

# FAITH CHAT

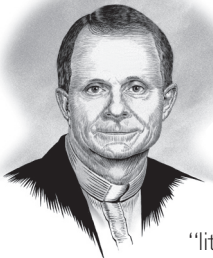
with James & John

## Has Idolatry Crept Into Catholic Devotion?

Know This...

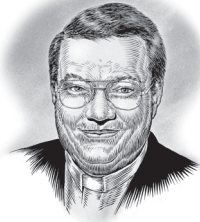
In true devotion, faithful Catholics dedicate themselves to God's service. In false devotion, the misguided and often over-zealous Catholic can commit idolatry. The Church is vehemently against all forms of idolatry: "giving the worship due God to an object or person." Religious objects, as well as pictures and statues of Jesus, Mary, or the saints can awaken our senses and deepen our relationship with God; but these material things are not to be worshipped.

Worship is reserved for God alone.  
A statue of Jesus is not Jesus.



**John:** Devotion of sacred objects and images separates Catholic and Orthodox Christians from other Christians who take an overly "literalistic" view of Ex 20:4, "You shall not make for yourself a graven image."

**James:** Accurate interpretation of this Bible passage reveals that God does not condemn devotion to sacred objects and images if they draw us to Him. He does condemn our worship of such things.



**John:** Devotion and veneration of the saints always include prayer that is ultimately directed to God the Father. Praying the rosary or chaplets are examples of devotions. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Body of Christ) is the highest form of "devotion" because the Blessed Sacrament is truly God; its worship is not idolatry.

**James:** Pious devotion and veneration of the saints give vitality to our faith; but throughout Church history, idolatry has crept into these acts. We the faithful must worship God alone.

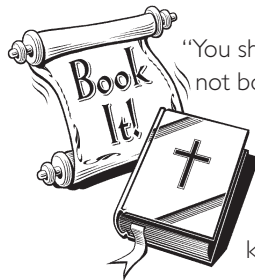
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Jesus said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Mt 6:22-24

"He that, according to the flesh, was born of the Holy Spirit is to be adored. And let no one divert this to the Virgin Mary: Mary was the temple of God, not the God of the temple. And therefore He alone is to be adored, who was working in the temple." St. Ambrose of Milan, 381 A.D. "Even if we make images of pious men it is not so that we might adore them as gods but that when we see them we might be prompted to imitate them; and if we make images of Christ, it is so that our minds might wing aloft in yearning for Him." St. Cyril of Alexandria, 429 A.D. "If we were making images of men and thought them gods, and adored them as gods, certainly we would be impious. But we do not do any of these things. We worship and adore the Creator and Maker alone, as God who by His nature is to be worshipped." St. John Damascene, 725 A.D.



"You shall not have other gods besides me...you shall not bow down before them or worship them." Ex 20:3,5

"You shall bear the penalty for your sinful idolatry."

Ezek 23:49 "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Col 3:5 "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true... Little

children, keep yourselves from idols." 1 Jn 5:20a, 21 St. Paul assures us that worshipping the Eucharist is not idolatry, "Therefore, my beloved, avoid idolatry. I am speaking as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I am saying. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" 1 Cor 10:14-16

Lord Jesus, King of the universe and Savior of the world. Your crucifixion and resurrection revealed Your Father's infinite love for us. I pray to your most Sacred Heart that I will never get so caught up in the things of this world that they become my god. May my devotion to Your Mother and the saints strengthen my love for You and deepen my desire to serve You always and everywhere. I ask this in Your most Holy Name. Amen.

