

Teaches Counterfeit of Biblical Trinity

By Richard Bennett

The Pope's visit to Australia for World Youth Day '08 was highlighted with his arrival aboard a luxury motor yacht in Sydney Harbor, an indigenous dance welcome and the flames of countless torches borne aloft by young people well into the night. Benedict XVI gave passing attention to his own political problems with an appropriately sorrowful condemnation of sexual abuse committed by Australian priests. Later he actually met with four of their victims, each of whom was carefully screened from a very large number of complainants. It is difficult to believe that many of those not included would have been so deferential in audience. "Pedophiles cannot be priests," the Pope declared in a bald acknowledgment of the sexual abuse crisis that has overwhelmed his Church. This was inherently an admission by the Supreme Pontiff of past and present failure to confront the principal cause of the wickedness and moral degradation that has disgraced Catholicism. That cause surely is the unnatural scourge of priestly celibacy imposed by Rome on its clergy for so many centuries, the dreadful consequences of which were for so long successfully hidden from the world. It is ironic that the Pope, decked in all the splendor that is so alluring to the young, would use the occasion of World Youth Day to speak so deceptively to Catholic youth—those of the age most often the targets of sexual abuse.

However there has not been even the slightest hint of acceptance from the Vatican that the contemporary nightmare of child abuse in the Roman Catholic Church has any connection to Rome's anti-biblical teachings on forbidding marriage to its priesthood while laying on these same men mandatory celibacy. Nor has there been any acknowledgement that historically this has been an age old plague particularly of the Church of Rome. Even worse is the Pope's continuing refusal to accept any correlation between institutionally enforced celibacy and sodomy. However, Donald Cozzens, a well known Catholic priest and former rector of a leading at St. Mary's Seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, stated in his book on the priesthood, "At issue at the beginning of the twenty-first century is the growing perception—one seldom contested by those who know the priesthood well—that the priesthood is becoming or already is a gay profession....Gay seminarians are likely to feel at home and at ease in a seminary with a significant gay population."¹ The Pope's apologies in Sydney, his meeting with four victims, and his statement that pedophiles cannot be priests, were nothing more than public relations' shams, blind denials of the harsh reality that sexual misconduct, pedophilia, and rampant perversion among the Roman Catholic clergy has been documented worldwide. Nevertheless, on Tuesday July 15, 2008, the Pope conducted the opening Mass of his visit alongside 26 cardinals, 400 bishops, and 4,000 priests. It was estimated that 143,000 Catholic pilgrims were assembled at Barangaroo near Darling Harbor. One news account reported "a wave of optimism sending pilgrims into an excited frenzy."

One of the Pope's important addresses was given to a gathering of young people at the nighttime vigil which took place on Saturday, July 19, 2008 at the Randwick Racecourse. The presentation began with exuberant words about the Holy Spirit. Pope Benedict then exhorted them, "Accept into your hearts and minds the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit! Recognize and believe in the power of the Spirit in your lives! ...We recalled how in the great gift of baptism

¹ Donald B. Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection of the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) p. 107, 135

we, who are made in God's image and likeness, have been reborn, we have become God's adopted children, a new creation."²

The Pope's words about being reborn in baptism were totally false. Being "reborn by baptism," is official Roman Catholic dogma³, but it is biblically dishonest and is at odds with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. He told his disciples that, "*he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*"⁴ Spiritual life is not a product of an institutional ritual but a work of God the Holy Spirit in His sovereign power. A living personal faith is an outcome of a genuine new birth.⁵ Individual personal faith or trust is what the Lord requires. This faith, given by God's grace, brings the forgiveness of sins, as souls believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the new birth unto everlasting life. As the Apostle Paul clearly preached, "*be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.*"⁶ In believing on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, one has everlasting life and the forgiveness of sins. Nevertheless, at this same event some 300,000 young Catholics were told to have their sins forgiven by confessing into the ear of a priest, in what was deemed to be the "world's largest confessional."⁷ Up to 1,000 priests heard the sins of the young people and dispensed forgiveness at 250 locations. Additionally, the Pope also granted the medieval decree of indulgences, discredited by Martin Luther in the 16th century. The Vatican's words explaining this were, "Those who 'gather at Sydney, Australia, in the spirit of pilgrimage' to participate in celebrations for 23rd World Youth Day, will be able to receive a full or plenary indulgence, the decree says."⁸

