

Nino Tirelli

We ought to obey God rather than men

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). Our testimonies on earth are echoed in heaven in the presence of our Father and His angels.

Dear brothers and sisters, dear friends, in the joy of our salvation freely granted through the Blood of the Lamb, I rejoice in this opportunity to give my testimony. May our hearts be lifted up to God in gratitude and praise.

God's Word declares that when the Church was birthed in Jerusalem *"the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"* (Acts 6:7). This did not occur only once. Throughout the centuries right up until today we find many further instances. All of the Reformers came out of the Roman Catholic Church. I drew support and encouragement from this, and it helped me to take the great leap of faith. I mean, of course, the faith that is derived from the Holy Scriptures, and not from man-made traditions and syllogisms and reasoning.

I wish to make it clear that I am not going to be provocative or make matters darker than they actually are: I am merely going to tell the truth. In mentioning all those years I spent in monastic seclusion my sole purpose is to show you how the Lord brought me out of darkness into His light, how He delivered me from the power of Satan to that of God, from death to life. Here are just a few dates: I was born in 1917 and entered the convent in 1928. I was ordained a priest in 1942, and was born again in 1959 after thirty-one years of spiritual bondage.

No doubt you have quite a few questions in mind, or perhaps just one: Why did I leave the convent and the Church of Rome? It was not for personal reasons or for motives pertaining to man, but because of the Word of God. Before answering, I need to tell you about the spiritual atmosphere I lived in, and about convent life.

How I came to enter the convent

In my boyhood I wanted to be a physician, supposing that physicians knew all about illnesses and how to cure them, and could prevent people from dying. However, one day our country physician died, which amazed me to such an extent that I changed my mind. Being far from wealthy but eager to get an education, from age eleven onwards I attended a Catholic boarding school run by Franciscan friars.

Please follow me now for a few minutes. We ring at the convent door, and a bearded Capuchin friar ushers us in. Whatever we are carrying is stored in a numbered locker. The convent door closes behind us, and from now on, we have to consider we have no wills of our own under any circumstances whatever.

Here in my first convent I received five years of secondary schooling, cut off from my family and from the rest of the world. Most of the time the air was thick with false piety, and what passed for the Gospel was a mere code of conduct. In this convent, monastic traditions were seemingly the only thing anyone knew about. Throughout the years I spent there, I found no peace. I was plagued with queries and doubts. If I ever shared them with anybody else, the only answer I obtained was: "It's of the devil!" So I fell into the habit of keeping my thoughts to myself.

Later on I was transferred to another convent to begin my novitiate, which is a time of preparation and testing for those who wish to become friars. Then we have to take the threefold vow of obedience, chastity, and poverty. This I did at the end of my first year. Franciscans have three knots in their rope girdles, symbolizing this threefold vow.

As a seminarian, I already had to reckon that I had no will of my own, but all the more so now that I was a friar. I was given the name of "Brother Matthias", wore a monastic habit, and was tonsured. Even in winter I walked barefoot in sandals. There were no conveniences whatever in our cells, and we used to rise at midnight and go down to church to sing vigils. Almost daily I had to fast, wear a hair-shirt, and flagellate myself to (supposedly) atone for my sins. There isn't enough time to expand on these matters: suffice it to say that I got no inner peace out of those sacrifices and mortifications. I fervently longed to be freed from this state of spiritual bondage.

After three years of philosophic studies, I had to renew my vows, which then bound me for life. I then studied theology for four years and was ordained a priest on July 12th, 1942. Those were fourteen long years of learning and experiences and struggles, never to be forgotten. The rigid discipline and the isolation in a closed environment very soon turned me into a slave, and I mechanically walked in the way that had been mapped out for me, no longer wondering whether it was the right path for me or not.

During my novitiate, I had begun to wonder whether this was really God's will for me. Should I continue? Would it not have been better to drop everything and go home again? I let my superiors know about my inner struggles. They would reply: "Stay where the Lord has put you. All else is of the evil one." Having been well schooled in obedience, I would always say yes, albeit in bitterness, so I accepted their counsel and plodded on. But God, who searches our hearts and sees the innermost parts within us, had already heard my cry and was already preparing my deliverance.

