



Lies

There are many misunderstandings about what the Catholic Church teaches and does. This page is meant to give brief responses to some common misconceptions (lies). Even if you disagree with the Catholic Church, it is only fair that you hear what she actually claims and why she does so.

The responses are not meant to be complete. Other Web sites provide much more detailed answers. These answers are merely meant to present the reader with a Catholic perspective on the issues.

<p><u>God does not want you to call a priest "father."</u></p> <p><u>Catholics worship Mary.</u></p> <p><u>Catholics confess sins to men, not God.</u></p> <p><u>The Church is invisible.</u></p> <p><u>The Pope is not in the Bible.</u></p> <p><u>The Bread and Wine are just symbols.</u></p> <p><u>Catholics pray to dead people, not God.</u></p> <p><u>We can interpret the Bible without the Church.</u></p> <p><u>God doesn't care what Church you join.</u></p> <p><u>The Catholic Church is a man-made institution.</u></p> <p><u>Papal infallibility is a recent invention of the Catholic Church.</u></p> <p><u>The Assumption of Mary "became" a Catholic belief in 1950.</u></p> <p><u>The Catholic Church added books to the Holy Bible.</u></p> <p><u>The Catholic Church does baptisms improperly because they do not immerse fully.</u></p> <p><u>The Catholic Church does baptisms improperly because they baptize babies.</u></p>	<p><u>The Catholic Church punished Galileo because he thought the earth orbited the sun.</u></p> <p><u>The Bible teaches that the world was made in 7 days.</u></p> <p><u>The Catholic Church changed its teaching on Limbo.</u></p> <p><u>Mary is not the mother of God.</u></p> <p><u>There is no historical evidence that Peter ruled the Church from Rome.</u></p> <p><u>Priestly celibacy is a Catholic invention.</u></p> <p><u>Purgatory is not real because it denies Our Lord's saving work on the Cross.</u></p> <p><u>Catholics violate God's commands against idolatry when they worship statues.</u></p> <p><u>The use of relics is a strange Catholic innovation.</u></p> <p><u>Catholics place the tradition of men over the Bible.</u></p> <p><u>God Can't (fill in the blank)</u></p> <p><u>God is not Substantially Present in the Bible/Sacraments.</u></p> <p><u>God's Love is UNCONDITIONAL.</u></p> <p><u>All you need is a personal relationship with Jesus.</u></p>
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God does not want you to call a priest father.

Matthew 23:8-12 - But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, [even] Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no [man] your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, [even] Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

At a glance this would seem to prohibit the use of the words for father, master, and teacher (rabbi) among Christians. After few moments of thought we would realize that we would no longer have a word to describe a male parent or a teacher. Another possibility might be that Jesus was criticizing the attitude of the Pharisees and telling the future leaders of His Church not to seek worldly honor and power.

Is this possibility supported by Sacred Scripture?

Yes. In following passages the leaders of the early Church refer to themselves and others as "father."

Acts 21:40, 22:1, Romans 4:16-17, 1 Corinthians 4:14-15, 1 Timothy 1:2, Hebrews 12:7-9, Philemon 1:10, 1 John 2:13-14

Obviously, the first generation of Christian leaders did not think that Our Lord had given a literal prohibition on the use of the word "father." Neither do Catholics today.

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Catholics worship Mary.

No, we don't. Faithful Catholics seek to love Our Lord as Mary loves Him and to love Mary as Our Lord loves her.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church-

2083 Jesus summed up man's duties toward God in this saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all

your mind." This immediately echoes the solemn call: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD." God has loved us first. The love of the One God is recalled in the first of the "ten words." The commandments then make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God.

971 "All generations will call me blessed": "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship." The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."

Remember, Our Lord gave His mother to the disciple He loved, to be taken into his home as his mother. Faithful Catholics seek to do the same.

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Catholics confess sins to men, not God.

Catholics do confess their sins to men that have been given the authority to forgive sins. Our Lord gave this authority to the apostles and they passed it on throughout the centuries by giving it to their successors. This power is explicitly shown in the Gospel of John.

John 20:19-23 Then the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them [his] hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace [be] unto you: as [my] Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on [them], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; [and] whose soever [sins] ye retain, they are retained.

Faithful Catholics take these words of Our Lord very seriously. I have confessed my sins to Catholic priests and privately to God. Believe me; it is more difficult to confess to a visible representative of Christ. For me it brings about a deeper reflection upon my sins and a greater commitment to

change. Priests, bishops, and even the Pope go to other priests for confession.

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The Church is invisible.

