

# COMMON GROUND

WHAT PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS CAN  
LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

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PASTOR STEVE ANDREWS  
FATHER JOHN RICCARDO

## DVD STUDY GUIDE CONTAINING QUESTIONS, WORKBOOK & ANSWERS

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Repairing the breach in Christianity through the exploration of faith values and history with  
Catholic-Christian apologetics and entertainment media

*Common Ground: What Protestants and Catholics Can Learn From Each Other*  
*STUDY GUIDE containing QUESTIONS, WORKBOOK, & ANSWERS.*

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## Introduction

This Study Guide Workbook was designed for use with Pastor Steve Andrews' and Father John Riccardo's *Common Ground* DVD in a variety of religious education settings such as schools, small groups, Bible studies, home schools, and personal study. It is our hope that this guide and workbook will not simply add to our "head" knowledge of the Christian faith, but add to our "heart" knowledge as well. We hope that our heads and hearts will work together to share God's love with those around us. Indeed, what Protestants and Catholics can and should learn from each other is both an accurate knowledge of God and a personal faith in Christ.

We offer up this project in prayer that all Christians will grow in both faith and reason so that together, led by the Holy Spirit, we can rise to the contemplation of truth and be one as Christ so fervently prayed (John 17).



The questions (in Part 1) and the answers (in Part 2) of this Study Guide Workbook are in the same order as the DVD chapters. Students can discover the answers to the questions by watching the DVD, studying the passages of the Bible, and reading other reference materials (such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church) that are referenced below each question. Occasionally, some independent research will be required, which the Internet can make fairly easy and productive. Internet sites to check include the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Vatican website, Bible search engines, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The hardback edition of the Catechism includes a glossary of terms and other helpful indexes such as a cross reference of cited Bible passages.

At the back of this Study Guide you'll find not only answers to the questions, but in some cases, additional resources and discussion graciously provided by the author.

We always welcome your comments and suggestions for improvement. Please e-mail them to [StudyGuides@NinevehsCrossing.com](mailto:StudyGuides@NinevehsCrossing.com) or write us at Nineveh's Crossing Study Guides, P.O. Box 29, Novi, MI 48376.

# QUESTIONS AND WORKBOOK

## Chapter 1: Intros – Who are Fr. John Riccardo & Pastor Steve Andrews?

Fr. John mentioned (humorously) that his mother doesn't call him "Father." Some Protestants object to addressing Catholic priests as "Father", usually citing Matthew 23:9—"And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven." But the Bible contains indication that such a title is proper.

### **QUESTION 1a**

For each of the following scriptures, tell who is being called "father" and who is speaking/using that term.

Matthew 15:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

John 8:56 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 7:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 4:12 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 4:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 4:15 \_\_\_\_\_

### **QUESTION 1b**

What might Jesus have wanted us to understand by his "command" to call no man "Father?"

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## Chapter 2: Passions - The passionate chasm that has separated Christians

The divisions in Christianity rightly sadden many Christians.

### **QUESTION 2**

Wholly apart from the question of who is right and wrong on Doctrine A or Teaching B, in the following passages, paraphrase what Scripture says about the tragedy of Christian separation and division:

John 17:22-23 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 4:32 \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 1:10-13, 11:18-19 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:20 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 4:3-5 \_\_\_\_\_

I Timothy 6:3-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Titus 3:9-11 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 3: Learning – The need for Christians to learn about their faith

Fr. John stated: "Arguing isn't a bad thing. Unfortunately, arguing now just looks like two people screaming at each other with no prospect of receiving truth."

Pastor Steve replied: "That's discouraging."

### **QUESTION 3**

What do the scriptures have to say about Christians knowing their faith and being able to positively "argue" and "dispute" with those who disagree with them?

Acts 17:2,17; 18:4,19 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 9:29 and Mark 12:28 \_\_\_\_\_

Jude 3 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 3:15 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 4: The Church - Can Protestants be "Saved" according to Catholicism?

Pastor Steve noted how, when he was growing up, "Many of us thought: I don't know if a Catholic is a real Christian." Then he asked Fr. John: "Were Catholics thinking that about the Protestants?" Fr. John said that this was more so the case in his father's generation. They both agreed that this was "very hurtful," to both Protestants and Catholics.

### **QUESTION 4a**

What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) have to say about how Catholics should view non-Catholic Christians? (CCC 817-818)

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### **QUESTION 4b - Extra Credit**

In your own words briefly describe what the Vatican II: Decree on Ecumenism [*Unitatis Redintegratio*] says about non-Catholic Christians.

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## Chapter 5: Heartfelt - The disaster of being a "professional Christian"

Pastor Steve spoke about how all Christians are tempted to "go through the motions" of Christianity and to not have a passionate commitment to Jesus Christ, and Fr. John quickly agreed: "we've all done it at times." One of the criticisms of the Catholic Church is that the liturgy of the Mass is too ritualistic, therefore, leading people to a rote observance without wholehearted involvement.

### **QUESTION 5a**

What do these biblical passages suggest about observing ritual and saying form prayers (e.g. the *Our Father/The Lord's Prayer*)?

Psalm 136 \_\_\_\_\_

Jeremiah 6:19-20 \_\_\_\_\_

Amos 5:11-24 \_\_\_\_\_

James 1:26-27 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 6:7; 15:7-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 4:8-1; 5:8-14 \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 5b**

Can you think of any other scriptures that refer to ritual and saying form prayers?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Chapter 6: A Vision –  
Fr. John’s call to the priesthood**

Protestants and Catholics both believe in a divine “calling” to the ministry. Many if not most serious Protestants would not deny the legitimacy or at least possibility of the supernatural vision of Jesus that Fr. John recounted having in his automobile. One of the most controversial aspects of the Catholic priesthood in particular, however, is the celibacy requirement. Fr. John felt that he was called to celibacy as well as to the Catholic priesthood.

**QUESTION 6**

How do the following Scriptures support the call to “consecrated celibacy?”

Matthew 19:12 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 7:7-38 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 7: In Common - What Catholics and Protestants hold in common

Fr. John listed the following as a few of the many things that both Catholics and Protestants believe: “created in the image and likeness of God, we’re saved by His precious blood, by the Word made flesh, I’m saved by grace alone, I’m called to live a life that is one that clearly shows forth that we belong to Him; we’re called to proclaim the gospel,...we as Catholics can say we’re saved by faith alone, so long as we understand what we’re talking about.” Pastor Steve exclaimed, “It’s exciting to know what we really share in common.”

### **QUESTION 7**

List other things that Protestants and Catholics agree on.

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## Chapter 8: Love the Bible – Christians need to venerate the Holy Scriptures

In the video, both men happily noted that there has been a great interest in the Bible among Catholics in the last generation. Nevertheless, many people believe that the Catholic Church frowns upon Bible study, or doesn’t allow Catholics to do Bible interpretation without constant supervision from a priest or a bishop.

### **QUESTION 8a**

What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* say about respect for the Bible?  
(CCC 103 and 141)

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**QUESTION 8b - Extra Credit**

What does the Vatican II, *Constitution on Divine Revelation [Dei Verbum]*; Pope Leo XIII, and *Providentissimus Deus [On the Study of Holy Scripture]*, November 18, 1893, say about Bible study?

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### Chapter 9: Not Works – Christians cannot work their way to heaven

Pastor Steve asked Fr. John: "Do Catholics believe you can work your way to heaven?" Fr. John replied, "No...I can't save myself. I'm saved by Jesus' precious blood; period. End of story. But I have to *respond* to it." He agreed that Catholics could say they were saved by faith alone, and explained that faith was "clinging to Christ...It wasn't my work; it was His work on the cross."

**QUESTION 9a**

What do these scriptures have to say about faith and salvation?

Matthew 7:16-27 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 2:5-13 \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 3:8-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:8-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 2:12-13 \_\_\_\_\_

I Thessalonians 1:3 \_\_\_\_\_

James 1:22; 2:14-26 \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 9b**

What is the place of "works" in the Christian life, as commanded by Christ?

Matthew 5:20, 7:16-27, 16:27, 25:31, 41-46 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 14:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 2:5-12 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 5:9 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 1:17 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 20:11-15, 22:12 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Chapter 10: Social – Christians need to be concerned about social issues**

Abortion is clearly a very important ethical issue where traditional Catholics and Protestants have almost complete agreement, against the culture of death that occupies the current age of secularism.

### ***QUESTION 10***

**In each of the following passages, what does the Bible have to say in support of the pro-life position? (Paraphrase your answer. Don't just quote scripture.)**

Matthew 25:40 \_\_\_\_\_

Jeremiah 1:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 139:13-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 1:15,41,44 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 24:10-12 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezekiel 16:20; 23:37-39 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 57:4-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 82:2-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 11: The Word – How Catholics hear the Gospel in every Mass

Pastor Steve described frequent reports of former Catholics who attend his church: “I didn’t find Christ in the Catholic Church. I didn’t meet Jesus . . .” Fr John replied: “Maybe they weren’t listening. Maybe they weren’t interested...You can’t come to Mass and not hear God. The whole Mass is Scripture...How do I **not** hear the Lord there?”

### **QUESTION 11**

*The Four Spiritual Laws*, written by Bill Bright founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, have been used by a number Evangelical Protestant organizations and churches to explain the heart of the Gospel message. The laws are listed below. Where in the Mass do we find these same elements of the Gospel message?

**Spiritual Law 1:** We are sinners in need of God's forgiveness.

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**Spiritual Law 2:** Only God can forgive and save us, by His mercy and grace. (We cannot save ourselves.)

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**Spiritual Law 3:** Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins in order to reconcile us with God and make it possible for us to be saved and have eternal life in Him.

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**Spiritual Law 4:** We must accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and become His committed disciple in order to attain this salvation.

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## Chapter 12: The Eucharist - A personal relationship with Jesus in every Mass

Fr. John compared the Catholic view of the Eucharist to marital love: "God loves us so much He doesn't just tell that to me...He wants to give me Himself tangibly under this sacramental sign...the sacraments are pure grace. They all flow from the efficacy of the cross. We would say they have the power of Christ's death and Resurrection in them."

### **QUESTION 12**

**How do the following Bible passages tie in Holy Communion (or the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist) with a relationship with Jesus (or salvation)?**

Matthew 26:26-28 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 22:19 \_\_\_\_\_

John 6:53-58 \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 10:16; 11:27 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 13: Our Senses – How we encounter God through our physical senses

Fr. John spoke about matter, spirit, and sacraments (physical means of grace): "God sees it fitting to hide Himself in material things, which man is inclined to reach out for, so that man can be healed of his slavery."

Pastor Steve: "So, when you think of that in terms of the Eucharist, you reach out for the bread, and really, you're reaching out for Christ."