My life as a priest

To a certain extent, studying philosophy and being transferred to another convent in another city helped to assuage my doubts. They increased tenfold, however, as I was to be ordained a priest. My superiors, who knew about my inner struggles, sent me to a highly secluded convent to be "brainwashed", as we say today. What with all the humiliations I underwent, the outbreak of the Second World War, my utter isolation, and my fear of finding myself in an even worse situation, like it or not, I allowed myself to be ordained.

This marked the beginning of a new phase in my life. Being a priest enabled me to establish contacts with all sorts of persons. After the death of my parents and the end of the war, I became a teacher, a confessor and a hospital chaplain in various locations. But peace still evaded me and my soul was restless. After having been a Capuchin for twenty-one years, I joined the Minor Conventuals, an order of Franciscans whose rules are less strict. I was transferred to the monastic province of Rome.

This seemed all new and wonderful at first. I thought I had found a haven of peace, but how wrong I was! All my doubts surfaced again and I kept being misunderstood. After serving for five years in a secondary school in Rome I was sent into exile in the secluded convent of Sezze Romano in Latium. Strangely enough, in one way I lacked nothing, and at the same time I lacked everything. Everything ran like clockwork: our daily schedules, our programs, teaching students, mass, confessions... Such was my run-of-the-mill existence.

Radio, television and movies were of the utmost importance in our convent, which was filled with the world and its lusts. Theoretically, I had renounced the world and its temptations, but now I felt myself gradually sinking into sin, on my way to hell. Elsewhere, outside our walls, there were also so-called "servants of God" of questionable morals, lovers of money who were into simony, within the Church and outside of it. Idolized by their flocks, they glorified images and relics, raised Mary and the papacy to god-like status, advocated indulgences and all sorts of false doctrines.

From darkness to light

In the isolation of the convent, a sort of upheaval took place within my spirit. Seemingly God was forcing me to examine my own life in the light of the Holy Scriptures, like the Bereans in Paul's time. It became clear to me that so far, instead of actually studying God's Word, I had merely dissected a few passages which at first sight could be used to support Roman Catholic theology. I understood how limited and distorted my study of the Bible had been. I had only studied disconnected fragments. The light of God, and the whole counsel of God were lacking, and I had a false concept of salvation. So far, pagan philosophy and sophistry had been foremost. We had twisted and hijacked the Word to make it fit the Roman Church.

From perdition to salvation

In God's Word it is written: *"The Lord knoweth them that are his"* (2 Timothy 2:19). Jesus has said: *"I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts"* (Revelation 2:23). *"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble"* (Psalm 9:9). *"He knoweth them that trust in him"* (Nahum 1:7).

The great day of revelation when I received help and light from above came to me quite unexpectedly. It was on an April morning in 1958. Owing to a slight hitch I postponed mass from 6.30 till 7. I went up to my cell again and tried to find a musical program on the radio. In His love, God led me to Radio Monte-Carlo. I listened to a beautiful hymn and a powerful, Spirit-inspired message on the subject: *"Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts"* (Hebrews 3:6-7). At the end of the message came the announcement: "Qui Radio Risveglio" (You have been listening to Radio Revival), then the address of the ministry.

I am unable to describe exactly what happened that morning. But I do know that from then onwards, I sensed new life welling up within me. I wrote to "Radio Risveglio", and they answered. Through our exchange of letters I entered into true fellowship with God, which was completely new to me. To put it in a nutshell, I was born again. I felt powerfully moved to serve God in sincerity and righteousness. The very thought of my past filled me with loathing. The staff of "Radio Risveglio" sent me a New Testament. It was my favourite book for daily reading and meditation.

Shortly afterwards I was able to have a personal contact with "Radio Risveglio", to share my problems and open my heart. In September that same year, the Lord intervened providentially, allowing me to obtain a passport, which is unusual for a friar. This enabled me to travel to Lugano, where the "Radio Risveglio" ministries were based. In my monastic garb, I took part in their services. In this atmosphere of brotherly love I clearly realized that splendid liturgical ceremonies, man-made traditions and fine philosophical or theological arguments cannot quench one's spiritual thirst. Only the Word of God can meet our need, provided it is accepted and obeyed unreservedly, for God's Word alone is the Truth.

