

Why unbelieving Catholics must see themselves as no longer Catholic and stop ticking the Roman Catholic Box in the Census Form?

Census forms should never ask, "What is your religion?" It should ask, "Do you practice a religion?" This would help work out more reliable statistics so that the government departments can make plans far better. For example, funding will be cut back on humanist chaplains in hospitals if too many people identify themselves as Catholics when they think or know the religion is false and do not practice it. Also, the huge number of people revering the religious label - though not the religion - and thus taking that label on the census form is the prime reason religion gets unfair and special privileges such as tax exemption.

The claim that Catholicism is globally 1.2 billion is the prime reason it gets disproportionate airtime in the news and on television in general. The Church says that it is a communion of faith and love meaning that the cherry-picker member is really only a part-member if a true member at all. It is possible to imagine devout Protestants who are more in communion with Catholic belief than those who profess to be Catholics. The Church says you excommunicate yourself from it by heresy and grave sin so that in your heresy and sin you have no right to claim to be acting as a Catholic.

REASON ONE

Valid Baptism is supposed to make you a member of the Church and give you supernatural power to accept the Catholic faith. So, if you find that you have always been unable to do so fully then you have the right to take that as a sign that your baptism was null and void. If it works, experience will tell you. Nobody has any business assuming you are Catholic just because you were put through a baptism ceremony - its not that simple.

REASON TWO

By merely being listed as a member or listing oneself as a member, is to tacitly support the Church and to say that if you dissent from the Church that your views are not representative of the faith. To tick the box and support the Church by declaring membership is immoral when you don't believe in it - it is promoting a structure of deceit that damages people. If you know the Church is nonsense, then that is far worse. If you protest against the teachings that are essential, you are not much of an asset to your causes. You are just coming across as a disobedient hypocrite. A hypocrite actually supports the teachings he undermines for hypocrisy is paying homage to the virtues simulated.

REASON THREE

Ticking the 'Roman Catholic' box as a non-believer demeans yourself for you are not being true to you. And more so if you know the Church is not the only authorised Church of God that it claims to be. A person who takes a census form and declares themselves to be a member of a faith and Church they have fallen away from is not being true to themselves.

Religion is not a gathering of individuals. It is not a social club for individuals. In fact, you have to give up your liberties to be part of the religion. But you may say that say Mormons and Catholics for example have a lot of freedom to do what they want. Yes but they are doing these things primarily because they are permitted so they are still not free. The only freedom the religious person has is the freedom to obey.

A religion is not the people who comprise it. It is a system. It is ultimately the system of Roman Catholicism that is the problem not the Catholic people. The system is what must be rejected. Its not worth more than the people who compose its membership. To change the system is to make a new one. To say you can be part of it while rejecting anything it stands for is to misrepresent it and to deceive. If you want to see Church teaching on gay people changed why stop there? If you start to find the notion of God offensive which you may do should you lose a loved one in a horrible manner, why not try and get it the progress of the belief stopped too? The point is, refusing to admit that opposition to gay sex is part of Catholic doctrine and Catholic identity is absurd and dishonest. To repudiate one official Catholic doctrine is by implication to invite Catholics to repudiate the rest and to pretend that they are a Church.

REASON FOUR

An unbelieving person ticking Catholic implies that Catholicism is a mere label - it is not. Catholicism claims that the Catholic religion is the most important business of all. It says there is no salvation outside the Church. It adds that there is just everlasting torment for those who do not join the religion they believe to be of God. It says the Church is not a human organisation but is set up and revealed by God. It is warped to think its disrespectful to a religion to fail to put the label it gave you down on a census form, and not disrespectful to see it as a mere label.

If religious belief and practice do not matter, then why not declare yourself any religion at random? There is no difference between a unbelieving person who rejects the Church and its faith declaring themselves Mormon on the census form or Catholic. One is just as untrue as the other.

