

# YOGA

*Not a Catholic Meditation Technique*

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This research paper has been written in response to the following email message:

*Peace be with you! I am a high school youth minister at a Catholic church.*

*Recently a debate has arisen among members of our parish staff about Yoga. The basic debate is thus: is it possible to separate the movements and positions of yoga from the spirituality? Several members of our staff do yoga at the church once a week and they claim that it's just exercise -- totally separate from any sort of religious ties.*

*I'd be interested in reading your treatise and hearing the results of your research in this area. Thanks! In Christ, Janet<sup>1</sup>*

The question is complex and not easy to answer. There are many components to the question: What is yoga? Why is it so popular in today's society? Why is it finding disciples among our Catholic faithful? Is it Catholic? Is it just an exercise? Is it right for the Catholic faithful to practice yoga?

The concept of alternative health treatments and the freedom of relating to people of other religions, have led some Catholic faithful into areas of individual exploration. Yoga is popular today, among Catholics and the general population. I have a Catholic friend, Ana<sup>2</sup>, who years ago started practicing yoga, and today believes that God is energy, that we are all part of God, that there is no devil, that there is no hell, and that there is reincarnation. I wonder if what happened to Ana could happen to Janet?

What are we doing when we do yoga? The urgency of answering Janet is compounded by the

responsibility I feel as a Christian not to be prejudiced and to look at situations and people through the eyes of Christ. I do not want to sound judgmental or closed minded. I recall Romans 1:25, “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and revered and worshiped the creature rather than the creator...”

Yoga originated as one of the systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy. In Samskrit it means “union” and it seeks the union of the individual with the divine by means of exercise, breathing, posture, diet and meditation. The effects of yoga are similar to hypnosis. Have you ever seen a magician hypnotize someone and make them act out at their command without the person being conscious of their action? In being hypnotized by the magician, the individual is giving up his or her free will and conscious control. When the individual goes into a trance brought about by yoga, who or what is in control? The person is giving away its mind to something. If a person was compared to an airplane, it has just given away the controls of the plane to another person or entity. What is that something to which the free will of the individual is surrendered? It is not God as we Christians know it. The person may never know. One is dealing with the occult powers of the mind. Our mind is the “pilot” at the “control” of our will. When we let go, who is doing the “piloting”?

What are we doing? We are experimenting with an unknown. Hypnosis is an area not completely understood. When we empty ourselves of every human desire and search into the “depth” of our souls... what are we looking for? I fear the loss of a soul to pagan practices, because Colossians says, “See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

Yoga in our American culture is marketed as a way to exercise the body and mind by relaxing and toning the muscles. It is fashionable. It is up to the individual to make it happen. You do not need community. It is offered in churches, in Country Clubs, at work, sometimes it is even covered by insurance as an alternative medical treatment. In the Church’s bazaar in my parish, gifts certificate to yoga classes in the Dharma Institute<sup>4</sup> were auctioned. We are practicing techniques devoid of Christianity thinking that we are “just” exercising. How did it happen? Western Christianity has brought humanity to the point of

development that it is today. Yoga and Eastern philosophy sinks the human soul into hopelessness, neglecting the world we live in and sinking the human mind into unknown territories. The product of the Eastern culture can be seen in the countries where it has been practiced for centuries. The picture is one of poverty and sorrow. Eastern yoga places the responsibility of salvation on the individual disregarding Jesus sacrifices for us.

We have been misled by yoga exercises to believe that the physiological feelings brought about by our own actions are of a spiritual nature. In "*Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*," is stated:

Some physical exercises automatically produce a feeling of quiet and relaxation, pleasing sensations, perhaps even phenomena of light and of warmth, which resemble spiritual well-being. To take such feelings for the authentic consolations of the Holy Spirit would be a totally erroneous way of conceiving the spiritual life. Giving them a symbolic significance typical of the mystical experience, when the moral condition of the person concerned does not correspond to such an experience, would represent a kind of mental schizophrenia which could also lead to psychic disturbance and, at times, to moral deviations.<sup>5</sup>

The Christians who want to justify yoga as compatible with Christianity may quote Saint Paul, “In him we live and move and have our being.”<sup>6</sup> They also may quote Jesus saying, “The Father and I are one.”<sup>7</sup> They proceed to say that Jesus was a Yogi, an enlightened one, a person in union with God. In yoga the ultimate goal is to be one with god, but the god they define is not the God we know. Yoga is a pseudoscience, defining God as an energy that permeates everything, and we are all part of that energy. The way it attracts Americans to its ritual and exercises is talking in terms attractive to our culture. It promises physical health and mental health, muscle tone, spiritual enrichment but the methodology is one of the Hindu religion.

