

## When a religious label is applied as a permanent one!

A label of any kind needs to be the truth. Otherwise it is just a word. The religious label is nothing if the religion is not true. If Catholicism is as man-made as the local pub then being Catholic is just being called Catholic and nothing more. In reality, there is no Catholic. In a sense The Elite public house does not exist. It is useful to call it that but its just a name.

A true label is not about you. It can be but never has to be. A label is descriptive and about the truth not you. If it were about you then calling yourself an accountant would make you entitled to be called one. Unless you have studied and qualified and work as an accountant you cannot be one. You are what you are no matter if you want to be or not. Thus those who put labels on you and do not care if they apply are objectifying you. The label may not be true of you and may mean nothing to you but it means something to others. Letting yourself be labelled unjustly is letting others manipulate and objectify you.

## LABELLING

Racists equate biological and genetic characteristics with having a tendency towards bad values or values that are hostile to those of your race. It is an us versus them and them versus us mentality. The reason human nature is prone to labelling people religiously is because people want to encourage an us versus them and vice versa mentality. A white racist who hates a baby just because it is black can only be classed as totally insane and even his fellow-racists will assert and believe that. The baby cannot have values opposed to yours. Religious labelling is worse than such racism for it is far more absurd. Yet for a Catholic to label a baby a Catholic is considered sane! And even worse, the Catholic labelling is far more about values than racism is!

The notion that "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic" is found among some Catholics. It expresses a wish to refuse to respect the religious rights of a person who was baptised Catholic but who has abandoned the Church. It is saying, "If they become Mormon or atheist or Muslim, they only think they have become it. They are Catholics and that is that!" Such an attitude is unloving - thought the Church claimed to be about love? It refuses to respect a person's right to decide what they are. If a person identifies as Mormon and has gone through the procedure of becoming Mormon, that identification should be accepted unless the person indicates that he has no real faith.

Some Catholics hold that those who were Catholics and who say they have no religion are still Catholics. Those who simply neglect the faith and the practice of it can still be Catholics for they have not rejected and denounced their faith outright. Ex-Catholics may unite themselves with some other faith community or become atheists. Perhaps they may even repudiate their membership in the Catholic Faith before their priest and members of their parish.

Labelling is an awful practice. It is odious. To label is an attempt to put you in a box, to stereotype you. It is very serious if a religion says you belong to it and should obey its authority just because you went through some initiation ceremony even if you have abjured that religion. The religion is very arrogant. And if it says you are duty bound to obey it on pain of everlasting damnation or other curses it is just bullying. The religion would need to have very strong proof that its ceremony confers such permanent membership and those obligations. Catholicism doesn't have the proof. If it teaches once a Catholic always a Catholic no matter how hard you try not to be then it should be laughed at. But it would be a very insulting teaching. It would be a form of forced conversion. To consider a person who joins a new religion to be still a member of your own would be like forcing membership on them or wishing you could. It would legitimise a form of forced conversion. You might have other reasons why you would not force them to convert such as fear of the law and the anti-cult brigade. But that does not change the fact that part of you agrees with force. To wish you could force is enjoying your attraction to violence. The violence in this case is a wish to see others forced to become Catholics. The less sensible evidence you have for your religion the more this violence is present.

Labelling people without justification is a symptom of sectarianism. The Catholic would not like the Buddhist to say, "Catholics are really Buddhists but they don't know it." That would be condescending and refusing to see that your religion is a religion in its own right. It would imply, "I cannot tolerate other faiths so I have to tell myself they are not other faiths after all." Sectarianism starts off with a refusal to understand.

The notion of once Catholic always Catholic is really about people wanting to force religious labels on others.

To say to an apostate atheist who was a Catholic, "You are still Catholic", is saying, "I will label you instead of respecting you by letting you label yourself. Though it is up to each person to decide what they are, I will label you. Once a Catholic always a Catholic has no hope of making sense if the Catholic faith is false or manmade. You cannot be a member of

Stepping Stones and Toddlers group forever. If it thinks you can be then it is pretending you are still a member. I don't believe the Church is true and I can't know it. But that won't stop me labelling you. But I will not stand for any Muslim saying everybody is born Muslim and remains Muslim even if they don't realise it."

## CATHOLIC LABELLING IS PARTICULARLY ODIOUS

The once a Catholic always a Catholic proverb is rooted in bigotry. It implies that being Catholic is some kind of default and being anything else is perverted and wrong. That would be an arrogant thing to assume. A religion founded on that presumption is not a religion of virtue but of false virtue. It would be guilty of unjustly opposing those who consider Catholicism harmful and superstitious.

Catholics claim to form the one authorised Church of Christ. They allege that no other Church has the authority to make you a member of itself. There may be some of that in the once Catholic always Catholic idea. Though bishops outside the Church are thought to be real bishops they have the supernatural powers of a bishop to give sacraments but have no right to govern as bishops.

