any canon of scripture. They were not writing at the instruction of anyone-nor do any of the writers say they were inspired as writers nor did they ever make an index. The Catholic Church made the index.

Columbia Encyclopedia [not a Catholic publication] says under the heading of "New Testament"

"At any rate, it is reasonably certain that early in the 2nd century Christians everywhere held in veneration two sets of writings, a set of gospels and a series of Paul's epistles as we have them. It seems early in the 3rd century the church was convinced that a Christian literature existed which should rank in canonicity with the Jewish scriptures but there was no clear agreement except as to Paul's epistles and the four gospels.

.The authority of Origen [185-251] was important in the canon and he had much influence and is largely responsible for giving James, Hebrews, Peter 2, John 3 and Jude a place in the NT. In addition, the present canon was listed as we now have it by Bishop Athanasius [4th cent] and again by Pope Damasus in 382".

Part of the reason for the creation of the canon as we now know it was Marcion, a deacon in Rome, who, in about the year 150, listed what was the first known canon—he claimed the canon should be limited to Paul's letters and Luke's gospel. He wanted to purify the church from its Jewish roots and thus all other Christian writings were rejected, as well as the Jewish Septuagint scriptures. At this point, the institutional church [consisting mainly of bishops] stepped in and rejected Marcion's canon.

The church called itself Catholic at the beginning of the second century. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch [city where the followers of Christ were first called Christian] in a letter to the church in Smyrna stated as follows: "Shun divisions as the beginning of evils. Do follow your bishop, as Christ followed the Father, and presbyters [priests] as the apostles, and to the deacons pay respect as to God's commandment. Let no man do things apart from the bishop----wherever the bishop shall appear, even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal [catholic] church". Now we have thousands of denominations, a far cry from the biblical injunction, that there be one faith, one baptism and one lord.

Most Protestants say the scripture is an infallible inspired book. Thus, can it not be said that the bishops and councils of the Catholic church that selected these writings also had an infallible trait- weren't bishops also inspired in making the selection?

One may argue that these books are self evident and should be a part of scripture. They are not self evident, the writers never made an index—the Catholic church did. St Augustine stated “I would not believe the gospel if the authority of the Catholic church did not move me”. Martin Luther made the same comment centuries later. G. B. Smith, Protestant theologian concludes that only when one admits a divine authority in the church can there be an infallible canon. The church is the basis for the bible as the church came first. The early church used the Jewish Septuagint scriptures which was settled in the second century BC by Jewish scholars and this canon was used by Christ and the apostles during their lifetimes. This canon included the six books rejected by Protestants rejected during the Reformation.

The Jewish Palestinian canon was assembled in the mid 2nd century AD by Jewish scholars and this is now the present Jewish canon as well as the Protestant canon. This canon does not have the additional six books the Catholic Church is falsely accused of adding to the canon. However, nearly all references in the NT to scripture are in fact a references to the Septuagint.

Rev. Testa, in his preliminary statement states that many of the dates used are approximate as to when a certain teaching arose.

He also states that when a pope or council proclaimed a teaching, it became dogma. Unfortunately, Rev Testa cannot distinguish between what consists of dogma, doctrine and rule.

Doctrine is subject to change but it can be subject to change such as the doctrine of just war. A just war has been the teaching of the church for centuries but with the advent of nuclear warfare, the church is rethinking that doctrine.

Dogma is doctrine defined. For instance, the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed can be considered dogmatic statements of faith. Dogma can be amplified and further explained but it is generally not subject to change.

A rule can be changed, such as the use of vernacular in the Mass.

Now I wish to address the list of “Heresies” as Rev. Testa calls it, and I shall do so by using his numbering system

1. A. Testa says the Catholic church says prayers for the dead and uses the sign of the cross and started doing this around the years 300-310.

We will start with the sign of the cross. It is true that in the early church the cross was not used as a symbol because it was a sign of shame and cruelty. Instead, the church used such symbols as loaves and fishes but after Constantine's vision of the cross before the battle at the Milvan bridge in Rome in the 4th century, the cross became more acceptable as a symbol of Christianity. When Constantine issued the edict of Milan around 315 AD, the Catholic Church could practice its beliefs as a "religio liciti. Since then, crosses became one of the leading symbols of Christianity, they are on steeples of churches, reflected in art and statues, icons and often placed inside churches. They are on flags of a number of countries, the Red Cross uses it as a symbol, they are often in or on hospitals and on jewelry. We are human, we understand symbols. Christ understood that also when he used such items as water, fish, bread, wine, oils to clarify his teaching and promote his ministry. The sign of the cross invoking the Trinity is a prayer sometimes said by tracing the sign of the cross in front of the person making the sign. It is true this exact sign was never used or mentioned by Christ in the scriptures, but then where is there authority in the scriptures to make use of steeples, pews, podiums, church bells, microphones etc. Nowhere in scripture is there any statement that church teaching and actions are limited to what is in the bible.

1 B Testa says that prayers for the dead is contrary to the bible—there is no mention of it in scripture.

Before starting on this subject, we must delve into at least three related subjects:

- A. Communion of Saints,
- B Purgatory,
- C Intercessory prayer

We first look at scripture:

- a. 2 Maccabees 12:38-46—summarized indicates that after a battle involving the Maccabees in a Jewish revolt, there is a statement that it is good to "pray for the dead" [soldiers slain in battle]. This portion of scripture is part of the Septuagint.
- b. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Verse 15 states that "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he shall be saved, yet so as by fire" [KJV]-1611 edition.

Now let us look at purgatory as an existence after death. This word is not found in scripture, but then neither is the word trinity. Both trinity and purgatory are words used by the church to explain a teaching.

Ancient Christian tombs often carried the inscription RIP, rest in peace—the Latin initials are the same as the English initials—this inscription is a form of prayer. It is senseless to pray for one who is either in the existence of heaven or hell—it would do no good, thus the tomb inscription implies another

existence. The Orthodox Christians agree with the Catholic position although they do not use the term purgatory.

We start by saying that God is an all perfect being, he cannot be less than that, otherwise God himself would be an inferior being. When we are called from this life, it is to enjoy a perfect union with God, and thus, we ourselves must arrive at some state of perfection, otherwise union with God cannot be perfect. Scripture says we are to be perfect as the Father and nothing unclean can enter into union with God.

But here on earth we are full of imperfections, we lie, cheat, gossip, have addictions, and these imperfections, if not remedied on earth, must be purged in after life. Purgatory is a place of growth and joy—note that as teenagers we experience growth pains, it hurts, but we know as we go through this age we will arrive at adulthood. So likewise, a student studying for a degree suffers hardship in his/her studies, but upon passing, enjoys a graduation with a degree.

None of this is intended to subtract from Christ's atonement death on the cross for the redemption of mankind but a conversion to Christianity or acceptance of Christ as one's savior does not automatically guarantee union with God after death. There is post conversion or post baptismal sin. In other words, Christ's death did not deliver us from concupiscence or weakness of the flesh. We still have these weaknesses.

Say I walk out of Safeway as a born again Christian with \$100.00 worth of groceries not paid for and die of a heart attack in the parking lot without repentance, where would I go?--- Fundamentalist teaching would have to place me either in hell or heaven? In this scenario, it seems I cannot go to heaven because I have committed a transgression against the commandment not to steal. Yet to a Catholic it seems that it is not serious enough to warrant eternal separation from God, that God in his mercy would want us all in heaven, yet at the same time it seems that some form of growth/repentance is still needed. Would not an existence in purgatory sound reasonable?

In this next scenario I use another situation.

The example now changes to my son Bill who takes the \$100.00 worth of groceries from Safeway and is arrested in the parking lot unrepentant. Would I, as a father, exclude him from my household forever. Not on a lifetime. Would I take him back-yes. Would he have some penalty to pay? Yes! So he goes to court, tells the Safeway manager and the court that he is extremely sorry. Is that the end of the case? No- Bill may be put on probation, have to do community service, pay a fine and return the groceries or at least pay for them. Eventually over time he is brought back into the community. This is the penalty.

As Christians, we often refer to this as post conversion or post baptismal sin. Christ's death on the cross does not allow after baptism-[born again conversion] to automatically wipe away these later types of transgressions. If personal sin is later committed after being born again without repentance, does that person go direct to heaven on death if they continue to confess Christ as savior?. If so, wouldn't that give Fundamentalists free rein to do anything they like without ever having to worry again?. Catholic

belief is that you work out your salvation each day by your actions and beliefs and this is borne out at Matt 25:31-46 where the nations of the world will be judged on how we cared for one another. This involves the parable of separating the goats and the sheep based on their caring for the downtrodden of the world.

The next issue has to do with prayers for the deceased. Preliminarily this has to do with those persons who may be in the existence of purgatory and this necessarily involves the teaching around the Communion of Saints, which is part of the early church creed known as the Apostles Creed. This creed is a short summary of the early church core beliefs and was used in early baptism rites and in fact is still used in Catholic baptism rites to this very day. The church considers all persons on earth, heaven and purgatory as part of this communion. In addition, the Eucharistic celebration in Catholic, Orthodox and some Protestant congregations emphasize this community and joint effort. This is sometimes referred to as both a vertical reach to God as well as a horizontal reach to each other.

In treating this issue, we also look at the type of prayers that are used in the church. They are petition, praise, thanksgiving and intercession. Here we are concerned only with intercessory prayers. Thus, if I ask someone to pray for me here on earth why wouldn't that same person do so if he/she were in union with God after death—we don't lose our sense of community because of death.

Since we are community and since those in purgatory are in communion with us, why shouldn't we pray for their ongoing growth and eventual union with God. Is there any inconsistency here? Aren't we all on the same road? Doesn't God answer all prayers in one way or the other? Does not God want all humanity to be joined in heaven? This is why Catholics pray for each other not only on earth but also those who are deceased and that may be in the growth state of purgatory.

