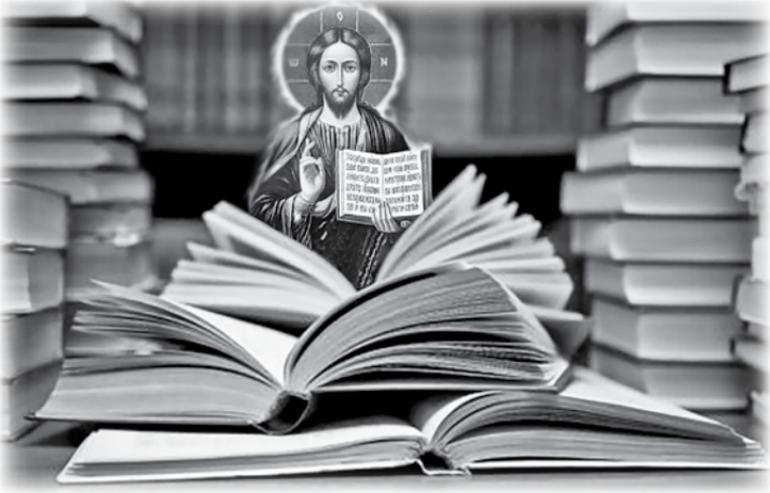


Why I Am Still
a Catholic
The Reality of Truth
by
Margaret Perez



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ABOUT THE WHY I AM STILL A CATHOLIC!

A SERIES OF BOOKLETS

by Ronda Chervin, Ph.D., Editor

In the year 2016 I read somewhere that 60% of Catholics have left the Church or only attend occasionally!

I was shocked! Myself a convert from an atheist but Jewish background, Jesus, manifested and coming to me in the Catholic Church is the greatest joy in my life...from time into eternity!

How could it be that so many Catholics have lost faith in a church that offers so much?

I believe it was the Holy Spirit that suggested to me a remedy.

Suppose the parish racks had little booklets written by strong believers, such as myself, describing why we are still Catholics in spite of many of the same experiences which have alienated other Catholics! Such a series of booklets could attract wavering Catholics or be given by strong Catholics to family and friends who have left us. In this way our series was born.

So, now I address all wavering Catholics, and

all those who have left the Catholic faith, and beg you to give us one more chance. Could it hurt to say a little prayer, such as this?

Jesus, if you are really the Son of God, and you want me to receive fullness of grace through the Word and Sacraments in the Catholic Church, open me to the witness of the writers of these booklets. As they tell me why they are still Catholics, please tell me why I should still be a Catholic!





Saint Edith Stein,
pray for us.

*Confirm us in your service, Lord,
and help us to bear witness to you
in the society in which we live.*



Margaret synthesizes important reasons that lead her to maintain her Catholic faith. The attack on her belief began as soon as she became a student in a secular university. It was her experience within a secular academic environment that initially propelled her to dig deeper into the claims of Catholicism. Fortunately, in her case, the more she researched, the more she understood the historical, theological and philosophical validity of the Catholic world view.





Youthful Experience



N was born and raised in a Catholic family. I went to Catholic elementary school and high school but I unfortunately didn't really get much catechetical teaching from these schools. It was my mother who taught me about the Catholic faith through her words and example. By the time I went to the university, the secular environment really shocked me intellectually since I had never been in classes where elements of the faith are directly debunked. For example, in

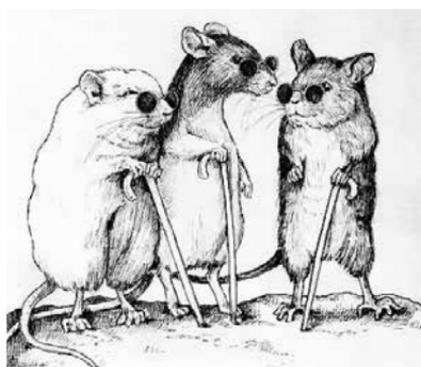


a psychology class there was always the constant premise that thought itself was merely a result of neurotransmitter interactions and chemical processes. I was taken aback by the assurance of professors who used this premise as a launching pad for all other psychological theories; nevertheless, there was a certain intellectual vagueness in these assumptions that these professors never acknowledged. For the first time, I was exposed

to a direct contradiction of what I had considered myself to be, that is, a *hylomorphic being composed of body and soul.



