

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM:

*Past*  *Present*



David Cloud

*Roman Catholicism: Past and Present*

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# Introduction

This report takes a serious look at the Roman Catholic Church, both past and present. There is a powerful back-to-Rome movement throughout Christianity today, from liberal Protestantism to Charismaticism to Evangelicalism. These either accept the Roman Catholic Church non-critically or, more commonly, they acknowledge that Rome has serious doctrinal errors but speak of these in soft terms and refuse to treat Rome as Protestants and Baptists once did, as the forerunner to the Harlot of Revelation 17.

The first part of this report vividly describes the Roman Catholic Church as she exists today in the very heart of her empire, the city of Rome. The second part is a study of Revelation 17, comparing the characteristics of the religious harlot with the Roman Catholic Church.

Has the Roman Catholic Church changed its doctrinal stance? Is it no longer the heretical entity it once was? Should we join hands with earnest Roman Catholics and accept them as brethren in Christ? These are some of the important questions that we set out to answer.

# **A Visit to Rome**

I have visited Rome three times, once in the early 1990s and again in April 2003 and April 2005. In 2003 I was accompanied by our friend Pastor David Brown of First Baptist Church, Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and by Brian Snider, a friend and co-worker in the ministry who has produced many of our multi-media video presentations. In 2005 I was accompanied by Brian Snider and his brother Jeff.

## **The Coliseum**

We will begin our visit to Rome with the ruins of the ancient Roman Empire.



The most outstanding structure is the old Coliseum that was built by Roman emperors between 72 and 80 A.D. It was completed by Titus, the great persecutor. It was called “collosseum” (colossal) because of the huge statue of Nero that stood nearby. Its actual name was the Flavian Amphitheater. Its seating capacity is debated today but it could possibly have seated 65,000 with standing room for

another 5,000. The circular stadium was four stories high and featured a leather or canvas sunshade that could be rolled out over at least part of the structure. It was infamous for its gladiatorial battles, man against man and man against beast. During the reign of Augustus Caesar alone 400 tigers, 250 lions and 600 leopards were used in the arena. In its heyday the coliseum could even be flooded to stage naval battles using small scale warships. The gladiators oftentimes fought to the death, after giving the traditional salute to the emperor: “*Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant!*” (“Hail Caesar, we who are about to die salute you!”). The elaborate network of passages, wild animal pens and cells that were concealed under the floor of the coliseum can be seen today. There were “lifts, trapdoors and chutes from which gladiators or wild beasts could suddenly appear” (Rupert Matthews, *The Age of the Gladiators*).

This amazing stadium also witnessed the vicious martyrdom of many harmless Christians.

## **The Roman Forum**

The Forum is near the coliseum and contains many other ruins from ancient Rome. Some highlights of these are as follows:

The **TEMPLE OF VENUS AND ROMA** was begun in 121 AD and inaugurated in 135. It was personally designed by Hadrian. The cells containing the image of the goddess Roma faced the forum and the one containing Venus faced the Coliseum.

The **TEMPLE OF ANTONINUS AND FAUSTINA** was built for the worship of Emperor Antoninus Pius and his wife, after they were exalted to divinity.

The **TEMPLE OF SATURN** was the focus of a popular festival called Saturnalia, held in the middle of December, during which everyone exchanged gifts.



*The Roman Forum*

The **TEMPLE OF VESTA** is one of the oldest temples in Rome, although its present appearance dates to 191 AD when it was restored by Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus. “The fire sacred to Vesta, the goddess of the household hearth, had to be kept perennially burning in this temple, for the disaster threatened if the flame were to go out.” Associated with the temple was the House of the Vestals, priestesses of the cult and custodians of the fire. There were six women who composed this House, the only body of female priests in Rome.

### **The Arch of Titus**

At the entrance to the Forum nearest the Coliseum is an amazing silent witness to the surety of Bible prophecy. The Arch of Titus, the oldest surviving arch in Rome, was dedicated in 85 A.D. to the Emperor Titus, who had died four years earlier from the plague after being on the throne for only two years. It commemorates the victory of Titus and his father Vespasian over Jerusalem and the deification of Titus.





A bas-relief on the left inside of the arch depicts the spoils from the Jerusalem Temple carried in a victory procession after Jerusalem's fall to Titus in 70 A.D. Clearly seen are the candlestick and the table of shewbread, which shows exactly what these ancient items from the Temple looked like. It is suspected that these were carried in procession during the elaborate pageantry surrounding the dedication of the arch.

This 1900-year-old monument thus stands as a silent witness to the accuracy of Bible prophecy, as the destruction depicted on it was prophesied by the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 19:41-44 -- *"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."*

In this same chapter Christ explained that the kingdom of God would not be set up until the King goes away for a time and then returns (Luke 19:11-27).

Bible prophecy has always been fulfilled literally, and we can be sure that the rest will be fulfilled in its time. Israel is back in her land and the stage is set for the events described in Revelation. The only reason that the Lord is “tarrying” is the salvation of souls. *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Pet. 3:9). It is high time to dedicate ourselves to the Harvest while we lift up our eyes in expectation for His soon return.

## **Christianized Paganism**

**SANTA MARIA SOPRA MINERVA** (Saint Mary over Minerva) church is dedicated to Mary and was built in the 8th century on the ruins of the temple of Minerva, a pagan female deity. This exemplifies how Rome has “Christianized” pagan beliefs and practices.

Rome’s Mary is not the Mary of the Bible but is a heathen goddess with a slight biblical veneer. The Bible’s Mary is not the Queen of heaven or the Queen of peace or any such thing. But many ancient pagan religions featured a goddess with a baby. Isis, for example, was often depicted with the baby god Horus. There are still Hindu goddesses in India that are depicted with babies.

In front of the Minerva church is an Egyptian obelisk standing on a statue of an elephant. It dates from the sixth century B.C. and was dedicated to the Pharaoh Hophra mentioned in the book of Jeremiah (44:30). It was brought to Rome by the Emperor Domitian and formerly stood in the Temple of Isis and Serapis.

Mary is depicted in Minerva in paintings and statues in her Assumption and Coronation, as Our Lady of the Rosary (crowned with stars), and as appearing to “Saint” Hyacinth. In a large painting behind the altar she is being crowned by angels.

St. Catherine of Siena, patroness of Italy and Europe, is buried here. She is shown in a glorified state surrounded by angels with Europe at her feet, which depicts Rome's heretical doctrine of sainthood.

The church contains the tombs of five popes: Pope Leo X (who condemned Luther), Clement VI (who refused to nullify Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon), Clement VII, Benedict XIII, and Paul IV ("the most virulent of the Inquisitor popes").

## **Seat of the Inquisition**

Santa Mary Minerva was the seat of the inquisition in Rome. A small church was first built here in the 8th century. In the 13th century the church and nearby premises were occupied by Benedictine nuns. By 1275 the nuns' house and church were given to the Dominicans, who were in the forefront of the Inquisition.

By papal decree, the Dominican monastery at Minerva was designated as the official seat of the Congregation of the Holy Office (Inquisition) and became the tribunal where trials were held and sentences read out. "In all probability the place chosen by the Congregation of the Holy Office consisted of the rooms now known as Galileo, embellished with frescoes by Francesco Allegrini, the most important of which represents a victory by the Catholic forces over the Albigenses in the battle of Muret in 1213" (<http://english.camera.it/index.asp?content=%2Famministrazione%2F316%2F320%2Fdocumentotesto%2EASP%3F>). Today part of the former monastery houses government offices.

Saint Mary Minerva Church was the scene of many inquisition trials and other wicked deeds.

On July 29, 1498, two hundred and thirty people who had fled the Spanish Inquisition publicly abjured their "heresy" before Pope Alexander VI [the infamous Rodrigo Borgia] and his cardinals and were marched in procession to Santa

Maria sopra Minerva (Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 5). This persecution was motivated by the pope's need of funds to build an elaborate embassy for his son Caesar. He offered to forego burning any Spaniards who would come forward and pay a large financial penance.

On September 8, 1560, Waldensian pastor and evangelist Jean Louis Paschale, who had been captured in Calabria in the south of Italy and cruelly treated on his journey to Rome and during his imprisonment there, was brought before an Inquisition tribunal at the Minerva Convent. He was condemned and burned to death the following day.



His execution was described by the Presbyterian historian James A. Wylie in *The History of the Waldenses*, chapter 11 --

“Standing upon the summit of the Janiculum Mount, vast crowds could witness the spectacle. In front the Campagna spreads out its once glorious but now desolated bosom; and winding through it like a thread of

gold is seen the Tiber, while the Apennines, sweeping round it in craggy grandeur, enclose it like a vast wall. Immediately beneath, uprearing her domes and monuments and palaces, with an air that seems to say, 'I sit a queen,' is the city of Rome. Yonder, asserting an easy supremacy amid the other fabrics of the Eternal City, is the scarred and riven yet Titanic form of the Coliseum, with its stains of early Christian blood not yet washed out. By its side, the partner of its guilt and doom, lies the Palatine, once the palace of the world's master, now a low mound of ruins, with its row of melancholy cypresses, the only mourners on that site of vanished glory and fallen empire. Nearer, burning in the midday sun, is the proud cupola of St. Peter's, flanked on the one side by the buildings of the Inquisition, and on the other by the huge Mole of Hadrian, beneath whose gloomy ramparts old Tiber rolls sluggishly and sullenly along. But what shout is this which we hear? Why does Rome keep holiday? Why do all her bells ring? Lo! from every street and piazza eager crowds rush forth, and uniting in one overwhelming and surging stream, they are seen rolling across the Bridge of St. Angelo, and pressing in at the gates of the old fortress, which are thrown wide open to admit this mass of human beings. Entering the court-yard of the old castle, an imposing sight meets the eye. What a confluence of ranks, dignities, and grandeurs! In the centre is placed a chair, the emblazonry of which tells us that it claims to rise in authority and dignity over the throne of kings. The Pontiff, Pius IV., has already taken his seat upon it, for he has determined to be present at the tragedy of to-day. Behind his chair, in scarlet robes, are his cardinals and counsellors, with many dignitaries besides in mitres and cowls, ranged in circles, according to their place in the Papal body. Behind the ecclesiastics are seated, row on row, the nobility and beauty of Rome. Plumes wave, stars gleam, and seem to mock the frocks and cowls gathered near them, whose wearers, however, would not exchange these mystic garments for all the bravery that blazes around them. The vast sweep of the Court of St. Angelo is

densely occupied. Its ample floor is covered from end to end with a closely-wedged mass of citizens, who have come to see the spectacle. In the centre of the throng, rising a little way over the sea of human heads, is seen a scaffold, with an iron stake, and beside it a bundle of faggots. A slight movement begins to be perceptible in the crowd beside the gate. Some one is entering. The next moment a storm of hissing and execration salutes the ear. It is plain that the person who has just made his entrance is the object of universal dislike. The clank of irons on the stone floor of the court, as he comes forward, tells how heavily his limbs are loaded with fetters. He is still young; but his face is pale and haggard with suffering. He lifts his eyes, and with countenance undismayed surveys the vast assembly, and the dismal apparatus that stands in the midst of it, waiting its victim. There sits a calm courage on his brow; the serene light of deep, untroubled peace beams in his eye. He mounts the scaffold, and stands beside the stake. Every eye is now turned, not on the wearer of the tiara, but on the man who is clad in the sanbenito. 'Good people,' says the martyr--and the whole assembly keep silence--'I am come here to die for confessing the doctrine of my Divine Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ.' Then turning to Pius IV. he arraigned him as the enemy of Christ, the persecutor of his people, and the Anti-Christ of Scripture, and concluded by summoning him and all his cardinals to answer for their cruelties and murders before the throne of the Lamb. 'At his words,' says the historian Crespin, 'the people were deeply moved, and the Pope and the cardinals gnashed their teeth' [*Hist. des Martyrs*, pp. 506-16. Leger, part i., p. 204, and part ii., p. 335]. The inquisitors hastily gave the signal. The executioners came round him, and having strangled him, they kindled the faggots, and the flames blazing up speedily reduced his body to ashes. For once the Pope had performed his function. With his key of fire, which he may truly claim to carry, he had opened the celestial doors, and had sent his poor prisoner from the dark dungeons of the Inquisition, to dwell in the palace of the sky. So died, or rather passed

into the life eternal, Jean Louis Paschale, the Waldensian missionary and pastor of the flock in Calabria. His ashes were collected and thrown into the Tiber, and by the Tiber they were borne to the Mediterranean. And this was the grave of the preacher-martyr, whose noble bearing and undaunted courage before the Pope himself gave added value to his splendid testimony for the Protestant cause.”

