

## Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries



Steve Clifford

<mailto:stevec@transporter.com>

<http://www.transporter.com>

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Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

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## The Missionary Discussions



1. The Plan of Our Heavenly Father
2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- 3. The Restoration**
4. Eternal Progression
5. Living a Christ-like Life
6. Membership in the Kingdom

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## The Missionary Discussions



### 3. The Restoration

- We must find and accept the truth
- By doing this, we learn that Christ founded his Church by revelation
- Revelation is continued today by “apostles” and “prophets”
- It was not always so; the first apostles were rejected and their priestly authority was completely lost

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## The Missionary Discussions



### 3. The Restoration (Cont.)

- For many centuries the institution known as “Christendom” was in reality an apostate church opposed to God and the truth
- Not until 1830, when Joseph Smith organized the Mormon church, was the true church of Christ restored to a lost world
- Priestly authority was re-established
- New scriptures were brought forth and ancient rituals were again performed

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## The Missionary Discussions



### 3. The Restoration (Cont.)

- An outward indication of membership in the one, true church is weekly attendance at its meetings

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## The Catholic Response



- Topics for Discussion
  - Public/Private Revelation
  - Total Apostasy vs. Apostolic Succession
  - Apostles and Prophets
  - The Church
  - Priesthood Authority
  - Meetings
  - Standard Works

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## LDS Revelation



- The Lord continually reveals His word to prophets for the contemporary guidance of His people
- Revelation to the Church is continuous
- Only the President of the Church (prophet, seer, and revelator) has the right to receive new revelation for the Church
- The words of the prophet are to be received as if they came from the mouth of the Lord
- The prophet will never lead the Saints astray

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## LDS Revelation (Cont.)



- Only by revelation from God can we gain knowledge about God; we cannot learn about the existence and character of God by reasoning alone
- Revelation from God to each of us as individuals is necessary for our salvation
- Personal righteousness is a prerequisite for receiving revelation
- Every Church member is entitled to revelation in the performance of his/her calling in the Church

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## Problems with LDS Revelation



- The need for continuous revelation implies that the Bible is deficient (incomplete)
- Continuous revelation is used to complete, correct, or add to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)
- “The Prophet can receive revelation on any matter – temporal or spiritual” (Ezra Taft Benson)
- “The Prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time” (ibid)

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## Problems with LDS Revelation (Cont.)



- Polygamy is condemned in the Book of Mormon (Jacob 2:26-27)
- Later revelations contradict earlier revelations (D&C 132 in 1843 and the 1890 Manifesto to “refrain” from polygamy)
- Polygamy is still a requirement for godhood
- Failure to receive individual revelation is an indication of a lack of righteousness
- Personal revelation based on subjective feelings and emotions (burning of the bosom)

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## Public Revelation in the Catholic Church



- God has said everything in His Word
  - “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)
  - Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father’s one, perfect, and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. (CCC 65)
- There will be no further Revelation
  - No new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (CCC 66)

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## Private Revelation in the Catholic Church



- Some “private” revelations have been recognized by the authority of the Church
- “Private” revelations do not belong to the deposit of faith (they are not binding on the faithful)
  - It is not their role to improve or complete Christ’s definitive Revelation
  - The magisterium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church
  - Christian faith cannot accept “revelations” that claim to surpass or correct the Revelation of which Christ is the fulfillment (CCC 66)

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## LDS Theory of the Total Apostasy



- Jesus Christ established His true Church during His earthly ministry
  - He founded it in Palestine
  - After His ascension He came to the Americas and established it among the Jewish immigrants
  - He called apostles and prophets who would lead the Church through revelation after He was gone
  - He gave them the priesthood authority to speak and act in His name
  - These inspired leaders made sure the people could learn the truth and not be misled by false teachings

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## LDS Theory of the Total Apostasy (Cont.)