In biology classes I was exposed to the certainty of professors who seemed to have an unshakable position that the existence of all life forms was a mere coincidence resulting from a random universe. In literature classes I was exposed to the



Biology Department Faculty

premise that reason in language is a myth, and we are basically deluded beings who think we inhabit a reason-filled existence. It wasn't what they said that had the most impact in students;

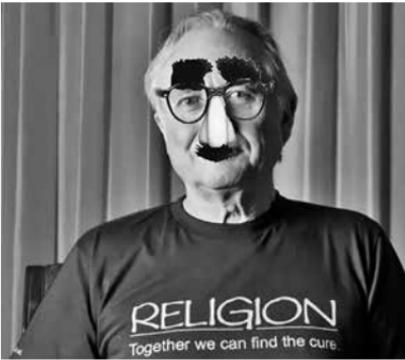
**"Hylomorphism," from the Greek words ὕλη hyle, "wood, matter" and μορφή, morphē, "form," is a philosophical theory developed by Aristotle, according to which every natural body consists of two intrinsic principles, one potential, namely, primary matter, and one actual, namely, substantial form.*

it was their unhesitating certainty and apparent conformity. It was as if they knew they needed to counter traditional world views and used their own academic weight to instill a new perspective of reality to their unsuspecting and inexperienced students. Their atheistic ideological stance was interwoven in their lectures and explanations. There was no neutrality in their pseudo-objectiveness and there was no appreciation for diversity of thought; there was a true tyranny of baseless secular assumptions and no openness of mind. My faith was now under



attack; doubts and hints of doubts started to emerge in my mind. The atheistic mindset was not only palpable in classes dealing with subjects that are directly connected to the sciences, they were also very evident in classes relating to Western history, social sciences, literary theory and education. This was definitely an abrupt and unsettling time. Nevertheless, it was during this time that my interest in philosophy grew, since I was wanting to find the reasonable answers that countered the atheistic stance of academics, answers that

clearly demonstrated the lack of critical cogency embedded in their pronouncements. I started

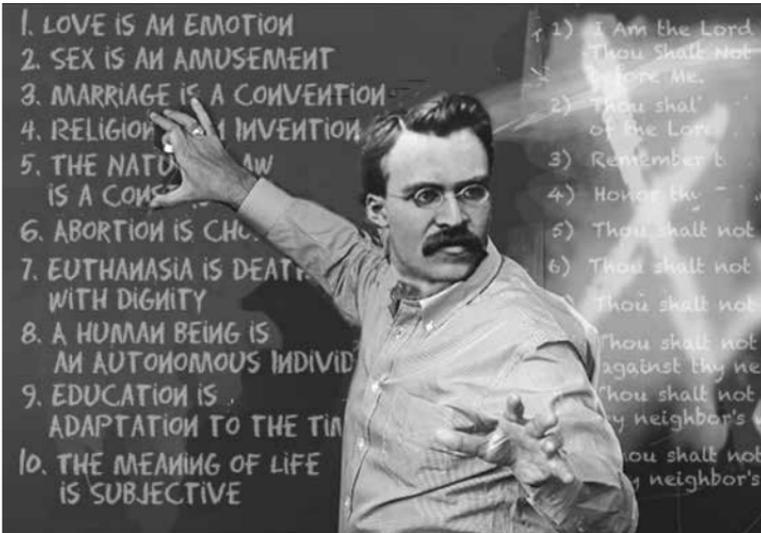


Marxist Pre-Med Prof lectures wearing a tee shirt with the inscription:

RELIGION:

Together we can find a cure.”

searching for answers in books related to Catholic philosophy. I also had a great interest in finding out about Catholic history since the Catholic Church was presented as a very negative institution that controlled naïve populations throughout its history.