Three days later I returned to the convent, but in excellent company this time: I had a Holy Bible with me. For a while, I led a double life, so to speak: on one hand, a meaningless, ritualistic, rut-like existence, conforming to the environment I still had to get by in, and on the other hand, a life of genuine communion with God, dedicated to studying and meditating on His Word. I kept comparing the Roman Catholic doctrines and practices with the Word to find out whether or not I was in the truth.

Out of bondage and into freedom in Christ

Brothers and sisters, do you suppose I should have continued to live in the darkness once I had seen the light? Should I have persevered in error although the truth was staring me in the face? Never! I do not think you would have advised me to stay where I was; you would have very likely extended your hand and helped me to leave this prison as quickly as possible, wouldn't you?

Thus I had to change course and turn towards Jesus so that He alone would be my Savior, my Master, my Lord, my all. This new direction had begun internally when I listened to Radio Revival for the first time; but for all practical purposes it began on February 4, 1959 when, without the least regret, I left my monastic order and the Roman Catholic Church.

I spent the night preceding my departure writing my spiritual testimony, declaring that I was leaving behind error and lies in order to embrace the truth of the Gospel. Then as I left my cell in the morning, the enemy tried to hold me back, using all sorts of arguments. But an inner voice told me: "Be brave and act." So I celebrated my last mass. I ate my last meal with the other monks, and after having slipped my written testimony into the superior's mail box, I took the train to Lugano, where I met up with the team at Radio Revival.

Several months later the Lord opened a door for me, in fact within this very same organization; thus I was now able to proclaim Salvation via mass media, which I did up to my retirement and also afterwards.

Now I invite you to look at several points of the teachings of the Church of Rome.

The papacy

When I set out to examine the doctrines of the Church of Rome in the light of the Bible, I started at the top, that is the papacy, by reading the biographies of the popes in the Catholic Encyclopaedia (which undoubtedly "adjusted" a few facts). I nevertheless learned that the existence of some popes is uncertain and that the chronological placement of others is unknown. This Encyclopaedia also describes the bloody combat others engaged in to attain the papal throne. Still others were condemned as heretics by their successors; several of them led a corrupt life. After reading all this, I asked myself the following question: "Could the papacy have been instituted by God?" Obviously the response was no.

From an early age I was taught (and, sad to say, subsequently taught others) that the bishop of Rome is also the "pope," in other words Peter's successor at the head of the Church and the representative of Christ on earth, that he is "infallible", and that we owe obedience to him as we do to God. But do the Holy Scriptures confirm these teachings? Not at all!

The Church of Rome claims to have an uninterrupted chain of Peter's successors on the papal throne, but freely acknowledges the impossibility of proving that Peter ever set foot in Rome. There is not a single verse in Scripture that alludes to his going to Rome.

The doctrine of "apostolic succession" received a fatal blow during the Western Schism (1378-1417) when for thirty-nine years there were two and even three popes at the same time, who were excommunicating each other. It was and remains unknown who was the real pope.

Where there are two or three popes, there is no longer one real pope.

The pope calls himself the "Vicar of Jesus Christ". But does his character resemble that of the Savior in any way? Did Christ ever condemn those who did not recognize him as King of Heaven to go to prison or burn at the stake? Were those who didn't receive Him given a death sentence? What a difference between His thoughts and those of His so-called vicars!

And what about papal infallibility? Did the pope become infallible on July 18, 1870, the day he proclaimed this in Vatican Council I? In the light of history and, more importantly, of Holy Scripture, no one is infallible. Jesus prayed for the Apostle Peter to remain faithful, but he never guaranteed Peter would be infallible. At Antioch in the early days of the Church, Paul condemned Peter's attitude, thus permanently invalidating in advance this modern doctrine.

Baptism

Baptism should testify to the faith and repentance of the person who has converted to Christ. Indeed, Jesus said to his disciples, *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* (Mark 16:15-16). Clearly faith should precede baptism, as baptism has no value unless it is accompanied by faith. This is why Philip responded to the Ethiopian eunuch who asked to be baptised, *"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* (Acts 8:37). And then the Bible tells us: *"They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."* (Acts 8:38).