Lastly, Jewish tradition has a prayer called the Kaddish in which Jewish members on earth pray for their deceased members. That tradition exists today. There is nothing in Christian scripture which condemns this. In addition, Jesus as a practicing Jew would have said these prayers as he would have attended Jewish funerals and said prayers for his deceased relatives and friends. He never condemned these practices as he did the then current Jewish practice of divorce.

There will be more on the issue of purgatory in paragraphs seven and thirty below

2. Testa says that candles were introduced in the year 320 [presumably in church services]

Candles were used in the ancient world to give light at night. When the church was in the catacombs in Rome in the early centuries, candles were used to give light so people could see. Scripture cites that Christ [logos] is the Light of the World, John 1: 3-5. Christ brings this divine light and life into the world for our benefit. What a fitting use of candles that symbolize and remind us that Christ is the light of the world. Candles are warmth, light, joyous—they are not adored. We use them for gatherings, birthday parties, church celebrations, dinner parties. The use of candles are certainly not adverse to any scripture readings.

3. Testa says veneration of angels and dead saints started circa 375

Scripture states that the greatest of the commandments is to love God and neighbor.

Brothers and sisters in Christ have been referred to as saints in the NT. In the early church, saints were acclaimed by local congregations but in more recent times, the church now uses a canonization process to formally declare a saint which involves an investigatory process. Saints are venerated because they most literally took God's command to love God and neighbor. Saints give us hope in an often dreary world.

How many of us have pictures of family members in our house who are deceased and often times we may remember their anniversary dates, either of birth or death? We reverence, for instance, our family members. We also reverence, for instance, George Washington, Martin Luther King and Abe Lincoln as important individuals in our country's history.

There is nothing in scripture adverse to remembering or venerating saints who have gone before us.
[paragraph 7 below]

4. Testa says the Mass, as a daily celebration, was adopted in 394

The Catholic church moved the main day of eucharistic worship from Saturday to Sunday in the 3rd-4th century. Sunday now is the normal weekly day of worship for most Christians.

There is nothing that prohibits a eucharistic celebration on any other day of the week. It would appear that Acts 2: 42-46 indicates the participants have a daily sharing of a meal and praising God but even if one argues that this was not the eucharistic celebration, still why can't such a rite be celebrated daily? The Mass, as it is also called, is one continuous prayer, [except for the homily] involving prayers for forgiveness, praise, recitations from the psalms, readings from both OT and NT, sermon, recitation of the Nicene Creed and/or Apostles Creed, prayers of petition, worship, celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, thanksgiving, recitation of the Lords Prayer, Communion and a final blessing urging all to go forth and serve the Lord and each other.

Recall on the institution of the Eucharist, Christ mandated that it be continued. He did not restrict it to any one particular day—in fact the first celebration took place on a Thursday.

There is nothing here inconsistent with scripture Why wouldn't shouldn't Mass be celebrated daily as a prayer for persons who might wish to attend? Isn't prayer a good thing to be involved in? Don't Evangelicals have TV programs everyday that involve praise and worship? Should that be curtailed?

5 Testa says the worship of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the use of the term, “Mother of God”, as applied to her, originated at the Council of Ephesus in — 431

In approaching this subject, we assume for the purpose of this discussion that Christ has two separate and distinct natures, one human and one divine. This issue took several centuries to resolve. In arriving at this conclusion, the church had to deal with such heresies as Arianism, [among several heresies] which stated Christ is the first created being, Appollinarianism which stated Christ had no human spirit, the Logos replaced it; Monothelism which stated Christ had no human will, just a divine one—thus the church had to deal with Christ’s nature[s] which ultimately involved Mary as Christ’s mother.

All worship in the Catholic church is directed to God, not to any of the saints, including Mary. Many people have gotten this wrong for centuries; but Protestant theologians of note get Catholic teaching right, but apparently this thought never gets into all Protestant pews.

Mary’s role becomes more evident after the Trinitarian and Christological disputes were settled. Without Mary's assent there is no redemption.

Mary’s status was discussed at Ephesus as well as at Chalcedon in 451. Stated simply, since Christ has a divine nature, Mary could thus be called Theotokos. It was the eastern church theologians and bishops who carried the ball in this area. Thus Theologian Richard P. McBrien, Notre Dame University, stated that the “Council of Ephesus would insist that Mary was the Mother of God, on the theological principal that she gave birth not to a nature alone personage, but to a divine personage. As a consequence of the union by which divinity and humanity are united in one person, we can predicate the one person is rooted in either nature”.

This was further amplified on jsm.com [Swaggart Ministries-TNT channel]] on June19 2005, when Rev Swaggart made the statement that God was incarnated in the flesh [in Mary] Thus Mary became the Theotokos [Godbearer-Greek word]-we translate that in English as Mother of God.

Elizabeth at Luke 1:43 states: “And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me”. [KJV-1611].

The following are some additional scripture other scripture quotes involving Mary:

Luke 2:28 Gabriel greets Mary as follows: “Hail, thou art highly favored among women, the lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women”

Luke 2:42 Mary is greeted by Elizabeth and says to Mary “blessed is the fruit of thy womb” Then follows Mary’s Magnificat where she states her soul magnifies the Lord.

I attended a Fundamentalist church part time for two years or so and the words I sometimes heard were that Catholics adored Mary. Any standard encyclopedia [Britannica-Americanana- Columbia] will indicate different.

I challenged a fundamentalist preacher on this several years ago and he commented that the encyclopedias were wrong on this issue, even tho these encyclopedias were published in Protestant countries, United States and Britain.

Columbia Encyclopedia [1937] states under the heading 'SAINTS'--- “This word was in use almost from the beginning of Christianity, a saint is one who died for the faith [martyr] or one who led a holy life who was not a martyr. – The intercession of the saints is a characteristic of Catholics and Orthodox. Saints are considered analogous to friends to whom one may turn for help. Prayer to saints does not imply lack of immediate approach to God. The honor paid the saints is distinguished by Catholics and Orthodox from the worship of God, who alone may be considered omnipotent, perfect and eternal and on whom the saints depend for all their power the saints are neither **ADORED OR WORSHIPED.**” [emphasis added]

6.. Testa says the clergy began to dress differently from the laity in 500

The exact opposite happened. Styling of clothes changed through the centuries for the laity. For instance, today there are business suits, ties and vest in our society–these were unknown centuries ago.

The traditional wear in the Middle East today remains similar for many in that many Arabs and others still wear long robes. The Catholic clergy in some places have have continued this traditional wear of robes although in recent times there has been a change to dark suits

7. Testa says the doctrine of purgatory was first established by Gregory the Great [pope] about the year 583

We have discussed some of the aspects of purgatory in paragraph One above. We agree that the word purgatory is not found in scripture, but the underlying teaching is there.

The following are scriptural quotes that support the teaching of purgatory:

1. Timothy 1: 16-18: “May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus because he gave me new heart and was not ashamed of my chains.—May the Lord grant him to find mercy in the Lord on that day.” The word “day” here means judgment day. See Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Paul prays for his departed friend which makes sense only if he can be helped by prayer. Prayer helps no one who is in existence of hell or heaven.

2. Matt 5:48 “So be perfect just as your father in heaven is perfect.” and Rev 21:27 where “Nothing unclean shall enter heaven.” How many of us die a perfect saint? Don't you think we take some of our addictions into eternity at death, such as an addiction to gossip, drinking and gambling addictions, racism, discrimination, slanderous thoughts etc. All of the items mentioned in this paragraph are less than perfection. Does it get sorted out in hell? I don't think so. Purgatory is a growth existence for our benefit. Christ wished all peoples to be saved.

references: Scripture

Encyclopedia Britannica

Catholicism, by Richard McBrien, theologian, Notre Dame University

Beginning Apologetics, Chacon and Burnham, 1993-98, San Juan Seminars

8. Testa says the Latin Language , as the language of prayer and worship, was imposed by Gregory 1, 600 years after Christ.

The two most common languages in the Roman empire were Greek and Latin. . There were, of course, other languages, such as Hebrew and Aramaic used mainly in Palestine. The Septuagint was in the Greek language and all of the Christian scriptures were written in Greek, with the possible exception of Matthew.

Latin made its first appearance in the west in North Africa at the close of the second century - this was at a time when Greek was the standard language for the Mass in Rome. Latin services spread to Rome and became the language of the Mass in the west around 3rd century. However, as change is difficult, the “Kyrie Elieson” of the Mass is still recited in the Greek language, that is, it still remains a part of the Latin Mass.

In later centuries when Latin disappeared as a common language, one going to Mass in Madrid, Paris or Rome would hear the Mass in the traditional Latin language, a sign of unity in the church. As printing became prevalent in the last few centuries and people became more literate, vernacular translations would appear along side the Latin. Today the Mass is now in the vernacular in all countries.

The first Latin translation of the bible was copied by St. Jerome from the Greek to Latin and this was called the Vulgate. This was done at the beginning of the 5th century. Ancient scribes were reluctant to translate scripture because meaning was often lost in the translation and this type thinking carried into the Reformation. During the Reformation period we had a number of bad translations, such as the”Adulterers bible”, “Breeches bible” and so on.

As the western empire dissolved, Latin continued as the language for government, international affairs and it was also the language for medicine, ecology, biology, theology, science. It was used in universities founded and operated by the church. Until recent times, the majority of people could not read or write-it is said there during the Dark Ages maybe 1-2% of people were literate, and these people were generally connected with government and the church.

9 Testa says the bible teaches that we pray to God alone. In the primitive church never were prayers directed to Mary or dead saints. This practice began in the Roman church about 600 AD. The following quotes from scripture are cited as reason for this statement:

Matt 11:28 Come to me, all that labor and I will give you rest.

