

## FAITH IS A GOOD EXCUSE FOR MAKING THOUGHT CRIMES

The Catholic Church sees religious faith as a virtue. St Paul implied as much when he said that faith, hope and love go together indicating that you cannot have love without faith.

This leads to the persecution and slander of unbelievers.

The Lord offers the grace of faith to all. If good he must. It is often taught that we are free to accept or reject this offer. But how can we unless we believe in the first place for you cannot sincerely accept or refuse what you do not understand? All must first believe in it to reject it. God has forced all to believe. All our thoughts are forced on us anyway so it makes no difference. We can't help what we believe or know so it doesn't matter if it is forced on us. In the present moment, I am unable to change the things in the past that make me believe.

McGrath declared in his *Believing in God* that we cannot decide what we are going to believe (page 131). So how could faith be a virtue?

The two major objections to faith or belief being a moral issue or an issue of virtue are that belief is involuntary and that it is the individual's own business.

The terrible things that people like Torquemada do are not to be praised even if they sincerely believed they were doing right therefore you can be condemned for your harmful beliefs (page 408, *Reason and Belief*). What I like about that point is that it forbids evil beliefs like that God is right to torment people in Hell forever or that to use birth control deserves eternal punishment or that the brother you can see and touch comes second to the God you can't see or touch. The Christian who supports those tenets cannot use the excuse that it is good of God to do those things and demand that he come first. Torquemada would have said the same about his belief that heretics should be cruelly destroyed for the glory of the Catholic Church. Even those who do evil are doing good as they see it. If they don't mean to do evil, that is very true. And it is still true if they consciously do evil for they see the evil as attractive and therefore good. This shows that faith and trust and belief have nothing to do with moral intent which is the only thing that counts in morality. This shows that the legal system should be centred on opposing dangerous beliefs with truth and even the rigours of the penal system for when error is a threat to morality or belief in right and wrong there is no alternative.

Religion should drop harmful fanatical doctrines and has nobody but itself to blame if it gets on the wrong side of the law. It shows that religion's fanaticism should have no hearing when it comes to governments deciding what the law should do. If religion wants unbelief to be a sin then it gives others the right to condemn itself and despise it for its beliefs. Even if unbelief is not a sin, religion still consents to this treatment for when it demands it for others it must expect such treatment in return. No wonder it gets defensive and no wonder sectarianism is a poison that goes hand in hand with religion. It gives sectarianism the status quo in legitimacy.

Jesus regarded lack of faith and belief as a sin which shows he hadn't the slightest clue what he was talking about. He was anything but a Son of God for he could not manage even to be a prophet never mind decent. If anybody raised him from the dead it was Satan. So Jesus as good as confessed through his bigotry about faith that it was evil to teach doctrines like eternal punishing and still taught them. This shows that the doctrines of Jesus is nothing contain a good deal of spiteful wishful thinking. There is no hate worse than cold hate like that.

Jesus wanted those who displeased him to rot in Hell forever. Nobody could in justice hold such a belief as eternal punishing lightly. If you want to believe in it and call yourself holy you would have to go and do heroic good works. That might lessen the cloud over you for believing such a doctrine but the cloud can never go away. You are still admitting you want to believe that sinners deserve such a harsh fate.

It has been observed that Christians do not say one has faith that there is no God. If we believe in Mars though we have never seen it that is not considered to be faith. But those things are faith. Funny that is not considered a virtue! How fair!

Religion says that it is reasonable to trust God. This is true if he exists and you can prove it. Believing that God exists though there is no evidence or proof is made a part of this trust for God does not lead you (discreetly or otherwise) to see that he exists and then reveal himself to you. So trust in God forbids you to see any contrary evidence. Faith, in the religious view, must mean tricking yourself into ignoring the evidence and telling yourself that you believe until you really believe.