In 1563 Pope Pius IV chose Santa Maria Sopra Minerva as the final destination of the solemn procession to celebrate THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, which poured out curses upon Bible believers.

“Above all other institutions, he [Pope Pius IV] favored the Inquisition, which he himself had re-established. The days appointed for Segnatura and the consistory he would often allow to pass unnoticed, but never did he miss a Thursday, the day set aside for the Congregation of the Inquisition to assemble before him. He wished the powers of this office to be exercised with the utmost rigor. He assigned new classes of offenses to its jurisdiction, and conferred on it the barbarous prerogative of applying torture for the detection of accomplices. He permitted no respect of persons. The most distinguished nobles were summoned before the tribunal, and cardinals such as Morone and Foscherari were now thrown into prison, because he entertained doubts about the soundness of their opinions, in spite of the fact that these very men had previously been appointed to examine the contents, and determine the orthodoxy, of such important books as the *Spiritual Exercises* of Iganatius Loyola. It was Paul IV who established the Feast of St Dominic, in honor of that great Inquisitor. ... Paul IV seemed almost to have forgotten that he had ever pursued purposes other than those which now occupied him; the memory of past times seemed to be extinguished. He lived and moved in his reforms and his Inquisition, passed laws, imprisoned, excommunicated, and held autos-da-fé; these occupations filled his life” (Leopold von Ranke, *The History of the*

*Papacy*). [The autos-da-fe, which means “acts of faith,” were the public events in which heretics were burned.]

In 1572, following the ST. BARTHOLOMEW’S DAY MASSACRE in which thousands of Protestants were murdered in France, Pope Gregory XIII was so ecstatic that he led a procession to St. Mary Minerva, and, after mass, published a jubilee. It called upon “all Christendom” to “thank God for the slaughter of the enemies of the Church, lately executed in France” (J.A. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, 1899, II, p. 606).

In February 1600 Giordano Bruno was condemned to be burned for heresy at the Church of Minerva. He had spent eight years in prison. The trial is described in *The Pope and the Heretic: The True Story of Giordano Bruno, the Man Who Dared to Defy the Roman Inquisition* by Michael White (HarperCollins, 2003):

“The hall was vast and ornate. The eight cardinals and the seven coadjutors and notaries sat on comfortable high-backed chairs forming an arc around the accused, their official robes of satin falling gently over their velvet seats. The Lord Cardinal Severina was seated in a giant throne at the apex of the arc, his hands placed on the ornate wooden arms, his long bony fingers twitching with impatience, his cardinal ring bobbing and catching the light streaming in from long windows that dominated an entire wall of the chamber behind him. ... Severina read the charges, a total of eight counts of heresy” (*The Pope and the Heretic*, chapter 1).

Bruno was condemned to torture followed by burning at the stake. He was taken from his cell in the early hours of the morning to Piazza Campo di Fiore (Rome’s Smithfield) and burnt alive.

On December 20, 1624, the dead body of Marco Antonio de Dominis, Italian theologian and natural philosopher, was condemned at St. Mary Minerva. His body was then taken out of the coffin, dragged through the streets of Rome, and



burned in the Piazza Campo di Fiore. He had been imprisoned in 1623 and had died in prison before the Inquisition could finish its work.

The St. Mary Minerva Dominican Convent was where Galileo was tried in 1633 and where on June 22 he repudiated on his knees his teaching that the earth revolves around the sun (heliocentricity).

Quietist leader Miguel de Molinos was condemned at the St. Mary Minerva Convent in 1685 (after having spent two years in prison without being charged). It was ordered that his books be burned in the Piazza della Minerva in front of the church, and the authorities announced that those who attended the ceremony would be granted an indulgence of 15 years. On September 3, 1687, Molinos' books were burned and he renounced his heresy.

The titular head of the St. Mary Minerva is the Archbishop of Westminster in England. In the late 15th century this was Michele Ghislieri, who became Pope Pius V and excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I. This pope greatly strengthened the Inquisition to stamp out "heresy," expelled Jews from the papal states and created the Jewish ghetto in Rome. He was made a saint in 1712 by Pope Innocent XI.

Today, the Archbishop of Westminster is Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, who was consecrated at Saint Mary Minerva on October 20, 2001. He was co-chairman of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), an ecumenical project that sought to reunite the Church of England with Rome.

## **Hindu Catholic Priest**

At Santa Maria Minerva, Brian interviewed a Catholic priest named Patrick, who was in charge of the religious items sales area. Following is part of the exchange:

Brian: "Do you believe there is a heaven?"

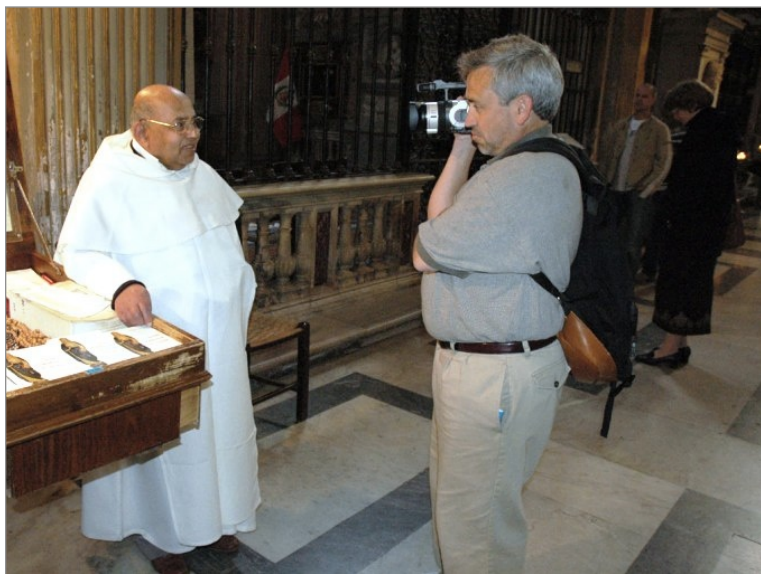
Priest: "Heaven? That is where your soul goes."

Brian: "Do you believe you will be going there?"

Priest: "That depends upon what is my destination."

Brian: "How will that be determined?"

Priest: "It depends upon my way of living."



Brian: "Can you explain?"

Priest: [He is speechless, shaking his head, rocking from foot to foot. Then says,] "If one lives his life honestly, surely God will reward him. Heaven is not a thing that we can touch and see and look at. Heaven is a place where our soul can go."

Brian: "Do you believe God will weigh your good works against your bad works?"

Priest: "Sure; it is for me to do good or to do bad."

Brian: "Do you have to be Roman Catholic to go to heaven?"

Priest: "There is no reason whether he is a Catholic or Hindu or Muslim. God has given to each one his own. ... If a Hindu does good work, like Mahatma Gandhi, surely they

can. ... I can be a prophet; you can be a prophet. A Hindu can become a prophet. It doesn't have to come [through Jesus]. I can remain a Hindu and go to heaven. ... I AM ALSO A HINDU. You can be a Hindu living a good life and go to heaven and a Christian living a good life and go to heaven and a Muslim living a good life and go to heaven."



## Confessionals

There were confessional booths in all of the churches and some were in operation. Pope John Paul II did much to bring the confessional back into popular usage. Auricular confession, meaning "confession in the ear," is the Catholic doctrine that the priest has the authority to forgive sin in

Christ's stead. In some cases, the priest merely sat on a chair in a corner of the church and the confessor sat in a chair beside him and whispered his confession, but in most cases, the priest sat in confessional booth while the confessor kneeled on the side and spoke his confession through a screen.

## Mary Casting Luther out of Heaven

The **CHURCH OF GESU** is the headquarters of the Jesuits or the Society of Jesus. The Society was established on September 27, 1540, by Pope Paul III and was a major part of the Counter Reformation. The church features a bronze relief depicting Pope Paul III approving the Jesuits.

This is only the second Catholic Church I have seen that is named for Jesus. Most, of course, are named after Mary or some "saint." Even though named for Jesus, Mary is at least as prominent as Christ inside the church.

On the left side of the church is a massive monument to Ignatius Loyola, the co-founder of the order.



On the right lower side of the monument is the marble statue **"THE TRIUMPH OF THE FAITH OVER HERESY"** by Pietro Le Gros. It depicts Mary holding a large crucifix and violently casting Luther and John Huss out of heaven (their names are engraved in the statue). A little winged angel off to the side is gleefully tearing pages from a book. Another book is waiting its turn for destruction. The books could be the writings of the reformers or could be their vernacular Bible translations, which were also condemned and burned by Rome.

On the opposite side of the church is a large altar to the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier. The golden reliquary contains his right forearm, which baptized thousands of converts to Rome in India and Japan. I don't know what happened to his other arm. At the very top of the altar Xavier is represented as a glorified saint surrounded by angels. Francis Xavier is often included even in Protestant church histories as a genuine missionary, but this is bogus and is evidence of widespread historic revisionism. No man who preached a false gospel of grace plus works plus sacraments and submitted himself "as a corpse" to the pope should be looked upon as a genuine missionary. Beware, friends, about the books that are available in the average Christian bookstore.

In a back room we saw some priests open a cupboard door and one of them genuflected before something inside. Upon further investigation, Brian found that the cupboard contains a picture that is reputed to be a picture of Jesus. Brian was standing behind the priests and took some video footage of the rather frightful looking face.

Outside of the Gesu Church is the Piazza del Gesu (the plaza of Gesu). Even on calmest days the square is said to be gusty, with little wind devils blowing about. According to legend, the Devil and the Wind went for a walk through Rome. Upon reaching this place, the Devil asked the Wind to

wait for him while he tended to some business in the Jesuit church; and the Wind is still waiting.

