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A journal for restless minds

# Colloquī *: to discuss*

## **Culture Catholicism**

*Neither culture clique nor social club*

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## **Deacon's Diner**

*Food for a restless mind*

# Culture Catholicism

*Neither culture clique nor social club*

**T**here is much to be said, both good and bad, for Catholicism and the Catholic Church, but one thing that must be stated is the Church and her religion are neither culture clique nor social club, and yet, by every indication, a great many people who are wont to call themselves “Catholic” hold to an undeniably heretical orthodoxy, a heterodoxy that professes capitalization of little or no distinction. Whether one claims to be catholic or Catholic is of no mean insignificance; indeed, it is no less a heresy than mistaking a toad a frog or a mule a thoroughbred, and it is high time the distinction should be called out.

There are altogether an overabundance of culture/social “catholics” which is to say, too few Catholics who faithfully “believe and profess *all* that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.”<sup>1</sup> In truth, there are Catholics and then there are self-described cultists who continue to call themselves *catholic*, either out of sheer force of habit or because they hold a heterodox conviction to membership in an exclusive social club for life.

Previously, on the subjects of heresy and heretics, I described formal heresy as “the willful and persistent adherence to an error in matters of faith” on the part of a baptized member of the Catholic Church. As such it is a grave sin and involves *ipso facto* excommunication. Here “matters of faith” mean dogmas which have been proposed by the infallible magisterium of the Church<sup>2</sup> and, in addition to this intellectual error, “pertinacity in the will” in maintaining it in opposition to the teaching of the Church must be present.<sup>3</sup> It is equally important to remind ourselves of what Lawrence Feingold (*op. cit.*) had to say on the matter of heresy.

Heresy is a particular kind of disbelief by which someone who believes in Christ obstinately rejects the au-

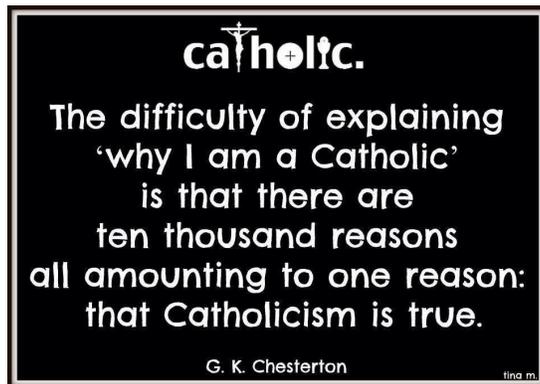
thority of the Church to define doctrine and corrupts or denies some truths of faith. They “choose” and obstinately hold their tenets of faith according to their own reason and will, which they put above the authority of the Church. Interestingly, the word “heresy” comes from the Greek for election or choice.<sup>4</sup> Every heresy involves a kind of picking and choosing of the faith according to one’s own personal (or group) criteria. This is the same spirit that leads to “cafeteria Catholicism.”<sup>5</sup>

To be fair, culture/social “catholics” are not “bad” people *per se*, they are just not Catholic, anymore than a Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, or member of any other Christian sect is Catholic; they may be catholic Christian but they are not Catholic Christian. Many Christian cults/sects profess the Nicene Creed and retain the statement, “We believe in one holy catholic and

apostolic Church,” but note, “catholic” is not capitalized because it means “universal”, not the Catholic Church. Christian cults/sects—collectively, Protestant denominations—are universally (catholic) Christian but are not in communion with the Catholic Church. Why? Because they do not believe and profess *all* that the holy Catholic

Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God. If that holds for Protestants, must it also hold true for culture/social catholics? The answer is, or ought to be, obvious, “yes”; there is absolutely, undeniably, unquestionably no difference, none, nada, zip. Culture/social “catholics” are catholic in name only—protestant, lock, stock, and barrel—and ought not profane the faith which they neither fully accept, profess, nor believe. This applies equally, whether laity or clergy, public or private man, woman or child, priest, prophet or king, and yes, even bishop, cardinal or pope.