Yoga is not a Christian practice and can lead individuals away from the Catholic Church first and then away from Christ. In today’s society there is no generic religion, but yoga could be said to be one. It describes itself like a way to be in harmony with one’s own body. Its marketing techniques convey the idea that it is a way of reducing stress and improving the mental well being of an individual. Where is the error? Yoga is a religious practice that will lead Christians astray. It yokes the individual to self-search into the psychic powers of the mind. It is a practice without the divine revelation of Christ trying to make sense of the world and what it is all about. We are in need of a Savior. Without Christ we cannot work our own salvation.

Through Christ alone there is salvation. “The theory of the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which would be complementary to that found in other religions, is contrary to the Church's faith.”<sup>8</sup>

The “God” that yoga talks about is an energy. If you are able to tap into that “energy” you will be like “God.” You will be enlightened which is what the Hindus believe Christ to be. The God we worship as Christians is a personable<sup>9</sup> God, a Triune God. We are the creature, He is the Creator.

How can a Catholic be lead into yoga thinking it is a spiritual rich method? By thinking of the inner “God” which yoga is trying to approach as the Holy Spirit. That is not what yoga is talking about. The

misunderstanding of what yoga is, promotes the practice of yoga among the Catholic population. Well meaning Catholics are introduced to elements of Gnosticism which the Early Fathers fought to eradicate. In this case “ignorance is hazardous to the faith.” The solution to the problem is to learn what Christ’s message of salvation is all about. God is the creator. We are His creation redeemed by Jesus Christ.

There is a need to remember that “Man’s nature calls him to seek the truth while ignorance keeps him in a condition of servitude.”<sup>10</sup> “Indeed, the whole Church, as the ‘salt of the earth’ and ‘the light of the world’ (cf. *Mt* 5:13 f.), must bear witness to the truth of Christ which sets us free.”<sup>11</sup>

My friend Ana wandered away from Christianity practicing yoga. I realized that, when she told me that she believed in Jesus like a prophet, but like any other prophet; and in her home, next to the picture of Jesus, I saw the picture of Paramhansa Yogananda.<sup>12</sup> To her the yogi and Jesus were at the same level as persons in union with God. But, “What was God to her?”

I asked, and Ana told me that we are all god. How can a Catholic like her, wander away from the faith and be so deceived? The concept of yoga practiced by Ana was an exercise that searched union with the Infinite. In words from the *Autobiography of a Yogi*:<sup>13</sup>

Kriya Yoga is a simple, psychophysiological method by which the human blood is decarbonated and recharged with oxygen. The atoms of this extra oxygen are transmuted into life current to rejuvenate the brain and spinal centers. By stopping the accumulation of venous blood, the yogi is able to lessen or prevent the decay of tissues. The advanced yogi transmutes his cells into pure energy. Elijah, Jesus, Kabir, and other prophets were past masters in the use of Kriya or a similar technique, by which they caused their bodies to dematerialize at will.<sup>14</sup>

The above quote from the book by Paramhansa Yogananda,<sup>15</sup> equates our Lord Jesus Christ to the prophet Elijah, and echoes what Ana said about who Christ was. The statement sounds scientific without scientific basis. What is wrong with the picture?

The Hindu religion from which Yoga originates is a pluralistic religion and it believes in many deities. To them, any religion is okay. Religion is viewed as a way to God.

The Catholic Faith is not a pluralistic religion. In *Dominus Jesus*<sup>16</sup> we read, “The Church's constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* but also *de iure* (or in principle).” The secular expression, “I’m okay. You’re okay,” is not a Christian concept. Our God is a jealous God as Exodus 34:14 says, “You shall not worship any other god, for the LORD is 'the Jealous One'; a jealous God is he.”

The American culture sometimes judges religion only as a social function. The standard idea in the American society is that as long as you believe in something you are okay. Any religion is fine as long as it believes in God. You have to be open minded enough to keep religion to yourself, “after all it is a private matter - You and God and that is it!” That sounds like the Greco-Roman culture. Have we forgotten why the Christians were persecuted by the Romans? They were persecuted because they would not worship other gods and condemned the worship of other gods. The Greco-Roman culture condoned pluralism in their religious fervor. Christians did not and do not. Catholics have fought and died to preserve the Christian faith for two thousand years. Are we diluting the truth with unwanted pollution? Was the blood of the early martyrs shed in vain?