Luke 1:46 Mary says my soul magnifies the lord.

Acts 10:25-26 And as Peter was coming in Cornelius met him and fell down and worshiped. him [Peter] but Peter told him to get up, that he, Peter, was a man.

Acts 14:14-18 Here the two apostles criticize Lyconia for praising and sacrificing to Jupiter.

RESPONSE:

The above citations revolve around adoration. Adoration is reserved for God alone. There is no adoration of saints in Catholicism.

This question was answered under paragraph 5 above under the communion of saints but more amplification below.

Love implies nurturing, support, caring and personal involvement with others. God gave us a free will and intellect—the ability to think. God is a personal God and he has these traits. He could not give us traits He does not have. Thus, we as individuals have at its ideal a nurturing and loving personality. We do and say prayers for each other on earth, including intercessory prayers for each other. We call this the communion of saints. This is very biblical.

Scripture at 1Cor 12:12-13 indicates we are baptized into one body. Ephesians stresses we should be of one faith, have one lord and on baptism, be of one spirit and body.

10 Testa says the papacy is of pagan origin. The title of pope or universal bishop was first given to the bishop of Rome by the wicked emperor Phocas in the year 610.

The basis for the primacy of the bishop of Rome is Matt 16:16-19. Christ provided for the leadership of the church so it would continue after Christ was no longer on earth. While Christ is the invisible head, the bishop of Rome is the visible head, the successor to Peter. Is there any organization on earth that does not have a president, chairman, leader—if not, that organization falls into disarray and eventually crumbles and fragments.

There are many writers in the early centuries who make reference to Peter being in Rome and dying there. One of the earliest writers to draw up list of bishops for Rome was Hegasippus [110-180AD], another was church historian Eusebius [270-340AD]. It was important in the early church that each church trace its origin back to an apostle and/or one appointed bishop by an apostle thus tracing its orthodoxy through a line of succession.

St Irenaeus [fl 180-200AD] stated that “the succession of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient Church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, that church which has the tradition and faith comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. For with this church, because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree—and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition” Irenaeus then goes on to name all the twelve successors of Peter to the time of his writing. Who is best to believe, someone writing in the 16 or 20 century, or one who lived just after the apostolic age?

Canon 3 of the 1st Council of Constantinople in 381AD stated: “The bishop of Constantinople shall have the primacy of honor after the bishop of Rome, because his city is New Rome”

Emperor Phocas as mentioned above in Testa’s challenge was not the emperor in Rome, he was the emperor in Constantinople [602-610AD]. As the eastern ruler, he merely recognized the primacy of the apostolic see at Rome. He did not coin the word “pope”

The word “pope” is from the Greek word “pappas” meaning father and in Latin rendered as Papa and it was in use as early as the 3rd century according to Encyclopedia Britannica. It was not necessarily used solely by the bishop of Rome, other large metropolitan areas also called their spiritual leaders pope. We know that Cyprian of Carthage [c250AD] was written a letter from Rome in 250 where the word “pope” was used. The year 610 as alleged by Testa is false. The word pope is not in scripture, but neither is the word “Reverend” as the writer Stephen L. Testa styles himself.

Testa also says in this paragraph that Christ did not appoint Peter to the leadership of the apostles and forbade any such notion, citing Lk 22:24-26, Eph 1:22-23, Col 1:18 and 1 Cor 3:11. He also charges Peter never was in Rome, ie., no evidence to support it.

1. The reference in Luke is to bragging rights and in this passage Christ berates his followers. I ask Rev Testa how any organization survives without leadership. Is there not some type leader in the

reverends own church? The reference in Ephesians is Christ's kingship over all—the notion of Peter being the chief apostle is not at variance with this passage—Catholics acknowledge the kingship of Christ but he is not here on earth in a physical form—some one on earth must lead. There never has been and never will be a direct phone line to God

2. The reference in Col. is that Christ is the invisible head of the church—Catholics agree with that because Christ initiated the church but nevertheless Christ appointed Peter its visible head to make sure it survived. Without the institutional church, Christianity would not have survived, the Christian scriptures would not have been placed in a canon and orthodoxy would have been buried with the Arian, Nestorian, Docetic, Montanist etc movements in the early church. A good share of the biblical letters address problems in the early church—it was not pristine as the NT epistles point this out.

3. The reference in 1 Cor is that Christ is the foundation of the church but notice that in the preceding sentence Paul says Christ laid a “foundation and another is building upon it” acknowledging that Christ is the basic foundation. The apostles built on that and that is why Christ chose one of them to lead on earth. See Matt 16:18 for appointment of Peter as head of the church [discussed in OVERVIEW above]. Peter has over a 120 citations in scripture, the next most mentioned apostle of the original 12 is mentioned less than 30 times. In addition, Peter is the only apostle who had his name changed from his birth name to “rock” by Christ. The changing of Peter's name to rock is an indication of giving the church itself a solid foundation, no other apostle received such attention from Christ.

4. Scripture does mention Peter at Rome. See 1 Peter 5:13 where he writes: “The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you and so doth Marcus my son” [KJV 1611]. Babylon was the code name for Rome. Apocalyptic literature, Christian and otherwise, was common in this era and these code names were used to avoid destruction of any written material in the event of persecution. Thus Christians would use the code name “Babylon” for Rome for this reason. This geographic name of Babylon, of course, had a bad connotation for those with Jewish background. and the Romans would be unlikely to destroy any document mentioning Babylon as they would one mentioning Rome.

5. Written Tradition has both Peter and Paul dying in Rome. Clement of Rome [4th bishop of the city] in his first letter to the Corinthians in about 96 AD states: “Consider the noble examples of our own generation. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillar [referring to the church in Rome] were persecuted even to death. Let us set before our eyes the good apostle: Peter, who through unwarranted jealousy not one or two but many toils and having thus given testimony went to the place of glory that was his due”

In so far as other writers are concerned, there were many who placed Peter in Rome—here are a few;

1. Ignatius of Antioch [35-107AD]
2. Papais, bishop of Hieropolis [quoted in Eusebius] 60-130AD]
3. Dionysisus, bishop of Corinth, Soter, bishop of Rome, 166-174AD

11 Testa says the kissing of the popes feet began in 709. It had been a pagan custom to kiss the feet of emperors. The word of God forbids such practices [Acts 10:25-26 and Rev 19-10; 22:9]

1. Acts says Cornelius fell down and worshiped Peter and Peter said to Cornelius to rise up. There is nothing in Catholic teaching that says popes are to worshiped.

2. Rev 10 and 22 suggest worship of God only—no quarrel there

Kissing of the feet is a gesture of respect in this context, not adoration. Note Luke 7: 36-50 talks about a woman kissing and anointing the feet of Jesus. While this passage talks about forgiveness, one must remember the culture in which this occurred—the Mediterranean basin and in particular in a Jewish setting. Harper's Bible Dictionary, first published in 1952 and again in 1971, basically a Protestant publication, at page 341, talks about gestures.

Gestures are the movement of hands and other parts of the body to express feelings and attitudes and that these gestures have different meanings from culture to culture. A kiss is generally a greeting, even Judas used it after the Last Supper.

I do not recall any prohibition in scripture against that cultural act. The intent of the act is all important—no worship of the pope has ever been intended—worship alone is reserved for God as Columbia Encyclopedia states.

Carrying this a bit further, in our civil proceeds here in this country, the petitioners pleading their case before the court “pray” to the court for relief. Judges in England were sometimes called “Your Worship”.

12. Testa says the temporal power of the pope began in 750 and that Pepin gave Rome and the surrounding territory to pope. Jesus expressly forbade such a thing and he himself refused worldly kingship. See Matt 4:8-9; Matt 20:25-26 and John 18:38.

1. Matt 4 deals with Christ's temptation where the devil offers all the kingdoms of the world to Christ in exchange for worship of the devil by Christ. Christ refused. There is nothing implicit in Testa's statement that Pepin required worship from the pope or that the pope himself was to be worshiped

2. Matthew 20 talks about service, let one of the great minister and whoever that might be, let him also be servant to all. Is not a pope who in this age is sovereign in Rome and as a moral leader to all peoples in the world prevented from that ministry? Admittedly, there have been some popes who have abused the position but all in all the See of Peter has survived for 20 centuries, mostly with decent popes. Even Christ chose as one of his own a betrayer, doubter and denier. Can we thus accuse Christ of a bad choices, certainly at least in the case of Judas?

3. John 18:36 says Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Nevertheless, since this kingdom had to operate in this world, it was necessary to have some sort of organization, otherwise it would have fallen apart after the Christ left this world. The bishop of Rome is the oldest continuing institution in the world as it carries on the work of Christianity.

How did the pope become a secular leader?

In the late 4th century, the western empire was inundated with tribes from the north and eventually it began to collapse. In these years, the western emperor moved his palace to such cities as Verona, Ravenna and Milan. In the mid 5th century, Attila the Hun and his group threatened Rome. Then pope Leo I, the most respected person in Rome, went to the city of Mantua to plead with Attila, in northern Italy, to spare the city of Rome and asked him to withdraw from the area. The pope's request was granted. Later, in 455 he met the Vandal Gaiseric outside the walls of Rome and, if he could not prevent him from seizing and looting the city, at least the pope spared it from fire, torture and massacre. The pope was considered a hero by the populace and he became the de facto ruler of the city.

Was he to refuse that leadership when his office had saved Rome serious damage in at least two instances in the 5th century. One must look at the culture at the time of the event and not judge it strictly by today's standards. With the legalization of Christianity, the church started to acquire lands and estates, often by grants and wills. In the 8th century the duchy of Rome, as it was called, was dependent on the eastern empire. However, the duchy could not be protected from the Lombards so Pope Stephen pleaded for protection from the Franks and as a result, the papal states came into existence.