Fr. John: "It's more that He is offering Himself to us, like a bridegroom, which is one of His favorite images in the New Testament, offers himself to a bride. The Lord says through Isaiah [62:5], 'more than a bridegroom longs for his bride, so do I long for you.'"

### **QUESTION 13a**

**In each of the Scripture passages below, describe how God's grace is transferred to mankind through physical means.**

2 Kings 13:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 9:20-22 \_\_\_\_\_

Mark 8:22-25 \_\_\_\_\_

John 9:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 5:15 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 19:12 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 12:27 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:22-33 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 4:14 \_\_\_\_\_

James 5:14 \_\_\_\_\_

### **QUESTION 13b**

What is the most dramatic and important way in which God's grace is conveyed to mankind through physical matter?

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Chapter 14: Remembrance – A total re-engagement in the sacrifice of Christ**

Pastor Steve recounted another common criticism of Catholics (that he regards as a “misconception”): “Don’t you re-sacrifice Jesus Christ at the Mass every time and doesn’t that seem like you’re forcing Christ to do it over and over again?” Fr. John emphatically exclaimed: “No! Of course not! We know Hebrews [7:27]. He was sacrificed once and for all; it’s done with...[The Mass] is a re-presentation of Christ’s once and for all sacrifice, which happened on Calvary...[In the Sacraments] such as the Eucharist, God uses material things in such a way that He fills them to make divine events present...The Passover, for a devout Jew, was ‘we’re coming out of Egypt tonight’...the very sacrifice of Christ on the cross; it’s like we now become contemporaries of it...somehow, sacramentally, I’m at the foot of the cross...all because it’s His doing, because He wants that to happen.”

### **QUESTION 14**

Is there any biblical basis for this type of Catholic thinking, that seems so very foreign-sounding to most Protestants? (See what you can find in these scriptures.)

Revelation 8:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_

John 1:29,36 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 10:14-22 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 5:6-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 110:4 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 6:20 \_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 14:18 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 66:18-21 \_\_\_\_\_

Malachi 1:11 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 15: Mary / Saints – Catholics do not worship saints

Remember this interchange from the program?

Pastor Steve: "Is it a misconception that Catholics worship Mary?"

Fr. John: "Yes, it's a misconception...We do not worship her. We worship God alone. We do honor her...we [in our society] honor someone who's 6'9" and can dunk. If we honor those people for doing things which have nothing to do with character, then how much more do we honor the saints, both alive and dead?...The communion of saints, for a Catholic, is not broken by death, we would hope . . ."

Pastor Steve: "I hope not."

Fr. John: ". . . those who, according to Revelation, are standing around the throne of God, in glory, we ask them to pray for us. And they know what in fact we need to receive, because somehow the perspective from heaven seems to be a little better than our perspective here on earth. So, the simple fact that they're not dead [i.e. living] means I can have some sort of...relationship. We ask them to intercede."

Pastor Steve: "They're part of the great cloud of witnesses [Hebrews 12:1] still."

Fr. John: "Exactly! God is the God of the living, not the dead." [Matthew 22:32]

Pastor Steve: "That's awesome."

### **QUESTION 15a**

**Some Christians believe that any kind of honoring of another person is equivalent to worship. But what do the following scripture passages tell us about honoring other human persons?**

Romans 12:10 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 2:17 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 15b**

What is the difference between honoring humans (live or deceased) and worship of God?

Honor is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Worship is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 15c**

What does the following scripture passage tell us about the power that the prayers of honored people can have?

James 5:10-18 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 15d**

What do the following verses tell us about Christians that have died, and whether or not it is plausible that they can, somehow, be aware of what is happening on Earth?

Matthew 17:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 18:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 27:50-53 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 11-12:1 \_\_\_\_\_

**ANSWER 15e**

What do the following verses tell us about the activity of saints in heaven?

Revelation 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelations 6:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelations 8:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 16: Reverence – How close do we dare get to God?

After Holy Communion is distributed during Mass the remaining consecrated hosts are kept in a small gold cabinet called the tabernacle, near which a candle burns 24 hours a day. In these hosts, and thus in the tabernacle, Catholics believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is sacramentally and truly present in His body, blood, soul, and divinity. Fr. John explained the power of God and our ability to approach it at close range (in the tabernacle) by drawing an analogy with nuclear power.

### **QUESTION 16a**

What was Fr. John's analogy that explained the power of God that Catholics believe is held within the tabernacle?

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### **QUESTION 16b**

According to Fr. John, what did Mahatma Gandhi once say about the Catholic Eucharist?

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## Chapter 17: Answering – Only God answers prayer

### **QUESTION 17a**

When you ask a friend to pray for you, is it your friend, or is it God that answers?

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### **QUESTION 17b**

When you ask a person in heaven (a saint) to pray for you, who are they praying to, and who answers your prayer?

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## Chapter 18: Confessing – Christians must confess their sins

Pastor Steve inquired: “Does the priest forgive a person’s sins, and not God, when they’re confessing...what’s happening there? What do we learn from that?” Fr. John appealed to Scripture (John 20) in answering that the priest only represents God.

### **QUESTION 18a**

Who is actually forgiving the repentant sinner?

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### **QUESTION 18b**

Are there other similar passages in the Bible that would indicate a class of people (in Catholic thinking: the priest) who are intended by God to dispense forgiveness on His behalf? What do you find in these scriptures about confession of sins?

Matthew 16:19: 18:18 \_\_\_\_\_

John 20:21-23 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 2:6-11 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 19: Protestants – Christians need to evangelize and “sing.”

### **QUESTION 19a**

According to Fr. John, what are some of the things that Catholics can learn from Evangelical Protestants?

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**QUESTION 19b - Extra Credit**

Where in Vatican II (the Ecumenical Council held from 1962-1965) is personal evangelism by the laity encouraged and what are some of the key issues about evangelization that the council raised?

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**Chapter 20: Spiritual Gifts –  
Christians need to use their spiritual gifts**

Pastor Steve asked: "I'm wondering about spiritual gifts...teaching on spiritual gifts or inviting people to use the spiritual gifts; has that always been a part of the Catholic experience?" Fr. John spoke about his background in a charismatic Catholic household, but...

**QUESTION 20**

How are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are associated with the Charismatic Movement, viewed and evaluated by the Catholic Church's hierarchy?

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## Chapter 21: Reading the Bible – Christians need to read their Bible daily

### QUESTION 21

What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* say about the importance of studying the Bible? (CCC 133)

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"\_\_\_\_\_ of scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ."

## Chapter 22: Relationship – We need to pursue a personal relationship with Christ

### QUESTION 22

With respect to our relationship with Jesus Christ the phrase "personal" does not appear in the Bible -- but the concept does. In the following titles for Christ and the accompanying citations, describe how a Christian should be related to Christ.

ADVOCATE  
(1 Cor. 15:3, Rom. 4:25, 1 John 2:1, Heb. 7:27) (CCC 519)

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BREAD OF HEAVEN, BREAD OF LIFE, OUR DAILY BREAD  
(Ex. 16:19-21, Matt. 6:11, John 6:51, 54, 56) (CCC 2837)

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### SUGGESTION

There are over a hundred names for Christ in the Bible. A good meditation is to pick one and write out how that name applies to you and your relationship with Christ in a practical, everyday, decision-making way. (See CCC Index: *Christ's titles* pages 769-770)

## Chapter 23: Encountering – Jesus at St. Anastasia

Fr. John recounted a story where a devout Protestant asked him if he had a personal relationship with Jesus. He replied that he received Jesus' flesh and blood into his body every day (the Eucharist) and stated, "I don't know how much more personal it can get than that...The Catholic will hear a language coming from the Protestant or vice versa, and we don't have any way to process [it]...so we just filter it through what we think you're saying, as opposed to actually taking the time to...have the discussion." He stressed that Catholics can have this same personal relationship with Jesus in their own way, but couched in different terms, and that all Christians must renew their commitment to God daily.

### ***QUESTION 23***

Thomas à Kempis (1380 – 1471), a Catholic, wrote a famous book that can often be found in Protestant bookstores. The book stresses a personal relationship with Jesus. Do you know the title, and some of its themes?

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## Chapter 24: Brothers – There's more unity than most would think.

### ***QUESTION 24***

List as many as you can of the common ground beliefs and practices that Protestants and Catholics share.

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**Chapter 25: Wounds –  
What wounds the Holy Spirit?**

**QUESTION 25**

List several examples of "Christian" behavior that wound the Holy Spirit with respect to the unity of Christians.

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**Chapter 26: Call to Pray –  
Fr. John’s challenge to all Christians**

Fr. John challenged all Christians to spend a solid hour in prayer each day.

**QUESTION 26**

Where in the Bible does this hour of prayer come from?

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## Chapter 27: Prayer – Pastor Steve and Fr. John pray for each other's church

In their final prayer, Pastor Steve and Fr. John model for us a unity that other Protestants and Catholic Christians can practice in an effort to fulfill Christ's insistent, John 17 prayer to his Father in heaven.

### ***QUESTION 27***

List as many of the specific things Fr. John and Pastor Steve prayed for as possible.

**Father John:**

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**Pastor Steve:**

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# ANSWERS

## Chapter 1: Intros – Who are Fr. John Riccardo and Pastor Steve Andrews?

Fr. John mentioned (humorously) that his mother doesn't call him "Father." Some Protestants object to addressing Catholic priests as "Father", usually citing Matthew 23:9: "And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven." But the Bible contains indication that such a title is proper.

### ANSWER 1a

For each of the following scriptures, tell who is being called "father" and who is speaking/using that term.

**Matthew 15:4-6** - Jesus is reciting the commandment to "honor your father and mother."

**John 8:56** - Jesus is talking to Jews about Abraham, "their father," rejoicing to see Him (Jesus).

**Acts 7:2** - Stephen, speaking before the High Priest, addresses those gathered as "brothers and fathers."

**Romans 4:11-12** - Paul is writing the Christians in Rome and calls Abraham the "father of all the uncircumcised" and "father of the circumcised."

**Romans 4:16-18** - Paul is speaking to Christians in Rome and says of Abraham that he is "the father of us all," ... "our father in the sight of God," ... "the father of many nations." (Romans 9:10, Philippians 2:22, James 2:21)

**1 Corinthians 4:15** - Paul is speaking to Christians in Corinth saying, "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

### ANSWER 1b

What might Jesus have wanted us to understand by His "command" to call no man "Father?"