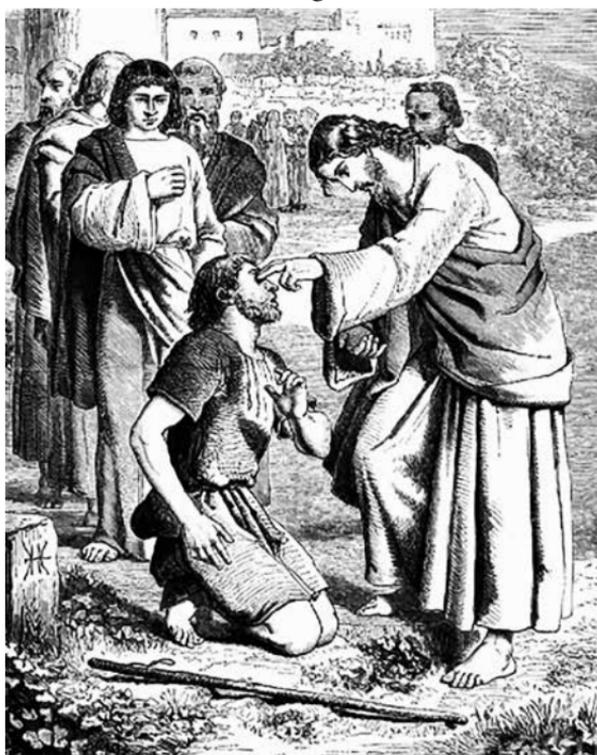




*They did not know, they did not understand;
they walk in the shadows. Psalm 81*



Blind leading the blind



Jesus restores sight to the blind

Maintaining Fidelity



Comparing Catholicism to other faith traditions, including non-Christian beliefs, can do a lot to re-enforce one's allegiance to the Catholic perspective. For example, the person of Jesus Christ is someone who stands out and is different from any other founder of any other religion, despite that fact that He is frequently portrayed as one of many guru-type leaders. His teachings and exhortations are not simply ways of living a nice life or of being a nice person; rather,



Jesus lashes out with niceness at the temple merchants

they are instructions how to raise our existence and reach our maximum individual holiness. Being perfect, as Jesus exhorts us in scripture, means accomplishing a perfect union with God, who is Existence itself. Being a nice person is good, but it is not the totality of what Jesus Christ taught. Holiness and perfection are related to existence and joining ourselves to Existence itself, and Love itself. Jesus Christ calls for a full transformation, a renewed type of existence that reaches the depths of our being, the depths of our soul. Those who promote Christ as being an advocate for niceness truly shortchange and distort Christ's message.



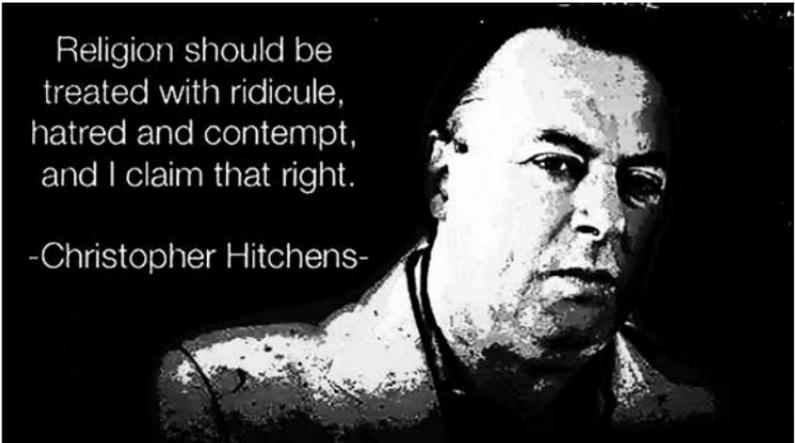
The Catholic faith is the only one who espouses this deep and mysterious doctrine. Other faiths try to imitate one or various tenets of the Catholic faith, but they fail to do so; they are not close to any authentic type of metaphysical awareness as regards the nature of man, and the ontological constitution of reality. These other faith pathways represent mere narratives that may try to emulate any one of the truths found in traditional Catholicism. It's interesting that atheist viewpoints frequently

