

## **A Personal Interview with a Roman**

### **Catholic Priest by Jessica Gallant**

Notice the following report details an interview which Pastor Jones' grand-daughter, Jessica Gallant, had with a Roman Catholic priest as a partial fulfillment for one of her University courses. Jessica grew up on Prince Edward Island, Canada where her parents are missionaries. She and her husband Brent serve the Lord faithfully in the ministry of Cornerstone Baptist Church. Jessica is a store manager on the island but she has committed her life to serve the Lord. Her interview and report substantiate first-hand what Catholicism teaches about certain issues and how they are contrary to the Scriptures.

World Religions Report - Catholicism

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Catholicism is a religion based entirely on works. Catholicism started with the basic theology of the Bible. In the year 300 A.D., people began to add traditions and practices to the basic beliefs. Constantine was a big contributor to start the changes that occurred within the Catholic theology when he combined church and state. This started a slow trend that formed into what Catholicism is today.

The central Catholic beliefs are the deity of Christ, the Trinity, a literal Heaven and Hell, a process of Salvation and confession. The Holy books are the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha.

I interviewed a Priest named Father John Molina. He is from the Holy Redeemer Parish in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada.

I went to talk to the Priest and I had a list of fourteen questions to ask him. The interview went something like this.

**Jessica:** “According to Catholicism, who needs to be saved and how can they be?”

**Father John:** “Everyone that is human is called to conversion. Not to be saved or not. It is an on-going process of transformation to get to be in the presence of God. Salvation comes sometime in the future and you do not know when it happens or when it will happen.”

**Jessica:** “If Mary was without sin, why did she refer to God as her Savior in Luke 1:47?”

**Father John:** “In a certain way, she referred to God as her Savior. She was the chosen one, like the Jews were the chosen people.”

**Jessica:** “Like the Jews are the chosen people.”

**Father John:** “Like the Jews were the chosen people. God chose her and God is saving her in choosing her.”

**Jessica:** “According to Catholicism, what is the purpose of mass?”

**Father John:** “ To follow the commandment of Jesus when He said, “Do this in remembrance of Me” and to come as a community to encounter God together.”

**Jessica:** “When the priest blesses the sacraments, do you believe that they actually turned into the body and blood of Christ (Transubstantiation)?”

**Father John:** “The priest does not bless it. They ask Jesus to bless it for them and yes, it does turn into the body and blood of Christ.”

**Jessica:** “Do Catholics pray to Mary?”

**Father John:** “Yes. We believe that people intercede through Jesus to the Father. People that are already enjoying the presence of God can intercede. Because of the relationship that existed between Mary and Jesus, she is more special and she can and will intercede.”

**Jessica:** “Does the Catholic Church still teach the doctrine of purgatory, and if so why?”

**Father John:** “Purgatory used to be a concrete place, like Heaven and Hell. It’s a place where you go to get cleansed of your sins before you go to Heaven or Hell. Today, we don’t believe it as a concrete place but as a spiritual state, a state of soul. We have to go there to purify ourselves so we can enjoy the presence of God.”

**Jessica:** “Does the Catholic Church still require indulgences in any form today?”

**Father John:** “The church doesn’t require indulgences but we offer them anyway. They make you holier and help us be better people.”

**Jessica:** “Since the New Testament authors did not refer to the Apocryphal books as the Word of God, but consistently quoted the Old Testament books, why does the Catholic Church believe in doctrines that are only mentioned in the Apocrypha?”

**Father John:** “Um... Can you repeat that?” (Jessica repeats the question). “That is a tricky one... How could we confirm that they didn’t quote it? The Apocrypha is a revelation that God gave to the Catholic people. These books contain what we believe. It’s the Christian message out of love.”

**Jessica:** “Does the Catholic Church still teach that un-baptized babies go to limbo?”

**Father John:** “No! Limbo! The Vatican (council of bishops) believes in Limbo. But it is really hard to believe in that. Could you believe in that?”

**Jessica:** “No, I would have a hard time with that.”

**Father John:** “That is why I can’t believe in that. It is too hard.”

**Jessica:** “So, where do they go, if they don’t go to limbo?”

**Father John:** “People that are not baptized but are good, have an extreme possibility of salvation and sharing the presence of God. The same is for babies. Babies that are not baptized but are good have an extreme possibility of salvation and sharing the presence of God.”

**Jessica:** “Following Pentecost, the only church leaders mentioned in the Word of God are Bishops and Deacons, What is the church’s justification for Priests in leadership?”

