

The Normal Christian Life and Catholicism

We must deal with the apparent normality of Catholicism. The Catholic Church is based on some of the great essential truths of God's revelation. She holds to the existence of a self-existent and eternal God, the Creator of the universe, of man, and of all things. She teaches that in the Godhead there are three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the same in substance, and equal in power and glory. She teaches that man was created in God's image and that he fell by the sin of disobedience and became subject to both temporal and eternal death. She teaches that Adam's race shared in the guilt and consequences of his sin, and that each one is born as a sinner before God. She accepts the doctrine of man's redemption by Jesus Christ, teaching that He became incarnate, and endured the death of the cross; that He rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and will return on the Last Day. From my own experience, and from talking to quite a number of other former Priests and Nuns, I found that while we saw the normality that there is in Catholicism in many basic doctrines, yet we all sensed an inner gnawing emptiness. In preparation for the priesthood, there were times when I wanted in some way to share my religious experiences with fellow students. For the most part I was told that 'we do not talk shop'. That phrase, 'we do not talk shop' was a recurring theme throughout the years of preparation and into the priesthood years. I remember as a Priest, one particular visit to Amsterdam. I stayed not in a Dominican Priory but in a Jesuit house. The Priests who met me at the airport were quite cordial and kind, however in trying to explain my daily search to know Lord in the Scriptures, I was met with silence. Then later in Trinidad, when I spoke to another Priest about the fact that most of the babies we baptized never returned to Church, he joked that if infant baptism did work, we would never have enough room in our churches to hold all those whom we baptized. His jest was painful to me. I have heard the same sort of experience from quite a few former Nuns. Conversation, jokes, even those of the shady kind, and ordinary gossip were all quite acceptable, however when a Sister wanted to reveal her heart in her search to know the Lord, there was always a chilling silence.

With the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic movement in the early seventies things were somewhat different. With Pentecostal people, and with Charismatic Catholics, there was an eagerness to share religious experience. Nevertheless, again there were boundaries. Such things as claimed miracles, wonders, and the up-to-date Charismatic happenings, were all acceptable, what was definitely taboo was all talking about doctrine as such. Out of bounds were all questions and discussion on official Church teachings. Then, even at the annual Priests' conference and other meetings, when I would question doctrines and cite Scriptures I was always informed that I was out of place. What a great contrast it has been for me coming to true Biblical faith to find that fellow believers just treasure sharing with each what the Lord is doing personally in their lives. During my visit to Warsaw Poland, London, and Ireland in 2003 I was greatly edified by the openness and frankness with which believers shared enthusiastically with each other. The normal Christian life is always centered on the Lord, His presence, His answering prayer, even His discipline as He watches over His own. My experience and what I have learned from many other former Catholics, is that while things looked normal, we had no real inner life with the Lord. When we did begin to search and wish to share deeply what we were discovering about walking with the Lord, the general response was always the hackneyed phrase "we don't talk shop". The system of belief behind this shared experience that I have found among those who were Priests Nuns and lay Catholics; I will now layout in the way that

can be understood. While major doctrines may seem to be biblical, Christ's sacrifice and the redemption flowing from it are quite compromised in Catholicism, to the point of being soul damaging.

The Application of Christ's Redemption

Sin is an evil of infinite significance, since it is committed against an infinite Person. There is no way of escaping the wrath of God against sin except by the application of the Lord Christ Jesus' finished work. Concerning the Holy Spirit the Lord promised that, "*when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*"¹ The Holy Spirit convicts of sin as He makes the sinner realize his lost condition and brings him to sense his need of Christ's righteousness. The Holy Spirit only can impart spiritual life to the soul and supernatural light to the mind. Therefore the Lord Himself proclaimed, "*verily, verily, I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"² "*Verily, verily,*" is an expression used by Lord to draw attention to the crucial importance of what He said. What He calls being "born again," He also establishes as a principle of life, "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"³ The Holy Spirit is the sole and only efficient cause of being "born again". The same principle of life is later repeated by the Lord, "*it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing...*"⁴. The wonderful work of the Holy Spirit opening the mind and heart to redemption is highlighted by the Apostle Paul, "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*"⁵ The Lord God saves sinners gloriously, "*according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*"⁶ True believers are "*born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,*"⁷ "*of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.*"⁸ This is utterly splendid, clear and profound. The Spirit of God's unique work is to apply Christ's redemption to the sinner. In this regeneration He works as a Free Agent. He dispenses His power where, and when, on whom, He pleases. In the words of the Lord, "*the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"⁹ The wind is an element which man cannot control. The wind is not regulated by man's desires or plans, so it is with the Spirit of God. The wind blows, where it pleases, as it pleases and when it pleases, so it is with the Holy Spirit, He is absolutely Sovereign in all His operations.

