

Fr. Perozich comments —

What I hear in the Catholic Church today are noise that deafens the ear to truth: universal brotherhood, reset of the world order in immigration, income, sexual liberation, all religions willed by God, climate change just as important as abortion, confusion about cooperation with evil in voting, relativizing Jesus' teachings on marriage and divorce.

It seems to me that I am being reset, reformed to be integrated into the world in a new way of living, a new brotherhood of men without reference to Jesus.

*I reject the reset. To help me work out my salvation in fear and trembling, guided by Sacred Scripture and the Sacraments **IN** the church, I need an ongoing light to see what forces are acting upon me to undermine my faith and charity, and to try to replace it with a new paradigm which is **NOT** what Jesus taught.*

I am a Catholic, and not a Protestant. Casey Chalk, the author, came through Protestantism to the fullness of the faith in the Catholic Church. Thus he has a lived experience of thinking compared to my limited experience of study of other ways of Christian thinking.

He makes good points to keep a Catholic grounded in the ongoing transformation through the forgiveness of sins, cooperation with God's grace into the image of Jesus Christ for goodness here and eternal life in a new and resurrected body on the last day.

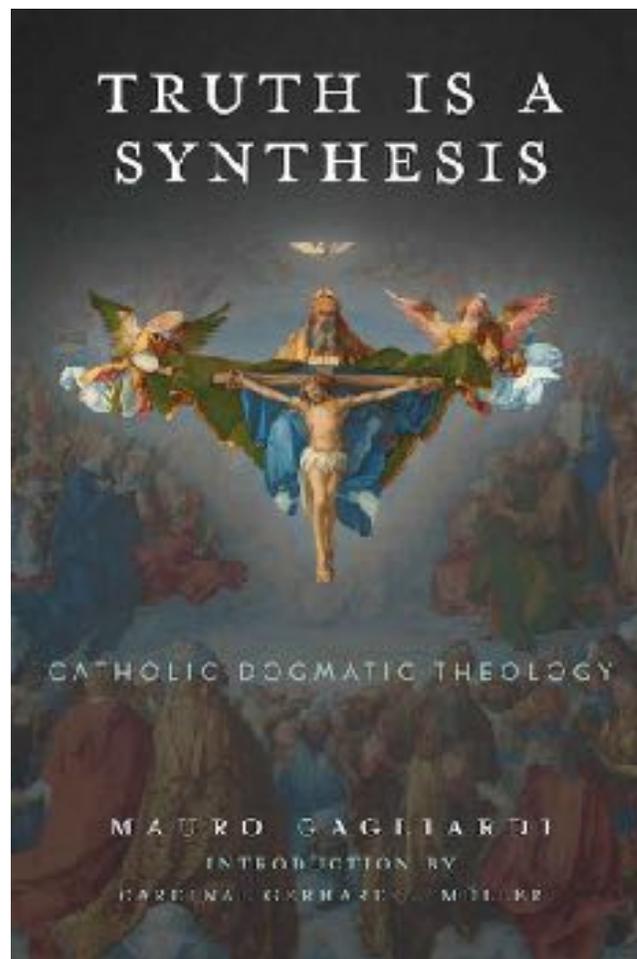
Chalk shows how others think regarding religion. This information can help me as a Catholic to understand how others live their life and practice their religion as well as to hold firm in my Catholic faith. It also helps in conversations with non Catholic Christians (NCC) in their thinking versus Catholic thought.

Because the church current flows with worldly matters these days, the Catholic might be more susceptible to NCC thinking and lose his way in working out salvation in fear and trembling.

This article keeps me on the classic Catholic way to salvation in faith and charity, in word and sacrament, united to Jesus with the saints of old and new on the one journey to the New Jerusalem when Jesus comes again.

- Catholics have often been tempted by the same dualistic thinking, whether that manifests itself in importing Protestant thinking into our theology or presenting Catholic thought and practice as one thing and not another*

- For NCC, an “either or” theology **might** rule their thoughts. For Catholics it is a “both and”.
- The Word of God is found either in Scripture or the Tradition; thus, one needs to choose, and Luther chose Scripture, erasing the Tradition. Justification happens either by faith or through human works, so faith alone saves. Salvation is the fruit either of divine grace or human merit, so grace alone saves. Honor should be manifest either to Christ alone or also to Mary and the saints, so, obviously Christ is chosen. Finally, glory should be given to God or to a human being.
- *Sola scriptura*, the bible alone, with my own personal interpretation instead of understanding in the light of the saints of the church: the Tradition, the Magisterium, the Fathers, and the Doctors of the Church.
- *Sola gracia*, that by God alone and without my cooperation am I saved and going to heaven.
- *Simul justus et peccator* (“just and sinner at the same time”), which teaches that even after the salvific moment, the Christian retains both original sin and all of his personal sins. This would eliminate any change in me through the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, yet it is how some have been taught to think outside of Catholicism.
- *Catholicism is inherently synthetic: Revelation is both Scripture and Tradition; salvation requires both divine and human action; God deserves our worship, but the saints are worthy of veneration.*
- The out-out (either or) paradigm is also visible in the Protestant doctrine of *solus deo gloria*. Because God alone is worthy of glory, not only is veneration of saints prohibited, but so is Marian devotion. Venerating humans, say Protestants, necessarily detracts from the worship due to God.



