



"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone
who asks you for a reason for your hope"
1 Peter 3:15

Popular Catholic Myths - Pt. 1

“Mythological” Origins . . .

Whether they come from anti-Catholic sources or just poor catechesis, Catholic myths are as much a part of Catholic life as attending weekly Mass or going to a parish picnic. The fact is that many of these myths are believed and shared by Catholics as much as they are by others, albeit for *different* reasons.

Many non-Catholics, especially *anti-Catholics* will spread these untruths as a means to discredit our doctrines – sometimes out of ignorance, and sometimes with more sinister intentions. After all – if they can’t find a reason to discount our teachings – they are in a position where they must question their *own* teachings. Catholics, on the other hand, usually believe these myths simply from a position of sheer ignorance.

As Catholics, we need to be able to separate fact from fiction – truth from myth, when it comes to our faith. We need be able to give an explanation for the hope that lies within us - as St. Peter wrote (**1 Pet. 3:15**).

“At Communion, we must receive both the consecrated bread and wine to receive the Body and Blood of Christ”

The fact of the matter is that Jesus is fully present in both species, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Whether we receive communion in the form of the Host or the Chalice – we receive the Lord in His fullness.

A person who suffers from a physical aversion to wheat, such as *celiac disease* might be concerned about consuming the Host. Others, who might show a similar concern toward the Precious Blood because of a problem with alcohol needn't worry, either. They are receiving our Lord in His fullness under *either* species.

“Chewing the Holy Eucharist is sinful”

This is one of the most popular and widespread myths among Catholics. The Church has never taught that we cannot bite down on the Eucharist. As a matter of fact, the Greek word used for consuming the Body of Christ in the **Bread of Life Discourse** in **John 6** is “*Trogo(n)*”. This word describes the way an animal eats – to “*munch or gnaw*”.

Many of us were taught that we had to simply allow the host to dissolve in our mouths and *never* to use our teeth. This teaching may have been due to the attempt by some to stress the reverence we are to have for the Blessed Sacrament. However, in their zeal to emphasize this reverence, the idea that we are not to chew the Host is simply a rule that the Church has *never* officially taught.

“The Pope cannot make mistakes”

The Doctrine of Papal Infallibility applies to the Pope when he makes formal, binding declarations on matters of faith and morals. The Holy Father is infallible - not *impeccable*, which would imply that that is to say that he cannot err in other matters. He can. Infallibility simply means that he is protected by the Holy Spirit from teaching error on doctrinal or dogmatic matters – when he makes binding declarations on matters of faith and morals.

Jesus promised the Church that the Holy Spirit would guide her to **ALL** truth (**John 16:12-15**). So, don't bet the farm on a Superbowl team just because the Pope said so.

“Catholics Worship Mary”

Nothing could be further from the truth. This is simply a case of anti-Catholics bearing false witness.

Latria means **worship** that is given to God alone - **Dulia** is theological term signifying the honor paid to the saints. We honor them because of their earthly examples of faith and endurance as member of the Body of Christ. **Hyperdulia** is the veneration offered to the Blessed Virgin Mary – *who is also a member of the Body of Christ* - because of her special role in salvation history as Mother of God.

The word **Dulia** is from the Greek **douleia** meaning “slavery”. Its root word is **doulos** which means *slave* - in the sense that we are **all** slaves of God. **Hyper** is defined as “**above**”, “**beyond**” or “**super**”. When we talk about paying **hyperdulia** to Mary, it is in this sense that the term is used. **Beyond** mere dulia that is paid to the saints in heaven, but **not** worship.

“The Bible Condemns Repetitious Prayer such as the Rosary”

More fiction.

Despite what our non-Catholic friends may say, the Scriptures do **not** speak out against repetitious prayers to God. When Jesus condemned repetitious prayer in **Matt. 6:7**, he was speaking about the nonsensical babbling of **pagans** to their gods – not the sincere prayers of the faithful. He said: “**In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words.**”

We read about them in **1 Kings 18:26-29**, where the pagan prophets on Mount Carmel tried to invoke Baal all day long, repeatedly calling on his name and performing ritual dances. These are the types of “**vain repetitions**” that Jesus is speaking of in **Matt. 6:7**.

In **Matt. 26:44**, Jesus himself prayed the exact same prayer **three** times in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper.