There is no mention in the Bible that the Church on earth would be invisible. If this were true Our Lord's disciples could not follow his direction for settling disputes between fellow Christians.

Matthew 18:15-17 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear [thee, then] take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

The early Church had visible leadership that has been maintained throughout the centuries. The false idea of an invisible church with no divinely guided leadership is necessary if a person wishes to belong to a church of more recent origins.

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The Pope is not in the Bible.

It is true that the word "pope" is not in the Bible; however, the office of pope is clearly described.

Matthew 16:15-19 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Similar words were used in the book of Isaiah to describe the chief office under the king.

Isaiah 22:20-23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. **And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.** And I will fasten him [as] a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house

When Our Lord spoke to Peter He was describing a similar office in His kingdom.

This is shown again when Jesus gives specific instructions to Peter in Luke 22:32 and John 21:17. Peter's unique office is apparent when reading the first 15 chapters of the book of Acts. We see that Peter directed that Judas' office be filled and the selection of the successor (Acts 1:13-26), led the preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2:14), received the first converts (Acts 2:41), inflicted the first punishment (Acts 5:1-11), excommunicated the first heretic (Acts 5:21), received the revelation to admit gentiles into the Church (Acts 10:44-46), led the first church council (Acts 15:7), and settled the first major dispute (Acts 15:19).

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The Bread and Wine are just symbols.

Catholics take the words of Our Lord at the last supper "this is my body" and "this is my blood" as literal (Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-30) and as the fulfillment of His promise made in the Gospel of John.

John 6:51-66 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso

eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard [this], said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? [What] and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that [time] many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Notice that those present took Him literally and He reinforced this understanding of His words. Our Lord did clarify that it was not His flesh that gave life, but His spirit that is received with it.

Catholics believe that when we receive Holy Communion we receive Our Lord into us and us into Him. We believe that He is fully present in what appears to be bread and wine after the priest says the words of consecration. He is there, body and blood, soul and divinity.

This is a hard teaching for many to accept. It demands great faith in Our Lord's words.

A review of the writings of the early Church fathers supports the Catholic belief in Holy Communion, but there is more. All of the churches that have broken from the Catholic Church throughout the centuries AND are headed by those with true apostolic authority share the same belief of the Catholics. The oldest of these splits occurred in 431 AD (the Assyrian Church). Only the more recent churches (those following the Protestant Reformation), who broke without retaining the continuity of apostolic authority, lost that belief.

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Catholics pray to dead people, not God.

Catholics recognize there is one mediator, Jesus Christ, but like other Christians, they pray for one another and ask each other to do so. Those who have died in Christ are not separated from Him or from His Church. The letter to the Hebrews states that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1). If these witnesses are about us and alive in the presence of Jesus Christ then they can pray for us as can our other Christian brothers and sisters.

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We can interpret the Bible without the Church.

This thought is contrary to what is actually written in Sacred Scripture.

2 Peter 1:19-21 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 3:15-16 And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

So Sacred Scripture is not open to individual interpretation and those who are unlearned and unstable will make serious errors in interpretation. This helps explain why there are so many conflicting differences in belief among Christian churches. No matter what you believe, you can find a church that will agree with you.

If the Bible alone was sufficient to guide the faithful to the Truth about God then the Protestant Reformation would have led to a greater unity of faith. Instead, it led to an ever increasing diversity of faiths and confusion.

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God doesn't care what Church you join.

This would only be true if He did not establish a real, visible Church. There are thousands of different denominations and they disagree on the most fundamental issues...and everything else.

Can non-Christians be saved? Baptists say no. Episcopalians say yes.

Is baptism necessary for salvation? Churches of Christ say yes. Presbyterians say no.

Can salvation be lost? Many non-denominational churches say no. The Church of God in Christ says yes.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church has written down its teachings throughout the centuries and it maintains that what it taught in the first century is the same as its teachings in 2004. Many anti-Catholic Christians challenge this claim. Read the examples of the changes and discuss them with a knowledgeable Catholic. You will see that Catholic consistency has been maintained.

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The Catholic Church is a man-made institution.

The exact opposite is the case. The leaders of the Catholic and Orthodox churches (other apostolic churches that split from the Catholic Church) trace their authority through the successive ordination of their bishops back to the apostles. The other churches lack such historical continuity. The origin of their churches can generally be traced back to the work of one man or a group of men, making them man-made.

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Papal infallibility is a recent invention of the Catholic Church.

Note: Infallibility is defined in section 891 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as:

"The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful - who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. . . . The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium," above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine "for belief as being divinely revealed," and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions "must be adhered to with the obedience of faith." This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.

