Apologetics

***Q. Can a person with a reasoning behaviour question the church?***

***A.***

I believe what you mean by your question is - can we question what the church teaches us and it what the church ask us to do?

Of course you can and rather you must. Asking questions helps us grow in our reasoning and adds meaning to what we do. In fact a great way to study our faith is by asking questions and finding out the answers. When you do this it will help you add a whole new dimension to your faith and make you fall in love with Jesus. So we encourage you to ask as many questions as you need to grow in your faith. The Church is always willing and ready to help you.

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***Q. We don't worship any idols or anything, but why do we Kiss statues or like bow down before them? Isn't that like the same sort of thing?***

***A.***

Let me break up this question into 3 parts.

Firstly are having statues or images of saints wrong? Let’s see what the bible says about it.

During a plague of serpents sent to punish the Israelites during the exodus, God told Moses to "make [a statue of] a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (Num. 21:8–9). One had to *look* at the bronze statue of the serpent to be healed, which shows that statues could be used ritually, not merely as religious decorations.

Catholics use statues, paintings, and other artistic devices to recall the person or thing depicted. Just as it helps to remember one’s mother by looking at her photograph, so it helps to recall the example of the saints by looking at pictures of them.

Secondly regarding bowing?

Though bowing can be used as a posture in worship, not all bowing is worship. In Japan, people show respect by bowing in greeting (the equivalent of the Western handshake). Similarly, a person can kneel before a king without worshipping him as a god. In the same way, a Catholic who may kneel in front of a statue while praying isn’t worshipping the statue or even praying to *it*. For example, Jacob bowed to the ground on his knees seven times to his elder brother Esau (Gen. 33:3), Bathsheba bowed to her husband David (1 Kings. 1:16), and Solomon bowed to his mother Bathsheba (1 Kings. 2:19).

In fact, in Revelation 3:9, John records the words of Jesus:

Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and learn that I have loved you.

Finally kissing a statue?

I kiss the picture of my mom who passed away over ten years ago. I know the photo paper behind the glass in the frame is not my mom, but it is something that reflects what she once looked like. We don't "love" the statue but whom it represents.

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***Q. Why is the Catholic Church not trying to bring back our brothers and sisters who have left the church?***

***A.***

Many people leave the church because they for some reason lack understanding regarding what the Catholic Church is all about. Venerable Fulton Sheen was absolutely right when he said this about America and the same applies to us here as well. These were his words -- “There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.”

The Catholic Church does its best to teach and defend our faith. Let’s take our parish for example. We have the bible cell which teaches the faith as well as being part of the proclamation cell in Mumbai. The Lighthouse which answers question regarding our faith and encourages people to ask more question to grow deeper in their relation with Jesus. The confirmation and Sunday school are place where we teach our faith. With missions and special session that happen throughout the year we aspire to grow in knowledge and our relationship with Jesus.

But the question arises how does that bring people back? We need you to help us to reach them. People who have left the church would rather listen to a person then know and trust than a total stranger. Therefore we empower you to speak, understand and help them come to the knowledge to the Catholic Church.

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***Q. Does the church have a tough and real answer to an atheist's question?***

***A.***

The debate of does God exist has been around forever. If a person is adamant that there is no God then no amount of proof or logical explanation is going to help. For example if a person says that no one has ever walked on the moon and is adamant about his position not amount of proof, interviews, data and reasoning can help him. It is the same way with atheism is one tries to shut the door on reasoning but for one who is in search of the truth God can be explained. Let me put before you a few simple points that we could speak about.

There is no God.

1. This is not a logical position to hold since to know there is no God means the person would have to know all things to know there is no God.  Since he cannot know all things (if he did he would be God), then he cannot logically say there is no God.

I believe there is no God.

1. To say "I believe there is no God" is a conscious choice.  Then, on what do you base your choice: evidence, logic, faith, or a combination of the three?
2. For someone to believe there is no God is to hold that belief by faith since there is no evidence that positively supports atheism, and there are no logical proofs that God does not exist.  It is, after all, virtually impossible to prove a negative.

There is no evidence for God.

1. This is not a logical position to hold since to know there is no evidence for God's existence necessitates that the person knows all possible evidences for God's existence.  Since he cannot do this (if he did he would be God), then he cannot logically say there is no evidence for God.

I have not seen sufficient evidence for God's existence.

1. To say you haven't seen sufficient evidence for God's existence is a more intellectually honest position, but it is really a form of agnosticism which maintains that God is not known or knowable while admitting the possibility of God's existence.
2. If a person has not seen sufficient evidence for God, then it means he has not yet seen all evidence; and there might be sufficient evidence.  This would mean that God may indeed exist; so the person is really an agnostic concerning God, which makes his atheist position inconsistent with his statement.

