

"EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS"

(Outside the Church there is no salvation) (J.F.M.H. 2.5.2019)

The arguments for religion do not compel anyone to believe, just as arguments for good conduct do not do not compel anyone to obey. Obedience is the consequence of willing to obey, and faith is the consequence of willing to believe; we may see what is right, whether in matters of faith or obedience by ourselves, but we cannot will what is right without the grace of God. Here is the difference between our exercises of reason and arguments for the truth of religion. It requires no act of faith to assent to the truth that two and two make four; we cannot help assenting to it, and hence there is no merit in assenting to it; but there is merit in believing that the Church is from God; for though there are abundant reasons to prove it to us, yet we can, without an absurdity, quarrel with the conclusion. 'Faith' is not a mere conviction of reason; it is a firm assent, it is a clear certainty, greater than any other certainty; and this is wrought in the mind by the grace of God; and by it alone. As then men may be convinced and not act according to their conviction, so may they may be convinced and not believe according to their conviction. They may confess that the argument is against them, and that they have nothing to say for themselves, and that to believe is to be happy; and yet, after all, they cannot believe; they do not know why, but they cannot. They acquiesce in unbelief, and they turn away from God and His Church. Their reason is convinced, and their doubts are moral ones, arising in their root, from a fault of their will. We may complain that it is not clearer, we may suspend our assent, we may have doubts about it, if we will; and that grace alone can turn a bad will into a good one. (Discourse to Mixed Congregations, on Faith and Doubt, No. XI) (Cardinal John Henry Newman)

There is a difference of kind, between 'Belief' and 'Faith'. This difference is often seen in the doubts of people who have given up the practice of their Faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church goes into much greater detail to show the answer to their questions, than is possible in this talk, should be read by all. The command of Christ to the Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations implies a corresponding obligation on the part of all men to hear and obey them, and, therefore, to become part of His Church "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. **He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.**" (Mark XVI, 15, 16) No one therefore who on coming to the true Church, refuses to join it can be saved. Neither can they be saved, if, having once entered the Church, they forsakes it through heresy or schism: "as for a man that is factious, (the sense here is a heretic), after admonishing him once or twice have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self condemned. (Titus III.10) The Church is the mystical body of Christ, and he who severs himself from the Church, severs himself from Christ, and cannot be saved, for in Christ alone is salvation. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in Me he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. (John XV. 5,6)

(Extract from "Singulari Quadam" of 1854 by Pope Pius IX)

It is to be held as a matter of faith that no one can be saved outside the Apostolic Roman Church. It is the only ark of salvation and anyone who does not enter it must sink in the flood. But it is equally to be held as certain that those who live in ignorance of the true religion, if such ignorance be invincible, will not be held guilty in the eyes of the Lord.

(Extract from a letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston - 1949) "

Among those things that the Church has always preached, and will never cease to preach, is also that infallible article by which we are taught "**outside the Church there is no salvation**". This dogma is, however to be understood in the sense in which the Church herself understands it.... In the first place the Church teaches that in this we are dealing with a most strict *command* of Jesus Christ.... But among the Commands of Christ not the lowest place is occupied by that whereby we are ordered to be incorporated by baptism in the mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, and to adhere to Christ and his vicar through whom he himself governs the Church in a visible manner. Nobody therefore, will be saved who, knowing the Church to have been divinely instituted by Christ, refuses to submit to her or who refuses obedience to the Roman Pontiff, the vicar of Christ on earth.

But the Saviour did not only give the commandment that all peoples should enter the Church, he also established that the Church is the *means of salvation* without which no one is able to enter the kingdom of heavenly glory. In His infinite mercy, God wished that the effects of this necessary means of salvation, ordained by divine ordinance, but not by intrinsic necessity to (man's) final end, could also be obtained in certain circumstances when they are applied only *in voto* or by desire. Which we see defined in clear words by the Council of Trent concerning both the sacrament of regeneration and that of penance. The same must be said, in its way, about the Church as a general aid to salvation. For someone to obtain eternal salvation it is not always demanded that he is in fact incorporated as a member of the Church, but what is absolutely required is that he should adhere to it by wish and desire. This wish (*votum*) need not always be explicit, as in the case of catechumens, but where a man labours under invincible ignorance God also accepts an *implicit wish*, as it is called, for it is contained in that good disposition of the soul whereby a man wishes to conform his will to the will of God."

(The Apostolic Declaration 'Dominus Jesu')

"Above all else, it must be firmly believed that "the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of FAITH and BAPTISM (cf. Mk16:16; Jn 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door". This doctrine must not be set against the universal salvific will of God (cf. 1 Tim 2:4); "it is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this salvation."

. Dear Christ, because of your love and mercy, we pray for all you came on earth to save.