Cardinal Newman wrote that we will never do anything if we keep looking for proof in life so we have to assume that a person or God is trustworthy and to assume that is to have faith in what he has revealed. That is advocating discrimination for God allows a lot of suffering and makes killer viruses and sends sinners to Hell forever and a tyrant does less evil and is vilified for it. You see how a tyrant could use religious approbation for the evil of God to persuade people to afford him the same privilege. He could tell people that he is authorised by God to do what he does and God has it all in control. The tyrant could tell people that it is not fair of them to judge a being they don't really know as good while they know tyrant exists and call him an evil autocrat. It is very easy to believe that if your trials come from God and God is using them to better you that you should feel a disinclination to stand up for yourself. Tyrants would love you to be like that.

We should always look for some evidence and try to avoid guessing and depending on what we feel about things. Assuming is bad news unless it is something unimportant or an emergency. If we are unable to get evidence that does not mean we should close our minds to what the evidence against an assumption says and religion commands us to shut them firmly.

In the chapter called, Why Does God Tolerate Suffering? we find the following in relation to atheists or those who think that if there is a God, then God is to be condemned for letting so much suffering happen, "The condemnation of God by man is not based on the truth, but on arrogance, on an underhanded conspiracy" (page 65, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, John Paul II, Jonathan Cape, London, 1994). It is interference to judge atheists as arrogant for blaming God if he exists. It is fuelling antagonism against the atheists. And it is an insult to the person who sees such horrendous suffering that they refuse to accept a God who would tolerate it. They do that out of a wish to face the utter horror and intolerability of the suffering. They do it out of courage and compassion.

The Christian faith says everybody is a sinner and sin is essentially the prideful wish to be free from God. If we are sinners and the essence of sin is pride, then the most attractive sins will be the ones that make us look good though we are not. Religion calls faith a virtue. So the virtue of faith is intrinsically suspect. Some virtue then! Even if faith should be a virtue it does not follow that it ever is practiced as one.

Sins against faith would be the most common sins. For example, when a Christian commends somebody's revenge that is heresy. The Church does little to bolster people's faith because it knows it hasn't a leg to stand on. Such sins attack the heart of the faith and would be the most serious of sins – for example, to reject one doctrine is to reject the reliability of the rest and to espouse anarchy in some form - and the Church's apathy proves that the Church is insincere and only out for money and power and many of the priests are just priests for they are some way dysfunctional. The Church has so many sins that most people have never even heard of and if they did they would desert the Church in droves. It is clear from Jesus' ban on sexy thoughts that it is a sin not to be well covered up for the sake of modesty for example. And the Church has many doctrines that are so silly and impractical and these are kept from the people for the Church knows that the people would desert the Church in droves if they knew of them. And the Church also has many doctrines and rules in opposition to the gospel of Jesus, for example, his rule that the Church must shun unrepentant sinners is ignored. There are many in the Church who only imagine they believe – we have all met people who under questioning show that they feel the faith is true but can't be said to have any real belief. Therefore the Church is taking money off the people on false pretences. This is theft.

The doctrine that God guides you is dangerous. God is supposed to guide Catholics to believe in the Catholic Church. That is why the Church says that faith is a gift from God. Many have sworn that God guided them to give money to charlatans like Benny Hinn. Hinn says that he only wants the money to do the Lord's work and because he deserves it because of the great work he does for the Lord. He says he does ask for money but leaves it up to the people to decide if God wants them to give. This proves all the more that God is a bad idea because when God has mysterious ways he could want you to give money to some greedy evangelist.

We need light from God to believe in the gospel because it is so easy to err and believe other things and all of us will die with many errors in our belief system. Some intelligent people believe that nothing can be known except that nothing can be known for sure. We all have different levels of intellectual ability and also we all have different biases. The Church says that faith in the doctrines of the Church is a gift from God and that we need supernatural light from God to have this faith. It follows then that anybody who does not believe in God's one true gospel doesn't want to and is an evil person.

Thought crimes are the mark of an ideology and Jesus and gods give an infallible way to create them.