If belief, or at least refusing to accept beliefs contrary to the religion, is not needed to be a true member then there is no real criteria to make one a real member of any religion and religion becomes must a pretence and a label. To deny one doctrine that the religion says God has revealed is to say the others may be denied or doubted as well. Why should we believe your statement? Would we believe somebody who said "I checked the Catholic box on the census because I identify as a Catholic. I also identify as an atheist"? Or "I checked the Catholic box on the census because I identify as a Catholic. I also identify as a Muslim"? Just admit it you are a hypocrite. If as you seem to think, one can believe it is right to be gay despite the official teaching of the Church and be a true Catholic, then there is no criteria for telling who is a hypocrite or not. If you can be a Catholic, then surely the embezzler who believes he has to steal for his children can justly appropriate and take the good Catholic label if he wants it? I am not saying that embezzlers and gay people are to be compared by the way.

Anybody can call themselves a Christian or Muslim if picking and choosing out of a faith is acceptable. There is no place to draw the line at where a picker and chooser can stop before he or she loses the right to claim to be a member of her or his religion. For example, would you consider a priest to be a real Catholic who stood for the notion that the Mass was barbaric idolatry and the Pope was not the head teacher appointed by Christ to be his voice in the world?

Any religious affiliation can be changed and changing does not make you more or less of a person. You can be fully human and have no religion.

REASON FIVE

It is Catholic teaching that God makes laws we do not understand because he alone has all knowledge and can see the benefits of these laws. Both religious liberals and fundamentalists believe that God knows best and that kind of thinking is to blame for much of the harm done in the name of God. Do not become complicit in it by supporting the religious system in any sense.

REASON SIX

It makes no sense for people to expect the Church to change its teaching for them. Such a move would basically be the Church showing it is a human organisation, not a divine one, if it could change doctrine. It can't do that without becoming a new religion and it would not be the Church anymore. To support the Church - actively or passively - is to damage the human right to truth and transparency. If you think the Church is merely human then you should not be in it. A God would want you to worship him in the true religion.

The Church says the true Church has four marks - one, holy, Catholic and apostolic. It is one in faith - all members agree that the Catholic faith with its doctrines and ethics is true and that the Church cannot contradict its teaching but may grow in understanding it. It is holy which refers primarily to the doctrine and ethics of the Church. Even if Catholics are all bad, the principles at least are holy and the Church is called to be holy. Holy means to be separate and different. A Church that is a close match for the values of the secular world is not holy in any sense. The Church claims to be a church of sinners so the holiness refers principally to the teaching and the sacraments the Church provides. It is Catholic - Catholic means universal or meant for all people. It is apostolic - meaning it accepts the teaching of the apostles and cannot change it for it was given once for all in the past. The Church may increase in understanding the faith but it cannot change it or contradict it. The unbeliever is not Catholic for none of the marks apply to him or her.

REASON SEVEN

By merely being listed as a member or listing yourself as a member, is the minimal way of supporting the Church. Declaring yourself a member of the Catholic Church is giving the minimum of support for the Church as the Church can't exist without members. Financial support of the Church is giving more support to its anti-rights-when-we-don't-like-the-rights ethos than mere membership is. Paying the Peter's Pence to the pope every year is directly financing a ministry that does all it can to halt and reverse many rights. Moreover it is financing a platform from which the pope speaks to the poor and the poorly educated woman and urges her to do nothing to protect herself from AIDS should she be forced to have sex. The pope urges African women to throw the condoms away though they will catch AIDS from their husbands. That is how most transmissions occur. If you won't divorce the Church at least do not give it money.

By passive support, I meant merely allowing your name to be on the membership rolls and ticking the Catholic box. Active would refer to going to Church and/or paying the Church money for its support and promoting the faith of the Church as true and correct. Merely having the name on is saying, "Yes, I support Catholic teaching or believe I should support it. If you don't believe in the teaching you are still saying that you support it. If I do not believe in it, this is not a sin as I am on a journey that I intend to end in belief". Paying money and going to Mass are giving stronger support. Without passive and/or active support there would be no Church. So such support does at least damage many human and unbeliever's rights by taking at least an implicit stance against them.

