

Why am I a Catholic?

---- Especially written for a Muslim fiend ---

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State of the question: There are many religions in the world; hence the question immediately comes: is there one true religion? And if there is one, which one is it? Why should I believe this one rather than that one?

1/ Some people say that it does not matter what one believes, so long as he believes more or less in a "god". Such position presupposes that God does not care about what we think of him.

This position thus is found among those whose idea of God is that of a vague "energy", power, "principle", etc. with no definite knowledge of us and our thoughts and affections. One finds such position in some Asian religions or rather philosophy.

A similar position is found among some deists, who pretend that yes, there may be a god, but he is so much higher than we are that he does not care about what we think and do.

Thus this indifference of god concerning what we think of Him, either comes from a lack of knowledge in god, or a lack of caring/providence in God: evidently such "god" would not be God at all. Indeed necessarily the Supreme Being possesses all the perfections that are found in the lower ones, which He has made: no one can give what one does not have; so if we find a perfection in the creatures, such perfection necessarily exists in God in a higher degree. Since we find knowledge in the creatures, God possesses necessarily supreme knowledge, of absolutely everything, including all our thoughts. Since it is evident that God is not stupid, He has a wise purpose in all that He has made, and therefore "cares" that each creature reaches its goal according to the mode He has given to each creature.

A god who would ignore our thoughts, or who would not care that we think the truth about Him, would not be the true God. A religion that presupposes such "god" could therefore not be a true religion.

2/ Some religions are man-made, some pretend to be "revealed". Since the very idea of religion is that of a bond between man and God, and God is above us, it is easy to see that man alone is not sufficient to establish such bond: a man-made religion is necessarily deficient. There is need of a God-made religion.

It is quite evident that if there is a true Revelation, i.e. if God, Who cares for us, deigned to "speak" to men (i.e. to manifest the truth about Himself to men), then that religion is "The" true Religion; and there is a duty for all men to believe what God said and to follow the path He has shown. There are several religions that claim such revelation: the Christian religion is the first, then Mohamed with his Coran, and even John Smith with his "book of the Mormons".

Since God cannot contradict Himself, He cannot reveal contradictory revelations: it is evidently impossible that both Islam and the Catholic Church be true together, since the first claims that there are NOT three Persons in God and the second teaches that there ARE three Persons in the One God.

So we are necessarily led to the question: how do we recognise the religion that is really founded by God, to Whom God has really spoken?

Three answers have been given to this: a) the Mormons say that “just pray and you will FEEL that this book of the Mormons is inspired by God.” Most protestant would follow the same approach for their personal interpretation of the Scriptures: they rely on their own judgement, on their own feeling of being right. They do not rely on objective facts independent of themselves.

The flaw of that approach is that it is evidently impossible for God to contradict Himself, but this approach leads to a multiplicity of religions (see the many Protestant sects), each one claiming to “FEEL” that their book is revealed, or that their interpretation of the Book is the right one. One may not rely on such feeling. Some pretend: it is the Holy Ghost who inspires me! But what proof do they offer that the Holy Ghost inspires them rather than the others? None other than their feelings. So they come back at the first place: they rely on their own feelings. This is most unreliable, since it leads to a fundamental inability to find objectively the one true religion.

b) As for Islam, at first, Mohamed himself does NOT give any reason to believe him. Only later, the need of apologetics (especially with Catholics) led some of them to an argument which I will expose below: but that argument is not found in the Coran itself. At first, one should notice that none of the Muslim can point out an answer given by Mohamed to that question.

c) The Christian answer is simple, and solid: the fact (and truth) of the Christian Revelation is proven by several “divine signs” – like a signature of God: objective facts that are the sure mark of a divine origin. The two most important are prophecies and miracles.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only founder of religion who was prophesised hundreds of years before his coming. It is so objectively true that there was a whole nation expecting the coming of the Messiah: the Hebrews. When he would come, where he would come, what he would do, how he would die, and that he would rise again, ascend into heaven, found a church, etc. all that was prophesised in the Old Testament. When He came, He was recognised by some of the Hebrews (the Apostles and first Christians), and was rejected by others. Yet, that very rejection itself had been prophesised! And it was useful in order to “keep the proof-value of the prophecies” as St Augustine explains: if one would say to the Christians, “these prophecies, I don’t believe in them, you made them up afterwards”, the Christians can easily answer: “no, we did not make them up, go to the Jews, they have in their hands the text of the Old Testament, that contains all these prophecies, and you can’t accuse them of having made them up, since they don’t believe in Christ!”

Now this is absolutely unique in the history of religion, and it is a most sticking historical fact. Neither Buddha, nor Mohamed, nor Luther, nor any other founder of religion was so prophesised before his coming.

Moreover, not only was Christ prophesised, but He himself prophesised the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, the spreading of the Church all over the world, the martyrdom of his Apostles, etc.

Not only did he fulfil the prophecies, but He presented the fulfilment of them as proof of his mission: thus He said to the Jews: “Search the scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of Me” (Jn. 5:39).

