

How Scripture Requires all Christians to be Catholic¹

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[Revelation 17:1-6:]

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who is seated upon many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” ³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; ⁵ and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth’s abominations.” ⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her I marveled greatly.

When I was a boy, it was not unusual to say this passage was about the corruption and idolatry of the Catholic Church. The whore was the Pope of Rome with his idolatrous worship and the martyrs were Protestants persecuted by the Catholic Church in every century. That was a man’s religion—like drinking your bourbon straight—although drinking alcohol was actually a sin. It was in fact a great preparation for becoming Catholic. The principles I was taught ultimately led me to the truth, even though my teachers could not see it. At the Baptist seminary I was taught to believe what the Bible says. If I didn’t like what it said, I was the one who needed to change. So when I studied the Bible in earnest, over the course of six years I eventually saw that the Catholic Church is in fact the Church Christ founded in a way that other churches are not. I saw that the Catholic faith is true. I saw that I must join said Church if I wished to continue to follow Christ. My purpose tonight is not to tell that story but just to distill and present a few of the ways in which Scripture requires all Christians to be Catholic. I will present four arguments: one that combines the necessity of a valid Eucharist for salvation with the power of binding and loosing

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Christ gave to the Church in Matthew, one from the power of binding and loosing in reference to instruction, one from the promise of reliable teachers in Ephesians, and one that combines the significance of transubstantiation and Eucharistic adoration with the New Testament promise of a reliable tradition. What all these arguments have in common is that we look at the New Testament doctrine of the Church and then see that only the Roman Catholic Church matches what the Holy Spirit promised the Church would be.

Before I share the arguments, however, I must dedicate at least half the talk to a long preamble in which I will establish from Scripture most of the premises for these arguments.

Indications that the Church is a visible societas

The first question to ask of the New Testament about the Church is whether the Church Jesus founded is a visible institution or merely a spiritual communion. Many Protestants hold to the second view and so conclude that the institutional Church is unimportant or even bad. So, before we can discuss the Church and her teaching office, we must show that the Church is the visible society of those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit and that it is constituted by participation in the Eucharist. It will then become clear through the four arguments that this mystical body of Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church and that all Christians should be Catholic. We'll begin with two basic texts on the nature of the Church, leaving out those that will surface just later:

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

We see here that Baptism is how individuals are joined to the body of Christ. Therefore, the body of Christ is visible. The alternative view would be to say that you become part of the body of Christ by some inner spiritual act that is not visible, like just believing.

The second text is 1 Corinthians 10:16-17:

¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

So if partaking of the one bread is what makes us one body, this shows us that participation in this rite, whatever you want to call it—the Lord’s Supper, Communion, the Eucharist—this is what makes Christians one body. So again, the body of Christians is visible.

It is worth observing here that an institution of this kind, one that is constituted through participation in special rites like baptism and the Eucharist, necessarily will need ordained ministers and internal codified laws if for no other reason than that people will need to know whether their sacraments are valid. They will need to know whether their sacraments are valid to know whether they are in the Church or not. For example, if someone were to change the Trinitarian formula to “Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier,” as did in fact happen, there has to be someone who can decide officially, for everyone, whether someone baptized in that name is really baptized or not. (The answer is no, they are not.) This organization also will need a central authority to make and apply those decisions about the sacraments. All of this simply follows from the fact that the Church is constituted by the visible rites of baptism and the Eucharist.

From this we can see that the Church founded by Christ fits the traditional definition of a society (*societas*). The four essential traits of a society are that it has 1) a number of people 2) pursuing a common object 3) using common means 4) under a common authority. The people of the society are the baptized who participate in a valid Eucharist. They are pursuing salvation and the glory of God. The means they use include at least baptism and the Eucharist, and we know they will need some common authority to keep these rites in meaningful operation. Let’s see

what the New Testament says about that authority. It seems that, if this is right, there should be some instruction about it.

The Church in Matthew 16 and 18

The word “Church” (in Greek, *ekklesia*) occurs exactly three times in the gospels. With two of these occurrences in the same verse, there are really only two passages discussing the Church as such in the gospels. (Of course, many passages teach about the Church without using the term.) Both of the passages using *Ekklesia* occur in the Gospel of Matthew, and both concern the authority of binding and loosing. Comparing these two passages helps us to see clearly what Jesus meant in each one.

Here are the passages:

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesare’a Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli’jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter [means “rock”], and on this rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven [lit., “shall have been bound in heaven,” and likewise throughout these passages], and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Matthew 18:15-18

¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

So we see here there is a correspondence between these decisions and what God says, what is true in heaven.