Darlene Zschech and the Hillsong group performed while the Pope conducted the papal Mass on the last day. The Mass was presented as a continuation of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. The consecrated host was claimed to become Christ Himself and was worshiped during the Mass. Zschech led the Hillsong that performed during the ritual re-sacrifice of Christ and also while the traditional Stations of the Cross were carried out. The 14 Stations of the Cross, presented to the youth and all the pilgrims, allegedly depicted Christ's trial and crucifixion using man-made images of Jesus Christ that are strictly forbidden in the Bible. Several of the Stations used have no scriptural warrant. According to Catholic tradition, Christ supposedly fell down three times, met with Mary on the way to the cross, had His face wiped by a woman named Veronica, and was taken down from the cross and laid in Mary's arms. The entire drama was a masterfully deceptive meld of fiction and biblical history designed to reinforce a worthless papal tradition while attracting interest and praise across the world. All of this is simply fictitious and intended to teach papal traditions while attracting interest and praise across the world. All the major news media photographed the Pope magnificently dressed in all his glory, while Jesus Christ the Lord was reduced in the Station of the Cross, to the dead Christ in the arms of Mary, with absolutely no hint of His glorious Person, boundless might, and position as Lord of Lords and King of

² www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/july/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080719_vigil_en.html 7/22/2008

³ "Through baptism men and women are freed from sin, are reborn as children of God, and, configured to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated in the [Catholic] Church." *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 849

⁴ John 5:24

⁵ John 6:63, I Peter 1:23

⁶ Acts 13:32

⁷ http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/pope_australia_confessions_dc 7/22/2008

⁸ <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=13147> 7/22/2008

Kings, presently seated at the right hand of God the Father. The spectacular events were, at times, augmented with the mystical songs of Darlene Zschech and the Hillsong group. This was one of the many worldly attractions at the Sydney papal gathering that entertained the youth and pilgrims present while drawing admiration from across the world.

Investigative prototype

To understand fully what happened at Sydney and to fairly evaluate the dogmas of the Papacy in general, the doctrines of Catholicism must be brought to the plumb line of the Bible alone. In the Bible, the Lord God glorifies the essential properties of His nature as the only eternal spring of salvation for sinners. The sole way of salvation presented by the Triune God is by His grace through faith in His own work, that of the Son, as Redeemer.⁹ So, first, there is the sovereign power, grace, goodness, and love of the Father toward a lost soul.¹⁰ Second, these same divine qualities are in Jesus Christ as Mediator to give eternal life to the redeemed.¹¹ Finally, the Holy Spirit applies these grants of life, power, grace, and mercy by regenerating, indwelling, justifying and sanctifying the believer. Thus, the ineffable glory of the nature of God, in three distinct persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is exhibited in the salvation of sinners.¹²

These divine and unique features of the Triune God's salvation of souls are consistently negated by Catholic dogma and the spurious substitutions the Papacy makes in place of the three Persons and the work of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although it formally denies this, Papal Rome presents itself as a carnal alternative to the divine Persons and work of the Holy Trinity. In the place of God the Father, Papal Rome substitutes its Pope, calling him "Holy Father." In place of the Person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, it substitutes its sacraments. For the Holy Spirit, it substitutes its priests. These three substitutions amount to nothing less than total blasphemy.

The Trinity functions first by the Father's sovereign power

In Scripture, the sovereign, gracious, all wise and loving government of the Father is proclaimed. He is the one "*who worketh all things according to the purpose of his own will...*"¹³ Therefore, the Lord God accomplishes His design in all things, whatever impotent opposition man or devil may purpose against Him. He rules all things according to His sovereign will. As His written Word proclaims, "*and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?*"¹⁴

In order to believe on Jesus Christ, it is absolutely necessary that sinners first be drawn by the Father to the Son. Thus, the Lord Jesus instructed us that, "*no man can come to me,*

⁹ "*For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" Ephesians 2: 8-9

¹⁰ "*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*" Ephesians 1:4-6

¹¹ In the Lord's own words, "*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*" John 17:2-3

¹² Psalm 18:2, Isaiah 12:2 Isaiah 45:22

¹³ Ephesians 1:11

¹⁴ Daniel 4:35

*except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*¹⁵ No baptism, absolution, sacraments, extreme unction or last rites will ever assist one sinner to stand before God. The Father must withdraw him from the lure of the world and the enticements of Satan and draw him to His Son.