Catholicism is not an equal opportunity religion based on a faith to be conformed as you like it. From the beginning, God has never equivocated, never been one to offer suggestions; God commands and man obeys or suffers the direst of consequences. “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take



from it" (Deut 12:32).

If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, "Let us go after other gods," which you have not known, "and let us serve them," you shall not listen to the words of the prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him, and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave to him (Deut. 13:1-4).

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age (Matt 28:18-20).

Notice, whether Old or New Testament, there is no equivocation, no waffling or wiggling, there is only that tiniest of three-letter words: A.L.L. You shall neither add nor subtract, you shall observe *all*, with *all* your heart and with *all* your soul.

In a recent column, S.M. Hutchens notes how "The Chronicler's blunt post-mortems on the kings of Israel and Judah as having done good or evil (often qualified good or qualified evil, but one or the other notwithstanding) is something that has impressed me strongly, particularly since acknowledgement of such judgments is not only a vital part of the faith of both Testaments, but wholly contrary to the temper and habit of those who claim that learned objectivity and appreciation of the complexity of things does not permit them to think in such rude fashion." In other words, those too learned, altogether much too sophisticated and intelligent to bother with such simple ideas as right and wrong, good and evil.

These are frequently marked by an aversion to taking sides, for one of the prejudices of their caste is that resolute opinion on complex matters is a mark of ignorance. His hearers noted that Jesus was different, for he taught with authority and not as an intellectual. As a reader and editor, I have found that the error of insufficient knowledge is commonly alleged by members of the intelligentsia in their attacks on opinions they do not like and would rather not risk attempting to argue on

the merits, since this always contains the temptation of vulgar lawyering—presenting for some personal profit firm opinions on complex matters.

That *every* issue is infinitely complex, and can be presented as simple or complex as desired seems to have escaped them. This attitude deserves to be associated with a logical fallacy—let us call it the fallacy of weight—since there is no necessary connection between depth of knowledge and right judgment...

If the learned profess to be believers, however, they must acknowledge that the God they serve is offensively binary in respects many of them are trained in the prejudices of their caste to dislike, for his judgments, and those which follow his, carry an ultimacy in which good and evil are eschatological categories he freely assigns, by which he divides the human race and judges its history. Those categories assigned by the Chronicler to good and evil-doing kings are suspiciously like those of One who separates humanity into sheep and goats, the saved and the damned, and who calls some children of the devil and others the blessed of his Father in anticipation of the final disambiguation to which the Creed refers: "He shall come again in glory to judge the quick and the dead...."

In him complexes of good and evil are eschatological impossibilities, and there is no learned virtue in refusing to settle one's mind on which paths (be they intellectual or otherwise) to take, even when they present themselves not as absolute, but as no more than better or worse, that is, only *tending* toward ... "good or evil side." One notes, however, that there are *specific issues* about which the Chronicler says the Lord is concerned, for which simple yea or nay, do-or-not-do choices were required for the good. The same must be true in our day....

An actual mistake in path-choosing may be repented of and made right, to some degree in this world, but the reflexive refusal of deep but prideful comprehension to make a choice when a choice is acutely present to hand is the *trahison des clercs*<sup>6</sup> writ very large. It is the story of those who agreed, for example that Nazism was a very wicked thing—after the war against it had been won by more binary people, and the pictures of the corpses stacked in the camps were published. Such include intellectuals who had had *Mein Kampf* in German since 1925 and English since 1933—the sophisticated who thought Hitler had a lot of good ideas about the ordering of society, and who regarded those simplistic folks who denounced him early on as a wicked man whose empowerment would lead to horrors as lacking in the complexity of informed detachment—a trap into which Winston Churchill, the twentieth century's greatest statesman, is famous for not falling.<sup>7</sup>

Martin Luther was a German professor of theology who also was a priest and Augustinian monk. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1507 but came to reject a number of teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. His obstinate refusal to renounce his heretical writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Holy Roman Emperor. Thus, the Protestant Reformation began out of obstinacy by a priest who refused to believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.