Not only prophecies, but also miracles are the sure sign of the divine origin of the Christian religion. Already in the Old Testament, Moses did some miracles (the Ten Plagues of Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna in the desert, etc.), Elias and Eliseus also did miracles, but our Lord Jesus Christ did many more than

anyone before Him: even his bitterest enemies could not deny it: "The chief priests therefore, and the Pharisees, gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles?" (Jn. 11:47).

And our Lord Jesus Christ explicitly presents them as sure signs of His mission: "I have a greater testimony than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me" (Jn. 5:36). "Jesus answered them: I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me" (Jn. 10:25).

Moreover, He gave to His Apostles power to do miracles and the gift of prophecy. These gifts which the apostles had in abundance for the establishment of the church are found throughout the history of the Catholic Church in her Saints, to whom God gave the power to do miracles: some did many, some did few, but all of them did some miracles (otherwise they would not have been canonised).

Some of the recent miracles are abundantly documented, such as the miracles at Lourdes in France, or the miracle of Fatima in Portugal, which around 70,000 people witnessed! Even today, it is not difficult to check these documents.

In conclusion, those prophecies and miracles are like the signature of God on our Lord Jesus Christ and on the Church He founded, the Catholic Church.

3/ Some Muslims, in order to answer the above arguments, pretend also a) that Mohamed had been announced in the (Catholic) Scriptures, and b) that the Coran itself is a miracle.

a) They say that the prophecy of the coming of the Paraclete was announcing Mohamed: but such claim is absurd for many reasons. 1/ Because the announce of the coming of the Paraclete was so well fulfilled at Pentecost that nobody was expecting another one... six hundred years later! It is an undeniable fact that when Mohamed came, nobody was expecting him based on such prophecy! Not even Mohamed or the Coran claims that. 2/ That claim to be the Paraclete had already been done by another heretic in the 3rd century, Manes, founder of the Manicheans, and he was fully refuted in such claim by the Church already at the time (some 400 years before Mohamed). 3/ Why would one rely on a prophecy in the Gospel if one rejects other sayings of the Gospel such as concerning the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, as true Son of God? There is a great contradiction to present a prophecy from a book which one rejects on another hand! So the claim of a prophecy does not stand. 4/ Moreover one should add that this is only one, as compared to the many prophecies found in Christianity! One could be mistaken about one, but the many prophecies make like a multiple bond, most solid.

b) Some pretend that the Coran is a miracle, because Mohamed would be an uneducated man who could not have written it, and that it contains a lot of "scientific" knowledge which he could not have had. Hence they conclude that the Coran itself is a miracle. To this claim, there are many answers: 1/ With an argument like this, one could also say that the Gospels, especially that of St John, is a miracle, since St John was an uneducated fisherman and could not have written such lofty text... But John Smith would say the same about the book of Mormons. So it is a very unreliable argument. 2/ Even if one concedes that there may be an origin above human ability, then it could very well be an angel, or even a bad angel: a devil, why not? One still has to prove that such comes from God. But given the violence which a good number of verses of the Coran instil, the likelihood that it comes from the devil becomes even greater! Add to this the immorality of divorce and polygamy, and it becomes a certitude. 3/ Moreover, there are some blunt errors in the Coran, such as the claim that Mary, the mother of Jesus would be the sister of Moses. Though Moses had a sister called Myriam (=Mary), yet he lived more than 1200 years before Jesus and thus his sister could

not be Jesus' mother! Also, the Coran has copied some of the elucubrations of the apocryphal "gospels of the infancy" of Jesus, which the Church had always denounced as being unauthentic and containing falsehoods (the Church had denounced them much before the arrival of Mohamed, thus independently of the Coran).

Moreover, I know several Islamic teachers who claim that they reject miracles... yet they claim the Coran is a miracle! This is a contradiction: if God can do one miracle (the Coran – if it is one), then why not others? If one needs no miracle, then why claim the Coran is one?

4/ The comparison of the founders also makes one incline definitely in favour of our Lord Jesus Christ over Mohamed (and all the other founders of religion).

Mohamed had twelve wives, while he allows "only" four to his disciples. Now this is certainly not a model of chastity! Why would the wife be obliged to be faithful to her husband if the husband is not bound to be faithful to his wife and may take another one? When God did the first marriage, between Adam and Eve, he made the marriage to be between one man and one woman; and in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ restored marriage to its original sanctity and perfection. Moreover, Mohamed permits divorce – hence practical adultery: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery" (Lk. 16:18). Some have four wives... and not always the same! And Mohamed does not prohibit this: such lax morals certainly do not pertain to a religion of the Holy God! "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16).

On the contrary, our Lord Jesus Christ practiced perfect chastity, "consecrated virginity", which befits the Kingdom of God, a spiritual kingdom! "God is a spirit; and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Not only did He practice this perfect chastity, but His apostles practiced perfect continence from the time they followed Christ (they "left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for [His] name's sake" Mt. 19:29). And many from the very early Church consecrated their virginity to Christ (see the four daughters of Philip, Acts 21:9). His own Mother is a Virgin Mother, perpetually virgin before, during and after the birth of Christ! That evidently sets Him above all other founders of religion.