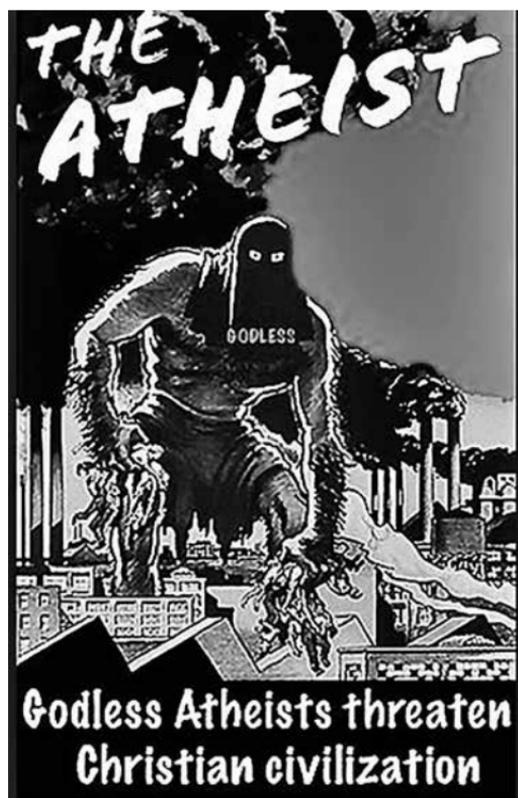


criticize belief in general, precisely because they consider well-meaning adherents to flimsy narratives in the same way a child holds on to fairy tales. One could say that atheism and agnosticism frequently target distorted views of truths in order to debunk religion in general. Simultaneously, atheistic proponents fail to understand the metaphysical dimension underlying their own rejection of belief.

Religion should be treated with ridicule, hatred and contempt, and I claim that right.

-Christopher Hitchens-

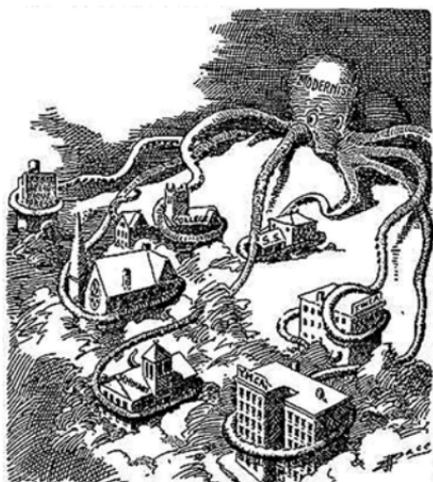




In Stark Contrast with Contemporary Values



An additional factor that contributes to my Catholicity results from my observation of how secular culture



The tentacles of modernism

embraces values that are stripped of any traditional meaning and re-framed within a more convenience-minded meaning. For example, the value of a human being in the womb is exchanged for the right of the mother to decide whether to let her

baby live or to end its life. Having the mother opt for the death of her unborn child is seen as a compassionate resort. Being kind and



understanding is therefore allowed within the framework of murder. Society's non-adherence to any type of absoluteness within the moral context is very unsettling. In fact, this collective attitude of indifference within the moral fabric of society is contrary to the traditional Christian idea of values in society. It seems that the Catholic Church is the only institution that teaches about the reality of absoluteness and the validity of truth as something we need to strive for as human beings. The Catholic Church's view of reality represents a stark contrast with contemporary values.