Henry VIII was King of England, best known for his six marriages, in particular, for his efforts to have his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled. When Pope Clement VII refused to grant an annulment, Henry initiated the English Reformation, separating the Church of England from papal authority and appointing himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England, dissolving all convents and monasteries. For this he was well-and-duly excommunicated, a king who believed himself above all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.

*Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life) is Pope Paul VI's famed 1968 encyclical on contraception and reproductive ethics. Written in light of a study commissioned by the Vatican on modern reproductive issues, its timing coincided with the sudden prevalence of contraception and concerns about overpopulation in society at large. Pope Paul VI's writings reaffirmed long-held Church teachings about human nature and new life, but also explained how this wisdom was to be applied in a modern cultural context. Since its promulgation, *Humanae Vitae* has been both controversial and controverted by many Catholics, laity and clergy alike. It has been, in this author's view, the force behind the rising tide of culture/social catholicism. In his encyclical, Pope Paul VI made seven basic points which bears further explication.

1. God is the Author of Life, and the Lives He Creates are Sacred.

God wills into existence every life brought into the world as part of His plan for creation. We are made in

His image and likeness and as the Supreme Creator, it is He who has mastery over life and death. To interfere with life between conception and natural death is in essence usurping God's ultimate authority.

We are made to know, love and serve Him, and our reproductive capacity mirrors this relationship. Our creative potential is united with God's in the marital act. Any attempt to end a life through abortion or contraception (which is an abortifacient) defies God's will for His creation, and is strongly condemned by the Church.

2. Procreation is the Heart of Marriage

Married love is a holy institution designed by God to reflect the love that exists between Christ and His Church. In marriage, the totality of the human person is a mutual giving of oneself is first an exchange of loving the other unselfishly with body, soul, and will. By sharing everything and uniting themselves heart and soul, husband and wife perfect each other and reach a deeper state of human fulfillment.

Moreover, this relationship of complete love is privileged to be the instrument God uses to bring new lives into the world. Marriage is designed for procreation on both the spiritual and physical levels, and children are the "supreme gift" of marriage. All married couples are called to be open to this gift; to do otherwise is to deny the spiritual and physical premise of marriage.

3. Openness to Procreation Affirms the Dignity of Woman

In its explanation of the social effects of contraception, *Humanae Vitae* points out that when a woman's sacred ability to give life is taken away, her role in a sexual encounter will often be that of an object of pleasure. This role is beneath the dignity of woman and contrary to the meaning of conjugal love, which is meant to be a mutual gift of self, in which the other is loved and appreciated for their individuality, and never used as a means to an end.

When the life-giving aspect of such love is preserved, its implications are too great to be undertaken lightly for selfish reasons. A woman in this scenario is not an object of pleasure, but has inside of her a miracle of creative potential, and must be honored, respected and loved. The same could also work in reverse, for if pleasure is the only aim of sexuality, this works against mutual respect of the spouses, love for children and ultimately, love for the Creator as part of the process.

4. This does not mean it is always God's Will for a Couple to Conceive

While married couples must always be open to procreation, it is acknowledged that they have a great many other obligations and are expected to make prudent

decisions, especially regarding the enormous privilege and responsibility of raising children. The Church understands the difficulties placed upon families by the modern world, and certainly allows couples to limit marital relations to infertile periods if external circumstances, or the physical or psychological condition of the spouses are unfavorable for procreation.

So, while not to be taken lightly, certain factors sometimes create legitimate circumstances in which a couple, by use of a well-formed conscience and prayerful discernment, may determine that it is not the will of God that they should conceive at that time.

5. Couples may take advantage of the infertile periods provided by God to temporarily avoid conception

In the order of nature established by God, there is a way to enrich a marriage through conjugal love while avoiding conception by limiting intercourse to the infertile periods of the reproductive cycle. The moral implications of this natural kind of birth control are completely different; it honors the divine wisdom evident in God's creation and works within the boundaries laid out for us, rather than overruling God by disrupting the natural order. The practice of periodic self-denial also helps to strengthen the marriage by converting selfish love into charity, bringing husband and wife to a greater awareness of their responsibilities, and improving the discipline that will protect their chastity and help them overcome other difficulties. The spouses will be blessed with tranquility and peace.