REASON EIGHT

The Catholic teaching of 'blame the sin, not the sinner' makes no sense as to blame the sin is to blame the sinner. The

person is his or her sins for they show his or her character and thus, it is the character that is the problem. So it follows that to wish evil on a sin is to wish evil on a person. The doctrine of 'hate the sin' infers that the Church must do all it can to discourage disobedience to God and often does this by applying social pressure to oppress and silence sceptics.

REASON NINE

Tickling the box tells the state that you support the Church, which crucially means the State may formulate policies and laws that reflect the teachings of said Church. A country SHOULD be reluctant to legalise anything contrary to essential Church teaching if it looks at the census results and sees that most have declared themselves Roman Catholic. The objective behind all the works of the Church is to bring people to believe in Catholic doctrine. To tick the Roman Catholic box is to sanction public and official Church doctrine.

What about the principle? The principle is that the nation cannot please every faction. So it must at least seriously contemplate legally enforcing the major principles of the majority faith. If the state ignores the Church, that is against the principle.

In a democracy the will of the majority must come first. Therefore if most people claim to be Catholic - although that is not the same as really being Catholic - the state should check what Church teaching is and legislate as best as it can to suit that teaching. The fact of the matter is, if a person does not like their Church's teaching, nobody forced them to be confirmed into the membership of the Church. Therefore the state should contemplate the official and real teaching of the Church and implement it through law.

REASON TEN

If you consciously abandon your Catholic faith or if it happens naturally, then you are no longer Catholic, as Church law states that apart from being baptised one must consciously embrace the Catholic faith and all its doctrine in order to be a true Catholic. You are not the head of the Church. It is not your job to teach Church doctrine (only to repeat what you have been taught by the authorities). That is the job of the bishops and the Pope who is the head of the Church. Catholics are expected to learn at their feet and pass on what they teach. To differ from them in matters of faith and doctrine is to try and misrepresent the faith. If you don't agree with the faith then go. Find another faith or found your own version of Catholicism. Don't be like a person who claims to be a Muslim but who says the Koran is satanic. Be honest. It is not up to you to make up the rules and laws of the Roman Catholic Church. Period.

If a Church lets you believe what you want and be a full member the result is not a Church but a social club. The Church claims to be a voluntary organisation built on faith and held together by faith. That is why anybody that disagrees with the Church on an official teaching is automatically excommunicated.

REASON ELEVEN

I terminated membership of Catholicism because I am a secularist. This would not be for political reasons so much as social. The decline of the Church means the decline of its influence. The social influence of the Church does unbelieving people infinitely more harm than the influence of the Church on politics. The Church claims to be a family thus it opposes the individualism of today. To be part of a religion means you are repudiating individualism and complete independence and are making it other people's business what you do. The Catholic's duty is to help others live by the official teaching of the Church. If you don't want the duty, then leave the Church.

REASON TWELVE

Religion thrives on irrational thinking and is based on feelings and has no real regard for plausibility - the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is appalling. Though the gospels do not eliminate the possibility that Jesus could have been taken out of the tomb before the stone was rolled over the entrance to his tomb, we are expected to think his body vanished from the tomb for he rose again. If you are irrational and support an irrational religion even in the census form, you can't complain then if irrational Catholics keep trying to wreck your rights. If you want to be irrational then why condemn others who do the same just because you don't like their irrationality?

REASON THIRTEEN

It is bad enough to stay in a deliberately harmful or ignorant organisation when you really think that that organisation is God's Church. But to stay in it for sentimental or emotional reasons is disgraceful. It is really using the Church when the Church is not about having people who style themselves as members because of emotional or social reasons. Besides, the Church is not about using doctrine to make people feel good. It is about helping them to believe and remain believing doctrines that are said to be the truth. Your support of the Church is a hypocritical promotion of the Church. If a person properly supports an organisation, that person will not work against or protest against its official teaching and especially when that organisation claims to be an infallible teacher guided by God. All the person that does this is really trying to do is go apply pressure so that it will give up its identity. He or she by claiming to be a member is really misrepresenting the meaning and teaching of that religion.

Nobody should be in a religion that contains official teaching that is not right for them. It is not fair on the religion or them. They are not exercising honesty. They are undermining the right of the religion to set standards of membership and devotion.