Ecumenism has been interpreted at times as the freedom to experience any faith and culture. After all, some Catholics may say, the Second Vatican Council encouraged dialogue among different religions. That is true as we read in the “*Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*”:<sup>17</sup>

“The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.”<sup>18</sup>

The above quote taken out of context seems to reaffirm that any religion outside of Christ has some part of the truth. What the statement really says is that these religions may have an incomplete part of the truth. This is clarified if we read the statements that follow: “Indeed, she proclaims and ever must proclaim Christ ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (Jn 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19).”<sup>19</sup>

The Catholic Church encourages us to establish dialogue with other religions, and to foster peaceful coexistence among all, but it does not say that the Catholic Church is equal to other religions. The *Declaration Dominus Jesus*<sup>20</sup> reaffirms that the Church is necessary for salvation. In life we are not in the market for the truth. We already found it. The truth of Christ is revealed in His Church: The Catholic Church.

As we study the history of the Western civilization, we learn that Christianity has brought humanity to the point of development that it is today. Yoga and Eastern philosophy sink the human soul into hopelessness, neglecting the world around and dismiss it as an “illusion.” The product of the Eastern culture can be seen in the countries where it has been practiced for centuries. The picture is one of poverty and sorrow. Eastern philosophy practiced in yoga places the responsibility of salvation on the individual disregarding Jesus sacrifices for us.

The marketing technique used to promote yoga may sound scientific, but there is no basis in science for what is stated. Yoga is not a science, but a pseudo-science.<sup>21</sup> In today’s society, the danger of yoga is that it can mislead innocent Christians to believe that it is an alternative way to getting healthier and obtaining relaxation in this busy world. The reality is that yoga is the initiation of an Eastern religion that does not believe in Christ as the savior of the world. A religion based on man’s way of trying to explain God through human understanding alone. It makes the sacrifice of Christ worthless. It ignores the reality of Jesus Christ when He says: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”<sup>22</sup>

In today's health issues, we can see how hypnosis can use the mind to manipulate body rhythms and lead people in ways that are not usually possible. In 1957, Pius XII describes hypnosis, "Here a lowering of consciousness is intended to be brought about that the higher faculties might thereby be dulled in such a way as to paralyze the psychic control mechanism which men constantly use for self-mastery and self direction..."<sup>23</sup>

Yoga exercises are geared toward detaching the mind from "reality." We do it to ourselves. We need to protect our ways and practices. The mind can be disturbed by tampering with it. In yoga, we are dealing with the mind. Our body and soul are so closely knitted that it is hard to separate them. Our human body is made-up like one of body, mind and spirit. The body is similar to my computer hardware; the mind is the program that runs it; and the spirit or soul is the hand that guides it. When you tamper with the body you affect the way the mind may see things and impair the spirit to guide it. Can we separate yoga exercises from the spiritual make up of yoga? Can we alienate the action from what is intended to do? Let us look at it from a Catholic point of view.

When talking to someone in the Hindu religion, who practices yoga, it is easy to conclude that they are trying to obtain salvation by their own efforts outside of Christ. They see Christ as a good person, an enlighten one, even a good prophet but that is it. The Hindu belief from which Yoga originated believes in reincarnation and predestination. It lessens the value of life. To put it simply, it makes life a recyclable commodity. In reincarnation, if your life doesn't work this time, there will be another chance in another life. There is no sin. There is no devil. According to yoga, God is an energy. It interpretes humanity without the divine revelation of Christ.

I heard Bishop Vasquez of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston describing a Catholic and saying that being Catholic is being in community. We are in community when we remain in the Church. Even monks and mystics, who yogis like to compare themselves to, lived in communities. St. Theresa of Avila<sup>24</sup> in her life time rejected "certain methods" which did not take into consideration the humanity of Jesus and were tempting her to submerge into the abyss of the divinity. We are to worship God with our free will, not



giving up our free will. We align our will to God's will, but we never lose our identity. If we were to seek unity with God, like a yogi aspires to do, we would be looking for equality with God, something that not even Jesus looked for on this earth.<sup>25</sup> Our attitude in our every day lives should be as Philipians 2:5-8 describes it:

“Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”

If you search for “yoga” in the Vatican site<sup>26</sup> nothing turns up. Yoga is so foreign to the Catholic faith that there are no specific documents to address the issue. In reference to Hinduism, the Catholic Church has adopted a spirit of reconciliation with it and with different religions through out the world. Annually, it gathers leaders of different religions from around the world to pray for world peace. In the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*, in 1965<sup>27</sup>, it acknowledges that Hinduism leads men to contemplate the divine mystery “through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry.” They do that searching for freedom from the human condition through ascetical practices or profound meditation. *Nostra Aetate*<sup>28</sup> also affirms the knowledge that: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.”<sup>29</sup>