Use of contraception or sterilization denies the true nature of marriage and the dignity of man, and the consequences of this denial are far reaching. One must consider Pope Saint Paul VI's prophetic words on what would follow the separation of procreation from the marital act. In *Humanae Vitae*, he said:

- Moral standards would be lowered.
- Marital infidelity would increase.
- Disrespect for womanhood would follow.

6. Artificial Birth Control is a Recipe for Cultural Disaster

Also to be considered is the general principle that what is acceptable for private use, later becomes acceptable for public use. Artificial birth control has enormous potential for misuse by civil authorities trying to address problems of the modern era. (If that sounds far-fetched, consider the one child policy in China, and the sterilization programs put in place by the Third Reich).

NB: If infertility is not the purpose, but an unintended side effect of a necessary therapeutic measure, it is not considered an act of opposition to God's design of humanity and marriage (for instance, if a spouse is treated

for cancer and the treatments cause infertility). There are many separate aspects to therapeutic treatment, however, which cannot all be covered within this article. For instance, contraception prescribed for health reasons would still preclude marital relations during fertile periods. When in doubt, check with a good pro-life priest for further guidance.

7. Change the Culture, Instead of Ignoring the Moral Law That "Doesn't Fit" Our Culture

The circumstances that make artificial birth control seem like a necessary evil must be changed. Fertility is not a disease; it is a gift. Nor is any solution permissible if it violates the dignity of man, made in God's image. The Pope asserts that it is never acceptable to do evil in order to avoid a bad outcome. Social and economic progress must take the entire person into account.

As an antidote, *Humanae Vitae* calls for societal promotion of "true human values," such as encouraging commitment in marriage which leads to stable families, which will in turn enable more families to welcome children into a loving, more economically sound unit. He also calls for all unchaste and indecent images to be removed from the media, which promote an unhealthy and sinful view of sexuality, promiscuity and objectification of the other person, and many other evils.<sup>8</sup>

Over the last 50 years, ever since the Second Vatican Council, there have been those who have increasingly exercised and in many cases marketed their own brand of "catholic" faith, eagerly discarding that "old-time religion" with all of its rules and regulations, limits and strictures, relieving themselves of the burdens of sin and guilt while professing a gospel of mercy, love and forgiveness (forgiveness from what is the question.) As one such liberated culture/social catholic priest recently opined: "In the last 30 or 40 years a lot of Catholics have become very legalistic in so many ways about who can receive holy communion, who is worthy, who is excluded, what does it mean to be excommunicated and such like that." Now, that in and of itself is but his opinion, but it gets worse, much, much worse, it gets heretical with a capital "H" Heretical. Consider his initial complaint a warmup to homiletic heresy. After channeling Thomas Cranmer<sup>9</sup>, expanding on the "real presence of Christ" well-beyond magisterial teaching, at one point, this priest (let us call him Father Hairy Tickle) proclaimed (and here I quote him verbatim):

It did not come—an argument point—for 15 centuries over “Is Jesus Christ in the body, in the bread and wine?” That didn’t become an issue until the Protestant Reformation. It was a theological issue that a lot of people picked up and chose sides for all kinds of reasons, not knowing what they were talking about. That’s an era by the way before we invented some words like transubstantiation and Catholics wave that word like it’s a real banner that helps us explain things. Well, transubstantiation only makes sense if you are fluent in late medieval scholastic philosophy and theology and I don’t know anybody who is fluent in that, huh. And it goes right along, by the way, with other words that you’ve got to know besides transubstantiation, there’s transignification and transfinalization and transactualization and probably a few dozen more that all sound the same or nutty to our ears because they don’t make sense in modern theological philosophical talking. The problem is in the Catholic tradition we teach little children about Eucharist and what do we say to children in first and second grades about the Eucharistic bread and wine, we say, and this phrase is what we use, we say Jesus is in this piece of bread, we say Jesus is in this cup of wine. And when a first and second grade person thinks about that they change the words, they think Jesus has to squeeze himself in there, Jesus has to shove himself in there and that’s goofy, that’s child talk.

