

RESPECTING BELIEF especially RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL BELIEF

The Church follows commonsense in saying that a belief should be firmly opposed if it is wrong. It says it needs to be shown false.

To respect beliefs that do no good at all - such as original sin - would be very wrong. Catholics might say that original sin is good for it gives us a reason to get their babies baptised. But that is getting good out of the doctrine. It does not mean the doctrine is good. You can get good out of anything bad. And who says a baptism of a baby is good?

To respect belief is to respect the idea that we should be dogmatic about things that don't matter for they don't do us any good. Beliefs that do harm deserve less respect.

If people claim the right to believe what they want, then they must respect your right to believe that you should tell them if you think that belief is wrong.

Religious believers claim to have the right to indoctrinate you if they get you as a child, they claim the right to put up shrines and crosses and churches to promote their faith and to shove their religious leaflets through your door. They claim the right to keep a religious influence in the government. Surely then you have the right to point out errors in their faith.

If you have the wrong beliefs, that is bad. A doctor is a bad doctor no matter if he has the purest and kindest heart in the world if his beliefs about what he can do are wrong. The believers accuse those who disagree with them of being bad persons whether they realise it or not. Therefore you have the right to expect the believers to listen to your criticisms. You have the right to ask them.

If you try to show a Catholics why their faith is wrong, some people will say you are doing them a disservice and removing a source of comfort from them. But if you say nothing you deprive them of the opportunity and the choice to be free and to find something new and better.

A Catholic who does not listen to the reasons why his religion is wrong is not respecting you. This person is not confident that his religion is what it claims to be and it claims to be the truth. Truth should be able to withstand all questions and attacks. People who say, "Our religion is the religion of the truth", should welcome questions and challenges from doubters and unbelievers.

The person that is truly sincere will seek challenges. If believers are insincere then they have no faith for us to respect.

Sincere belief welcomes criticism. It is not afraid. It seeks criticism and criticises itself in order to purify itself.

Praising the sincerity does not mean praising the error or overlooking it. If you really believe the person sincere you will point the error out. Go and do it.

Believers who are confident will not mind if somebody criticises their beliefs for it gives them the chance to learn and understand their faith better. They will appreciate it that somebody is interested in the faith.

Most people who forbid you to say anything critical about their religious beliefs will accuse you of disrespecting their beliefs if you do. Even if they claim to be religious liberals, they are fundamentalists. It is fundamentalism to keep religious critics quiet or to refuse to listen to them.

You can point out faults but this is not disrespect as long as it is constructive and intended to help.

The Catholics protest when their belief are criticised and they allege that the critics are not respecting Catholic beliefs. But beliefs are not entitled to respect.

Ideas and beliefs do not deserve respect unless they are wholesome and very likely true. It is people that deserve respect. Deserve means be entitled to or earn or merit.

People need to be rescued from false hope. Do we stand there silent and let women spend a fortune on useless anti-ageing creams when we know these creams cannot work? We mightn't do it believing that we are destroying those women's hopes. But is that not showing a lack of faith in those women to cope? Religion is a worse source of false hope. Even St Therese of

Lisieux spoke of the times she was in the grip of despairing unbelief. And Mother Teresa agonised in a similar way.

Respecting a belief does not mean you will decline to work against the belief. Respecting others does not mean you will not try to get the job they are after.

The Catholic with all the harmful beliefs he or she adheres to, is not respecting others by supporting Catholic beliefs.

Religious belief is unnecessary. Therefore it is undeserving of respect.

Don't ask any critic to be silent or ask that your belief be respected until you prove that it really is a belief. Show that you are not mistaking a feeling that something is true for a belief. Show that you have a real belief and not a piece of self-deception.

To claim that all religions however contradictory are all as good as one another and equally true is just a cop-out and the claim is the rant of cowards. In the name of tolerance, the claim advocates intolerance towards those who reject this silly idea of "If you believe it, then it is true." It accuses them of bigotry and causing division. But one religion disagrees with and divides itself from others and pretending that all religions are the same and as good insults religion and pretends that the divisions do not exist. Believing your baby will be nourished by poison won't make the poison good for the baby.

The Church says that God inspired the gospels so that the life of the perfect man, Jesus, might be recorded for us to learn from it. Jesus in the gospels was iconoclastic - he criticised the beliefs of the Pharisees openly and even called them bastards and hypocrites to their faces and told parables that went out of their way to criticise them. He told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector when he could have said proud man instead of Pharisee. The knowledgeable Christian will consider Jesus's behaviour as model behaviour. If Christians believe they should be iconoclasts then they cannot complain if people are iconoclastic in relation to Christian beliefs.

Catholics have to be repulsed by sin and what they see as error - their ditty is to love sinners and loathe sin. Catholics have to be offended by liberals and secularists. These advocate sin by watering down the faith or opposing it. Even if they are sincere they are still bad. The bad they do still has to be hated as much as ever. In fact, their bad is worse than sin for at least with sin the sinner knows he or she is bad. So it has to be hated far more than sin. Hating the sin is supposed to be about hating the evil rather than judging or blaming the sinner which illustrates the point. The Catholic faith must lead to intolerance.

Even if you do have to respect beliefs, you should not be asked to respect the harm that such beliefs do.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO YOUR OPINION

Those who tell you when you state a fact that it is your opinion are being judgemental and intolerant of you. It is not up to them to accuse you of stating an opinion when you are stating a fact. They are undermining your knowledge by saying it is an opinion rather than knowledge.

The modern adage, "You have a right to your opinion/belief" is used by those who think they should think or believe whatever they WANT rather than think or believe whatever seems TRUE. Its a revolting misuse based on the wish to become immune to rational argument or persuasion. The only reason you have a right to your belief or opinion is that you use belief and opinion to find the truth or to improve your knowledge and accuracy. To say you have the right to believe or think what you want is ridiculous. It is not about what you want and you have no right to deceive people that it is. Grow up!

The person who tries to believe what he wants without regard to what is true is being intolerant of the fact that belief is based on evidence. He is not being fair or honest in this. He is not being supportive or tolerant towards those who want to base belief on good reasons. He will fear and tend to be bigoted towards those who endanger the facade he has created.

People say they have a right to their beliefs and opinions. That is actually a half truth. The correct thing is to say you have a right to your beliefs and opinions as long as you see them as helps on the journey to truth. If you say you have a right to your beliefs and opinions without any concern for truth then you are not being fair. Fairness is based on what is true. The person who sees the truth and calls it a lie is being unfair.