

HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

“Have you been saved?” Perhaps you have been asked this question many times by well intentioned evangelical Christians. I know I have. Many Catholics are caught off guard by such question, and usually don't know how to respond.

After a long or short pause, the person who asked the question realizes that as in most cases, the Catholic Christian is not familiar with the Bible. For this reason it will be easy to persuade and convince Catholics to switch camp.

St. Paul clearly states: “...If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved “ Rom.10:9). Therefore, all that is necessary, evangelicals believe, in order to be assured of salvation in heaven is for a person to turn to Christ in faith and to simply accept Him as “his personal Lord and Saviour “.

So, what is the Catholic response to the question?

It is not enough to profess the faith. The Bible tells us that faith alone “is dead” (James 2:14). After committing our lives to the Lord we are called to serve Him and do what He asks of us.

The New Testament teaches about the necessity of cooperating with God's free gift of grace each day until the very end of our life. “Those who do not persevere in their faith will not be “saved” (Mark 13:13; Matthew 10:22).

In Matthew 25:31-46, about the final judgment, Jesus will ask whether we have fed the hungry, visited the sick and the prisoners, assisted the poor, before He let us into heaven and be “saved “.

It is Catholic teaching to consider “faith” as a way of life, rather than as a major decision that happens once, twice, or a few times in one's life.

As Catholics we know the importance of the initial conversion and commitment to Christ, but we also emphasize the challenge of living out faith in Jesus Christ every day, by God's grace and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So, evangelical Christians confuse REDEMPTION (a one moment event that happened when Jesus shed His Blood on Calvary) with SALVATION (a life-long walk with Christ beginning at Baptism and ending when a person enters the kingdom of heaven).

Despite having publicly proclaimed their “sinner's prayer” of commitment to Christ, some time later they also fall into sin, which, contrary to their doctrine, cannot guarantee their eternal salvation, unless they repent and confess their sins.

As Catholics we cooperate with God's grace as we make use of the sacraments when we approach the sacrament of Reconciliation, we receive Jesus himself in the Holy Eucharist, and do works of mercy towards our neighbour.

This enables us to say: “I AM REDEEMED AND I AM BEING SAVED EVERY MOMENT AND EVERY DAY.”

YES, IN THIS SENSE... “I AM SAVED!”