

THOUGHTS OF AN OLD CATHOLIC

I was born into a catholic family and educated in catholic schools. I thought I knew a lot about my religion until I was asked in my late 60s to be a Catechist in the village where I live, which has no catholic school. I was to educate 8 to 9 year olds in Catholicism. The questions these children asked made me realise how little I did know. I soon adopted the strategy of telling them they could ask questions after the lesson, and I would answer them at the start of the next lesson. Being a pensioner allowed me to research their questions for a whole week.

It was during these weeks of research that I realised two facts which to me were very important:

1. I was not a knowledgeable catholic.
2. I had to Ignore theological findings.

The reason for point 1 was the large amount of research I had to do. This proved to me how little I knew about Catholicism.

Point 2 concerned the use of theological terms that I didn't understand and had no time to investigate.

The knowledge I gained was still not comprehensive, but it was far more than I originally had. There were many things I'd heard of but never understood that I do now, and there are still many things I don't know.

Following these Catechist training sessions for several years, I eventually produced one-page articles on Catholicism, which our parish priest checked. Then he put one on the last page of his parish weekly newsletter. We were very surprised at the positive reception from the adult parishioners. These are now on a website called:

www.catholicismrefreshernotes.co.uk

The following are some notes I've made about Catholicism. They do not use theological terms, as I've discovered that these tend to turn many people off reading religious articles. I hope the reader finds them to be easy to read and interesting.

To start with, the most important fact I came across in my research was the three words in the New Testament used by Our Lord Jesus Christ when asked what his mission here on earth was. He said **TO SAVE SINNERS**. I reasoned that if this was his mission, it should be the mission of the church he created, but what did it all mean?

I reasoned that when a human being is conceived, God gives it two very important things:

1. AN ETERNAL SOUL
2. FREE-WILL

The whole purpose of the soul is that when a person dies, the soul will live with God in that wonderful environment called HEAVEN for all eternity, but to achieve this, that person must, while alive, obey God's

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Free will provides us with the ability to obey God's ten commandments, which should not be a problem for people. So why did God send his Son to earth to help us do this?

I believe it's because of that fallen angel called SATAN. He is passionate about ensuring people disobey the Ten Commandments, and he uses many very effective tactics to make this happen. One typical activity is manipulating one of mankind's basic instincts we call:

DESIRE

It's important to remember that God created man with a free will, which logically means desires, which in turn, meant that God's creation had a purpose. With free will, man can choose how he behaves, and desire plays a great part in any choice. Using free will, man has developed to such an extent that he is now reaching for and flying to the stars, but it now looks like he's forgotten the real reason for having free will, which was so he could choose to keep his pact with God.

Think of the Ten Commandments. Many start with "Thou shall not," which is another way of saying DO NOT DESIRE TO. It is amazing when you think of all the catastrophes caused by men because each one was based upon desire—the desire for love, wealth, power, or any combination of these. Yet man has never learned from these examples.

There have always been and always will be people who succumb to Satan's temptations to desire love, wealth and power and will do anything, such as steal, threaten, torture, murder, war and even genocide, to get them. Not only are these great sins against God but they are the causes of many of the world's ills. Sending his Son to help us shows God's great love for us.

There's nothing wrong with love, wealth or power. The problems occur when they're heartily desired by one person or a few at the expense and pain of others, then they truly offend God. The Catholic church has adopted the strategies created by Jesus and has introduced some of its own in an attempt to thwart Satan. Some of these are as follows:

- 1. Praying.**
- 2. The Sacraments:**
 - Baptism.**
 - Confirmation.**
 - Holy Eucharist**
 - Reconciliation**
 - Anointing of the sick.**
 - Holy Orders**
 - Matrimony**
- 3. The Mass**
- 4. Missionaries**
- 5. Helping the poor, sick, lonely and imprisoned**

These are all very powerful strategies, which, if practised by Catholics, would make the work of Satan a waste of time and ensure their souls gain Heaven with God for all eternity when they die. Have you ever asked yourself:

- How often do I pray?
- Have I been baptised and confirmed?
- Do I regularly go to communion and confession?
- Do I go to mass at least every week?
- When I do go, do I take part in it earnestly?
- Do I support the missionary services
- Am I charitable to the poor, sick, lonely and imprisoned?

Our Lord Jesus Christ made it simple for us. He told us to love God and our neighbours truly. If we did this, we would automatically obey the Ten Commandments, thus gaining God's great promise for our souls.

I'm continually researching Catholicism and finding out more about how to save my soul. It's remarkable how Jesus showed and taught us in many ways how we can achieve this. It's all in the Bible, but how many of us have one and read it?