

From Science to Christianity, Part II: After Baptism Class

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Abstract

After believing Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we decide which church to go to (specifically Catholic) and we have to work out whether what we believed contradicts with the teaching of the church. This may lead to some updates of our beliefs. Also, during and after the baptism classes, we encountered people, Christians or not, who may raise questions about our beliefs, which we have to answer. For example, scientists and atheists employ methodologies in experimental science to challenge our approach to believe in Jesus Christ, and we have to answer them one by one why their methodologies are inappropriate. The baptism classes we attended build our Catholic faith which has four building blocks: creeds, sacraments, morality in our Christian life and prayers. We will go through them which are given in details in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Finally, we clarify various miscellaneous issues that we observe. This includes facing God with just ourselves in our afterlife. We conclude that our faith is shallow and there is much to learn as our Christian life is not a straightforward path to heaven but a winding road that is full of tests.

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1. Introduction

After establishing that we should wholeheartedly believe in Jesus Christ (see Jesus in Christianity in Wikipedia) as the Son of God (see Wikipedia) with a minute probability that we are wrong, in our first ebook (Luk, 2024a), we have to come to decide on which Christian church (see Wikipedia) we should go to. On the one hand, we need to find a church near our home and on the other hand the beliefs of the church should not contradict with our beliefs. Several candidate churches are considered including Catholic, Anglican, Baptists, etc. We decided to follow the Catholic church (see Wikipedia) because of our beliefs that the Eucharist (see Wikipedia) has the real presence of Jesus Christ due to the Eucharistic miracles (Ignis, 2024; Capturing Christianity, 2025) and that the Blessed Virgin Mary (see Mary, mother of Jesus in Wikipedia) plays a special role in our beliefs due to past Marian apparitions (see List of Marian apparitions in Wikipedia). So, we attended the Catholic baptism class which has an impact on our core beliefs of Christianity (Luk, 2024a). Therefore, we need to update our (core) beliefs of Christianity. In the next section, we will discuss this update. In section 3, we will present the Catholic faith as taught in the baptism class. It has a detailed structure that we will present, which is reflected in the subsections of section 3. In section 4, we will deal with various miscellaneous topics like the Problem of Evil. In section 5, we will conclude.

Our mission (see Christian mission in Wikipedia) as a Christian (see Wikipedia) is to evangelize and convert people to believe in Jesus Christ. However, our experience in converting people to believe in Christianity (see Wikipedia) has not been very fruitful. Our approach to faith based on evidence is not necessarily welcomed by others even those who are Christians (although there are other approaches; see for example Redeemed Zoomer, 2024). Also, appealing to evidence opens the doors to doubt the Bible (see Wikipedia) and the evidence since we are hoping that by resolving the doubts we try to establish a more concrete faith in Christianity. However, those who do not believe may leverage the doubt and who would apply a higher bar to believe in the evidence of the miracles, which is a wrong approach as we will point out in section 2. As a result, it is very hard to convert many non-believers based on an evidence-based approach to Christianity. However, we believe that we should put on the table the evidence of the miracles and let the non-believers to decide for themselves because that would be rational and open-minded as well as an expression of loving neighbors as in the second commandment of Jesus Christ. Maybe in the future when they face death, they will reconsider to believe in Christianity. Another approach tells them the consequence of not believing in Christianity if it is true, so that they can feel the gravity of their decision, and we just mention the evidence of the miracles with scientific investigations to bring home that Christianity is true so that they understand what eternal torment in hell really means. This approach may backfire as some may believe we are forcing them to believe, so this approach needs us to be tactful in presenting the consequence of their decisions. In any case, it is not easy to convert people to believe in Christianity.

This manuscript is written based on my experience during and after my baptism class. It is more or less my understanding and response to Catholic teachings. I have not taken any class on (Catholic) theology (see Catholic theology in Wikipedia). Therefore, I am not an expert on Catholicism and I have much to learn. This manuscript serves to contrast my understanding of Christianity before the baptism

class and after the baptism class, and it serves to update the beliefs in Christianity before I became a Christian. It also spells out what do we mean by faith in Catholicism by discussing the four pillars of Catholic faith. It makes clear what do we believe (in) and what do we trust. Finally, we discuss various topics that appeared in my journey to Christianity which people might have similar experience that may strengthen their faith or may loose their faith. It may be important to learn from the cases of loosing their faith why we keep our faith. Therefore, our journey in Christianity is not a straightforward path but one that would be tested in many different ways.

After believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, I am confronted with questions like why I have to kneel down, why I have to go to church, etc. posed by my relatives. The first question is are we equal to God? And the obvious answer is that we are not. While God has the power to destroy us, he did not but instead try to save us. As we are unequal and we respect God for his power and benevolence, we kneel down. We need to humble ourselves. We go to church for ourselves, for our community and for God. That is love God and love neighbour; the two commandments from Jesus Christ. We worship God together because God deserves to be worshiped. Think how many times we asked God for help? How many times calamities did not happen? You may wonder also how many times God did not appear to do anything even if we ask for help. However, we only have partial knowledge so we may not know why God did not help until (much) later or ever. However, we should not sit at the judge seat and judge God why He did not help because while God is qualified as a judge to judge us (morally) because He has complete knowledge, we are probably not qualified as we only have partial information. You may say that this is true for all Gods, but the Christian God left us with multiple testimonies and miracles (some even in the recent past) as evidence to substantiate our beliefs. That is why we believe in and respect the Christian God. That is why we worship God and thank God for him to reveal Himself to us. There are in fact so many things that we can think of to thank God and therefore it is proper to worship Him and so kneel down before Him. I say this in the introduction as a preamble for you to prepare yourselves when reading the rest of this manuscript.

Another question that I face from some Christians is why evidence-based faith for Christianity (Warner and Wallace, 2025b)? Apart from showing that Christianity is true by evidence, it is an answer against some (New) Atheists (see New Atheism in Wikipedia) contention that blind faith can be dangerous for us. Blind faith here means that we just believe in whatever we are told by religious text in this instance. For example, Islamic jihadists are accused for blind faith to enact suicidal actions killing civilians. Their faith in part of the Quran text urges them to enact this kind of brutal actions coloured by geopolitical concerns. They do not know whether these Quran text are true or not but just believe in them based on their writings. If Christianity is just based on blind faith, it may also succumb to such tragic consequences with killings of civilians based on just beliefs in the Bible. Therefore, we have to establish that besides the Bible, Christianity is true so that we do not rely on blind faith but evidence-based faith. One might argue that the New Testament has objectivity to it because it was a testimony from different people whereas the Quran is a testimony from only Muhammad himself. However, we feel that this is not strong enough as we may be accused of collusion among the Gospel writers by atheists. Moreover, Christians believe that the Bible contains divine revelation so it is not blind faith, but

atheists do not believe in the Bible and may consider Christians to have blind faith. Therefore, we substantiate our claim with evidence from miracles of (relatively) recent pasts as these evidence are outside the Bible but related to it with hundreds or a thousand years apart. Note that faith is still needed since we cannot prove Christianity is true nor Science can prove the physical laws as universal statements are true as Science needs faith too. Therefore, we cannot do away without faith. For example, how can we prove that the Christian God is the most high or most powerful for limited power people like us? So faith is necessary but we do not want blind faith (Keyes, 2024).

Some Catholic friend thinks that if you have faith then you do not need evidence, and if you have evidence then you do not need faith. However, my view is that faith and evidence support each other rather than making them running against each other. If you have faith, you still need evidence to know whether what you trust or believe is true. So evidence can help you along this line. If you have evidence, you still do not have a water-tight proof, so you need faith to help you to believe although the leap of faith is smaller compared with no evidence. Why we do not have a proof because we only find evidence to support our beliefs. If there is such a proof, then we would know by now as it would be promoted by all Christians as they evangelize. Also, it is unlikely that God will provide such a proof because God would allow you to believe that there is no God so that you have the condition for your free will to choose.

In this manuscript, I have made many references to Wikipedia instead of those in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see Wikipedia and Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003). This is because this manuscript is written for mostly non-Christians who may not be very religious, so the Catechism may be difficult to grasp for the non-Christians as they may not have any religious conviction or experience. Wikipedia has the advantage that it is written for general readership so it should be easier to grasp than religious text. Also, Wikipedia webpages include some other information (like history of the topic, hyperlinks to related concepts and references) that the Catechism does not have so that readers can refer to. In addition, Wikipedia may introduce the concepts as understood by Catholics, Eastern Orthodox church or other denominations, so that the Catholic view and the view of other denominations can be contrasted. Finally, it should be warned that some Wikipedia webpages are biased and some Wikipedia webpages, for example, may overly rely on reputable sources like prestigious scientific journals to write those webpages. Having said that, most Wikipedia webpages are reasonable and informative, so we cite them to introduce the concepts to our readers instead of the Catechism.

2. Update of Belief

We need to update our beliefs because some of the beliefs before I was baptized may not be allowed as a Christian or it may require clarifications. For example, some Christians hold that there is no coincidence (see Wikipedia). However, for many of us we think events may happen by chance. How can we reconcile these differences between some Christians and those who think events happen by chance? One simple way is that for some Christians, in God's perspective everything happens with causes that He know and therefore in His perspective nothing is a coincident. For human being with limited knowledge, we do not know everything so events happen by chance. We only know the macroscopic view and we do not know how every event may lead to other event since we are not God.

We update our beliefs according to several categories. One type of update is to clarify our core beliefs or issues related to our core beliefs. That is in section 2.1. Section 2.2 updates our beliefs based on issues related to extra-biblical sources. Section 2.3 updates our beliefs based issues related to biblical sources. There are many issues in this category as we went through the baptism class. Lastly, we update our beliefs based on issues related to Atheists objections or problems in section 2.4.

2.1 Update of Core Beliefs

In my first ebook (Luk 2024a), the core beliefs of Christianity have missed out an important point. That is whether the Christian God is the greatest. This was mentioned in my first ebook but not included as part of the core beliefs. I think it is apt to put it into the core beliefs because if we are believing the God that is not the greatest, then the higher God may dislike us and therefore may punish us. So, we need to believe in the God who is the greatest. First, the Bible claimed that the Christian God is the most high according to some (fortune telling) spirit for example in the Acts of the New Testament. Second, Genesis claimed that the Christian God created heaven and earth so that is a demonstration that the Christian God is the most high. Before heaven and earth were created, the Christian God existed so that He may be before spacetime. Thus, it follows the Christian God is the greatest. Creating heaven and earth by the Father (or the Christian God) is mentioned in both the Apostles' creed and the Nicene creed, so that would concur with our core beliefs.

In my first ebook (Luk, 2024a), I also mentioned that it is interesting that there may be other gods who are not as high as the Christian God. Actually, the Christian God only allows Himself to be called God and others are only spirits. One reason is that God demands worship and the Christian God demands worship only to Him. If the other spirits are called gods, then this may cross the red line that worship to other gods is allowed that the Christian God forbids (because He is jealous). So, our core beliefs should only recognize one God: the Christian God and not others.

For Catholics, the Holy Trinity (see Trinity in Wikipedia) is regarded as a mystery. Some (e.g., as mentioned by Ratzinger, 1990) may think that personhood in the Holy Trinity is only a device for us to establish relationships with the divine for the Father and the Holy Spirit do not have bodies but they are like human beings who may have their own thoughts but may not have emotions due to the disputed, impassibility (see Wikipedia) attribute of God (see Attributes of God in Christianity in Wikipedia).