- The people rejected the truth and killed the apostles, both in the Holy Land and in the Americas
  - God took the priesthood authority and the Church from the earth
  - Loss of revelation led to great confusion, contention, and incorrect teachings
  - This falling away from the truth is called the Apostasy
- “For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.” (2 Thes. 2:3)

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## LDS Restoration



- God has once again proclaimed His truth through modern-day prophets
  - Through Joseph Smith the Lord brought forth the Book of Mormon, “Another Testament of Jesus Christ”
  - The Aaronic Priesthood Authority to baptize was restored by John the Baptist
  - The Melchizedek Priesthood Authority to lead the Restored Church was given by the Apostles Peter, James, and John
  - Smith received other revelations from God which are recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price

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## LDS Restoration (Cont.)



- Joseph Smith organized the “Church of Christ” on April 6, 1830
- The Lord proclaimed that it is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30)
- The Church is led today by a prophet and twelve apostles
  - They receive continuing revelation from God
- Through baptism into the Church of Christ, we accept Christ and enjoy the blessings of his atonement

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## Problems with the LDS Apostasy/Restoration



- Christ established His Church twice and both times it failed (see Is. 9:6-7, Dan. 7:13-14, Matt. 16:18, 28:20, John 14:16)
- 2 Thes. 2:3 taken out of context (read 2 Thes. 2:1-4)
- There has always been individual apostasy from the Church but never an apostasy of the Church
- No total apostasy of the Church means there is no need for a restoration
- The early Christian Church was Catholic, not LDS

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## Apostolic Succession



- Jesus chose the Twelve Apostles to receive the fullness of the gospel teachings (Mt. 10:2-4, Mk. 3:16-29, Lk. 6:13-16, Acts 1:13)
- He chose Peter to be the first in authority among the apostles (Mt. 16:18-20, Lk. 22:32, Jn 21:17, Mk 16:7, Lk 24:34)
- Upon “this rock” (Peter) Christ promised He would build His Church
- He promised the gates of hell shall not prevail
- Peter alone was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 16:18-20)

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## Apostolic Succession (Cont.)



- Apostolic Succession was first demonstrated in Acts 1:20-26 when Matthias was chosen to replace Judas
- Every validly ordained bishop in the Catholic Church can trace his priesthood authority back through history to one of the Twelve Apostles
- This authority has been passed on in an unbroken chain of ordinations by the laying-on of hands from the Apostles to their successors, the bishops, and to their successors, other bishops

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## Apostolic Succession (Cont.)



- The bishops of the Catholic Church are the successors to the Apostles in a continuous line of apostolic succession
- The Catholic Church has existed continuously since the time of the Apostles
- The Catholic Church was founded as a divinely inspired earthly organization by Christ upon Peter, the rock
- No other Christian church can trace its authority unbroken back to the original apostolic source

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## LDS Apostles and Prophets



- The true church of Christ must be led by living apostles and prophets
- Apostles are prophets
- In addition to written scripture we need continuous revelation from living prophets to guide us
- Beginning with Adam, the Lord has continually sent prophets to the people to instruct them in the principles of the gospel
- Joseph Smith was chosen and called by the Lord to be a latter-day prophet

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## Catholic Church Apostles and Prophets



- Jesus called the Twelve to become His Apostles, chosen witnesses of His Resurrection and the foundation on which the Church is built (Eph. 2:20, Rev. 21:14)
- The bishops receive their office as successors of the Apostles through the Sacrament of Holy Orders
- The age for new, publicly binding revelation is over (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- There will always be false prophets (Lam 2:14, Ezek 22:28, Mt. 7:15, Mt. 24:11, Mt. 24:24, Mk. 13:22, Lk. 6:26, 2 Pet 2:1, 1 John 4:1)

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## The LDS Church



- The true church must bear the name of Jesus Christ (the LDS church is the only true church)
- Organized exactly like the New Testament church (Eph. 2:19-20)
- Modern-day apostles and prophets receive revelation from God, just as in the ancient church
- Through priesthood authority, they teach the truths of God, perform his work, and direct his church
- We must come unto Christ by being baptized into his church