In chapter 18, it is clear that binding and loosing involves at least individual disciplinary decisions. That is the context where it is brought up. The language, however, of binding and loosing suggests a connection to the rabbinic tradition of *halakah* (the way), in which the rabbis made authoritative decisions concerning faith and morals. They laid down decisions called *halakoth* (the ways), and these formed an authoritative oral and eventually written tradition of what was or was not binding on the Jewish community. Individuals who refused to abide by *halakoth* could be excluded from the Jewish community. Thus, the language of binding and loosing suggests that both doctrinal and disciplinary decisions would be included. Besides, when someone sins by teaching heresy—if heresy is the reason he is brought before the Church—the disciplinary authority can only address the disciplinary matter if this body also has competence and authority to judge doctrinal matters. So binding and loosing deals with both discipline and doctrine.

There is, however, an important difference between rabbinic authority and what Jesus institutes in Matthew. Among the rabbis and scribes in Jesus' day, Rabbi Shammai might have said one thing and Rabbi Hillel another. Each had his followers that obeyed his authority, and neither school of thought could claim that its opinions were the ultimate decisions of God. Jesus, in contrast, taught with final authority. It says at the end of the Sermon on the Mount He taught with authority, not as their scribes.² The correspondence of Peter's (chapter 16) and the Church's (chapter 18) decisions to the decisions of heaven shows that Jesus gave this same authority to Peter and the Church.

² Matthew 7:28-29.

In chapter 16, Peter is given the authority of binding and loosing by virtue of the office of the keys, which is given to him at the same time. To understand how Peter would have understood that commission, we need to look at Isaiah 22.

Isaiah 22:15, 19-22

¹⁵ Thus says the Lord God of hosts, “Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the household, and say to him: ... ¹⁹ I will thrust you from your office, and you will be cast down from your station. ²⁰ In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, ²¹ and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your belt on him, and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. ²² And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Here we see that the key of the house of David signifies an administrative office roughly like that of a prime minister for the kingdom of Judah. Now let us add Revelation 3:7, where we read: “And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens.’” Here Jesus is said to hold the key of David, suggesting that the kingdom of God’s chosen people is now spiritual, the Kingdom of Heaven. The ascended Christ, as holder of the key, administrates this kingdom from heaven. Yet it has at least an earthly component to be run by men, for Jesus says to the chief priests and the elders in Matthew 21:43: “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.” So, this is something that was held by men and given to other men. These passages taken together suggest that the office given to Peter involves administration of the Kingdom of Heaven, which at least includes the Church, if it is not identical to it. Peter is the prime minister of Christ’s Kingdom, exercising on earth the authority Christ exercises in heaven, thus acting as his vicar. Peter exercises this office more than once in the book of Acts.³ From this we can see that the Church, in order to have such an office, was going to be one, organized body, a *societas*,

³ See Acts 2-3, 5, 9:32-42, 10, 11:16-18, 12:5-11, 15:6-29.

as discussed above in reference to the sacraments. Here, it is necessary because a man cannot wield administrative authority if he does not have an organization. There has to be an organization for there to be such authority.

One could wonder, however, whether this was to be a perpetual office. This was an option I considered at one time. Maybe Peter had all this power, but it was just to get the mission started. So, let's think about that.

In chapter 18 it is clear that the act of binding and loosing with authority would be a perpetual possibility for discipline in the Church. This is evident from its presentation as a disciplinary procedure for general use. Jesus says, "If your brother does this, then you do that." And in fact, Protestant churches to this day virtually all turn to this passage for instruction on proper church discipline. What they seem not to realize is that such final authority, the authority of excommunication, can only be practiced meaningfully if the Church has the ability, when needed, to speak as a unified whole. Otherwise, a condemned heretic could just walk down the street and try his luck in communion with the next church. Further, the enduring validity of the chapter 18 binding and loosing fits best with the purpose of Matthew as a new interpretation of the Torah for the new, true people of God. This is a larger issue, but one can see that Matthew is a new presentation of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus goes up on the mountain like Moses and proceeds to say, not "Thus says the Lord," but rather, "you have heard...but I say" about several things concerning the interpretation of the Law. Yet, He says He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. So He is the new Moses, but He gives a new interpretation of the Law, rather than a completely new law. In this new interpretation of the Torah, we need a new judicial process, and we get it. The Church would exercise the collective authority of binding and loosing for the first time in Acts 15 at the Council of Jerusalem.

So, one can see from Matthew 18 that Church discipline is to involve binding and loosing in perpetuity, and one can see from both chapters (again) that the Church will have to be one organism in terms of human administration, a *societas*, in order for it to function as Jesus intended. Since both chapters speak of the Church as one administration and of binding and loosing, it is very likely that the authority in chapter 16, like chapter 18, was intended to be perpetual. But that authority depends upon the office of the keys. Therefore the office of Peter should be perpetual.

