

## MEMBERSHIP IF FORCED IS BAD BUT FORCING FAKE MEMBERSHIP IS WORSE

The Church forces people to become members, to think they are members, and to stay as "members". Social pressure is applied. It forces membership on babies at baptism. Those who think they choose to join are not making a valid informed choice. We will see that the members are not valid member at all.

### BAPTISM AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Here are the reasons a baby cannot become a Catholic by baptism:

Even if a baby needs to be something, it does not follow that it really is a Catholic baby. It is only a baby who has got the Catholic label for the sake of giving it a label.

Catholic doctrine is serious stuff. Therefore you cannot make a valid decision to enter Catholicism knowing some of this stuff but not all. But babies know nothing at all.

If the baby has original sin, it is inclined to choose sin rather than choose God. Thus it can only become a member of the Church if forced. If it had a say it would refuse. Original sin means a refusing of God so infant baptism is forced conversion or pretended conversion.

### FORCED MEMBERSHIP

A choice made for you is not as binding as a choice you make for yourself. If you were baptised a Catholic as a baby without your consent, then that is less important than the decision you make as an adult to stay in or leave the Church. A choice made for you is not a choice made by you and so it cannot be called a choice at all. Those who say you are Catholic and even if you join the Hindus this is only a pretence and you are still a Catholic and a liar.

Forced conversion does not mean just forcing people to join your religion but keeping them in it. You are forcing them to renew their conversion every day.

Those who believe in once a Catholic always a Catholic take their children for baptism. Clearly they are attempting the forcing of religion on children whether its wanted or not for no matter what he or she does when he or she grows up he or she cannot stop being a Catholic! Its a mark of arrogance and intolerance to do that. It implies that it is not enough to be a good person. One needs a splash in the Catholic baptismal font as well. If you say that being good is not enough then you are criticising goodness itself! You are setting out to warp.

Baptism insults the dignity of the child as a human person. It does that naturally. It is its essence. But it is far worse when commissioned by families and priests that think in terms of once a Catholic always a Catholic. If you are a Catholic and not living it then you are sinner. That is what the thought infers. It seeks to expose the child to the judgement of the fictitious god of the Church and the Church itself and society and judgemental Catholics who love to criticise and condemn if the child grows up to neglect the Church and even leave it.

If you believe that it is wrong to proselytise or to pressure people to join your religion, then by adopting ideas such as once a Catholic always a Catholic, you are depriving people of one important reason for believing such proselytism is wrong. You are eliminating the idea: "Nobody is obliged to join your religion or worship your God. Your religion or God doesn't own anybody. Everybody owns herself or himself" as a reason for condemning it. You are lessening the reasons for condemning it. An Atheist would say that a Church cannot think of you or treat you like you have a duty to become its member like you were its property etc. Thus his opposition and perception that it is bad would be stronger than that of a Catholic. The Catholic, even if he or she opposes proselytism, will have weaker opposition to it. If it were the only reason for forbidding proselytism, the Church would reject it. To teach doctrines that even slightly make opposition to proselytism weaker is reprehensible. It is a crack even if the Catholic would never proselytise. Its diminishing respect for others in the name of religion.

### WRONG TO FORCE A DUTY

Priests intend to force a duty - to live as a true member of the Church and believe all the Church teaches and to obey it - on every baby they baptise.

To impose a duty to belong to a particular religion on a child is evil. The Church says that to refuse to go to Mass without a real reason such as sickness or having to look after a sick relative is a mortal sin. The baby is obligated to go to Mass when he grows up. Is it right to force such an obligation on the child when it makes him a bad person if he does not go?

If there is a duty, you will be able to provide proof that there is a duty. Nature writes the proof that we must look after our ailing parents or see that they are provided for. It writes that duty on our nature. But to say there is a duty to follow Catholicism is ridiculous. You may as well say there is a duty to say magic words over your car every morning. Once a Catholic always a Catholic implies you have a duty to call yourself Roman Catholic even though you have gone through a process of conversion to Presbyterianism and don't believe in Catholicism. It is harassment to tell somebody they have a duty unless you can prove the existence of the duty.

FINALLY

Every religion has to have rules about who is a member. The Catholic Church regards the Catholic who repudiates transubstantiation as a Protestant - ie a Christian who has declared independence from the Roman Church. The person who knows a teaching is essential for being a Catholic and rejects it should look for another Church. He should not be pretending to be a the main sense, a Roman Catholic believer. To go through the motions of staying when he can join his local Anglican Church smacks of sectarianism. If he is to be considered a Roman Catholic then the word hypocrite becomes meaningless. You cannot be a genuine member of any community if you reject its ideals. Any Catholic who does not believe but who is trying to can be a Catholic. The one who is not trying is not. Moreover, an individual Catholic who acts as if he can pick and choose what to believe is not recognising the Pope as the head teacher of the Church who stands in the place of Jesus Christ.

You may have a parent, son, daughter, sister or brother who are so manipulative and toxic that you are better not to have a relationship with them. A relationship would not be a relationship at all. All you are left with is realising that they are still your family and seeing that that link is important. A connection and a relationship are not the same thing. So if an ex-Catholic has a link with the Church it is a minor one. It is not enough to keep her or him a member.

The Church seems to think at times that being Catholic is a grey thing. So if you are sectarian or an abortionist just for the money you are Catholic but not Catholic doing those things. You are Catholic but also contradicting it. Of such Vatican II says that the Catholic who “does not persevere in charity. He remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in a “bodily” manner and not “in his heart” (Lumen Gentium 14). He becomes a mere outward Catholic. This is saying he or she is only one on the outside not the inside. So you can stop being a Catholic one way but in the bodily way you are still Catholic. The Church is clear that the obligation to obey Church law and to drop heresy is still there. But that only means, “You have a duty to obey the truth. We are the truth. So obey.” There is no real obligation if Catholicism is a false religion. The Church does say that you have a right not to identify as Catholic but as you are wrong the obligations to return to the Church remain.

The Church reasons that very immoral and heretical Catholics are still Catholics and that only makes their sins and the penalties before God far worse. So we should wish that the Church is not true for their sake instead of wishing that they could still be Catholic!

If there is no right or privilege to leave religion then there is no right to protest by leaving. There cannot be a right to leave if you cannot leave for rights are about reality.

The Church protects its faith and faith witness by excommunication. So excommunication is about protecting the faith and those authorised by God to preach it. Treating everybody who is baptised as a Catholic regardless of their heresies is to make the religion totally about a superficial label. It is not really a religion at all for it has no faith standards.

A cherry picker has an internalised faith of their own construction and preference. He or she is not a proper religionist but a play religionist. To follow truth just because it suits is not following truth at all. In addition to that the cherry picker rejects that the religion presents as the truth. A religion that is a home for cherry-pickers also has an internalised faith. If a religion is dangerous imagine how much worse it will be if you are the religion and you have no like-minded cult to be in to talk you out of anything? Group religion is bad but individual religion is no better and you would expect it to be worse for there is no bigger authority than you.