In the *Parable of the Determined Widow* in **Luke 18:-87**, Jesus emphatically states that God hears those who **keep** petitioning him in sincere faith: **“Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.”**

In **Luke 18:13**, the tax collector kept beating his breast and praying, **“God be merciful to me, a sinner.”** This was pleasing to God.

In **Rev. 4:8** the angels pray the **same** prayer day and night in the presence of almighty God, **“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.”**

Psalm 136 goes on for **26** verses in a row, repeating the **exact** same prayer, **“God's love endures forever”**.

Similarly, in **Dan. 3:56-88** we read the exact same prayer for **32** verses, which is **“bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.”** This is far more repetitious than a decade of the Rosary.

“We are Saved by our Works”

Not exactly.

The Church teaches – and has *always* taught that we are saved by **God’s grace**. The Scriptures assure us that we as Christians are **ALREADY SAVED** (Rom. 5:1, 8:24, Eph. 2:5–8). This is **Initial Salvation** – God give us the initial grace to believe.

However, because Salvation is a **lifelong** process – it also says that I am **BEING SAVED** (1 Cor. 1:8, 2 Cor. 2:15, 7:1, Phil. 2:12, Heb 12:14). This is **Ongoing Sanctification** – God is sanctifying us throughout our life as we **cooperate** with his grace.

Because of this, I have the **hope** that I **WILL BE SAVED** (Matt. 24:13, Rom. 5:9–10, 1 Cor. 3:12–15). This is **Final Sanctification/Salvation** – We die and go to heaven having **endured** to the end.

This cooperation and endurance is based on our **DOING** the will of God (**Matt. 7:21-23, Matt. 25:31–46**). Faith is not simply “believing” in God. **James 2:19** states that even the ***demons*** believe and tremble. Our cooperative works are **part** of our faith – not merely an addendum to it. **True faith = Belief + Works (obedience)**.

“The Catholic Church hates homosexuals”

On the contrary – the exact **opposite** is true.

While it is true that the Catholic Church condemns the homosexual act, as we read in Scripture (**Lev. 18:22, 20:13, Rom. 1:26-7**), homosexuals themselves are our fellow human beings deserving of the same dignity that is given to all people.

However, simply because every human is to be respected as a person, this does ***not*** mean that we are to condone their sin any more than we would condone the actions of bank robbery or rape or murder. Everybody has sinful proclivities – and **ALL** of them are sinful.

“Catholics believe that sex is only for procreation”

That’s not what the Church teaches.

Whereas, the Church **does** teach that sex is only for those who are married, as does Scripture (**Gen 2:24, Acts 15:20, 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:13, 18, 7:1-5, 7:36, 10:8, 2 Cor. 12:21, Gal. 5:19, Eph. 5:3, Heb. 13:4, Col. 3:5, 1 Thess. 4:3, Jude 7**) – its purpose is **twofold**: It is both **Unitive** and **Procreative**.

As we read in the Catechism: **2366** "This particular doctrine, expounded on numerous occasions by the Magisterium, **is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act.**"¹⁵³

Because the marital act is holy, to be shared only by those who have been indissolubly made "one flesh" in the Lord in matrimony and is a gift from God - it must be open to life as well as being unitive. Therefore, it is not solely unitive **or** procreative.

"All Non-Catholics are going to Hell"

Not according to the **Catechism: 847** This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church: Those who, **through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church**, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too **may** achieve eternal salvation.

Although the Church teaches that there is no salvation outside the Church - the bottom line is that we are saved by God's **grace**. However, we are saved **through** His Church. As the Catechism states, those who are ignorant of Gospel and the Church **may** also be saved. We leave such souls to the mercy of God.

The Church is Against Science

Really? Tell that to **Monseigneur Georges Henri Joseph Édouard Lemaître**, the Catholic Priest who first proposed the ***Big Bang Theory***. We must remember that it was the Catholic Church that founded the first University system. The Church is also responsible for the first hospitals.

Since the Middle Ages, Catholics – ***clergy and laity*** - have been responsible for some of history's most significant scientific contributions, such as:

William of Ockham (c.1288–c.1348) – Franciscan Friar known for the mathematical principle, ***Ockham's Razor***

Thomas Bradwardine (c.1290–1349) – Archbishop and one of the discoverers of the ***Mean Speed Theorem***.

Jean Buridan (c.1300–after 1358) – French priest who developed the ***Theory of Impetus***..