Religious faith is not all it is cracked up to be. It implies, "I pledge full loyalty to these doctrines and commandments. I could be wrong that they are really from God but if they are not then stuff him." To be labelled as Catholic against your will is trying to make you complicit in the errors and crimes of the Church in that conditional sense. If many Catholics act as believers while knowing the Church is not the true Church, they try to make you complicit in the worst possible sense.

The Catholic who becomes atheist could say, "I am still Catholic for they say you cannot leave so I am a bad Catholic." That actually implies that Church law is binding just because the Church says so and would imply that it is the one true Church! Its odious to class all who break with the Church as bad Catholics even if they join the Hindu and whatever else kind of religious community there is.

Jesus said that we must serve God with all our heart, body and mind. This indicates that our role as servants of God is not part of us. It is all of us. If we fail, we are not living up to what we are. He clearly then authorised the evil practice of pretending that there is not more to a person than their faith or religious affiliation. For him you identify as being of his religion. You should identify yourself as a human being who is not to be identified with your religion or politics or nationality. There is more to you than that!

Bizarrely, Christianity refuses to obey Jesus' doctrine. If it did, it would have to abandon all ecumenical activities. The Church says it prays with Muslims, for example, to celebrate what Christianity and Muslims have in common without glossing over the differences. But if the Church sees Muslims as Muslims rather than as persons this friendship will not be possible for it means they are identical with what is seen as a false religion by the Catholic Church.

May you baptise a child so that the child will be a Catholic for all eternity whether he or she grows up to believe in Catholicism or not? It is a bigoted supposition and can only lead to further bigotry. It implies that being baptised a Catholic is like some kind of default. It implies that being anything else means nothing and is somehow bad. It implies that Catholicism even as a mere label should gain a special place in human thought and estimation. So much so that if a Catholic becomes a Protestant he does not really become one and if a Protestant becomes a Catholic he really becomes a Catholic. Its an implied insult to other religions. It would imply that the Catholic state has no right to list an ex-Catholic as a Protestant or whatever he or she has converted to.

Why would the Catholic Church be special? Is it because it is better at making good holy people than any other religion? But a religion being good has nothing to do with the thought that once you join that religion you cannot ever sever membership. The once Catholic always Catholic line of thinking is pure politics. Maybe with a religious flavour - but still totally political. To say, "You were once a member of the Catholic denomination so you are a Catholic forever", is pure politics because if saying it was motivated by the spiritual one would say, "You were once given to Jesus in baptism - therefore you are obligated to stay united with him forever. If you renounce being a Christian remember the door is open to becoming a member again". Catholic is only a label. Just as Lutherans got the label of Lutheran, the Catholic Church can stop calling itself the Catholic Church. It could call itself the Church of Christ. The term Catholic only singles out one aspect of the Church. The Church has four marks it says. It says it is one and holy and Catholic and apostolic. It could be called the Holy Church if it wanted to be.

It has nothing to do with goodness so it should be disregarded. If it had it would follow that if Protestantism is good and you become a Catholic which is even better it follows that for you its partly true that Once Protestant always Protestant! Where does it all end?

To say once a Catholic always a Catholic is to say that everybody should be a Catholic for if Catholics cannot stop being Catholics no matter what they do then the Catholic Church must be special if it can have that much authority over a person

that it still owns them no matter if they leave it or not! It is to automatically insult all other faiths. It is to proclaim the Catholic Church to be the instrument of God while all other institutions are merely human. It is to hand the child over to the control of the priesthood.

To say you are made Catholic by baptism even if you become a convinced Hindu later in life actually waters down the meaning of Catholic so much that the word means nothing. If Mormons said that everybody that is born on earth is born Mormon by default that would make being Mormon meaningless.

Some link once Catholic always Catholic to the belief that no Catholic ever really stops believing in the Catholic Church. It is said that belief/faith is necessary to become a Catholic and is put into the person at baptism in a potential way and it takes effect when the person chooses it for themselves. On the human level, the faith is said to be so reasonable that nobody in their right mind learns the faith and then rejects it. This version of the doctrine at least accepts that faith is necessary to be a real Catholic. It may say that all baptised Catholics believe but it holds that a hypothetical person can lose their membership of the Catholic Church by turning away from faith.

## LABELLING LITTLE BABIES AND CHILDREN

The Church forces a Catholic label on poor little vulnerable children. When you label a baby you can label anyone.

You hear of Jewish children, Muslim children, Protestant children and Catholic children but you never hear of Republican children or Democrat children. Why should a child who accepts people without labels be made to take a label just because their parents wear it and conditioned into the them and us mentality? At least political labels have some justification for politics tries to be scientific and give the people what they want, inform the people, test the political theory and generally avoid stubborn adherence to dogma. Religion demands adherence to dogma and can't offer any decent evidence for its claims so the religious label is just taking away childlike innocence to put bigotry in its place.