However, while God is spirit, Jesus Christ who is God has a body. In general, Catholics believe that Jesus Christ body is a spiritual body or a supernatural body which does not decay and lives eternally. However, if Jesus Christ is God and God is spirit, then God seems to be a mystery. However, this is less of a mystery if we think of mass-energy equivalence due to $E = mc^2$ so that the body of Jesus Christ can become energy or that the body of Jesus Christ can become spirit is not all that unthinkable. Note that energy and spirit are different. For examples, spirit has volition but not energy, and energy follows physical laws but spirit can transcend them. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas (see Wikipedia), the human nature of Jesus Christ (who also has the divine nature) may be regarded as lower to God (Broussard, 2019). Personally, I considered that some part of the human nature of Jesus Christ is his body only during the time of the first century or there about because after the resurrection, I once thought that Jesus Christ body can become spirit. Therefore, does God refer to the Father, the Spirit of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in unity? My previous ebook before thinks that the body of Jesus Christ is special after the resurrection, which can become spirit (or energy?) and which can become physical, since Jesus Christ is God who can do anything except being the Father and who inherits the power of the Father. Personally, I do not know whether to hold on to this view as this might be a heresy or simply to put a stop to it and think it is a mystery. I leave it to you to think about it.

Assuming that the principles in scientia theology (Luk, 2024a) are part of the core beliefs, we need to change our principle of Holy Trinity to the belief that the Holy Trinity is a mystery with one God and three persons (i.e., the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) to be in line with Catholic understanding. Also, we need to add another principle say the principle of Reconciliation because the principle of Eucharist only applies to venial sin. For mortal sin, we need the principle of Reconciliation where the Catholic sinner confesses his/her mortal sin to the priest for forgiveness (by God). More details are given in Section 3.2. Hopefully, these would make our core beliefs more complete and compatible with Catholic understanding.

2.2 Update of Beliefs related to Extra-Biblical Sources

A famous extra-biblical source is the historical account of Jesus Christ (see Historicity of Jesus in Wikipedia) by Josephus (see Josephus on Jesus in Wikipedia). However, some scholars doubt that, suggesting the historical account was interpolated leaving many people in doubt as well. Recently, a scholar, called Tom Schmidt (2025), argued that the historical account in Josephus was not interpolated but authentic. First, he noted that paradoxa in Josephus text was translated as miracle or wonderful works in English suggesting that the passage was interpolated because that suggested favour to Jesus Christ. However, the meaning of paradoxa in Josephus text has a negative connotation or implied meaning in the original language, suggesting that the particular text was not interpolated contrary to many scholars who believe that the text was interpolated based on the translated passages. Second, one part of the passage says that “Jesus was the Christ”, and many scholars believed that part is interpolated. However, that passage was consistent with Jewish views that Jesus died and was not resurrected since Jesus was the Christ and he is not alive anymore. If the passage was interpolated by Christians, we would expect that “Jesus is the Christ” rather than “was”. Therefore, that passage suggested that there was no interpolation there either contrary to some scholars’ beliefs. Third, one part of the passage wrote that Jesus

appeared to the disciples to be alive after condemned to the cross three days afterwards. Tom Schmidt thinks that Josephus meant Jesus seemed to the disciples to be alive so that that part of the passage is unlikely to be an interpolation by later Christians. Tom Schmidt backed this up by pointing to another place in Josephus writings where that appeared in Josephus writing meant seemed as well. Again, this is contrary to some scholars who believed that the passage was interpolated. Overall, Tom Schmidt believed that the historical account of Jesus by Josephus was authentic, supporting that Jesus Christ did miracles, Jesus is the Christ and disciples had seen Jesus Christ alive after the crucifixion. His book supports the case that Jesus Christ is a historical figure (Metatron, 2025) unlike some who thought Jesus Christ is a myth (see Christ myth theory in Wikipedia) even though this is questioned (Warner and Wallace, 2025a; UsefulCharts, 2025).

Another update of beliefs based on issues related to extra-biblical sources is about Exodus (Ear to Hear, 2025a). Many English bibles refer to the crossing of the sea as the Red Sea. However, the Hebrew bible refers to the crossing of the sea as the Reeds Sea. As a result, there were two candidates (see Yam Suph in Wikipedia) where the crossing of the sea happened in Exodus; one is in the Red Sea leading to the present place in Saudi Arabia and the other one is the lake leading to the Sinia Peninsula where the lake has many reeds. The second one has backing from early Christians who thought that the crossing occurred in the sea but actually is a lake because that would lead to the Sinai Peninsula where it was thought that Moses climbed the Sinai mountain to communicate with God before and during the Exodus. However, archaeologists did not have consistent findings about this candidate as many events in the recording of the Old Testament did not match with any relics found in that region. Also, the Exodus description of the crossing involves water walls that are tens of feet tall but the lake is only a few feet deep. Also, the Egyptian army may not be destroyed after the water fall back after the crossing, and the Egyptian army could have moved around the lake to catch the fleeing Israelites. Therefore, the lake candidate is unlikely to be true. The first candidate occurred in the Red Sea and the difficulty is to find where in the Red Sea that this took place since the Red Sea is over 100 miles long. Some amateur and professional archaeologist have found a place where the crossing could take place in the Red Sea. It could not have taken place elsewhere in the Red Sea because the floor of the Red Sea is too deep. At the specific location, there is a ridge joining the two coasts of the Red Sea, which is not as deep as the other parts of the Red Sea. Also, this would be consistent with the Old Testament that the water walls were tens of feet tall. Also, some amateur archaeologists have used underwater metal detector to find chariot-looking remains underwater to indicate the presence of metal in those remains dispelling the objection that those were chorals. Note that those artifacts cannot be carried away for further examination because authorities prevented archaeologists taking any remains away. After crossing into present Saudi Arabia, more supporting findings were discovered. First, there is a place where there is water in a dessert-like place near the crossing. Second, near the believed-to-be Sinai mountain, there was a rock that was split suggesting water flowed out in the land as described in the Old Testament. Third, there were inscriptions of ox or cow on the rocks that looked like Egyptian Ox god consistent with the story of Exodus that some Israelites or escaped Egyptians started to worship the Ox when Moses was away to mount Sinai to communicate with God. Fourth, there were places that looked like mass graves as Exodus told us that over 3000 were dead because they worshiped the Ox. Fifth, there were places that looked like an altar where worship to God might

have taken place. Sixth, on the alleged mount Sinai, the top was colored in brown or black, consistent with the Old Testament that there was thunder and fire at the top of mount Sinai. The coloring only appeared at the top surface of the rocks as the rocks and the other side of the rock did not have this colouring. Again, the artifacts cannot be carried away for further examination because the authorities prevented moving any remains from the site. Overall, it seemed Exodus was highly likely to have happened in the Red Sea.

Another extra-biblical source relating to the update of beliefs is the Marian apparition at Fatima in 1917 (see Our Lady of Fatima in Wikipedia). According to the seers of the Marian apparition, the Blessed Virgin Mary entrusted three secrets for them to keep. These secrets are now known. One secret is that World War I would end soon. Another secret is that Russia would become an atheist country. The third secret was believed to be the assassination attempt of the Pope, John Paul II, in 1981. The assassin fired at the Pope and fortunately only wounded the Pope. The bullet was taken out of Pope's body. Later, it was found that there was a hole in the crown of the Blessed Virgin Mary statue for Fatima. The bullet was placed in the hole and fitted perfectly (Pronechen, 2020). People suggested that it was not a coincidence since the third secret of Fatima was believed to be about the Pope assassination. Since then, the bullet has remained in the hole of the crown of the Blessed Virgin Mary statue.

Yet, another extra-biblical source lends credence to the Old Testament. In the book of Job (38:31), God challenges Job, asking if he can "bind the chains of the Pleiades" (see Pleiades in folklore and literature in Wikipedia) and "loosen the belt of Orion". Today astronomy using telescopes has found that the Pleiades star cluster is bind together and that the constellation of the Orion belt is drifting apart. However, during the Old Testament time, there were no telescope to make such observations. Yet, the book of Job reported with such clarity as told by God. This shows that the Old Testament was creditable at least for the book of Job.

Fast forwarding to the present time, Carlo Acutis (see Wikipedia) has become a saint this year after it was postponed due to the death of Pope Francis. Saint Carlo Acutis was a teenager who collected information about the Eucharistic miracles and present them in the Internet. He was noted to have been pious in his early age and considered the Eucharist as a highway to heaven. He died young at the age of 15 but his corpse has remained incorruptible or decayed slowly. To be recognized as a saint, he had at least two different miracles attributed to him. His mother indicated that after Carlo Acutis died, he told her that he will become a saint in her dream. There are other miracles like the unveiling rose petal. Therefore, if these five different events were random according to the null hypothesis, then all events appear to be miracles would be less than five percent by chance suggesting that we should reject the null hypothesis so that these events are not considered random. Substantiating our belief that miracles happened, inferring Carlo Acutis is a saint and is alive in heaven. However, we should caution that we have not included the cases where people have asked for miracles by Carlo Acutis intercession but failed, since those cases are unlikely to be reported. Nevertheless, those five events support the existence of miracles inferring Carlo Acutis as a saint.

2.3 Update of Beliefs related to Biblical Sources

Why did Jesus Christ become human? The obvious answer is that He became human because he wanted to save us from sin so that we can live happily with God without sin. Since we are based on the image of God, He becoming human does not lower himself to other animals which are not based on the image of God. Also, human can be composed of spirit, soul and body so that the spirit of God the Son can reside in Jesus Christ's body. In addition, He inherits the power of God and become the spiritual and material king of all people since He has a body. Since He has a body, it enables people like us to visualize God as Jesus Christ is God so that we have something concrete to refer to as well as to worship. Since He is human, He can also be the high priest who carries out the sacrifice to wash away our sin. He also become human because He represents the perfect Adam who follows God's command instead of the fallen Adam who transgressed God's rule. He also came to give His new commandments and the new covenant.

Some theologian mentioned that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the new ark of the new covenant (Ray, 2019) representing the fulfillment of the old covenant and the presence of God in a profound new way. The old ark of covenant in Moses time had the manna which was the bread that fed the Israelites in the dessert for forty years, the staff which the high priest used and the tablet of law or the ten commandments. Jesus Christ fulfilled these as his flesh is the bread of life, as Jesus Christ is the high priest holding the staff and the ten commandments are being summarized by the two commandments of Jesus Christ: love God and love neighbour. The Blessed Virgin Mary is like the ark holding the new covenant that Jesus Christ brings. In Moses time, the presence of God was in one place for the entire group of people or the nation. After Jesus Christ was resurrected and ascended to heaven, the Holy spirit (who is God) is present to individual human beings instead of being at one location for all the believers as in Moses time so that God becomes a personal God for all those who believe.

After Lucifer (see Wikipedia) lost in the battle against God, he was cast out of heaven. However, hell did not exist at the time, so he went to earth as we were told that in the beginning God created heaven and earth. God let him to stay on earth because he has a purpose to tempt Eve in Eden. If Lucifer turned Satan did not tempt Eve and repented his sin, it is not known whether God will forgive him. However, Satan tempted Eve instead, so he is sure to be punished in the future. He still have influence on people as he serves God's purpose to tempt people to evil. It might be counter-intuitive that God allows Satan to tempt people but God gave us free will to decide for ourselves on how to choose between good and evil. Also, since Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we become aware of both good and evil so that Satan representing evil can reach us so we can be tempted. Alternatively, some (Ear to Hear, 2025c) believed that Satan was a Cherubim who was jealous of humans in Eden as they were favoured by God.

In the Gospels, there were two genealogies (see Genealogy of Jesus in Wikipedia) of Jesus Christ. One is based on the Gospel of Matthew which traced the genealogy of Jesus Christ from Joseph to Abraham. Since Matthew is a Jew, his Gospel was written for the Jewish audience so the genealogy stopped tracing back once reached Abraham. The other genealogy of Jesus Christ is based on the Gospel of Luke which traced the

genealogy of Jesus Christ from Heli to Adam because Luke is a gentile who thought Jesus Christ is for both Jews and Gentiles so Luke traced back to the first human being, Adam, according to the scripture. These two genealogies of Jesus Christ both descend from King David but one via King Solomon but the other via another path. King Solomon path of genealogy is cursed (Jeremiah, 22:30) so there is a need for another genealogy path. Therefore, some thought that the other path which cited Heli as the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, was the father-in-law of Joseph or the father of Mary. So, the genealogy in Luke was thought to be Jesus Christ genealogy via His mother, Mary, instead of Joseph. Although Aaron was in the path of genealogy related to Elizabeth, where Aaron was a high priest, it was thought that Jesus Christ can also be the high priest who is of the order of Melchizedek (see Wikipedia). Some argued that Heli is not the father of Mary since according to Catholics, Joachim is the father of Mary. Some considered that Heli (see Heli (biblical figure) in Wikipedia) was another name related to Joachim but some thought otherwise. Some considered the genealogy of Jesus Christ based on who the kingship would pass onto after death so that this explained why there were two different genealogies.

