

Only Catholics Are True Christians

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

What follows is some evidence of the deeper dogma that all men who profess belief in Jesus Christ and the New Testament but do not adhere to the Catholic Church are not Christians.¹ They are either formal heretics or formal schismatics. Hence they do not believe in or obey the true Jesus Christ and thus do not believe or obey the true Catholic Church. Therefore, they are nominal Christians (that is, Christians in name only). Hence only Catholics are true Christians:

Heretic Tertullian, *The Prescriptions against Heretics*, c, 200: “Since this is the case, in order that the truth may be adjudged to belong to us, ‘as many as walk according to the rule,’ which the Church has handed down from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God, the reason of our position is clear, when it determines that heretics ought not to be allowed to challenge an appeal to the Scriptures, since we, without the Scriptures, prove that they have nothing to do with the Scriptures. For as they are heretics, they cannot be true Christians because it is not from Christ that they get that which they pursue of their own mere choice, and from the pursuit incur and admit the name of heretics. Thus, not being Christians, they have acquired no right to the Christian Scriptures.”²

St. Cyprian, *Epistle 52*, to Antonianus, 3rd century: “24. In reference, however, to the character of Novatian, dearest brother, of whom you desired that intelligence should be written you what heresy he had introduced; know that, in the first place, we ought not even to be inquisitive as to what he teaches, so long as he teaches out of the pale of unity. Whoever he may be, and whatever he may be, he who is not in the Church of Christ is not a Christian. Although he may boast himself, and announce his philosophy or eloquence with lofty words, yet he who has not maintained brotherly love or ecclesiastical unity has lost even what he previously had been.”

St. Cyprian, *Epistle 73*, to Pompey, 3rd century: “7. ...He should not have God as his Father before he has had the Church for his Mother?”

Apostate Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, c. 303: “For when they are called Phrygians, or Novarians, or Valentinians, or Marcionites, or Anthropians, or Arians, or by any other name they have ceased to be Christians, who have lost the name of Christ, and assumed human and external names. Therefore it is the Catholic Church alone which retains true worship. This is the fountain of truth, this is the abode of the faith, this is the temple of God; into which if any one shall not enter, or from which if any shall go out, he is estranged from the hope of life and eternal salvation.”³

St. Athanasius, *Epistle 1*, to Bishop Serapion, Concerning the Holy Spirit, 4th century: “28. ...See the tradition which is from the beginning and the doctrine and faith of the Catholic Church which the Lord indeed communicated, which the apostles proclaimed and the fathers guarded; for on this has the Church been founded, and he who falls away from it would not be a Christian and should no longer be called so.”⁴

The Council of Sardica, 343: “Men who have come down on their churches like wolves, such as Gregorius in Alexandria, Basilius in Ancyra, and Quintianus in Gaza, we charge them not even to call bishops nor yet Christians, nor to have any communion with them... For those who separate the Son from the substance and

¹ It is a deeper dogma because a Catholic who is inculpably ignorant of this deeper dogma may think that they are Christians because they profess belief in Jesus Christ and the New Testament, although not Catholic Christians. But if he believes they are in the way of salvation and thus can be saved while not adhering to the Catholic Church, then he is a formal heretic for denying the basic dogma that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church.

² c. 37.

³ b. 4, c. 30.

⁴ Contained in *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit*, Translated by C.R.B. Shapland. Published by The Epworth Press, London, 1951. Page 58.

divinity of the Father, and alienate the Word from the Father, ought to be separated from the Catholic Church, and alienated from all who bear the name of Christians. Let them then be anathema to you, and to all the faithful, because they have corrupted the word of truth.”⁵

St. Athanasius, *To the Bishops of Egypt*, Chapter 1, 356: “13. ...For maintaining these and the like opinions, Arius was declared a heretic... He who holds these opinions can no longer be even called a Christian, for they are all contrary to the Scriptures.”