Jesus was using the common Hebrew method of exaggeration or hyperbole (see Mt 19:24, 23:24; Lk 6:42, 14:26) in order to teach that God the Father is the ultimate source of all authority. He said this during the course of rebuking the Pharisees for spiritual pride (Mt. 23:2-10). This argument proves too much because it would prohibit *all* uses of the word *father* whatsoever; even biological fathers. Therefore, it stands to reason that Jesus must have meant something else.

Jesus Himself uses the term *father* many times (Mt 15:4-6; 19:5,19,29; 21:31; Lk 16:24,27,30; Jn 8:56, etc.). Several other passages from others utilize the term, too, so unless it is believed

that they were being disobedient to Jesus, the objection to calling Catholic priests *father* must be discarded.

## Chapter 2: Passions – The passionate chasm that has separated Christians

The divisions in Christianity rightly sadden many Christians.

### **ANSWER 2**

Wholly apart from the question of who is right and wrong on Doctrine A or Teaching B, what does scripture have to say about the tragedy of Christian separation and division in the following passages?

**John 17:22-23** Our Lord Jesus prayed at the Last Supper for Christians to be "one, even as we [the Father and the Son] are one" and "perfectly one."

**Acts 4:32** Luke describes the earliest Christians as being "of one heart and soul."

**I Corinthians 1:10-13, 11:18-19** - The Apostle Paul, above all, repeatedly condemns "dissensions," ... "difficulties" (Romans 16:17), "quarreling," ... "jealousy and strife" (1 Corinthians 3:3), "divisions and factions," ... "discord" (1 Corinthians 12:25), and calls for Christians to be "united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10), and to be "in full accord and of one mind" (Philippians 2:2). "Stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

**Galatians 5:20** - Paul condemns "enmity" and "a party spirit."

**Ephesians 4:3-5** - Paul says, "Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, ...one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

**I Timothy 6:3-5** - Paul has strong words for anyone who does not teach "the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ:" ...."he knows nothing; he has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among men..."

**Titus 3:9-11** - Paul has strong words in how to treat someone who is quarrelsome - "But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned."

## Chapter 3: Learning – The need for Christians to learn about their faith

Fr. John stated: "Arguing isn't a bad thing. Unfortunately, arguing now just looks like two people screaming at each other with no prospect of receiving truth."

Pastor Steve replied: "That's discouraging."

### **ANSWER 3**

**What do the scriptures have to say about Christians knowing their faith and being able to "argue" and "dispute" positively, in sharing their faith with others who disagree with them?**

Scripture contains many examples of the Apostle Paul (particularly) reasoning and disputing and arguing with Jews and Greeks. The Greek word *dialegomai* is the source of the English word *dialogue*. It is found in the following passages:

**Acts 17:2** - And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures...

**Acts 17:17** - Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. [see also 17:18, 19:8-10]

**Acts 18:4** - And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

**Acts 18:19** - ... he himself entered into the synagogue, and **reasoned** with the Jews.

Likewise, the New Testament word *suzeteo* means "argue." It is found in the following passages:

**Acts 9:29** - And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

**Mark 12:28** - And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together,...

This statement was in reference to Jesus' discussion with the Sadducees about resurrection (Mk 12:18-27). Thus, Jesus used the techniques of "argument," "debate," and "disputation," just as St. Paul did, and on very many occasions as well, especially with the Pharisees. Lastly, all Christians are encouraged in Jude, to do so:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3)

The Bible teaches us that we can passionately share our Christian faith and the reasons for it, while always doing so "with meekness" (1 Peter 3:15). These passages can readily be applied to inter-Christian discussions as well. Not all arguing is quarrelsome and hostile and acrimonious. We are called to argue, in loving dialogue, in favor of Christian and biblical truth.

## Chapter 4: The Church – Can Protestants be "Saved" according to the Catholicism?

Pastor Steve noted how, when he was growing up, "many of us thought... 'I don't know if a Catholic is a real Christian.'" Then he asked Fr. John: "Were Catholics thinking that about the Protestants?" Fr. John said that this was more so the case in his father's generation, and they both agreed that this was "very hurtful."

### **ANSWER 4a**

**What does the Catechism have to say about how Catholics should view non-Catholic Christians? (CCC 817-818)**

**CCC 817...**The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body - here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism - do not occur without human sin: Where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers.

**CCC 818** "However, one cannot charge with the sin of the separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers.... All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church."

### **ANSWER 4b - Extra Credit**

**In your own words briefly describe what the Vatican II: Decree on Ecumenism [*Unitatis Redintegratio*] says about non-Catholic Christians.**

Here are some highlights of what the Second Vatican Council stated in its Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*; emphases added throughout):

1. The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council.
3. ...in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared...for which, often enough, men of **both sides** were to blame. However, one **cannot charge with the sin of separation** those who at present are born into these communities and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with **respect and affection** as **brothers**. For

men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.

3. ...all who have been justified by faith in baptism are **incorporated into Christ** [the footnote cites Council of Florence, Session 8, from the year 1439]; they therefore have a right to be called **Christians**, and with good reason are accepted as **brothers** by the children of the Catholic Church.

... Moreover, some, even very many, of the most significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist **outside** the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements. All of these...**come from Christ** and lead back to him.

... The brethren divided from us also carry out many liturgical actions of the Christian religion. In ways that vary according to the conditions of each Church or community, these liturgical actions most certainly can truly engender a **life of grace**, and, one must say, can aptly **give access to the communion of salvation**.

...the separated Churches and communions as such...have been by no means deprived of significance and **importance in the mystery of salvation**. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as a **means of salvation**, which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church.

5. ...bond of brotherhood existing among all Christians.

8. ... restoration of unity among Christians.

9. ...We must become familiar with the outlook of our separated brethren.

12. ...Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them... Through such cooperation, all believers in Christ are able to learn easily how they can understand each other better and esteem each other more...

21. A love and reverence...of Holy Scripture leads our brethren to a constant and diligent study of the sacred text... in the dialogue itself, the sacred word is a precious instrument in the mighty hand of God for attaining to that unity which the Savior holds out to all men.

## Chapter 5: Heartfelt – The disaster of being a “professional Christian”

Pastor Steve spoke about how all Christians are tempted to “go through the motions” of Christianity and to not have a passionate commitment to Jesus Christ, and Fr. John quickly agreed: “we’ve all done it at times.” One of the criticisms of the Catholic Church is that the liturgy of the Mass is too ritualistic, therefore, leading people to a rote observance without wholehearted involvement.

## ANSWER 5

What do these biblical passages suggest about observing ritual and saying form prayers (e.g. the *Our Father/The Lord's Prayer*)?

**Psalm 136** - Fr. John provided one reply to this objection, where the same exact phrase ("for his steadfast love endures for ever") is repeated for 26 straight verses.

If formal worship or religious ritual were always opposed to a sincere, heartfelt adoration and praise of God, then certainly God wouldn't have commanded it in the Bible. Yet we find that He does exactly that, in many places.

Elaborate, painstaking instructions for the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:1-22), the tabernacle (Ex 25:23-40; chapters 26-27), and the Temple (1 Kings, chapters 6-7) illustrate the highly ritualistic nature of Hebrew worship (see also Leviticus 23:37-38 and 24:5-8).

God did assuredly often warn the people against *hypocritical* worship: performing of rituals without the proper attitude of heart towards God. This is an ongoing human tendency that we all must be vigilant to avoid. God opposes deceit and hypocrisy, not formality, and rituals performed without a committed spirit and *devotion*, or in light of continued sin and disobedience on other grounds:

**Jeremiah 6:19-20** - See, I bring evil upon this people, the fruit of their own schemes, because they heeded not my words, because they despised my law. Of what use to me incense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from far-off lands? Your holocausts find no favor with me, your sacrifices please me not.

**Amos 5:11-14,21-24** - Therefore because you trample upon the poor and take from him exactions of wheat, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins -- you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate. Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time. Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said...I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them, and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (cf. Prov 15:8, 21:27; Jer 6:19-20; Mal 1:6-14)

**James 1:26-27**: If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

When His people obeyed His *commands*, however, then God was pleased with the same sacrifices (see, e.g., Is 56:6-7: "their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar"; Jer. 17:24-26: "But if you *listen* to me . . ."; Mal 1:11: "a pure offering"; many others).

**Matthew 6:7** - Jesus didn't oppose all repetition whatsoever, but rather, "vain" repetition or "empty phrases." He described such vain worship in the next passage:

**Matthew 15:7-9** - You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." (cf. Mk 7:6-7)

Formal and ritualistic ceremonies and worship services are recorded as taking place even in heaven itself (Rev 4:8-11, 5:8-14), complete with repetitious prayer (Rev 4:8: "they never cease to sing . . ."), repeated chants or hymns (4:11, 5:9-10), an altar and incense (8:3-4), and sacrifice (5:6).

## **Chapter 6: A Vision – Fr. John's call to the priesthood**

Protestants and Catholics both believe in a divine "calling" to the ministry. Many if not most serious Protestants would not deny the legitimacy or at least possibility of the supernatural vision of Jesus that Fr. John recounted having in his automobile. One of the most controversial aspects of the Catholic priesthood in particular, however, is the celibacy requirement. Fr. John felt that he was called to celibacy as well as to the Catholic priesthood.

### **ANSWER 6**

**How do the following scriptures support the call to "consecrated celibacy?"**

**Matthew 19:12** - (Jesus said this, mentioned by Fr. John in connection with his calling.)

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.

Other modern translations use the phrase "others have renounced marriage." One might argue that Jesus was merely describing this state of affairs, not sanctioning it, but He concludes, "He who is able to receive this, let him **receive** it."

**1 Corinthians 7:7-38** - The Apostle Paul leaves little doubt as to both the permissibility and desirability of such an estate in life, and taught on the matter in great detail. (The numbers below refer to verses.)

7. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

8. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do.

9. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion . . .

20. Every one should remain in the state in which he was called... .  
 27. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage.

28. But if you marry, you do not sin...Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. . .

32. I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord;

33. But the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband.

35. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord . . .

38. So that he who marries his betrothed does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

According to Paul, and the Catholic Church, heeding his instruction here, the celibate priest can singleheartedly devote himself both to God and his flock. The practical advantage is that the celibate has more time and is not burdened by multiple loyalties.

Opponents of celibacy often simply assume, like Luther, that a life without sex is utterly impossible, whereas our Lord Jesus and St. Paul undeniably teach the contrary, and even the preferability of celibacy for those so called. The Catholic Church is not forcing anyone to be celibate. It is both a matter of personal choice, and, on a deeper level, an acceptance of one's calling, as given by God. Paul acknowledges both the divine impetus (1 Corinthians 7:7, 20) and the free will initiative of human beings (7:35, 38). These two are not contradictory, but rather, complementary. If a man is called to celibacy, he will be given both the desire and the ability to carry out this lifestyle successfully (see Philippians 2:13). If one is not called, like most of us, to celibacy and/or the priesthood, then he or she ought to get married (1 Corinthians 7:7, 9, 20, 28, 38).