Without the horizon of God, searching within by the use of yoga, a human being can get lost. With limited mental resources searching for the divine outside of Christ is dementia. It is a sin, because it is sinful to disregard the wondrous sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross to try to reach salvation, health and redemption outside of Christ. With Christ's word ever present, we will know the truth, and the truth will set us free.<sup>30</sup>

Yoga is the taste of the "tree of knowledge."<sup>31</sup> It promises health and peace to the troubled soul and the only thing that it asks in return is total abandonment of one's free will to something or someone that is quoted as universal energy. Yoga is non-Christian practice.

We need to be aware of the danger of yoking ourselves with pagan practices. As Paul says in 2 Cor 6:14: "Do not be yoked with those who are different, with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?"

Humans are hungry for a closer relationship with God, but we have to remember that a relationship has to be nurtured and is not a "drive-through lane service" on which we decided what to get and when to get it. In the department of mystical experiences, God is in control, time and the place at His own choosing. "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you."<sup>32</sup> To grow in our spirituality we cannot trust every experience as from God. We need to remember 1 John 4:1-3: "Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God. This is the spirit of the antichrist that, as you heard, is to come, but in fact is already in the world."<sup>33</sup>

As the baby-boomers begin to age, they search for new ways to health and inner peace. Ponce de Leon embarked in a similar search when he came to Florida in 1513 searching for the Fountain of Youth. He did not find it, as the people who are looking for a "new way" in yoga will not find it either. When we wander away from our Catholic faith and begin experimenting with other religions searching for false

promises, we are acting against the law of God as St. Augustine said "Love of self to the point of contempt for God."<sup>34</sup> Good and evil, good and sin are no longer discernable because everything goes.

It is not possible to separate the movements and positions of yoga from its spirituality. We cannot separate the yoga exercise from the yoga beliefs. They go hand in hand. Just ask a yoga instructor where does it all lead? They will tell you that yoga is just the beginning of a journey to "revitalizes and nourishes the mind, body, and spirit."<sup>35</sup>

You can defend yourself against temptation if you know it is a temptation. You can stop yourself from sinning if you know that it is a sin. The danger of yoga it is that it seems harmless and it is not. It seems different, mysterious in many ways. It reminds me that the occult has always existed and the realm of the kingdom of the evil one is real on this earth. My experience is that once in yoga the self-sufficiency of the individual kicks in, and the individual creates its own way of finding "God" and ends up walking away from the Church and the sacraments. We need to know what we are getting into and it is not from the Triune God.

On a television program, I heard a reporter say that "what made the attack on Pearl Harbor a total Japanese success was that the Japanese managed to keep it a total secret." What is making yoga a success in the American culture, it is that it has kept the secret that is a religion and leads its followers to believe that it is alternative health practice. It is attacking the Christian beliefs and the Christian churches do not even know it.

I will say about those who are introducing yoga to the Catholic faithful the same that Paul said about the prophets in the region of Achaia: "For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, who masquerade as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light."<sup>36</sup>

The reality of God's love for us is such that we never lose our own identity. God wants us to love Him but He respects our identity and in heaven we will have our identity. When we die, we will not blend into the essence of God. We will not become God. We will remain as individuals to worship God eternally

and we will experience a joy that no human feeling can compare to. If we are able to give over to God all that we are and all that we have, our physical and spiritual well being will improve. The secret of happiness and peace is to say like Mother Theresa of Calcutta: “I am nothing but a pencil in God’s hand” and leave everything to the Lord.

What can take the place of yoga? I think there are many alternatives. The one I would place at the top of the list is to go to daily Mass and to pray, talking to God as a friend. Walk for fifteen minutes each day while praying the rosary and then sit quietly thinking of the mysteries of our faith, giving thanks to God for every one of them. Instead of turning off your inner light of faith, shine the light of Christ to others. Make your life one of helping others, of showing genuine interest for the lives of your family members, of your friends, of your community. Make your life one of service. Begin by relating better to your loved ones. Call your husband and your children once a day and pray with them. Live each day as it was your last in love and service of Christ.

