

What We Believe... Why We Believe It

By
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The Every Catholic Guy

Repent!

For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.—Matthew 21:32

This installment is going to make some readers very angry. If it does, any psychologist will tell you it's your own guilt causing the anger, because I'll have hit the nail on the head. Or as they like to say today, I'll have hit it out of the park.

The Catholic Church is rife with scandal from the top all the way down. All of us lay people are livid and embarrassed by the scandals and apparent corruption. We certainly have a right to be angry. But while most priests and bishops are good men who faithfully live up to their vows, we have to ask ourselves one pertinent question: Are those bishops and priests involved in their corruption and mortal sin the only persons to blame? The answer is an unequivocal no!

The laity must share blame for the scandal and corruption, even if to a lesser degree. Had we cared enough about our holy and ancient faith to actually learn it (and, implicitly, to live it), those responsible for the scandal and corruption could not have gotten away with pulling the wool over our eyes as long as they have; we could have identified the red flags signaling us things were rotten in Denmark. Loving and protecting this divine organism we call the Catholic Church is everyone's responsibility, not just bishops and priests.

We go merrily along living our less than fully Catholic lives thinking we have no responsibility for the evils that seem to permeate the Church today, but our merry thinking would be wrong. As I've said before, we all—pope, bishops, priests, deacons, religious and laity—have two primary responsibilities: to become saints and share the faith. As I heard a priest ask in a homily a couple of years ago, if you don't want to become a saint, why are you a Catholic? I'll say the unspoken but implied follow up comment to that by telling you that if you don't want to become a saint, convert to Protestantism; they wrongly think they're already saints.

The point is that if every Catholic had been living up to what it means to be Catholic, none of this could have happened. But many of us, if not most, are too caught up in the world to be bothered with trivial things like the hideous passion Christ suffered for us all, or veneration and respect for Jesus in the most holy Eucharist. Heck, our generation of "me" doesn't even place our family responsibilities ahead of the things that pleasure us. Our society has become too selfish and our culture too immature to have the personal self-discipline to fulfill our rightful obligations. Don't believe it?

Every single week, no matter what parish I'm in, I see 95%-99% of Catholics get up for Communion, but 1% or less show up for confession each week. Feeling pretty good about yourself, huh? Don't think you do things that merit the need for confession, eh? Well then just consider this: surveys indicate that 90% of Catholics use artificial contraception, 65% say cohabitation without marriage isn't sinful, 50% say homosexuality is okay, a third of Catholics say abortion isn't a sin, and 53% aren't certain God exists. Why do Catholics believe these things? Because the world gives us the sexy pleasure we prefer, but Jesus gives us a not so sexy cross. Well, I've got news for you: artificial contraception, cohabitation, homosexuality, abortion and refusing to believe in God are sins that will condemn you to an eternity in hell.

Hell, in case you don't realize it, is nothing like what you see depicted on TV or the movies. Hell is a place of eternal punishment where every excruciating torment imaginable (and, I'm sure, many beyond our limited imaginations) is inflicted on its residence without ceasing. The worst punishment of all is complete separation from God. Even if you live in a chronic state of mortal sin now, you still enjoy the presence of God. Life would be impossible separated from Him, so you still enjoy His presence here, but that is not going to be the case in hell.

If you choose not to believe these things, I'll ask the same question as before: Why are you Catholic? It's long past time we renounce the lies of the world and embrace the cross! Things have become so bad in society and the Church that we can no longer afford "nice Catholicism"—hearing, choosing and doing only those things that make us feel good. We must get serious about our faith. Embracing Christ's Church must come before our own selfish desires, our spouses, our children—*everything*. I'm not the one who said that; Jesus did in Matthew 10:37-38.

So what do we need to do? Well, first things first: make a good confession, telling the priest everything you can think of in your current understanding of Catholic morality, making a firm purpose of amendment to not do those things again. The next thing would be to learn our faith as you should. I can and will freely teach you, even answering your questions. Visit the JoeSixpackAnswers.com website. While there, sign up for the free email course and I'll send a new lesson to your inbox every three days. I'll also send you special invitations to free webinars I host every week to teach you the things you need to know. I'll answer your questions and take all the time with you that you need, even carrying it on with email and phone conversations if necessary. No one has ever complained that my classes are boring, and in thirty years I've never had a face-to-face student get all glassy-eyed with that thousand yard stare because I was putting them to sleep.

I'll go you one better. Your priest cares about the state of your soul or you wouldn't be getting these in your weekly bulletin. So if you can get his approval and put together a group from your parish, I'll hold private webinars just for those members of your parish.

It's time to get serious about our Catholicism. It's my personal opinion our time before Christ returns to judge us all grows short. So go to confession, stop sinning, learn your faith well, and don't hesitate to call on ol' Joe Sixpack—the Every Catholic Guy to help.

That's What We Believe... Why We Believe It.