## Mother of All Churches

The San Giovanni Laterano Church and palace is the first church of Rome and a Latin inscription on the front says, “SACROSANCTA LATERANENSIS ECCLESIA OMNIUM URBIS ET ORBIS ECCLESiarUM MATER ET CAPUT, meaning, “MOST HOLY LATERAN CHURCH, MOTHER AND MISTRESS OF ALL CHURCHES OF THE CITY AND THE WORLD.”



Here, the Emperor Constantine authorized the bishop of Rome to set up a church, and Catholic popes lived in the Lateran Palace until Clement V (1305-1314) was forced to move the papal headquarters to France. When the papacy returned to Rome in 1377, its headquarters was moved to the Vatican palace.

The tomb of Pope Innocent III, who was a great persecutor of those who refused to accept Roman doctrine and practice

and in fact was one of the fathers of the horrible centuries-long Inquisition, is located at the Lateran.

Many councils, synods, and historic events have been held here. In 313 there was a synod to resolve “the problem of the Donatist schism.” The Donatist churches were seeking to remain pure and strict after the apostolic model, and this was causing schism with the looser, worldly churches associated with Rome. The Donatists were cast out and fiercely persecuted.

In 897, the Lateran was the scene of the “CADAVER SYNOD,” when Pope Stephen VI (896-897) had the body of his predecessor, Pope Formosus (891-896), exhumed and put on trial. Not surprisingly, the former pope was convicted of heresy and desecrated.

Here Pope Innocent III approved the Franciscan order (1210) as well as the Dominican (1215). The Dominicans were at the forefront of the Inquisition. Above the reclining statue over the tomb of Innocent III is a depiction of Christ blessing the founders of these orders.

It is at the Lateran that every new pope is enthroned as the Bishop of Rome and it is from here as well as from the throne in the Vatican that he speaks “*ex cathedra*” (*from the throne*). The splendid marble Bishop’s Throne in the Lateran is situated in an extravagant setting in the apse at the rear of the basilica facing the altar, situated at the top of five steps beneath a painted half dome.

In the bowl of the apse is a painting of Mary touching the papal crown of a kneeling Pope Nicholas IV. This is a reference to the dogma formulated at the Council of Ephesus (431), whereby Mary was declared *Theotokos*, the Mother of God (*Patriarchal Basilica Saint John Lateran*, p. 36).

On the left side of the Transept is the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament. It features a gilded bronze tabernacle to house the blessed wafer (so that it can be worshipped). Above this is a gilded silver bas-relief of the Last Supper that protects a cedar wood table alleged to be the one used by Christ.



The high altar has “a relic chamber at the top, in which the heads, or part of the heads, of Peter and Paul are preserved, according to tradition.

The Eucharist table under the papal altar is alleged to have been used by Peter.

## **Ancient Baptistry for Immersion**

The Baptistry of St. John, which is located in a building behind the San Giovanni Laterano basilica, is said to be the oldest baptistry in Rome. It was first constructed in the days of Constantine and is a large pool. Today there is a small infant baptismal font in the center of the dry pool.



I walked down into it and it is about waist high on me. This illustrates a stepping-stone in apostasy from scriptural immersion to pedobaptism. The guide books say this baptistry was used for “partial immersions,” whereby the candidate knelt in the water while water was poured on his head, but why would anyone get wet up to the shoulders just



to have a dab of water poured on his head? In our missionary work in South Asia we have immersed baptismal candidates in water shallower than this. Scriptural baptism depicts dying and being buried with Jesus Christ positionally and raised to newness of life (Romans 6:1-4), and Christ was not partially buried. Neither pouring nor sprinkling depicts burial and resurrection. The old German Bible translated the Greek word *baptiso* as “dipping,” and that is an excellent translation, for it carries the idea not only of immersing something in water but also of bringing it up out of the water. Thomas Armitage, in his 1890 *History of the Baptists*, gave many examples of ancient baptisteries that were used for complete immersion, and we are confident that the ancient baptismal pool at the Lateran is an example.

### **Lateran’s Obelisk**

On one side of the Lateran is an obelisk that once stood before the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, Egypt. Erected there around 1500 B.C., it was brought to Rome by Constantius in A.D. 357 and set up at the Circus Maximus. Pope Sixtus V found the obelisk in a swamp, restored it and placed it at the Lateran church site in A.D. 1588.

Further, the marble and bronze columns over the main Altar of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lateran are from the Temple of Jupiter.

### **Shrine of the Holy Stairs**

Near the Lateran basilica is the Shrine of the Holy Stairs, which is reputed to contain the steps from Pilate’s judgment hall that Jesus ascended after he was whipped. The steps were allegedly brought to Rome by the mother of Constantine in the 4th century. Many Catholics climb the stairs on their knees in pursuit of a blessing from God and a promised papal indulgence. At the top of the stairs is an image of Jesus that, allegedly, was painted without human

intervention. Each time we have visited the Shrine there were many people proceeding up the stairs.

## Papal Audience

We spent most of the day at the Vatican on April 2, 2003, and again on April 15, 2005.



When we first arrived there in 2003, we learned that the pope was giving one of his public papal audiences in the piazza in front of St. Peter's Basilica, and we were able to obtain tickets and get front row seats by claiming our seats an hour early. Right on time, at 10:30 a.m., Pope John Paul II was motored out in his "popemobile" and was driven around St. Peter's Square to the enthusiastic shouts of the faithful. Many young people near us were repeatedly shouting "viva il papa" ("long live the pope or father") and were waving little papal flags. We got some good photos of the aged pope after he was driven up on the large platform by a ramp that had been constructed for this purpose. After he left the

popemobile, he was rolled the few feet to his chair in a little cart, because he was too frail to walk.

## **Vatican Museum**

On both trips we went through the Vatican Museum, which contains fascinating history but is spiritually dead. It contains a wide assortment of old pagan statues, including heathen gods and goddesses such as the drunken Bacchus (god of wine and debauchery), the many-breasted Diana, Mercury, Apollo, the Nile river god, Minerva, Athena, Hermes, Venus, and Isis. There is a famous statue of a Trojan named Laocoon, priest of the sun-god Apollo, being killed by two serpentine sea-creatures. It is located in the octagonal Belvedere Courtyard. This statue originally stood at the palace of the pagan Roman emperor Titus and was brought to the Vatican in 1506 by Pope Julius II.

There are many paintings and embroideries depicting scenes from the Bible and church history. The first Raphael Room contains a painting of Pope Leo III crowning Charlemagne in St. Peter's at the Midnight Mass of Christmas 799. The third Raphael Room contains a painting of the Mass at Bolsena, "when the Corporal [the dedicated host] now at Orvieto is believed to have become miraculously bloodstained." The Hall of Constantine depicts Constantine's alleged vision of the Cross, his baptism, and his supposed donation of Rome to the popes. This and others "donations" by early emperors to the popes were fabulous counterfeits, but they were taught and accepted throughout the dark ages as truth.

The Borgia Apartment was built by the pope of that family, Alexander VI, a singularly reprobate man. Before he bribed his way to the papacy, he had at least four illegitimate children, whom he made rich through appointments after he was pope. He made his son, Caesar Borgia, a cardinal when he was only 18 years old. Caesar was an immoral and violent man who had his brother put to death as well as his sister

Lucrezia's husband. Alexander held unspeakable orgies in his palace and kept mistresses who were married women. He died of syphilis.

The Sistine Chapel, a rectangular hall with a barrel vault that gets its name from Pope Sixtus IV, contains the famous painting of Michelangelo from the creation of man to the last judgment. The paintings took nine years to complete in two sessions that were 25 years apart. It has been called "perhaps the greatest artistic achievement of all time." It was restored between 1981 and 1994 and the original bright colors are again visible. The paintings include depictions of pagan prophetesses called sibyls. There is an Erythraean Sibyl, Persian Sibyl, Delphic Sibyl, Cumaean Sibyl, and Libyan Sibyl.

The Sistine Chapel is where the cardinals hold the conclave to select new popes. *Conclave* means with (*con*) key (*clav*) and refers to the fact that prior to 2005 it was customary for the cardinals to be locked into the chapel for the duration of the voting. Beginning with the election of Pope Benedict XVI in April 2005, the cardinals have been allowed to retire to more comfortable quarters in other parts of the Vatican after their work is completed each day.

## **St. Peter's Basilica**

The current St. Peter's basilica was started in 1506 and completed during a period of roughly 120 years under a succession of 18 popes and 12 architects. The façade was finished in 1614. The bronze pillars over the Papal Altar (called Baldacchino) were completed in 1633.

The massive church, 610 feet long by 450 feet wide, has 44 altars, 11 domes, 778 columns, and 395 statues. The bronze monument above the high papal altar is the largest in the world. It is five stories high and weighs about 83,000 pounds.

It houses the alleged tomb of Peter, though there is no biblical evidence that Peter was ever at Rome. Paul wrote

letters to Rome and from Rome, and he mentioned many of the believers there but he never mentioned Peter. The Bible tells us that Peter was the apostle to the Jews, while Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles.

**THE PAGAN OBELISK** standing in the center of St. Peter's square in front of the basilica was brought to Rome from Egypt in 37 BC by Emperor Caligula to decorate Caesar's Forum. In 1586 it was moved by Pope Sixtus V to its current location in an operation that took four months and required the labors of more than 900 men, 75 horses, and 40 winches.



The reliquary on top of the obelisk allegedly contains “a piece of the true cross.” The St. Peter's obelisk symbolizes papal supremacy. It “stands at the geometrical center of the ellipse and is the gnomon of an immense sundial, symbolizing the sun itself and alludes to the central figure of the pope, the Vicar of Christ on Earth” (*Rome and the Vatican*, p. 110).

The **GREAT PORTICO** that branches out from the front of the basilica forms two hemicycles delineated by a double

row of stone columns. This symbolizes Rome's universal claim. The portico is "a symbolic embrace by the Church that would welcome and protect all the faithful of the world in this and in the next life" (*Rome and the Vatican*, p. 107).

On the way into the huge church, we saw the "Porta Santa" or "**HOLY DOOR**," which is walled up except during "holy years." The last one of these was in 2000, when Pope John Paul II opened the door and countless thousands of Catholic pilgrims walked through them in search of the indulgence he had promised. A plaque above the doors commemorates that occasion.

The famous **PIETA OF MICHELANGELO** is located to the right as you enter St. Peter's, but it is now behind bulletproof glass, after a man attacked it with a hammer in 1971. It depicts an apocryphal scene of Mary holding Jesus after his death. In reality, Jesus' body was taken down by Joseph of Arimathaea (Matt. 27:57-60) and there is no mention in the Bible of Mary even being present at that scene. Michelangelo's *Pieta* depicts Mary as larger than Jesus, which is symbolic of Rome's mis-emphasis on and heretical exaltation of Mary. Mary is also depicted as a young woman, fitting, perhaps, into Rome's "perpetual virgin" myth, whereas she would have been an older woman at that point in her life.