Mystical experiences are a gift from God which God initiates. In the Bible the vertical experiences with God gave great spiritual fruit for the community, for example Abraham and Moses. The encounter of Abraham and God which God initiated made possible a covenant between God and His people.<sup>37</sup> The encounter of Moses with God in the burning bush with God initiated compelled Moses to lead the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments<sup>38</sup> A true experience of God in Christ Jesus is shown by its fruit. If the Spirit is poured upon a soul the fruits of the Spirit will show through the actions of the individual.

In the Eastern religions and exercises, the body is the instrument by which we escape from the distractions of the outer world, seeking God within ourselves. Can we by technique or exercise achieve mystical experiences? No. God cannot be commanded to act. Your body can be commanded to act but only God or your free will can command your soul.

We are part of a greater picture. We can share our gifts. We are part of a reality not an illusion. In

that reality of life, Christ has given us the Church and the sacraments but we cannot command the Lord to act upon our command. To desire or try to be like God is a sin against the first commandment. We, Catholics, believe that there is One Truth, Jesus Christ, and the best document to clarify that statement was written by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith: "*Declaration 'Dominus Iesus' on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church.*"<sup>39</sup> stands in defense of Jesus Christ which yoga is in direct opposition to.

In summary, answering Janet's question: When we talk about separating the exercise of yoga from its spirituality, one thing comes to mind, Can we separate the intent and the instrument of an action? Can we separate the gun from the person who pulled the trigger? The exercises of yoga are designed to detach the mind from the concentration of its surroundings. If you give away your alliance to Christ for the sake of your body is it worth it? I do not think so.

"May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>40</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

1 Janet is not her real name.

2 Ana is not her real name.

3 Col 2:8 4 *THE DHARMA CENTER*, 13817 Southwest Freeway, Sugar Land, TX 77478 – It offers yoga, t'ai chi, pilates, massage therapy, healing touch, aromatherapy, etc.

5 “*Letter for the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*” by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. October 15, 1989.

6 Acts 17:28

7 John 10:30

8 “*Declaration 'Dominus Iesus' on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church.*” Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Vatican. September 2000. #6

9 Cf. Dreher, Rev. John D. “*The Danger of Centering Prayer.*” From

<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/apologetics/ap0005.html>

10 “*Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian.*” Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Vatican. May 24, 1990.

11 Ibid.

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13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.



16 The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith made public the "*Declaration 'Dominus Iesus' on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*" on September 2000. It is available at the Vatican site – [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

17 *Notra Aetate* - *Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*  
(1965), #2.

18 From *Notra Aetate*: “Religions... that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus, in Hinduism men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism in its various forms realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men in a devout and confident spirit may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life and sacred rites.”

“The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19).”

19 *Notra Aetate* - *Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (1965), #2.

20 Refer to footnote #17.

21 False science.

22 John 14:6

23 Gormley, William J., C.M., S.T.L. *Medical Hypnosis, Historical Introduction to Its Morality in the Light of Papal, Theological and Medical Teaching – A Dissertation.* The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. (1961) pp 126.

24 From the Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church “*On Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*” by the

Congregation of Faith – October 15, 1989. Footnote #12. Pope John Paul II has pointed out to the whole Church the example and the doctrine of St. Teresa of Avila who in her life had to reject the temptation of certain methods which proposed a leaving aside of the humanity of Christ in favor of a vague self-immersion in the abyss of the divinity. In a homily given on November 1, 1982, he said that the call of Teresa of Jesus advocating a prayer completely centered on Christ "is valid, even in our day, against some methods of prayer which are not inspired by the Gospel and which in practice tend to set Christ aside in preference for a mental void which makes no sense in Christianity. Any method of prayer is valid insofar as it is inspired by Christ and leads to Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6)." See: *"Homilia Abulae habita in honorem Sanctae Teresiae:"* AAS 75 (1983), 256-257.

25 Phil 2:5-8

26 [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

27 *The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions Nostra Aetate*, by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Cf. John 8:32

31 Cf. Gen 2:9,17.

32 John 15:16

33 1 John 4:1-3

34 St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28: CCL 48, p. 541.

35 <http://www.arlingtonyogacenter.com/aboutyoga.html>

36 2 Cor 11:13-14

37 [Gen 17:8] *I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now staying, the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God.*" [Gen 17:9] God also said to Abraham: *"On your part, you and your descendants after you must keep my covenant throughout the ages."*

38 [Exo 34:27] Then the LORD said to Moses, "*Write down these words, for in accordance with them I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.*" [Exo 34:28] So Moses stayed there with the LORD for forty days and forty nights, without eating any food or drinking any water, and he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

39 Refer to footnote #17.

40 1 Thessalonians 5:23