Naturalism is true; therefore, there is no need for God.

1. Naturalism is the belief that all phenomena can be explained in terms of natural causes and laws.  If all things were explainable through natural laws, it does not mean that God does not exist since God is, by definition, outside of natural laws since He is the creator of them.
2. Some might say that if all things can be explained via natural laws, then it means there is no evidence for God. But, can all things be explained via naturalism?  No, because naturalism has not explained all phenomena known today, nor can we assert that all things in the future will be explained via naturalism because we do not know all phenomena that can and will occur.  Therefore, it is not a fact that naturalism can explain all things.  Therefore, God is not negated via naturalism.

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***Q. How to deal and convert a protestant to a roman catholic?***

***A.***

That’s a great question… Let me try and put a few points that would be very important.

**Rule No 1: Don’t argue.**

This is not to say that we should not discuss in a measured and charitable manner, but we should avoid the emotional, arm-twisting argument that generates more heat than light, more bad will than desired results.

Of course, for many of us this takes tremendous self-control. We have to remember that we can win an argument but lose a soul; win the battle but lose the war. We have to bite our lip and grimace inside.

**Rule No. 2: Love them**

Our love for them is the cause of our hurt and the desire to win them over, but we need our love directed carefully with the big picture in mind. At the point when the other expects us to react negatively, we need to respond with love. Love is the one argument no one can resist.

**Rule No. 3: Study the Catholic Faith.**

We are not Catholic Christians because it makes us feel good or because it was the way we were raised. Ultimately we are Catholics because the Faith is true. And if it is true, we should know why it is true and be able to explain it to ourselves and to others (especially our children).

Since we are praying and making sacrifices for our loved ones, we are expecting them to come around sooner or later—correct? And what if they come to us (because we’ve loved them and kept the doors of communication open) with good and honest questions and we cannot answer their questions?

St. Peter understood this. That is why he told us, “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15). If we learn the Faith, we are prepared to answer questions when the blessed time finally arrives. The worst thing that can happen is for the person to come back and honestly ask why we Catholics believe and do thus or so—and we have no answer!

**Rule No. 4: Pray and be patient.**

This seems like common sense, but we often spend our time fuming and creating imaginary arguments in our heads when we should direct our energy and time to serious prayer. Make a prayer list and be persistent in prayer.

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***Q. Why does the Church have idols and encourage people to worship them when God and the Bible is against it?***

***A.***

Appreciate the question.

I believe you are referring to this verse in the bible.

"You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down to them or serve them" (Ex. 20:4–5)

Anti-Catholic writer Loraine Boettner, in his book *Roman Catholicism*, makes the blanket statement, "God has forbidden the use of images in worship" (281). Yet if people were to "search the scriptures" (cf. John 5:39), they would find the opposite is true. God forbade the *worship* *of* statues, but he did not forbid the *religious use* of statues. Instead, he actually *commanded* their use in religious contexts!

Let’s see a few examples –

1. Ex. 25:18–20 - "And you shall make two cherubim of gold [i.e., two gold statues of angels]; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end; of one piece of the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends…………..
2. Ezekiel 41:17–18 describes graven (carved) images in the idealized temple he was shown in a vision, for he writes, "On the walls round about in the inner room and [on] the nave were carved likenesses of cherubim."
3. During a plague of serpents sent to punish the Israelites during the exodus, God told Moses to "make [a statue of] a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (Num. 21:8–9). One had to *look* at the bronze statue of the serpent to be healed, which shows that statues could be used ritually, not merely as religious decorations.

Catholics use statues, paintings, and other artistic devices to recall the person or thing depicted. Although the worship of anything, not just statues, in place of the True God is idolatry, there are times when statues are not just tolerable but recommended. Just as those Old Testament statues were ordered fashioned by God to remind the Israelites of heavenly realities, Catholic statues of Jesus and the angels and the saints serve the same purpose. Catholics also use statues as teaching tools. In the early Church they were especially useful for the instruction of the illiterate. Also the statues of saints are a reminder to us of the great lives they lived in order to inspire us to live like they did.

Regarding bowing and worship to idols.

Bowing can be used as a posture in worship, not all bowing is worship. In Japan, people show respect by bowing in greeting (the equivalent of the Western handshake). Similarly, a person can kneel before a king without worshipping him as a god. In the same way, a Catholic who may kneel in front of a statue while praying isn’t worshipping the statue or even praying to *it*, any more than the Protestant who kneels with a Bible in his hands when praying is worshipping the Bible or praying to *it*.

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***Q. Why do we believe in Idols?***

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