*Thanks to God, we have come into this world. Also thanks to God, we have received baptism, we have entered the Church, and we have received the glorious name of disciples of the Lord. But what use would that name be if it did not **correspond to reality**? If it does not, then it is in vain that we have come into the world and entered into the Church. Moreover, such a state of affairs would not serve the Lord and his grace. It would be better for us never to have been born than to receive the grace of the Lord and then sin against him.*

Saint Andrew Kim Taegŏn

Relativization of Values



Another observation that contributes to my Catholicity is related to the relativization of values that has led to the post-modern mindset to prioritize recreation and entertainment as the ultimate reason for living.



The unprecedented collective compulsion towards living a life imbued with distractions that stem from technological advances in communications,



which are entirely focused on entertainment, would no doubt be an unacceptable way of life

for past generations, especially of Catholics, who held traditional notions regarding our life as a preparation for eternity. The constant push towards



imbuing society with an implied acceptance of recreation and entertainment as values embedded in human living that represent humanity's *raison d'être* is overwhelming. The lifestyle promoted by these values counters Catholicism's teaching on the individual's vocation for holiness and the importance of using our time on earth prudently and wisely in order to strive for holiness and union with God. It would be unthinkable to imagine saints of the past, for example, St. John Bosco, instructing his boys on the value of spending free time on distractions rather than on devoting sufficient time to activities that contribute to personal holiness. In fact, St. John Bosco used entertainment activities only moderately in his



effort to recruit boys who needed his guidance. The main focus of his efforts revolved around teaching these boys values that would help them get to heaven and the value of using their time wisely.

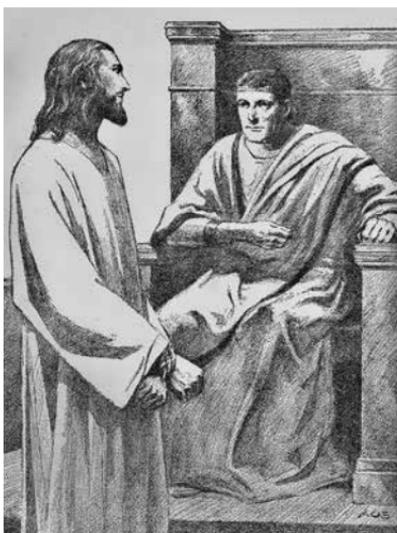


TRUTH

it's the new hate speech

**"During times of universal deceit, telling
the truth becomes a revolutionary act."**

George Orwell



"What is Truth?"

asks a pre-modern relativist.

TRUTH IS TRUTH

even if no one believes it

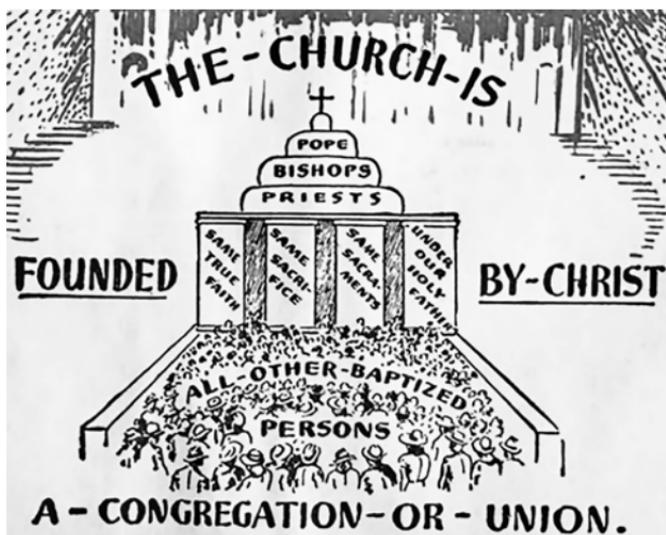
a Lie is a Lie

even if everyone believes it

Catholic Faith Is Truly Realistic



et another factor that has contributed to my intellectual acceptance of the Catholic faith is the fact that Catholicism is the only faith that views reality from a realist perspective. In other words, the teachings of Christ as handed down through the centuries through His church are based on the premise of Truth as existing externally. Truth can be interiorized but is not generated by each individual. The manner in which the Church hierarchy is structured, as designed by Christ, is none other a result of this premise. Authority and the external existence of Truth are inter-connected