The necessity of the direct work of the Holy Spirit on the soul of man is because man is spiritually dead. In the words of the Apostle, "*for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath*

¹ John 16:8

² John 3:3

³ John 3:6

⁴ John 6:63

⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

⁶ Titus 3:5

⁷ John 1:13

⁸ James 1:18

⁹ John 3:8

made me free from the law of sin and death.”¹⁰ The new birth by the Holy Spirit is essential, because natural man is totally deficient in and of himself. It is not that he is weak and needs stimulation, spiritually he is dead, in the words of the Apostle, “*and you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*”¹¹ Because there is a direct connection between the redemption of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is serious error to substitute ritual or ceremony for the work of the Holy Spirit, because in the words of the Lord, “*that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*”¹² “*God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son*”.¹³ The work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to bring the sinner to Christ, to overcome his innate opposition, and induce him to believe. In all of this, the Holy Spirit is Sovereign.

Salvation alleged as Autonomous and Self-Regulating

The Catholic Church does speak of the grace of the Holy Spirit, but not as a direct work in Christ Jesus, but as a work under her control in her sacraments. She makes a declaration of immense significance in stating,

“The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*. **'Sacramental grace' is the grace of the Holy Spirit**, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.”¹⁴

The assertion attempts to replace the Person of Holy Spirit with ‘Sacramental grace’. Such grace or power it is claimed to come through the sacraments. She goes so far as to call her sacraments “God's masterpieces”.¹⁵ These sacraments are visible physical rites, as she states, “The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament.”¹⁶

The precious Word of God in Scripture explains how salvation is not accomplished; salvation is not by means of ceremonies or rites, rather by God’s grace through faith. “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*”¹⁷ “*And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.*”¹⁸ Yet this word “works” is the very word that the Catholic Church uses to declare that her seven sacraments operate ‘*ex opere operato*’ ‘from the work, worked.’ The official teaching is,

“If any shall say that by the said sacraments of the New Law, grace is not conferred from the work which has been worked [*ex opere operato*] but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace: let him be anathema.”¹⁹

¹⁰ Romans 8:2

¹¹ Ephesians 2:1

¹² John 3:6

¹³ 1 John 5:11

¹⁴ *Catechism* Para 1129

¹⁵ “In the liturgy the Holy Spirit is teacher of the faith of the People of God and artisan of “God's masterpieces,” the sacraments of the New Covenant.” *Catechism* Para 1091

¹⁶ *Catechism* Para 1131

¹⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9

¹⁸ Romans 11:6

¹⁹ Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Tr. by Roy J Deferrari from *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 30th ed. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), #851. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this work.

What is soul destroying is that this teaching attempts to substitute rituals or rites for the direct work of the Holy Spirit. The rites or sacraments it is claimed, ‘work by their own working’ ‘*ex opere operato*’, that is they function irrespective of the spiritual condition of the Priest giving them or the layperson receiving them. In a word, they work automatically. This claim in practice attempts to establish Rome’s sacraments as autonomous and self-regulating rites to confer grace. It is difficult to envisage a teaching so contradictory to the truth of the Lord, “*it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing*”.²⁰

Baptism by which it is claimed men and women are ‘born again’

We saw above how the Holy Spirit is the sole and only efficient cause of being “born again”. An example of Rome’s autonomous automatic sacraments is that of the claim that Baptism brings about spiritual rebirth. The Roman teaching officially declares,

“Baptism...by which men and women are freed from their sins, are reborn as children of God...is validly conferred only by washing with true water together with the required form of words.”²¹

Thus Catholic teaching is that rebirth ‘as children of God’ is by Baptism. Real water, together with set form of words, is necessary for Baptism to work automatically. In the Scriptures, the new birth is solely the work of the Holy Spirit, and not the work of man or of physical things. This is from the very nature of the condition of man. The state of man by nature is represented as death in sin. Birth altogether excludes the idea of any effort or work on the part of the one who is born. The new birth is a spiritual resurrection, a passing from death unto life, outside of man’s control. In the valued words of the Lord, “*He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*”²²