The teaching is clearly laid out in Sacred Scripture. Our Lord told St. Peter that what he bound on earth was bound in heaven, clearly showing us that he would have authority to speak for God to others on earth (Matthew 16:16-19). Similarly, the leaders of the Church were given the same authority when they speak collectively (Matthew 18:19). Our Lord also promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the Church (John 16:13). Putting the pieces together, it would seem clear that He would guide His Church through those He promised authority. A faithful Catholic simply trusts in those promises.

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The Assumption of Mary "became" a Catholic belief in 1950.

It is true that the Catholic Church formally defined the dogma of the Assumption of Our Lord's Blessed Mother in 1950; however, this was merely to settle questions regarding the detail of the teaching and to promote consideration of the teaching. There are differences of opinion on the details of Mary's assumption. By declaring dogmatically where the line is drawn, we can see more clearly where we can offer differing opinions within the faith. The Assumption was already in the Rosary and paintings (on the web) for at least HUNDREDS of years and is shared by the Orthodox (who split with Catholics 1000 years ago).

Why wasn't it clearly discussed in the writings of the early Church? We don't have most of the writings of the early Church and Church leadership would have only made a formal declaration in the early years if there was an important conflict on the matter.

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The Catholic Church added books to the Holy Bible.

Well, this charge is true. The Catholic Church added *all* of the books to the Bible. The selection of Old Testament books was based on the Septuagint, chosen by Jewish scholars for translation into Greek before the time of Christ. Jewish scholars chose a more limited canon in 90 A.D., almost 60 years after the establishment of the Christian Church and 20 years after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This later Canon was chosen by Martin Luther over 1400 years later and logically would have no authority over Christians.

The Christian Church selected the books of the New Testament following the conclusion of the Roman persecutions in a series of church councils at the order of Pope Damasus in the late fourth century. Great inconsistencies in the books and letters used in the celebration of the Holy Mass were present. It was only by the authority of the leaders of the Church, its bishops, possessing apostolic authority, that such a selection would be accepted....until the Protestant Reformation. Why did the Church select the canon of Scripture? It was so that *ONLY* inspired texts would be used in the Holy Mass.

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The Catholic Church does baptisms improperly because they do not immerse fully.

It is true that Catholic baptisms allow for full immersion or the pouring of water on the head of the individual being baptized. However, the Bible does not prescribe how baptisms are to be performed in such detail. The detail was provided in oral tradition. Some say that the word baptize usually means full immersion; however, in Luke 11:38 a Pharisee criticizes Jesus because he did not baptize (wash) before the meal. Jewish baptize before a meal was limited to washing the hands. Additionally, the oldest images of Jesus' baptism have Jesus standing in the Jordan while John the Baptist pours water over His head with a shell. (Without being immersed, Jesus would have then come up out of the water.)

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The Catholic Church does baptisms improperly because they baptize babies.

St. Paul calls baptism the "circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11-12). Baptism enters the Christian into the new covenant, just as circumcision enters the Jew into the old covenant. Children were circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Likewise, baptism is an appeal to God for His blessing on the baptized. Jesus also blessed infants when parents brought them to Him (Luke 18:15-16) even though His disciples tried to stop them. God can bless infants and it is not wrong to ask for such a blessing.

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The Catholic Church punished Galileo because he disagreed with the Catholic Church teaching that the sun orbited the earth.

Interestingly, the Catholic Church has never declared anything about the motion of the planets. Galileo, as a Catholic scientist, was asked to not declare his theory that the sun was at the center of the universe as a fact accepted by the Church. Likewise, other scientists should not declare that the earth was at the center of the universe as Church doctrine. Galileo disobeyed and seemed to speak with more authority than he had. As it turns out, both theories were incorrect. Neither the sun nor the earth were at the center of the universe. If the Church had accepted either teaching as church doctrine it would have been wrong.

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The Bible teaches that the world was made in 7 days.

The Catholic Church has never declared that interpretation as true. Part of the reason that would be difficult is that chapter one and chapter two of Genesis contain contradictory stories of creation that would have been obvious to attentive ancient readers. This was not a mistake by the inspired authors, but an indication that the literal reading of Sacred Scripture may not correspond to a modern reading.

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The Catholic Church changed its teaching on Limbo. So, the Catholic Church does change its teachings.

The Catholic Church used to call the "place" that the holy souls waited until heaven was opened by Our Lord's Ascension...Limbo. In recent years the Church has referred to what was once called "Limbo" as the "Bosom of Abraham." This "rebranding" points to the abode of Lazarus (Luke 16:22-23) following his death. By using Our Lord's words to describe the "location" the Church points more clearly to the scriptural support for the teaching.

