

## LIVING WITHOUT THE CHURCH

Many people feel forced to stay in the Church for several reasons.

They feel that having the religious label makes them fit in with their community.

Most people care about you being nice to them and not what religious label you carry. Those that care about the label should not be worried about.

They find it soothing to go to Church once a week.

You should have a better reason to go to Church than that. It's serious stuff.

They want a ceremony to mark their babies coming into the world.

A humanist naming ceremony or a Buddhist ceremony can take care of that. Why not make up your own ceremony? You can't expect your baby to grow up and thank you for facilitating a Catholic baptism for her or him! Baptism is seen as more important than a life or death matter in Church doctrine.

They want a Church wedding.

You can have a Church wedding without being a Catholic. If your priest won't let you in the door, have a word with the bishop or find another priest. Why not find a Church that will let you rent the Church for the day and you can have the ceremony your way and without any religion should you choose? It is the venue that matters most to people considering marriage if they are honest about it.

They want a Church funeral.

Humanists will perform a non-religious ceremony for your funeral. Or get friends and family to do it. Think deeply. Do you really think a funeral where readings from an irrelevant and malignant old book and where what a religious system wants matters more than what you want is for you? The funeral should be about you and your life. Christian funerals are concerned about God, despite appearances. They insult you.

The funeral Mass is about worshipping God not you so it is not really honouring you. Making up your own ceremony with the help of your loved ones is better.

What about the burial? What if the priest will not allow a heretic or atheist to be put into the Catholic graveyard.

The solution could be cremation and having some of your ashes scattered over the family grave.

Religion has no right to exclude non-believers from burial with their loved ones. Surely the grave belongs to the family and not the parish or the priest.

## GO YOUR OWN WAY

You can go your own way in religion or non-religion but within these guidelines:

Belief should be framed in such a way that people benefit and you benefit. Forget about gods and invisible entities.

Beware of emotional reasoning. That happens when your feelings tell you what to do in the guise of logic. Feeling that something is true is not the same as thinking or believing it. Thinking and belief are in the head not the heart. Challenge anyone with questions if you suspect the possibility that a person is telling you they believe something only when they feel it. That way they will see it for themselves.

Belief that excludes the supernatural is safer than belief in the supernatural.

See all people of no religion and of religion as brothers and sisters - do not support segregation by supporting religion. If you have to cause a division by leaving religion, remember that religion is to blame for it creates unnecessary division.

When it teaches awful things such as that masturbation or heresy deserve everlasting punishment it should be able to take severe criticism. The hyper-critic should be able to take criticism.

Ask religious people and superstitions people challenging questions about their faith. It is wrong to try and convert others to any point of view - but you can question them so that they will make their own decision about the truth.