During the 2005 trip we went up in **THE DOME OF ST. PETER'S**. It is an amazing feat of engineering. Two thousand workers labored to complete it to the point of the drum underneath the dome, before work was stopped in 1564. The dome itself was completed in 1590 by 1,600 workers who labored day and night for 22 months.



Underneath St. Peter's is the crypt containing the alleged **TOMB OF PETER**, as well as the tombs of many of the popes, and a museum containing ancient art, vestments, and other items. If I remember correctly, less of the crypt is accessible today than it was when I first visited St. Peter's in the early 1990s and fewer of the stone burial monuments are accessible to tourists.

On April 13, 2005, we visited **THE TOMB OF THE LATE POPE JOHN PAUL II** in the crypt under St. Peters. This was the first day it was opened to the public. It is a simple tomb, a marble slab a few inches high inscribed in gold letters with the pope's name, the years of his papacy, and his seal. Above the tomb is a picture carved in stone or marble of Mary holding Jesus.





It is sad to see the veneration that is misplaced on a sinful man who preached a false gospel and was one of the greatest exalters of Mary in all of Rome's heretical history. He dedicated himself and his papacy to Mary, glorified Mary for her alleged protection during his assassination attempt, and had the words "all yours" embroidered on his garments in Latin, according to his own autobiography. To exalt Mary to a position that belongs solely by Jesus Christ is pure blasphemy, and yet this pope was praised by countless Evangelical and Charismatic leaders.

### **Pope John XXIII and Ecumenism**

One of the prominent newer papal tombs in St. Peter's is that of John XXIII, who called the Vatican II Council in the 1960s and thus opened the doors for the ecumenical movement. Originally his tomb was located in the spot in the crypt now occupied by John Paul II's body, but it was moved up to the main level some years ago because it is so popular.



Pope John XXIII's ecumenism reminds me of an American woman Brian interviewed prior to the papal audience outside St. Peter's in 2003. She said that her family had given her a 40th birthday gift of a trip to Rome, which she had long desired. She said that she was raised Baptist but had converted to Catholicism. She explained that 20 years ago she probably wouldn't have converted, because there was not much freedom in Catholicism in those days, but "since Vatican II," there is more freedom. She emphasized that her priest is very easy-going about doctrine. We didn't ask, but it is possible that she is part of the "charismatic renewal" in Catholicism. She is a "Baptist-Catholic" (so to speak), but she knows very little about Catholic doctrine. She claimed to believe that salvation is by the grace of Christ alone, but this is complete confusion, because the Catholic Church denies this and solemnly cursed such a belief at the Council of Trent.

Thus in one day in Rome we met a Hindu-Catholic, which represents the merger of Catholicism with the pagan religions, and a Baptist-Catholic, which represents the merger of Catholicism with the non-Catholic denominations. Rome today is a big stew of syncretism and ecumenism, adapting itself to and swallowing up every form of "spirituality" in the world. You are free to believe pretty much anything you please doctrinally, as long as you will give some credence to papal authority. The one thing that the "Hindu-Catholic" and the "Baptist-Catholic" have in common is their love for the pope.

We are observing ecumenical confusion of the highest degree, which is preparing the way for the end-times "one world church," the final form of the age-old "mystery of iniquity."

## **Christianized Heathenism**

The Vatican is aptly filled with Christianized heathenism, because this is basically what Roman Catholicism is. We can

only give a few of the almost countless examples. Every image of Mary, the very papacy itself, the “saints,” purgatory, the mass, the images, the relics -- all of it is Christianized heathenism. The Word of God warns, “Learn not the way of the heathen” (Jer. 10:2), but Rome has ignored this throughout her history and there is no greater evidence of this than the Vatican itself.

The massive obelisk in the center of St. Peter’s Piazza is a pagan object from Egypt.

The Vatican Library contains large paintings of various pagan gods and goddesses, such as Isis and Mercury and Minerva.

The “Cathedra Petri” or “Chair of Peter” contains woodcarvings that represent the labors of Hercules.

Near the main altar of St. Peter’s is a bronze statue of Peter sitting in a chair. It is reported that this statue was originally the pagan god Jupiter that was taken from the Pantheon in Rome (when it was still a pagan temple) and moved into St. Peter’s Basilica and renamed Peter! Jupiter was one of the chief gods of ancient Rome and he was called the “pater” (father) or Jove in Latin. There are extant statues of Jupiter which are similar to the one of Peter. One foot of the statue is made of silver and a constant stream of pilgrims pass by and superstitiously touch or kiss it.

In the supposed tomb of Peter, 99 oil lamps are kept burning day and night. For those familiar with pagan religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, the origin of such things is obvious. There is no biblical authority for any of it. Jesus warned the Pharisees, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9).

## **Trevi Fountain**

One of the famous sites of Rome is Trevi Fountain. The background of the monument depicts the palace of the pagan

sea god Neptune. The massive marble sculpture (about 60 feet wide and 78 feet high) depicts the pagan god driving a chariot drawn by horses rising out of the sea. There are also mythical tritons emerging from the water to guide the horses. The building of this pagan monument was begun by Pope Urban VIII and completed by Clement XII. At the very top of the monument are the papal coat of arms, the tiara (papal crown) and the key of “St. Peter.” The popes have thus blessed all of this pagan idolatry.

### **Papal Hearts and Entrails and Miraculous Icons**

Near Trevi Fountain there are 13 Catholic churches in a small area covering a few blocks.

**SANTA MARIA IN TRIVIO**, right beside the fountain, features a copy of the Mary statue at Fatima. The original Fatima statue is the one that Pope John Paul II used as a backdrop for his Rosary for the World that was broadcast a few years ago to millions of people. The Pope dedicated the world to Mary.

**SAINTS VINCENT AND ANASTASIUS**, right in front of the fountain, contains the hearts and entrails of 22 popes who died in the nearby Quirinal Palace up to the time of Leo XIII, who departed his earthly abode in 1903.

**SANTA MARIA IN VIA**, a short distance away, is the site of the alleged miraculous appearance of an icon of Mary painted on stone which was supposedly found floating on water that had overflowed from a well.

### **Pagan Mouth of Truth**

The Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin is the home of the **BOCCA DELLA VERITA (THE MOUTH OF TRUTH)**. It is a pagan image of a frowning river god and is prominently displayed in the foyer by which you enter the church. “The plaque is traditionally held to be an incorruptible judge: those acting in good faith can put their

hands in the mouth of the god without fear, but those whose consciences are not quite as spotless and who challenge the judgment of the god run the risk of seeing the mouth snap shut and finding their hands amputated.”

## **Synagogue Where Pope Blessed Jews**

The Roman synagogue is located on the opposite bank of the Tiber from the Vatican. This area was once occupied by the Jewish ghetto. Pope Paul IV had the area enclosed in 1556 to separate the Jews from the rest of the city, and the wall was not torn down until 1887. The Jews were viciously persecuted throughout much of Rome’s history and were as much the victims of the Inquisition as Bible-believing Christians.

Things are difficult in today’s ecumenical climate and unity is in the air on every hand. Pope John Paul II made an historic ecumenical visit here in 1986. As the pope walked down the aisle escorted by a rabbi, the choir sang “Ani Ma’Amin,” “I Believe.” The pope and the Chief Priest and the Chief Rabbi sat on the Teva, the platform normally reserved for the cantors who read from the Law of Moses. The pope said, “You are our dearly beloved brothers. And in a certain way, one might say, our elder brothers.”

## **St. Paul Anglican Church**

Nearby the hotel where we stayed in the heart of Rome in 2005 is St. Paul’s Within the Walls Anglican Church. Prominently carved into the front of the church is a monument to a highlight in ecumenical ventures, the first visit of an Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican Church, to a pope in Rome. The words say: “The bronze doors dedicated 28 - IV - 1977 offered to the glory of God commemorating the meeting on 2 - XII - 1960 in Vatican City of John XXIII P.M. and Geoffrey Fisher Archbishop of Canterbury -- ‘THAT WE MAY BE ONE.’”

## **Naiads Fountain**

Across from the Basilica of Saint Mary degli Angeli, located near the main train terminal, is the pagan Naiads Fountain that was built by Pope Pius IX. It depicts a sea god and nymphs, all naked, and a sea horse, a swan, and two snake-like creatures. A Hindu would feel comfortable with such things.

## **Triton Fountain**

Another example of Christianized paganism is the Triton Fountain. It features a statue of a triton, a mythical creature associated with the false god Neptune. The triton is sitting on top of conch shells upheld by four fierce-looking, snake-like sea monsters. Right beneath the triton is the papal coat of arms with the pope's crown or tiara and the "key of Saint Peter."

## **The Bone Chapel**

Nearby the Triton Fountain is the Church of the Immaculate Conception, underneath which is the Capuchin Cemetery, popularly called the Chapel of Bones. This weird place consists of five rooms featuring the bones of 4,000 Capuchin monks arranged in various artistic patterns. One room is named the "crypt of the skulls." It contains an arrangement of perhaps 200 skulls interspersed with other bones, with the complete skeletons of two monks dressed in brown friar robes, lying separately on either side of the room. Another room is named, believe it or not, the "crypt of the pelvises," and features a tasteful arrangement of pelvic bones. (It would seem that this would be a good place for Elvis' remains.) Another of the rooms, the Mass Chapel, contains more bones plus a special added treat, the heart of Maria Felice Peretti, the grand-niece of Pope Sixtus V. The shriveled heart is visible in a lead casket. The last two rooms at the end of the hall are "the crypt of leg bones and thigh

bones” and the “crypt of the three skeletons.” The latter features the complete skeletons of three young children, as well as the skeletons of two more monks lying on “cushions” made of bones. While touring the place it was all I could do not to launch forth with a round of “Them Bones, Them Bones”!

In 1797, Pope Pius VI granted a plenary indulgence to those who visit the Bone Chapel on the first Sunday in October. Since both of our visits were in the month of April, I assume we didn’t get in on that benefit.

While this is the most extravagant collection of unburied bones in Rome, there are other Catholic churches in the area that have smaller assortments in their crypts, including the Venerable Confraternity of Devotees of Jesus Christ on Calvary and of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Church of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Prayer and Death, the Church of the Stigmata, and the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows at Frascati.

This love for unburied bones is evident in Catholic churches throughout the world, in fact. I have seen the head of a priest exposed for veneration in Dublin, Ireland, and the heart of a priest similarly exposed at St. Joseph’s Cathedral in Montreal, Quebec.

The same is true in America. In Chicago, for example, two of the bone fragments of San Diego de Alcala, the “saint” for whom the ever-sunny southern California city is named, are displayed in a silver showcase at Loyola University. A bone from the right arm of Mother Cabrini, who died in 1917 and was declared a saint in 1946, is on display at the National Shrine to St. Frances Cabrini at Columbus Hospital. And pieces of a leg bone believed to belong to Jude, one of the 12 apostles, are enshrined at the National Shrine to St. Jude.