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## The Catholic Church



- Four marks (qualities or characteristics) which help to identify the true Church of Jesus Christ:
  - The Church is One (CCC 866)
  - The Church is Holy (CCC 867)
  - The Church is Catholic (CCC 868)
  - The Church is Apostolic (CCC 869)
- Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 in response to the Arian heresy: “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church” (Nicene Creed)

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## The Church is One



- Unity in belief
  - Same teachings and traditions that were given to the Twelve Apostles (John 10:11-16, John 21:15-17)
- Unity in worship
  - Christ prayed “that they may be one” (John 17:11, John 17:22-23)
- Unity in government or leadership
  - One visible head of government and leadership, the Apostolic College with Peter and his successors as its head (CCC 813)

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## The Church is Holy



- Holiness in its founder
  - Jesus Christ
- Holiness in its principles
  - Jesus prayed for the holiness of His Church, to “Sanctify them” (John 17:17), “consecrated in truth” (John 17:19)
- Holiness in its members
  - Consisting of His own sheep who have been purified for Him as an acceptable people (Titus 2:14)
  - There will be both holy and unholy people until the end
- Holiness in its miracles
  - (Healings, Eucharistic miracles, the Incorruptibles, etc.)

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## The Church is Catholic



- From the Greek word *katholikos* meaning general or universal
  - St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Smyrnaeans around A.D. 110: “Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be, even as where Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church”
- The Catholic Church consists of a universality in time and in place
  - The gospel will continue to be preached throughout the whole world until the end of time (Mt. 24:14), to the whole creation throughout all the world (Mk. 16:15), and by the power of the Holy Spirit to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8)

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## The Church is Apostolic



- The true church must always teach the identical doctrines that were originally delivered to it by Peter and the Apostles (Mt. 28:18-20)
- Her ministers must derive their powers from the Apostles by an uninterrupted chain of succession
- Peter is the rock upon which Christ built His Church (Mt. 16:18) (the successor of Peter is the Bishop of Rome)
- Any church claiming to be Christ’s own must be able to trace its lineage in unbroken continuity back to the apostles (only the Catholic Church can make this claim)

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## LDS Priesthood Authority



- Priesthood is the authority to act in the name of God
- This authority was lost to the world because of the general (total) apostasy of the Christian church
- Aaronic (“lesser”) Priesthood
  - John the Baptist restored the authority to baptize to Joseph Smith
- Melchizedek (“greater”) Priesthood
  - Peter, James, and John, the apostles to whom Jesus had given the authority to lead his Church, restored the authority they held to Joseph Smith

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## LDS Aaronic Priesthood



- **Deacon** (boys aged 12 to 13)
  - Pass the bread and water in Sunday meetings
  - Go house-to-house to collect offerings from members
- **Teacher** (boys ages 14 to 15)
  - Prepare the bread and water for Sunday meetings
  - Visit members at home once a month with an adult member of the Melchizedek Priesthood
- **Priest** (boys aged 16-17)
  - Baptize new members; may also ordain others to the Aaronic Priesthood
  - “Blesses” the bread and water

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## LDS Aaronic Priesthood (Cont.)



- **Bishop** (member of the Melchizedek Priesthood)
  - Head of the temporal affairs of his congregation (called a ward, consisting of 100 to 300 families)
  - Presides over the ward's Aaronic priesthood

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## LDS Melchizedek Priesthood



- **Elder** (all worthy men about 18 years of age or older)
  - Includes male missionaries
  - Received by the laying on of hands by a man having the proper authority
  - Acts for God within his own sphere of influence
- **High Priest** (reserved to older men or those who have made significant contributions of service)
  - First and Second Quorum of the Seventy and the Apostles (General Authorities) are chosen from this group

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## Problems with the LDS Priesthood Authority