Although not formally accepted as a teaching by the Church, many Catholic theologians had proposed that unbaptized babies may spend eternity in Limbo because they had not received the saving grace of baptism and certainly did not merit hell. Since God's plan for such souls has not been revealed, Catholics could debate that subject.

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Mary is not the mother of God.

All Christians agree that Jesus is God and that Mary is His mother. The problem is that many Protestant Christians are uncomfortable with giving Mary too much honor. The Catholic view is simple. If a woman gives birth to someone, regardless of whether that person is eternal, she is his mother.

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There is no historical/archaeological evidence that Peter ruled the Church from Rome.

While it is true that the Bible neglects to mention the travels of St. Peter early Church fathers agree that Peter was in charge of the church in Rome and died there—Clement, about 70 A.D. - Ignatius of Antioch, about 110 A.D. - Irenaeus, about 190 A.D. - Tertullian, about 200 A.D.

<https://www.catholic.com/tract/was-peter-in-rome>

Additionally, archaeologists have located St. Peter's tomb (and body), which was reported to be directly beneath the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. It had been covered since construction of the old basilica in the fourth century. The reports were confirmed to be true during excavation in the twentieth century.

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Priestly celibacy is a Catholic invention.

The Church has always challenged its leaders to live as Christ did, poor and chaste. In [1 Corinthians 7:32-38](#), St Paul commends those who can, to forego marriage in order to better serve Our Lord. The Church chooses its leaders from those willing to make that sacrifice.

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Purgatory is not real because it denies Our Lord's saving work on the Cross.

Purgatory recognizes the fact that few of us are sufficiently without sin to enter into the presence of God. So, in order to be perfectly holy we must change here on earth or be changed by God after we die. Purgatory is the process for making that change after death and it is only made possible by Our Lord's saving work on the cross. Purgatory is not an alternative to accepting Christ in this life, but a completion of the conversion process. In St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, 3:10-15, he points out that to be saved we must build on the foundation of Christ, but some will build better than others and those that build less worthily "shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

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Catholics violate God's commands against idolatry when they worship statues.

Worshipping statues is a sin. Catholics believe that worshipping anything other than God is idolatry. However, Catholics recognize that statues can be used in worship. Just as the Jews had statues of angels and animals in the temple ([1 Kings 7:25, 29](#)) and placed a bronze serpent on a pole to be looked upon for healing ([Numbers 21:6-9](#)), Catholics use statues and pictures. Protestant Christians likewise have pictures of Jesus and religious stories.

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The use of relics is a Catholic innovation.

Acts 19:11-12 states, "And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them."

Scripture shows that the Catholic concept of relics of saints was alive in the days of the apostles. The Catholic Church never lost this belief or its practice.

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Catholics place the "tradition of men" over the Bible.

In St. Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians 2:15 he stated, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter." This shows the Catholic view that all of the revelation passed on from the apostles has value and is guaranteed by God to be without error. Until the leaders of the early (Catholic) Church selected the canon of Scripture and identified the specific books and letters as be inspired by God faithful followers sometimes considered incorrect writings to be inspired and some inspired writings to be in error. Sacred Scripture is part of the Sacred Tradition, that is, deposit of revelation, passed on from the apostles. Just as Sacred Scripture, properly interpreted does not contradict itself, Sacred Tradition does not contradict Sacred Scripture. Of course, there are many little traditions in the Church, just as there are less authoritative writings. These can change.

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God Can't (fill in the blank)

People make God seem more human when they say things like God cant make someone love Him, but they also make Him seem less divine. Is there really anything that God cannot do, such as square circles and rocks so big He cannot move them? The following article explores how God can do anything, even all of the silly impossibilities we can imagine.

[God Can](#)

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God is not substantially present in the Bible, the sacraments, or the Church.

The removal of God from the Bible, the sacraments, and the Church as well as the removal of divinity from Jesus Christ are all products of the latest heresy, modernism. The following article explores this heresy.

[What is Modernism and How Do I Recognize It?](#)

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God's love is UNCONDITIONAL.

This mischaracterization of God's love is relatively new and is not consistent with Catholic teaching and the Bible. The attached document provides a thorough discussion of this belief.

[When is God's Love Conditional?](#)

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All you need is a personal relationship with Jesus.

This view of Jesus is a result of modernism. It reduces the value of the Church that He established as well as any commands that He has placed on His disciples. This view puts us in charge of determining the nature of the relationship instead of God.

[What is Modernism and How Do I Recognize It?](#)

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