After going through the weird chapel in April 2003, Brian Snider and I went upstairs to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Several people were praying in the main church area, but we found a quiet, unoccupied small back room that

is located right over the Bone Chapel, and there we had our own time of prayer. We thanked the Lord for all of His tender mercies during the trip and prayed for our families and our nation. We beseeched the Lord to use the things we have seen to help benighted people to come to the light of the Truth in Jesus Christ.

## **John Baptist's Head**

Speaking of bones, the San Silvestro in Capite church, in the Trevi Fountain area, is named for its famous relic, which is the purported head of John the Baptist. It is in a glass box on an altar in a little chapel on the left side of the building. There is indeed a skull in the box, but only the Lord knows whose it is!

In the same room is a large image of Mary holding the dead Jesus. I was in the room for about 10 minutes taking photos and there was a constant stream of people coming through and worshiping before the Mary image.

## **Saint Paul Without The Walls**

In 2003 I visited the large basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura (Saint Paul Without the Walls). The apostle Paul is supposed to be buried under the main altar here. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel contains a crucifix that St. Bridget of Sweden claimed spoke to her, though it didn't say anything during my visit. There is also a Relic Chapel that contains a wide variety of "holy relics," including many bones and the alleged prison chains of Paul. I stopped by here mainly to see the mosaics of all of the popes.

While I was there, I took some photos of a mass that was led by a group of 10 bishops. Their golden cup and scarlet robes immediately brought to mind Revelation 17:4.

## **Papal Blessing**

In the gift shop of Saint Paul Without the Walls I bought a card with a photo of Pope John Paul II and the words, “May the Apostolic Blessing, which I impart to everyone with great affection, be a pledge of my universal favor and the reconciliation of hearts.”

In fact, the popes have no apostolic authority, and even the apostles themselves did not presume to be able to impart blessing or universal favor upon anyone. Rather, they preached Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith and the sole Mediator and Reconciliator.

## **Souls of Purgatory**

Three times we have tried unsuccessfully to visit the Museum of the Souls of Purgatory located in the Chiesa del Sacro Suore del Suffrago (Church of the Sacred Heart of Sufferance), facing the Tiber River onto the Lungotevere Prati. The church was locked each time. There is not a lot about the doctrine of purgatory visible in Rome today, and we wanted to see what was on display here. In case someone gets a chance to visit it, the instructions I found say to enter the church in the front and then walk down the right aisle to a door on the right where you ask to see the “il museo.” According to descriptions of the place are on the Internet, the little museum contains alleged evidence of paranormal signs sent from souls in purgatory to the living. The signs include scorched fingerprints, handprints burnt on to wooden tables and pieces of paper, and singed pillowcases and shirt sleeves. Supposedly, by these signs the dead are trying to get the attention of the living so that they might offer masses and prayers in their behalf. The 100-year old museum was built by Victor Jouet, a French priest who traveled to Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy gathering relics. He died in his little museum in 1912.



## **Waldensian Church in Rome**

There is a Waldensian Church in Rome about a block farther away from the river from Chiesa del Sacro Suore del Suffrago, but though the Waldensians stood for the Word of God through the Dark Ages and were persecuted by Rome, they are largely apostate today and have even joined Rome in the ecumenical movement.

## Mary: Tutelary Deity of Rome

John Burgon's description of the Mary cult in Rome in the 19th century is as apt today as then. He said: "There has resulted from this unscriptural theory of Tradition, no grosser perversion of the truth than the entire system of Saintworship, and especially the cultus of the Blessed Virgin Mary. ... She can only be fitly described as the tutelary Deity of modern Rome."

The Roman Catholic Mary is indeed the tutelary (guardian/protector) Deity of Rome. She is everywhere. Most of the churches are named in her honor and feature her statues and paintings. They celebrate fables surrounding her sinless birth, her presentation in the temple, her assumption into heaven, and her coronation as Queen.

Consider **SANTA MARIA DI CONSOLAZIONE** (Saint Mary of Consolation). This church, which exalts Mary as the Mother of Consolation, has four shrines to her under different titles.

Consider **SANTA MARIA IN ARA COELI** on the Capitoline, which exalts Mary as the Altar of Heaven. The 124 marble steps, which serve as the ceremonial approach to the church, formerly led up to the Temple of the Sun that was built by the emperor Aurelian (270-75 AD). The site of the church was formerly occupied by an altar to Juno, Jupiter's female counterpart. The main altar features a colorful statue of Mary with a large crown; she is pointing with her right hand to a large cross she is holding in her left. In one chapel there is a statue titled Santissimo Bambino (most holy Infant Jesus), a "curious little statue, beloved of Romans." Any Hindu would love this little idol of an infant god. On the wall facing the entrance to this chapel is the painting "Our Lady of the Way," depicting Mary holding Jesus. Both are crowned.

Consider **SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO** (Saint Mary of the People). The Madonna del Popolo in the main altar is falsely alleged to have been made by the Gospel writer Luke. Among the frescos in the presbytery are the Coronation of the Virgin depicting Jesus in his throne crowning Mary, who is sitting at his right hand. There are also depictions of the sibyls, which were pagan prophetesses. The Basso Della Rovere Chapel features a picture of Mary sitting in a throne and holding the infant Jesus and another depicting the assumption of Mary into heaven. Below is an empty casket and above is Mary in glory surrounded by angels. The Cerasi Chapel features another painting of the assumption of Mary as well as one of her coronation. The Chigi Chapel has a 16th century painting of the fable “The Birth of the Virgin,” symbolizing Rome’s dogma that Mary is a perpetual virgin.

The **SAN MARCELLO AL CORSO CHURCH** in the same general area as San Silvestro in Capite contains a purported miraculous crucifix. The almost life-sized crucifix has its own chapel and there is a photo of John Paul II bowing beside it. It is carried through the streets of Rome in procession during special occasions, such as the start of the Vatican II Council in the 1960s. A prayer that is supposed to be prayed “before the miraculous crucifix” ends with these words: “And you, Mary, Mother and Virgin of Sorrows, hear my plea, intercede for me with your divine Son so that I will receive the graces necessary for today and always.”

This illustrates the error and confusion of Rome’s gospel. It is a false mixture of faith plus works, grace plus sacraments, Bible plus paganism, Jesus plus Mary.

San Marcello al Corso also has a chapel dedicated to “**OUR LADY OF GRACES**.” This is a blasphemous exaltation of Mary to the place of God, who is “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10). It is God and God alone who is “able to make all grace abound toward you” (2 Cor. 9:8). The fact that grace is extended from Jesus Christ is irrefutable evidence that He is

God (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; Gal. 1:3; Phil. 1:2; Eph. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Phile. 1:3).

This church also has a Chapel of Annunciation, honoring the myth that Mary ascended to heaven and was crowned Queen of the universe.

A plaque says that this chapel was originally dedicated to Saint Ansano, also called San Sano, the “protector from mental illness.” We met a lot of people on this trip who think that fundamentalists need a good dose of this saint’s help!

Consider **SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI** (Saint Mary of the Seven Angels). The church was built through the zeal of Antonio Lo Duca, a Sicilian priest “devoted to the veneration of angels.” In 1541 he had a vision of a “light whiter than snow” emerging from the Diocletian Thermal Baths. The only place in Scripture where we see angels appearing as light is in 2 Cor. 11:14, “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” On the left side of the circular vestibule as one enters the church is a statue “The Angel of Light.” It was made in 1945 and placed here at the end of Jubilee 2000. It has an (appropriately) demonic appearance.

In the center of the apse is the painting “The Madonna of the Angels” which depicts Mary on a throne surrounded by seven angels. She is breast feeding the infant Jesus and a massive crown is being placed on her head by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The other angels are named Uriel, Barachiel, Salatiel, Jeudiel, and Raphael.

On the right wall of the presbytery in the front of the church is the painting “The Presentation of Mary at the Temple.” It depicts the apocryphal scene of Mary being presented by her parents to the high priest in the temple. She is said to have climbed the steps alone to present herself to the priest.

On the left wall just before entering the passage to the presbytery is the painting “The Immaculate,” representing an exalted Mary being adored by angels and men.

Consider, for example, **SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE (SAINT MARY MAJOR) BASILICA**. Of the countless churches in Rome named for Mary, this is the main one. It is one of four “patriarchal basilicas,” meaning they are directly associated with the pope and have papal altars at which only the pope or his authorized representatives can conduct mass.

Built in about 350 it was restored by Pope Sixtus III to commemorate the declaration of Mary’s Divine Motherhood by the Council of Ephesus in 432. The Council defined that “Mary was the Mother of one person, and that as he was God, as well as man, she was rightly to be called Mother of God.”

The mosaic in the apse, from the late 13th century, depicts Mary sitting on the right hand of Jesus on his throne and being crowned by him as Queen of heaven. The great blue orb surrounding them depicts the universe, filled with sun, moon, and stars. The Latin inscription translated says: “The Virgin Mary assumed into the dwelling place of the heavens, where the King of Kings sits on the starry throne. The Holy Mother of God is elevated into the Kingdom of Heaven, above choirs of angels.” Christ has an open book in his hand which has the words in Latin meaning “Come my beloved and I will place you on my throne.”

Another prominent statue of Mary in this church is titled “Mary Queen of Peace.” Mary is depicted holding the child Jesus with one arm while holding the other out in a sign of blessing.

One of the church’s chapels enshrines an ancient icon of Mary titled “Salus Populi Romani” (“the health or well-being of the Roman people”).

Under the main altar of Santa Maria Maggiore is a relic that purports to be pieces of wood from **THE MANGER OF BABY JESUS**. The wood has been encased in an ornate gold container with a gold image of a crowned infant on the top. The entire thing is housed in a glass case. Electric candles are constantly lit in front of it, and even in the few minutes I was

there taking photos, many people came by to pray and worship.

It is pure idolatry, and it is a grievous matter to think of the multitudes that are deceived by Rome. Even more grievous is the thought of those duped Protestant and Baptist leaders today who are breaking down the walls of biblical separation so that the people can no longer see the plain distinction between truth and error.

Outside of the St. Mary Major Church, MARY IS EVEN HANGING ON THE CROSS WITH JESUS! A large crucifix has Jesus hanging on one side and a crowned Mary hanging holding a baby on the other. The image is located in a parking lot behind a gate that is kept locked and we were not allowed to enter, but we got good photos of it from the sidewalk across the street. We found out later that the image is accessible from a side door of the church. This statue depicts Rome's dogma that Mary is the co-redemptress with Christ, that she intercedes for men from heaven and aids in their salvation. Note the following quotations from the Vatican II Council of the 1960s:

“Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience. For as St. Irenaeus says, she being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race. Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him in their preaching ... ‘death through Eve, LIFE THROUGH MARY.’ This UNION OF THE MOTHER WITH THE SON IN THE WORK OF SALVATION is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, chap. 8, II, 56, pp. 380-381).

“Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but BY HER MANIFOLD INTERCESSION CONTINUES TO BRING US THE GIFTS OF ETERNAL SALVATION. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth

surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of ADVOCATE, HELPER, BENEFACTRESS, and MEDIATRIX” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, chap. 8, II, 62, pp. 382-383).

