



Response to Fr. Serpa

Nothing But the Truth

(expanded)

A questioner on the EWTN forum made Fr. Serpa aware of our post, to which he responded as follows:

[quote from EWTN:]

Dear Eric,

My answer to Jacob was correct, but has raised questions for a number of people due to its brevity and what it did not say. As I said, would that Jacob (and other Jews) be given the grace to recognize Jesus as the Son of God and could join the Catholic Church.

We as Catholics believe that no one can reach heaven except through the one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ as manifested through His Church. "Outside the Church there is no salvation."

However, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church states (847) "This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church". The Catechism goes on to quote Lumen Gentium (14): "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience--those too may achieve eternal salvation."

This means that we believe that those who honestly (the key word here is "honestly") cannot see Jesus by means of the light of faith, can still be saved by that same Jesus Christ, even though they do not realize it--providing that they seek God and try in their actions to do his will, etc. as above.

Fr. Vincent Serpa, O.P.

We shall now proceed to rebut in detail what Fr. Serpa has said (please note that it is not our intention to question Fr. Serpa's sincerity):

Fr. Serpa: "My answer to Jacob was correct, but has raised questions for a number of people due to its brevity and what it did not say."

Response: "Actually, the main problem was with what it *did* say. It was addressed to a Jew who knows about Jesus Christ (or else he couldn't have asked the question) and Fr.'s answer

was that he doesn't need to convert if he 'can't accept' Jesus. This is heresy per the Council of Florence, as we quoted in our [original news story](#). Fr. Serpa put forth precisely what the Ven. Pope **Pius IX** condemned as **erroneous**, namely, that "[g]ood hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ" (Syllabus of Errors, 1864, condemned proposition #17). **Daniel 9:26** is clear that those who deny Jesus Christ as the Lord are not part of His Church: "And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain: **and the people that shall deny him shall not be his**"! The same passage also foretells the end of the Old Covenant and the Temple worship: "And a people, with their leader, that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation." This is the final proof for the Jews that the Messiah has indeed arrived: through the destruction of the Temple, it is no longer possible for the Jews to practice their religion. Christ Jesus proved that He is the Messiah by means of fulfillment of the prophecies about Him and by means of His miracles. The destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, which took away the old sacrifices forever, was then the "icing on the cake," if you will--the last and final proof that the Old Covenant was forever over and done with! It is no longer possible to be saved in that religion, no matter how "devout" and "sincere" you might be. In fact, St. Paul is clear in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "...without faith it is impossible to please God" (11:6). Instead of telling Jacob that as long as he is really being honest, true, and "devout," his conversion does not matter, Fr. Serpa should have given him hard-hitting evidence that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, aside from whom no one can be saved (see Acts 4:12), and he should have prayed that when he reads the Old Testament, the veil might be taken from Jacob's heart (see 2 Corinthians 3:14-15).

Fr. Serpa: "As I said, would that Jacob (and other Jews) be given the grace to recognize Jesus as the Son of God and could join the Catholic Church."

Response: Why? If it's true that he can be saved by being a devout Jew, why does Fr. Serpa want him to convert nonetheless? Here Fr. is being inconsistent. But much worse than that, Fr. actually has the audacity to suggest that if Jacob (and other "sincere" Jews) do not accept Jesus, they do so because they have not been "given the grace" to do so! In other words, it's **God's fault!** Since God is the one who gives grace, then, if Jacob cannot recognize the Messiah, then it's because God didn't give him the grace! *Unbelievable!* In this case, then whenever someone who is sincere does not accept Jesus even though the evidence is there, it's really because God withholds His grace! So much for the **God who "will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4)!** What can one say in the face of such horrible insult to Almighty God?! Now, surely, Fr. Serpa did not mean to insult our Lord, we have no doubt, but *he just did*. The *Novus Ordo* religion gets well-meaning priests so far that they don't even realize anymore the implications of what they are actually saying.

Fr. Serpa: "We as Catholics believe that no one can reach heaven except through the one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ as manifested through His Church. 'Outside the Church there is no salvation.'"

Response: See, this is nice: throw in an orthodox dogmatic phrase and hope that this does justice to the perennial doctrine. Unfortunately, Fr. Serpa does not explain here what "outside the Church there is no salvation" *means*. He merely mentions it and prefaces it by saying that we believe no one can be saved except through Jesus. Is Fr. saying that this is all that "outside the Church there is no salvation" means? It's quite a bit more restrictive than that. Not only do you have to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, you also have to be a member of the Catholic Church in order to be saved. That excludes infidels, apostates, heretics and schismatics. And no, we are not taking a Feeneyite position here. In his encyclical [Charitas](#), promulgated on April 13, 1791, **Pope Pius VI** taught: "**no one can be in the Church of Christ**

without being in unity with its visible head and founded on the See of Peter." Still questions, anyone?