The Papal substitution for the Father's sovereign power

In Roman Catholicism, the Pope is officially presented as the Pontiff who has “full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.”¹⁶ Thus, the Church of Rome attributes to her Pontiff both the sovereign rule and moral rights of God Himself. Let us make no mistake: through all of its history the Papacy has persistently and arrogantly assumed and appropriated to itself the prerogatives of the Almighty Triune God over His creatures. During the centuries of the Holy Roman Empire, successive popes enforced the Church of Rome's power and authority by the terrors of the Inquisition. Yet, then and now, in spite of the Pope's high-sounding declaration of full, supreme, and universal primacy he is powerless to draw one single soul to Christ Jesus and to true Christianity. Consequently, it has always been necessary for the Pope to offer counterfeit substitutes to replace the drawing power of God the Father. Three such substitutes are the empty ritualistic chanting, reverential worship and mysticism spearheaded by the Catholic Mary. Concerning this fictitious Mary, the Pope officially states, “Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.”¹⁷ Quite astonishingly, even for Rome, the Pope also exalts this “Mary” as “the All Holy One.”¹⁸

It is no surprise that the Pope also claims to possess the authority of infallible teaching. As papal thinking goes, an infallible Pope can exercise his presumed spiritual control over the minds of his followers, who are enslaved to this papal substitute for God. Ostensibly it is the Roman Catholic “Holy Father” who demands this submission. Thus, Vatican law can dictate, “The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful...he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such.”¹⁹ But infallibility is a natural attribute of Deity alone. Thus, as the Apostle Paul states “... *let God be true, but every man a liar.*”²⁰ In direct opposition to the Father's sovereign power, the Vatican usurps the titles of the Sovereign God and “authoritatively” calls its pretender Pontiff “Holy Father”²¹ and “Most Holy.”²²

In ordinary life, when a Catholic begins to consider his salvation before God, he thinks of his Church. Since the Catholic Church offers what it calls “salvation,” the end result is that Catholics first and foremost believe and depend upon the keystone of papal triune power, the Pontiff. A recent example of Catholics looking first to the Pope for spiritual blessings was the acceptance of “full or plenary indulgences” obtained from him at Sydney. The official teaching

¹⁵ John 6:44

¹⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Ed. (Wash DC: US Catholic Conf., 1994, 1997) Para 882

¹⁷ *Catechism*, Para 494

¹⁸ *Catechism*, Para 2677 “By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the ‘Mother of Mercy,’ the All Holy One.”

¹⁹ *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English ed., New English Transl. (Canon Law Society of America, 1989) Can. 749

²⁰ Romans 3:4

²¹ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Broderick; ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1976) p. 217.

²² Henry Denzinger, ed., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*. Tr. by Roy J. Deferrari from the 30th Ed. of Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) #649

relating to these reads as following, “Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.”²³

The Trinity functions in salvation by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

In Scripture, the covenant of grace is between God and Jesus Christ. God in His role as Father chose His people in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Jesus Christ in the role of Mediator took upon Himself flesh to be the sacrifice for the sins of those whom the Father had given to Him.²⁴ Christ Jesus lived under the Law the perfect life and died the perfect death on the cross. Thus He could cry from the cross, “*It is finished.*”²⁵ The full payment for the sins of His people was finished—once and for all time.²⁶ Thus the New Testament proclaims, “*Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,*”²⁷ “*and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*”²⁸ It is by His grace alone that we are made acceptable before the All Holy God. “*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.*”²⁹ “*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.*”³⁰ From this fullness He abundantly gives all that are His own people “*grace for grace.*” We have received a gift that is so great, so rich, so invaluable that it is spoken of with emphasis, “*grace for grace.*” The grace we receive from Christ is personal. It is from Him and in Him, by the Father’s love and through the working of the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, the blessed Savior is represented as the fullness of God abounding in grace, and possessing in Himself all that is necessary to fill His people with truth, grace, and love.³¹

