



# Can my non-Catholic friend go to Heaven?

January 2019 'Faithful Questions' Seminar  
Deacon Ken Crawford



**YES!**

# Session overview

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# References

- Placuit Deo – 2018 (PD)
  - [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_faith\\_doc\\_20180222\\_placuit-deo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_faith_doc_20180222_placuit-deo_en.html)
- Dominus Iesus – 2000 (DI)
  - [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_faith\\_doc\\_20000806\\_dominus-iesus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_faith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html)
- Lumen Gentium – 1964 (LG)
  - [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)
- Catechism of the Catholic Church – 1994 (CCC)
  - <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>
  - Particularly Part 3, Section 1, Chapter 3 (paragraphs 1949-2051)



# Two quotes

- It was the best of times...
  - “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
- It was the worst of times...
  - Called to beatitude but wounded by sin, man stands in need of salvation from God. Divine help comes to him in Christ through the law that guides him and the grace that sustains him: *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 (CCC 1949 – Phil 2:12-13)





# No salvation outside the Church?

- Extra ecclesiam nulla salus
  - Dates to 3<sup>rd</sup> Century (Cyprian of Carthage)
  - Dogmatically defined 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council in 1215
- Catechism 846-847
  - 846 How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body:
    - Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.
  - 847 This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church:
    - Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation.



# Where is Christ?

- God, who desires to call all peoples to himself in Christ and to communicate to them the fullness of his revelation and love, “does not fail to make himself present in many ways, not only to individuals, but also to entire peoples through their spiritual riches, of which their religions are the main and essential expression even when they contain ‘gaps, insufficiencies and errors’”. Therefore, the sacred books of other religions, which in actual fact direct and nourish the existence of their followers, receive from the mystery of Christ the elements of goodness and grace which they contain. (DI 8)
- In other words, He’s every where!
  - Thus when we speak of “salvation only comes from Christ” it is not as limiting as it sounds



# Where is Christ? (Cont...)

- Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things, and as Savior wills that all men be saved. Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel. (LG 16)
- In other words, Christ loves those who do not know of Him





# Commands of Christ Lens

- **Love God**
  - “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” (Luke 10:25-28)
- **Be baptized**
  - Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. (John 3:5)
- **Receive the Eucharist**
  - Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. (John 6:53)
- **Ask forgiveness for your sins**
  - [Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (John 20:21-23)



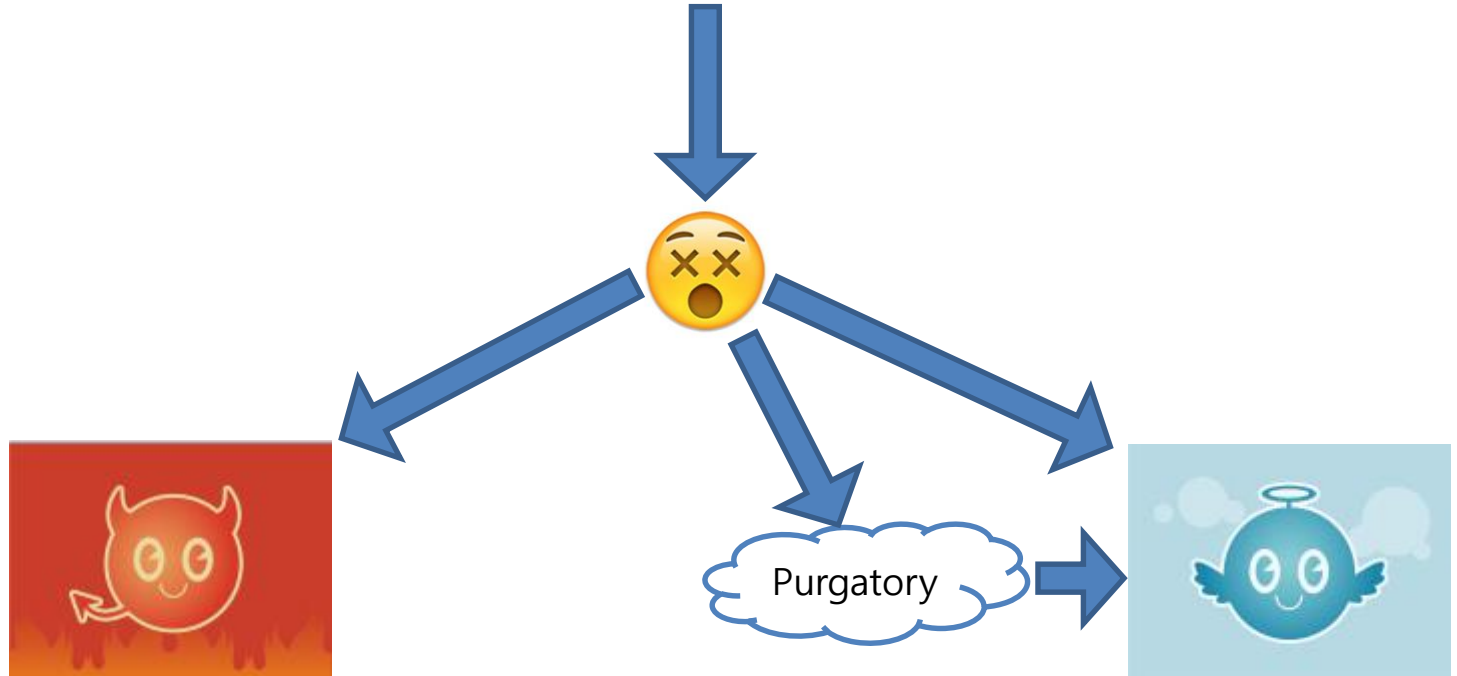
# Natural Law Lens

- The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to sin . . . But this command of human reason would not have the force of law if it were not the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be submitted. (CCC 1954)
- In other words, God places in every heart the desire to follow Him.
- People may be following Him without knowing it.



# State of Grace Lens

- Moment of death is key
  - But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved. (Matt 24:13)



# Avoiding Heresy Lens

- **Neo-Pelagianism**
  - On one hand, individualism centered on the autonomous subject tends to see the human person as a being whose sole fulfillment depends only on his or her own strength. (PD 2)
- **Neo-Gnosticism**
  - On the other hand, a merely interior vision of salvation is becoming common, a vision which, marked by a strong personal conviction or feeling of being united to God, does not take into account the need to accept, heal and renew our relationships with others and with the created world. (PD 2)
- **Relativism**
  - The Church's constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only de facto but also de iure (or in principle). (DI 4)



# Goals vs. Requirements

- Christ calls us to something very lofty
  - “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)
  - Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ (Matt 25:34-36)
- But He also forgives those who fail in profound ways
  - “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)





# Deacon Ken's guidance

- So how should we talk to non-Catholics?
  - Remind them we believe in a loving and forgiving God
  - Humility! Work out your salvation with fear and trembling
  - God wants you in the Church because He wants to give you His love, grace and forgiveness
  - These things will help
    - Prevent arrogance
    - Avoid despair
    - Ensure salvation
  - But we never put limits on God's forgiveness



# Next month

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday – February 19th
- 7:30 PM in the Morris Hall
  - As always
- Topic
  - What is the point of fasting?
- Future month topics
  - March: Were the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus?
  - April: What do eggs and bunnies have to do with the Resurrection?
  - Always looking for suggestions for more topics
    - Perhaps pre-submitted Q&A session for May?



# Materials

- <http://deaconken.org>
- Slides available on blog
- Check <http://deaconken.org/blog>
- Audio/Video may be available at a later date.