The issue is not a matter of either/or, with one option being good and the other bad. Both are good, but one has a certain practical superiority and an obviously somewhat heroic aspect. To personally renounce something is not equivalent to regarding the state or thing as evil. I may give up eating potatoes, reading fiction, ice skating, or swimming, for various and sundry reasons, but this does not make any of them evil in and of themselves.

Vowing is completely voluntary and optional in biblical thought, but once made, the vow must be performed and is a very serious matter indeed (Exodus 20:7, Leviticus 19:12, Deuteronomy 5:11, 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5; Malachi 1:14; Matthew 5:23).

## Chapter 7: In Common – What Catholics and Protestants hold in common

Fr. John listed the following as a few of the many things that both Catholics and Protestants believe: “created in the image and likeness of God, we’re saved by His precious blood, by the Word made flesh, I’m saved by grace alone, I’m called to live a life that is one that clearly shows forth that we belong to Him; we’re called to proclaim the gospel,...we as Catholics can say we’re saved by faith alone, so long as we understand what we’re talking about.” Pastor Steve exclaimed, “It’s exciting to know what we really share in common.”

### **ANSWER 7**

**List other things that Protestants and Catholics agree on.**

The Second Vatican Council stressed common ground with Protestants, in its Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*; bold emphasis added):

Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the **truly Christian endowments** for our common heritage, which are to be found among our separated brethren. It is right and salutary to recognize the **riches of Christ** and virtuous works in the lives of others who are **bearing witness to Christ**, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood. (4)

Nor should we forget that anything **wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit** in the hearts of our separated brethren can **contribute to our own edification**. Whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what **genuinely belongs to the faith...**(4)

The Christian way of life of these brethren is nourished by faith in Christ. It is strengthened by the grace of baptism and the hearing of the Word of God. This way of life expresses itself in private prayer, in meditation on the scriptures, in the life of a Christian family, and in the worship of a community gathered together to praise God. Furthermore, their worship sometimes displays notable features of a liturgy once shared in common. The faith by which they believe in Christ bears fruit in praise and thanksgiving for the benefits received from the hands of God. Joined to it is a lively sense of justice and a true charity toward others. This active faith has been responsible for many organizations for the relief of spiritual and material distress, the furtherance of education of youth, the improvement of social conditions of life, and the promotion of peace throughout the world. (23)

Catholics and Protestants can benefit greatly from each other. We have in common such things as the Trinity, the Resurrection of Christ, the Incarnation, love for the Bible as God’s inspired and infallible revelation, various philosophical arguments for the existence of God, belief in angels, the devil, heaven and hell, an eternal soul, salvation by grace alone through Christ alone, and a host of other things. Many Christians cite the Nicene Creed on Sunday, and this unites most Christians in the world.

Catholics can learn a great deal from Protestants (or even denominations) because they often excel (especially in practice) at particular aspects of the Christian life or theology (e.g., Bible

study, prayer, outreach, teen ministry, fellowship) in a way that puts Catholics to shame. We need to stand with fellow Christians wherever we find common ground, so that we can affect our culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not be defeated by a "divide and conquer" strategy. We have our principled disagreements, but we also have so very much in common, and we are called to rejoice in the truths that bind us.

## **Chapter 8: Love the Bible – Christians need to venerate the Holy Scriptures**

Both men happily noted in the video that there has been a great interest in the Bible among Catholics in the last generation.

### ***ANSWER 8a***

**What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* say about respect for the Bible? (CCC 103 and 141)**

For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God's Word and Christ's Body. (CCC 103)

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord" (DV 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105; cf. Is 50:4). (CCC 141)

### ***ANSWER 8b - Extra Credit***

**What does the Vatican II, *Constitution on Divine Revelation [Dei Verbum]*; Pope Leo XIII, and *Providentissimus Deus [On the Study of Holy Scripture]*, November 18, 1893, say about Bible study?**

Vatican II, *Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*, states:

Access to sacred Scripture ought to be wide open to the Christian faithful...the Church, with motherly concern, sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into various languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books. If it should happen that...these translations are made in a joint effort with the separated brethren, they may be used by all Christians. (ch. 6, sec. 22)

Virtually all Christians have orthodox and dogmatic boundaries that constrain them from interpreting in certain ways. The Catholic exegete (interpreter of Scripture) has virtually as much freedom of inquiry as the Protestant exegete.

**The 1910 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, in its article on "Biblical Exegesis" states:**

The Catholic commentator is bound to adhere to the interpretation of texts which the Church has defined either expressly or implicitly. The number of these texts is small, so that the commentator can easily avoid any transgression of this principle.

The emphasis may be greater today among Catholics, to study the Bible, but popes have encouraged this for a long time. For example, Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (On the Study of Holy Scripture), of 18 November 1893, urged the faithful:

Let all, therefore, especially the novices of the ecclesiastical army, understand how deeply the sacred books should be esteemed, and with what eagerness and reverence they should approach this great arsenal of heavenly arms...As St. Jerome says, 'to be ignorant of the Scripture is not to know Christ' [In Isaiam, Prol.]...'A man who is well grounded in the testimonies of the Scripture is the bulwark of the Church.' [Ibid., 54:12]...

...the Church by no means prevents or retrains the pursuit of biblical science, but rather protects it from error, and largely assists its real progress. A wide field is still left open to the private student, in which his hermeneutical skill may display itself with signal effect and to the advantage of the Church...such labors may, in the benignant [def: pleasant and beneficial in nature] providence of God, prepare for and bring to maturity the judgment of the Church; on the other, in passages already defined, the private student may do work equally valuable, either by setting them forth more clearly to the flock and more skillfully to scholars, or by defending them more powerfully from hostile attack.

...the studies of non-Catholics, used with prudence, may sometimes be of use to the Catholic student...

## Chapter 9: Not works – Christians cannot work their way to heaven

Pastor Steve asked Fr. John: "Do Catholics believe you can work your way to heaven?" Fr. John replied, "No...I can't save myself. I'm saved by Jesus' precious blood; period. End of story. But I have to *respond* to it." He agreed that Catholics could say they were saved by faith alone, and explained that faith was "clinging to Christ...It wasn't my work; it was His work on the cross."

### **ANSWER 9a**

#### **What do these scriptures have to say about faith and salvation?**

There are many such verses in Holy Scripture; it teaches that the true faith by which we are saved is always accompanied – and validated -- by works.:

**Matthew 7:16-27** - By their **fruits** [works], you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

**Romans 2:13** - **For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.** (emphasis added, here as throughout; cf. Heb 5:9)

**1 Corinthians 3:8-9** - Each shall receive his wages **according to his labour**. For we are **God's fellow workers**; you are God's field, God's building. (cf. 15:10,58; Titus 1:15-16)

**Galatians 5:6**:...faith **working** through love. (cf. 6:7-9)

**Ephesians 2:8-10**: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**Philippians 2:12-13**:...**work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (cf. Titus 3:8; Heb 6:9-10, 10:24)

**1 Thessalonians 1:3**:...your **work** of faith and **labor** of love...(cf. 2 Thess 1:11)

**James 1:22**: But be **doers** of the word, and **not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves. (cf. 1:23-27)

**James 2:14, 17**: What does it profit, my brethren, if a man **says he has faith, but has not works**? Can his faith save him?...So **faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead**.

**James 2:22, 24, 26**: You see that faith was active along with his works, and **faith was completed by works**,...You see that a man is justified by works and **not by faith alone**...For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so **faith apart from works is dead**.

## **ANSWER 9b**

**What is the place of "works" in the Christian life, as commanded by Christ?**

It is also very interesting to note that in virtually every passage (including Paul's own) dealing with judgment and God's determination of whether a person is saved or lost, *works* are mentioned as key determinants, but faith is *not* mentioned (**Mt 5:20, 7:16-27, 16:27, 25:31, 41-46; Lk 14:13-14; Rom 2:5-12; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 20:11-15, 22:12**).

Christians – while agreeing on grace alone through Christ alone -- disagree on the precise relationship of faith and works and justification and sanctification, and about various aspects of salvation. But the above passages form a common heritage for all Christians, and must be incorporated into every Christian's understanding of what *faith* means.

At the very least, hopefully Protestants can better understand some of the biblical rationale that Catholics bring to bear on these questions, and Catholics can discover that Protestants and Catholics have a great deal in common, on the practical level of day-to-day life and "walking the Christian walk." Despite all the disagreements about the more abstract, "intellectual" aspects of the theology of salvation, all Christians agree that one is saved by grace and that the Christian's life must be characterized by good works and an increase in sanctity over time.

## Chapter 10: Social – Christians need to be concerned about social issues

Abortion is clearly a very important ethical issue where traditional Catholics and Protestants have almost complete agreement, against the culture of death that occupies the current age of secularism.

### **ANSWER 10**

**In each of the following passages, what does the Bible have to say in support of the pro-life position?**

**Matthew 25:40** - Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. (Jesus speaking)

**Jeremiah 1:5** - Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

**Psalms 139:13-16** - You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so fearfully and wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. Your eyes foresaw my actions; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be.

**Luke 1:15**: ...he [referring to John the Baptist] will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

**Luke 1:41,44** - And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb..."For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb [John the Baptist] leaped for joy."

**Proverbs 24:10-12** - If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Rescue those who are being taken away to death...If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?...and will he not requite man according to his work?

**Ezekiel 16:20** - And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed...

**Isaiah 57:4-5**: . . .Are you not children of transgression, the offspring of deceit, you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree; who slay your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks?

**Ezekiel 23:37-39** - For they have committed adultery, and blood is upon their hands... they have defiled my sanctuary...For when they had slaughtered their children in sacrifice to their idols, on the same day they came into my sanctuary to profane it...

**Psalm 82:2-4** - How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the fatherless...Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

## **Chapter 11: The Word – How Catholics hear the Gospel in every Mass**

Pastor Steve described frequent reports of former Catholics who attend his church: "I didn't find Christ in the Catholic Church. I didn't meet Jesus . . ." Fr John replied: "Maybe they weren't listening. Maybe they weren't interested...You can't come to Mass and not hear God. The whole Mass is Scripture...How do I not hear the Lord there?"

### **ANSWER 11**

**The Four Spiritual Laws, written by Bill Bright founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, have been used by a number of Evangelical Protestant organizations and churches to explain the heart of the Gospel message. The laws are listed below. Where in the Mass do we find these same elements of the Gospel message?**

*The Four Spiritual Laws* are not part of Catholic teaching, per se, but many Evangelical Protestants use them to summarize God's plan of salvation. They are:

1. We are all sinners in need of God's forgiveness.
2. Only God can forgive and save us, by His mercy and grace. We can't save ourselves.
3. Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins in order to reconcile us with God and make it possible for us to be saved and have eternal life.
4. The individual must accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and become His committed disciple in order to attain this salvation.