**Father John:** “Well, now that is a tough one. Priests are ... helpers of Bishops. We are like Elders.”

**Jessica:** “Why does the Catholic Church teach that one should confess his sins to a Priest?”

**Father John:** “The main reason is humility, and the need to get rid of our humanity to be saved. We are called to confess our sins and it is not easy to do, especially in public. That is why we have offered a private environment. The power of forgiveness was given to the disciples and we believe that the succession of power was passed down to us, so we can forgive in the name of Jesus.”

**Jessica:** “What are the important holidays and traditions of Catholicism?”

**Father John:** “Oh, this is easy. The central holiday is Easter, the resurrection of Jesus. Then there is Good Friday, Holy Thursday. Also Christmas is a big one, because it is the birth of Jesus. Oh, and there is All Saint’s Day, The Day of Martyrs, and The Mysteries of the Faith. Traditions come together with Holidays. The main traditions are the sacraments: Baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, and death, oh, and the resurrection.”

**Jessica:** “How has Catholicism shaped your life?”

**Father John:** “I was born in a country that was 90% Catholic – Columbia. Now that I live in Canada, I have a completely different understanding of religion that normal Christian people don’t have. When I was in Columbia, I was very strong in my faith. Now that I live in Canada, I feel like I am at a middle ground position in my faith.”

**Jessica:** “What are the challenges if any, to practice Catholicism?”

**Father John:** “It is a challenge in itself to practice it. The hard thing is to live a holy life in today’s world.”

I have decided to compare Catholicism with Christianity. Although the background is similar, they have major theological differences. I am going to refute what his responses were in the interview. Catholic belief is that everyone is called to a process of conversion.

In Romans 3:23, The Bible says, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”.

Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. The Bible explains here that all have sinned and need to be saved, but it is not a process, it is through faith. The Bible says, in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”. Also, in Romans 10:9 & 10, it says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”. The Bible says that Christ died on the cross for us and it is a free gift. He has already done everything for us. All we have to do is accept Him. It explains how right here. I don’t believe this is explaining a process of conversion, salvation is obtained through faith.

According to Catholicism, Mary was without sin, but she referred to God as her Savior because He saved her in choosing her. Luke 1:46,47: “And Mary said, ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior’.” I think this verse speaks for itself.

The Catholic Church believes that during communion the wine and bread actually turn into the body and blood of Christ. They take this literally. Let’s look at another passage in the

Bible that would not be a good idea to take literally. John 10: 7 & 9, “Then said Jesus unto them again, ‘Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.’ ‘I am the Door, By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture’.” If you take this passage literally, you will think that Jesus is a door. Obviously, it is meant to be taken allegorically.

We have already looked at Catholicism in accordance with who they believe Mary was. This is the reason that they pray to Mary. She is their interceder. Luke 11: 27 & 28 says, “And it came to pass, as He spoke these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said to Him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.’ But He said, ‘Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it!’ ” This is Jesus talking and He did not want the focus to be on Mary, but on God and His Word.

Father John referred to the Apocrypha as a revelation that God gave to the Catholic people. He said that these books contained what the Catholic people believe. The Apocrypha was written in 1546. If this was given to the Catholic people by God and explained what they believed, then why was the Apocrypha written after Catholicism had developed.

Purgatory did not enter into the picture until 593 A.D. It was established by Gregory I. Also in the Bible, when the beggar died, he was carried to Abraham’s bosom (heaven) and when the rich man died, it says he was in Hades (Hell) (Luke 16:22-23). There was no purgatory.

The Catholic Church teaches that Priests should be in Church leadership. In 1 Timothy 3:1-8, it explains who should be in leadership and it clarifies what their jobs are to be. There is no mention of Priests in this passage. Also, Father John mentioned that Priests are helpers of Bishops. He said that they are like Elders. The Bible refers to Bishops, Elders and Shepherds, in

the Greek, Bishops, Elders and Shepherds are all the same. Deacons were the helpers of the Bishops (Elders or Shepherd).

According to Catholicism, one should confess his sins to a priest. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” According to the Bible, we have no need for a priest today. We have direct access to God.

I have learned through studying Catholicism, that no matter what Christian church you go to or who your pastor or elder is, you always need to go back to the Bible and check it out for yourself. This course has made me a lot stronger in what I believe and who I am because of Christ. I have learned that nothing compares to the Bible, which is the infallible word of God. The Bible was God breathed. It says in 2 Timothy 3:16, “ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction , for instruction in righteousness”.

God gave these words to us so we could learn about Him and grow strong in Him. The Bible is surely God breathed and infallible and we can refute things like Catholicism, with what He has given us in His words.



References

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