The Holy Spirit convicts a person of sin and as that person trusts on Christ’s cross and resurrection alone regenerates him to new life in Christ. Then the true believer has a Divine Person who indwells him²³ who loves him²⁴ who leads him²⁵ who gives him assurance of his sonship²⁶, who helps him in his weaknesses by making intercession for him.²⁷ He it is who seals the true believer unto the day of redemption.²⁸ All of this Divine activity and power is from a Person. In Catholicism the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit, has in practice, been replaced by sacraments that ‘work by their own working’. Many of us who were Priests for many years baptized countless infants. Year after year we saw the infants we had baptized grew up destitute of the grace of God. It is necessary for Catholics to have the honesty to recognize that a Divine Person causes salvation, not a self-regulating sacrament of Baptism. It is necessary for every

²⁰ John 6:63

²¹ *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English Ed. (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983), Canon 849. She also asserts, “...The [Roman Catholic] Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude...” *Catechism* Para 1257

²² John 5:24 A fuller explanation of the Sacrament of Baptism is given in chapter three.

²³ 1 Corinthians 6:19

²⁴ Romans 15:7

²⁵ Romans 8:14

²⁶ Romans 8:16

²⁷ Romans 8:26

²⁸ Ephesians 4:30

sincere Catholic, as in the presence of the Holy God, to ask himself how can he experience the quickening of the Holy Spirit. He ought to give no rest to his soul until he has sought the grace of God, and implored the work of His Spirit that his heart may be renewed.

Oldest, most alluring Temptation

The Catholic teaching on Baptism is in fact the oldest temptation known to man. A physical thing water, and physical words are presented as accomplishing new birth. Looking to a physical thing to give spiritual life was the first lie of Satan. "...*in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*"²⁹ Satan offered the fruit as the efficacious means of bestowing good upon Eve. She believed in the fruit's inherent efficacy to open the eyes and to give knowledge of good and evil. In the same way, the Roman Church presents 'true water together with the required form of words' as the inherent means of being born again. Flesh can only reproduce itself as flesh. The law of reproduction is 'after its kind.'³⁰ Therefore the Holy Spirit alone produces spirit, a life born again. The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of true believers is fruitful and indestructible. His work is a renovating power; "*he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*"³¹. In Scripture many activities are assigned to the Holy Spirit. He guides believers into all truth, He shows believers things to come; and He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to His people, "*He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you*".³² The prime object purpose of the Holy Spirit is the glorification of Christ Jesus. The centerpiece of this glorification of Christ is the revelation of Christ to the believer. The illumination of the Holy Spirit is His first work upon the soul, in the words of Scripture, "*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*"³³

Spiritual Fruits, the vital test of reality

Christ Jesus said, "*ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*"³⁴ Good spiritual fruit that shows the nature of the doctrines that have been taught. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruits in those who are truly born again. These are fruits of repentance, personal faith, and deep fellowship with God and His people. New birth bears fruit in an awareness of God's absolute Holiness, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The fruit is seen in the fervent desire to humble oneself before God in submission to His Word and will. The fruits of salvation are seen in desires of the heart to walk in thankfulness with God and His people according to all His commandments. These fruits show an appreciation of the worship due to God alone, coupled desire to glorify Him in all aspects of life. The Lord Himself gave the touchstone, "*ye shall know them by their fruits.*"

A true Christian by living holy shows that he is "*a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*"³⁵ The Christian life shows forth the work of the Holy Spirit that has taken place in the heart. Christian life is not a manufacturing plant where autonomous and self-regulating rites supposedly confer grace. It is the family of God where

²⁹ Genesis 3:5

³⁰ "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" John 3:6

³¹ 1 Corinthians 6:17

³² John 16:14

³³ 2 Corinthians 4:6

³⁴ Matthew 7:16

³⁵ II Corinthians 5:17

He has free sons and daughters who lovingly and freely serve Him, where salvation is entirely of Him, directly wrought in Christ Jesus, entirely by His grace and to His glory. It is when one sees a truly Christian life, that one is shocked by how abnormal are such things as bowing down to crucifixes, statues and images, wearing ashes, lighting candles, praying to dead saints, using holy water, performing the stations of the cross, praying for souls in a non-existent place called purgatory, wearing medallions and scapulars and displaying palm branches. Many of us, even while we were devoutly Catholic, sensed that there was something strange in all the paraphernalia, we would joke about ‘the bells, yells and smells’ that were part of our Catholic life.