([www.campuscrusade.com/fourlawseng.htm](http://www.campuscrusade.com/fourlawseng.htm))

The following excerpts from the Catholic liturgy of the Mass, are referenced with numbers 1-4, which correlate with the above "laws."

This is evidence that there is plenty of "gospel preaching" in the liturgy itself, even apart from the priest's homily (which itself is usually about the Gospel reading for the day):

**Congregation:** I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do. (1)

**Priest:** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. (1) (2)

**All:** Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. (1) (2)

**Priest:** Lord show us your mercy and love. And grant us your salvation. (1) (2)

**All:** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. (3)

**Priest:** Through him, with him, in him; in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. (2; implied)

**All:** For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. (3)

**Priest (first Eucharistic prayer):** Remember [Lord] all of us gather here before you. You know how firmly we believe in you and dedicate ourselves to you. . . We pray to you, our living and true God, for our well-being and redemption...Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen...Though we are sinners, we trust in your mercy and love. Do not consider what we truly deserve, but grant us your forgiveness. Through Christ our Lord you give us all these gifts. You fill them with life and goodness, you bless them and make them holy. (1) (2) (3) (4)

**Priest (second Eucharistic prayer):** Dying you [Jesus] destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory. . . Have mercy on us all; make us worthy to share eternal life...(2) (3)

**Priest (third Eucharistic prayer):** All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit...Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven...(2) (3)

**Priest (fourth Eucharistic prayer):** Father, you so loved the world that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior...In fulfillment of your will he gave himself up to death; but by rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life. (3)

**Congregation:** Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free. You are the Savior of the world. (3) (4)

**Priest:** This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper. (3)

**Congregation:** Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed. (4)

## Chapter 12: The Eucharist – A personal relationship with Jesus in every Mass

Fr. John compared the Catholic view of the Eucharist to marital love: “God loves us so much He doesn’t just tell that to me...He wants to give me Himself tangibly under this sacramental sign...the sacraments are pure grace. They all flow from the efficacy of the cross. We would say they have the power of Christ’s death and Resurrection in them.”

### **ANSWER 12**

**How do the following Bible passages tie in Holy Communion (or the Lord’s Supper, or the Eucharist) with a relationship with Jesus (or salvation)?**

**Matthew 26:26-28:** Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

**Luke 22:19:** And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

**John 6:53-58:** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

**1 Corinthians 10:16:** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

**1 Corinthians 11:27:** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.

Some object to the Catholic “realist” view of the Eucharist on the grounds that it can’t be objectively verified as the miracle it is believed to be. But there are many Christian supernatural beliefs that can’t be proven by observation or science: the virgin birth, Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice on the cross, the Incarnation (a sample of Jesus’ flesh and blood while He walked the earth would not necessarily look any different from any other human sample), heaven and hell, the existence of angels, immortality, original sin, regeneration, biblical inspiration, and lots of other things (indeed, most Christian doctrines) held in common by Protestants and Catholics.

Jesus taught that no signs or miracles would suffice for hard-hearted people, anyway (Luke 16:31), so this is not a matter of empirical verification, but rather, of how the relevant “Eucharistic” passages of Scripture are to be best interpreted. Christians differ on this, but

the least we can do in respecting our brethren in Christ is to better understand how and why we differ, and how each party argues its position from Holy Scripture.

[Note: DVD Chapter 16 on reverence and being in the actual presence of God is related to this chapter]

## **Chapter 13: Our Senses – How we encounter God through our physical senses**

Fr. John spoke about matter, spirit, and sacraments (physical means of grace): "God sees it fitting to hide Himself in material things, which man is inclined to reach out for, so that man can be healed of his slavery."

Pastor Steve: "So, when you think of that in terms of the Eucharist, you reach out for the bread, and really, you're reaching out for Christ."

Fr. John: "It's more that He is offering Himself to us, like a bridegroom—which is one of His favorite images in the New Testament—offers himself to a bride. The Lord says through Isaiah [62:5], 'more than a bridegroom longs for his bride, so do I long for you.'"

### ***ANSWER 13a***

**In each of the Scripture passages below, describe how God's grace is transferred to mankind through physical means.**

**2 Kings 13:21:** Dead man raised by coming in contact with Elisha's bones

**Matthew 9:20-22:** Jesus' garment healed the sick.

**Mark 8:22-25:** Saliva mixed with dirt brought sight to a blind man.

**John 9:7:** Water from the pool of Siloam healed the sick.

**Acts 5:15:** Peter's shadow healed the sick.

**Acts 19:12:** Paul's "handkerchiefs" healed the sick.

**1 Corinthians 12:27:** The Church is the "Body" of Christ.

**Ephesians 5:22-33:** Marriage (including the sexual act) is described as a direct parallel to Christ and the Church.

**1 Timothy 4:14:** Laying on of hands

**James 5:14:** Anointing with oil for healing is encouraged.

**ANSWER 13b**

**What is the most dramatic and important way in which God's grace is conveyed to mankind through physical matter?**

The incarnation, which made the atonement possible, is *the* event in salvation history, and raised matter to previously unknown heights. God took on human flesh! **All created matter was "good"** in God's opinion from the start (Gen 1:25), and is **"glorified" further** by the wonder of the incarnation. Ritual and "physicality" were not abolished by the coming of Christ, nor was the atonement itself purely "spiritual." Quite the contrary: **it was as physical as it could be**, as well as obviously spiritual. Christians of all types (particularly Evangelical Protestants) refer to "the Blood" [of Christ] and rightly so (see Rev 5:9, Eph 1:7, Col 1:14, Heb 9:12, 1 Peter 1:2, 1 John 1:7, etc.). It was the very suffering of Jesus in the flesh, and the voluntary (and physical) shedding of His own blood, which constituted the crucial, if not essential aspect of the atonement and redemption of fallen sinners. **"By his bruises we are healed"** (Is 53:5).

Catholic and Orthodox Christians, and some denominations in Protestantism (such as Lutherans and Anglicans) following this principle, believe that the **Eucharist and other sacraments (notably, baptism: Acts 2:38, 22:16, 1 Pet 3:21 -- cf. Mk 16:16, Rom 6:3-4 --, 1 Cor 6:11, Titus 3:5), literally convey grace** and have something to do with receiving or "appropriating" the salvation won for us by Jesus on the cross.

### **Chapter 14: Remembrance – A total re-engagement in the sacrifice of Christ**

Pastor Steve recounted another common criticism of Catholics (that he regards as a "misconception"): "Don't you re-sacrifice Jesus Christ at the Mass every time and doesn't that seem like you're forcing Christ to do it over and over again?" Fr. John emphatically exclaimed: "No! Of course not! We know Hebrews [7:27]. He was sacrificed once and for all; it's done with...it is a re-presentation of Christ's once and for all sacrifice, which happened on Calvary...God uses material things in such a way that He fills them to make divine events present...The Passover, for a devout Jew, was 'we're coming out of Egypt tonight'...the very sacrifice of Christ on the cross; it's like we now become contemporaries of it...somehow, sacramentally, I'm at the foot of the cross...all because it's His doing, because He wants that to happen."

**ANSWER 14**

**Is there any biblical basis for this type of Catholic thinking that seems so very foreign-sounding to most Protestants? (See what you can find in these scriptures.)**

Jesus' sacrifice (in Catholic thinking) is not only present to us on earth, but also in heaven, where the book of Revelation (6:9; 8:3,5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7) tells us there is an "altar" at which Jesus and the prayers of the saints (**Rev 5:6-9; 8:3-4**) are offered. In Revelation, Jesus is also called the *Lamb* twenty-eight times (e.g., 7:9-10; 12:11; 22:1,3, etc.; cf. **Jn 1:29,36**; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19), which obviously itself harkens back to the Old Testament sacrificial system of priests' offering unblemished lambs to atone for sin.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul, in **1 Corinthians 10:14-22**, uses the language of “tables,” suggesting that he viewed the Eucharist as a sacrifice. He mentions the “altar” of the Old Covenant in 10:18 and makes a direct analogy to the New Covenant, over against the altars and sacrifices of the pagans:

**1 Corinthians 10:19-21:** “What do I imply then, that food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

Jesus is now our High Priest (Heb 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:10; 6:20; 7:23-26; 8:1; 10:19-21), having offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Heb 2:17; 9:12-14, 24, 28; 10:12-14). In the historical sense, this is a past event, but in the timelessness of God and heaven it is an “eternally present” event:

**Revelation 5:6:** “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain . . .”

This – most strikingly -- describes as a present event in heaven the historical sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary in Jerusalem. In Revelation 5:6 we catch a glimpse of the *past* sacrifice (“had been slain”) as it is *presently* (“standing”) in heaven—John tries to capture the mystery of the one sacrifice in the *past*, which is ever present in the *now*. This is precisely what Catholics believe occurs at Mass.

This same “slain Lamb” (Jesus) is repeatedly described as sitting on God’s throne (Rev 7:17; 22:1,3), and a “golden altar” is in front of this throne (8:3). It appears, then, that the Mass can be compared to events in heaven that resemble it, at the very least. Jesus offers Himself, as a priest, “forever” (**Ps 110:4**; **Heb 6:20**; 7:17, 24). Heavenly worship is (I think all Christians would agree) a worthy model for earthly Christian worship.

This biblical data, then (even if not regarded as a narrative of literal events), appears to offer clear support for the Catholic conception of priestly worship and the Mass. Other passages present a similar picture of universal sacrifices, Eucharist, and “offering” (**Gen 14:18**; Lev 23:13; **Isaiah 66:18,21**; **Mal 1:11**).

## Chapter 15: Mary / Saints – Catholics do not worship saints

Remember this interchange?

Pastor Steve: “Is it a misconception that Catholics worship Mary?”

Fr. John: “Yes, it’s a misconception...We do not worship her. We worship God alone. We do honor her...we [in our society] honor someone who’s 6’9” and can dunk. If we honor those people, for doing things, which have nothing to do with character, then how much more do we honor the saints, both alive and dead?...The communion of saints, for a Catholic, is not broken by death, we would hope . . .”

Pastor Steve: “I hope not.”

Fr. John: “. . . those who, according to Revelation, are standing around the throne of God, in glory, we ask them to pray for us. And they know what in fact we need to receive, because somehow the perspective from heaven seems to be a little better than our perspective here on earth. So the simple fact that they’re not dead [i.e. living] means I can have some sort of...relationship. We ask them to intercede.”