- Only the descendants of Moses' brother Aaron could possess the Aaronic priesthood
- In Scripture there is no such thing as a "Melchizedek Priesthood" (see Gen. 14:18-20)
- Bible compares Christ to Melchizedek in that He is a genuine priest of God "Like Melchizedek you are a priest forever" (Ps. 110:4b, Heb. 5:6, 10, 6:20, 7:11, 7:17)
- No evidence of two levels in the early church
- Blacks were forbidden to hold the Mormon priesthood until 1978

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## Catholic Priesthood Authority



- Priesthood of the faithful (CCC 784, 1119, 1546)
  - Christ gives the faithful a share in His priesthood through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation
- Ministerial priesthood (CCC 1547)
  - The priesthood of Christ is made present in a special way in the Church through the ministerial priesthood, conferred through the Sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1539, 1544, 1547, 1554)
- True priesthood offers sacrifice (Heb. 5:1, 8:3)
  - Catholic priests offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the salvation of souls and for the glory of God

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## LDS Meetings



- **Sacrament Meeting**
  - Attended as a family, about 70 minutes long
  - Open/Close with prayer, hymns, “sacrament”, and talks by members on diverse topics
- **Sunday School**
  - Age-appropriate “Gospel Doctrine” classes, about 45 minutes
- **Priesthood, Relief Society, Young Women’s Meetings**
  - Segregated by age and by sex

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## Problems with LDS Meetings



- The early Christians gathered to hear and study the Word of God (Acts 17:11, John 5:39)
  - Mormons rarely read publicly from the Bible
- The early Christians corporately worshipped Christ and His Father (Acts 2:42-47)
  - LDS worship God the Father only, not normally in public, communal setting
- The early Christians shared in the Eucharist, believing it to be a sharing in Christ’s body and blood (1 Cor. 11:23-29)
  - LDS “sacrament” is merely a reminder of their promises

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## Catholic Church Holy Sacrifice of the Mass



- All gather together
  - Eucharistic assembly presided invisibly by Christ
  - Bishop or priest acting in the person of Christ the head (all present participate in some way)
- Liturgy of the Word
  - Readings from OT/NT and Gospels, homily, prayers
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
  - Transubstantiation: The substance of bread and wine change into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances or “species” of bread and wine

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## LDS Standard Works



- Bible (King James Version)
  - LDS do not use the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of the Bible
- Book of Mormon
  - Comparable to the Bible, contains the fullness of the everlasting gospel
- Doctrine and Covenants
  - 138 Sections plus 2 Official Declarations
- Pearl of Great Price
  - Collection of smaller writings

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## Bible (KJV)



- “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” (8<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith)
  - LDS believe the Bible to be incomplete because many plain & precious parts have been taken away (1 Nephi chapters 13 & 14)
  - LDS use the Bible to support their position where possible
  - When it conflicts, then they will claim that the Bible was not translated correctly
  - Joseph Smith Translation is not used by the LDS – Why?

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## Book of Mormon



- “...we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God...” (8<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith)
  - No caveat about correct translation
- “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (Joseph Smith)
  - Over 4,000 changes have been made since 1830
  - Much closer to our understanding of the Holy Trinity than today’s Mormon view of the Godhead

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## Book of Mormon (Cont.)



- Primarily a record of two great civilizations
  - Jaredites
    - Descendants of Jared who came to South and Central America by eight boats when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel (about 2200 B.C. until 200 B.C.)
  - Nephites and Lamanites
    - Descendants of the sons of Lehi, who came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C. The Nephites were righteous people (white and delightsome) and the Lamanites were wicked, filthy, and ignorant (cursed w/dark skin)

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## Book of Mormon (Cont.)



- The golden plates (records) were sealed and hidden in the ground in the Hill Cumorah about 421 A.D. by Moroni, son of Mormon and the last of the Nephite prophet-historians
- 1823 - Joseph Smith learns of the golden plates during a visitation by the angel Moroni (Nephi by some accounts)
- 1827 – Guided by the angel Moroni, Smith unearths the golden plates and begins translation
- 1830 – The Book of Mormon is first published

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## Problems with the Book of Mormon



- There is absolutely no evidence of any of the societies mentioned in the book
  - No evidence of “Reformed Egyptian”
  - No archeological finds to support any of the stories (great battles using swords, shields, armor, etc.)
  - No evidence of things like iron, elephants, domesticated animals, bees, etc.
  - No coins as described in Alma 11:5-19 have been found

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## Problems with the Book of Mormon (Cont.)



