

From the PASTOR'S DESK



Family Faith

It is as a family, or more precisely as a body, that we gather at Mass, but when we say the Creed, we say, I believe. There is no we believe because the Faith of the Church is a personal faith for us. Faith is confessed personally by the I. Whenever people say, we believe, the we is restricted to those presuming to speak on behalf of everyone else.

Through Baptism the Holy Spirit gives us the power of faith, the capacity to have faith; but this faith is actualized in an explicit act of faith. Faith, under God's grace, becomes a personal act, an active reality. Faith as an act comes about through our free and graced co-operation with the Holy Spirit. Because faith is personal, it must be confessed personally.

It would be odd if Catholics did not sometimes question certain issues in the Church. Most people do, and although our difficulties with a particular topic may worry us, we should not confuse these wonderings with doubts. St. John Henry Newman wrote Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt. The difference is between someone who struggles within a family fold and one who no longer struggles.

In our faith, we give our consent to believe in the Church. We don't invent our own Christianity to suit ourselves. There will be and have always been contentious issues in the family of the Church. That's nothing new. While we may struggle, we still believe in the Church because there is no other faith to assent to. Where would we go?

Problems arise when we apply worldly models to the Church. The Pope is not a CEO who can change company policy. The Church is not a board of managers whose majority decisions can change doctrines or morals. We need to keep our perspective. Things were worse in the 4th century. The Arian heresy – that Jesus was not true God - was leading in the polls. Worldly models have nothing to do with the work of the Holy Spirit.

In every age the Church has forcefully stressed the reality of sin and the devil, the need for conversion to Christ, and to take the Church's teachings as a given. The Church is Christ's, or it is a lie.

We need the person Christ, we need His holy Spirit, which the world cannot receive and cannot know. We need to let Christ be our Lord: of our desires, our loves, our needs, truly Lord of our whole persons. When we can truly claim His lordship, life-killing and joyless doubts will vanish, and all our difficulties will be graced with faith.

Fr. Hernan Cely

Pastor

