

Jesus answered the question of salvation

I sat down today to read with interest Father Dietzen's answer (CR, June 4) regarding salvation through faith or good deeds. I have had similar discussions with Protestant friends and Catholics who look to the Magisterium's directives on Mass attendance and the receiving of Communion as being the means to salvation.

I am not a theologian and realize that the mystery behind the gift of sanctifying grace is just that - a mystery - but it seems to me that Jesus himself answered the question of salvation very clearly numerous times in Scripture. One need only read Matthew's Gospel to hear Jesus' directives on gaining salvation: 7:21: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one that does the will of my Father ... ;" 5:23-24: " ... if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother;" and, most notably, 25:31-45: " ... Lord, when did we see you hungry ... naked ... ill ...in prison?" In addition, if our focus is on our own salvation and our reason for doing for others is to gain that salvation, the life we present to our Father in heaven will be tainted by selfishness.

I believe we follow solely the doctrines of our individual denominations, without due attention to God's holy word, at our own peril.