The Papal substitution for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

In Roman Catholicism, the concept of “grace” is totally different. Papal Rome declares that grace is deposited in the Church. Nowhere does the Bible teach this. Papal Rome officially teaches, “It is in the Church that ‘the fullness of the means of salvation’ has been deposited. It is in her that ‘by the grace of God we acquire holiness.’”³² A bizarre consequence of such a teaching is the claim that the Church of Rome itself can forgive sins. Thus, she officially proclaims, “There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest.”³³ The “deposited grace” of Papal Rome is claimed to be in her sacraments. They are proclaimed as “necessary for salvation.”³⁴ Thus, we have the appalling pretense at Sydney when 300,000 young Catholics went to have their sins forgiven in the world’s largest confessional. This was another example of the age-old temptation of looking to magical

²³ *Catechism*, Para 1498

²⁴ John 17:2-4; Philipians 2: 6-8; Ephesians 1:4-7

²⁵ John 19:30

²⁶ Hebrews 9:22b—28.

²⁷ John 1:17

²⁸ John 1:16

²⁹ Hebrews 7:25

³⁰ Colossians 1:19

³¹ Ephesians 1:23; 3:19; Colossians 1:19; 2:9-10

³² *Catechism*, Para. 842

³³ *Catechism*, Para. 982

³⁴ *Catechism*, Para. 1129, “The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation.”

rituals and physical substances to obtain life. Such unbiblical teachings come under the eternal curse of perverting the Gospel of Christ.³⁵

Counterfeiting of the power of the Holy Spirit

The only way of escaping the wrath of God against sin is by the power of the Holy Spirit who applies the Lord Christ Jesus' finished work to the individual God is calling out of darkness. Concerning the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord proclaimed, "*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*"³⁶ The Holy Spirit convicts of sin as He makes the sinner realize his lost condition and brings him to sense his need of Christ's righteousness. The Holy Spirit alone can impart spiritual life to the soul and supernatural light to the mind. Therefore, the Lord Himself proclaimed, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"³⁷ What He calls being "*born again,*" the Lord establishes as a standard, "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"³⁸ The Lord God saves sinners gloriously, "*according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*"³⁹ True believers are "*born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"⁴⁰ The Spirit of God's unique work in applying Christ's redemption to the sinner is utterly clear and profound. The work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to bring sinners to Christ. In all of this, the Holy Spirit is sovereign. Because there is a direct connection between the redemption of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is blasphemy to claim divine power for papal priests. This, however, is the counterfeit that Rome presents. Formally she states, "Priests have received from God a power that he has given neither to angels nor to archangels... God above confirms what priests do here below."⁴¹ By delegating such patently false authority to its priests, the Papacy deceives and misleads millions of its followers.

For example by sprinkling a little water on the head of a child, its priest claims to remove the guilt of original sin and regenerate a soul.⁴² A comforting whisper from a priest in the confessional box gives assurance of absolution from sin, but may be leaving a person to face the reality of eternal damnation. In like manner, by saying a few words over a piece of bread, a priest is bound to blasphemously claim to create the very flesh, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ.⁴³ "The host" produced by the priest's words is believed to separate the sinner from his sin.⁴⁴ Thus, the Holy Spirit's work in separating souls from the habits of sin is entirely subverted. Roman Catholic baptism and confession are a counterfeit currency, worthless toward God and injurious to sinners. The recent example of this was although the Pope so profusely praised the work of the Holy Spirit at Sydney with words; nonetheless, his deed was to send the young people to the 1,000 priests to obtain forgiveness. This was most serious, for "*...whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this*

³⁵ "*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*" Galatians 1:9

³⁶ John 16:8

³⁷ John 3:3

³⁸ John 3:6

³⁹ Titus 3:5

⁴⁰ John 1:13

⁴¹ *Catechism*, Para. 983

⁴² *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 849

⁴³ *Catechism*, Para. 1413

⁴⁴ *Catechism*, Para. 1393

world, neither in the world to come.”⁴⁵ Although Pope Benedict made more than fifty apparently favorable references to the Holy Spirit in his address, by then sending the young people to priestly confession he denied the power and usurped the role of the third person of the Trinity. This is consistent with the claims of successive popes since the eighth century, for they have absurdly and blasphemously called themselves “The Vicar of Christ” in place of the true substitute for Christ, the Holy Spirit, to whom the Lord Jesus entrusted the universal care of souls.