Catholicism and the Whole Truth

By [Casey Chalk](#)
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“If we have to give up either religion or education,” declared populist and fundamentalist Christian William Jennings Bryan, “we should give up education.” It’s easy to scoff at such an absurdity, though Bryan, whatever his flaws, was defending Christianity from what he thought modernist, anti-faith attacks in American public education. Though many evangelicals today cringe at Bryan’s anti-intellectualism, as a convert from

Protestantism, I discern a deeply problematic perspective in his uncompromising, either-faith-or-reason, worldview.

As Italian theologian Mauro Gagliardi argues in *Truth is a Synthesis: Catholic Dogmatic Theology*, Protestantism operates in an *aut-aut* (“either-or”) theological model that views truth in simplistic binaries. Catholic theology, in contrast, employs a principle of *et-et* (“both-and”) that synthesizes different realities.

Gagliardi identifies two principles as foundational to Protestantism. The first is Biblicism, the belief that the Bible is self-interpreting. But “when Luther says that the Bible is interpreted by itself, he means, in fact, that the individual reader interprets it. The reader of Scripture does not need. . .the Tradition, the Magisterium, the Fathers, and the Doctors of the Church.”

A common Protestant rejoinder is that it confuses the *sola scriptura* (“me and my Bible”) of some evangelicals with the *sola scriptura* of historic Protestantism. The latter, they claim, appreciates the need to interpret the Bible in light of ecclesial tradition.

It’s true that many Protestants speak favorably of tradition. Yet, as Catholic philosophers Bryan Cross and Neal Judisch **have argued**, the individual Protestant ultimately remains in the driver’s seat regarding which traditions are to be considered normative. Protestants love to cite St. Augustine on soteriology; not so much on ecclesiology or Mariology. With no unifying principle besides the Bible, Protestantism is thus inherently unstable and fragile. “This is why, from the beginning,

Protestantism broke apart into hundreds of different denominations, all obviously convinced to be the one that correctly interprets the word of God,” notes Gagliardi.

Protestantism’s second fundamental principle is justification, particularly the belief that it is solely God’s grace through faith that saves the Christian – hence the Reformed credos of *sola gratia* (“grace alone”) and *sola fide* (“by faith alone”). Gagliardi refers to this as a “totally passive” conception of soteriology: “even regarding the faith, the person is not a positive agent; it is God that makes the gift, and it is also He who is active in the gift.”

This is further evident in Luther’s famous theological doctrine of *simul justus et peccator* (“just and sinner at the same time”), which teaches that even after the salvific moment, the Christian retains both original sin and all of his personal sins.

Gagliardi argues that the Protestant doctrine of justification reflects a manifestation of the *aut-aut* principle in its juxtaposition of humanity and God. Salvation is *either* a human work *or* a divine one, and thus “a choice must be made.” Since nothing in the human person is good, it must be entirely and exclusively God who is the actor in salvation. We see something similar in Lutheran and Calvinist teachings regarding predestination: since man is powerless regarding his eternal destiny, it is only God who chooses. Indeed, Calvin popularized “double predestination”: God in all eternity determines who will be saved and who damned, irrespective of choice.

This dynamic is also at work in Protestant Christology, specifically regarding Christ's humanity. Gagliardi writes: "If Christ is the Savior, and if for Him one speaks of merits, then it is due to the fact that the divinity of the *Logos* abides in His Humanity. It could be said that even for Jesus it is true that God does everything, and the human being does nothing."

In this system, the humanity of Christ is not an instrument conjoined to His divinity that truly cooperates in the redemption of man, but only a sort of receptacle in which God reveals Himself. This results in an anthropology far different from what is found in Catholicism.

Consider, for example, the very notion of a *saint*. Or, alternatively, reflect on the difference between a Protestant soteriology in which divine wrath is released upon a Christ who was "made sin" for us, and a Catholic soteriology in which the God-man offers Himself as a perfect, atoning sacrifice.

The *aut-aut* paradigm is also visible in the Protestant doctrine of *solī deo gloria*. Because God alone is worthy of glory, not only is veneration of saints prohibited, but so is Marian devotion. Venerating humans, say Protestants, necessarily detracts from the worship due to God. The Reformation-era iconoclasts believed statues, icons, and relics were *blasphemous* and must be destroyed for the sake of liturgical and ecclesial purity. French Huguenots, for example, destroyed the relics of St. Irenaeus of Lyon, one of the greatest early Church Fathers.

Given these examples (and others), Gagliardi labels the *aut-aut* principle the “fundamental assumption of Protestantism.” He explains:

The Word of God is found either in Scripture or the Tradition; thus, one needs to choose, and Luther chose Scripture, erasing the Tradition. Justification happens either by faith or through human works, so faith alone saves. Salvation is the fruit either of divine grace or human merit, so grace alone saves. Honor should be manifest either to Christ alone or also to Mary and the saints, so, obviously Christ is chosen. Finally, glory should be given to God or to a human being.

What results from this dialectical opposition is a profoundly pessimistic view of the human person, as well as a prioritization of the subjective over the objective.

Catholics have often been tempted by the same dualistic thinking, whether that manifests itself in importing Protestant thinking into our theology or presenting Catholic thought and practice as one thing and not another, even if no magisterial teaching exists on the matter. Yet, as Gagliardi argues, **Catholicism is inherently synthetic: Revelation is both Scripture and Tradition; salvation requires both divine and human action; God deserves our worship, but the saints are worthy of veneration.**

The principle of Both/And is what keeps Catholicism “Catholic,” i.e., faithful to the *whole* Truth.

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