St. Athanasius, *On the Symbols 'Of the Essence' and 'Coessential'*, 4th century: “37. Now, if certain others made excuses of the expressions of the Council, it might perhaps have been set down either to ignorance or to caution. There is no question, for instance, about George of Cappadocia who was expelled from Alexandria; a man without character in years past, nor a Christian in any respect but only pretending to the name to suit the times, and thinking ‘religion to be a’ means of ‘gain’ (1 Tim. 6:5)”⁶

Theodosian Code, 4th century: “And in imitation of this, Theodosius junior made another law to the same effect against Nestorius and his followers: that they should not abuse the name of Christians but be called Simonians, from Simon Magus, the arch-heretic.”⁷

St. Hilary of Poitiers, *Appeal to Constantius*, 4th century: “The voice of him who cries to you for help should be, I am a Catholic, and do not wish to be a heretic, I am a Christian and not an Arian.”⁸

St. Ambrose, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, c. 389: “101. ...Even the heretics appear to have Christ for none of them denies the name of Christ; yet, anyone who does not confess all that pertains to Christ does in fact deny Christ (1 Jn. 2:22-23)⁹ ...The Lord severed the Jewish people from his kingdom, and heretics and schismatics are also severed from the kingdom of God and from the Church. Our Lord makes it perfectly clear that every assembly of heretics and schismatics belongs not to God but to the unclean spirit.”¹⁰

St. Augustine, *City of God*, 413: “But the devil seeing the temples of the demons deserted and the human race running to the name of the liberating Mediator has moved the heretics under the Christian name to resist the Christian doctrine, as if they could be kept in the city of God indifferently without any correction, just as the city of confusion indifferently held the philosophers who were of diverse and adverse opinions... The heretics themselves also, since they are thought to have the Christian name and sacraments, Scriptures, and profession, cause great grief in the hearts of the pious, both because many who wish to be Christians are compelled by their dissensions to hesitate, and many evil-speakers also find in them matter for blaspheming the Christian name, because they too are at any rate called Christians... But that grief which arises in the hearts of the pious, who are persecuted by the manners of bad or false Christians, is profitable to the sufferers, because it proceeds from the charity in which they do not wish them either to perish or to hinder the salvation of others.”¹¹

St. Augustine, *Letter 78*, to the Church of Hippo, 404: “8. ...Ye ought to bring no reproach against heretics but this, that they are not Catholics.”

⁵ Quoted in Theodoret’s *Ecclesiastical History*, b. 6, c. 6.

⁶ pt. 3.

⁷ b. 16, title 5. *De heret*, c. 66.

⁸ Migne, *PL* 10:558; Quoted *The Origin and Development of the Christian Church in Gaul*, by T. Scott Holmes, D.D. 1911. Chap. 6, p. 152.

⁹ b. 6, sec. 101; Contained in *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, by apostate Rev. William Jurgens, v. 2, p. 163, No. 1304.

¹⁰ b. 7, sec, 95, *Commentary on Lk. 11:24*.

¹¹ b. 18, c. 51.

St. Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichean*, 400: “25 ...Moses no doubt knew in the spirit of prophecy, and from what he himself heard from God that many heretics would arise to teach errors of all kinds against the doctrine of Christ, and to preach another Christ than the true Christ. For the true Christ is he that was foretold in the prophecies uttered by Moses himself and by the other holy men of that nation. Moses accordingly commanded that whoever tried to teach another Christ should be put to death. In obedience to this command, the voice of the Catholic Church, as with the spiritual two-edged sword of both Testaments, puts to death all who try to turn us away from our God or to break any of the commandments.”¹²

St. Augustine, *Letter 104*, to Nectarius, 409: “The emperors say this because they are called Catholic Christians, not servers of idols like your Julian; not heretics, as certain ones have been and have persecuted the Church, when true Christians have suffered the most glorious martyrdom for Catholic truth, not justly deserved penalties for heretical error.”