The life of the Spirit in Believers and Pastors

The Holy Spirit applies to true believers all the virtues of Christ’s perfect work. The Holy Spirit communicates to them conviction, light, love, faith, repentance and perseverance. By His death Christ Jesus meritoriously acquired for all of His people a real participation in the blessings of redemption, and in Christ, His Spirit directly applies these to them. By the operations of the Spirit true believers are brought to saving faith and repentance. In a word, the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ Jesus efficaciously unites true believers to Himself. There is no grace, no mercy, no privilege, and no consolation that we receive, possess, or use, except what is given to believers by Him alone. The Holy Spirit is the immediate and efficient cause of all divine activities. In Him divine excellence and the power is manifest. This life of the Holy Spirit is meant to be especially evident in the life and behavior of the Christian Pastor. The normal Christian life is meant to be under the pastoral care of men who exemplify godly behavior. The Scripture states that, *“a bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.”*³⁶ He must be one who so directs his family as to set a good example to heads of other families. A Pastor that rules a good Christian home gives proof of his ability to take care of the church of God, *“for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?”*³⁷ Scripture emphasizes that fact that, *“marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.”*³⁸ From these passages it is clear that the Vatican law regarding the celibacy of the clergy is anything but normal. The lives of the Catholic clergy are quite irregular. For example, “well-informed victims’ advocacy groups in the United States estimate there are between 2,000 and 4,000 abusive priests in America at this time, or a number between 4 percent and 8 percent of the 48,000 U.S. priests. If true, that would reflect an incidence of abuse alarmingly above that of the general population...”³⁹ Catholic Priests and people if they are honest should admit that in their midst things are not quite normal, the big question is are they willing to search for what is indeed standard Christian life.

Two Irreconcilable Prototypes

To discover normal Christian, life we must ask the question posed in Scripture *“... how can a man be justified before God?”*⁴⁰ The Word of God says very clearly and repeatedly that a man is justified, that is, counted freed from sin and positively righteous, as a gift of God’s grace through

³⁶ 1 Timothy 3:2

³⁷ 1 Timothy 3:5

³⁸ Hebrews 13:4

³⁹ <http://www.poynter.org/dg.lts/id.46/aid.52811/column.htm>

⁴⁰ Job 9:2

faith, “now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”⁴¹ The Catholic Church claims that one becomes a Christian and maintains Christian life through her sacraments, holy oils and other objects, and that one does righteous works to earn merit, all in collaboration with what she calls “sanctifying grace”.⁴² Further, the Church of Rome declares that she herself “engenders supports and nourishes our faith.”⁴³ In the Scriptures however, the Church was begun and established entirely by God through Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. God engenders saving faith by the true Gospel of grace. It is by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit that one believes the Gospel of Christ. It is of such wonderful power that it is compared to the same power that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead! “That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.”⁴⁴

The Catholic Church presents a teaching about salvation that is very down-to-earth and under the control of her Priests. She officially says, “Indeed bishops and priests, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, have the power to forgive all sins ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’⁴⁵ And, “Priests have received from God a power that he has given neither to angels nor to archangels...God above confirms what priests do here below. Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation.”⁴⁶

To claim the power on earth that can only be attributed to the very Spirit of God in heaven is certainly not normal. Much more of this we will see as we progress in this book. The life and power of Priests is not normal in a Biblical sense. Even marriage in a Biblical sense is not normal in the life of Catholics. The life of a Nun is quite unusual when compared to what the Scripture teaches for believers. These topics and many others we will investigate in different chapters of the book. For now, the overview that we have been seeking is clear and precise. The All Holy God will not share His glory with another. Since the Scripture’s teaching concerning the power and prerogative of the Holy Spirit is true, the alternative method presented through rituals and Priests presented by Catholicism is of necessity false and abnormal.

Promise for our time

The promise concerning our days in the New Testament times is that our “*eyes shall see the king in his beauty.*”⁴⁷ True believers shall experience the grace of Christ in all its power and excellence. He calls unto all, saying, “*Look unto me, and be ye saved.*”⁴⁸ Peggy O’Neill, a

41 Romans 4:4-5

42 *Catechism*, Para. 2025 “We can have merit in God’s sight only because of God’s free plan to associate man with the work of his grace. Merit is to be ascribed in the first place to the grace of God, and secondly to man’s collaboration. Man’s merit is due to God.”

