

Catholic vs. LDS: Complete Comparison Debate Sheet

Steelman Catholic Doctrine, Then Make the Case for Restoration | Quick Reference

1. PAPAL AUTHORITY & SUCCESSION

Catholic: Bishops are successors of apostles (CCC 857, 861). Pope inherits Peter's keys (Matt 16:18-19). *Lumen Gentium* 20: bishops "taken the place of the apostles."

Historical facts against:

- No monarchical bishop in Rome until **mid-2nd century** (~100 yrs after Peter)
- Title "Pope" restricted to Rome only in **6th century**
- Constantine convened Nicaea (325)—Pope Sylvester **didn't attend**
- Canon 6 of Nicaea: Rome had only **regional** authority (like Alexandria)
- Donation of Constantine = proven **8th-c. forgery** (Valla, 1440)
- Edict of Thessalonica (380): **Emperor** elevated Rome, not a council
- Leo I (440-461) first to argue Petrine succession—enforced by **imperial decree**
- 37-40 antipopes**; Western Schism: 2-3 simultaneous popes (1378-1417)
- Eastern Orthodox have valid succession but **reject papal supremacy**

Ignatius (110 AD): "I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you." —Romans 4
Cyprian (256 AD): Gathered 87 bishops to defy Pope Stephen; rejected "bishop of bishops"

LDS: Keys require divine conferral (Heb 5:4). Aaronic Priesthood restored by John the Baptist (D&C 13). Melchizedek Priesthood by Peter, James, John (D&C 27:12-13). Not institutional transfer—heavenly intervention.

2. REVELATION & INFALLIBILITY

Catholic: Pope speaks *ex cathedra* infallibly (Vatican I, 1870). 4 conditions: supreme pastor + defines doctrine + faith/morals + binds universal Church. Only **2 uses ever**: Immaculate Conception (1854) & Assumption of Mary (1950).

Problems: 2 infallible statements in 2,000 years—both about Mary, neither clearly biblical. Pope Honorius I condemned as **heretic** by Third Council of Constantinople (681). If a pope can teach heresy, what does infallibility protect?

LDS: Living prophets, ongoing revelation, open canon. D&C 1:38: "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same."

3. PRIESTHOOD

Catholic: Ordained ministers hold sacramental power through unbroken succession chain. Sacraments require valid priesthood.

Problems: Alexander VI **bought** the papacy (1492). Simony was endemic for centuries. If authority passes through the wicked, what is it transmitting? **FAIR:** bishops were "stationary overseers" who "did not regard themselves as having apostolic authority."

LDS: Aaronic restored by John the Baptist (D&C 13). Melchizedek by Peter, James, John (D&C 27:12-13). Heb 5:4: "Called of God, as was Aaron"—direct divine call, not bureaucratic chain.

4. SAINTS & MARY

Catholic: Latria (God) vs. Hyperdulia (Mary) vs. Dulia (saints) —Aquinas. CCC 969: Mary = "Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, Mediatrix." CCC 970: doesn't diminish Christ. Defense: Rev 5:8, James 5:16.

1 Tim 2:5: "One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"
Deut 18:10-12: Consulting the dead forbidden
Isaiah 8:19: "Should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead?"

LDS: Pray **ONLY** to Father in name of Christ (3 Ne 18:19-20). Don't even pray to Jesus directly. Origen (250 AD): "Prayer can be offered only to the Father." Council of Carthage (397): "At the altar, always address prayer to God the Father."

5. IMAGES & IDOLATRY

Catholic: CCC 2129-2132. God commanded images (bronze serpent, cherubim). Incarnation = "new economy of images." Honor passes to prototype. Second Council of Nicaea (787): proskunesis OK, latreia only for God.

Rebuttal: Exodus 20:4-5 — no graven images. Deut 4:15-19 — no images of any form. Isaiah 44:9-20 — mocks idol-makers. **Bronze serpent was destroyed** when Israel worshipped it (2 Kings 18:4)—proves the danger.

LDS: No crosses, crucifixes, icons in worship. Hinckley: "The cross is the symbol of the dying Christ; our message is a declaration of the Living Christ." Temples use symbols (sun, moon, stars) but none are worship objects.

6. INFANT BAPTISM

Catholic: CCC 1250: children "tainted by original sin," need baptism. Council of Carthage (418): anathema on those denying infant baptism. Limbo never formally defined; 2007 document: only "grounds for hope" for unbaptized infants.

No NT infant baptisms recorded. Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptized"—infants can't repent. Mark 10:14: "Of such IS the kingdom of God"—they're already in it.