- The Book of Mormon contains nothing unique to Mormonism
- The “Fullness of Gospel” has had over 4,000 changes made to it
- Supplemented/augmented by Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and modern-day writings by church officials and revelations by their prophets
- It is called “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” (see Galatians 1:8)

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## Doctrine and Covenants



- 138 Sections plus 2 Official Declarations
  - Most sections are introduced as revelations given to Joseph Smith
  - Significant exceptions are:
    - Section 135, official version of Smith's "martyrdom"
    - Section 136, "The Word and Will of the Lord, given through President Brigham Young"
  - Two sections were officially added in 1979
    - Section 137, Smith's "Vision of the Celestial Kingdom"
    - Section 138, twentieth-century leader Joseph F. Smith's "Vision of the Redemption of the Dead"

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## Doctrine & Covenants (Cont.)



- Full of instructions for the church as to the Mormon beliefs and practices
  - Baptism for the dead, celestial marriage, priesthood, polygamy, etc.
- 2 Official Declarations
  - 1890, LDS are to "refrain" from polygamy (Article 132 is still included and considered valid)
  - 1978, extended priesthood and temple blessing to all worthy male members of the church (only blacks were denied these privileges)

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## Pearl of Great Price



- The Book of Moses
  - Elaboration and rewriting of the Book of Genesis, adds some unique Mormon teachings
- The Book of Abraham
  - Includes three facsimiles of the Egyptian papyrus from which Joseph Smith “translated” the BoA along with keyed explanations
  - Basis for anti-black doctrine, plurality of gods, the gods came from a planet near the star Kolob to do their creative work in this part of the universe
- Portions from Joseph Smith’s revision of Matthew’s Gospel, extracted from the JST

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## Pearl of Great Price (Cont.)



- Joseph Smith – History
  - Smith’s account of his early visions and the golden plates
- The Articles of Faith
  - Total of 13 Articles written by Joseph Smith in the History of the Church, Vol. 4
  - Handed out by missionaries as a summary of the beliefs of the Mormon church
  - Much of the “unique” LDS doctrines and beliefs is left out or glossed over

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## Catholic Church The Word of God



- **Sacred Scripture** (Holy Bible)
  - The books (46 in OT and 27 in NT) which contain the truth of God's revelation, composed by human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit
- **Tradition** (capital "T")
  - The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church (the oral preaching of the Apostles conserved and handed on as the deposit of faith through the apostolic succession in the Church)
- **Magisterium** (teaching authority)
  - The living, teaching office of the Church, whose task it is to give authentic interpretation of the word of God

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## Summary



- There is no need for continuous revelation – God has said everything in His Word
- There has always been individual apostasy from the Church but never an apostasy of the Church
- The bishops of the Catholic Church are the successors to the Apostles in a continuous line of apostolic succession
- There will always be false prophets
- Four marks (qualities or characteristics) which help to identify the true Church of Jesus Christ

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## Summary (Cont.)



- No evidence of two levels of priesthood (Aaronic and Melchizedek) in the early Church
- True priesthood offers sacrifice
  - Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (2,000 years of the Catholic Church)
- The Bible is a Catholic Book – rely on the Catholic Church for correct interpretation
- No other earthly organization has a right to add or take away anything from the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19)

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## Summary (Cont.)



- Know, love, and practice your own faith
- Use good Catholic Christian charity when speaking to the Mormon missionaries
- Be prepared to respond with your own “testimony” of the fullness of truth contained only in the Catholic Church
- No “Total Apostasy” means no need for Restoration

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Question and Answer



Steve Clifford

<mailto:stevec@transporter.com>

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