In 1870, along with other countries in this time frame, Italy became a united country and the papal states ceased to exist. Later, Pope John Paul II took the office of pope to unprecedented heights in the 20th century, preaching love, tolerance, justice, equality to all peoples, regardless of color, ethnicity, creed, religion or nationality, not just to Christians, but to the whole world.

13. Testa says worship of the cross, of images and relics was authorized in 788—by order of the dowager Empress Irene of Constantinople and then called a church council at the request of Pope Hadrian I.

Such practice is condemned in Ex 20:4, 3:17, Deut 27:15 and Psalm 1 15

Catholics and Orthodox Christians do not adore these item, they may be venerated or revered but never adored. Only God is adored and worshiped.

As humans, we may reverence a keepsake of our deceased parents, but that is not and never can be adoration Hadrian I did not authorize the adoration of relics, images and cross, but he did restore their veneration after the Iconoclastic controversy in the east.

Ex 20:4 says no graven images of things above and below shall be made. This forms part of the ten commandments. This has to do with adoration of images. But see Exodus 25:18-20 where God instructs the Israelites to fashion an angel from gold.. How do you resolve this conflict? Easy, the intent is all important

Deut 27:15 addresses the same subject as Exodus. This graven image recited here is to be put in a secret place—but again this has to do with adoration—no problem here with Catholic and Orthodox and this again goes up against Ex 25:18-20. Intent-intent.

..

14 Testa says holy water, mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by the priest was authorized in 850.

The use of holy water derives from Christ's use of water in his ministry.. He was baptized with it in the Jordan and the church has termed the use of water in blessings as a "sacramental" or "sacrament." in the case of baptism. Baptism is a sacrament but the use of blessed water in making the sign of the cross is a sacramental. We bless food at the beginning of meals. In summary, there is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot be directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God. What is wrong with blessing houses, animals, fire trucks, baseball fields, city halls etc with the idea of consecrating their use to the good of people and ultimately thanking God. See Catholic Catechism

Does it really matter when this might have began? Isn't good to bless the items God has given us?

15. Testa says the veneration of St Joseph began in 890

Veneration of saints began very early in the Christian era—at first it was applied to people who gave their life as martyrs. Veneration of saints usually started at their death site. Polycarp was one of the earliest martyrs that we have a record according to Ency Britannica.[70/82-156/168 AD].

Thus veneration of a particular saint might start in any given year. The church has made a distinction between Latria [worship of God] and Dulia [veneration of saints]. St Augustine made a very strong statement on this issue during his lifetime.

The veneration of Joseph was introduced in the east and placed on the Catholic calendar in the west in the 15th century

16 Testa says the baptism of bells was begun by Pope John XV in 965.

John XV was in office from 985-996, not 965..

“Baptism” here has the meaning of having rung the bells for the first time. Similarly, when a GI enters combat for the first time, he is said to have undergone “a baptism of fire”. I am quite confident that anyone reading this paragraph would not understand either of these two mentioned events as the Sacrament of Baptism as administered by any church.

If newly installed in a church, there may also be a blessing of the bells before they are first rung, a blessing that might be similar to saying a blessing before partaking of a meal.

17. Testa says canonization of saints began in 995. Every believer is called a saint in the bible, Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:2

Paul uses the word saints as an address for the Christians of these two communities. Catholics have no problem with that.

However, over the centuries, certain individuals have stood out and these persons have been “canonized” as having special qualities that maybe many of us do not possess.

Enc Britannica states there was no formal canonization in the early church, tho the recognition of martyrs was widespread in the ancient church. The bishop of the local church would make some determination of special sainthood. Often times, canonization was by acclamation but as time passed on, it was thought there should be some formulation and formal investigation for canonization and so appeals were often made to the pope. Thus, in the 16th century, a congregation in Rome was set up to investigate causes for sainthood.

This is a natural condition. Don't we hold certain persons in our own culture having special status, such as Geo Washington, Abe Lincoln, Martin Luther King etc.

18. Testa says fasting began on Fridays and during Lent and were imposed in year 998

This is against the plain teaching of the bible, see Matt 15:10, 1 Cor 10:25, 1 Tim 4:1-3

Matt 15:10 says nothing about fasting, 1 Cor 10:25 says nothing about fasting, 1 Tim 4:1-3 deals with false asceticism. Mark 9:29 suggests prayer and fasting.

When Catholics discuss fasting and Lent, we refer to Matt 4:2 where Christ fasted 40 days and nights in the wilderness. The origin of fasting in the early church comes from the apostolic times. The period of 40 days is suggested by Christ's own fast in the desert before his public ministry.

Matt 6:17 states “When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Hermas c 150 AD follows this lead and says every prayer should be accompanied with humility. Fast, therefore, and you will obtain from the Lord what you plead for.

The Didache c80AD says baptismal candidates to fast one or two days before the baptism.

The apostolic constitution [compiled 390AD] refers to a 40 day fast

Enc Britannica states there was fasting in Rome in the early years and the Council of Nicea uses the name of Lent in the 5th canon [325AD]

19. Testa says the Mass was developed gradually as a sacrifice. Attendance made obligatory in the 11th century.

Testa says the bible teaches that Christ's sacrifice was offered once and for all and is not to be repeated, but only commemorated in the Lord's Supper. [Read Heb 7:27, 9:26-28 and 10:10-14]

RESPONSE

The scripture quotation from Hebrews was addressed to Jewish people who most likely attended the synagogue and who at the same time were Christian. The quotes from Hebrew suggested to those with Jewish background that they no longer had to offer bloody sacrifices. However, the sacrifice of the Mass [Liturgy in the Eastern Orthodox Churches] is that a sacrifice of praise is offered. The Mass is not another sacrifice of Christ, nor a re-sacrifice of Christ, it is the one offering of Christ that is re-presented [made present] to us today.

Let us start with scripture and may I suggest here that John 6:32-70 be read in its entirety. But in all event, certainly the following passages are critical.

John 6:51-57 is Christ's teaching regarding what was later to be the first Eucharist at the last supper. Verse 56 is crucial—"who ever eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him" . Verse 66 says many DISCIPLES LEFT Christ after he said these words-these were the first protestants against Christ's teaching. Christ did not call these disciples back nor did he attempt to make any further explanation as to what he said. These disciples, along with the Romans and Greeks, called this teaching and his other teachings ridiculous. If Christ were talking symbolically, these disciples would not have left. Christ meant what he said and He used very plain and understandable language.

Now we come to the last supper. Note the sacrificial words used by Christ at Luke 22:19-20: "This is my body which is GIVEN up for you" and "This cup is the new testament in my blood which is SHED for you" [emphasis added]. This is sacrificial language which would have been understood in the Jewish culture. None of the apostles at the Last Supper backed away from these statements and none questioned Christ about the plain meaning of his words. In Luke's gospel Christ uses the word "eat". The Aramaic word has the general meaning of "gnaw" although we translate it as "eat" in English.

See also Paul's letter 1 Cor. 10:16: "The cup of blessing, which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Verse 26 says: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [READ SACRIFICE] until he comes again"

Peter 2:3 states the we “also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” [KJV-1610]

Now let us turn to some of the church fathers:

Didache, an early church writing [c 80AD] states “that after gathering and breaking bread and giving thanks and having confessed you sins, that your sacrifice may be pure—and that the sacrifice not be profaned.”

Justin Martyr, [c 160AD] speaks of those “Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices the bread of the Eucharist and the cup of the Eucharist.”

Clement of Rome, fourth bishop of the city of Rome [86-97AD] in 80 AD said “Our sin offering will not be small if we reject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly offered sacrifices” meaning Eucharist

Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, [c110AD] stated “They [meaning Gnostics] abstain from the Eucharist because they do not confess it is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ—“ The Gnostics generally held that material was evil, rejected the Jewish scriptures and gave hidden meanings to their beliefs. These teachings were rejected by the church and eventually Gnosticism passed pretty much into oblivion despite the Elaine Pagels books of our current age.

The Orthodox Christians agree with the Catholics in this matter

20. Testa says the celibacy of the priesthood was decreed by Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VIII, in the year 1079. Jesus imposed no such rule nor did any of the apostles. On the contrary Peter was married and St Paul says that bishops were to have wife and children [1 Tim 3:2-5 and 12; Matt 8-14-15]. Timothy suggests bishops be married only once if they are consecrated to the position and have a wife. If the wife dies during the term of the bishops office, the bishop cannot remarry.

RESPONSE

My reply here is that these statements here are in the nature of good counsel but they do not prohibit celibacy.

The founder Christ and Paul the prolific writer in the New Testament were both single.

1 Cor 7:32 fortifies the single life lead by Paul. This passage suggests that one who is single cares for the things of the Lord and how he may please the Lord. When one has a family, there are family matters to consider where an unmarried person can devote full time to service God. Did not Christ, when he called the apostles, ask them to give up their former life style and follow Him. 1 Cor 7:8-10 suggests celibacy but does not command it.

Celibacy and the married life exhortations are rules that can be changed. There is no absolute mandate for either marriage or celibacy but either is acceptable.

The celibacy rule was partially put in place in the western church in the 4th century. Celibacy became mandatory in the west during the Lateran councils. Part of the reason is that various churches that were administered by married priests, would, on death, pass to his family and thus create a legal tangle.

Celibacy is a rule and thus can be changed.

21 Testa says the rosary, or prayer beads, was introduced by Peter the Hermit in 1090

The counting of beads is a pagan practice and condemned by Christ [Matt 6: 5-13]

Matthew deals with hypocrites and the praying on streets and synagogues in a standing position so that everyone is aware of their prayer. There is nothing here about the use of beads.