The trouble is many of us don’t think about it anymore than that after we make our first communion. Fast-forward to the age you are now, you’re a grownup I hope and the question is what are the real presence of the Christ in the Assembly, the congregation of the baptized, in the proclaimed word and in the reception of the sacrament, in the reception of the sacrament. It does no good to come and just stare at the Blessed Sacrament. If you’re going to be receiving the presence, you’ve got to come and fellowship with people, you’ve got to say “hello”, you’ve got to say “hi, my name is ...” and try to get together. Now that’s hard for shy people but you’ve got to work at this. You’ve got to be here to hear the words. You’ve got to pay attention. We’ve often said growing up it used to be a rule, you know, Catholics are obligated to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and if you don’t attend Mass on Sunday’s it’s a mortal sin and that means if you get hit by a bus and die you don’t go to heaven right? Well, think about it, that’s awfully simplistic. What if you’re sick at home and right now we’re not suppose to come to Mass, so everyone and all the Catholics in this country are committing mortal sins because they’re staying home trying not to get sick and die. Okay, the rule is a bit nutty isn’t it. It’s more than a bit nutty, good sense always prevails. If you feel bad because you can’t go to Mass, you’re afraid you’re making committing a mortal sin there’s something wrong with your theological maturi-

ty and I can’t fix that, but good sense always prevails. Mom and Dad, you stay home and take care of your sick children. When your spouse is sick you stay home and take care of the spouse. You elderly parents are there needing your help, go do that. The church comes second because taking care of people always trumps that, always comes first. So, being with us is important but you’ve got to use your good sense with this and it’s not magic, you’re not in second grade. Jesus does not squeeze himself into a small piece of bread or a small cup of wine.

I would love to scold laypeople who insist on telling other Catholics who have not been faithful to Mass, “Oh, you can’t go to Holy Communion because you’re married outside the church or you haven’t been to Mass in a long time.” I want to say, “stop practicing church rules without a theological license.” Just so you know, I have a license in theology. I can do this and you’re wrong. So, the rule is Christ wants you. Christ is there calling everybody. Nobody is thrown out. Do you know how hard it is to become excommunicated? You have to either physically attack the Pope or the bishop or you have to set yourself outside the church. And in my lifetime there have been a couple of attempts on the lives of Popes. Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II were both attacked, one by knife, one by gun, and in both cases it was crazy men who did that, okay, crazy people do crazy things like that. One of them was not even Christian. So, it’s hard to be excommunicated. You do not get excommunicated by getting married outside the Catholic Church if you’re a Catholic. Pope Francis says this, it’s never been true. People have said it, priests have said it, but they’re wrong and that’s harsh, that’s unkind, it’s, it’s subversive. I think it’s sinful if you pass on that kind of information, misinformation, huh. It’s like being a liar or that sort of thing. So, you’re not excommunicated easily, you have to want to leave the church and most people don’t give it enough thought, actually. So, your grown-up children Christ has them. What if they die, Christ has them. What do they when they come back to your house for Christmas and you say to your grown son or daughter and spouse and/or living companion even though they’re not married, whatever, “would you come to Christmas Mass with us?” If they say yes, good. And if then they ask the question “You know I haven’t been to communion for many years, what should I do at communion time?” you say, come receive Holy Communion, come be nourished by Christ because Holy Communion is not a reward for conforming yourself to the rules of the church. Holy Communion is Christ nourishing you with his very self. It’s Christ’s coming to you fully so that you can be fully alive. We heard some weeks ago, Jesus says, “I came that they might have life and have it most fully or have it abundantly.” That’s what Eucharist is about. And so,