Pastor Steve: “They’re part of the great cloud of witnesses [Hebrews 12:1] still.”

Fr. John: “Exactly! God is the God of the living, not the dead.” [Matthew 22:32]

Pastor Steve: “That’s awesome.”

### **ANSWER 15a**

**Some Christians believe that any kind of honoring of another person is equivalent to worship. But what do the following scripture passages tell us about honoring other human persons, and why is such honor not worship?**

**Romans 12:10:** Outdo one another in showing honor (to others).

**1 Peter 2:17:** Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

**1 Timothy 5:17:** Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor...

### **ANSWER 15b**

**What is the difference between honoring humans (live or deceased) and worship of God?**

*Honor* is an elevated but limited esteem that we give to persons either because of their temporal position over us, or because of their good character. In honoring a person we may still be aware of their imperfections and faults, but we still show them elevated respect.

*Worship* is (along with *adoration*) the unlimited honor that we reserve for God alone. Worship is what is given to God who is over us not only temporally, but eternally. In adoration we are giving God praise for his perfection in every respect.

### **ANSWER 15c**

**What does the following scripture passage tell us about the power that the prayers of honored people can have?**

**James 5:10-18:** this verse indicates that there are men who set examples for us, and whose prayers were more powerful than the prayers of others. There were the prophets, like Elijah who were steadfast and reaped happiness because their intercessory prayers were answered. There are the elders of the church who are directed to anoint the sick with oil and pray -- and their prayers will forgiveness and healing. And lastly, we are reminded that the prayers of a righteous man have great effect.

In cooperation with the passages in Romans and 1 Peter 2 we can see that there are those that we should honor, not just because they are righteous, but because their prayers are answered.

**ANSWER 15d**

What do the following verses tell us about Christians that have died, and whether or not it is plausible that they can, somehow, be aware of what is happening on Earth?

**Matthew 17:1-3, Luke 9:28-33:** In the transfiguration of Jesus, Moses and Elijah appear and are heard talking about events on Earth.

**Matthew 18:10:** Angels continually communicate the events on Earth with the powers that be in heaven. While this doesn't say directly that the saints in heaven are aware, it is one of several that suggest that angels communicate information between the two realms.

**Matthew 27:50-53:** Saints rose from their graves and walked among people of Jerusalem.

**Hebrews 11–12:1:** Hebrews 11 describes many renowned men and women, who because of their faith and obedience, we should honor as role models for our lives. In the next verse (12:1) we are told that the men and women of Chapter 11 are witnesses of our lives. How this happens we are not told, but its plausible that it is with the help of angels. (cf. Matthew 18:10)

**ANSWER 15e**

What do the following verses tell us about the activity of saints in heaven?

**Revelation 5:8:** the prayers of the saints are presented to Jesus (the Lamb) by elders.

**Revelations 6:9-10:** martyrs pray before God for justice on Earth and are told of what else must happen on Earth before God's judgment.

**Revelations 8:3-4:** an angel is given the prayers of the saints to mix with incense so that the prayers would rise before the throne of God.

**DISCUSSION**

Catholic theology takes its lead from the Early Church's interpretation of the term "saint" to mean all Christians—both here on Earth and those in Heaven. For example, when we are told to "pray for each other" (James 5:16) the Church sees the injunction as applying to all saints in Heaven and on Earth. Thus, it is through this interpretive lens that the Catholic Church interprets the Bible passages in the following discussion:

The Bible commands us to **honor teachers in the Church** (1 Tim 5:17), **those in the government** (Rom 13:7), and even **fellow believers in Christ** (1 Cor 12:12-26). Indeed, such a spirit of **honoring those who deserve it** is supposed to be characteristic of a Christian (**Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 2:17**).

The Apostle Paul imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6) and in turn **urged us to "imitate" him** (1 Cor 4:16; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:7-9). This would be true, even after his earthly death. So, Catholics imitate the saints' lives and have devotion to them both during and after their lives on earth.

The Bible also devotes **an entire chapter to the heroes of the faith whom we are to emulate (Hebrews 11; cf. 6:12; James 5:10-11)**. In James 5:16-18 we are taught some very important principles about effective prayer:

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.** Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit. (James 5:16-18)

The Bible refers to other **powerful intercessors such as Abraham and Moses**, whose pleas were so strong that they convinced God not to destroy entire cities or peoples. Catholics ask for the **prayers of Mary and also ask other saints, because they have more power than we do, having been made perfectly righteous** (according to the passage above and the revealed fact of sinlessness in heaven: (Rev 21:27, 22:14). Therefore, by the principle taught in James 5:16-18 **they would be very effective intercessors. They do not themselves "answer" our prayers**; only God does that (as Fr. John made clear in DVD Chapter 17). They are praying on our behalf just as a friend on earth might pray for us. And, Scripture clearly teaches that **these saints in heaven are aware of earthly happenings**. God is fully able to give them the power to hear us, possibly through angelic messengers. We see this in the following passages:

**Hebrews 12:1:** the "cloud of witnesses"; prayers for us from "saints" in heaven

**Revelation 6:9-10:** When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" (cf. Zechariah 1:12)

An angel somehow possesses "prayers of the saints" and in turn presents them to God:

**Revelation 8:3-4:** And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense **to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God.** (cf. Revelation 5:8)

Scripture appears to imply that Jeremiah is praying for his people after his death (**Jeremiah 15:1**). If they have such awareness, it isn't that much of a leap to conclude that they can hear our requests for prayer, especially since the Bible itself shows that they are indeed praying.

**Matthew 17:1-3:** Moses and Elijah came back to earth and appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus.

**Matthew 18:10** suggests the notion of guardian angels.

**Matthew 27:50-53:** Many bodies of the saints who had "fallen asleep" walked around Jerusalem after the crucifixion, and "appeared to many."

The "two witnesses" of Revelation 11:3 are thought by many Bible commentators to be Moses and Elijah, or Enoch and Elijah. It makes eminent sense to believe that the saints who

have died devote themselves to prayer for us (and that therefore they could hear our prayers), because they are perfected in love and long for human beings to be saved. They're not simply sitting on clouds and playing harps, as the cultural stereotypes would have us believe. They no longer play all the games that we play in order to ignore the spiritual dimension of reality. If it is objected that they cannot hear "thousands of prayers" at once, one can reply that those in eternity in heaven are not subjected to the limitations of time. If these creatures are outside of time, then there is no problem of sequence. This is how Catholics can defend all these beliefs, from express indications in the Bible.

## **Chapter 16: Reverence – How close do we dare get to God?**

After Holy Communion is distributed during Mass the remaining consecrated hosts are kept in a small gold cabinet called the tabernacle, near which a candle burns 24 hours a day. In these hosts, and thus in the tabernacle, Catholics believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is sacramentally and truly present in His body, blood, soul, and divinity. Fr. John explained the power of God and our ability to approach it at close range (in the tabernacle) by drawing a rough analogy with the construction of a nuclear reactor.

### ***ANSWER 16a***

**What was Fr. John's analogy that explained the power of God that Catholics believe is held within the tabernacle?**

In a nuclear reactor, the reaction is contained by a special kind of water that is held in place by thick glass. If the glass were to break, those watching just outside the glass would be dead in less than an instant. We should remember that next time we walk past the tabernacle.

### ***ANSWER 16b***

**According to Fr. John, what did Mahatma Gandhi once say about the Catholic Eucharist?**

If Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, as the Christians say, then I would get on my hands and knees to worship.

## **Chapter 17: Answering – Only God answers prayer**

### ***ANSWER 17a***

**When you ask a friend to pray for you, who answers your prayer? Is it your friend, or is it God?**

It is God who answers our prayer.

**ANSWER 17b**

**When you ask a person in heaven (a saint) to pray for you, who are they praying to, and who answers the prayers?**

Like we ask a friend to pray for us, so we ask friends in heaven to pray for us. But in the end, only God answers our prayers.

## **Chapter 18: Confessing – Christians must confess their sins**

Pastor Steve inquired: “Does the priest forgive a person’s sins, and not God, when they’re confessing...what’s happening there? What do we learn from that?” Fr. John appealed to Scripture (John 20) in answering that the priest only represents God.

**ANSWER 18a**

**Who is actually forgiving the repentant sinner?**

While we are told to forgive each other our sins, ultimately only God forgives our sins. In John 20 Christ gives *his* authority to forgive sins to the Apostles.

**ANSWER 18b**

**Are there other similar passages in the Bible that would indicate a class of people (in Catholic thinking: the priest) who are intended by God to dispense forgiveness on His behalf?**

The direct basis for these beliefs is found in three scripture passages, taught by Jesus:

**Matthew 16:19:** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

**Matthew 18:18:** Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

**John 20:21-23:** Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

“Binding” and “loosing” were rabbinical terms that had to do with authority to punish or pardon. We see the Apostle Paul literally exercising these prerogatives with the Corinthians. He “binds” in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (what Catholics would call “imposing a penance”) and “looses” in 2 Corinthians 2:6-11. Paul forgives another man for a transgression that wasn’t personally committed against him, and instructs the Corinthians to do the same (the sin wasn’t committed against all of them, either). So both he and the Corinthians as a whole

were acting as “God’s representatives” in the matter of forgiving sins (bolded emphasis added):

**1 Corinthians 5:1-5:** It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, **I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus** on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, **you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved** in the day of the Lord Jesus.

**2 Corinthians 2:6-11:** For such a one this **punishment by the majority** is enough; so **you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him**, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. **Any one whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ**, to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

## Chapter 19: Protestants – Christians need to evangelize and “sing”

### **ANSWER 19a**

According to Fr. John, what are some of the things that Catholics can learn from Evangelical Protestants?

- Catholics can learn from Evangelicals how to share their faith and evangelize. Vatican II taught that the primary purpose of the laity is to be about evangelization and sanctification.
- Catholics can learn from Evangelicals how to worship and sing with enthusiasm and passion.
- Catholics can learn from Evangelicals how not to compartmentalize their faith and make everything in their life fit into the bookshelf which is their faith.
- Catholics can learn from Evangelicals (especially Charismatics) something more about who the Holy Spirit is and the Spirit's power to change hearts.
- Catholics can learn from Evangelicals how to be more open to reading, studying, and carrying their Bible with them...preferably a Bible in good leather binding.

### **ANSWER 19b - Extra Credit**

**Where in Vatican II (the Ecumenical Council held from 1962-1965) is personal evangelism by the laity encouraged?**

Vatican II issued the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity -- Apostolicam Actuositatem*. Here are excerpts of that document where it speaks about the laity's responsibility to be evangelists.