The Book of Acts also tells us that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, after having heard Peter's first speech, *"were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37-38). This passage shows us that repentance is necessary to obtain forgiveness of our sins. Now in the Church of Rome (and others as well) babies are baptized, in spite of what the Bible teaches. A little baby is innocent and unaware and can neither believe nor repent. In addition, the verb "baptize" means "immerse", not "sprinkle." Thus the only baptism which can be called as such is baptism by immersion (Matthew 3:16 and John 3:23).

The Mass

According to the Roman Catholic Catechism, "The Holy Mass is the sacrifice of the body and the blood of Jesus Christ offered on our altars under the species of bread and wine, in memory of the sacrifice at the Cross. The sacrifice of the Mass is substantially the same as that of the Cross; it is the same Jesus Christ who offered Himself on the Cross who is offered by the hands of his ministers the priests on our altars, but by the manner in which it is offered, the sacrifice of the Mass differs from the sacrifice of the Cross, all the while maintaining the most intimate and most essential similarity. Between the sacrifice of the Mass and that of the cross, there is this difference and this similarity in that on the Cross, Jesus Christ is offered by shedding his blood in merit for us; whereas, on the altars he is sacrificed in an unbloody manner and applies to us the fruit of his suffering and death."

This is about a sacrifice that is renewed and is the same as that of the cross, but which takes place without the shedding of blood. Let us take a closer look at this:

First observation: Jesus Christ, in offering Himself as a sacrifice to the Father for the redemption of the world, put an end to the sacrifices required by the law up to this point. (See Hebrews 10, verses 1 to 18).

Second observation: Jesus Christ offered Himself once and for all by one sacrifice and He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own Blood, having obtained eternal redemption. (See Hebrews 9:12).

Third observation: The sacrifices of the Old Covenant were usually characterized by the shedding of blood. Hebrews 9:22 says that "*without the shedding of blood there is no remission.*" Thus how could it be that in the Mass Jesus would sacrifice himself again, but without blood, for our purification?

Fourth observation: We know and believe that our sins were atoned for at the Cross (Isaiah 53:3, 1Corinthians 15:3, Galatians 1:4, 1 Peter 3:18). For this reason, we do not need additional sacrifices because "*where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin*" (Hebrews 10:18).

Furthermore, there is the "mystery" of transubstantiation in the mass, which is to say that the substance of the bread (called a host) and the wine supposedly becomes the body and blood of Christ in the eucharist. Rome teaches that as soon as the priest pronounces the sacramental words, "This is my body . . . This is my blood," a wondrous miracle takes place: the altar becomes Calvary; the host becomes the physical body of Christ and the wine becomes the actual blood of Christ, such that in all it has become the actual person, Jesus Christ. The priest who is officiating performs a sacrifice and the faithful become his collaborators.

We recalled just above that according to Scripture Jesus offered Himself once for all; He put an end to blood sacrifices: He entered into the Most Holy Place with His own blood, and He is now seated at the right hand of God forever. (See Hebrews 10:12). Now then, how can we reconcile the physical presence of Jesus in His body upon millions of altars in the millions of hosts which are consecrated daily throughout the world with the fact that He is eternally at the right hand of God? We could arrive at the same conclusion from Jesus' declaration, "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*" (Matthew 18:20). How can all those "Jesuses" spring up like mushrooms at the command of a priest? Only once did the Word become flesh.

The Church of Rome insists that "Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself... is present in a true, real and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity. Even in each part of each species, after it has been divided, Christ is present in whole." Can we accept that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Almighty, could become a plaything in the hands of a priest? How preposterous!

Mary

It is written in the Word of God: *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God"* (Exodus 20:4-5).

We read in 2 Kings 18:4 that Hezekiah, the King of Juda doing that which was right in the eyes of God *"removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it"*. In other words, Hezekiah destroyed these things because the people, totally lacking discernment, were given over to idolatry.

Apparently these divine commandments are unknown in the Church of Rome. In fact, her temples and sanctuaries are overflowing with statues, paintings and other religious images, as was the Pantheon of ancient pagan Rome. Furthermore, she worships the "saints" and especially Mary, "Queen of angels, prophets, apostles, heaven, earth and sea . . . Mother of God, dispenser of all grace . . ." among other titles. But shall we look at this in the light of the Holy Scriptures, which is the only rule of Christian conduct? Here are several truths: *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Timothy 2:5). *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Jesus Himself told us: *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18). *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). *"If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it"* (John 14:14). These words are so clear that we have no choice but to listen. Unfortunately the Church of Rome has turned a deaf ear and directed people along a different path, sending them away from the truth.