The rosary can be said in silence with the beads in your pocket and no one would know. The rosary deals with meditations surrounding Christ's life. The beads are merely used as counters and serve no other function. There are four prayers involved in the rosary. The first prayer is the Apostles Creed. The next prayer is an Our Father, followed by three Aves [Hail Marys] and the doxology prayer [Gloria Patri].

Then follows five decades of the rosary, each decade starting with the Lords prayer, followed by ten Aves and then a Gloria Patri. Each decade has a certain mystery which one meditates on.

The Hail Mary [Ave] consists of two sentences, the first sentence consists of the salutation given by Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation then the concluding part of the first sentence consists of Elizabeth's greeting to Mary at the Visitation.

The second sentence in the Ave asks Mary to pray on our behalf "now and at the hour of our death"—an intercessory prayer.

The beads, as said above, are nothing more than counters so one doesn't have to keep separate count of the ten Aves in ones mind but rather one can put full attention to the meditation involved in each decade. . .

HISTORY: In the early church, monks and nuns in monasteries memorized the 150 psalms and used beads to keep track of the psalm they were reciting. Many laypeople could not read Latin. In time these people were interested in some type of devotional prayer and since they could not memorize the psalms, they, over time, they simplified their prayer by using 150 Aves interspersed with the Our Father, Apostles Creed and Gloria Patri. These 150 Aves were later broken up into 50 Aves [five decades] for each rosary that is the norm today. It seems that St Dominic may have been instrumental in fixing the rosary in its format today. He lived in 15th century

22. Testa says the Inquisition was instituted by the Council of Verona in 1184. Jesus never taught the use of force to spread his religion.

I can only agree with Testa's statement as to the use of force to spread the gospel as being wrong.

Catholics as well as non Catholics have judged the Inquisition severely. The practices of the Inquisition were no worse or better than civil and criminal courts of the day. Not only Catholics but Protestants and many other groups used force to impose religious unity. [Enc Britannica]

We can look at the persecution of Irish Catholics during the Reformation, where Mass was forbidden, priests killed and expelled, Irish teachers forbidden from teaching Gaelic. It is said that 2 million Irish died during the famine in the 1840's. The saying is that while God may have caused the blight on the potatoes, the English occupiers, who were Protestant, caused the famine. The Irish were exporting crops to England to absentee landlords while ordinary Irish people starved to death.. One could get food by converting to the Protestant church in Ireland. In addition, there was ethnic cleansing—Irish were moved from the east to the west part of the island where the soil was so poor in spots it could be cut out of the soil, dried and used as fuel.

Catholics were barred from office for several centuries in England until 1829 when the penal laws were lifted. Oliver Cromwell caused much anguish to the Irish during his invasion of the island several centuries ago and the Protestant groups in Ireland still march thru Catholic enclaves today banging drums celebrating the battle of the Boine in which the Irish Catholic forces were defeated several centuries ago near Dublin defending their own country. .

In England, The Star Chamber was in effect, where Catholics, Puritans and others were tried as heretics and condemned, punished by whipping, branding and execution.

Catholics were persecuted in this country with burnings of churches, the Ku Klux Klan and the Know Nothing Party operated with blatant anti Catholicism biases, the practice of Catholicism was banned in the early colonies except for Maryland.

In any event, I am not saying this to excuse Catholic conduct—I am saying both sides have had a problem in this area of using force in the past.

21 Testa says the sale of indulgences, commonly regarded as a purchase of forgiveness and a permit to indulge in sin began in the year 1190. Christianity, as taught in the bible, condemns such traffic, and it was the protest of this traffic that brought about the Reformation in the 16th century.

Indulgences deal with penalties associated with sin, not the forgiveness of sin. They certainly do not allow one to indulge in sin. Rather, as Enc Britannica says, an indulgence can best be compared to a pardoning of a part of the sentence of a prisoner who may have performed some good work not directly connected with his crime or sentence. This subject was partially discussed in Paragraph One above.

The basis for indulgences is found in John 20:21-23: “Jesus said to them, peace be with you, as my Father has sent me even so I send you. And when he said this he breathed on them, and saith to them, Receive the Holy Spirit—Whose sins soever you remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose sins you retain they are retained.”

Here Christ gives the church the authority to forgive sins and the church titles this the sacrament of Reconciliation. The authority to forgive sins also carries with it the right to set a penalty. All sins are deserving of a penalty of some sort. Christ’s death righted us with God, but the redemption did not affect our human weaknesses such as lust, greed, envy etc. In the first paragraph above, I discussed the non payment of groceries in a Safeway store by my son Bill, who is then later arrested, tells the court he is sorry, tells Safeway he is sorry. Is that the end of it—not at all. The penalty survives, in this case, maybe probation, payment of a fine and restitution to Safeway either by return of the groceries or cash, maybe community service etc. Now this is not to say that the penalty can’t be remitted and this is what is meant by an indulgence as set forth in Britannica above.

The embryo for indulgences lies in the early centuries of the church during the Roman persecutions. The authorities would set up altars through out a city or an area and ask individuals passing by to place a pinch of incense on the altar proclaiming the emperor as god. Those who refused were taken to prison—those who offered incense were given a libellum, indicating compliance with the law. Now the lapsi, those who sacrificed, would now have to tend to the temporal needs of the prisoners since the prisoners were not clothed, fed or given medical assistance by the authorities. The lapsi would often ask the prisoners to give a written statement of the good works the lapsi were performing for the prisoners. When the persecution was ended, many lapsi sought reconciliation with the church community and God and confessed to the local bishop [or confessor]. Confession of sin and sorrow reconciled the penitent with the community but this confession of lapsing did not necessarily remit a penalty that might be imposed as a penance to purify or rectify one's future actions.

The penances [penalties] often were severe in the early church—one would present the libellum at his or her reconciliation and any penalty that might be imposed could then be reduced, say, from one month or year to a shorter period.. This is the basic background for what would later be called an indulgence.

The problem arose centuries later when alms giving could generate an indulgence and this was decried by Luther, ie, in effect, the granting of indulgences for a donation. In any event, the Council of Trent put an end to this practice.

24. Testa says the dogma of transubstantiation was decreed by Pope Innocent III in the year 1215

By this doctrine, the priest pretends to perform a daily miracle by changing the wafer into the Body of Christ and he then pretends to eat him alive in the presence of the people during Mass. The bible condemns such absurdities, for the Lords Supper is simply a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ. The spiritual presence is implied in the Lords Supper.

RESPONSE: This was also discussed partially in paragraph 19 above but more explanation here:

Luke 22:19 This passage requires the Last Supper be done in remembrance of Christ

John 6:35 Christ says he is the bread of life, he that comes to me shall never have hunger or thirst. But later in verse 53 Jesus says that except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink of His blood, you shall not have life in you. Verse 55 says “For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed”. There is no doubt in these words This is more than a mere memorial and the proof in the pudding is the fact many of the disciples left Christ at this time because of the language He used. If there was mere symbolism, these disciples would not have left. Christ did not call these disciples back to make any explanation, he left His words stand.

1 Cor 11:26 This passage says as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lords death till he come [again]. However, the next verse states that whoever drinks this cup of the Lord and eats this bread unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

1 Cor 10:16 “The cup of blessing, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

There is no doubt what Christ meant in these words and this is true and believed by both for Catholics and Orthodox Christians. Christ did not use symbolic language—it is too clear and this was picked up by Paul in his dissertation in 1 Cor. This letter was written by Paul before any of the gospels were written. Paul picked up this information from the Tradition passed to him from the other apostles.

Ignatius of Antioch [c105AD] states: “I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ---and I desire the drink of God, namely his blood, which is love and eternal life”

Ignatius, again “They [Gnostics] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not believe the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ”

Justin Martyr, [c160AD]: “We do not receive these as common bread or common drink. Rather Jesus Christ having been made flesh by the word of God has both flesh and blood for our salvation. So, likewise, we have been Taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of his word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh”

Cyprian [200-258] wrote a treatise on the Mass as sacrifice and the real presence in the Eucharist. The silence to this treatise is deafening—there was no retort. In fact there was no real dissent until Berengar of Tours, in the 11th century or so attacked the real presence and his ideas were later picked up in the Reformation.

In any event, the church in 1215 at the 4th Lateran Council used a Latin philosophical term to describe the action at the Mass during the consecration—and this term was transubstantiation.

Now in order for the word transubstantiation to have any meaning, one must first accord Christ a divine nature. If one concedes Christ has a divine nature, and if one concedes his words regarding the Eucharist are clear, then the definition used by the church becomes self evident. The word means that Christ's nature subsumes the elements of bread and wine.

The Lutherans use the word consubstantiation, which means the real presence co-exists with the elements. The early Reformers wrestled with the Catholic teaching of “Real Presence” in the Eucharist and tended to agree with the church in many aspects, especially Luther and some of his fellow reformers, but as the Reformation disintegrated into more branches, and as churches split and divided, rejection of the Catholic teaching became more prevalent to the extent that some Protestant churches in later years rejected the sacramental system in its entirety. The Orthodox Churches, although not in communion with the Catholic Church, have near identical beliefs regarding this issue. Our churches were one until the tragic break in the year 1054 and it is hoped reunion can be achieved in the near future.

25. Testa says Confession of sins to the priest at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent 111, in the Lateran Council 1215 The bible commands us to confess our sins direct to God

Ps 51:1-10 This is a passage that asks God for forgiveness of our sins. Catholics have no disagreement with this passage and Catholics do ask God in sorrow for forgiveness once remorse sets in but this does not preclude the sinner from confessing to either a priest or a bishop.