Vatican’s triune counterfeit answered

This is a clear pattern of the Vatican’s fictitious alternative to the redemptive work of the Triune God. It imitates the Father’s supreme, universal, and sovereign control, by claiming such dominion for its “Holy Father.” It sets aside Christ Jesus’ grace as Redeemer by presenting its worthless sacraments in His place. It attempts to rob God the Spirit of His peculiar work as the Sanctifier by attributing His power to its own flawed and sinful priests. It is time for those who really love the Lord and the truth of His Bible to stand up and be counted. We are commanded by the Lord not only to contend for the faith once given to the saints; but also to separate from those who have compromised that faith. “*Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the LORD.*”⁴⁶ The commandment to share the Gospel is laid on those of us who call ourselves biblical Christians. To uphold His Gospel of truth based on His written Word is our great commission!

Concluding Memo

Church history reveals again and again how often the young and the unwary have been deceived. In Sydney, Australia, on World Youth Day 2008, the world witnessed this very occurrence as so often in former days. How adeptly the Pope presented to these spiritually empty young people an aura of order, of antiquity, and of splendor so unknown in their casual blue jeans world. But how utterly destructive is the heretical message that the Pope in the midst of his own transient glory brings to these poor souls who stumble about in darkness. It was as if we were witnessing the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “*For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God....I will be like the most High.*”⁴⁷ There is a remarkable resemblance between this declaration and the description used by the Apostle Paul of the man of sin, “*who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God...showing himself that he is God.*”⁴⁸ Like those who preceded him, the present Pope consistently insists on being called “Holy Father,” “Most Holy,” and “His Holiness.” Such titles apply solely to God. God is the only Being whose very nature is holy.⁴⁹ The Pope at Sydney was again attempting to establish his righteousness and glory as the “Holy Father”. As the Lord exposed the Pharisees for trying to establish their own righteousness and glory so the true believers today ought to oppose the Pope’s apostate system. The salvation of many is involved. The Lord faced off the fanatically devout Pharisees with a very strong word. They were looking to their own traditions and self-righteousness as ground for acceptance with God. Because they did not believe that the Lord Jesus was the Savior, He confronted them with the words, “*if you*

⁴⁵ Matthew 12:32

⁴⁶ II Corinthians 6: 17

⁴⁷ Isaiah 14:13, 14

⁴⁸ II Thessalonians 2:4

⁴⁹ Revelation 15: 4, 1Samuel 2:2.

believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.”⁵⁰ Like the Pharisees, present-day Catholics look in faith to the Roman papal system with its deceptive rituals and to its Pope. If anyone continues to recognize the Pope as “Holy Father,” he is in fact denying the true Father and the Son.”⁵¹ He who persists in his sins will likewise die in his sins. The Lord Christ Jesus died in place of the true believer in Him. His life and finished sacrifice alone are the ransom for the believer. *“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*⁵² Jesus Christ was the supreme example of one who manifested true greatness. He who is God’s Messiah, *“the Son of man,”* might well have asserted His right to be ministered by men. Instead He came to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. This was the price demanded by the all holy God in order that justice might be satisfied in the forgiveness of sins. As a result of this payment, the believer is freed from sin and given everlasting life, *“for the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*⁵³ Since the wages of sin is like payment for work, it is being justly threatened, *“the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”*⁵⁴ God inflicts anything that was threatened. Death stands opposed eternal life, and shows that one is as enduring for eternity as the other. The gift of God is not what is due to the believer; but the sheer love, mercy and grace of God, *“for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*⁵⁵ *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*⁵⁶ ♦

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⁵⁰ *“He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son”* John 8:24

⁵¹ I John 2:22

⁵² Mark 10:45

⁵³ Romans 6:23

⁵⁴ Ezekiel 18:4

⁵⁵ II Corinthians 5:21

⁵⁶ Mark 16:16