1. To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God, the most holy synod earnestly addresses itself to the laity, whose **proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church** has already been dealt with in other documents. The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation, and **the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity [evangelism] was at the very beginning of the Church** (cf. Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3).

**Our own times require of the laity no less zeal: in fact, modern conditions demand that their [evangelization] apostolate be broadened and intensified.** With a constantly increasing population, continual progress in science and technology, and closer interpersonal relationships, **the areas for the lay [evangelization] apostolate have been immensely widened particularly in fields that have been for the most part open to the laity alone.** These factors have also occasioned new problems which demand their expert attention and study. This apostolate becomes more imperative in view of the fact that many areas of human life have become increasingly autonomous. This is as it should be, but it sometimes involves a degree of departure from the ethical and religious order and a serious danger to Christian life. Besides, in many places where priests are very few or, in some instances, deprived of due freedom for priestly work, **the Church could scarcely exist and function without the activity of the laity.**

2. ...the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore **have their own share in the mission** of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.

**They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men** and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, **they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ.**

6. ....There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the **exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification.**

...Since, in our own times, new problems are arising and very serious errors are circulating which tend to undermine the foundations of religion, the moral order, and human society itself, **this sacred synod earnestly exhorts laymen—each according to his own gifts of intelligence and learning - to be more diligent in doing what they can to explain, defend, and properly apply Christian principles** to the problems of our era in accordance with the mind of the Church.

## Chapter 20: Spiritual Gifts – Christians need to use their spiritual gifts

Pastor Steve asked: "I'm wondering about spiritual gifts...teaching on spiritual gifts or inviting people to use the spiritual gifts; has that always been a part of the Catholic experience?" Fr. John spoke about his background in a charismatic Catholic household, but...

### **ANSWER 20**

**Is the Charismatic Movement, within Catholicism, accepted by the leadership of the Catholic Church?**

Yes.

#### **1. Vatican II: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*:**

It is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues. Allotting His gifts "to everyone according as he will" (1 Cor. 12:11), He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank..."The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit." (1 Cor. 12:7). These charismatic gifts, whether they be the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church.

Still, extraordinary gifts are not to be rashly sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from them. In any case, judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who preside over the Church, and to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good (cf. 1 Th. 5:12,19-21).

(chapter 2: "The People of God," paragraph 12)

#### **2. Vatican II: *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam actuositatem)*:**

The Holy Spirit sanctifies the People of God through the ministry and the sacraments. However, for the exercise of the apostolate he gives the faithful special gifts besides (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7), "allotting them to each one as he wills" (1 Cor. 12:11), so that each and all, putting at the service of others the grace received may be, "as good stewards of God's varied gifts," (1 Pet. 4:10), for the building up of the whole body in charity (cf. Eph. 4:16). From the reception of these charisms, even the most ordinary ones, there arises for each of the faithful the right and duty of exercising them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the development of the Church, of exercising them in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who "breathes where he wills" (Jn. 3:8), and at the same time in communion with his brothers in Christ, and with his pastors especially. It is for the pastors to pass judgment on the authenticity and good use of these gifts, not certainly with a view to quenching the Spirit but to testing everything and keeping what is good (cf. 1 Th. 5:12, 19, 21).

(chapter 1, paragraph 3: "Foundations of the Lay Apostolate")

### 3. Pope Benedict XVI (as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger):

What is hopeful at the level of the universal Church - and what is happening right in the heart of the crisis of the Church in the Western world - is the rise of new movements which nobody had planned and which nobody has called into being, but which have sprung spontaneously from the inner vitality of the faith itself. What is manifested in them - albeit subdued - is something like a pentecostal season in the Church. I am thinking, say, of the charismatic movement, of the Cursillos...Certainly all these movements also give rise to some problems. They also entail greater or lesser dangers. But that happens with all living beings. I am now, to an increasing degree, meeting groups of young people in whom there is a wholehearted adhesion to the whole faith of the Church, young people who want to live this faith fully and who bear in themselves a great missionary elan. The intense life of prayer present in these movements does not imply a flight into interiority or a withdrawal into the private sphere, but simply a full and undivided catholicity. The joy of the faith that one senses here has something contagious about it. Here, new vocations to the priesthood and to the religious orders are now growing spontaneously.

**What is striking is that all this fervor was not elaborated by any office of pastoral planning, but somehow it sprang forth by itself.** As a consequence of this fact, the planning offices - just when they want to be very progressive - don't know just what to do with them. They don't fit into their plan. Thus while tensions rise in connection with their incorporation into the present form of the institutions, there is absolutely no tension with the hierarchical Church as such.

What is emerging here is a new generation of the Church, which I am watching with a great hope. I find it marvelous that the Spirit is once more stronger than our programs and brings himself into play in an altogether different way than we had imagined. In this sense the renewal, in a subdued but effective way, is afoot...

*(The Ratzinger Report, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Vittorio Messori, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985, translated by Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison, 43-44)*

## Chapter 21: Reading the Bible – Christians need to read their Bible daily

### **ANSWER 21**

What does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* say about the importance of studying the Bible? (CCC 133)

The Church "forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful. . . to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. **Ignorance** of scripture is **ignorance** of Christ. (CCC 133)

It is true that there has been, historically (for various reasons), less interest in Bible reading among Catholics than among many Protestants, and many Catholics continue to fall pathetically short in this regard. The official teaching of the Catholic Church regarding

Bible-reading and emphasis, however, is scarcely different from that of most Protestant communions.

## **Chapter 22: Relationship – We need to pursue a personal relationship with Christ**

### **ANSWER 22**

**With respect to our relationship with Jesus Christ the phrase "personal" does not appear in the Bible -- but the concept does. In the following citations describe how a Christian should be related to Christ?**

#### **ADVOCATE**

(1 Cor. 15:3, Rom. 4:25, 1 John 2:1, Heb. 7:27) (CCC 519)

Each of these verses refers to Christ as the person who sacrifices himself physically for us in an effort to redeem us from sin before the Father. The Catechism passage explains that Christ lived his life, not for himself, but for us... "for us men and for our salvation" for our "justification." He lived to make (personal) intercession for us... something he does now in the personal presence of God the Father. He is our personal representative to the Father. It's a representation that is united with our sin and our deepest self. He is, thus, not just the Savior of the world in general, but he is our personal Savior in particular.

#### **BREAD OF HEAVEN, BREAD OF LIFE, OUR DAILY BREAD**

(Ex. 16:19-21, Matt. 6:11, John 6:51, 54, 56) (CCC 2837)

Fr. John suggested that you can't get much more personal than eating Christ's body and drinking his blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharist every day. In Exodus 16 we see that the Old Testament type (the manna bread from heaven) taught the Children of Israel that they had to trust in God daily for their physical sustenance. That type points to the more important daily bread that Christ brings to us in his spiritual and sacramental presence. In Matthew 6 we hear Christ teaching the Apostles to ask daily for bread. But the bread he refers to is the bread that is supernatural, like the bread on the side of the mountain in John Chapter 6. But even the multiplied bread in John 6 is a foreshadowed "type" for that which is more significant and which comes even later—the actual presence of Christ in our lives and the 'real presence' of Christ in the Eucharist—the "bread of Heaven." In consuming Christ's presence physically in the Eucharist, by giving Him thanks for his personal involvement in our lives, and in our service personally to others, we give ourselves to him personally, spiritually, mentally, physically, and eternally.

## **Chapter 23: Encountering – Jesus at St. Anastasia**

Fr. John recounted a story where a devout Protestant asked him if he had a personal relationship with Jesus. He replied that he received Jesus' flesh and blood into his body every day (the Eucharist) and stated:

I don't know how much more personal it can get than that...The Catholic will hear a language coming from the Protestant or vice versa, and we don't have any way to process [it]...so we just filter it through what we think you're saying, as opposed to actually taking the time to...have the discussion.

He stressed that Catholics can have this same personal relationship with Jesus in their own way, but couched in different terms, and that all Christians must renew their commitment to God daily.

### **ANSWER 23**

**Thomas à Kempis (1380 – 1471), a Catholic, wrote a famous book that can often be found in Protestant bookstores. The book stresses a personal relationship with Jesus. Do you know the title, and some of its themes?**

*The Imitation of Christ* was written by Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380 – 1471). The book is devoted to sublimely spiritual things that many Protestants commendably emphasize. The first book (or section) is entitled: "Thoughts Helpful in the Life of the Soul." It's followed by three other books (or sections): "The Interior Life," "Internal Consolation" and "An Invitation to Holy Communion." The book is remarkable for its profound spirituality, expressed in simple language.

Thomas à Kempis died a generation before the Protestant Reformation began. *The Imitation of Christ* is typical of many dozens of such meditations by pious Catholics and Catholic mystics through the ages. Here are but a few portions that would relate to the question of a "personal relationship with Jesus," as many Protestants would put it. This communion with God is not at all foreign to authentic Catholic practice, tradition, and devotion.

Here are excerpts from *The Imitation of Christ* that encourage all Christians to see God and Christ in a personal way.

[*The Imitation of Christ*. Thomas à Kempis. Trans: Aloysius Croft and Harold Bolton. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1940. On-line: [www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.html)]

**(From Book II: *The Interior Life*, Chapter One: "Meditation")**

The kingdom of God is within you," says the Lord. [Luke 17:21]

Turn, then, to God with all your heart. Forsake this wretched world and your soul shall find rest. Learn to despise external things, to devote yourself to those that are within, and you will see the kingdom of God come unto you, that kingdom which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, gifts not given to the impious.

Christ will come to you offering His consolation, if you prepare a fit dwelling for Him in your heart, whose beauty and glory, wherein He takes delight, are all from within. His visits with the inward man are frequent, His communion sweet and full of consolation, His peace great, and His intimacy wonderful indeed.

Therefore, faithful soul, prepare your heart for this Bridegroom that He may come and dwell within you; He Himself says: "If any one love Me, he will keep My word,

and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." [John 14:23]

Give place, then, to Christ, but deny entrance to all others, for when you have Christ you are rich and He is sufficient for you. He will provide for you. He will supply your every want, so that you need not trust in frail, changeable men. Christ remains forever, standing firmly with us to the end.

... you shall have no rest until you are wholly united with Christ.

... Fix your mind on the Most High, and pray unceasingly to Christ.

... Had you but once entered into perfect communion with Jesus or tasted a little of His ardent love, you would care nothing at all for your own comfort or discomfort but would rejoice in the reproach you suffer; for love of Him makes a man despise himself.

A man who is a lover of Jesus and of truth, a truly interior man who is free from uncontrolled affections, can turn to God at will and rise above himself to enjoy spiritual peace.

