

Christianity is not a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process.

Assess to what extent this quote reflects the core teachings of Christianity as a living religious tradition

Adherents of Christianity believe that God has revealed Christianity's life process in the Bible, specifically through the life and teachings of Jesus. It is through Jesus' fundamental teachings of "loving one another as I have loved you", where an adherent is informed how to engage in the living process of Christianity. An adherent first becomes part of the living process of Christianity following the sacrament of Baptism whereby a disciple is cleansed of Original sin, imbued with the Holy spirit and tasked with the eternal mission of serving God, doing what is right and living as God intended by enacting Christianity's ethical teachings. Thus informing further adherents that "Christianity is not a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process". Christian scholar Paul of Tarsus embodied the living process of Christianity, following his baptismal conversion on the road to Damascus. It is through Paul's teachings and sacred writings where a disciple is informed of Christianity's ethical teachings revolving around the sacred pillars "faith, hope, love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). Therefore, allowing adherents to be "justified by faith in Christ"(Galatians 2:16) and enact the living process of Christianity in order to gain salvation. Thus, an adherent is guided by faith in Christ and their conscience when making moral decisions. This is particularly true for decisions revolving around Bioethical issues, Abortion and Euthanasia, whereby an adherent is asked to undertake the most loving action. Therefore, by an adherent engaging in the core ethical teachings of Christianity, it subsequently allows adherents to demonstrate that Christianity is "a life and a living process".

Paul of Tarsus reflected the core ethical teachings of Christianity in his daily life, allowing himself to engage in the living process of Christianity by "living for God" (Galatians 2:19). Paul's teachings of "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Letter to the Romans 13:8), informed future generations of adherents how to live a life of love. Allowing Adherents to fulfil their baptismal promise of building the Kingdom of God on Earth to ultimately spread to further disciples that "Christianity is not a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process". This directly relates to the sacrament of Baptism where an adherent is tasked to "Go into all the world, making disciples and baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). It is through baptism that an adherent is "Reborn as child(ren) of God, (the baptised) must profess before all people the faith they have received... and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1270). By "professing the faith they have received", an adherent allows their conscience to be imbued with the Holy spirit following the cleansing of their sin through water, and thus must emulate the Christian life of Jesus. Therefore, Christians are expected to behave in a way that will meet with God's approval in all aspects of life, particularly when making moral bioethical decisions. The bible states that "mankind is made in our image, in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26), therefore each life is made in the image of God. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." (Ephesians 2:8-10), this demonstrates the immense sanctity in which Christianity holds for all human life, as "Every human being has the right to life...from the moment of conception until death" (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Subsequently, by an adherent treating Christianity as “not a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process”, an adherent is upholding the eternal construction of the Kingdom of God on earth, by serving God, doing what is Right and living as God intended, thus allowing further disciples to engage with the living process of Christianity.

Christian scholar Paul of Tarsus’ was able to embody the notion that “Christianity is not a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process” through his ethical actions that taught adherents “God does not show favouritism” (Romans 2:11). Following his evangelisation, Paul developed theologies in order to make the word of God and the teachings of Jesus available to everyone, allowing for communities to have a simplified version of Jesus’ teachings so all could engage in the living process of Christianity expressed within the sacred texts. This ultimately led to Paul translating Oral Hellenistic Christianity into Roman and Hebrew written scriptures, allowing non-Hellenistic speaking countries to be informed about the beliefs and ethical teachings of Christianity in their native tongue. “There are, for example, so many kinds of tongues in this world; and none is without voice.” (1 Corinthians 14:10-11). This translation of the sacred texts allowed Christianity to “not be a theory or speculation, but a life and a living process” as adherents of all tongues could access and embody Jesus’ teachings of “having love for one another” in order to gain salvation. Subsequently, this directly relates to the significance of baptism in the universal Christian Community as baptism serves a means of defining who the members of the Christian Church are. During baptism, an adherent participates in the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 2:38), to form part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), and to be cleansed of their sins (1 Corinthians 6:11) in order for all adherents to be bounded by loyalty and faithfulness to Christ. Thus, allowing all adherents to support the construction of the Kingdom of God on earth, engaging with the living process of Christianity. Thus, by an adherent being bounded by loyalty and faithfulness in Jesus, a disciple is able to adhere to Christianity’s distinctive vision of the meaning and purpose of human existence. That existence being to search in light of the Christian Faith. Hence for bioethical issues, adherents must engage in a code of behaviour that inspires goodness in each individual, “Blessed are the merciful” (Matthew 5:7), in order for all adherents to recognise that each new life is not a potential human being but a human being with potential as “Every human being has the right to life...from the moment of conception until death” (Catechism of the Catholic Church). Therefore, all human beings deserve to receive their eternal gift of salvation by engaging in the living process of Christianity.

Hence, when making moral bioethical decisions an adherent is asked to seek their conscience as their conscious is imbued with the Holy spirit following baptism and is thus an integral part of enacting the living Process of Christianity. Conscience is intertwined with Natural Law, which refers to the use of reason to analyse human nature in order to deduce binding rules of moral behaviour from God’s creation of reality and mankind, “They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness” (Romans 2:15). This quote demonstrates the degree to which the natural law is present within us all, and how it encapsulates Christian Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity in order to assist our conscience in determining what the most loving action would be to ultimately support the love-orientated process of Christianity. Paul of Tarsus’ embodied this notion of enacting the most loving action by personifying Jesus’ teachings of “love one another as I have loved you”, ultimately “dying to the law so

that he might live for God.” (Galatians 2:19). Through his three missionary journeys Paul developed the laws and life process of Christianity, bringing forth a new light upon how to receive salvation by emphasizing the importance of reading the scriptures to obtain faith in the lord Jesus Christ and live the Christian life scribed in the sacred texts. An adherent becomes part of Christian life following baptism whereby parents and God parents who are a part of the “life and living process” of Christianity take on the responsibility of educating the new adherent in the practice of the faith. Thus, baptism directs an adherent to receiving the fulness of Christian life by embodying Jesus’ teachings of love. Ultimately supporting the construction of the Kingdom of God on Earth so all can engage in the living process of Christianity and receive their eternal gift of salvation.

Ultimately, all Christian adherents are directly influenced by the ethical teachings expressed in the sacred texts of Christianity, which adherents must embody in order to engage in the living process of Christianity, and thus reflect the core teachings in their daily life. This is particularly true when making moral decisions revolving around bioethical issues such as Abortion and Euthanasia where followers must seek guidance from their conscience to adhere to the communal values, expectations, and actions of Christianity. These actions subsequently fulfil an adherents baptismal promise of constructing the kingdom of God on earth by like Paul, “living for God”, being justified by faith alone through good works, and engaging in the life process of Christianity.