Fr. Serpa: "However, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church states (847) 'This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church'. The Catechism goes on to quote Lumen Gentium (14): 'Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience--those too may achieve eternal salvation.'

Response: The question of invincible ignorance is really irrelevant to the issue at hand, as Jacob, the Jew who posted on EWTN's forum, *knows* about Christ and is therefore not ignorant, much less invincibly so. But if Fr. Serpa thought Jacob was invincibly ignorant, then why did he not preach the Gospel to him so that he would be enlightened? Alas, Fr. decided to basically tell him that 'it would be nice if you could become Catholic, but if you can't, don't bother.' But the real clincher comes now:

Fr. Serpa: "This means that we believe that those who honestly (the key word here is 'honestly') cannot see Jesus by means of the light of faith, can still be saved by that same Jesus Christ, even though they do not realize it--providing that the[y] seek God and try in their actions to do his will, etc. as above."

Response: This "explanation" of invincible ignorance is absolutely unacceptable, because it is false, simply false. Somebody is "invincibly ignorant" of the Gospel when he *does not know about the Gospel through no fault of his own*. But what Fr. Serpa interprets "invincible ignorance" to mean is "not convinced." Fr. is in effect saying that anyone who does not believe in the Gospel, unless he knows he must and refuses to, can be saved, as long as he lives in accordance with his conscience (apparently, it doesn't matter whether his conscience is lax, erroneous, etc.). But this a most pernicious error! This is basically saying there is "**salvation by default**" for all who are sincere and try to be good, except for those who consciously, deliberately refuse to believe and do what they know they need to believe and do in order to be saved. In other words, the path to Heaven is broad and the gate of Heaven is wide; whereas the path to hell is straight and the gate to hell narrow....but this is **precisely the opposite of the Gospel**: "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" (St. Matthew 7:13-14). Fr. Serpa's gospel teaches "**salvation by subjective sincerity**" rather than salvation by submission to the objective Truth!

Fr. Serpa confuses invincible ignorance with vincible ignorance; he supposes that all ignorance is invincible. But there is no reason to suppose that any non-Catholic of middle or even lower class status living nowadays in the USA can be said to be invincibly ignorant of the Gospel, given the media and literature out there to educate people. Go to any bookstore or library! If we at *Novus Ordo Watch* are ignorant of Islam, we are vincibly ignorant of that religion. We *could* find out about it but *don't*. If Islam were the true religion, we certainly could not plead invincible ignorance.

So, what has the *Novus Ordo* religion made of the Gospel? If Fr. Serpa were right, **why in the world did Christ send the Apostles to preach the Gospel** and convert souls? Why not simply leave them in all in their "sincere" and "invincibly ignorant" state and, at best, tell them to be *better* Jews, *better* Muslims, *better* Pagans? Ah, this is exactly what Pope John Paul II now preaches, and how many souls is he dragging to hell with it!

Open up **Sacred Scripture**, open up the rich **Tradition** of the Holy Catholic Church before the modernist takeover in 1958, and nowhere will you find the gospel of Fr. Serpa!

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (St. Mark 16:16).

"The holy universal Church teaches that it is not possible to worship God truly except in her and asserts that all who are outside of her will not be saved" (Pope Gregory XVI, Encyclical [Summo Iugiter Studio](#), citing Pope St. Gregory the Great).

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so now I say again: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:8-9).

Evangelizing the Jew (or any other non-Catholic) is the **greatest act of charity** you can show towards him. It is not politically correct, of course, but it is the right thing to do. The unwillingness of the *Novus Ordo* religion to preach the Gospel to the Jews is very apparent its **Good Friday liturgy**. Where the Catholic Church prays: "for the perfidious Jews: that Our Lord and God may lift the covering off their hearts, so that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ Our Lord," the *Novus Ordo* religion prays: "for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they many continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant"!

This is unbelievable! The *Novus Ordo* religion now gives *de facto* recognition to the "covenant" of the Jews, as though the Old Covenant were still valid! But this is not charity, this is *hatred* of the Jews, because by confirming them in their errors, they help them remain on their way to everlasting damnation.

Love the Jew; love the Gentile: share the Gospel with both! It is not only our privilege -- it is our duty!

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