

18. WHY CATHOLICISM?

More than one religion among many

There are many religions? Is it because there are many gods? No. Though there are many religions, there is only one God. Every religion represents a kind of understanding about God, and each provides a form of worship for man to communicate with the divine. Consequently, each religion has its own version of theology, spirituality, and rites. Also, every religion has its interpretation and emphasis about the meaning of life, and how man should relate with one another and with the world.

Why Catholicism When There are So Many Religions?

Why do we choose Catholicism then? The Catholic Church believes that God loves man deeply. He sent His only Son to the world, incarnated as Jesus. Jesus is the perfect mediator between God and man. He teaches us to love God and to serve Him, and to love our fellow man. He helps us to experience the presence and love of God. We believe that through the life and teaching of Jesus, we can know and love God and realise the meaning and purpose of our earthly life.

We find the Catholic faith meaningful and hope that those who are considering a religion could know Jesus and his Church. We invite you to come and see, to experience Jesus, and be transformed by him. We welcome you to join this community of believers, to build a communion of faith and love, and together, we share the love of God with others and serve the common good of all!

Some claim all religions are the same because all religions teach people to be good and to avoid evil. This view of religions is both right and wrong. It is right because all religions do teach people to be good and to avoid evil. It is wrong because accepting a religion is more than just doing good. What is so special about Catholicism? Why be a Catholic?

Different Motives

Some people accept Catholicism because they benefit from this faith spiritually and materially. Some people find peace praying in church, and they believe that going to church will bring them blessings. Some have their illnesses healed, jobs found, or relationships reconciled. Their faith is built on and strengthened by favours granted or on miracles.

At times, it is the ambience that makes people choose the church they belong to. Some people attend Christian worship as if going to a concert because the “electrifying atmosphere” makes them feel high. Others prefer the majestic church buildings and the solemnity of worship, for they feel the peace and tranquillity of the church.

There are those whose faith is “inherited” from their parents, and their parents’ parents. They have been inducted to the faith since young. There are also some who become Christians through marriage as they want to share the religion of their spouses. Others become Christians because they were helped and inspired by Christian friends. They piggyback on the faith of other people.

Some people find Catholicism simpler compared to some folk religions when it comes to funeral rites. Catholicism seems more “relaxed” when it comes to practical matters such as not prohibiting drinking and smoking and more “open-minded” when it comes to accepting other religions. Thus, they choose to be Catholics.

Belief in Jesus

The motives mentioned above are individual concerns but they do not provide a strong foundation for Catholic faith unless they lead the baptised to eventually focus on Jesus. Christian faith that is not built upon a personal relationship with Jesus is inadequate. When these people face difficulties and trials such as when business is no longer thriving, personal career has stalled or interpersonal conflicts arise among fellow Christians, they may abandon the Church.

For faith to be strong, it must be rooted in Jesus. To know Jesus is first to believe in him and allow him to transform and enrich our lives. No one can believe in place of another person. Anyone who wants to know Jesus must experience him personally. The psalmist invites us to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps 34:8).

A selfish life is not worth living. The incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus showed us how he lived for others, even to the point of sacrificing his life for us. He revealed to us the beauty of transcending self to care for others. When we know and follow Jesus, we are transformed, and our lives are enriched and uplifted.

The Gospel of Jesus transform our worldly preoccupation with a divine goal. As intentional disciples of Christ, we

live to fulfil God's purpose for us. The Gospel of Jesus gives us direction in life. The more we follow and imitate him, the more we will be able to overcome sin and live the Gospel. In this way, we can live His kingdom of love, peace, mercy, justice, freedom, and joy here on earth and realise its completion in the life-after.