The Gospel wrote that the magi (see Biblical Magi in Wikipedia) visited the stable where Jesus Christ was born. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh but not jewellery, nor silver, nor other expensive fragrance. These gifts signify the importance of Jesus Christ as he would become. Gold is a gift only for kings and Jesus Christ is the King of Jews or the King of God's kingdom. Frankincense is a gift for God so that Jesus Christ was already attributed to God. Finally, myrrh is a gift for death that signifies Jesus Christ will die even if He is God.

There were two Passover timings (Humphrey, 2011) for the last supper (see Wikipedia) in the Gospels. One Gospel wrote that the last supper occurred as a Passover meal and the other Gospel wrote that when Jesus Christ's body was about to be buried after the crucifixion, people were hurried to prepare for the Passover meal suggesting that the last supper which happened the day before was not a Passover meal. However, we need to note that for Galilean Jews at the time, the day begins at six pm nowadays and ends before six pm the following day. So, it is possible that the last supper is a Passover meal and Jesus Christ was crucified on the following day as the Passover day. Some explained that there were pilgrims to Jerusalem for the Passover meal which will be taken the day after the last supper that is on the Passover day before six pm. Therefore, there may not be any contradictions of the two Passover timings in the Gospels.

One problem I had was about the perpetual virginity of Mary (see Wikipedia) since it is difficult to know about this and the New Testament says that Jesus Christ had brothers and sisters. However, careful observations showed that Jesus Christ has no brothers and sisters because of translations as those original words could also mean cousins. Also, in the Gospel of John, when Jesus Christ was being crucified, he told John to take care of his mother Mary. If Jesus Christ had brothers like James, then He would have told his brothers to take care of Mary which was in accordance to Jewish law at the time. In addition, Mary has vowed not to have sexual relationship with her husband as she wanted to be of service to God for all her life so that she was greeted with the phrase "Full of Grace" by the angel. It is believed that Joseph respected her vow and did not have any sexual relationship with her.

Another sticking point is the assumption of Mary (see Wikipedia). It was alleged that the Blessed Virgin Mary did not die or if dead, was immediately taken up to heaven so that there was no record of her death in the New Testament. She might have this special treatment because she is the mother of Jesus Christ and also because she is the immaculate conception meaning that she does not have the original sin condition (implying that she need not die to escape from her original sin condition). How do we know she is the immaculate conception because in a number of Marian apparitions (e.g., our Lady of Lourdes), she declared or indicated she was the immaculate conception in relatively recent times. Some (Freedom Frame, 2025) says that the (sacred) tradition have the account of Mary's assumption. This sacred tradition include early Christian writings, apocryphal texts (like the *Transitus Mariae*), the consensus of the Church Fathers and liturgical practices even though it is not explicitly described in the Bible.

The church service in Catholics is called Mass which is a Latin word meaning Mission (see Mass in the Catholic Church in Wikipedia). It is supposed to mean that after the Mass, we are sent out to share the good news of the Gospels and live in the presence of Christ for others. Christmas is the word meaning Christ Mass. The Mass has a structure. In the beginning, we start by asking for the forgiveness of our sins and beg for the mercy of God to forgive us. Then, we praise God (by singing). Next, we have the Liturgy (or formula) of the Word, including scripture readings, a homily and prayers. Finally, we have the Liturgy of the Eucharist, including offering, consecration and receiving of the consecrated elements.

The Hebrew bible, the Tanakh including the Torah, has been undergoing editing for some time but it was standardized in about 1008 A.D. that the Masoretic text (see Wikipedia) of the Hebrew bible was formed. This text were significantly different (Hackett, 2024a) at certain places from the old Greek translation of the Hebrew bible, called the Septuagint (see Wikipedia) that was believed to have been translated by third century B.C. It was thought that the Septuagint might be more consistent with the old Hebrew bible as there are places where the Dead Sea scrolls were consistent with the Septuagint than with the Masoretic text (Hackett, 2024b; 2025a) despite that some places the Dead Sea scrolls align more with the Masoretic text than the Septuagint. People are concerned that the Masoretic text was being edited from the time of the resurrection of Jesus to obscure the prophecies of Old Testament to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah because Jewish scholars and leaders generally did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. For example, the Septuagint indicated that a virgin gave birth to a son who is the Emmanuel but the Masoretic text changed the word to a young woman, obscuring the prophesy of the virgin birth. It is believed that Jesus Christ had used the so called Septuagint (or the more or less common Greek translation of the Pentateuch, Psalm and Isaiah; Hackett, 2025c) instead of the Hebrew Bible because the quoted text align with the so called Septuagint instead of aligning with the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible. Quoted text as evidence for the use of so called Septuagint by Jesus Christ includes Isaiah (61:1-2) in Luke (4:18-19) with the phrase "and recovering of sight to the blind" (Hackett, 2025b).

Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Bible all share the same 27 books of the New Testament. However, the main difference between them (Bible in Action, 2025) is in the content of the Old Testament. The Protestant Bible adheres to the Jewish Hebrew Tanakh's canon, containing the same 66 books found in the Jewish tradition.

Most likely, the Protestant Bible may refer to the Masoretic text. The Catholic Bible is based on the Septuagint but may have referred to some parts of the Hebrew Bible in the early centuries after Jesus Christ ascension to heaven, and the Catholic Bible includes several books not found in the Protestant Bible, some of which may refer to prayers to the dead which may have been used to justify the belief in purgatory. The Eastern Orthodox Bible is the most extensive canon based on the Septuagint, containing more books than the Catholic Bible.

According to the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus Christ cursed the Fig tree (e.g. Mark 11:12-14; see [Cursing of the Fig Tree in Wikipedia](#)) which did not bare any fruit. In the Old Testament, the Fig tree had served as a representation of Israel and its people before so that a fruitless Fig tree represented punishment or unfaithfulness of Israel. Therefore, the curse by Jesus Christ was a parallel to God who would judge Israel which did not bare any fruit of righteousness as Jews in Israel did not believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah. His curse was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when Israel fell and the second temple was destroyed. As a result, many Jews were dispersed away from Israel without a nation to protect the Jewish people until 1948 when Israel was established as a country.

We need to start God's salvation plan (see [Salvation in Wikipedia](#)) before the fall of Adam and Eve. I speculate that in the beginning, God as a perfect being was on His own shared with his Word. God is loving so He wants to share his power with someone. Therefore, He begets the Son of God to share as well as love between them via the Holy spirit. To show that the Son of God is wealthy to inherit the power of God, God made angels, spirits with free will so that some of them may turn against God by their free will. However, those turned cannot be saved because they know the power of God, and this shows that the Son of God is special as angels with power and free will can be corrupted but the Son of God is not. So, God would be righteous to give His power to the Son of God among the angels and spirits that turned against God. Again to show that the Son of God is wealthy to inherit the power of God to the loyal angels and spirits, God created man with free will so that they turn against God but man can be saved by the Son of God through salvation. This time the Son of God has to go through suffering to show that He is wealthy of His title and inherit the power of God whereas the loyal angels and spirits do not need to go through this test or demonstration. God needs to do this because He is righteous to give the Son of God His power. Now, the corrupted angels or spirits serve the purpose to tempt Man and the Son of God against God. It should be noted that God is not collaborating with corrupted angels or spirits but just let them tempt Man and the Son of God as they desired.

The doctrine of the original sin (see [Wikipedia](#)) by Augustine has been in dispute (e.g., Heiser, 2023). Our view is based on the original sin condition that is passed down or inherited by descendants. Why are we concerned that the original sin condition is not a (personal) sin but a condition that is passed down to us? This is because people are not held responsible for sin that they do not commit, and it would appear unjust if the (original) sin is acquired by inheritance rather than by committing it. So, what is this original sin condition? This condition (akin to the "fallen" existence condition) is the lack or deprivation of original holiness and justice like Adam and Eve after their fall. Holiness here means set apart and does not necessarily mean sinless. Since we are not as holy as Adam and Eve before the fall, we are unable to be present with God as

frequently as we wish so that we may doubt His existence leading to our ignorance of God. Also, our original sin condition is that after the fall, Adam and Eve have to die because they were punished by God for eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so the condition of death dominion is passed down to us and we have to die as well since we are deprived from the tree of life as Adam and Eve fell from Eden. In addition, our original sin condition means that we may lack justice, so we have a tendency to sin. As a result, there may be suffering. However, why do we lack justice? This is because Adam and Eve have eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This condition is passed down to us so that we are aware of good and evil. As evil may mean that we may be tempted to do the incorrect thing for expediency and/or for gaining advantages, we may lack justice to do the right thing. However, we are not encouraging the view that people inherited the original sin as a (personal) sin that Adam and Eve have, so people are guilty from birth. Rather the condition (similar to the condition of fallen existence) that this guilt of Adam and Eve is in after the fall is inherited by us. The acknowledgement of the original sin condition is necessary because our scientia theology (Luk, 2024a) has a principle of it, and it is supported by Marian apparition where our Lady of Lourdes declared she is the immaculate conception. Note that some other Marian apparitions also indicated that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the immaculate conception so Saint Bernadette Soubirous did not misheard her. Note that baptism only washes away our original sin conditions for the soul and not necessary all the (physical) effects (to be precise some temporal consequences) of our original sin conditions like death dominion.

According to Catholic teaching, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son but according to Eastern Orthodox teaching, the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father (see Filioque in Wikipedia). So, how do we know that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well (Riecker, 2025)? In the New Testament, the Son gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples in the Pentecost so the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well. Also, the Father and the Son are of the same essence so what the Father can do, the Son can do except the Son cannot be the Father. So, if the Holy Spirit can proceed from the Father, then the Holy Spirit can proceed from the Son as well.

Peter denied Jesus Christ three times before. However, Peter is the rock or foundation of the church and he is entrusted with the key to heaven. So, Peter was upset by his own denial when seeing Jesus Christ after his resurrection. Jesus Christ tried to restore Peter's confidence (see Restoration of Peter in Wikipedia) by asking Peter three times whether Peter loves Him. Jesus Christ reassured Peter that he would attend his sheep indicating to Peter that he would lead followers of Jesus Christ so that Peter is the "rock". This supports the view that the apostolic succession began with Saint Peter (see Wikipedia) from Jesus Christ.

In Genesis of the Old Testament, we are said to be created in the image of God that is why devils, demons and Satan hate us. What does created in the image of God mean? It could mean that we are triune beings (with the body, soul and spirit) like the Holy Trinity who is triune as well. It could also mean that we function like God because God rules over the heaven and the earth, whereas we were created to take care of other creatures on earth. It could mean that we have unique moral, intellectual and spiritual qualities with a will that reflect God. More importantly, it could mean that we have relation with God just like the person in the Holy Trinity has relation with

God. This sets us apart from other creatures on earth because other creatures do not have relations with God.

2.4 Update of Beliefs related to Atheists' Views

Some atheists and some scientists have some significant misunderstanding of our hypothesis testing approach to test the Son of God hypothesis (Luk, 2024b) because they are so accustomed to conventional scientific hypothesis testing that they overlooked the nature of the testing we are engaging in. First, they argued that the level of acceptance of the hypothesis should be increased from 95% to say 99.99% because extra-ordinary claim requires extra-ordinary evidence (see Wikipedia) as popularized by Carl Sagan. However, this reason needs to be balanced with another counter reason called Pascal's Wager (see Wikipedia) which lowers the level of acceptance of the hypothesis considerably because of the payoff if we believe or not believe Christianity is true. In the end, we suggest that balancing these two reasons will just maintain the level of acceptance of the hypothesis testing to 95% so that our previous hypothesis testing still hold.