Pope Leo the Great, *Epistle 124*, 5th century: “I am surprised that you, beloved, have any difficulty in discerning the light of the Truth. And since it has been made clear by numerous explanations that the Christian Faith was right in condemning both Nestorius and Eutyches with Dioscorus, and that a man cannot be called a Christian who gives his assent to the blasphemous opinion of either the one or the other.”¹³

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Letter 45*, to the Patrician Theoctista, 7th century: “For it used to be said against them that under pretext of religion they dissolved marriages; and that they said that baptism did not entirely take away sins; and that, if any one did penance for three years for his iniquities, he might afterwards live perversely; and that, if they said under compulsion that they anathematized anything for which they were blamed, they were by no means holden by the bond of anathema. Now if there are any who undoubtedly hold and maintain such views, there is no doubt that they are not Christians. And such both I, and all Catholic bishops, and the universal Church, anathematize, because they think what is contrary to the truth, and speak what is contrary.”¹⁴

Apostate Antipope Eugene IV, Invalid *Council of Florence*, Bull *Cantate Domino*, 1441: “Whoever, therefore, have adverse and contrary opinions, the Church disapproves and anathematizes and declares to be foreign to the Christian body which is the Church.”¹⁵

Apostate Antipope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, 1896: “So long as the member was on the body, it lived; separated, it lost its life. Thus the man, so long as he lives in the body of the [Catholic] Church, he is a Christian; separated from her, he becomes a heretic”

Beware of heretics who take out of context the term “Catholic Christians” used by some Church Fathers to defend their heresy that Protestants are Protestant Christians, the Greek Orthodox are Greek Orthodox Christians, etc. and thus are Christians. They used the term “Catholic Christian” to distinguish from the heretics who called themselves Christians but were not, such as the Arians and Donatists. What follows are two quotes one from a council and the other from a Church Father that use the term “Catholic Christian”:

The Canons of the 217 Blessed Fathers Who Assembled at Carthage (aka The Code of Canons of the African Church), 419: “Canon 22 (Greek 25.) That bishops or other clergymen shall give nothing to those who are not Catholics. And that to those who are not Catholic Christians, even if they be blood relations, neither bishops nor clergymen shall give anything at all by way of donation of their possessions.”

¹² b. 6.

¹³ c. 8.

¹⁴ B. 11.

¹⁵ D. 705.

St. Augustine, *On Heresies*, 428: “[Chap. 43] ...Now what Catholic Christian, learned or otherwise, would not shrink in horror from what Origen calls the purgation of evils?”¹⁶

Elsewhere, as seen above, St. Augustine teaches that those who profess belief in Jesus but do not adhere to the Catholic Church are not Christians.

St. Augustine, *City of God*, 413: “Heretics under the Christian name...resist the Christian doctrine... But...grief...arises in the hearts of the pious, who are persecuted by the manners of bad or false Christians...”¹⁷

Why, then, did he and other Church Fathers use the term “Catholic Christian” when opposing the heretics. They did so in order to distinguish Catholics from the heretics and schismatics who called themselves Christians and called their Churches or sects Christian Churches or sects. One proof that this is true is that none of the Church Fathers ever referred to an Arian, Donatist, Pelagian or any other heretic or schismatic as a Christian nor refer to their Churches or sects as Christian Churches or Christian sects. For example, they never used the terms Arian Christian, Donatist Christian, Pelagian Christian, Arian Christian Church, Donatist Christian Church, Pelagian Christian Church, Arian Christian Sect, Donatist Christian Sect, or Pelagian Christian Sect. They either called them Arians, Donatists, or Pelagians or Arian heretics, Donatist schismatics, or Pelagian heretics. And they referred to their Churches or sects as the Arian Church or Sect, Donatist Church or Sect, or Pelagian Church or Sect. For example, the apostate Firmilianus says,

Apostate Firmilianus, *Letter 74*, to St. Cyprian, 3rd century: 26. ...Why do we call them heretics and not Christians? ...We and heretics have not one God, nor one Lord, nor one Church, nor one faith, nor even one Spirit, nor one body,”

In the following quotes St. Augustine use the term “Catholic Christian” but does not refer to the heretics or schismatics as Christians:

St. Augustine, *Letter 93*, to Vincent, 408: “I have received a letter which it seemed to me was not improbably yours, for the one who brought it to me, as he was evidently a Catholic Christian, would, I think, not venture to lie to me... But the Donatists are much too active, and it seems to me it would be advisable for them to be restrained and corrected by the powers established by God.”

St. Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, 419-420: “Our other proposition, however, that ‘the good of marriage cannot be blamed for the original sin which is derived from it,’ he will not admit to be true; if, indeed, he assented to it, he would not be a Pelagian heretic, but a Catholic Christian.”¹⁸

In the following quote, St. Augustine uses the term “Catholic Christian” and says they are the “true Christians”:

St. Augustine, *Letter 104*, to Nectarius, 409: “The emperors say this because they are called Catholic Christians, not servers of idols like your Julian; not heretics, as certain ones have been and have persecuted the Church, when true Christians have suffered the most glorious martyrdom for Catholic truth, not justly deserved penalties for heretical error.”

While St. Fulgentius uses the term “Catholic Christian,” he does not call the heretics Christians. Instead, he calls them Sabellian heretics, etc:

St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, *On the Forgiveness of Sins*, 6th century: “(XI) 20. ...If you see anyone confessing the one nature of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in such a way that he wants to proclaim one person, do not think him a Catholic Christian but recognize him as a Sabellian heretic. (XII.) 21. If you hear anyone

¹⁶ PL, 42, col. 33.

¹⁷ b. 18, c. 51.

¹⁸ b. 2, c. 42.

speaking of the three persons of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in such a way that they want to assert three natures of these three persons, understand without a doubt that he is an Arian heretic. (XIII.) 22. If you see anyone confessing the one nature of the Father and the Son but proclaiming that the substance of the Holy Spirit is other, so that he says the Son is equal to the Father and asserts that only the Holy Spirit is less, that one does not hold the truth of the Catholic faith but follows the error of faithlessness born from Macedonius. Accordingly, because he is not a Catholic Christian but a Macedonian heretic, he must be repudiated by all the faithful.”

From the information I have, the heresy that men, Churches, and sects that profess belief in Jesus but do not adhere to the Catholic Church are Christian first entered among nominal Catholics in the late 19th century. For example, the heretical Catholic Encyclopedia, published in the beginning of the 20th century, contains this heresy in several articles. I will list a few:

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Canon Law, 1910: “1. General Notions and Division: ... We have to distinguish between the law of the Western or Latin Church, and the law of the Eastern Churches, and of each of them. Likewise, between the law of the Catholic Church and those of the non-Catholic Christian Churches or confessions, the Anglican Church and the various Eastern Orthodox Churches.”

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Christianity, 1908: “Moreover, the Christianity of which we speak is that which we find realized in the Catholic Church alone; hence, we are not concerned here with those forms which are embodied in the various non-Catholic Christian sects, whether schismatical or heretical.”

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Japan, 1910: “The chief Protestant College in Tokyo belongs to this United Church, and instruction is here given according to the spirit of Protestant Christian religion and morality.”

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Oratorio, 1911: “It may be said that they express the national religious ideal of a Protestant Christian people more adequately than does their form of worship.”

However, it is not heresy for Catholics to call a Church or sect by its official name even if the name contains the word “Christian.” But the Catholic should, if necessary to prevent scandal, say that it is not Christian or it is nominally Christian. For example, if a heretical Church calls itself “The Christian Identity Church,” a Catholic must call it by that name when referring to it, but, if necessary, he must say that it is not Christian or it is a nominal Christian Church. Similarly, when referring to the Greek Orthodox Church, Catholics must call it by that name when referring to it, but, if necessary, must say that it is not Orthodox or that is heretical and schismatic and thus is unorthodox or that it is not Christian or that it is a nominal Christian Church.

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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