



Can someone be “eternally secure” in their salvation no matter how they live?

In a world where many churches preach that “*all you need to do is accept Jesus once to be saved forever*,” Catholic doctrine offers a deeper, more biblical, and hopeful vision: **salvation is a process of cooperating with God’s grace, not an “irrevocable ticket” to heaven.**

This article will dismantle the theological error of “**Once Saved, Always Saved**” (also known as the *perseverance of the saints*), showing why it contradicts Sacred Scripture, Apostolic Tradition, and spiritual common sense.

1. What Does “Once Saved, Always Saved” Teach?

This doctrine, popular in many evangelical and Protestant denominations, claims that:

- **A single act of faith** (a one-time “acceptance of Jesus”) guarantees eternal salvation.
- **Good works do not affect salvation**, since it depends solely on initial faith.
- **Even if a person commits grave sins after “conversion,” they cannot lose salvation.**

This idea is based on a selective reading of verses like **John 10:28** (“*No one will snatch them out of my hand*”) or **Romans 8:38-39** (“*Nothing can separate us from the love of God*”), but it ignores dozens of biblical warnings about the possibility of **falling from grace**.

2. Catholic Teaching: Salvation Is a Journey, Not a Magic Pass

The Catholic Church, faithful to **2,000 years of apostolic teaching**, affirms that:

□ **Salvation begins with Baptism** (John 3:5, Titus 3:5) but must be **guarded and nurtured** through a life of faith, hope, and charity.

□ **Justification is not a “legal status”** but a **supernatural transformation** (2 Corinthians 5:17).



- **Grace can be lost through mortal sin** (Hebrews 10:26, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).
- **Good works are the necessary fruit of authentic faith** (James 2:24, Matthew 7:21).

□ **What Does the Bible Say?**

- **Philippians 2:12:** *“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”* (Why “fear” if salvation is already guaranteed?)
- **Ezekiel 18:24:** *“If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die.”*
- **Matthew 24:13:** *“The one who endures to the end will be saved.”* (It does not say “the one who once believed.”)

3. Historical Origin: Where Did This Doctrine Come From?

The “*Once Saved, Always Saved*” teaching did not exist in Christianity until the 16th century, when **John Calvin** proposed it as part of his doctrine of **unconditional predestination**. For Calvin:

- **God had already decided who would be saved and who would not**, with no possibility of change.
- **“Good works” were merely a sign of election**, not a cause of salvation.

But this idea **was never believed by the Church Fathers or early Christians**. In fact, the Council of Trent (1547) explicitly condemned it:

“If anyone says that a justified man cannot lose grace, let him be anathema.” (Decree on Justification, Canon 23).



4. Dangers of Believing in “Once Saved, Always Saved”

This doctrine can lead to:

- **Moral complacency:** “Since I’m already saved, it doesn’t matter how I live.”
- **Disregard for the Sacrament of Confession:** If sin does not affect salvation, why confess?
- **False security:** Many believe they are “saved” while living in grave sin.

Jesus warned clearly:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father.” (Matthew 7:21).

5. True Hope: Perseverance in Grace

The Church does not teach that salvation is “uncertain,” but rather that **God gives us His grace, and we must cooperate with it.** As St. Paul said:

“I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

How can we remain in grace?

- † **Live in a state of grace** (avoiding mortal sin).
 - † **Receive the sacraments** (Eucharist, Confession).
 - † **Practice works of mercy.**
 - † **Pray and grow in virtue.**
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Conclusion: Salvation Is a Gift, But It Demands a Response

God is not an arbitrary judge who “signs irrevocable salvation decrees,” but a **loving Father who calls us to holiness**. The “*Once Saved, Always Saved*” doctrine is a **grave error** that downplays the seriousness of sin and the need for ongoing conversion.

The Catholic truth is deeper and more beautiful: God saves us, but not without us.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16).

Are you living as a true disciple of Christ, or are you merely relying on a “past decision”?

□ **Share this article** to help others discover the truth about salvation.

[**Leave a comment!** What do you think about this doctrine?]

□ **Want to go deeper?** Recommended reading:

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (nn. 1987-2029).
- *Justification According to St. Paul and St. James* (Bible study guide).
- *Council of Trent: Decree on Justification*.

Thank you for reading! **May the Blessed Virgin Mary help us persevere to the end.** □