ideas that mutually validate each other. The opposite stance is that truth is a mere subjective reality, developed individually, and dependent solely on environmental factors and personal demands. If one inspects the general parameters of other Christian denominations, the non-realist view of Truth is evident through their insistence of personal interpretation of scripture, thus opening the pathway for various interpretations of the same context. The fragmenting of these faith communities lends support to the notion

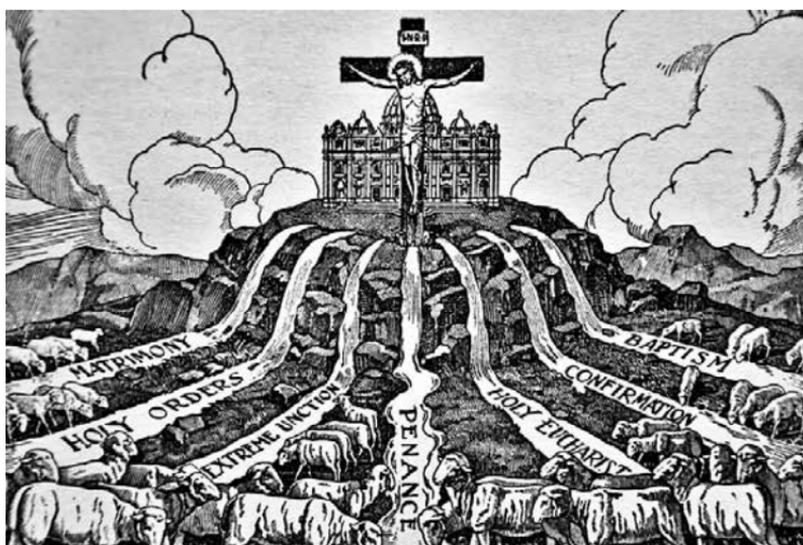

 that Truth is considered as a relativized thought possibility. The teachings of Christ are actually contrary to this type of philosophical relativism. The fluid nature of truth in non-

Christian belief systems also reflects the relativized presupposition that Truth is not absolute and external. Atheist perspectives also debunk any notion of external truth since non-belief requires the negation of all absolute philosophical principles in general. Acknowledging Truth as an external reality, corresponds to Christ's affirmation: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life..." (John 14:6). Christ's equating of Himself with Truth and Life are nowhere to be found in other belief or non-belief systems.