In his general audience of May 7, 1997, Pope John Paul II said that “MARY IS THE PATH THAT LEADS TO CHRIST” and concluded by urging all Christians to acknowledge Mary’s “providential role in the path of salvation” (Vatican Information Service, May 7, 1997).

### **Worshipping Mary**

When someone says today that Roman Catholics worship Mary, it is typical for this to be challenged by Catholics; but the Catholic Church itself says that Mary is worshiped. For example, a plaque in the Chapel of the Virgin of the Grace at Saints Vincent and Anastasius says, “Cardinal Benedetto Odescalchi, who became the pope with the name of Innocent XI, initiated THE WORSHIP OF THE IMAGE, placed on the altar in 1677, and wanted his heart to be buried here, not in the main chapel.”

This is only one example of many that could be given of the term “worship” used in regard to Mary in Rome’s churches.

## Is Rome the Harlot of Revelation?

Having looked at the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, let's look at the Bible. Does the following prophecy have anything to do with the Roman Catholic Church?

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. ... And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. ... And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Revelation 13:1-6, 9, 15).

When Dave Hunt published a book in 1994 (*A Woman Rides the Beast*) that identifies the religious harlot of Revelation 17 with Roman Catholicism, it created quite a controversy. Hunt's book was blacklisted by many Christian bookstores and denounced by some key Evangelical leaders and ministries, including the Christian Research Institute (CRI). On the *Bible Answer Man* radio broadcasts, Hank



Hanegraaff claimed that it is ludicrous to identify the Roman Catholic Church as the whore of Revelation 17.

Such a controversy is relatively new. For a thousand years and more, Baptists, Protestants, and Fundamentalists have identified Rome with the Harlot of Revelation 17. Consider a few examples:

At the end of the **NINTH CENTURY**, “Tergandus, Bishop of Treves, called the Pope antichrist, yea, a wolf, and Rome, Babylon” (*Martyrs Mirror*, 5th English edition, p. 240).

In **THE TENTH CENTURY**, Arnulphus, Bishop of Orleans, in a full council at Rheims, called the pope Antichrist (Peter Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, 1821, p. 229).

In **THE ELEVENTH CENTURY**, Berenger of Tours denounced Rome’s dogmas and maintained that the Roman Church was the See of Satan (George Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, 1838, p. 159).

**THE WALDENSIANS**, throughout most of their long history, identified the pope as the Antichrist. The Waldensian treatise titled the *Noble Lesson*, dated 1100 A.D., stated: “Antichrist, the predicted murderer of the Saints, hath already appeared in his true character, seated monarchally in the seven-hilled city.” In 1120 or 1160 A.D., *A Treatise Concerning Antichrist* identified the pope of Rome as the Antichrist. George Faber identifies this as a production of Peter the Waldo (Faber, pp. 379-384).

In 1206, at the conference of Montreal, the **ALBIGENSES** made the following confession: “That the Church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, but the Church of confusion, drunk with the blood of the martyrs. That the polity of the Church of Rome was neither good nor holy, nor established by Jesus Christ” (Peter Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, 1821 edition, first published in 1692, p. 178).

The **BOHEMIAN BRETHREN** held the following beliefs, according to the Roman Inquisitor. This description uses

material from the 13TH CENTURY: “The first error, saith he, is that the Church of Rome is not the Church of Jesus Christ, but an assembly of wicked men, and the whore that sits upon the beast in the Revelation. ... They declare the pope to be the head and ringleader of all errors” (Allix, *Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, pp. 242-259).

The **LOLLARDS** of the **14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES** maintained “that the Church of Rome was not the Church of Christ, but of infidel heathens; and they despised all ecclesiastical laws, together with all the Bishops and Ministers of the Church” (Allix, *Ancient Churches of the Albigenes*, p. 230).

The **PETROBUSIANS** judged the pope to be the Antichrist (Allix, *Ancient Churches of the Albigenes*, p. 142).

Throughout **THE REFORMATION ERA**, Rome was considered the Mother of Harlots. On September 9, 1560, Pastor Jean Louis Paschale of Calabria, just before he was burned alive in the presence of Pope Pius IV in Rome, turned to the pope and “arraigned him as the enemy of Christ, the persecutor of his people, and the Anti-Christ of Scripture, and concluded by summoning him and all his cardinals to answer for their cruelties and murders before the throne of the Lamb” (J.A. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, c1860, p. 120).

All of the Reformation leaders considered the pope the Antichrist, including Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Huss, and their successors in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries persisted in this.

Bible translator **WILLIAM TYNDALE** identified the pope as the Antichrist in his treatise *The Practice of Prelates* and also in the Preface to the 1534 edition of his New Testament.

Many of the **EARLY PROTESTANT BIBLES** contained dramatic woodcuttings portraying the Scarlet Woman of Revelation 17, plainly identifying the Roman Catholic Church with this apostate religious system. The 1560 Geneva Bible is an example. The notes on Revelation 17 said: “The

Beast signifies an ancient Rome; The woman that sits thereon, the New Rome which is the Papistry, whose cruelty and blood shedding is declared by scarlet and full of idolatries, superstitions and contempt for the true God. ... This woman is the Antichrist, that is, the pope with the whole body of his filthy creatures, as is expounded in verse 18.”

In fact, it was so common in the 16th century for dissidents to label Rome the antichrist and harlot of Revelation 17 that in 1516 Pope Leo X issued a papal bull which forbade preachers to touch on the subject of the antichrist in their sermons (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 20)!

This situation continued to exist among Protestants and Baptists generally throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th. In his 1893 work titled *Union with Rome*, Bishop Christopher Wordsworth of the Church of England stated the view that prevailed among Protestants at that time: “... we tremble at the sight, while we read the inscription, emblazoned in large letters, ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great,’ written by the hand of St. John, guided by the Holy Spirit of God, on the forehead of the Church of Rome.”

These examples could be multiplied almost endlessly.

Further, large numbers of old-line Protestants, Baptists, and fundamentalist Christians continue to identify Rome with Revelation 17 TODAY.

We have no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church is the partial fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation 17 of a one-world religious Harlot. This is not to say that Revelation 17 is entirely fulfilled by Roman Catholicism. The prophecy not be finished until the reign of the Antichrist just prior to the coming of the Lord, and Rome will be joined by a conglomeration of other apostate churches and organizations, the end result, no doubt, of the present Ecumenical Movement.

The religious harlot of Revelation 17 is aligned with the antichrist (compare Rev. 17:3 - 13:1) and like the antichrist it has two aspects: *historic* and *prophetic*.

In 1 John 2:18, the apostle said, “*Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*”

Thus there are two aspects to the antichrist. There is the antichrist *singular* that will rise in the future and will rule the world for a short period just prior to the return of Christ, and there are antichrists *plural* that have been in the world since the beginning of the church age.

Likewise, the Harlot of Revelation 17 has two aspects. There is a sense in which she has existed throughout the church age and there is a sense in which she will arise during the Tribulation.

Though she does not fulfill this prophecy in its final entirety, it is an amazing fact that every feature of the religious Harlot is found in the Roman Catholic Church. She has ridden through church history upon the back of kings, is clothed in gorgeous robes and decked in expensive attire. She sits on seven hills, is full of abominations, and has a golden cup. She is certainly drunk with the blood of the martyrs, and the inhabitants of the world are indeed drunk with the wine of her fornication. Countless multitudes of deceived people from practically every nation blindly follow Rome’s errors and glory in Rome’s false religion.

It is interesting that even Rome herself has understood her fulfillment of this prophecy. “In 1825, Pope Leo XII struck a medal, bearing on the one side his own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a ‘Woman,’ holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right a CUP, with the legend around her, ‘*Sedet super universum,*’ ‘The whole world is her seat’” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*).

Following are some of ways the harlot of Revelation 17 is identified with Rome:

## 1. HER CHARACTER IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME

(“*the great whore*,” Rev. 17:1).

This is true of Rome both spiritually and literally.

From her inception, Rome has committed spiritual whoredom with the pagan rulers and demonic powers of this world. She gleefully joined hands with Constantine of old, and she has disobediently affiliated with pagan governments ever since.

The Roman Catholic Church has also been associated with immorality in a more literal sense.

Many of her popes were exceedingly immoral. Even her own history books describe the unspeakably vile deeds of her “holy” popes, even though they rarely give the whole story.

Pope John XII (955-63) is described by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* as “a coarse, immoral man, whose life was such that the Lateran palace was spoken of as a brothel.”

Pope Benedict IX (1032-1045) was a murderer and an adulterer; the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits he lived a “dissolute life.”

Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84) erected a house of prostitution in Rome.

Pope Pius II (1458-64) had two illegitimate children.

Pope Innocent VIII (1484-92) had at least two illegitimate children that he raised to positions of authority and wealth in the Catholic Church.

Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) had at least four illegitimate children and he made them rich through appointments. He made his son, Caesar Borgia, a cardinal when he was only 18 years old. Caesar was an immoral and violent man who had his brother put to death as well as his sister Lucrezia’s husband. Alexander held unspeakable orgies in his palace and kept mistresses who were married women. He died of syphilis.

Pope Julius II (1503-13) had at least three illegitimate children.

This is only the tip of the iceberg in regard to papal depravity.

Rome's priests have also been immoral. They have taken vows of celibacy, but they have not been celibate! In *The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional*, Charles Chiniquy, a former priest, documented the moral vileness associated with Rome's practice of confession.

What Hannah Conant wrote about the Roman Catholic monasteries in England could be said for a large portion of its monastic system throughout Europe. The monasteries, which were supposed to be places of holiness, were more like brothels.

"Their profligacy was equal to their luxury. Those hells of vice, uncovered in the monasteries by the commissioners of Henry VIII, in the sixteenth century, were not the growth of that age alone. Such as they were then they were two centuries before, and the cry that went up from them to the ear of heaven was like that of Sodom and Gomorrah" (Hannah C. Conant, *The Popular History of the Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, New York: I.K. Funk and Co., 1881, p. 10).

Volumes have been written about Rome's immorality in the past, but she has retained her impure testimony even to this very day.

Throughout the world, her priests are renowned for homosexuality and child abuse. In recent years, Rome has paid millions of dollars to settle court cases brought against homosexual, child-molesting priests.

A 2004 study in America found 11,757 cases of sexual abuse involving 5,148 priests. The study also found that the Catholic Church has spent at least \$1 billion in lawsuits and treatment for priests. These studies only involve about half of the priests in the U.S.

The Archdiocese of Portland and that of Tucson filed bankruptcy in 2004.

According to Roman Catholic Bishop Pat Buckley, studies have shown that 80% of the Catholic priests in Ireland have broken their vows of celibacy. The bishop estimates that at least one in 10 of the 5,000 priests have regular clandestine affairs with women ("500 Irish Priests Having Regular Sex with Women," *London News Telegraph*, Jan. 21, 2006). Buckley says the figure of one in 10 is "an extremely conservative estimate" and that when the statistics are widened to include "practicing homosexuals," it would be found that UP TO 40% OF THE PRIESTS ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE. Buckley operates a ministry called Bethany, which counsels women who have been involved with priests. He says, "From the top down it is hypocritical. We are preaching compulsory celibacy, but very few are living it." He describes as common the practice of priests and their housekeepers living secretly as husband and wife and says that relationships between priests and nuns is so common that it is unofficially called the "third way."