Second, some atheists and some scientists forgot we are evaluating existential statements here instead of universal statements in science. Universal statements (in science) require all the cases to be true before the universal statement is claimed to be true. However, existential statements require only one case to be true and then the existential statement is true. Alternatively, the existential statement is false if all the cases are false. Now, it is not sufficient that all the cases at the present time are false but all the cases in the future as well as in the past are false to make the existential statement is false. It is like the opposite of the universal statement. One might argue that showing only one case is true is unreliable. Also, one can always doubt away the only one case making it difficult to be certain that the existential statement is true. One might argued that there are only anecdotal evidence to support the claim. However, for existential statements, anecdotal evidence is sufficient to prove the claim since only one case is true and the whole existential statement is true. If we found a few cases are true, then the existential statement is true. However, the skeptics usually doubt away the few cases by claiming that the unexpected events like miracles are poorly documented so that they can doubt these events happened. Their expectation is that the documentation should be similar to scientists doing controlled experiment which is not reasonable for unexpected events. That is why we developed a methodology (Luk, 2024a) to decide the acceptance of the hypothesis by combining the conditional probabilities of miracles are true given the evidence.

Third, some atheists or some scientists object that we do not random sample the cases in the hypothesis testing because scientific procedure uses random sampling. However, random sampling only works for universal statements. If the universal statement is true, then all cases would be true so that even if we random sample the cases, all the sampled cases will be true, increasing our confidence of accepting the hypothesis. However, if the existential statement is true, then it is possible all the cases are false except one case so that if we random sample, we will make the wrong conclusion that the existential statement is false even though it should be true. Therefore, we perform selective sampling, examining cases that are likely to be true and further examine the evidence to weight the probability that the case is true based on the evidence. Also, for random sampling, the null hypothesis would usually uses a

binomial distribution or normal distribution to derive the probability taking into account of the number of false cases. However, for existential statement, our methodology uses a Bayesian framework where most of the cases are false so that the distribution is highly skewed making the binomial or normal distributions inappropriate. Therefore, random sampling should not be used.

Fourth, some atheists or some scientists claimed that miracles cannot be repeated (see Repeatability in Wikipedia) like the scientific experiments, so we feel less certain that the miracles actually happened. However, repeatability is implied by the universal statements like physical laws because these laws are true for all objects and for all time so that when one repeats the experiment, the same outcome is expected. On the other hand, existential statements only indicate some cases are true and many cases are false, so this implies that the experiments cannot be repeated unless most cases are true. Therefore, one should not require the support of existential statements needs repeatability as a criterion of success since proving an existential statement is true does not require repeatability unlike universal statements.

Fifth, some atheists or some scientists thought that hypothesis testing requires predictions but historical science does not have predictions but instead retrodictions (see Wikipedia). Therefore, it seems impossible for historical science to perform hypothesis testing as there are no predictions. However, historical science can perform retrodictions or inferences, the consequence of which may be consistent or inconsistent with existing knowledge of the historical event or its implications so that these retrodictions or inferences can be tested like predictions in hypothesis testing. Moreover, in historical science, historical events may have left some relics or artifacts which can be scientifically examined so that the outcome may test whether the relics or artifacts are consistent with the hypothesis of the historical events or their implications. The scientific experiments with the relics or artifacts may produce reliability measures of the experimental outcomes so that those outcomes predicted by the hypothesis may become the evidence to support or refute the historical events or their implications. Therefore, it is possible to carry out hypothesis testing in historical science which includes our (historical science) hypothesis testing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Some atheists and some scientists are materialists, and they have real difficulty to accept that there is life after death (see Afterlife in Wikipedia). While there are many near death experiences, they argue that these experiences are subjective and did not relate to objective reality. First, we remind them that there are several near death experiences that can be verified by objective realities. However, they consider these as anecdotal evidence but we remind them that the claim that life after death exists is an existential statement that should not be shown like universal statement, so one strong case would be sufficient to show that the existential statement is true. One strong case occurred with a compulsive disorder patient who is forced to remember numbers she encountered. She had a near death experience and a out of body experience when she saw the 12-digit serial number of a cardiac vesicular machine seven feet high in the operating theatre. After she was saved and alive, she told the nurse who wrote down the number. Later, the nurse asked the maintenance man to climb up the ladder to verify the serial number is correct. The skeptic was unconvinced because the event was poorly documented since it does not have the exact date of the event, the name of the patient, the name of the maintenance person,

etc. The event was told as a story that was remembered by the nurse who became a professor in a university. However, such event is unexpected and to expect that the people involved wrote down every details is not reasonable. The participant may initially felt it was extra-ordinary and did not realize the significance of the event that it can be a proof of life after death, so it was not properly documented. Other events like finding a quarter coin next to the monitor or a shoe left at the top of another building are near death experiences that have been verified with objective reality. However, skeptics still treat them as anecdotal evidence and would not accept there is life after death even though we are testing the claim of an existential statement instead of a universal statement. Second, neurosurgeons and neural scientists (Discovery Science, 2025) thought that there is evidence for the soul because while memory and perception can be stimulated, abstract thoughts (like logical reasoning) cannot be stimulated (Daily Dose of Wisdom, 2025). The idea is that if materialism is true, there should be some circuitry for logical reasoning in the brain like in computers, so we expect stimulation will result in some abstract thoughts but there is none. Third, some scientist measured the loss of weight of a person who became dead and inferred that it would be the weight of the soul. This is the well known 21 grams experiment (see Wikipedia) by MacDougall in 1901, but it has largely been dismissed by the scientific community because the sample size is too small and that it used selective reporting. For showing the existential statement is true, these objections do not stand and it could be considered as the evidence for the weight of the soul although whether one infers the loss of weight is due to the soul leaving the body is another matter. Fourth, some like Sir Roger Penrose, the physics noble prize winner, with Hameroff proposed a quantum theory of consciousness (Hameroff and Penrose, 2013; Slumber Lab, 2025a; Slumber Lab, 2025b; also see Orchestrated Objective Reduction in Wikipedia) and people (Hameroff and Chopra, 2012; Sha and Xiu, 2024) extended this to the soul as people are now working on experiments to support such a theory (e.g., Hossenfelder, 2024; The Economic Times, 2025). Note that I think God is more powerful than quantum soul/consciousness which operates on the rules of quantum mechanics, so they are not the same thing. Fifth, do we count the souls of the deceased appearing in dreams of relatives? For example, Carlo Acutis (see Wikipedia) who passed away appeared to his mother in a dream telling her that he would be a saint which came true by now. Therefore, is this another line of evidence that there are souls? Finally, there are apparitions that indicate there are souls. Notable examples include Marian apparitions. While some Marian apparitions only have a handful of seers, some like Our Lady of Zeitoun (see Wikipedia) has thousands if not millions of eye-witnesses of Marian apparitions. So, there could be millions of eye-witnesses seeing the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and mass hallucination is unlikely to be an explanation of the eye-witness phenomena. In summary, there are various lines of evidence that support the existence of souls, and we can weigh on the different lines of evidence supporting the existential statement being true based on our Bayesian methodology (Luk, 2024a) to combine the different conditional probabilities into one. Note that the soul and the spirit are different (The Bible Stories, 2024) because the soul is concerned with earthly things, but the spirit connects us to God even though they interact with each other.

Some atheists and scientists cannot accept Eucharistic miracles (see Wikipedia) that turn bread into flesh because they think it is impossible for inanimate objects to become animate things. However, it is precisely that such thing is thought to be impossible that it is a miracle if it happens. So, skeptics use the dictum, extra-ordinary

claim requires extra-ordinary evidence, to examine such claim but they forgot that there is the Pascal's wager (see Wikipedia) to balance the examination. Also, they claim that these are only anecdotal evidence but they forgot that we are testing the existential statement claim. One strong case is the 1996 Eucharistic miracle happened in Argentina. The church asked a lawyer and a journalist to handle the case for scientific investigation. They gave the blood sample with lumps of flesh to a heart specialist doctor who examined the material under the microscope. The doctor concluded that he found the heart cells under the microscope as well as some living white-blood cells, so he asked the history of the sample which he was not told before because he was a catholic. He was told that the specimen was coming from Eucharistic miracles. However, our skeptics doubt that the specimen was being tempered with but the microscope found live white-blood cells as well which could not survive out of the body for a day or two. Therefore, it was unlikely that the specimen was tempered with, which was sealed in a box in Argentina before flying to New York for the heart specialist doctor to examine. While the skeptic was silent, (s)he appeared still unconvinced by the case. Therefore, we need to weigh on the existential statement being true based on our Bayesian methodology (Luk, 2024a).

The Wikipedia has wiki pages on the Shroud of Turin, Marian apparitions and Eucharistic miracles. The wiki page on the Shroud of Turin is biased towards showing that the Shroud is a medieval forgery because they picked only sources from well known journals like nature or science, which may not have an impartial view as journals may have their own agenda with most of the scientists being atheists. In fact, if one of the reviewer is a confirmed atheist, it would be highly unlikely that papers claiming on the existence of miracles will be accepted for publication. Also, journals would not want their reputation to be tarnished by accepting papers that claim supernatural phenomena, fearing that they may be ridiculed by scientists. The wiki page on the list of Marian apparitions appears to be more balanced because it lists out the Marian Apparitions as well as reminding the reader at the top that many Marian apparitions investigated by the church receive no judgment or negative judgment. Again, to show the existence of miracles does not need all Marian Apparitions to be true but only one Marian Apparition is true and the existential statement claim is true. Some of the Marian Apparitions are very well documented but skeptics are still unconvinced as they pick on things to doubt. The wiki page on Eucharistic miracles appear to favour the miracles are true, but the page includes a case that falsely identified the Eucharistic miracle being true. Instead of showing the number of false cases, it gave details of the falsely identified case while providing information to those that are thought to be true for people to discern. Anyway, skeptics can always find things to doubt. Skeptics may use a strategy to doubt many peripheral things to intensify our feeling of doubt even though these peripheral things got nothing to do with the miracles, so we need to weigh on the existential statement being true based on our Bayesian methodology (Luk, 2024a).

Some atheists doubted that the God mentioned in the Bible is the same God because God has different names (The Power of the Word, 2025) in the Bible like Elohim or Yahweh. They believe that they are different gods in different books. Some may even think that different people have their own God. For us, it is clear that we believe in the God that Jesus Christ believed in because if Jesus Christ believe in the God who is not in the Bible, then Jesus Christ would have mentioned it to us in His miracles. Similar clarifications have happened before like the Blessed Virgin Mary who clarifies us

about the existence of hell and that she is the immaculate conception when there was doubt among Christians about these issues. Also, Jesus Christ cannot inherit the power of the Father if the God He believed in is not the same God from the Bible since Jesus Christ is a Jew who fulfills the scripture. This belief is consistent with our core belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God whom we infer there is God. In my first ebook (Luk, 2024a) and my slides (Luk, 2024b), I have included a table showing the religious contexts of those miracles which support that Jesus Christ is the Son of God so that these miracles are related to the same God that Jesus Christ inherited His power. By our faith, we believe that the God Jesus Christ believes in created Heaven and Earth so He is the most powerful as Jesus Christ is a Jew who believed in the scripture. If that was not the case, Jesus Christ would have informed us in His miracles and lead us to the true God. However, Jesus Christ has not done that, so we are quite certain that the God whom Jesus Christ believes in and herits the power from is the same God in the Bible.