This also seems to be the most natural interpretation of chapter 16 considered alone, since one would normally assume that a kingdom begun with an appointed prime minister would continue to have one unless something major changed. The office of the keys is not the kind of office one would expect to become obsolete. When Shebna lost his office in Isaiah 22, he was replaced. There was no need for a revolution or political reorganization. If Christ the King is still in Heaven, presumably He will still have a prime minister on earth. If this were not His intention, it would seem odd that He appointed a prime minister and ascended without prohibiting Peter from passing on the office. Surely He would have seen the danger looming, if that were the thing he did not want to happen.

If the Petrine office continues, then one must conclude that even the exercise of chapter 18 authority will depend upon his approval, since the two powers of binding and loosing could never be contrary. If the collective decision of the Church did not depend upon the approval of the office of Peter in some way, then they could decide opposite things, and they would both be right. But that cannot be.

We can see from the book of Acts that the disciplinary functioning of the Church is essential to completing its mission to bring the Gospel to the whole world. This authority is

exercised both by Peter in Acts 10, when he baptizes the household of Cornelius, even though they are Gentiles, and by the whole Church in its leadership in Acts 15, which is together with Peter. It was by these means that the Gentiles were admitted to the Church without the need to become Jews, and thus Christianity became its own separate religion. Inevitably other issues of similar importance would arise over time. Jesus guarantees the success of the Church's mission by predicting its completion in Matthew 24, predicting the mode of its completion as rapid growth to a huge body throughout the world in the parables of the leaven and the mustard seed in Matthew 13, and promising to be with the Church always in precisely this mission in Matthew 28. Therefore it follows that the Church, until the successful completion of its mission, will be an organism with human administration, the authoritative decisions of which will be binding when either the whole Church (which would include the successor of Peter) speaks as one or the successor of Peter speaks for the Church by making a definite decision about doctrine or discipline.

With most of the work now done for establishing crucial premises, we can harvest what we have grown with four brief arguments why all Christians should be Catholic.

The first argument applies the power of binding and loosing to the necessity of the Eucharist for salvation.

John 6:53-56

⁵³ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; ⁵⁴ he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

Notice that part about abiding.

John 15:5-6

⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.

This is how we see that the Eucharist is necessary for salvation. But we see something else in 1 Corinthians, which is also important.

1 Corinthians 5:5, 11-13

⁵ ...deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

¹¹ ... I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber—not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the Church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Drive out the wicked person from among you.”

Here we see the purpose of the discipline of excommunication is ultimately the salvation of the person excommunicated. The hope is that he will repent.

The argument

- 1) A valid Eucharist is necessary for salvation (John 6:51-57, 15:5-6).
- 2) The Church has the power to deny the Eucharist to those who refuse to repent of their sin (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
- 3) Yet this power of excommunication is a means of discipline intended to lead to repentance (1 Corinthians 5:4-5; cf. 2 Corinthians 2:3-11).⁴
- 4) Now, if multiple independent churches have a fully valid Eucharist, the Church cannot exercise the discipline of Matthew 18, for the excommunicated person could always receive communion at an Anglican church, for example, or some other church that does not regard the discipline of the other churches.

⁴ It follows from 2) and 3) that grace can be operative in those who have been excommunicated, calling them back to communion. Presumably, one who is on the path to returning to communion would be saved, just as one who is on the path to receiving baptism (although the baptized has been regenerated), even if death prevents completion of the process. Likewise, because “sin is not imputed where there is no law” (Romans 5), one who has faith in Christ but refuses the Eucharist out of ignorance, although in peril, could still possibly be saved, just as one who has faith but has been taught that baptism is unnecessary.

- 5) But the Church can exercise the discipline of Matthew 18, for there are always sinners threatening the Church's mission, and the mission of the Church as described in Matthew is guaranteed to succeed (Matthew 16, 18, and 28). So the power will always be needed.
- 6) The decision in the discipline of Matthew 18 corresponds to the judgment of heaven, so only a church with a valid Eucharist can wield it. Otherwise, it would be to no purpose. If a Church that did not have a valid Eucharist should excommunicate someone, that person would not be losing anything.⁵
- 7) It follows [from 4) and 5)] that only one Church has a valid Eucharist with nothing lacking, and [from 6)] that this is the same Church as has disciplinary authority. **The power of discipline and validity of the Eucharist must go together.**