John 20:21-23 Christ states: "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me so I send you. When He said this He 'breathed' on them and said "Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive they are forgiven and whose sins you retain they are retained" The use of the word "breath" here is important. It is used in Genesis to breathe physical life into humans, here Christ breathes a spiritual life on the apostles by granting them power to forgive sins.

The one hearing the confession will say words to the effect as follows: "By the power invested by Christ in his church, I absolve you from your sins". This does not preclude the penitent from first asking God for forgiveness as suggested in Psalms. The priest confessor also is acting on behalf of the church community in granting forgiveness as sin often affects the community in general.

The statement that confession was obligatory at least once a year is a rule—it is not dogma. Confession once a year is a bare minimum. Christ was a master psychologist. Christ knew that we as humans had a yearning to tell our hurts and sorrows to another person, that's why "Reconciliation" is a sacrament.

26. Testa says the adoration of the wafer [host] was decreed by Pope Honorius in 1220

So the Roman church worships a God made by human hands. This is plain idolatry and contrary to the spirit of the gospel See John 4:24

The core issue here is whether or not there is a real presence in the eucharist. If the presence is not there, then Testa is correct. But we have discussed this issue in the paragraphs above using Christ's very clear language where He drove away his disciples with his preciseness of words with no attempt to clarify or amend His words to indicate any symbolism.

But in all events, none of this can occur unless a divine attribute exists in Christ. If the divine attribute does not exist, then I agree with the challenge raised by Rev Testa. But if the divine attribute is present in Christ and Christ meant what he said as it involves the Eucharist, then the divine attribute exists in the elements of wine and bread. Thus it follows, as the Lateran Council says: "Our Lord, true God and true Man, is truly and substantially contained under the perceptible species of bread and wine"

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27. Testa says the bible was forbidden to layman and placed on the forbidden books by the council of Valencia in 1229 Jesus commanded that the scriptures be read by all.

John 5:39 This says one should search the scriptures as Christ here is giving a dissertation about eternal life and his role as teacher. No problem here, but this reference is to the Jewish scriptures, as the new testament canon hadn't even been thought of at this time.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 This again is a reference to the Jewish scriptures which says that all scripture is inspired and Catholics have no problem with this phrase.

RESPONSE;

Now lets look at the culture that existed for the first 15 centuries or so. First of all there was no NT bible until St. Jerome hand wrote the first MANUSCRIPT bible in Latin, called the Vulgate bible in the early 5th century. Since there were no printing presses at this time no one carried a bible to church for the first 15 centuries. Most all bibles were hand copied from existing bibles in monastery scriptoriums..

All of the original biblical writings have been lost, worn out or destroyed and today the oldest codexes date back to the Sinaiticus codex now in London and the Vatican codex now in Rome. both date to the [circa] 4th century. Codexes are groups of writings that were bound together. It was the Catholic Church that carried forward and preserved the New Testament in manuscript form to the era of printing, which was perfected around the year 1450. It is said that more that 10,000 bible manuscripts exist today, more than any other writing that comes to us from ancient times. The average person could not afford a manuscript bible would cost about one days wage for one page of such a bible.

One must remember that barely 1-2% of the population could read from ancient times until 150 years ago or so when education became mandatory for most children world wide.

Testa references a council in Valencia. I can find no reference for a council in Valencia in 1229. . Valencia is a province in Spain and its capital has the same name. It was in Muslim hands until Sept 28, 1238, some nine years after the date of 1229 If there was a council, it was local, not eucemenical and it would have taken place while Muslims were in power which appears unlikely. If such a council came about, it may have been over a poor translation of scripture. Both Protestants and Catholics commissioned bible translations because of poor quality of translation in the vernacular. Many such translations abounded, such as "The Adulterers Bible", so named, because it listed one commandment as: "Thou shalt commit adultery". Poor translations were a great part of the problem and thus we had a secular king, James, for instance, commissioning the English translation of the bible published in 1611 because he could gather around him some decent scholars instead of having people go off half cocked with no training in language skills and run off a bible on any press they could find. Thus bibles were commissioned by competent authorities during the 16th and later centuries because of shoddy translations. Shoddy bible translations were condemned.

28. Testa says the scapular was invented by Simon Stock, and English monk, 1287. This is a piece of cloth with the picture of the Virgin and supposed to contain supernatural virtue to protect from all dangers whose who wear it on the skin. This is fetishism.

This is another misconstrued statement. The issue here is devotion, not fetishism. Scapular means having to do with the shoulders. There is nothing supernatural about the scapular. For instance, as we have seen, the rosary is a devotional and has no linkage to adoration. The wearing of a medal or scapular can be a devotion to a particular saint. It is like carrying a photo of your spouse or children in a billfold. It is a remembrance or devotion.

Secondly, I am assuming the “protection from dangers” relates to miracles so I will address that here.

Miracles are usually events that rise above medical explanation, as at Lourdes, where Mary made an appearance. The church investigates any alleged cure miracles with a medical team, not necessarily Catholics, to determine if there has been an event that cannot be explained using normal criteria. If the team of doctors, after having reviewed medical records before and after the event, indicates there is no medical evidence to support the change in condition, the doctors will so state. The church may then declare a miracle based on the medical evidence.

Any miracles that are declared to be apparitions are not part of the deposit of faith, even tho they may be binding on those receiving the apparition.

29. Testa says the Roman Church forbade the cup to the laity, by instituting communion of one kind, Council of Constance, 1414. The bible states to celebrate the Lords supper with unleavened bread and fruit of the vine.

Catholic theology holds that Christ’s presence in Eucharist is entire in each of the species. Withholding the cup from laity was done for health reasons or for reasons of abuse. It has been reinstated.

30 Testa says the doctrine of Purgatory was proclaimed as a dogma of faith by the Council of Florence 1439

Testa says there is not one word in scripture about Purgatory and that the Blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins:

He cites 1 John 1:7-9 This states that Christ cleansed us from sin

2 John 2:1-2 Christ died for the sins of the world

John 5:24 says that one who believes in Christ shall have everlasting life

Romans 8:1 asks that the law of God be served

RESPONSE

There is no question Christ, as a divine person, served humanity by going through the passion and death and doing for all of us what we could not do for ourselves. This restored our relationship with God which had been damaged as a result of original sin and thus we are baptized into the church as a sign of being united with God.

But the belief that we are saved by confessing Christ as a personal savior and that after confessing this we are automatically saved no matter what we do in later life is incorrect but if I am wrong I will stand to be corrected on this issue.

Rev 21:27 states nothing unclean will enter heaven; Matt 5:48 states that we are to be perfect like our heavenly father. What happens if we die with addiction such as a tendency to use alcohol, tendency to gossip, etc. When we die, our personality does not change, we take our imperfections and personalities into eternity. These deficiencies are cleansed in an intermediate state, they cannot be cleansed in the existence of either hell or heaven. Christ's redemptive act did not affect our weakness of the flesh, we are, as humans, still affected by greed, lust, drunkenness, etc.

If nothing unclean can enter heaven, where does this get sorted out? Most of us take some fault with us into eternity. What if we die with some unrepentant sin, such as theft of a \$25.00 item at a store. Are we condemned to hell? Would not Hell be the logical result of Fundamentalist thinking since the theft is a violation of a commandment not to steal. It certainly would be an imperfection and an unclean act mentioned in scripture. Should not the purgatorial teaching that is inferred in scripture and that has come down to us through centuries from the apostles be taught?

God is just and merciful and he wants us in joyful union with him but in order to meet him, we must be like him, in perfection, as scripture says. Any imperfections we have are worked out in what is called the existence of purgatory, actually an existence of joy, a growth place. God's love overcomes the

imperfection in us until we are ready to join him in full union. It is like a teenager experiencing the aches and pains of growing to adulthood, the stresses of a college student striving for a degree in college and the arriving at graduation day and receiving a degree.

James 5:14-16 states that if anyone is sick, that the elders of the church should be called, that prayers be said over him, that he be anointed, if he be in sin, his sins will be forgiven. While Christ atoned for sins, this passage deals with post born or post baptismal sins, otherwise it makes no sense. This has been discussed above.

31 Testa says the doctrine of the sacraments was affirmed in 1439

Testa says Christ instituted only two ordinances, Baptism and Lords Supper

Matt 28:19-20: “Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them all things I have commanded you, and I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth”.

Matt 26:26-28–this refers to the last supper
Response

No where is there a limitation on the number of sacraments

What about the forgiveness of sins at John 21:22, where the church is given authority to forgive sins?

What about James 5:14-15. “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders [presbyters] of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins he will be forgiven.”.

The church holds there are seven sacraments:

Baptism

Eucharist

Reconciliation [forgiveness of post baptismal sins]

Confirmation [similar to being born again for Catholics usually administered in late teens or anytime thereafter]

Marriage [between man and woman only]

Orders [ordination to bishop, priest or deacon]

Anointing of the sick [see above James 5:24-15]

The sacraments revolve around the most important events in ones life. The Catholic church lists seven sacraments, the Orthodox churches recognizes these same sacraments but does not place a number on them..

32 Testa says the Ave Maria, last part [sentence] was completed in 1508 and approved by Pope Sixtus at the end of the 16th century.

We have discussed this above as under devotions and the make up of the rosary.[paragraphs 5 and 21] Encyclopedia Britannica states that a recognizable form of the rosary emerged as early as the 8th century and in England was known as the “Pater Noster”. The devotion received its definitive western form in the 1470's and in 1520 Pope Leo approved it as a devotion.