43 *Catechism*, Para. 181

⁴⁴ Ephesians 1:18-20

45 *Catechism*, Para. 1461

⁴⁶ *Catechism*, Para. 983

47 Isaiah 33:17

48 Isaiah 45:22

former Catholic nun, began her testimony by saying, “I served as a sister in a religious order for about fifty years and during all that time, and I had never heard the true Gospel.”⁴⁹ Later in the same account of her life she said, “I was ignorant of God’s righteousness. What it takes for salvation is a righteousness that equals that of God and I knew that no one could ever reach that standard. This then is what the Gospel is all about: what God demands, He provides. The Good News is that if we believe in Jesus Christ whose death on the cross, burial and resurrection has paid the price of our sin, we will be saved. The Bible puts it this way; “*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” (II Corinthians 5:21). In exchange for my sins, God will give me the righteousness of Jesus, God’s righteousness for my sins! This is the Good News, the Gospel in a nutshell.”⁵⁰

The Lord Christ Jesus is Ready

The message of the Gospel is that the Lord Christ Jesus is ready to receive all sinners that come to Him. He alone is able to make you right with the Father. He is ready and willing to receive you. The revelation that He gives to you through the Scriptures is by the truth and love of His Holy Spirit. The frightening words of the Lord ring in the ears of those of us who have spent most of our lives in man-made religion, “*not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*”⁵¹ No person, by merely acknowledging Christ’s authority, believing in His divinity, professing faith in His perfection and in His atonement, shall have any part with God in His salvation, but only he who does the will of His Father. Take heed of resting on rituals and a faith in Christ Jesus that is not exclusive of all others. Multitudes have been so deceived and have perished eternally with a lie in their right hand. The Lord made the will of the Father abundantly clear when He said, “*this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*”⁵² “*Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*”⁵³ “*Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*”⁵⁴

This day the offer of grace is given to you, for you it is the acceptable time. Others have had this day as well as you and have missed the opportunity; take heed that you do not harden your heart. “*And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*”⁵⁵ The water of life is offered to you. Believe on Him alone and you will be forever secure, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*”⁵⁶

To forget the regeneration of the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit and replace it by faith and confidence in Priests and sacraments is fatal. In practice, instead of a Divine Person being the sole, and only efficient cause of being “born again”, ones thoughts and affections are on things, and the Priests that dispense them. This in a word, is the substitution of religion for a

49 The testimony of Peggy O’Neill on our WebPage: www.bereanbeacon.org/

50 Ibid, Peggy O’Neill’s testimony

51 Matthew 7:21

52 John 6:29

53 Mark 1:15

54 Hebrews 3:7, 8

55 Revelation 22:17

56 II Corinthians 5:17

relationship with the living God. Man indeed, likes it so. Humankind always likes to have all aspects of life under control, and in this respect Catholicism has everything on tap, as it were. The huge difficulty with all of this is the inner wound of emptiness that ritualism generates. In face of this, the correct Christian hope is that the Spirit of God will beget a man to new life in Christ. Those who are begotten to a new and spiritual life are begotten to a new and lively hope. In the words of the Apostle Peter, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"⁵⁷ All the believer's blessings begin with the regeneration that comes from God's abundant mercy. A living and durable hope needs to have such a solid foundation as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! A true relationship with the Lord gives the believer that solid foundation, so that he is joyful and content having such a deep inner peace. True faith produces a strong love for Christ Jesus. This love shows itself in the highest esteem for Him, a desire to be with Him and to talk about Him. It embodies a cheerful service of the Lord in all things, even sufferings. The purpose of such sufferings and heaviness is, "*that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*"⁵⁸ Where there is true faith and love of the Lord there is in the midst of all things, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. In Catholicism all of this inner foundation of a deep inner fellowship with the Lord is missing. The rituals and pomp, the fine architecture, and captivating music, the mysticism, charismatic experiences, visions and apparitions cannot fill the void that was meant to be filled by a Person, the Spirit of the living God. Catholicism can deceive peoples and nations no further and no longer than God will permit. The folly shall be finally manifested, it shall appear that it is the supreme example of "*having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*".⁵⁹ Many thousands of us have come out of Catholicism to normal Christian life. It still happens each year and in most nations. God is the only All Holy One. His holiness is the distinguishing factor in all His essential characteristics. This is the reason why we need to be in right standing before the one and only All Holy God on the terms He prescribes. God's truth, as we seen Scripture, makes it clear you cannot be right before God and remain true to Catholic teaching, since they contradict and oppose the truth of the Bible on the essential factor of how we enter into a relationship with Him. You may cling to such teachings and traditions to your own eternal peril. Or you may do what so many of us have done before you. Turn to God in faith alone for the salvation that He alone gives, by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, based on Christ's death and resurrection for His own, and believe on Him alone, "*to the praise of the glory of his grace.*"⁶⁰

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⁵⁷ 1 Peter 1:3

⁵⁸ 1 Peter 1: 7-8

⁵⁹ 2 Timothy 3:5

⁶⁰ Ephesians 1:6