

Saving the World

“God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost” and he came not to condemn but to save the world (*John 3: 16-17*). Christians find these perhaps the most reassuring passages in scripture. Despite our imperfect understanding, our sometimes faulty actions, our flickering belief, God is firmly on our side. We should build on that belief, perhaps praying, “Lord I believe. Help me overcome my un-belief.”

We have free will and could choose to reject the salvation offered; but why would we? But what of those who haven't properly heard of the Good News of salvation? At first glance this gospel seems to exclude them.

Pope Francis assures us though that, “The Lord has redeemed all of us, all of us, with the Blood of Christ: all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone! Even the atheists. Everyone!” (*Vatican 22 May 2013*). God wills the salvation of all and so the offer is on the table for everyone.

Our Catechism tells us that “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 own actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation” (CCC847).

Pope Francis asks, “How do we behave with our brothers and sisters, especially with those who are not Christians? Are we impediments to their encounter with God? Do we hinder or facilitate their encounter with the Father?” The pope concludes, saying: “Today we ask for the grace to recognize and encourage the ever new ways in which the Risen One pours out His Spirit into the world and attracts hearts.”

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