The first sentence of the Ave Maria is from scripture, from the words used by the angel Gabriel in the Annunciation and the second part of the first sentence is from Elizabeth’s greeting to Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee—Gabriel
Blessed is the fruit of your womb Elizabeth

The second sentence asks Mary to “pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death”

The Ave Maria is an intercessory prayer., not a prayer of adoration

33. Testa says the Council of Trent held in the year 1545 states that Tradition is of equal authority with the Bible. Testa says this is human tradition, condemned at: Mark 7:7-13-general condemnation of hypocrites; Col 2:8 talks about mens tradition, deceit and tradition of men; and Rev 22:18 talks about not adding to the book of Revelation [this latter statement applies to Rev. only, not scripture in general]

RESPONSE.

Testa confuses the two traditions. Thus we have Tradition beginning with the capital letter “T”.and one with the letter “t”. Tradition is from the Latin word “traduci” which means to hand on or pass down, ie as a teaching.

2 Thes 2:15 is an instruction to the “brethren to stand fast, and hold the TRADITIONS which you have been taught, whether by word or epistle” [EMPHASIS ADDED] This is repeated at Thes 3:6, where followers are admonished to give up disorderly conduct and follow in the Tradition given by Paul.

Scripture also confirms that “not everything is recorded” [John 21:25] thus we rely on Tradition. Christ did not abandon his church after the apostolic age, he stated he would be with the church all days, to the end of time. [Matt 28:20]

The men who were the leaders of the Reformation formed Churches and often these churches were given the names of their leaders or at least their theology, thus we have church names associated with Luther, Calvin, Calvin, Zwingli, Wesley etc. Christ’s naming of Peter as head of the church was not only to give leadership but also to give stability to the church in times of crises and his office was to be a sign of unity.

John Henry Newman, a clergyman of the mid 19th century who led the Oxford movement in trying to reform and renew the Anglican church in England, after researching early church history and reading what church fathers had written in the first centuries, said words to the effect: that if one digs deep into early church history, one ceases to be Protestant. He eventually joined the Catholic church in mid life.

34 Testa says the apocryphal books were added to the bible by the Council of Trent

Testa says these books were not recognized as canonical by the Jewish [Church]?

See Rev 22-8-9 I am not sure this has to do with selection of scripture—this part of scripture talks about worship.

RESPONSE

This was partly discussed in the beginning in the “Overview”, pages 1-3.

The first Jewish canon was formulated in Alexandria, Egypt in Greek in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. It was called the Septuagint and was compiled by a number of Jewish scholars. This canon contains the six books that Rev Testa says were added to the Christian canon by the Catholic church. This is patently false, these six books were a part of the Septuagint.

This canon was in use during the time of Christ and the Apostolic age. The authors of the New Testament drew their Old Testament quotations from the Septuagint since this was the only Jewish canon in existence.

Since the early church was using this canon in the 1st century, Jewish leaders deemed this a misuse of scripture because the church was claiming the Septuagint prophecies were being fulfilled in Christ. The Jewish people then stopped using the Septuagint, especially after the fall of Jerusalem in 70A, and adopted a new canon which was formulated in late 1st century. This new Jewish Canon did not adopt the six books from the Septuagint. This canon was later adopted as the Protestant canon centuries later.

The Septuagint had been the Christian canon until the Reformation when Martin Luther rejected these six books and which are now listed in Protestant bibles as Apocrypha but still continue as part of the canon for Catholics and Orthodox Christians.

35. Testa says the creed of Pope Pius IV was imposed as an official creed in 1560, 1560 years after Christ and the Apostles

Testa says scripture is the creed of Christians, see Gal 1:8. This passage says let no one preach any gospel other than the one being preached to you [church in Galatia] In verses Paul chides the Galatians for considering things dealing with pre-Christian times.

RESPONSE

There is nothing against creeds which summarizes or condenses our faith and sets forth core tenets, such as the Apostles and Nicene creeds, to mention two. I believe the creed mentioned in this paragraph by Testa is one that comes from the Council of Trent in the mid 16th century to rebut Reformation claims.

Protestants also have creeds, they just call them by different names:

Westminster Confession of Faith, 1643

Baptist Confession of Faith, 1646

Congregational Savoy Declaration of Faith, 1658

Quaker Principles of Christian Religion, 1678

Methodist Deed of Declaration 1784

Confessions of Augsburg, 1617

and so on

36. Testa says the Immaculate Conception of Mary was proclaimed by in 1854.

Testa says all men, with the sole exception of Christ are sinners and Mary herself was in need of a Savior.

Testa cites the following verses:

Rom 3:23 states that all men have sinned

Rom 5:12 states sin entered the world thru one man and passed to all men

Ps 51:5 and in sin my mother conceived me—a reference to the prophet Nathan

Luke 1:30 states that Mary has found favor with God

Luke 1:46-47 is part of the Magnificat recited in the presence of Elizabeth, where Mary is called blessed among women and later on all generations shall call her blessed

RESPONSE

The Catholic church took several centuries to define the nature of Christ and the Trinity, both of the church definitions [over several councils] are now generally accepted by most Christian bodies, with at least the exception of the Jehovah Witnesses and Latter Day Saints.

There is no question there was a theological dispute over the person of Christ and the application to Mary as the “Theotokos”, God bearer or Mother of God. But once Christ’s divinity was defined, the title Theotokos was a logical deduction from the teaching of full deity in Christ. Both the Orthodox and Catholic Christians accept this teaching as did some of the early Reformers , including Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. Zwingli stated: “It was given to Mary what belongs to no creature, that in the flesh, she should bring forth the Son of God”

Encyclopedia Britannica states the official teaching of the Catholic Church is that Mary as the Mother of God is not intended to detract from the Glory of Christ as sole Mediator, but that Mary has mediated between Christ and mankind as she did at Cana.

Biblical Basis: Luke 1:43 Elizabeth calls Mary the “Mother of my Lord”

Luke 1:35 says the child will be called holy, Son of God

Matt says Mary will bear a son, and his name shall be “Emmanuel”, meaning God with us.

Early Church: St Irenaeus [c130-199AD] stated that Mary was obedient to God’s word and would bear his Son

The question is whether Mary could be the Mother of God, if she is a stained vessel, ie, subjected to sin. The quote above that all men have sinned is not quite accurate—babies have not sinned.

If Mary conceived in sin, then how could Christ not be so conceived. Would the incarnation of Christ in Mary be put in an imperfect vessel? Did not Mary’s own blood and her life giving fluids ultimately furnish sustenance to the child?

The teaching that Mary is the Mother of God was settled centuries ago. The church merely defined it in 1854. It is interesting to note that in 1958 a small girl [Bernadette] in the small town of Lourdes, France, later referred to her vision as the “Immaculate Conception” a term she would not most likely know and even understand. The teaching holds that Mary herself was conceived without sin and this follows from the church definition of Theotokos being applied to Mary in an earlier church council.

37 Testa says in the year 1870 Pope Pius the IX proclaimed papal infallibility.

Testa refers to 2 Thes 2:2-12 talks about deceit as to when Christ might come again and in Verse 15 Paul asks the church to hold to the traditions which the church had been taught, whether oral or written.

RESPONSE:

The Catholic Church makes no prediction when Christ will come again, contrary to some Protestant tracts which say we are in the end times and many which have been published going back decades. Scripture says no one knows the end time.

Testa cites Rev 17:1-9 The reference here is to the beast and Babylon, a code name for Rome. The other references talk of similar undertakings—Rev 13:5, 8:18

He states the pope is the beast of the bible as recited in Rev 13:18 citing the term Vicarivs Filii Dei—actually the term sometimes used by the pope in the past is Vicar of Christ, not the wording used by Rev Testa. The term Vicarivs Filii Dei is false. The number six as used in Revelation represents an imperfect number falling short of the perfect number which is seven. Scholars say Nero is the emperor involved.

Revelation was written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The references in Revelation are apocalyptic and these types writings were prevalent between the years of 200BC-200AD. This book cannot be understood except in the historical and cultural context in the time it was written.. The book suggests that there was an early persecution of the church by Roman authorities and the harlot Babylon symbolizes Rome. The book is an exhortation of first century Christians to stand firm in their faith and to wait patiently and trust in Christ's promise even tho evil abounds.

The question then arises where does the infallibility of the church lie? If the bible is an infallible writing, the word of God and this book was selected by the Catholic Church, then how could this church in such grievous error, according to many Protestants, make the selection of what we call the New Testament? These church fathers would have been tainted.. The early church relied on apostolic succession—in other words, it was important for the early church to trace their origin back to the apostles and their immediate successor bishops and so this has followed the church through time. If an early congregation could not fall back or trace back to an apostles, such congregation was outside the church. When the Reformation came along, those that broke with the church wanted to make sure the succession was broken and so apostolic succession was discarded.

Secondly, if Christ is divine, how could he found a church that would ultimately founder? After all, he promised to be with the church from day one to the end of time. How could he abandon it? There were no Protestants as we know the term today until the 16th century although there were heresies, as the church called them, down through the centuries. The church used the authority under the keys provision given Peter to decide disputes, religious and theological issues that came up from time to time. The church has never been pristine, the epistles to various churches chiding and correcting issues in these churches prove that.

Protestantism in general says the bible has all the answers. If the bible has all the answers, why do we have Baptists, Methodists, Church of Christ, Quakers, and a myriad of others, all claiming they follow Christian teaching and the bible. Why aren't they one? They cannot be one because they have no central authority, they have destroyed the authority of the church by relying strictly on the bible, yet they cannot agree on a common interpretation of the bible.

Back to the question of infallibility? Where does it reside in the church? How can the church speak with authority when it comes to important issues such as the trinity and nature of Christ? It seems obvious the church can speak in one voice through councils, the first one is recited in Acts when the apostles met to determine whether or not it was necessary to belong to the Jewish faith and then become Christian. The church decided the faith could be preached directly to the Gentiles. As time went on there were other local and general councils to decide other issues as they arose

Britannica states as follows: [paraphrased in part] "Infallibility should be viewed against the background of other beliefs of which it is a part. The doctrine against which infallibility must be placed is the belief God intervened in human history, that he revealed himself to man and that he has given man the possibility of assurance in religious matters that he would not otherwise enjoy. The climax came when the Son [second person of the trinity] assumed a human nature, and thus Christ came into the world as a redeemer, divine law giver and infallible religious teacher.