3. Catholic Faith

In this section, we will look at what is the Catholic Faith (see Catholic Church in Wikipedia) and what it constitute of (see Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003). Faith (see Wikipedia) is about belief possibly without seeing, trust of something or somebody and confidence in something or somebody. The Catholic Faith is about believing in Jesus Christ, trusting Jesus Christ and has confidence in Jesus Christ. The scripture is what we learn about Jesus Christ so that you understand Him as a human and as God. The sacred tradition is what is passed down from the Apostles to the church so as to understand Jesus Christ as human and as God. Both scripture and sacred tradition are important elements in the Catholic faith instead of relying solely on scripture. The Catholic faith also recognizes the Magisterium (see Wikipedia) to provide the proper teachings and the proper understanding of the scripture unlike some denominations where different people can provide different interpretations of scripture. In addition, the Catholic faith recognizes that the Pope as the successor of Saint Peter so that there is an apostolic succession (guided by the Holy Spirit). Finally, Catholics believe in Papal Supremacy (see Wikipedia) as required by the Catholic dogma declared in 1870 that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ (representative of Christ) who has supreme, full and universal power over the entire Catholic church, including authority in matters of faith, morals and church discipline. In practice, whether the Pope fully exercises this power is another matter, but the Catholic faith recognizes it. Similarly, Papal infallibility (see Wikipedia) only holds when the Pope speaks in ex-cathedra and not whenever he speaks, so infallibility is not exercised most of time in practice even though Catholic faith recognizes it.

For the Catholic faith, it should be clear by now that there is no guarantee to heaven (Nunez, 2022). We cannot simply quote the scripture and claim God would do this or that. On the other hand, Catholics do not rely on a merit system to heaven since doing good does not cancel out doing bad unlike some other religion. Instead, what is required is that we recognize our sins, repent them, and live in a better way next time. In addition, our sins need to be forgiven by God where the priests are performing their forgiving duty in persona Christi (see Wikipedia) according to the sacred traditions like some sacraments, while in the end we do not have guarantees that we will be forgiven. For God has full and complete knowledge and will judge by Himself. For us, we need to beg for his mercy to forgive us so that we become righteous to go to heaven. Even following the sacraments will not guaranteed us to receive grace or mercy from God. We cannot claim that we received the sacraments then we are sinless. Rather, we need to trust Jesus Christ will be merciful and forgive us. For God knows clearly whether we truly repent our sins and try our best to be better. That is why James said that faith and works are both needed because just by faith without work (James 2:14-26) does not show truly that one has been transformed to be better. However, faith alone is possible for some special cases because there may not be any opportunity to carry out works like Saint Dismas (see Penitent thief in Wikipedia) who was crucified alongside with Jesus Christ and who does not have the opportunity to do works, so his faith allowed by Jesus Christ was enough for him to enter heaven. In the end, we trust Jesus Christ to make the right decision for He has complete knowledge of us to make these moral decisions. Since God knows whether our faith is genuine, so faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:28) alone is possible although for human being to discern, works support our faith and claim before others (including God). Also, God knows in the end whether we go to heaven or not in the future, so

God can accordingly give grace to us if we eventually can go to heaven or God will accordingly not give grace to us if we eventually cannot go to heaven. Since God knows our future, God can put down our name in the Book of Life even before we were born (which sounds like predestination in Calvinism) but whether God actually does that, we do not know because God can wait until it is judgment day to decide whether to put our name down in the Book of Life. However, I suspect God wants to show He is merciful and can be trusted to others, so He gives grace whenever possible (if that does not affect others) to give the best chance to people to go to heaven so that they would not blame Him because they did not receive grace. Also, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* (Question 109), humanity needs grace in general from God to do many things including knowledge, do or wish any good, etc. Finally, not providing guarantees also discourages people from evil-doing after they claimed to believe in Jesus Christ. However, some misunderstood that they are guaranteed to go to heaven after receiving baptism.

There are four pillars of the Catholic faith. The first pillar is the Apostles' creed and the Nicene creed, which spell out what do Catholics believe in common. The second pillar is the sacraments which are sacred traditions that we receive grace from God. Here, we need to trust God to give us grace after we followed the sacred traditions. The third pillar is the Christian life that we live out. Within this life, there are usually many opportunities that we follow Jesus Christ to make the appropriate decisions. How we understand Jesus Christ may affect us exercising the appropriate (moral) decisions. The fourth pillar is our prayers which shape our relationship with God. These four pillars are taken from the Catholic Catechism (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003) which explains the Catholic faith in a question and answer format using these four building blocks for the Catholic faith.

3.1 Creeds

The Apostles' creed (see Wikipedia) was first formulated to make clear what we are believing in Christianity. Later, due to the heresy of Arianism (see Wikipedia), the Nicene creed (see Wikipedia) further clarified that we believe Jesus Christ is both God and human. In short, these two creeds form the core beliefs or tenets of Christianity so that it makes clear what our faith entails.

In the first sentence of the Apostles' creed and the Nicene creed, God the Father is attributed to have made the heaven and earth. The first sentences of these two creeds try to show and claim that the Christian God is the greatest as He made heaven and earth, because it is impossible to prove to human that the Christian God is the greatest of all. We can only use some demonstrations to support that the Christian God is the greatest. If the Christian God claims to be the greatest and nobody is able to challenge Him, then the Christian God is consistent with our knowledge that He is the greatest. In the end, we have to rely on faith (i.e., believe and trust) when it comes to believing the Christian God is the greatest. If there is some other God that is greater than the Christian God, then our worship of the Christian God may offend the other greater God and we may be in trouble with the other greater God. That is why it is important that the Christian God is the greatest, and that is why we include this as our core belief.

The Apostles' creed mentioned the Jesus Christ went to hell, Shoel or Hades after the crucifixion but the Nicene creed omitted that details. How can the Apostles' creed know that Jesus Christ went to hell, Shoel or Hades? Actually, the hell that the Apostles' creed refers to is unlikely the Gehenna meant in the New Testament because souls in Gehenna rejected God and theologians believed that Jesus Christ would not do anything for them. Instead, theologians believed that Jesus Christ went to Hades or a limbo where those believe but could not get to heaven because of the original sin or attached sin were released to go to heaven. The Apostles' creed might make an inference that Jesus Christ went to hell from what the Gospel of Matthew (25:52-53) reported, which depicted souls went out of their tombs and went to Jerusalem after the crucifixion. Therefore, if you believe in the Gospels, then you would likely to believe that Jesus Christ went to hell as well.

Nicene creed mentioned that Jesus Christ was raised three days after the crucifixion according to scripture but this is not mentioned in the Apostles' creed. The Nicene creed probably considered that this relates to some prophesy or foreshadowing of the resurrection in the Old Testament as referred by the scripture. For example, Hosea 6:2 wrote that "after two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live in his presence". This passage was often cited as a prophesy about the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Testament (1 Corinthian 15:4) so that it would not be a surprise that the scripture mentioned in the Nicene creed might, for example, refer to Hosea 6:2 in the Old Testament.

3.2 Sacraments

One of the building blocks of our Catholic faith is the sacraments (see Sacraments of the Catholic Church in Wikipedia) which are rites (therefore as part of the sacred traditions) that provide God's grace to those who receive grace through enacting the rituals. There is no guarantee that by enacting the rituals the participants will receive the grace of God or some favour from God. However, as Catholics, we trust (and therefore by our faith) that God will give us grace and these sacraments are instituted by Jesus Christ.

In the early church, the number of sacraments were not defined and also varied. The current seven sacraments were set out by Peter Lombard, which were confirmed by the Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215. These seven sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Anointing of the sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders. These sacraments are grouped into the sacraments of initiation (i.e., Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), the sacraments of healing (i.e., Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick) and the sacraments of service (i.e., Matrimony and Holy Orders). These seven sacraments are related or originated from the Bible, and we will point out how the sacrament is related to or originated from the Bible if it is considered not clear.

Baptism (see Wikipedia) is a sacrament that washes away our original sin condition (of our soul) and all other sins so that we can start a new Christian life without sin. It is not recognized in Judaism tradition, so many Jews who are not Christians do not get baptized. John the Baptist was the one baptizing people in the New Testament, and Jesus Christ was baptized by him as well. John the Baptist felt that Jesus Christ did not need Baptism because He is sinless. However, Jesus Christ requested it be done so

that this signals that Jesus Christ recognized Baptism as a ritual therefore a sacrament later even though it did not come from Judaism. When Jesus Christ was baptized, the Father spoke and the Holy Spirit appearing as a dove descended onto Jesus Christ, so that the Holy Trinity was there. That is why when people get baptized, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are announced.

Confirmation (see Wikipedia) is another sacrament which is the out pouring of the Holy Spirit onto those who receive such grace so that those people are marked and sealed by the Holy Spirit. This sacrament is related to the out pouring of the Holy Spirit to the disciples after the crucifixion during Pentecost where the disciples after receiving the Holy Spirit were able to speak in tongues and later performed miracles. By performing Confirmation, it is hoped that the Holy Spirit will accompany those who receive such grace in their life so that their life is guided by the Holy Spirit and is safe from distress. In many cases for adults, Confirmation is carried out immediately after Baptism because a valid Confirmation demands the person to be free of mortal sin, who is likely to be the case after Baptism which washes away all the sins of the baptised person.

Eucharist (see Wikipedia) is an important sacrament, if not the most important one, which washes away our venial sin. It is important because it is a sacrifice that Jesus Christ did on the cross, it is a worship and it is a spiritual nourishment for us. The Eucharist is a Holy communion in which the real presence of Jesus Christ is believed to be in the consecrated bread and wine. Catholics are required to believe this and there were Eucharistic miracles that were documented in which the bread turned into flesh and wine turned into blood. Some of these Eucharistic miracles have been scientifically investigated like the 1996 Argentina case, which may strengthen the belief of the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. The Eucharist originated from the last supper that Jesus Christ had with His disciples and it is not part of any Judaism tradition, although the Gospels recorded that the last supper coincides with the day of the Passover. This co-incidence has symbolic significance as Jesus Christ is thought to be the lamb of God. On the original day of Passover in Egypt, Israelites were told to slaughter a sheep for sacrifice and wipe its blood above the door of the household as a mark so that death would not come to the first born male(s) of the household. Jesus Christ signifies as the lamb of God who sacrifices Himself like the sheep of the Passover, for our sins so that death is conquered for us like death may not visit us. This all happened on the Passover day (starting six pm on the day and ending before six pm the following day).

Holy Orders (see Wikipedia) is an important sacrament that confers the mission of Christ's apostles to ordained men as bishops, priests and deacons. Bishops can perform the sacramental act of ordination by laying on of hands to bestow spiritual power, lifelong commitment and an indelible mark on the soul. The Holy Order has three levels. The first level is the deacon who serves the community and proclaims the Gospels. The second level is the priest who preaches, teaches and celebrates sacraments like the Eucharist and the forgiveness of sins. The third level is the bishop who possesses the complete fullness of priesthood and who has the power to ordain others. The Holy Orders are only meant to be received by men only. The Holy Orders originate from Jesus Christ who establish the priesthood of his Apostles who in turn pass down the authority through the laying on of hands. This pass down of authority is like the Roman orders for passing authority of governance. This pass down of

authority is different from Judaism where the high priest pass down the authority to his descendant.

Reconciliation (see Penance in the Catholic Church in Wikipedia) is an important sacrament that can wash away our mortal sin (see Wikipedia). The process involves the sorrows for sin (called contrition), acknowledging sins to the priest (called confession), performing penance and the pronouncement of sin forgiveness by the priest (called absolution). John 20:22-23 is frequently cited as the institution for the sacrament of Reconciliation which can be claimed to be based on scripture. The reason why priests can absolve sin is because the authority to forgive sins is passed down from the Apostles to the leaders of the church through the sacraments of the Holy Orders, and the priests are acting In persona Christi (see Wikipedia).

Anointing of the sick (see Wikipedia) is a sacrament that provides spiritual strength, healing and comfort to people suffering from serious illness, injury or old age. The priest administered the sick person by anointing him/her with blessed oil, and the priest prayed over him/her for (spiritual) healing and for God's grace of peace, courage and forgiveness. These instructions for the rites come from James (5:14-15) book in the New Testament, and it is considered as the foundation of the sacrament even though Jesus Christ and His disciples have been healing people. Therefore, this sacrament is considered to be based on scripture.