Martin Luther visited Rome expecting to find the center of holiness, but after the visit he said: "If there be a hell, Rome is built over it."

**2. HER LOCATION IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME**  
(*"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth,"* Rev. 17:9).

John pictures the great harlot sitting upon seven mountains, which most Protestants of old and Fundamentalists of the present identify as the city of Rome.

"The woman is a city, and the city is Rome, the religious capital of the world. ... Rome was the city set on seven hills and was known as such to both pagan and Christian writers. ... Ovid said, 'Rome looks around on the whole globe from her seven mountains, the seat of empire and abode of the gods.' ... She is religious Rome, which at that time will have inherited all the religions of the world. ... It will attain the goal of the present-day apostates of all the great systems

of the world: Romanism, Protestantism, pagan religions, cults and isms” (J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation*).

### **3. HER WORLDWIDE REACH IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME** (“*that sitteth upon many waters,*” Rev. 17:1).

No matter where you go in this dark world, Rome’s tentacles have extended there.

Further, Rome is busy extending her influence by yoking together with the Christian denominations and pagan religions of the world. A statement made in recent decades by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Anglican and Episcopalian churches, shows how far the ecumenical movement has gone toward reconciliation with Rome. On August 7, 1977, Michael Ramsey said he would accept the pope as “President-Bishop” of a united “church” (Focus, Jul.-Aug. 1988, p. 5). Ramsey also said: “We should like to see the churches of England, Scotland, the United States and any other countries, bound together in one body. If the pope would like to come in as chairman, we should all welcome him” (*Why Were Our Reformers Burned?*).

My book *Evangelicals and Rome* documents the back to Rome movement within practically every segment of Protestantism.

And not only are apostate Christian denominations returning to Rome, so are pagan religions. At the last three general assemblies of the World Council of Churches, the main speakers included non-Christians. There were Hindus, Buddhists, Jewish rabbis, Muslims, Sikhs, Native American Indians, and Australian aborigines. Pagan altars were erected and fire offerings made to various pagan gods. “Ecumenical” means universal, worldwide, and the present-day movement of Christian unity, represented by groups such as the World Council of Churches, is the fore view of this worldwide apostate “church.” The WCC itself is composed of more than 300 denominations representing some 500 million people in more than 100 nations. This large body of apostate Christianity has already become one in spirit with the Roman



Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches and even recognizes the so-called spirituality of non-Christian religions.

The emerging “harlot church” was seen on January 24, 2002, when Pope John Paul II led the third Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Italy. This ecumenical prayer gathering featured some 200 religious leaders, including representatives of “Christian” denominations (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Reformed, Baptist, Lutheran, Mormon, Mennonite) as well as representatives of Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Bahai, Confucianism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and members of African and North American “traditional religions.” Prominently featured were 29 Muslim leaders from such countries as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and Libya, all of which persecute Christians to some degree.

Thus, there is already a harlot “church” taking shape and sitting upon many waters.

**4. HER UNHOLY EFFECT UPON MEN IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME** (*“and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication,”* Rev. 17:2).

Apostate religion allows men to continue in their sinful pleasures while having a form of religion to soothe their guilty consciences.

The term “fornication” in Rev. 17:2 refers to the seducing power of the Romish system in drawing away the affections from Christ, who is the only true and proper object of faith for the heart. “The priest comes between the heart and the blessed Lord; the Bible is concealed; the mind of God is unknown; the people are intoxicated with her exciting falsehoods; and worship they know not what” (Miller’s *Church History*).

The attraction of apostate Christianity to the people of the world, in spite of the fact that apostate Christendom has constantly discredited itself, is amazing to behold.

This is illustrated by the world's supernatural attraction to the pope.

Even the secular, humanistic press gives the Roman pope great acclaim; something that is not accorded any other Christian leader.

Of Pope John Paul II's journey to South America in 1980, *Time* magazine said: "The Polish-born pontiff proved a spell-binding presence, drawing crowds of a million or more on at least six occasions."

Following the first visit ever made by a pope to America, *Time* magazine gushed: "A gentle shepherd with a will of steel, John Paul II thrilled the U.S. with a glorious pilgrimage that won hearts—and challenged the nation. ... After only a year in office, the Pontiff is emerging as the kind of incandescent leader that the world so hungers for—one who can make people feel that they have been lifted above the drabness of their lives and show them that they are capable of better emotions, and better deeds than they may have thought."

People were trampled to death in the great crowds that flocked to see John Paul II during his world travels. In 1980 alone, nine people were killed and dozens hospitalized in Africa, while three were killed and 30 injured in El Salvador.

That the supernatural attraction to the office of the pope has increased dramatically in recent decades was evident at the funeral of John Paul II in April 2005. The ultra large front-page banner for the April 8 edition of the *Evening Standard* of London, England, was "UNITED BY THE POPE," and that about sums it up. Claudira Ribeira Santos, a Brazilian nun who attended the pope's funeral, observed: "The entire world is here. John Paul tore down the walls of countries, of classes, of religions."

The funeral was watched on television by an estimated two billion people. It was the first papal funeral attended by 200 world leaders, including at least 70 presidents and prime ministers. It was the first papal funeral attended by an

Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, the first attended by a British prime minister, and the first attended by a future monarch of England. It was the first papal casket before which a president of the United States bowed (*The Times*, London, April 7, 2005, p. 36) and the first papal funeral to draw an entourage of a current and two former presidents of the United States.

The world is indeed drunk with the wine of the fornications of the harlot “church.”

The attraction of the world toward apostate Christianity will continue to increase as the Great Tribulation draws nearer. Finally, the Antichrist’s prophet will “cause the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed ... and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do...” (Rev. 13:11-15) “... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. 3:11-12)

**5. HER ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP WITH CIVIL GOVERNMENT IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME** (“*with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,*” Rev. 17:2).

The apostles never yoked together with secular government. They gave their attention to establishing churches and their principle was that the church has its business and the state has its (Rom. 13:1-7). They wrote: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (2 Cor. 6:14-15).

Apostate Christianity, on the other hand, does not hesitate to unite with godless men in government to accomplish its purposes.

During the Dark Ages the Roman Catholic Church yoked with secular government and oftentimes even ruled over it.

In 1302 Pope Boniface VIII issued a papal bull entitled *Unam Sanctam*, in which he claimed that no one can be saved who does not submit to the pope as the supreme head of the church and demanded that kings and all earthly authority be subject to him.

Pope Gregory VII humbled Emperor Henry IV. In 1076, the pope called a council of bishops and proclaimed that the emperor could no longer rule his kingdom. In January 1077, the emperor traveled to Italy to the castle where the pope was staying on a visit to the duchess Matilda and begged his forgiveness. The haughty pope forced the emperor to stay outside in the winter cold, barefoot and fasting, for three days.

Pope Innocent III humbled King John of England (1199-1216). When his highness the pope became displeased with the king, he excommunicated him and issued a decree declaring that he was no longer king and releasing the people of England from any obligation to him. The haughty pope ordered King Philip of France to organize an army and navy to overthrow John, which he began to do with great zeal, eager to conquer England for himself. The pope called for a crusade against John, promising the participants remission of sins and a share of the spoils of war. In the meantime, King John yielded to the pressure and submitted to the pope, pledging complete allegiance to him in all things and resigning England and Ireland into the pope's hands.

The Roman Catholic Church still yokes together with secular government. It has hundreds of ambassadors to the nations.

**6. HER BLASPHEMY IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME**  
(*"full of names of blasphemy,"* Rev. 17:3).

Rome is indeed full of blasphemy, having exalted herself to the place of God in people's lives.

The very titles of Rome's popes are blasphemous. The pope calls himself the "holy father" and "his holiness," names that belong solely to Almighty God. He calls himself the "vicar of Christ," which is the office of the Holy Spirit.

Rome's priests also take to themselves blasphemous titles and claims. They are called "father," a title which Christ forbade (Mat. 23:9). They are ordained after the order of Melchisedec even though this is an office that belongs to Christ alone (Heb. 5:6, 10, 20). What mere man can be ordained after a priestly order that requires that one be "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (Heb. 7:3)?

Speaking of blasphemy, what about Rome's doctrine of Mary, that she is Redemptress and Mediatrix, that she is sinless and ascended to heaven and was crowned Queen of the universe, that she hears and answers prayers? Is it not pure blasphemy to depict Mary as any of these things and to build statues to her depicting her as the Queen of Peace and showing her hanging on the very cross with Christ, as we find at St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome?

#### **7. HER CLOTHING IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME** (*"arrayed in purple and scarlet colour,"* Rev. 17:4).

The apostles and Christians of the early churches were humble Bible-believers who lived simple lives and did not follow the pattern of the world's leaders and religions. The harlot church, on the other hand, loves impressive cathedrals, colorful robes, gorgeous ritualism, expensive ecclesiastical clothing and trappings.

Revelation 17:4 describes exactly how Rome's bishops and archbishops and cardinals and popes are clothed even to this day. We have described the mass that we observed in St. Paul Without the Walls in 2003, in which the bishops were clothed in scarlet. A few years ago, I watched a televised broadcast of the papal Christmas mass at the Vatican, and it looked like a very sea of purple and scarlet!

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* describes the garments of the Catholic clergy. The Cappa Magna is a cloak with a long train with a hooded shoulder cape. The color of it is purple wool for bishops, scarlet silk for cardinals, and red velvet for the pope. The Cassock is a close-fitting, ankle-length robe, the color of which is purple for bishops and scarlet for cardinals.

**8. HER WEALTH IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME**  
(“*decked with gold and precious stones and pearls,*” Rev. 17:4).

This is an accurate description of the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. It also describes literally the gold and jewels with which Rome has decked itself.

Consider this description of the coronation of Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241): “On the day of his coronation he proceeded to St. Peter’s, accompanied by several prelates, and assumed the pallium according to custom; and after having said mass he marched to the palace of the Lateran, COVERED WITH GOLD AND JEWELS. On Monday, having said mass at St. Peter’s, he returned wearing two crowns, mounted on a horse richly caparisoned, and surrounded by Cardinals CLOTHED IN PURPLE, and a numerous clergy. The streets were spread with tapestry, INLAID WITH GOLD AND SILVER, the noblest productions of Egypt, and the most brilliant colors of India, and perfumed with various aromatic odors” (George Waddington, *A History of the Church from the Earliest Ages to the Reformation*, 1834, p. 335).

The crown of Pope Paul II (1464-1471) was “set with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, and jaspers” (Ouseley, *A Short Defence*, 1821, p. 230).

The crown of Pope Julius II was valued at 200,000 ducats or gold coins. That is as much as Pope Paul III gave to Emperor Charles V to finance an entire war against the Protestants in the 16th century (Miller’s *Church History*, chapter 46). It is also the same amount as the entire dowry the king of Spain gave for the marriage of his daughter,

Catherine, to Arthur, Prince of Wales and heir to the British throne in the 16th century.