Yes, Mary is most certainly an idol. They have made her into the almighty, the mistress of heaven and earth. According to the teaching of Rome, all grace is dispensed only by Mary's hand, and all those who are saved owe their salvation to their "divine Mother."

Rome also teaches that Mary was conceived without sin, that she was born holy and immaculate, and that she ascended into Heaven, that she is equal to Christ incarnate, and is in some regards superior to Him, being His mother.

All these teachings are false and blasphemous: they contradict the Word of God.

Concerning the veneration of Mary, I have analyzed and examined the titles attributed to her, the high places and sanctuaries consecrated to her, the alleged apparitions, and the dogmas concerning her. I have found nothing but idolatry, legends, paganism and superstitions. What a contrast with the simplicity of the Gospel! And what a twisting of the truth! The Holy Scriptures' absolute silence concerning Mary's supposed all-powerful, dominating role, both in Heaven and on earth, is sufficient proof that only One should be worshiped, that there is only one Intercessor, that only One is the Savior: He whom God in His great love gave for our salvation: our Lord Jesus Christ.

Indulgences

Another teaching of the Church of Rome in opposition with the Holy Scriptures concerns the "indulgences," that is to say (according to Catholic theory) the total or partial remission of sins already forgiven. The Church of Rome claims to have received the power from Jesus Christ to dispense as she sees fit the overabundant atonement (in other words, merits) from Jesus, Mary and the saints, which make up what she calls "the treasury of indulgences." In 1552, the Council of Trent made this a point of their "doctrine of faith." All who deny the existence of this authority within the Catholic Church, or who declare indulgences useless, are anathemized, in other words, cursed. The bone of contention is found in the fact that the Catholic Church accepts a temporal punishment (in purgatory) or an eternal punishment (in hell) after death, depending upon whether the sin is venial or mortal--but the Gospel makes no such distinction. The Catholic Church does indeed teach that the blood of Jesus washes away our sin and frees us from eternal punishment, but by virtue of the "power of the keys" granted to the Church, the Church has some say in the matter, and there is a temporal punishment to be satisfied by the believer either on earth or in purgatory. By affirming this, the Church has placed herself above God. Scripture clearly tells us that *"the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Thus there is no basis for distinguishing between "mortal sin" and "venial sin." But Scripture does affirm that *"if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). Furthermore, the Apostle Paul assures us that there is now *"no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 8:1). This does not mean that we will be spared the consequences of our sins in our life here on earth.

What then are we to make of indulgences? If the Church of Rome prides herself in possessing this power, whether over the living or the dead, why does she not use it to instantly free all the souls she sent to purgatory to work out their temporal punishment? The teaching of the Bible rules out the existence of a "treasury of indulgences" the Church can dip into at her discretion. Christ himself alone is the sole propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins (1 John 2:2 and 4:10). God alone has the power to forgive sins.

This was recognized even by the Pharisees in Jesus' time: it is God who is offended when man sins.

However, the Christian, in his turn, is exhorted to forgive when he has been wronged. Jesus taught us to pray, *"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one who is indebted to us"* (Luke 11:4). These two acts, God's forgiving us, and the Christian forgiving others, are absolutely free; but through the use of indulgences the Church of Rome has transformed the remission of sins into a highly lucrative business we can only call simony.

The Catholic Church and the Bible

I could list more false doctrines of the Church of Rome, but I believe what I have explained so far is largely sufficient to demonstrate to any honest person capable of objective evaluation that the Catholic Church, although she considers herself the only true Church, has wandered terribly far away from the teachings of the Bible, that is, from the truth.

According to the Church of Rome, the Bible remains a closed book. No one has the right to read any version other than one containing their official notes and bearing the bishop's imprimatur. When boxed up within a monk's cell, one spends a great deal of time reading and meditating just about everything except the Word of God. Under these circumstances, the darkness thickens and obscures the spirits of those who should be enlightening the flock they have been entrusted to serve. We all know that Christ alone is the Light of the world and the Light of our consciences. If we don't allow Him to manifest his splendor through His Word, and His Word alone, we will remain in the darkness.