Of course, if this same Church declares the Eucharist of another Church valid, then it is valid too, although one Church must maintain disciplinary authority in order for the Church to complete its mission. So this other Eucharist still lacks something in that it does not effect full communion between the separate Church and the Church with the power of discipline. The CDF addressed this when they said the Eastern Churches do not constitute part of the Body of Christ, even though their sacraments are valid.⁶

- 8) The Roman Catholic Church is the only Church that may plausibly claim to exercise the discipline of Matthew 18, for no church independent of Roman discipline can also claim, with any plausibility, that it has the only valid Eucharist with nothing lacking.
- 9) Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church is the only Church with a valid Eucharist that lacks nothing and full Matthew 18 disciplinary power.
- 10) It follows [from 1) and 9)] that, in order to be saved (if not invincibly ignorant), one must join either the Roman Catholic Church or some Eastern Church whose Eucharist the Roman Catholic Church recognizes as valid [see 7)].

⁵ If a church with an invalid Eucharist could say with the authority of heaven, "this person should be separated from the valid Eucharist," that Church would not be exercising any real discipline. The person would already have been separated from the valid Eucharist.

⁶ They are particular churches in a loose sense, but not in the proper Catholic sense. Because they lack full communion with the Catholic Church, "these venerable Christian communities lack something in their condition as particular churches." Levada, William and Angelo Amato (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), "Responses to Some Questions regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church," *Origins* 37 (2007): 134-136, at 135. See also Ratzinger, Joseph and Tarcisio Bertone (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), "'Dominus Iesus': On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church," note 56.

11) It also follows [from 9)] that one who wishes to know and do the Lord's will fully (Matthew 18 and 28) must become Roman Catholic. This last point will become clearer, however, in the second argument.

The second argument goes like this:

- 1) The mission of the Church initially included the authoritative and infallible interpretation of Scripture. This simply follows from what I said about Matthew 16 and 18, if one includes the interpretation of Scripture in the set of things pertaining to faith and morals (and that is obviously the kind of interpretation in view).
- 2) The mission to teach what Jesus has commanded lasts until the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

"To the close of the age" gives us the duration of the Church's mission.

- 3) The Church could not teach people to observe all that Jesus commanded without Peter's authoritative interpretation. Note that He did not say "teaching them all that I have commanded" but "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded." For example, how is one to observe Jesus' statement on divorce in Matthew 19:9? How is one to observe His instruction on self-mutilation in Matthew 19:12? There have been those who have plucked out the right eye because He said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out." You see, they were not taught to observe all that He taught; they were only taught what he taught. Or again, who did Jesus mean should be baptized—children, a little bit older children, adults? Who's to say? How do we observe what he taught? How is the Lord's Supper to be observed? I was at a church once where it was done with bagels—a nice interreligious gesture, perhaps, though I don't think it was intended. Or again, how does love your neighbor as yourself apply to the question of contraception? It seems to me even the Orthodox cannot give a definite answer to that one.

- 4) The Church cannot fail in its mission (because the gates of Hell cannot prevail against the Church—Matthew 16:18).
- 5) Therefore, the Church must still have Peter’s authority to declare the authoritative interpretation of Scripture in matters of faith and morals.
- 6) The Roman Catholic Church is the only serious church that claims to retain that kind of teaching authority.⁷
- 7) Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church must still have Peter’s authority to declare the authoritative interpretation of Scripture.

We can summarize this argument very briefly by saying:

- 1) It is clear that the power of binding and loosing was to be a perpetual, universal, infallible authority pertaining to doctrine and discipline that the Church would always practice (Matthew 18:15-18—what is bound on earth is bound in heaven).
- 2) Since only the Catholic Church can still practice this with any reasonable claim to universal authority, it must be the true Church.

But one might wonder, does everything depend on one’s interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew? Is that a narrow basis for choosing one’s religion? Well, we cannot stay here all night, but I’ll offer a similar argument that does not depend on the Gospel of Matthew at all, so we can get the idea that this is not an isolated thing.

The argument from moral guidance in Ephesians (third argument)

The essential passage:

Ephesians 4:10-16

¹⁰ He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and

⁷ By “serious” I mean churches holding to the doctrine of the Trinity and salvation by grace through the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

In this passage we see that the ascended Christ has given “pastors and teachers” to the Church with a definite duration (“until we all attain...”) and clear purposes (“so that we may...”). This is what they are for—to prevent that tossing from happening.

