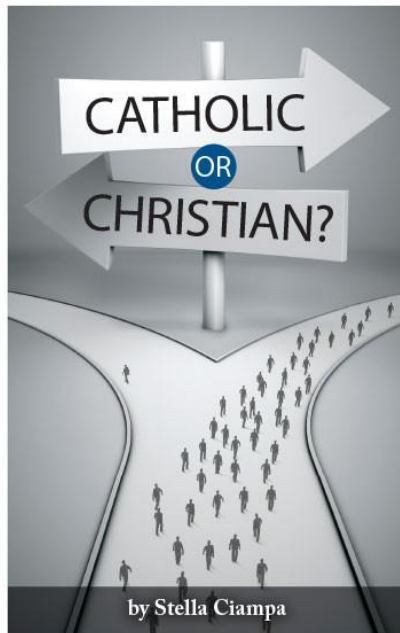# Catholic Or Christian
By Stella Ciampa - Former Catholic

Is there any difference between a Roman Catholic and a Christian? According to the Bible my answer must be: "Yes — a very real difference.". I was brought up in a Roman Catholic home and was baptized and confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church. I was taught to love, respect, and honor the Church and to believe and accept all its doctrines. I faithfully did this. It was not until after I had graduated from high school and enlisted in the United States Air Force that I learned from the Catholic Bible that there was a real difference between what I was—a Catholic—and what I must become—a Christian saved by faith alone in Jesus Christ.

After enlisting in the Air Force, I spent approximately six months training in Texas and was then transferred to Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois.

I often went to the Christian Servicemen's Center in Rantoul, Illinois. This is a place of recreation for servicemen and women; however, the primary purpose of this center is to teach the Word of God to military men and women. Many times when I went into the center, the workers spoke to me showing me verses from the Bible explaining that no church, Protestant or Roman Catholic, could save me. Neither could I merit eternal life by doing good works because the Bible says:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

The Roman Catholic Church, to the contrary, had taught me that I could merit eternal life through doing good works such as keeping the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and so forth.

The following two quotations are taken from A Handbook of the Catholic

Faith1:

"Good works are, therefore the reason for which God gives the reward of eternal life." (p. 217)

"The state of grace is not only a sanctifying state, but it also demands that we should earn the wages of supernatural life by our own labours." (p. 218)

As I continued to go to this center, I began to realize that although I was trying to live a good life and do all that the Roman Catholic Church required, I was not saved. I was a Roman Catholic but not a Christian just as there are Protestants who are not Christians.

One night I left the Servicemen's Center and a young Christian serviceman walked with me back to the barracks. As we walked he began to talk to me about Christ and my need to become a real Christian. I needed to accept Christ as my only and all-sufficient personal Savior. Where I had been trusting in faith and good works to save me, I must trust in Christ alone.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

The Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith." It does not say by faith and the sacraments or good works.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5).

When we finally reached the barracks, I turned to the Christian serviceman and told him I wanted to be saved. It was not religion that I needed, it was Jesus Christ. That night I prayed and asked Christ to be my only Savior.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

After my conversion, Jesus Christ became a living reality to me and I knew that I had eternal life. Heaven was my home for sure (John 14:1-6; 1 John 5:13). I experienced such peace and joy that my heart's desire was to share what I had with others. I thank the Lord that after speaking to my mother, she, too, was converted to Jesus Christ.

After I was discharged from the Air Force, I attended Nyack Missionary College in Nyack, New York for four years. Since my graduation, the Lord has led me to work as a missionary to Roman Catholic priests, nuns, and laity. Roman Catholic people are sincere, but sincerity cannot save. They are earnestly trying to merit eternal life through good works, but good works cannot save. We are born again by faith alone in Jesus Christ. I love the Roman Catholic people, and it is my desire to see them become true Christians. They must be saved. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see

the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The New Birth is not water baptism.

Will you accept Christ as your only way of Salvation? Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). You can become a real Christian right now by putting your trust in Christ alone—the Christ of the Bible and not a counterfeit Christ (Matthew 24:23-26; Mark 13:22).

The Bible says: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). It does not say maybe you will be saved or possibly, but it says you shall be saved.

"These things have I written unto you that believe … that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

Do you KNOW that Heaven is your home? I trust that you will give your heart to Christ. If you have any questions or comments, please write to the address below. They will try to help you find a fundamental, Christ-centered, Bible-teaching church in your community. — *Stella Ciampa*

This tract can be ordered here:
Moments With The Book