Let us bless the Lord for the grace He bestowed on us in giving us His written word, and for the free, direct and unlimited access we have to this source. Let us thank Him for guiding us by His divine Word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

As if the Gospel were not sufficient, the Church of Rome adds Tradition along with its precepts and laws, and monastic orders along with their rules and vows. The monk is thus surrounded--or more precisely, bound--by an endless number of duties, obligations and restrictions. He is truly a slave headed toward death.

It must be very difficult for those who have not lived in a monastery to realize exactly what I came through: Try to imagine how it would feel to be on death row and then to be suddenly set free instead of being executed. Indeed, after so many erroneous teachings, false interpretations, so much twisting of the Word of God, after all that we were forced to say and do (for we had to operate under duress), the day when the grace of God revealed the light and exposed the error was the day I came back to life!

The Church of Rome gives no assurance of salvation; she makes people live in doubt, in uncertainty, merely "hoping". She affirms and teaches that the Word of God is insufficient; that it is necessary to add Tradition and the pope's teachings. Moreover, she insists that grace flows from Mary, and she makes "saints" into mediators between us and God. In this system, anyone can earn their salvation by "good works," mortifications, indulgences, etc.

Anyone enlightened by the Bible is capable of verifying for himself the absurdity of this teaching which inevitably leads to spiritual death and the rejection of the true sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, belonging to the Church of Rome actually amounts to dwelling in death: the death of salvation by grace, the death of the Word of God (deemed insufficient) and the death of the once and for all perfect sacrifice of Christ, since this sacrifice must be daily repeated in the mass. It is even the death of our earthly life, for the more we do penance, the more we supposedly work our way up to heaven... What an aberration!

Beware of deceptive appearances

Nowadays the Church of Rome displays an outward show of sincerity. She justifies her cruel acts of the past; although appearing Christian, she has not changed in the least. She continues to extol the worldly aspects of the papacy, and retains those doctrines which originated in the darkest centuries of Christian history. This papacy (to which the Protestant world now so readily pays tribute) is indeed the same as that which dominated the world during the Reformation, and which was denounced in the past by men of God willing to risk their lives. Rome's tactic is to take on the appearance which best serves her intentions, but this ever-changing chameleon has always kept its poisonous venom. Some doctrines blocked me for thirty years. Without realizing it, I had been bound from infancy by these "doctrines of demons", to borrow an expression used by the Apostle Paul.

Rome binds us, whereas Christ frees us. Rome blinds us, whereas Christ enlightens us. Rome cultivates doubt, whereas Christ gives us assurance. Rome leads to perdition, whereas Christ leads to eternal life.

Rather than remaining on a negative note, I wish to point out that the most important part of my story is how I passed from death to life. One and only one road leads to Heaven: Jesus. Only one door opens into Heaven: Jesus. Only one key opens this door: The Cross of Jesus. Only one Name has been given to men through which they may be saved: Jesus. There is only one Mediator between God and men: Jesus. This is the only Gospel, the whole Gospel, the real Gospel.

Postscript

Forty-seven years after my conversion, I am still happy with my decision. In summing up this account, which is too brief, I can assert with the Apostle Paul: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law or sin and death"* (Romans 8:1). *"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"*. (Philippians 3:13-14). *"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever"* (Jude 25).

The Apostle Paul writes to the Christians in Corinth: *"For the love of Christ constraineth us..."* (2 Corinthians 5:14). His whole life is a marvelous example of the fervor and love which led him to spread the good news of salvation. Well, this same love for Jesus is what leads me today to ask you a question: Is one of you still groping about in the darkness of the Church of Rome? Does one of you have doubts about his salvation? Now is the time to face the facts and renounce false Catholic doctrine and to yield once and for all to Christ's love, because only He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Dear reader, you have read my testimony and followed the account of my spiritual struggles and my subsequent discovery of the truth. Maybe you are still in darkness; maybe you are still hesitating. I urge you to tear down this wall separating you from God and to choose Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Apart from Him there is no salvation: *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name in heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). May you answer the call Jesus is extending to you today, maybe for the last time. He says, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"* (Revelation 3:20). Won't you open your heart to your Savior? I urge you to do it now. And in return, you will be given peace and the joy of belonging to Christ, and these will remain with you until He comes to take you to reign with Him forever. (2 Timothy 2:12).

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