Catholics who haven't been there for a long time, invite them back. Just so you know, Catholics in prison, when there's a Eucharistic service in prison or in jail, they receive communion too. Christ wants them to receive communion. Now, they're in prison and they're probably not in prison for singing too loudly in church. They're probably in prison for violence or drugs or theft or even homicide, but Christ comes to them too. So, who is excluded from Holy Communion? Someone who does not want to receive perhaps. I've met people who are angry at God and angry at Christ and in the end they'll say, "I can't receive because I'm too mad at how he lets the world be or how these things happen, why did children have cancer and stuff like that. Then don't come, yet, I'm too broken up because a close friend or my parents or somebody has died. Okay. Give it time, but you're always welcome. Come, sit with the assembly, come sit in church when it's empty, come sit in church when it's full, sit through Mass, rest, let God work on you. But Christ is there for them, not against them. We, who tell people, if we ever tell people, "you must not receive Holy Communion," that's making us like the Pharisees in the gospel, self-righteous, harsh, cruel judges condemned errs. That's not okay, it's your place. Even I am NOT here to judge. Should people who are living together, adults living together outside of marriage receive Communion? If they want to take it, if they think it's important, yes. Some people are not allowed to get married for certain reasons. Can gay people get married? Not everywhere, not in the church. Can gay people receive communion, even if they're in a gay marriage? Yes, if their faith is such.

There is very little very little to exclude people from Eucharist. Please, pass this word around. No one is excluded automatically once you're baptized as a Catholic and once you've been given Eucharist as a Catholic, you have the right to receive the Eucharist regularly. Life becomes very complex. Nobody else appreciates your life quite the way you do. Nobody else can resolve it for you. When people come to talk to me, I ask them to think of the complications and ask how are you doing? Are you doing the best you can? Are you making any progress? Are you being a truthful, loving, generous, forgiving, hopeful, prayerful person according to the gospel? Do you embrace the gospel well? And if they say, "I'm trying my best" I say then, good, good. Now, to be fair, no one from the Mafia has come to talk about that, no hitman, no bank robbers and such like that, so, I've never been challenged with those things. I think I would have a slightly clearer answer for them, but everybody else who's doing their best, good, good. Should gay parents, parents some two men or two women who were officially gay who have somehow acquired a child through adoption or any other way, should they be allowed to baptize their child? The an-

swer is yes, if they've promised to raise the child in the practice of the Catholic faith. That's what the rules say; that's what the theology says and theology trumps rules. There's lots of exceptions. I have done weddings for people who've been married two and three times. Why? For all kinds of reasons, but it's nobody else's business. You see, these are conscience issues, well-formed conscience issues and most people I know, most people who will talk to me as a priest are wrestling very, very well with reality. So, please, do not judge, lest you be judged. Don't discourage people from coming to Eucharist. Don't feel like God has rejected anybody. Don't worry about people going to hell. Worry about yourself and how you must behave and how you must embrace the gospel and live it fully, joyfully. Delight in people who want to come to Mass, even if they've been away from Mass for a long time. That's very, very important.

There is much more (Father Hairy Tickle's homily goes on for more than 30 excruciating heretical minutes) but there is only so much any Catholic ought to be subjected. Despite Father Hairy Tickle's "theological license" and his assertion that he can practice church rules and you cannot, he is heretically wrong; he obviously got his theological license from a box of Cracker Jack's or Froot Loops. He is a pied piper, a heretic wearing a Roman collar, feeding *faux* chocolate heresy bars to his unwary flock.

What culture/social catholics lack the most is a philosophy upon which to rest their argument, thus, their argument is predicated solely upon what is not and what should have been, never on what is or why. They are anarchists, chafing at every stricture not of their own counsel; with wanton abandon they pick and choose their faith *haute couture*, twisting their noses to suit their snotty faces. It is odd, rather mad if you were to ask, that so many claim memberships in a cult they find so objectionable. It is like friends with benefits, unwilling to a make full and lasting commitment. They harbor no thought as to what they profess to belong; it is but a casual membership to a country club; faith and reason, Jesus Christ and his Church are mere afterthought.

