

Shayla: Can a Catholic be saved?

Extended question: My boss is a dedicated Catholic but she talks about Jesus as Master and King. She's modest and says she wants to be as Christ-like as possible.

Meforshim:

The short answer is "yes...but." We share a lot of common ground with our Catholic friends. We agree that

- There is life after death
- There is right and wrong
- What we do in this life affects the next
- There is a literal heaven and hell
- There is a God
- God is a Trinity
- The Holy Spirit is God
- Jesus is God incarnate
- Jesus was born of a virgin
- Jesus died to save us of our sins

There are more that we could go into but you get the idea. With the knowledge listed here it would be possible for someone to get saved while in the Catholic Church. After all, Martin Luther was saved while in the Catholic Church and he never left it. However, in rejecting the corruption of their doctrine of salvation by works,¹ he became the brunt of their constant persecution.

So, the "but" part is that they can't necessarily be a good Catholic, a knowledgeable Catholic, one that holds to everything the Roman Catholic Church says and get saved.

For example, the Bible teaches that Christ does not offer Himself repeatedly, as the Old Covenant sacrifices were

- **Hebrews 9:25-28 HCSB** He did not do this to offer Himself many times, as the high priest enters the sanctuary yearly with the blood of another. (26) Otherwise, He would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now He has appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (27) And just as it is appointed for people to die once--and after this, judgment-- (28) so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.
- **Hebrews 10:1-3 HCSB** Since the law has *only* a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual form of those realities, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year. (2) Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once purified, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? (3) But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.
- **Hebrews 10:12 HCSB** But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.
- **Hebrews 10:14 HCSB** For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

¹ prayers to the dead, good works, burning candles, baptism and marriage within the Church, saying the rosary, etc.

- [Hebrews 10:18 HCSB](#) Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

Contrary to this clear Scriptural teaching, good Catholics have to believe that the Mass is a "*propitiatory sacrifice*" that takes away sin and that in it "*the same, Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.*"² Vatican II states, that through Catholic liturgy, "*especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, the work of our redemption is accomplished (i.e., is an ongoing process)*"³ One cannot hold that belief while simultaneously believing that the work of our redemption was accomplished once for all by Christ on the cross, as so many scriptures clearly state.⁴

If your boss believes her salvation is provided only through grace by faith in Jesus Christ, she could be saved. However, if she accepts the full sweep of Catholic dogma, that's not possible because they have cluttered up the simplicity of salvation with a works/righteousness system.

Now let's be clear, that particular problem is not unique to the Catholic Church. It is the same problem that we find in Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and even an Adonaic congregation like ours! The tendency to replace the simplicity and perfection of salvation by grace through faith in the Lordship of Jesus the Messiah is very strong and must be constantly guarded against.

Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life⁵ and is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes⁶ and is the ONLY mediator between God and Man⁷ can be saved – I don't care what denomination you're in.

² Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1367

³ Flannery, p.1

⁴ Hebrews 9:12; Ephesians 1.-7; Colossians 1:14, etc

⁵ John 14:6

⁶ Romans 1:16

⁷ 1 Timothy 2:5