The argument

- 1) The gift-teachers of Ephesians 4 have as one of their functions that, rather than allowing people to be blown about by every wind of doctrine, they are to help them grow up in all things into Him who is the Head until the Church reaches its full maturity.
- 2) Therefore Christian teachers should teach on “all things” in such a way that people are not left unsure about what they are to do, that is to say, with authority.
- 3) “All things” surely must include any matter relevant to Christian maturity. Presumably it doesn’t include literally all things, but since it’s for the purpose of them growing up into Christ, it must include all things that are needed to be a mature Christian.
- 4) Whether or how Christians may practice contraception is relevant to Christian maturity. Is it a mortal sin? Is it not? You can’t say that doesn’t matter.
- 5) The Roman Catholic Church contains the only group of Christian teachers that speaks with authority to the matter of contraception.
- 6) Therefore, Roman Catholic teachers must be at least among the Spirit-given teachers of the Church.
- 7) Further, the Spirit-given teachers of the Church must agree in *all matters* relevant to Christian maturity with these Roman Catholic teachers. (Since they have to teach about all matters, they have to agree about all matters with the other Spirit-given teachers.) Obviously this would include the questions of where the mystical body of Christ subsists and whether one should be a Roman Catholic. Therefore, etc. QED.

For my last argument, I will apply the doctrine of the New Testament to some simple and uncontroversial facts of history.

An argument from the Eucharist and reliable tradition

In the Medieval West, at least in the centuries after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, all Christian teachers in good standing with the Church taught the doctrine of transubstantiation.⁸ This doctrine teaches that the Eucharistic elements, in their substance, are really changed into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. He is fully present in both natures (the divine and the human). If this is true, the Eucharist is not in its essence food, but God Himself in the person of Christ. It necessarily follows from this that the Eucharist is worthy of adoration. Therefore, one of two statements must be true:

The Eucharist is God and must be worshipped. -or-

The Eucharist is not God and must not be worshipped. For then it would be an idol.

This is a question of the highest possible significance. The fact that the Church defined as it did forces everyone to one of two stances:

A) The Church was right and upheld a very important doctrine.

B) The Church was wrong and encouraged idolatry in every mass (and still does).

To place an idol in every Sunday service and to make it the very center of Christian worship, and even of Christian life, would indeed be to put in the priest's hand "a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication," as we read from Revelation. You all have learned in freshman theology how the Old Testament prophets often considered idolatry a sort of

⁸ The doctrine of the Real Presence generally understood has been taught from the earliest times in the Church. See for example: *Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans* 7:1; Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 66:2; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* 4.18.5.

spiritual adultery or fornication. Thus that old Protestant interpretation of Revelation 17 is spot on, if the Eucharist is not God.

This leaves us with three choices:

1. Say the Church is wrong and call the Eucharist the work of the Devil.
2. Say the Church is right and worship the Eucharist.
3. Refuse to decide and guarantee that you are wrong, either for failing to oppose the most terrible evil in the world, or for refusing Christ Himself.

(And ignorance is an option if you didn't know that, but it's too late now.)

If there is any truth to my understanding from Scripture about the teaching office of the Church, God would never allow the whole western Church to set up the desolating sacrilege in every holy place. If that happened, then it would surely be true that the gates of Hell had prevailed against the Church, against Matthew 16. The Church would have failed in its mission, against Matthew 28. The Spirit of truth could not have been present, against John 14-16 and John 20. The teachers given by the Spirit could not have prevented believers from being misled, against Ephesians 4. And so on. This cannot be, so A) must be true, rather than B). The Church was right in what she defined. If that is true, to reject the Catholic Church with the Eucharist is to reject Christ. Thus, all Christians should be Catholic.

You can see a syllogistic summary of this last argument on your handout, but that one is better read than heard. So here I make my end.

The syllogistic chain from the handout:

- 1) Making idolatry central to the worship of every church throughout most of the Christian world could only happen if the Devil substantially controlled (and therefore was stronger than) the Church. (If idolatry [Y], then Devil is stronger [Z])
- 2) God promised that the Devil would not be stronger than the Church ($\sim Z$) (Matthew 16).
- 3) Therefore, by *modus tollens*, idolatry was not central to the worship of every church throughout most of the Christian world ($\sim Y$).

- 4) If transubstantiation is false (X), then idolatry was central to the worship of every church throughout most of the Christian world (Y).
- 5) Therefore, again by *modus tollens*, transubstantiation is not false ($\sim X$)
- 6) Therefore, transubstantiation is true (T).
- 7) If transubstantiation is true (T), then the Eucharist should be received and worshipped (G).
- 8) Therefore, by *modus ponens*, the Eucharist should be received and worshipped (G).
- 9) Only Catholics receive and regularly worship the Eucharist.
- 10) Therefore, if the Eucharist should be received and worshipped (G), one should be Catholic (C)
- 11) Therefore, by *modus ponens*, one should be Catholic (C).