Matrimony (see Marriage in the Catholic Church in Wikipedia) is another sacrament which is a sacred, lifelong and exclusive covenant between a man and a woman. This sacrament is related to the Matrimony in Judaism which originally has two stages: passing the ring and signing the contract. However, unlike Matrimony in Judaism, this sacrament is a covenant instead of a contract. This sacrament originates from the divine command for man and woman to unite. The covenant between man and woman is permanent and is similar to Jesus Christ and His church. Jesus Christ also signals the importance of Matrimony by performing His first miracle at a wedding banquet at Cana in the Gospel of John.

3.3 Christian Life (Morality)

The third building block of Catholic faith is the morality of our lives that is lived out and not something that is only theorized. Therefore, most people do not just have faith alone but also works that reflect our faith. James (2:17-18) claims that faith without good works is dead as a citation that faith needs to be accompanied by good works. However, some special cases can go to heaven for holding faith without works, for example Saint Dismas, because there is no opportunity to perform the works anymore. For most of us, faith and works go hand in hand, and that means we need to live out a Christian life that conforms to Christian moral values.

What are the Christian moral values or rules? Jesus Christ taught us two commandments (Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:27) which are love God (see Great Commandment in Wikipedia) and love neighbour (see New Commandment in Wikipedia). These are not easy commandments to follow as love could mean a lot of things. Love is not a feeling like falling in love with someone. Instead, love is the will for the good of others according to Saint Thomas Aquinas. It is a deliberate choice and an act of the will to actively desire and pursue what is

genuinely best for the other even if it involves sacrifice. What does it mean to love God? It can mean worshipping God, do what God wants, do what pleases God, etc. How do we know what God wants? So you have to pray to ask what God wants, and you need to observe from everyday life what God wants us to do. You may study the Bible and may know what God wants us to do like spreading the Gospels. On the other hand, atheists who do not believe there is God cannot love God and therefore fails the first commandment of Jesus Christ. What does it mean to love neighbour? Here, neighbour is anyone you can reach physically, virtually, etc. Neighbour includes your enemy whom you need to forgive. That may not be easy.

The two commandments of Jesus Christ are thought to summarize the ten commandments (see Wikipedia) from Moses time. Therefore, Catholics have to follow the ten commandments. The first three commandments in the ten commandments are about love God, the first commandment of Jesus Christ; they are (1) not have strange gods before the Christian God, (2) not take the name of the Lord your God in vain and (3) remember to keep holy the Lord's day. The remaining commandments in the ten commandments are summarized by the second commandment of Jesus Christ, love neighbour. Neighbour includes yourself because the fifth commandment is not to kill which includes killing oneself (i.e., suicide). These commandments are not to be interpreted in a restricted sense but in a broad sense. For example, the sixth commandment is not to commit adultery which includes fornication, masturbation, etc. and not just the literal meaning of adultery of married man and woman. Therefore, the things included in the ten commandments can be quite extensive.

The ten commandments from Moses time were available to Israelites. However, the Old Testament shows that Israelites are unable to follow them, and that is why Jesus Christ needs to come to save us. Therefore, how do we expect ourselves to be able to follow the ten commandments from Moses time now since Israelites and us are only human beings? After Jesus Christ resurrection, our situation is different from the Israelites in the Old Testament. First, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us whereas the Israelites in the Old Testament did not. Second, we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation which can forgive our mortal sins. Third, we have the Sacrament of the Eucharist to forgive our venial sins (see Wikipedia). Fourth, when we pray, the Father, Son of God and the Holy Spirit may help us as after the resurrection, as God became a personal God for us.

We need to be able to recognize sins so that we identify them, repent them and ask God for forgiveness for those sins. If we do not recognize these sins, we may not have intentions for these sins or we sinned without realizing them, in which case we would not be able to ask for their forgiveness from God since we do not know we have sinned. Based on the two commandments of Jesus Christ, there are seven deadly sins (see Wikipedia) that we need to recognize, and they are Pride, Anger, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Greed and Sloth. You may wonder could Pride be a sin since this might just involve thinking about something instead of doing something. However, some thoughts are sins. If you just had a brief thought, then this may be regarded as a temptation which is not a sin. However, thoughts that are developed extensively to the point where they may be enacted may be treated as sins for Catholics. The sin could be about not doing something instead of doing something to be a sin. So, pride preventing you to love others may be a sin.

We also need to differentiate between mortal sins and venial sins because their treatment for forgiveness is different. For mortal sins, we need to carry out the Sacrament of Reconciliation to ask for forgiveness from God via the priest (see *In persona Christi* in Wikipedia). For venial sins, we can repent them and take the Eucharist to wash them away. A mortal sin needs to be committed willfully and it cannot be pretended to be ignorant of divine law which may compound our guilt. Venial sins are less serious sins which may not lead to the separation between God and us, but may injure our relationship with God so that forgiveness is needed. The seven deadly sins can be mortal sins or venial sins depending on the seriousness of the sin. For example, masturbation, a form of lust, may be considered a mortal sin and looking at others with lustful intent (e.g., kissing) may be considered as a venial sin.

Apart from thinking about sins, it might be beneficial to think of what we desire to do so as to avoid sinning. In the Sermon on the Mount (see Wikipedia) in the New Testament, Jesus Christ helped us by declaring the beatitudes (e.g., hunger and thirst for righteousness) to his disciples, suggesting what characters or qualities of people are blessed to receive divine favour. If we strive to possess these qualities or character, then we are moving away from sins and likely to receive favours from God. Similarly, there are the cardinal virtues (i.e., prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; see Wikipedia) and theological virtues (i.e., faith, hope and love or charity; see Wikipedia) that can lead us away from sins if we possess these virtues. However, to what extent do we possess these characters or qualities to achieve our goal to heaven or keep the commandments? For example, how should charity or love, the theological virtue, should be manifested in our behaviour? Should we give all our possessions to the poor and become a monk like a Saint? How much do we give away to the poor? Do we give a small amount to the poor regularly to express our charity or love to others? It is not clear to me where the red line is. Should we think of the red line or try our best to be charitable? How does our conscience react to being charitable and how would our relative react to our charity to others? These are real questions that appear in our everyday life when we live out our Christian life.

In our baptism class, we were encouraged not to judge others for we may be judged by Jesus Christ who is sinless. However, as we are sinful, how can we judge others since we are not righteous. Therefore, it is best not to judge and if we have to judge, we should not judge harshly. We are also encouraged to forgive others as we ask for the forgiveness of God. If we do not forgive others, God may not forgive us since we are sinful. We are also encouraged to be merciful. Here, mercy means without getting a favour back, we give favours to others. We need to be merciful because we regularly ask God for mercy for we have sinned. Again, if we do not show any mercy to others, how can we expect God to show mercy to us? Again, I do not know where the red line should be drawn. I have to struggle this in my everyday life. For example, you see some old homeless people in shabby clothes and smell, struggling to walk in the street using a stick in a rainy day, do you immediately go to help them to walk or do you ignore what you see and walk away? For Jesus Christ knows everything and every details including what we are thinking, so if you walked away, were you not the goat or someone who does not give a helping hand to the needy (Matthew 25: 31-46) in the parable that Jesus Christ was separating the sheep from the goat. However, if you are going to help the smelly, homeless old people, how far will you help or walk

with them? Do you give them shelter and a bath? How merciful will you be? These are real questions that appear in our everyday life when we live out our Christian life.

For most of us, we cannot do enough unlike Saints nor do we know where the red line is. Therefore, we will not boast ourselves for being Catholics or Christians. We try our best to be humble because we know we are not merciful enough, we are not that forgiving as we want to, we are far from the cardinal virtues, theological virtues, etc., and we are sinful. So, we are not righteous; yet we ask for favours from God. Therefore, we really need to be humble as we do not deserve the favours from God, and we constantly need God and take refuge in Him for there are so many things that we cannot control and that we need His mercy.

3.4 Prayers

The fourth building block of Catholic faith is prayers (see Wikipedia) which are communications with God that form our relationship with God. There are several types of communications including adoration, confession, thanksgiving and requesting for help. When we appreciate God and what God has done or what God can do, we may adore God for His magnificence, His knowledge, His love, etc. As we recognize we have sinned, we may confess to God in our prayers and ask for forgiveness. As God may answer our prayers or certain outcomes turned up, we may thank God for His favour. As our power is limited or not in control, often we seek help from God whether it helps ourselves or people we know or humanity in general. Therefore, there are many things we pray for. After praying, we need to keep track of the events to observe whether our prayers are actually answered. This is a reflective process and we need to have good memory if we pray for many things to happen. If our prayers are answered, then we should thank God in our prayers. If not, then we need to reflect why it was not and to observe further whether God intended for something greater to happen. Therefore, praying is not just a one off event but a process of asking, observing, thanking, observing and possibly adoring God.

There are formal prayers and informal prayers. Formal prayers like Our Father or Hail Mary may be prayed together in the church to form unity among Christians and to deepen our faith guiding it in the right direction. Informal prayers like talking to God may be a two way communication between you and God. Sometimes, God actually answers back by deeds or in our head for some. Obviously, you have to practice prayers a lot to get answers back in your head, and there is no guarantee that God will give us such favour. Materialists may think these are psychosis, but the believers sometimes may be able to verify the hearings with objective reality as the answers from God may correspond to reality in the future. It should be said that not all answers are from God. Some hearings may be from demons, devils, Satan or psychosis, so one needs to discern what one hears. This could be difficult and one needs to make observations in the future to decide whether these hearings are from God or not.

We do not just pray for ourselves but for others as well as humanity in general so that prayers help us to empathize with others. This empathy helps us to follow the second commandment of Jesus Christ, which is love neighbour. Prayers also train us to be more aware of God's hidden action as we need to recall what we prayed and whether God answered our prayers. Why does God have to hide his actions? God is hidden

from us because He let us have free will to decide whether to believe in God. If God is always present or His action is always known, then we do not have free will to make the decision to believe in God. However, why does God give free will to us? First, God needs to show that He truly loves us so He gives us free will to believe. Since He is almighty, if He is always around, we would feel compelled to love him because if we do not, we know that we will be banished to hell. Also, since we have free will, we need to be responsible to what we do. Otherwise, if God always help out when some evil happens, then people may become irresponsible as God will always rescue us. Second, after the fall of Adam and Eve, we have the original sin condition so God is hidden from us. We cannot directly, casually meet God anymore until Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, where the Holy Spirit is sent to be with us. Third, it is supposed to be a test of our faith even though we do not see God but yet we believe in God. Therefore, we need to be able to believe that there is no God so that people can claim there is no God to believe in but in fact God is hidden from us. Therefore, God cannot show His actions all the time. Fourth, the hidden actions of God are supposed to be training for us to observe events in the longer span of time because God does not always give immediate gratification by His actions. Since God is eternal, the time span of the action of God may be very long. It may take years or centuries for His action to take place. Fifth, the actions of God do not just affect you but other people. So, God may not give immediate gratification to us because it may affect other people which may cause them to believe or not to believe in God or affect other cause-and-effect chain of events. Sixth, the actions of God are documented in many places in the Old Testament and the New Testament. There are also actions of God like miracles nowadays that are scientifically investigated. However, these actions happen not regularly but happen unexpectedly so that their documentation is difficult. This may be done on purpose as some people may think that there is no God so that God will not provide repeatedly occurring miracles at regular interval of time to people. One exception is the 3 dimensional image of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Alta Gracia in Argentina (EWTN, 2024) which appears for years so that scientists can visit there to investigate the miracle. However, I do not know any scientists have done that. I have also invited some paranormal scientists to go there to investigate but they refused citing they cannot afford to travel and investigate the matter. However, they are happy to receive tuition fees for taking in students to study the paranormal in universities. While they study the paranormal, they may be happy to report that there is no paranormal activity in their papers, and parapsychology is just a pseudoscience, using methods to investigate universal statements rather than existential statements. These scientists can then be praised to be impartial, objective, reliable and rigorous.