My dearest literary friend, G.K. Chesterton, once wrote a book—in fact, he wrote a great many books, but this one in particular to which I now refer—he began by stating, "There are two ways of getting home; and one of them is to stay there. The other is to walk round the whole

world till we come back to the same place; ...” Sound logic, if you ask me, which of course, you have not. Anyway, Chesterton goes on to admonish the reader of the critics who so easily and quite unhappily complain about the Church.

They are on a debatable ground, in every sense of the term. They are doubtful in their very doubts. Their criticism has taken on a curious tone; as of a random and illiterate heckling. Thus they make current and anti-clerical cant as a sort of small-talk. They will complain of parsons dressing like parsons; as if we should be any more free if all the police who shadowed or collared us were plain-clothes detectives. Or they will complain that a sermon cannot be interrupted, and call a pulpit a coward’s castle; though they do not call an editor’s office a coward’s castle. It would be unjust both to the journalists and priests; but it would be much truer of journalists. The clergyman appears in person and could easily be kicked as he came out of church; the journalist conceals even his name so that nobody can kick him. They write wild and pointless articles and letters in the press about why the churches are empty, without even going there to find out if they are empty, or which of them are empty. ... They will suddenly turn round and revile the Church for not having prevented the War, which they themselves did not want to prevent; and which nobody had ever professed able to prevent, except some of that very school of progressive and cosmopolitan sceptics who are the chief enemies of the Church. It was the anti-clerical and agnostic world that was always prophesying the advent of universal peace; it is that world that was, or should have been abashed and confounded by the advent of universal war. As for the general view that the Church was discredited by the War—they might as well say that the Ark was discredited by the Flood. When the world goes wrong, it proves rather that the Church is right. The Church is justified, not because her children do not sin, but because they do.<sup>10</sup>

My point is simply to state this one irrefutable, indisputable fact which culture/social catholics hold in low regard, even contempt: the Catholic Church is Christ’s Church, it is Jesus Christ who made the rules and it is the Church who administers and enforces them. “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt 16:17-19). Peter was given the keys to the king-

dom and the authority to bind and loose (administrate). Those who are wont to pick and choose whichever rules – teachings, doctrine, and dogma—they will are not disciples of Christ for they are clearly saying to him, “I choose my ways, not your ways.” They are not Catholic and should not profess to be so.

If you cannot be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ and abide by his commandments as taught by his Church, then perhaps it would be best to start your own church—the church of Hairy Tickle has a nice ring to it, does it not?

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1. The profession of faith made by *confirmandi*, those who are to be confirmed into full communion with the Catholic Church.
  2. Ott, Ludwig. *Manual de Teología Dogmática*, Herder, Barcelona:1968, p.31.
  3. Prümmer, Dominic M. *Handbook of Moral Theology*, Mercier Press: 1963, Sect. 201.
  4. See *Summa Theologica* II-II, q. 11, a.1.
  5. Lawrence Feingold, *Faith Comes From What Is Heard: An Introduction to Fundamental Theology*, (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2016), 47.
  6. *Trahison des clercs*: a betrayal of intellectual, artistic, or moral standards.
  7. S.M. Hutchens, “*Mortal Remains: Complexity & Judgment*”, Touchstone, September/October 2020, 10-11.
  8. Jenna McGuire, “*7 Basic Points: Humanae Vitae Summary*”, Human Life International, April 26, 2019.
  9. Thomas Cranmer was a leader of the English Reformation and Archbishop of Canterbury during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and, for a short time, Mary I. He help build the case for the annulment of Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Along with Thomas Cromwell, he supported the principle of royal supremacy, in which the king was considered sovereign over the Church within his realm. He was responsible for establishing the first doctrinal and liturgical structures of the reformed Church of England. He changed doctrine and discipline in areas such as the Eucharist, clerical celibacy, the role of images in places of worship, and the veneration of saints. He was put on trial for treason and heresy by the Catholic Queen Mary I and subsequently executed, dying a heretic.
  10. G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2007; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925), 5-6.