Moroni 8:8: "Little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin"
Moroni 8:12: "Little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world; if not so, God is a partial God"
Moroni 8:14: He who supposes children need baptism "must go down to hell"

Catholic Church: "grounds for hope" for unbaptized babies.
LDS Church: "ALL children who die before accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom" (D&C 137:10). Which God is more loving?

7. PURGATORY VS. SPIRIT PRISON

Catholic Purgatory: CCC 1030-1032. Saved but imperfect souls purified. Not punishment of the damned. Only for the already saved. No gospel preached. Living help: prayers, Masses, indulgences.

LDS Spirit Prison: Those who never heard + wicked. Gospel preached (D&C 138, 1 Pet 3:19, 4:6). Agency preserved—must choose. Living help: temple ordinances, baptism for dead (1 Cor 15:29).

Feature	Catholic	LDS
Who goes?	Only the saved	Uninstructed + wicked
Purpose	Purification	Teaching + suffering
Gospel preached?	NO	YES
Agency?	Automatic	Choice required
Living help	Prayers/Masses	Temple ordinances

D&C 19:11-12: "Eternal punishment is God's punishment"—describes the **SOURCE**, not the **DURATION**. Talmage: "No man kept in hell longer than necessary to bring him to fitness for something better."

8. SIN CATEGORIES & HELL

Catholic: Venial sin wounds grace (CCC 1862). Mortal sin destroys it (CCC 1857); grave matter + full knowledge + deliberate consent. **Die in mortal sin = eternal hell** (CCC 1861). Missing Sunday Mass = mortal sin. Contraception = mortal sin.

Unforgivable sin (CCC 1864): "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" = final impenitence. Catholic system: sleep in on Sunday, die before confession = **eternal damnation**.

LDS: D&C 76—three degrees of glory. **Almost universal salvation.** Even testial kingdom surpasses mortal understanding. Only sons of perdition (deny Holy Ghost after full knowledge) permanently excluded—extremely rare. God's justice is remedial, not retributive.

9. CREATION FROM NOTHING

Catholic: God created from absolute nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*). Cite Gen 1:1, Heb 11:3, 2 Macc 7:28.

Rebuttal: Hebrew *bara* = "organize/shape," not "create from nothing." Gen 1:2: matter existed ("without form and void"). Justin Martyr (110-165 AD): God created from "unformed matter." **FAIR:** *ex nihilo* appeared "suddenly in latter half of 2nd century."

THE DAMNATION PROBLEM: If God created souls from nothing, knowing some would be damned, **He created them FOR damnation.** He could have simply not created them.

LDS: God organized pre-existing matter (Abraham 3-4). Intelligence is co-eternal with God (D&C 93:29). We **chose** to come (Abraham 3:22-26). Our existence is not arbitrary. Our damnation (if it occurs) is not God's manufacturing defect.

10. THE LOVING GOD ARGUMENT

Catholic chain: Created from nothing → original sin at birth → infants at risk → mortal sin tracking → eternal hell for technicalities → no post-mortem opportunity for unevangelized → purgatory only for already saved

LDS chain: Eternal intelligences choose God's plan → children innocent → age of accountability (8) → repentance always available → spirit world teaching → baptism for dead → three degrees of glory → nearly universal salvation → God's punishment is remedial

Widtsoe: "In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there is no hell. ALL will find a measure of salvation."
2 Ne 26:33: "He denieth none that come unto him"

CATHOLIC "MUST BELIEVES" (PAIN OF HELL)

Requirement	Source	Penalty
Transubstantiation	Trent XIII	Anathema
Sunday Mass	CCC 2181	Mortal sin
Annual confession	CCC 1457	Mortal sin
Papal infallibility	Vatican I	Anathema
Immaculate Conception	1854	Heresy
Assumption of Mary	1950	Heresy
No contraception	Humanae Vitae	Mortal sin

KILLER QUESTIONS

- If succession proves Rome, why doesn't it prove Constantinople? Orthodox reject the pope.
- God spoke infallibly **twice** in 2,000 years—both about Mary. How is that not silence?
- Alexander VI bought the papacy. What is authority transmitted through bribery worth?
- Can you **guarantee** your unbaptized baby is in heaven? LDS can (D&C 137:10).
- Why did early Christians baptize for the dead (1 Cor 15:29) if there's no post-mortem chance?
- If missing Mass = eternal hell, is that really the God you worship?
- If God created souls from nothing knowing some would be damned, He created them **FOR damnation**.
- Ignatius distinguished his authority from Peter & Paul's. When did bishops become equal to apostles?
- Donation of Constantine was a forgery. Why did the Holy Spirit allow it to shape the Church?
- Cyprian defied the pope with 87 bishops in 256 AD. Was Cyprian in mortal sin?

"This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." —Moses 1:39