Mohamed extended his religion by the sword. Christ never used the sword: He sent His disciples "as lambs among wolves" (Lk. 10:3). And yet, those lambs converted the wolves, not by killing others, but by being martyred by others! What a contrast with the Muslim "martyrs" who put explosives around their waist and blow themselves up in the midst of an innocent crowd, killing innocents and their own selves. The Catholic martyrs did much better: they gave testimony to Christ in front of the persecutor and remained at peace in front of the utmost danger (tortures, etc.), their heart being fixed in God and filled with inner consolations (e.g. the little Agnes, martyred at 13yrs, who was the only one not weeping, while attendants themselves were afraid and wept for her). The Christian martyrs were really a sign that God was working in them, giving them both fortitude to persevere in the confession of Faith in Christ up to death, and also the meekness and charity to pray for their persecutors, as did St Stephen and many others.

Even in reading the Coran, one would find that the Coran puts Jesus above Mohamed: then one should really read Jesus' own life and words in the Gospel! There, one will see that Jesus is not merely a prophet, but that He is essentially The Saviour, and that "neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Not Mohamed is the Saviour,

but Jesus is the Saviour. And He will come at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead: again, it is not Mohamed who will judge us, but Jesus!

Jesus gave His life for our salvation, since by His Sacrifice He paid the price of our salvation, and cleanses us in His Blood. Then He rose again from the dead, to manifest His victory over sin and over death, and to make us participant to that victory: we will also rise with a glorious body IF we are united with our Lord Jesus Christ in His Passion, in dying to sin and living unto God. Mohamed did nothing similar.

5/ Another very important element that proves that the religion founded by our Lord Jesus Christ is the one true religion, the Catholic Church: it is the fruitfulness of that religion is producing Saints. There have been thousands and thousands of most holy men, who became so holy by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: from the apostles through the martyrs, the holy Fathers of the Church, the monks and nuns, the holy kings and holy beggars (thus from all kind of social ranks!), the holy elderly and the holy children, etc. And there were such saints at all periods of the Church, without ceasing. One looks at the Protestants, at the Muslim, at the Buddhists and in vain searches for anything similar. The Saints are indubitably the most beautiful testimony in favour of our Lord Jesus Christ. The works of God in souls is more beautiful than the work of God is merely material creatures.

And above all of the saints, the very Mother of Jesus, the blessed Virgin Mary, in whom God cumulated all his choicest gifts, and thus is the Immaculate! Her humility, her fidelity, her charity, and all her virtues have been praised and are still praised by millions every day! All this unto the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

6/ Finally, the very essence of the Christian life is a life of friendship with God, as children of God. The essence of the Muslim life is that of servitude, "submission". Now obedience to God's law is required of the true Christians (the Catholic) but it is the loving obedience of a child, not the submission of a slave without love. This is the one "attribute" that the Muslims do not have: "God is Charity"!

The very ultimate end that is promised to the Catholic is much higher than the paradise promised by Mohamed, which is an earthly paradise of earthly and sensual pleasures, which only proves that what Mohamed really loved is not God, but earthly things, power and pleasures. The ultimate end promised by Christ is what is described by St John: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth not us, because it knew not him. Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is. And every one that hath this hope in him, sanctifieth himself, as he also is holy" (1 Jn. 3:1-3). We are "sons of God" by adoption, not by nature: our Lord Jesus Christ alone is the "only-begotten Son" (Jn. 1:18) by nature, who alone could say: "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). But He, the Son of God, became the "Son of man", so that the children of men could become the children of God (by adoption), "partakers of the Divine nature" as St Peter writes (2 Pet. 1:4). And the joy that will be our everlasting joy is not a material joy, but rather the vision of God, "beatific vision", which will make that we will rejoice in God, of God, not taking our joy in creature but in the Creator, so much above!

We ought to pray much for the conversion of Muslims – but it is not easy, because there is a very great social pressure against them: Islam keeps them in fetters, in fear if they convert to our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet

there, and only there will they find the One true Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, eternal Son of the eternal Father and born in time of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Some had the courage to make the step – and to suffer for it – like Joseph Fabelle, an Iraqi Muslim who converted and had much to suffer as he wrote in his book “the price to pay”. Already now he tells of the joy he finds in Christ, who is ALL for him (in an interview in French/Arabic on YouTube). This shows a certain contrast between those who convert from Islam to the Catholic faith: they do that clearly for God’s sake, in spite of much earthly opposition and dangers; and on the other hand those who convert from the Catholic faith to Islam, who do that often for earthly reasons, e.g. marriage, or money (Omar Bongo, the president of Gabon was a Catholic catechumen, who became Muslim in order to belong to the OPEC – i.e. the Muslim group of countries producing petrol...), or simply fear...

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!