

***IF THEY BELIEVE
THEY WILL NEVER LEAVE***

I was sitting in my office with a couple who had gotten into a financial mess. The man, I will call John, was a non-practicing Pentecostal. The woman, a Baptist whom I will refer to as Sue, was wanting to come back to a closer relationship with God. They had a child together, but had not bothered getting married. As you can see, it wasn't just their finances that were in a mess; their whole life was.

John was a very intelligent person, who despite his efforts to handle his finances correctly, had managed to credit-card himself to death (a very common problem in today's I-must-gratify-myself society).

It did not take long for me to bring God into

the picture. It was no surprise on their part, for those who know me know that the primary reason I give financial counseling is to share my faith with others. There is quite a shift in our society today. It seems that the laity are talking more about God, and the clergy are talking more and more about the world. Too many of our supposedly “religious” leaders are acting and looking like businessmen or even worse, some are trying to look and act like cool dudes. These leaders have a childish philosophy that I like to refer to as perpetual juvenility. This philosophy has caused much suffering and heartache in many Catholic families, and it has contributed to the drastic decline in Mass attendance, especially among our youth.

The reader may be wondering, “Where is this all leading?” Well, it is all leading to the Blessed Sacrament, transubstantiation, the Real Presence, the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we fall away from this

belief, we fall away from the necessity of belonging to the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

Protestants Need to Entertain

While I was discussing financial matters with the couple, the phone rang. The caller wanted information concerning a prominent Protestant minister by the name of John Maxwell. Now, Dr. Maxwell is what I would call a motivational theologian. He gives motivational seminars as well as theological seminars for Protestant ministers. The program that I had viewed addressed the topic of how to grow your church. In his program, Dr. Maxwell made the statement that you could not run your church as you did twenty years ago. Change, he felt, was a necessity if your church was to grow.

I answered the caller's question and hung up the phone. Turning to John and Sue, I made the statement that as Protestants, it was, as Dr.

Maxwell had stated, necessary to constantly change if one wanted to hold on to the congregation and add new members to their church. Being human we tire of things, religion included. Things can quickly become mundane. We need variety. We need excitement. We need to be kept entertained, or we will get bored and look elsewhere for something new, exciting and stimulating.

It was at this point that I began to explain to the couple that as Protestants they do not believe that the bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. They, for the most part and depending on the particular denomination, believe that it is not much more than a pious practice which, in and of itself, has little significance. Again, each denomination looks on this in a different way, yet they all agree that it is only a symbol and definitely not Christ's real presence.

Ecumenism Has Caused Some Problems

Probably a more accurate statement would be, “The misinterpretation and/or distortion of what the Church meant by ecumenism has caused some problems.” The Church in her never-ending quest for unity intended to attack the problem of disunity by trying to focus on what the various denominations had in common, rather than fighting over who was right on matters of not so great importance, i.e., disciplinary rules and regulations. This was a very noble endeavor one must say. However, things gradually took an unexpected turn for the worse and what had begun as a search for a common unity in truth turned into everything is equal and true. Quite a departure from the original intent is it not? It has gotten to be an “everything goes” mentality in the minds of many Church officials. The I’m O.K., you’re O.K. mentality has prevailed. The pursuit for

unity at any price prevailed over truth itself. The very truth that Christ came to bear witness to was systematically pushed aside for a false expression of unity and Christian charity. It was cleverly shielded under the guise of ecumenism.

One diocesan newspaper ran an attack on one of my pamphlets two weeks in a row. One of the criticisms by the editor was that I was going against Church teachings by saying that Catholics are not Protestants. The editor stated that such a statement went against ecumenism. I wrote the paper and asked for a taped debate of the subject, and that Christian Family Outreach would make the taped debate available, free of charge, to anyone wishing to have one. The invitation was declined. The editor, being a shrewd and intelligent priest, knew that if we debated on tape I would clarify what he had confused in his article and question him as to what he truly believed on different Church teachings. That is something liberals, who have

not formally broken with the Church, avoid like the plague.

Common sense would strongly suggest that when Catholics do not know the difference between what is distinctly Catholic and what is distinctly Protestant, they stand a good chance of leaving the Catholic Church. This, my friend, is exactly what has happened since the Second Vatican Council, an absolute hemorrhage of people has left the true Church. The Catholic Church has things that the Protestant churches definitely lack and Catholics need to know exactly what they are. It is sad to say that for the most part our good Catholic people have been denied these beautiful differences, and for that matter so have our Protestant brothers and sisters. This intentional confusing of these differences by many leaders in our Church has not only caused thousands to leave our beautiful Catholic Church, but it has also kept many wonderful Protestant brothers and sisters from

coming in; sad is it not?

One of the main differences between Catholic beliefs and Protestant beliefs is Catholics believe that at consecration the bread and wine are no longer bread and wine but rather have been changed into our Lord's body and blood. The Church refers to this miraculous event as transubstantiation. Yes, the Church teaches that although the consecrated substances look, taste, smell and feel like bread and wine, they are no longer bread and wine but rather the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine what would happen in our churches if we had priests that believed in our Lord's real presence to such an extent that they would actually act like they believed? I truly believe that we would have an immediate turnaround in Mass attendance. Psychologists claim that actions speak louder than words, and if this is true, we would reclaim in a short time

the 75% of parishioners who lost the belief in the Real Presence. *So powerful are the actions of a saintly priest.*

No Entertainment is Necessary

John and Sue knew little about their own particular denominations. They are just two people trying to survive in a world that is just a little too complicated for them. They are products of a society that has lost the meaning of life and do not even know it.

Toward the end of our appointment John surprised me with a simple yet profound statement, a statement that would be good for every Catholic to understand regardless of his position in the Church. John said, ***“If a person believes that the Eucharist is really the body of Christ, nothing else is necessary.”*** I pray that everyone who reads

these words will truly analyze them.

John was a man with little knowledge of the Christian belief. Yet he, through the light of the Holy Spirit, could see what many so-called good Catholics cannot see. John could see that the belief in Christ's presence in the Blessed Eucharist would be more than sufficient to not only keep our youth Catholic, but it would be a powerful reason for non-Catholics to enter the Church.

It was our own weak faith in the Eucharist that caused the move from a devout reverence for the sacred Species to a carnival-like atmosphere in our churches. It was our weak faith that caused us to believe that the youth would not believe in what they could not understand. Yes, we denied them the faith in the Eucharist, and gave them third-rate entertainment, so they leave. Yes, they leave in search of Christ, the Christ that so many

church leaders ignored to such an extent that the people either forgot or never knew that He is here in our tabernacles.

I truly wonder if any sane person would believe that the Catholic youth of today, with all the filth to which they are constantly exposed, could stay moral without an authentic Christian moral belief. Nor could one believe that a person would remain Catholic without the belief that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist.

The greatest gift we can give our youth is the belief that our Lord is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. But there is a problem, a big problem. It is impossible to pass on a belief that one does not possess. Therefore our religious leaders, who have lost the belief in the Eucharist, resort to rock-n-roll masses and the sort, in an effort to lure the youth into the churches, not realizing that practices such as

these only alienate the youth from the Church and confirm in their mind the notion that the Eucharist is not truly the body of Christ, and that the Mass is nothing more than a boring ritual with little or no meaning. Why else would they bring in all this foolishness? What a tragedy for our young people and what a mockery to our Lord and Savior in the Blessed Sacrament!

So, I say, let's help them to believe and they will never leave.

Question

Do you think reading the lives of the saints would help our youth as well as our adults in their faith?????????