Rome grew wealthy through tithes and donations that flowed to her from the ends of the earth.

She grew wealthy through the taxes that she levied upon Catholic nations. In 1376 the English Parliament, for example, observed that the taxes paid to Rome amounted to five times as much as those levied by the king (Cushing Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, 1886, p. 457).

She grew wealthy through the sale of clerical offices. The following description of conditions in England in the 13th and 14th and 15th centuries was true throughout Europe: "The pope of Rome was farmer-general of the English Church. He who could pay highest was sure of the place in market, whether it were a country parish, or the Primacy of England; and the buyer must in turn, farm it out in the way which would bring the largest percentage on the cost. The richest prizes fell to Italians, parasites of the pope, some of whom, though unable to speak a word of English, and who had never set foot on English soil, held twenty, thirty, nay, some of them fifty and sixty valuable benefices in the English Church. On the revenues thus obtained they lived in magnificence at Rome, and laid up enormous fortunes, notwithstanding the large yearly sums paid out of them into the papal treasury" (Conant, *Popular History of the Translation*, p. 7).

Rome grew wealthy though rich men joining the monasteries and donating their wealth to the church.

She grew wealthy through the crusades. Not only did the crusaders bring much wealth back and donate it to the Roman Catholic Church, but it was the Catholic Church that provided much of the money for the crusades by loaning money to the crusaders. Though usury was officially forbidden by church law, the Catholic Church had ways to get around this, such as by gaining free use of the crusaders'

lands during the owner's absence (Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, p. 96).

She grew wealthy by the doctrine of masses for the dead, whereby the loved ones of the deceased paid money to the Catholic church to have masses performed to deliver them from purgatory. The wealthy would leave part of their inheritance to Rome for the saying of masses.

She grew wealthy through the sale of indulgences. This is how the popes built St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

She grew wealthy through the Inquisition, because she not only arrested and imprisoned and tortured and burned "heretics" but also confiscated their property.

The wealth of the Catholic Church is still vast. The harlot church is spiritually bankrupt, but amazingly full of material wealth.

**9. HER CUP IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME** (*"having a golden cup in her hand,"* Rev. 17:4).

The only cup that is mentioned in connection with the New Testament church is the cup of the Lord's Supper. In Bible believing churches, this cup merely symbolic and is made of wood or aluminum or glass. But Rome is not satisfied with a lowly ritual that merely symbolizes Christ's death; she has converted it into a glorious pageantry at the heart of which is the transubstantiation of the "host" into the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. For such a pageant a golden cup is more fitting.

Until recent times, Catholic liturgical law required the chalice (the cup of the mass) be made entirely of gold or at least to be gold plated (*Catholic Encyclopedia*).

To this day, the papal chalice is made of gold.

The Roman Catholic Church possesses thousands of gold chalices in its churches around the world.

**10. HER ABOMINATIONS IDENTIFY HER WITH ROME** (*"full of abominations,"* Rev. 17:4).



Indeed, Rome is filled with abominations. Her mass, which she claims is a bloodless re-sacrifice of Christ, is an abomination. The consecrated “host,” which is called the “corporal” and which is worshipped as Christ, is an abomination. Her sacramental salvation, her worship of Mary, her prayers to the saints, her doctrine of purgatory, her love affair with the bones of dead men, the unscriptural claims of the pope, all are abominations before God.

**11. HER ASSOCIATES IDENTIFY HER WITH ROME**  
(*“the Mother of Harlots,”* v. 5)

The Harlot of Revelation 17 is a mother who has daughters that are similar to her in character. They, too, are harlots. The Protestant denominations split off from Rome in the 16th and 17th centuries, though they retained some of her doctrine and practice, such as infant baptism, state churchism, and the allegorical method of Bible interpretation, and in the last 100 years they have apostasied from their former protestant faith and today they are re-affiliating themselves with their Mother.

**12. HER VIOLENCE IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME**  
(*“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,”* Rev. 17:6).

The Roman Catholic Church has murdered millions. No one has ever been able to count the exact total number, but it has been estimated by careful and reputed historians of the Catholic Inquisition that 50 million people were slaughtered for the crime of “heresy” between the A.D. 606 and the middle of the 19th century (John Dowling, *History of Romanism*, 1847, book VIII, chapter 1, footnote 1).

Rome is drunk with the blood of the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Lollards, the Anabaptists, the Baptists, and the Protestants, to name a few.

In the Netherlands alone following the Reformation, multitudes were tormented and destroyed. Consider the

following excerpts from a record of those persecutions dating from the 1520s:

“The history of the Low Countries from this time is so full of martyrdoms, that it is like a gradual extermination of the population. ... The fires were now kindled all over the country, and edict following edict, with increasing severity, kept them burning. It was death to read a page of the scriptures; death to discuss any article of the faith; death to have in one’s possession any of the writings of Luther, Zwingle, or OEcolampadius; death to express a doubt respecting the efficacy of the sacraments, or the authority of the pope. In the year 1536, that good and faithful servant of the Lord, William Tyndale, was strangled and burnt at Vilvordi, near Brussels, for translating the New Testament into English, and printing it in 1535. ... About four hundred churches were thus plundered and defaced in a few days. ... The troops were ordered to be distributed over the distracted country, that the persecuting edicts might be enforced. The Protestants were reduced to great straits; many were put to death, and many fled the country ... In the year 1567 the cruel duke of Alva was sent into the Netherlands with an army of fifteen thousand Spaniards and Italians; and the Inquisition was to put forth all its energies. . The wooden churches were pulled down, and, in some places the beams were formed into a great gallows on which to hang the minister and his flock. [These atrocities against Bible believers were] to be witnessed almost daily in the country for nearly forty years. ... In the year 1567 ‘the council of blood,’ as it was called, held its first sitting. ... Blood now flowed in torrents. ... A new edict was issued, affixing a heavy penalty upon all waggoners, carriers, and shipmasters, who should aid in the emigration of ‘heretics.’ They had resolved that none should escape. ... Upon the 19th of February 1568 a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. ... A proclamation of the king, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to

age, sex, condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed. Three millions of people--men, woman, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines. Under this universal condemnation the reader will see the real spirit of popery, and what all had to expect who did not yield an absolute, though blind submission, to all her idolatries, and superstitions" (Miller's *Church History*, pp. 1002-1008).

Similar atrocities were being committed against Bible believers across Europe and wherever Rome was in power, including South America, Mexico, the Philippines and other parts of Asia,

The persecution is not finished. Unprecedented persecution will be unleashed against those who hold to the Word of God after the final form of the Harlot church appears, supported by the satanic power of Antichrist's government.

**13. HER ASSOCIATION WITH BABYLON OF OLD IDENTIFIES HER WITH ROME** ("*mystery Babylon the great*," Rev. 17:5).

By this name, the final apostate harlot church is connected with the false religion established at Babel in mankind's early history (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9). The Harlot is the final product of Satan's corruption of true religion through the ages. Babel of old typifies the end-times Babylon in the following ways:

There was a man-made unity (Gen. 11:1). Likewise, the keynote of end-times Babylon is "ecumenism."

There was worldly ambition and ingenuity (Gen. 11:4). Likewise, the end-times Babylon glories in man's ability and contrivances. Babylon erects impressive structures and creates an impressive system of religion.

There was rebellion against God's revealed will (Gen. 11:4). God told Noah's family to "multiply and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1, 7), but Babel was a scheme to avoid being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4). Likewise, end-times Babylon is in open rebellion

against the New Testament Scriptures and has replaced the Word of God with human tradition.

There was pride. The founders of Babel said, “Let us make us a name” (Gen. 11:4). End-times Babylon is also proud and haughty, with its impressive cathedrals, its pomp and circumstance, its boasts of apostolic succession, its worldly ways.

There was idolatry. Babel was the beginning of the idolatrous mystery religions. The desire to build a tower to heaven had a religious meaning associated with astrology and idolatry (worship of the sun and moon and stars) (Gen. 11:4; Rom. 1:21-23). Rome also adopted many idolatrous practices, such as the worship of the Queen of Heaven and a mystery mass wherein god is sacrificed on man’s altars.

## Conclusion

In light of these sobering facts, **it is time to be saved.** *“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation”* (1 Thess. 5:8).

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone because of the blood of Christ alone and is without works or sacraments. Jesus paid it all, and He gives salvation directly to the believing sinner. *“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works”* (Rom. 4:4-6).

Dear reader, if you are not truly born again, we urge you to acknowledge and repent of your sin and to trust the Lord Jesus Christ exclusively for eternal salvation. Do not trust your baptism or some other church ritual. Do not trust any Christian service you might be doing. Do not trust that you have been born into a “Christian” home. Do not trust any good works that you believe you have done. Do not trust the ministry of a priest.

Jesus warned, *“Except ye be born again, ye shall not see the kingdom of God.”* That statement was addressed to a very religious man, Nicodemus. The apostle Paul said, *“For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast”* (Eph. 2:8-9). Turn from apostate religion to the resurrected Christ and from a false gospel to the true gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ and be saved before it is eternally too late.

**It is also time to be watching for Christ’s return.** *“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”* (Rom. 13:11).

The Word of God warns that the apostasy that began during the days of the apostles will increase until the formation of the great harlot religion of Revelation 17. We know that the hour is late. We see the ecumenical movement, the Evangelicals and Catholics together movement, the deep penetration of the Roman Catholic Church in the Charismatic movement.

It is time to be spiritually alert and on fire for the Lord and busy in His service.

**It is time to be discerning.** *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”* (Acts 17:11). In these days of spiritual and religious confusion God’s people need to emulate the Bereans more than ever. We need to *“prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (1 Thess. 5:21).

**It is time to be in a strong church.** *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Heb. 10:25). The church is God’s program and it is the place of discipleship, training, fruitfulness, and spiritual protection. It is dangerous to neglect the house of God. And we need to be in a strong Bible-believing church, a church that is not compromising the Word of God, a church that exposes heresy and apostasy and separates from it.

**It is time to warn others.** *“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”* (Jude 22-23). Every born again child of God has a responsibility to preach the gospel and to earnestly contend for the faith and to try to help those who are out of the way.

**It is time to be separated.** *“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”* (2 Tim. 3:5). *“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye*

*receive not of her plagues*” (Rev. 18:4). Biblical separation is not a suggestion; it is a commandment. It is a matter of spiritual protection, for “*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” (Gal. 5:9), and, “*evil communications corrupt good manners*” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Any preacher or church that speaks well of Rome and affiliates with Rome is disobedient to God’s Word and must be avoided. We are sad to say that this includes Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ, Chuck Colson, James Dobson, Elisabeth Elliot, Jerry Falwell, Bill Hybels, D. James Kennedy, the National Association of Evangelicals, J.I. Packer, Luis Palau, Robert Schuller, John R.W. Stott, Joseph Stowell, Wycliffe Bible Translators, the United Bible Societies, Jack Van Impe, Wheaton College, Fuller Theological Seminary, World Vision, Philip Yancy, and Youth for Christ, to mention but a few.

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