Proximately, the doctrine against which infallibility must be viewed is that of the nature of the church itself. In Catholic theology the church is not viewed as a human institution; doubtless the accidental occurrences of history have played an enormous role in shaping and modifying its external and secondary characteristics, but its essential structure and nature were determined by Christ.

There exists between the church and its Founder an extraordinary bond of union, which Christ himself spoke of when he promised his presence: "and lo, I am with you always to the end of time" Matt 28:20, Luke 10:16 "He that hears you hears me, and he that despises you despises me"; John 20:21. "Then he said to them again, peace be with you, as my Father has sent me, even so I send you".

For St Paul, the union between the church and Christ is so great Paul habitually speaks of the church as the body of Christ [of which Christians are living members], Paul speaks of the church as being the bride of Christ, as the pleroma or completion of Christ. In short, the church views itself as the extension of Christ in time. The church is what it is because of the nature that Christ has given to it. One of the reasons for this extraordinary union between Christ and the church is that the church must continue the work of Christ in the world. It must sanctify, rule [in religious matters] and also interpret in the light of changing circumstances so that it may remain at all times a vital and relevant word.

Infallibility has to do with the church's authority to teach in the name of Christ. Christ laid special stress on the aspect of teaching, and Christ, who himself had been filled with the Spirit from his conception promised the same Spirit, the "Spirit of Truth" to his church. John 14:26 "The Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things—". The conviction of the early church community that it was guided

by the Spirit is evident from Acts 15:28 “For it seemed good the Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things”

For one who accepts the belief in the identification of Christ and his church, it follows the church cannot lead man into religious error, that in proclaiming the message of salvation entrusted to it by Christ, it will be kept free from error by the presence of Christ and the Spirit. Were this not so, error would thus be imputed to Christ himself and the Spirit. Traditional belief, then, asserts the infallibility of the official church teachers [having come down to us from apostolic times, ie bishops], in union with the See of Peter and in union with each other”.

Papal infallibility is met when certain conditions are exist, that is, it must involve either faith or morals and must involve a teaching long held by the church, there must be an intent to define a doctrine, ie dogma and it must intend to settle an issue definitively. For instance, the doctrine of the trinity was formally defined as dogma in the early church at various councils. Since Vatican I, the papal infallibility privilege has been exercised once, that being the Assumption of Mary in 1950 by Pius XII.

When the pope speaks as a theologian or as the bishop of Rome, issues an encyclical or speaks from the balcony of St Peters these are not infallible statements. Discipline problem resolutions are not infallible decisions nor are his comments on economics, commercialism, secularism, materialism, war and a myriad of other subjects.

38 Testa says Pius X condemned Modernism and discoveries in modern science which are not approved by the church. He also refers to the Syllabus of errors 1864.

Modernism: [Columbia Encyclopedia] “ This was a religious movement among Protestants, Jews and Catholics having for its purpose the modification of traditional forms and practices to conform with the increased scientific knowledge of the 19th century. Among Protestants the rise of modernism was linked with the rift between science and the literal interpretation of the bible. Many new ideas proceeded from the rejection by large numbers of Protestants of the older liberal interpretation. Important among these are: God is not transcendent but immanent in the world; all religious efforts and every mans conclusions honestly come by having a certain common validity; prayer is effective only in its psychological effect on the one praying, and the Jesus of the Gospels is not the Jesus of history”.

The progress of modernism has been rapid and has led to a widespread lack of interest in the churches and to the dictatorship of relativism, ie, each person can set his or her own set of morals. Consider the ease of slaughter during the Nazi and Communist regimes where whole races and peoples were considered sub human and where the mass of death deadened the consciences of many who were involved in criminal activity in the name of progress and/or science.

Britannica: [paraphrased] Modernism disputed that Jesus revealed any truths about God but gave his followers religious symbols to inspire every age, that there was no resurrection of Christ, that the bible was not inspired, etc

The church rejected and condemned 65 subjects on the subjects of church, revelation, Christ and the sacraments. The decree of the church, called the Pascendi, declared modernism to be agnostic and made religious truth dependent on emotion and castigated it as a species of intellectual despair brought about by ignorance of philosophy.

I am not sure why this was raised as a subject—it appears Protestants rejected it also.

The syllabus of errors was a letter issued in 1864 condemning positions relating to communism, pantheism, deism and secret societies to claims that revelation is continuous. The Syllabus was also applied to Modernism recited above. During Vatican II the church addressed some of these issues by issuing a document entitled Verbum Dei [word of God] which dealt with the church in the world and religious liberty

39 Testa says Pius XI condemned public schools 1930

The matter of public schools is covered in an encyclical of Dec 31, 1929 called *Divini Illus Magistri*, translated in English as a document on Christian Education.

This document was written against a background in Europe of rampant nationalism and atheism especially in Italy, France, Russia and beginning in Germany. In addition, in the late 1920's, the State of Oregon passed a law under Ku Klux Klan influence which required all children to attend public schools, ie., outlawing private schools [mainly Catholic]. This law was appealed by the Sisters of St Joseph to the Oregon Supreme Court where the law was upheld. The case was eventually appealed to the US Supreme Court where the law was overturned..

It was against these cultural events that shaped the encyclical

The encyclical in part stated government is to protect education, that it is the obligation of the parents to raise children, the children are not objects of the state and do not belong to the state. Education is for the public good and should not be used to spread atheism, nationalism, violence and that some consideration be given to morals and the divine law.

Certain schools were forbidden to Catholic children, mainly in France because of atheism being taught, but could be tolerated if the local bishop otherwise approved.

The public school system that started in the United States was basically Protestant in the 1800's and because Protestant beliefs were taught, Catholics built their own school system. If that continued into the 1900's, I am of the general belief the children, if they were Catholic, would have been many times subjected to the 41 prejudicial statements and misstatements posed by Rev Testa with utterly no explanation of Catholic teaching. That would have been unacceptable not only to Catholics but would have been unacceptable to many mainline Protestants.

40 Testa says Pius XI [in 1931] reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is the Mother of God, this doctrine having been invented by the Council of Ephesus

He cites Luke 1: 46-49 This is the Magnificat--this passage supports church teaching, Mary is the mother of the Lord [verse 43].

He also cites John 2:1-5 This is the prologue and this passage hints at what will be later be defined as the Trinity.

This matter was discussed in paragraph 5 above, where it is alleged by Rev Vesta that Mary is worshiped and was given the title Mother of God [Theotokos} at Ephesus. There is nothing wrong with reaffirming a long held teaching of the church

41. Testa says in the year 1950 the last dogma was proclaimed by Pius XII, the Assumption of Mary

The reasoning for this teaching is found in 36 above regarding the Immaculate Conception and I incorporate that language herein.

Basically put, if Mary was conceived without sin then it would follow that her body would not be corrupted.

Part of the reason for proclaiming the doctrine in 1950 was the terrible loss of life in the two world wars of the last century, when tens of millions perished. Some ethnic groups were targeted, such as Jewish, Gypsies and Armenian groups. The church teaches the body is a sacred vessel, even in death. The teaching of the Assumption reverences life and the transfiguration of our bodies in eternity. Christ appeared with two prophets mentioned in Jewish scriptures who were transfigured with Him—Mary would be in the same category.

Encyclopedia Britannica states that no account of the place and circumstances of Mary's death appears, no burial place is acknowledged and no miracles attributed to any of her relics. She symbolizes the nobility of women and is called blessed in scripture.

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There is a general charge at the end of Testa's statement that 75% of Catholic practices are of pagan practices:

His Charge:	My response to his charge
Incense	Magi gift to Christ.
Oil	Christ feet anointed, used in sacrament of the sick – James 5:14
Water	Used at baptism
Blessings	Meals are often blessed before eaten
Vestments	Used by various denomination, follows from the Jewish tradition
Images	We use family pixes at home and in billfolds
Temples	Some converted to churches in early centuries
Offerings [votive]	Prayer said in fulfillment of a promise granted - often a candle may also be lit.
Tonsure	Done by a person, usually Catholic or Orthodox, as dedicating one's life to God, usually involves monastic life.

This ends the statements and replies to the issues raised by Rev Testa.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

We are responding to one of several sites that spreads half truths and misrepresentations of the Catholic Church. The wording of the charges formulated by Rev Testa by and of their very nature imply an immediate bias against the Catholic Church.

In summary, Reverend Testa has made a lot of unsupported statements. The format for each of the 41 allegations suggests the Catholic Church operates in a complete sea of ignorance in so far as scripture is concerned. He cites no evidence in any of his charges of Catholic use of scripture, yet this is the very church that made the selection of the New Testament canon. Certainly, somewhere he must have seen Catholic use of scripture.

Much of Rev. Testa's comments come from Loraine Boettner's book, "Roman Catholicism". c1962 and rebutted by Francis Keating in 1988, in his book "Catholicism and Fundamentalism".

The replies here are short and do not go into depth but are given here as merely an outline. I have made use of encyclopedias Columbia and Britannica, and to some extent the "History of the Church" by Robert C. Walton, King James version of the bible, Beginning Apologetics of the Catholic Faith by Chacon and Burnam, San Juan Seminars, Farmington, NM, and Christian History and Biography, Carol Stream, Ill, Winter edition, 2005, as it relates to the Council of Nicea, 325 AD

FINIS

J. D. Fournier May 31st, 2008