There is a misunderstanding that the Rosary prayers (see Rosary in Wikipedia) are about the Blessed Virgin Mary. While we pray the Hail Mary prayers, we are supposed to reflect simultaneously Jesus Christ. For each decade of Hail Mary prayers, we have to reflect on the Rosary mystery categories of the decade. These include the Joyful mystery category, the Sorrowful mystery category, the Luminous mystery category and the Glorious mystery category. Each mystery category is about Jesus Christ and not the Blessed Virgin Mary. Before praying the Hail Mary prayers, we pray Our Father and the Apostles' creed first and in between the decades, we pray the Glory be prayers, Our Father prayers as well as the Fatima prayers. The Rosary prayers are formal prayers which can be prayed by individuals or by a group. At the beginning and at end of the Rosary prayers, we have to perform the signs of the cross to remind us we are praying for Jesus Christ.

4. Clarifications

After updating our beliefs and going through our Catholic faith, we need to clarify some of the encounters we have with Christians and non-Christians or continue with discussion. We have listed out some of the topics that we encountered and some of them may sound repetitive because we have encountered the same problem in different occasions. These topics are written based on my memory, so it may not reflect accurately what was discussed, so you are notified.

4.1 Differences between Gospels

My Anglican friend introduced me to some seminars which focused on talking about differences between the Gospels. I have missed the first seminar which talked about the Gospel of Mark. I attended the second seminar which presents the differences of the Gospel of Matthew. The speaker identified Matthew was a Jew and his Gospel presents the viewpoint of a Jew as well. The speaker indicated that Matthew was the one who reported that Jesus Christ said that the (Mosaic) laws are fulfilled even to the dot (Matthew 5:18). This frightened the speaker because upholding the laws are very difficult and it is not clear where the red line is drawn in everyday life. The speaker also identified the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which started from Abraham because Jesus Christ is a Jew. The speaker also pointed out that the Gospel of Matthew reported that there was an earthquake after the crucifixion and that souls from tombs appeared to many in Jerusalem. The Gospel of Matthew also reported the false story that the guards of the tomb told the Jews about the empty tomb so as to counter the Jewish objection to the empty tomb.

Then the week afterwards, the speaker talked about the Gospel of Luke who was a Gentile. This time the genealogy of Jesus Christ started from Adam instead of Abraham because Luke is a Gentile so that Jesus Christ represents both Gentiles and Jews (i.e., humanity). Also, the speaker pointed out that Luke as a Gentile was more concerned about people in the lower strata of the society and he frequently talked about Jesus Christ helping these people and saying the leading/ruling class people will suffer. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples after the crucifixion and after the empty tomb was discovered.

In the final week, the speaker talked about the Gospel of John. The speaker thought that the Gospel of John was written earlier and later people added material at the end of the Gospel of John (believed to be John 20:30-31) to become the one that we now know. The Gospel of John started by identifying the “Word” or Logos instead of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the divinity of Jesus Christ. Similar to the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of John included material about Jesus encountering the disciples after the resurrection. This includes the doubting Thomas which tried to encourage people to believe without seeing.

4.2 Resistance to Rationalized Faith

I have some friends who are Catholics or Christians. When I introduced faith based on evidence and reason, they seemed to resist. One friend said that science and Christianity do not mix since science is about proving things and Christianity is about faith which is belief without seeing. He thinks that we cannot prove the existence of

God by science because we do not come into contact with God regularly and physically. For him, Christianity only needs faith. So, I asked him how he become to believe in Christianity. He said that one believes in God first before believing in the Bible according to some bishop in Hong Kong. I pressed on him further and he said that prayer is important but did not tell me in the end what makes him begin to believe in Christianity. I have objections to his view. First, science does not prove things unlike mathematics. This is because the universal statements in science requires infinite resources to prove which we cannot do. All we can do is to sample the reality and decide based on probability that the universal statements are true. Therefore, science can only find evidence to support our beliefs. For existential statements, although proving one case is enough to make the existential statement to be true, the opponent of our proof is going to doubt the case so that we lack certainty of belief. Therefore, we need to decide based on probability that the existential statements are true as well. Second, we do not directly prove the existence of God but indirectly by inference, so we do not require to be in contact with God regularly and physically. Third, we look at the physical evidence to implicate God or the Son of God, and not really directly testing the presence of them. Fourth, I find it hard to believe in God without referencing anything. One possibility is that people first believe and then see things in the perspective of the presence of God, and afterwards things turned out according to their initial belief so that they feel there is coherence between what they believe and what would happen, strengthening their faith. I have encountered this kind of faith-initiated belief for protestants and this is possible as a major theory of truth is coherence (see coherence theory of truth in Wikipedia). However, that does not exclude an evidence-based faith which is initially based on the correspondence theory of truth (see Wikipedia). After we believe based on the correspondence theory of truth, the knowledge of other material including the Bible and extra-Biblical material may be coherent so that we may believe stronger based on the coherence theory of truth.

4.3 Testing or Weighing the Son of God Hypothesis

When I tried to introduce my slides about testing the Son of God hypothesis to my Christian friend, he resisted to look at the slides because he thinks we are testing God which should be avoided according to the Bible (e.g., Matthew 4:5-7). I told him that we are not testing God but testing the hypothesis about the Son of God, but he insisted to refuse to look at the slides. I think we are examining or testing the evidence that implicates the existence of the Son of God and not really directly testing the Son of God, so it should not be a problem. However, my friend still avoided looking at the slides. Perhaps, we should use another title instead of testing the Son of God hypothesis. We can re-title it as Weighing the Son of God hypothesis because we are trying to weigh the conditional probabilities which are then combined to form the final probability of the hypothesis given the evidence. In this way, we avoid the word “test” and my Christian friends may find it less objectionable. For atheists and agnostics, the title, testing the Son of God hypothesis, has no problem since they do not have to follow the Bible (i.e. not to test God). Therefore, it would not affect the readership of these people. However, some Christians may choose to avoid the slides because of the title, and they may not benefit from the argument that the slides present when they evangelize to non-believers. Therefore, the title sometimes matter.

Google AI overview objects to testing the Son of God hypothesis because it claims that it is difficult to have empirical testing of a hypothesis that involves the

supernatural claims and faith is needed. While it claims to be difficult, it may not be impossible. Our approach is to examine the physical evidence that implicates the supernatural claims of the Son of God. Although the most secured conclusion is that there is no scientific explanation citing that science may explain later when science advances, this kind of explanation is like the science of the gap argument because it does not say how long we will wait for science to advance. Also, usually the miracles involved happen with a religious context so that we attribute the inexplicable happening to the supernatural claim. For example, after praying to some Saint who is dead, miraculous healing occurred and this does not happen once but several times. So, we attribute these miracles to the supernatural instead of the inexplicable science that we need to wait indefinitely. You may have to decide which one you believe on a case by case basis. Unfortunately, Google AI overview is popularizing that the Son of God hypothesis is not a reasonable hypothesis to test because the hypothesis involves a supernatural claim to be verified by empirical evidence, suggesting faith and science do not mix. Feedback to Google AI overview has not changed its stance and it is hoped that this ebook may change its view.

In experimental science, the hypothesis usually tests whether the physical law (usually a universal statement) is true by doing experiments. However, this is inappropriate for testing the Son of God hypothesis because it is historical science instead of experimental science. The hypothesis we have is to test the existence of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and therefore a completely different methodology needs to follow instead of those in the experimental science. However, Google AI overview at present cannot make this kind of distinction when it respond to our queries even though it has seen our slides or ebook. How deep Google AI overview can get into a topic is questionable. Unfortunately, it popularizes the view of experimental science because there is relatively few works in the methodology for historical science. Because of this training bias, we should be aware that AI tools may be biased towards experimental science instead of historical science.

Some of my Christian friends and some philosophers like Karl Popper hold that the supernaturals are not testable. Therefore, science and Christianity cannot be mixed, and we cannot test the hypothesis of the Son of God. However, there is a misunderstanding here because this suggests that the supernaturals are completely distinct from us. While this may be true, the supernatural needs to interact with the physical world in order for us to be able to observe things that the supernatural did. Otherwise, we would not notice the supernaturals. For example, the Eucharistic miracle happened because the supernatural probably caused the physical host to become the physical cardiac muscle that we can examine under the microscope. So, the supernatural interacts with the physical world and left evidence for us to collect and examine. This we can infer the existence of the supernatural or explained by the science of the gap which asks us to wait until one day science would be advanced enough to explain the unexplainable event although how long we need to wait we do not know. If you are not satisfied by the science of the gap, then you would infer the supernaturals causing the event that we observed and therefore can test or examine the evidence to infer the miracle as a supernatural event. If you are satisfied by the science of the gap, then you would wait indefinitely for an answer. However, if there are many different types of miracles for which you have to invoke the science of the gap, then the chances are that the science of the gap is unlikely rather than likely, so you can infer from there probabilistically which we do anyway when we perform

hypothesis testing. Therefore, we can weigh the probability of the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

4.4 Peer Reviewed (Scientific) Papers

Are most scientists or academics atheists? That can depend on how the question is phrased in a survey. However, it is likely that most reviewers for scientific journals are atheists or agnostics, and for prestigious scientific journals, this is even more likely to be the case because reviewers who stick to methodological naturalism (Plantinga, 1997) would win praises for being impartial, objective, rigorous, etc. when confronted with claims of the supernatural. In a prestigious journal, each paper is likely to have at least three reviewers. If one reviewer is an atheist or agnostic, it is likely that (s)he will rigorously doubt any claims of the supernatural and the paper is likely to be rejected. That is almost no scientific journal papers favouring the supernatural get published unless the journal is less well known or is related to religion, philosophy or religion and science. At present, Wikipedia on the shroud of Turin relies on prestigious journal publication as a source obviously has a bent towards refuting the shroud of Turin being authentic. That Wikipedia page has omitted many probable explanations that the shroud is authentic (West, 2025) because those sources were not from prestigious journals that they consider.

Reviewers (of prestigious scientific journals) also have the mentality of science trying to prove or show support to claims as if though they are universal statements. So, they may appear rigorous to demand the phenomena to be repeatable, or that random sampling should be done for investigating the phenomena, or that a stronger case is needed instead of providing anecdotal evidence. They also have a strategy to doubt the case because it is not as well documented as a controlled experiment since the supernatural event happened unexpectedly. They usually do not provide (negative) evidence to refute the case but just keep on doubting the case so that one feels uncertain about the claim. In doing so, they win praises of being rigorous, impartial, objective, etc. but in reality they are using a wrong methodology to review the paper because the claim is an existential statement instead of a universal statement. This happened many times in the past, and few scientists or academics point out the problem. As a result, many papers that may hint at the existence of the supernatural may be published in fringe journals or journals related to religion, philosophy or religion and science instead so that people may raise questions about their credibility just by looking at where they are published instead of the content of the paper. Also, since the reviewers or scientists have the mentality of verifying universal statements, they may think that one or two instances of evidence against the existential statements are sufficient to refute them like refuting universal statements. In reality, existential statements require all evidence against them in order for the existential statements to be false. This misunderstanding is quite common among skeptics who wanted to debunk the existence of miracles or supernaturals.