**(From Book II: *The Interior Life*, Chapter Seven: "Loving Jesus Above All Things")**

Blessed is he who appreciates what it is to love Jesus and who despises himself for the sake of Jesus. Give up all other love for His, since He wishes to be loved alone above all things.

Affection for creatures is deceitful and inconstant, but the love of Jesus is true and enduring. He who clings to a creature will fall with its frailty, but he who gives himself to Jesus will ever be strengthened.

Love Him, then; keep Him as a friend. He will not leave you as others do, or let you suffer lasting death. Sometime, whether you will or not, you will have to part with everything. Cling, therefore, to Jesus in life and death; trust yourself to the glory of Him who alone can help you when all others fail.

Your Beloved is such that He will not accept what belongs to another—He wants your heart for Himself alone, to be enthroned therein as King in His own right. If you but knew how to free yourself entirely from all creatures, Jesus would gladly dwell within you.

You will find, apart from Him, that nearly all the trust you place in men is a total loss. Therefore, neither confide in nor depend upon a wind-shaken reed, for "all flesh is grass" [Isaiah 15:6] and all its glory, like the flower of grass, will fade away.

You will quickly be deceived if you look only to the outward appearance of men, and you will often be disappointed if you seek comfort and gain in them. If, however, you seek Jesus in all things, you will surely find Him. Likewise, if you seek yourself, you will find yourself—to your own ruin. For the man who does not seek Jesus does himself much greater harm than the whole world and all his enemies could ever do.

**(From Book II: *The Interior Life*, Chapter Eight: "The Intimate Friendship of Jesus")**

When Jesus is near, all is well and nothing seems difficult. When He is absent, all is hard. When Jesus does not speak within, all other comfort is empty, but if He says only a word, it brings great consolation.

Did not Mary Magdalen rise at once from her weeping when Martha said to her: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee"? [John 11:28] Happy is the hour when Jesus calls one from tears to joy of spirit.

How dry and hard you are without Jesus! How foolish and vain if you desire anything but Him! Is it not a greater loss than losing the whole world? For what, without Jesus, can the world give you? Life without Him is a relentless hell, but living with Him is a sweet paradise. If Jesus be with you, no enemy can harm you.

He who finds Jesus finds a rare treasure, indeed, a good above every good, whereas he who loses Him loses more than the whole world. The man who lives without Jesus is the poorest of the poor, whereas no one is so rich as the man who lives in His grace.

It is a great art to know how to converse with Jesus, and great wisdom to know how to keep Him. Be humble and peaceful, and Jesus will be with you. Be devout and calm, and He will remain with you. You may quickly drive Him away and lose His grace, if you turn back to the outside world. And, if you drive Him away and lose Him, to whom will you go and whom will you then seek as a friend? You cannot live well without a friend, and if Jesus be not your friend above all else, you will be very sad and desolate. Thus, you are acting foolishly if you trust or rejoice in any other. Choose the opposition of the whole world rather than offend Jesus. Of all those who are dear to you, let Him be your special love. Let all things be loved for the sake of Jesus, but Jesus for His own sake.

Jesus Christ must be loved alone with a special love, for He alone, of all friends, is good and faithful. For Him and in Him you must love friends and foes alike, and pray to Him that all may know and love Him.

Never desire special praise or love, for that belongs to God alone Who has no equal. Never wish that anyone's affection be centered in you, nor let yourself be taken up with the love of anyone, but let Jesus be in you and in every good man. Be pure and free within, unentangled with any creature.

You must bring to God a clean and open heart if you wish to attend and see how sweet the Lord is. Truly you will never attain this happiness unless His grace prepares you and draws you on so that you may forsake all things to be united with Him alone.

When the grace of God comes to a man he can do all things, but when it leaves him he becomes poor and weak, abandoned, as it were, to affliction. Yet, in this condition he should not become dejected or despair. On the contrary, he should calmly await the will of God and bear whatever befalls him in praise of Jesus Christ, for after winter comes summer, after night, the day, and after the storm, a great calm.

## Chapter 24: Brothers – There's more unity than most would think

### **ANSWER 24**

List as many as you can of the common ground beliefs and practices that Protestants and Catholics share.

1. The Christian way of life is nourished by faith in Christ.
2. The Christian way of life is strengthened by the grace of baptism and the hearing of the Word of God.
3. This way of life expresses itself in private prayer and meditation on scripture.
4. It also expresses itself in the worship of a community gathered together to praise God.
5. The faith by which Christians believe in Christ bears fruit in praise and thanksgiving for the benefits received from the hands of God.
6. The faith of Christians in Christ also bears fruit in a lively sense of justice and true charity toward others. (As a result, both Protestants & Catholics have been responsible for many initiatives which have provided for (a) the relief of spiritual and material distress, (b) the furtherance of education of youth, (c) the improvement of social conditions for the poor and disenfranchised, and (d) the promotion of peace throughout the world.)
7. Most Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church share beliefs in: The Trinity, The Resurrection of Christ, The Incarnation, Love for the Bible as God's inspired and infallible revelation, Angels, the devil, heaven and hell, Salvation by grace alone through Christ alone, An Eternal Soul, Various Philosophical Arguments for the existence of God, and many more.
8. Many Christians recite the Nicene Creed or The Apostles Creed on Sunday, which is a sign of unity among Christians throughout the world.

## Chapter 25: Wounds - What wounds the Holy Spirit?

### **ANSWER 25**

List a couple of examples of "Christian" behaviors that wound the Holy Spirit with respect to the unity of Christians.

- When non-Catholics criticize Catholics as non-Christians.
- When our speech slanders or prejudges other Christians.

## Chapter 26: Call to Pray – Fr. John's challenge to all Christians

Fr. John challenged all Christians to spend a solid hour in prayer each day.

### **ANSWER 26**

**Where does this hour of prayer come from?**

One scripture that leads to the practice is Matthew 26:36-41.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you **could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test.** The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

## Chapter 27: Prayer – Pastor Steve and Fr. John pray for each other's church

In their final prayer, Pastor Steve and Fr. John model for us a unity that other Protestants and Catholic Christians can practice in an effort to fulfill Christ's insistent, John 17 prayer to his Father in heaven.

### **ANSWER 27**

**List as many of the specific things Fr. John and Pastor Steve prayed for as possible.**

Fr. John's prayer:

1. He thanks God for the work He is doing in the people of Kensington, and that they know the love of God revealed in His Son and the power of His Holy Spirit.
2. He thanks God for Pastor Steve and the gifts he and the pastoral staff have been given to serve the people of Kensington.
3. He prays for the Kensington pastoral staff to be a means of bringing about a renewal in the lives of their people so that in their places of work and in their families their faith might be truly contagious.
4. He prays that the people of Kensington might live so that others notice the difference in their lives and realize that difference comes from their relationship with God.

5. He asks God's blessings on all the activities at Kensington, and that these activities might be a means of showing glory and honor to God and building up His Kingdom.

Pastor Steve's prayer:

6. He thanks God for Fr. John's leadership and for the community of believers at St. Anastasia.
7. He thanks God for the scars on Fr. John's heart and prays that those same scars would also be on the hearts of every person at St. Anastasia, that it would be so clear that God owns their lives.
8. He thanks God for all the work He is doing in St. Anastasia and that God would expand the territory of their church.
9. He asks God to raise men and women up to serve God in ways they never thought possible.
10. He asks God to challenge Kensington to take up Fr. John's challenge to spend an hour a day in prayer, to hear from God and let His presence and love grow in them.
11. He thanks God that their time together has been a little piece of heaven and a sample of what heaven will be like.
12. He asks God to increase all of our faith and give us a clearer picture of who God is.

# Appendix

One of the most constructive and hopeful ecumenical endeavors in recent times occurred in 1994 with an effort spear headed by Evangelical, Chuck Colson, and Catholic priest, Rev. Richard John Neuhaus. The outcome of an ecumenical seminar was a joint document called, *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*. (On-line: <http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9405/articles/mission.html>)

Here are excerpts:

## **We Hope Together**

Unity and love among Christians is an integral part of our missionary witness to the Lord whom we serve. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13) If we do not love one another, we disobey his command and contradict the Gospel we declare. As Evangelicals and Catholics, we pray that our unity in the love of Christ will become ever more evident as a sign to the world of God's reconciling power. Our communal and ecclesial separations are deep and long standing. We acknowledge that we do not know the schedule nor do we know the way to the greater visible unity for which we hope. We do know that existing patterns of distrustful polemic and conflict are not the way. We do know that God who has brought us into communion with himself through Christ intends that we also be in communion with one another. We do know that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14) and as we are drawn closer to him-walking in that way, obeying that truth, living that life-we are drawn closer to one another. Whatever may be the future form of the relationship between our communities, we can, we must, and we will begin now the work required to remedy what we know to be wrong in that relationship. Such work requires trust and understanding, and trust and understanding require an assiduous attention to truth. We do not deny but clearly assert that there are disagreements between us. Misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and caricatures of one another, however, are not disagreements. These distortions must be cleared away if we are to search through our honest differences in a manner consistent with what we affirm and hope together on the basis of God's Word.

## **We Search Together**

In this search to understand the truth more fully and clearly, we need one another. We are both informed and limited by the histories of our communities and by our own experiences. Across the divides of communities and experiences, we need to challenge one another, always speaking the truth in love building up the Body. (Ephesians 4) We do not presume to suggest that we can resolve the deep and long-standing differences between Evangelicals and Catholics. Indeed these differences may never be resolved short of the Kingdom Come. Nonetheless, we are not permitted simply to resign ourselves to differences that divide us from one another. Not all differences are authentic disagreements, nor need all disagreements divide. Differences and disagreements must be tested in disciplined and sustained conversation. In this connection we warmly commend and encourage the formal theological dialogues of recent years between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals.

### **We Contend Together**

In the exercise of these public responsibilities there has been in recent years a growing convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics. We thank God for the discovery of one another in contending for a common cause. Much more importantly, we thank God for the discovery of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our cooperation as citizens is animated by our convergence as Christians. We promise one another that we will work to deepen, build upon, and expand this pattern of convergence and cooperation. Together we contend for the truth that politics, law, and culture must be secured by moral truth.

### **We Witness Together**

[B]earing false witness against other persons and communities, or casting unjust and uncharitable suspicions upon them, is incompatible with the Gospel. Also to be rejected is the practice of comparing the strengths and ideals of one community with the weaknesses and failures of another. In describing the teaching and practices of other Christians, we must strive to do so in a way that they would recognize as fair and accurate. In considering the many corruptions of Christian witness, we, Evangelicals and Catholics, confess that we have sinned against one another and against God. We most earnestly ask the forgiveness of God and one another, and pray for the grace to amend our own lives and that of our communities. Repentance and amendment of life do not dissolve remaining differences between us.

