

Roman Catholicism



APLA
Manila, Jan 2010

History of Catholicism

- Unlike other “Christian” groups, Catholics can legitimately claim to be a primitive church which can trace its origins to the New Testament church (as can “Orthodox” and Coptic Christians)
- To some extent, the story of Church history is the story of the gradual corruption and paganization of the Roman Catholic Church, especially after AD 325
- Authority is found through “apostolic succession,” not the scripture.

The Big Problem with Catholicism: Authority

- The Rule of Faith (in other words tradition)
- The “Church”
- Scripture

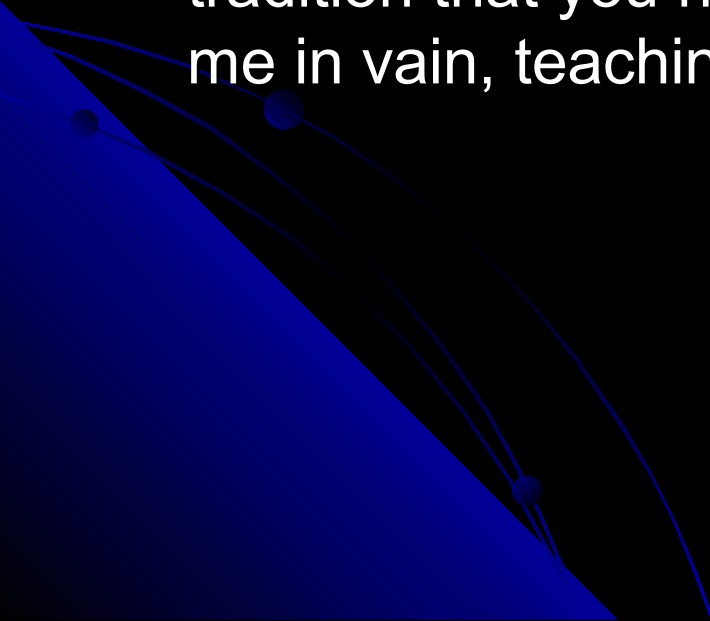
In that order!!!



Apostolic Succession

- Authority of the Roman Church has traditionally been based on supposed apostolic succession, with Peter as the first “pope” or bishop of Rome.
- Matthew 16:17-19 . You are Peter (rock, stone, *petros*) and on this rock (bedrock, large rock, *petra*) The “rock” that the church will be built on is not Peter. It is the confession and the fact that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God.

Does Tradition have authority?

- Catholics use NT language about traditions to justify authority of extra-biblical tradition (2 Thess 3:6, Rom 16:17, Phil 3:17, etc.)
 - Mark 7:1-13 Jesus: “You nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.” “They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the traditions of men.”
- 

False Doctrines in Catholicism

- **Prayer to God through Mary and the saints.** 1 Timothy 2:5
- **Original Sin. → Infant Baptism** Ezekiel 18:19-20
- **Transsubstantiation.** (The elements in the Lord's Supper literally become flesh and blood)
- **Lord's Supper is a sacrifice.** Luke 22:19 "Do this in remembrance of me."
- **Immaculate Conception.** (Mary was born from a virgin)

False Doctrines (cont.)

- **Sacramentalism. Power in the act rather than in faith and repentance.**
- **Special class of Christian priests 1 Peter 2:9 2 Corinthians 5:17-20.**
- **Purgatory. Works salvation.**
- **Salvation is found, not “in Christ” but in the church. Irenaeus: She [ie. the church] is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers.**

Traditions which “nullify the Word of God”

- **Church calendar**
- **Statues, icons, vestments**
- **Celibacy of priests**
- **Monks, nuns, asceticism**
- **Popes, cardinals, archbishops, etc.**