The labelling of a person, especially a child, as a Christian just because they were baptised is a true scandal. It just shows a vicious refusal to regard a person as free to leave the Church and not be considered a Christian in the eyes of God. It leads to the Roman Catholic Church considering a baptised person to be a Catholic even if they were baptised in a Protestant Church. So the Protestant is a Catholic who has strayed. Many Jews believe that once a man is circumcised he is a Jew forever. But what happens if he is baptised a Catholic? Does he belong to the Jewish faith and the Christian faith forever? How could he when one faith holds that Christ hasn't come yet and the other holds that he has? What if occultists start believing that anybody they touch belongs to the true religion forever? Catholics do not speak of the Church in Hell. For them the Church is only on earth, Purgatory and in Heaven. So if a baptised person goes to Hell that person is still no longer a member of the Church. From that it seems that the mark left on the soul by baptism that can never be effaced is not a literal mark. It is just God keeping record, "This person was baptised once and cannot be baptised again." The person can renounce the baptism and lose all its effects and be exactly the same as an unbaptised person. The only difference is that if he converts he doesn't need to be rebaptised again. It is just that he can join the Church easier than the other.

The proverb, "Once a Catholic always a Catholic", implies that no religion has the power to own its members forever but the Catholic Church. It is offensive and inexcusable. It refuses to respect the fact that if you don't believe in a religion you are not a genuine member of it. It refuses to respect that it is belief and faith that should determine if you are a Catholic or whatever. It is against commonsense to say that a religion cannot have people who are only pretend members.

## ITS REALLY ABOUT CULTURAL CATHOLICISM NOT REAL CATHOLICISM

The notion that you cannot cease to be Catholic is really about upholding cultural Catholicism which is about customs and fitting in rather than Catholic faith. Cultural religion is abhorrent bigotry. Jesus condemned it as having a form of religion but denying the power thereof. Typically it is fuelled by self-styled Catholics who do not want to fit in with Protestants for example. They want identifiers for the sake of propagating an us and not them mentality.

Its an insult to Catholics who become atheists or Mormons or Muslims or whatever to say that a person never stops being Catholic no matter what they do or believe. It implies that the label is special and that morals and faith don't matter in comparison. It is saying, "My label matters and that of other religions does not. I have the right to say that a Methodist who was baptised Catholic is still Catholic and should not be claiming to be a Methodist. If I was a Jew before I was Catholic, I deny that anybody has the right to say I am still a Jew for its not true. My religion has a right to be considered superior."

It may be replied, "Let the Catholic - an example - think that a baptised person cannot stop being a member of the Catholic religion. And let the Jew - another example - think that you cannot stop being a member of the Jewish religion. If you were Catholic but now consider yourself a Muslim or whatever why should you care when you don't believe in Catholicism any more?"

It is to be expected that a religion as hypocritical as Catholicism would use hypocritical ways to get people who are not really Catholic to identify as such.

Jesus to his credit condemned the kind of religion formed by people whose hearts are far from the God they say they adore and that they practice a form of godliness and religion that is devoid of power from God.

WHY NOT "ONCE A [ANY RELIGION] ALWAYS [THAT RELIGION]?"

It is stupid to say people are Catholics when they don't believe in Catholicism and don't want to be affiliated with the religion or pigeon-holed with it. If you are once a Catholic always a Catholic then why not once a Jew/Mormon/Muslim then not always a Jew/Mormon/Muslim? If you convert from Catholicism to Judaism and then Mormonism and finally Islam then are you still a member of all four religions? The suggestion that you are would be absurd.

If a child is circumcised into Judaism and baptised at the same time then what religion does it belong to? It can't belong to both. What if a new faith starts a coffee shop and has the doctrine that any child who eats its special ice lollies is automatically a member of the faith? Where is it all going to end? Clearly the Roman Catholic Church has no right to claim that a child is a member of the Roman Catholic Church by baptism. Therefore parents do not have the right to raise their children as Catholics. If they have the right to bring a child into their faith, they have to instil faith in the child by influencing the child to accept baptism. They certainly have no right to have the child baptised without her or his consent. That is imposing membership on the child.

Islam sees religion as service to God. Babies are thought to be sinless and so they are servants of Allah. It follows then that babies including baptised ones are really Muslims. It is only when they become older that they become something else.

Mormonism holds that the Church is the family of God. As all babies are born on good terms with God, they are really Mormons until they become something else. They are children of God until they wreck the relationship.

As babies care more about the soother and the cot and the baby food than God we should assume they are really humanists. If they are not then they are still more humanist than anything else.

If Islam or Mormonism or humanism is true, it follows that Catholic children are only called Catholic children. Its in name only. A man-made label means nothing. Only the truth can label - man cannot. When man labels it should be about the truth and not what he thinks.

SO?

We as a matter of principle and because of our intuition we cannot bear being criticised when we are challenged or despised or condemned for something we cannot change about ourselves such as our eye colour. Religion likes to portray members as permanent members as a control tactic. The reward for the religion is when the member cannot tolerate any criticism of the religion. That is what the religion is trying to achieve by infecting the whole culture. The more addicts to the label the more power for the religion.

The only way to break the spell is to pull the label off and rip it up - publically.