The main question about the Catholic Church is, "Is the religion really true and revealed by God?" The gay person who is alarmed at Catholic teaching, instead of trying to change the Church in its official teaching, should investigate it and look at the evidence for Catholicism. If it is wanting then he or she should do the right thing and quit. Revelation necessarily implies that you cannot figure out the truth on your own. It will collide with your intellect and experience. But that collision does not mean that it is necessarily wrong. Revelation necessarily excludes private judgement ie, I judge that part of God's word true and that other part false. If you want to exercise private judgment and pretend that being a good Catholic means you can be gay as well then you are in the wrong religion. Protestantism is the religion of private judgment. And Protestant is what you are.

REASON FOURTEEN

Its not up to any religion to belong to you but to you to belong to it. Do you really belong to the Spiritualists if you deny that anybody can communicate with the dead? If you say you do, it is the religious label and the trappings you want not the religion. It is that what belongs to you. Same with Catholicism. Don't be a hypocrite. You just want to use the Church for your own ends - community and the occasional feel-good factor.

You think you have the right to obscure and dissent from the Catholic faith and misrepresent it. You do not - as long as you hold on to the Catholic label. People exposed to Catholicism have the right to know the real teaching of the Church a teaching you oppose. You oppose their right. The word religion after all means to bind. Many confuse their beliefs with their religion. Your beliefs could be seen as your own business. But if you are part of a religion, then it is incorrect to speak of your beliefs. You are part of a group united in faith that means the beliefs you have are not yours but the group's. What you must speak of is the religion's beliefs.

There is no excuse for somebody being in a religion when they reject that religion's beliefs. Your beliefs are not about you. They are about the world. Your religion is not about you. It is about the universe and the world and the supernatural. It is not up to your religion to belong to you but you to belong to it. If you can't, use the door. The Catholic Church makes very big and serious claims. The bigger the claim the more evidence is required. Unless you have evidence that the Catholic Church is a supernatural entity set up by God to teach on his behalf, you should not be setting your face against many human and social rights - in particular the right of people to know the truth - by upholding Church membership.

Your critical voice of the Church is a small voice against a huge organisation. Staying in the Church to change it is as delusional as a flea challenging an elephant.

HOW TO GET OUT

Although the process of formal defection from the Catholic Church has been discontinued, Church law still recognises that one can leave the Church and cease to be Roman Catholic. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights gives you the right to stop being labelled under a religious identity. If you don't feel you are Catholic and do not believe then you are not Catholic anymore.

THE RIGHT TO MY OPINION EXCUSE FOR DISAGREEING

Opinions are what you think is the case but which is open to dispute. To say what somebody knows to be right is just their opinion is a form of undermining them and what they say. Its a tactic used by liberal Christians all the time. Opinions have no binding force. For example, consider this. If it is my opinion that $2 + 2 = 5$ and if it is yours that $2 + 2 = 4$ then we must agree to disagree. We must permit the disagreement and respect it. How can life function with an outlook like that where one has no firm beliefs and claims to know nothing and worse of all that permits any old rubbish?

No true follower of Christianity takes the view, "I've a right to my religious opinions". That is a form of relativism that teaches that we can be sure of nothing are are only left with opinions. The pope continually condemns such relativism. Christianity claims to be a body of revealed truth not a collection of opinions. Those who think its a collection of opinions are saying its just another man-made faith. If they claim to be Christians they are claiming what is false. They are actually agreeing with the atheists and religious sceptics that Christianity is not a monolith of divine truth but of mere human speculation.

Relativism is behind the notion that some have that you can embrace the Catholic faith and reject parts of the faith and still be a true believer. This is ridiculous. It is like, "I trust you but....". If one wants to be seen as that sneaky then let one be seen as it.

People who have realised they shouldn't be identifying as Catholics on the form must click no religion. There is nothing stopping them from attending Mass. Some people like attending any kind of religious service, Mass, Protestant Service and Hindu Puja for the sense of transcendence. Do you really think the Catholic next door will hate you if you tick the No Religion box and attend Mass occasionally? Why be afraid?

Become authentic and become it today.