Nicole Oresme (c.1320–1382) – 14th century bishop who theorized the daily rotation of the earth on its axis differentiation, the concept of infinity, and the ***Binomial Theorem***.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) – First person to formulate a comprehensive ***heliocentric Cosmology***.

Christopher Clavius (1538–1612) – Jesuit who was the main architect of the *Gregorian Calendar*.

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) – *Father of Modern Science*

Francesco Lana de Terzi (1631–1687) – Jesuit priest who has been called the *Father of Aeronautics*.

Jean Picard (1620–1682) – French priest and *Father of Modern Astronomy* in France

Louis Pasteur (1822–1895) – *Father of Bacteriology*.

Mary Celine Fasenmyer (1906–1996) – Catholic sister and mathematician, founder of *Sister Celine's Polynomials*.

“The ‘filthy rich’ Church doesn’t do enough to help the poor”

This is one of the biggest *lies* perpetrated in modern times.

On the contrary – the Catholic Church is **THE LARGEST** charitable organization in the **WORLD**. Every day, the Catholic Church feeds, clothes, shelters, cares for and educates more people than **any** organization on the planet – even more than most countries. Whereas, these numbers may vary, charities run by the Church include:

- **5,305 hospitals** including **1694** in the Americas and **1,150** in Africa.
- **18,179 clinics** including **5,762** in the Americas and **5,312** in Africa **3,884** in Asia.
- **17,223 homes** for the elderly, the terminally ill and the handicapped – most of them **(8,021)** in Europe and the Americas **(5,650)**.
- **9,882 orphanages** – a *third* of them in Asia.
- **Countless** homeless shelters and food banks.

Indeed, most **countries** around the world don’t even come close to the charitable contributions of the Catholic Church.

So much for Catholic greed . . .

“The Church has changed its position and no longer believes in Purgatory”

Not true at all.

This is often confused with the Church’s position on “**Limbo**”, which was never a matter of doctrine but merely a way of trying to reason the fate of unbaptized children.

The doctrine of Purgatory, however, is rooted in Scripture and has always been a teaching of the Church. According to the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, it’s a **“final purification of the elect” (1030-1032)**.

2 Macc. 42-46, Matt. 5:25-26, Matt. 12:32, 1 Cor. 3:12-15 all speak to the reality of Purgatory. **Matt. 18:32-35** and **Luke 12:58-59** are additional verses that support this doctrine.

“The Church Kept the Bible away from the People During the Middle Ages”

Nothing could be further from the truth.

During this period, the world’s **illiteracy** rate was close to **85%**. Most people couldn’t even **read** the Bible - let alone **own** one. Because they were **handwritten**, Bibles during this time were extremely expensive and hard to come by. Churches would chain their copies to the pulpit. This was not done to keep the Word of God from the masses – but to protect it from theft.

During this time, some educated heretics took to making their **own** translations of the Bible. The result was inaccuracy and perverted doctrine. For this reason, the **Council of Toulouse** in **1219** forbade the faithful from reading **vernacular** translations of the Bible. Since the Church was the only place one could acquire an officially-translated Bible, they were kept from the general public. This in no way means that the public was kept from the Bible – just from **owning** a copy so that they could distribute their own flawed translations.

As you know – a Catholic can be exposed to virtually the **ENTIRE** Bible in a 3-year cycle of liturgies. The idea that the Church kept the Word of God from the masses is just another silly anti-Catholic myth.

Early Church Myths

The Early Church was not without its myths and legends. The following is an example of one of the myths surrounding the Eucharist. It is from the Roman **Minucius Felix's "Octavius"**, which was written sometime between **150-270 A.D.:**

*Now the story about the initiation of young novices is as much to be detested as it is well known. An infant covered over with meal, that it may deceive the unwary, is placed before him who is to be stained with their rites: this infant is slain by the young pupil, who has been urged on as if to harmless blows **on the surface of the meal**, with dark and secret wounds. Thirstily – O horror! they lick up its blood; eagerly they divide its limbs. By this victim they are pledged together; with this consciousness of wickedness they are covenanted to mutual silence.*

The Roman critic seems to have conflated the details of the Nativity and the Eucharist. The Nativity took place in Bethlehem (which means "**House of Bread**" in **Hebrew**, and "**House of Meat**" in **Arabic**), and places Jesus in a manger ("*the surface of the meal*"), which is a food trough. His Flesh is the Bread which Christians feed upon. The Romans were correct, albeit, inadvertently in connecting the two - even if they botched-up the details.