Sacramental Reality



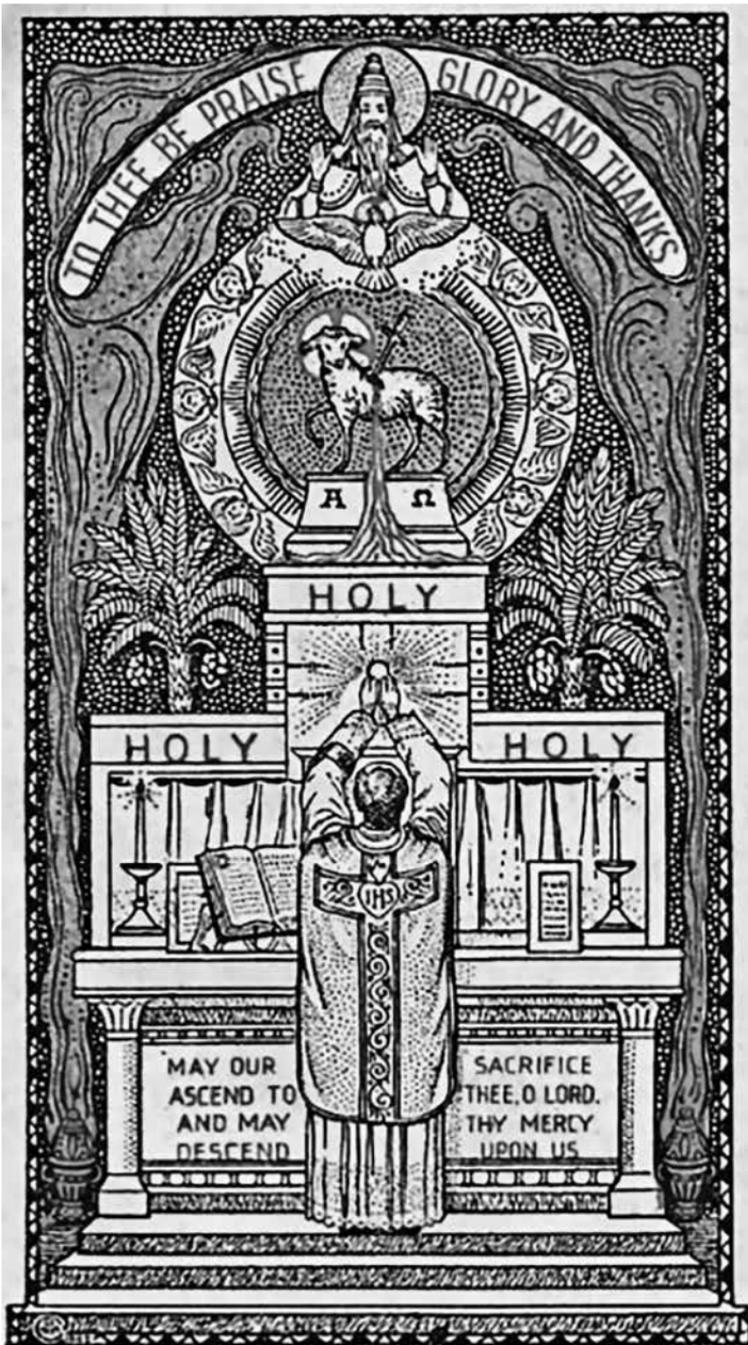
Above all, it is the sacraments that are the sustaining force of my love for the Catholic Church—the sacraments, those seven gifts left to us as portals of grace, granted through Christ's Redemption.



Theologically we recognize the supernatural benefit that we gain through these sacraments; philosophically we can recognize that this grace granted through the sacraments is the life of God, Existence itself. The sacraments provide a glimpse not only into the reality of grace but also, a glimpse into the metaphysical meaning of grace in our

persons. I believe that even though one may not be consciously delving into the philosophical meaning of the sacraments while participating in the sacramental life, one may intuitively contemplate the deeper realities present in these external signs of grace that are clothed with physicality. Through the wisdom of the Church, granted to it through Christ, we, as partakers of the sacraments, can acquire a greater level of gratitude towards these as one meditates on the way Jesus chose to transmit his grace throughout the centuries. Unfortunately, the sacraments are frequently thought of solely in symbolic terms and the faithful are frequently not in tune with the incredible source of grace that the sacraments impart on the person. The effect of the sacraments in the depth of the soul is real; therefore, it is imperative that the person be informed of the great privilege he/she has in being able to receive the sacrament, as well as the significance of the sacramental life. There is no equivalent, external vehicle of grace in any other belief system.





Teaching the Truth and Its Consequences

Luke 4:16-30

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

*The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.*

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the



assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said,

'This is Joseph's son, surely?'

But he replied, ‘No doubt you will quote me the saying, “Physician, heal yourself” and tell me, “We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside.”’

And he went on, ‘I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.

‘There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah’s day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha’s time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.’

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.



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