Some demands the evidence to be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals before they accept the conclusion that there are miracles. As pointed out earlier, the scientific journals are not completely objective as some may have their own agenda. Also, some editors of scientific journals may feel they are objective by including reviewers who are atheists and Christians, so that they have a full spectrum of opinions from both sides. However, it only takes one atheist reviewer to doubt the

case and editors who do not want to take the risk to ruin their reputation to reject a paper about the supernatural. After all, it does not hurt the editors to reject a paper on the supernatural then to accept one that may run into problems in the future. Why should editors take any risks? Therefore, there is very few if any papers about the supernatural for scientific journals. Most likely these papers appear in fringe scientific journals or journals related to religion, philosophy, or religion and science. Therefore, to expect that (prestigious) peer-reviewed scientific journals will publish papers on the supernatural seems a bit naive to me (unless they show there are no supernaturals) although there are a few (e.g., Romez et al., 2019) like those by the STURP team for the Shroud of Turin and those papers just say that the phenomena are inexplicable or a puzzle instead of saying that the divine is involved in the paper. The demand for peer-reviewed scientific journal papers about miracles seems to me to be unreasonable given miracles do not happen expectedly in a controlled environment like those in experimental science, and the requirement of repeatability seems unreasonable as we are finding evidence to support the existential statements instead of universal statements. Also, papers get published because they have novel ideas. Papers that just verify an existing phenomenon are likely to be rejected due to lack of novelty, and does the verification of an existing phenomenon have enough material to write a journal paper? Most likely, the scientists just write a letter or statement (e.g., Testify, 2025) to show their findings instead of a full blown journal paper. Finally, the reviewers are going to adopt the methodologies of verifying universal statements instead of existential statements to judge whether the paper should be accepted or rejected in order to appear that they review the paper rigorously, impartially, objectively, critically, etc. In summary, there are many reasons why there are not many peer-reviewed scientific journal papers supporting miracles or the supernaturals not because they are improbable given the evidence but other factors at play.

4.5 Eternal Living

For Catholics, eternal life (Catholic Paths, 2024) means live eternally and happily with God. It does not mean that you just live eternally. However, many people who are not Christians may think that they can accept not to live eternally and so there is no point to be a Christian since they do not want to be with God. However, we actually will live eternally whether we believe in God or not because our soul is eternal. If we do not believe in Christianity, we will have eternal torment which means we live forever but we will suffer forever. When people are now confronted with this problem, they may become unhappy because they think you are forcing them to decide, they become scared or they may look down on us because they think you are trying to trick them.

Some Christians think that hell is just a separation from God and imply that there is nothing to be scared about in hell. Universal salvationists (see Christian Universalism in Wikipedia) think that all people will be saved because God is so loving that no humans will be in hell. However, some Marian apparitions (e.g., Kondor, 2007) have taken the seers of the Blessed Virgin Mary to take a look at hell. These seers were horrified, so hell was not a nice place to be instead of just a separation from God. The seers described souls were suffering from fire burning them. They also saw non-humans perhaps demons or devils in hell. The demons and devils do not like human nor God because human beings are made in the image of God. Therefore, demons and

devils with supernatural powers may make the souls there to suffer further. The point is that this suffering is eternal and cannot be reverted. So, there is no hope in hell.

4.6 Problem of Evil

The problem of evil (see Wikipedia) has turned up in many places, and many people because of it have abandoned their faith. How can an all powerful God, a God that knows everything and a loving God permits evil? It sounds like morally unacceptable. However, we should avoid sitting in the judge chair and start to judge God whether He is right or wrong for we are not all knowing so we do not have complete knowledge to make the right decisions unlike God. Some people may retract from the judge chair and say I am just asking this question and I am not assuming to sit on the judge chair. However, what is the point of asking such a question if you think God is right? If you say you do not know that is why you ask this question, then I would also say I do not know either, so there is no point to ask me because I refuse to sit the judge chair. It is more like you are trying to trap me to sit on the judge chair! Interestingly, a message to the problem of evil may be found in the Old Testament (see Ear to Hear, 2025b).

There are some who create thought experiments relating to the problem of evil and tries to show that God permits evil is unacceptable. Again, this is dangerous. Academics have pointed out that thought experiments limit the knowledge we have when we make decisions, so when the thought experiment changes, our right decisions may need to change. Since we do not have complete knowledge, we may not know whether we are making the right decision in the thought experiments that are subject to change. It is better not to judge in these thought experiments. Moreover, this is irrelevant to whether Christianity is true or not. So, we should not fall into the trap that we need to answer the problem of evil. This problem may become relevant if you think that if the God is not that loving, then I will not believe God. However, who are you compared with God. Again, you should avoid sitting on the judge chair to judge God. However, sometimes we can decide what is good or bad by ourselves with incomplete information which agrees with God who has complete knowledge. However, try not to sit on the judge chair to judge God but judge on the event unrelated to God.

Now, God does not act immediately not because he agrees with evil but he has given us free will to decide and does not want to force us to know he exists. He will act later to make the judgments. While God knows whether some sufferings will eventually turn out to be some good thing, God does not intervene unless we asks God for help if he decides to act on it. So, some sufferings may not turn out to produce any good consequences and God is not acting to reduce sufferings now but perhaps reduce sufferings later possibly after the final judgment. Because we do not have complete knowledge, we do not know how God would square the sufferings. Personally, we do not need to engage in these kind of moral questions because we do not have complete knowledge. People can always come up with clever arguments to change your moral judgment by inserting more information to change your mind precisely because we have incomplete information. Therefore, we trust God to decide as he has complete information. We as believers just know that God exists and He loves us.

Consider the situation that Satan wins and God is defeated. What kind of world would it be like? Since Satan represents evil, he wants immediate gratification and he is unlikely to be as patient as God. Satan will not give us free will so that we cannot enjoy our life. Instead, he will immediately bring us to hell and start to torture us because we are made of the image of God. He detests human and want us all to suffer forever or annihilate us. Satan will likely reign as a tyranny doing what he feels like and would be very hard to satisfy. Therefore, we should be thankful that God defeats Satan because God will give us free will to do what we like, be patient so that we will not face judgment immediately, save us from sin by sending His Son and guide us through the Holy Spirit. The fact that we can enjoy our life sometimes is the result that God defeated Satan. Otherwise, we will be in trouble.

4.7 Naked Self

When you are going to face God, what are you going to take with you? In front of God, you may be naked because you have nothing to possess in the afterlife. Can you take money and bribe God? However, why would God want money if He is already almighty. Does that mean you have nothing in front of God? No, your soul will survive in the afterlife, so you have memories, knowledge, information, faith, etc. These abstract things will survive in the afterlife, so that is why it is important to preserve them from this life to the next. That is why it is important to learn about God, to memorize our important experience, our faith, etc. so that when we are confronted with God, we are prepared to a certain extent to interact with God and know our place in front of Him.

Will our soul change in the afterlife compared with this life? In this life, we may have sex drive affecting our daily life. In our afterlife, sex is not needed any more and we may not have sex drive any more. Also, if we are Christians who may go to heaven, then our original sin condition may be eliminated. So, the effect of having the knowledge of good and evil may not affect us any more as I speculate so that evil may not reach us like in this life. Also, God may send us peace so that we feel very peaceful in the afterlife. I had an experience to feel (externally given) peace and it was so great that I memorize that spiritual experience which disappeared after some moments. Now, I cannot willfully experience the same peace that I had, so it is not due to me and I am certain it is an externally given peace experience.

4.8 Is Purgatory Necessary?

What is Purgatory (see Wikipedia)? It is a place where souls are cleansed by God to be righteous enough so that those purified souls are ready to go to Heaven. The purification is an ordeal even though unclean souls desire for such purification as this is thought to be the love of God. While Catholics believe in Purgatory, many protestants do not believe in Purgatory. Therefore, they do not feel there is a problem that the protestant Bible missed out 7 books from the Catholic bible which have passages for praying for the dead and therefore supports Purgatory in the scripture. Then, this brings up a question whether Purgatory is necessary for our (core) beliefs?

Assuming that the principles in scientia theology (Luk, 2024a) are part of our core beliefs, Purgatory appears to be necessary as we have a principle for it. This principle is necessary as we believe the existence of Purgatory. The reason why it exists is that

people who sinned after being a Christian need to be purified or people whose souls may not be in a shape that is ready for heaven needs to be purified. For example, someone who has done a lot of evil things sincerely asks for the forgiveness of sins and became a Christian in his/her death bed. After (s)he was baptised, (s)he died and does that mean (s)he goes to heaven immediately? We believe that his/her soul would probably not in an appropriate shape or form to go to heaven immediately and his/her soul needs to go to Purgatory before rising to heaven (JD Catholic Engage, 2025). The process of purifying the soul also provides a form of justice to his/her evil doings even though his/her sins are forgiven, and God decides how much purification is needed for him/her since God is just.

How do we know Purgatory exists? First, there are Marian apparitions where some children were taken to visit Purgatory (e.g., Marian apparitions at Medjugorje [Pandarakalam, 2013]). The testimonies from these children serve as independent evidence there is such a place. Second, the Bible (Isaiah 4:4; Maccabees 12:41-45; Matthews 5:25-26; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Catholic Answers, 2015) also mentions purification of sins or some place like purgatory where those alive may pray for the dead. Finally, there are also other testimonies (I miss Christendom, 2022) about purgatory and some suspected souls from purgatory (Uniquely Mary, 2023). Also, Catholics have (medieval) stories about souls from purgatory but whether you believe in these stories as real is another matter.

5. Conclusion

We have updated our core beliefs to include our belief that the Christian God is the greatest. This belief is substantiated by the first sentence in the Apostles' creed and the Nicene creed that the Father created Heaven and Earth at the beginning. There were other updates of beliefs related to extra-biblical sources, biblical sources and atheists' views. These other updates do not change our core beliefs so it would not affect our (Catholic) faith which has four pillars or building blocks. The first pillar is the creed which is similar to our core beliefs, and it makes clear what we are believing about in our Catholic faith. The second pillar is the sacraments, the grace of which we trust we receive from God. Therefore, it makes clear what we trust in our Catholic faith. The third pillar is on how to live a Christian life according to some moral rules. While we have some definite moral rules (e.g., the two commandments from Jesus Christ), some words in these moral rules need further elaborations. When we transgress these rules, we may sin and we learn that there are seven deadly sins. We also know that even if we have sinful thoughts, it could be a sin when we entertain it to enactment. Instead of recognizing sin, the other way is to follow the moral direction away from sin like the beatitudes and the cardinal virtues. However, it is difficult to know the extent we follow this direction because this may imply we just follow it like a saint or follow it with little passion. The red line when the extent is considered enough is difficult to draw. As a result, since there is always an extra mile that we can do, we humble ourselves as most of us fail to live like a saint. The fourth pillar is prayer which is important to establish a personal relationship with God since we ask God for help most of the time as we cannot control many everyday situations. As God answers us, we should be grateful to God. Next, we made some clarifications of our faith. Specifically, we are concerned that scientists or academics typically use a wrong methodology to evaluate claims of the supernatural, which are usually existential statements instead of universal statements. This means that scientists and academics make wrong demand of supernatural claims to perform random sampling, to have much more evidence instead of anecdotal evidence, etc. As a result, prestigious scientific journals tend not to publish any papers that make supernatural claims, and some Wikipedia page uses these journals as sources to write about the shroud of Turin giving the impression that it is a medieval fake but in reality many pieces of evidence were omitted that can support it as authentic. In the end, whether science will self-correct itself to accommodate supernatural claims is something that we need to observe in the future. Finally, while we cannot carry any physical objects in our afterlife, we still have our soul which has our memories, our knowledge, our faith, our experiences, etc. Therefore, we should build them up in this life as we will carry them to the afterlife so that we are prepared to meet God in our afterlife.

Finally, I have only been a Catholic for a short period, so my (Christian) faith is shallow as I tend to answer secular questions, and there is much for me to learn. If you want to dive into deeper questions, you are welcome to read the Catechism of the Catholic church (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003), take some theology classes, talk with pastors or priests, go to church to listen to the homilies, view webpages and videos from great theologians, historians and others in the Internet, and read the Bible. Also, I am not trying to persuade the other Christian denominations to be Catholic since I tend to believe that they probably will be saved because there are miracles for non-catholic Christian too (e.g., Rome et al., 2019), although many of them may

have to go through purgatory (O. Praem, 2025) just like some Catholics have to go through purgatory too. I hope this ebook will be useful to some people.

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