## Deacon's Diner

*Food for a restless mind*

**F**or those restless minds that hunger and thirst for more. Each week this space will offer a menu of interesting and provocative titles, written by Catholic authors, in addition to those referenced in the articles, for you to feed your restless mind.

### BOOKS

**Salvation: What Every Catholic Should Know**

*Michael Patrick Barber*

Ignatius Press

2019, 189 pages.

**Faith and Politics**

*Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI)*

Ignatius Press

2018, 269 pages.

**The Day Is Now Far Spent**

*Robert Cardinal Sarah*

Ignatius Press

2019, 350 pages.

**G.K. Chesterton Collected Works: Volume XXXVI**

*The Illustrated London News 1932-1934*

Ignatius Press

2011, 613 pages.

**Return of the Strong Gods: Nationalism, Populism and the future of the West**

*R. R. Reno*

Regnery Gateway

2019, 182 pages.

**The Irony of Modern Catholic History:**

How the Church rediscovered itself

*George Weigel*

Basic Books

2019, 322 pages.

**Letters on Liturgy**

*Father Dwight Longenecker*

Angelico Press

2020, 164 pages.

**Immortal Combat**

*Father Dwight Longenecker*

Sophia Institute Press

2020, 144 pages.

### PERIODICALS

**First Things**

[www.firstthings.com](http://www.firstthings.com)

**Touchstone**

[www.touchstonemag.com](http://www.touchstonemag.com)

**Catholic Answers Magazine**

[www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com)

**Catholic Herald**

[www.catholicherald.co.uk](http://www.catholicherald.co.uk)

**Chronicles**

[www.chroniclesmagazine.org](http://www.chroniclesmagazine.org)

**Gilbert!**

[www.chesterton.org](http://www.chesterton.org)

**The National Catholic Register**

[www.ncregister.com](http://www.ncregister.com)

**Our Sunday Visitor**

[www.osvnews.com](http://www.osvnews.com)

### ONLINE

**Crisis Magazine**

[www.crisismagazine.com](http://www.crisismagazine.com)

**The Imaginative Conservative**

[www.theimaginativeconservative.org](http://www.theimaginativeconservative.org)

**Catholic Exchange**

[www.catholicexchange.com](http://www.catholicexchange.com)

**Intellectual Takeout**

[www.intellectuالتakeout.org](http://www.intellectuالتakeout.org)

**Life News**

[www.lifenews.com](http://www.lifenews.com)

**Life Site News**

[www.lifesitenews.com](http://www.lifesitenews.com)

**OnePeterFive**

[www.onepeterfive.com](http://www.onepeterfive.com)

**Catholic Vote**

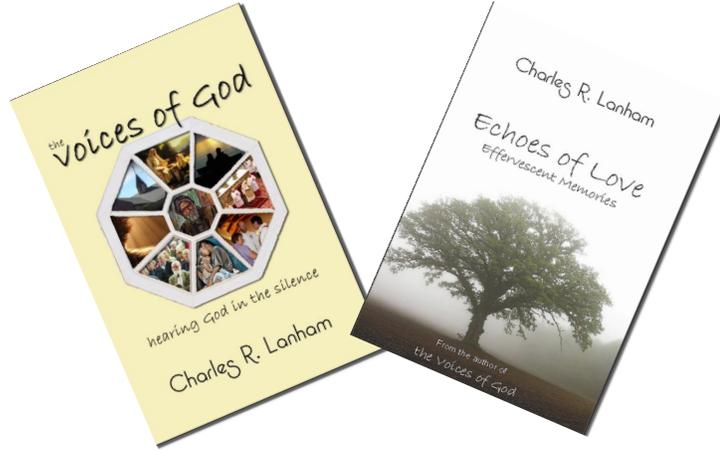
[www.catholicvote.org](http://www.catholicvote.org)

**The Catholic Thing**

[www.thecatholicthing.org](http://www.thecatholicthing.org)

**PragerU**

[www.prageru.com](http://www.prageru.com)



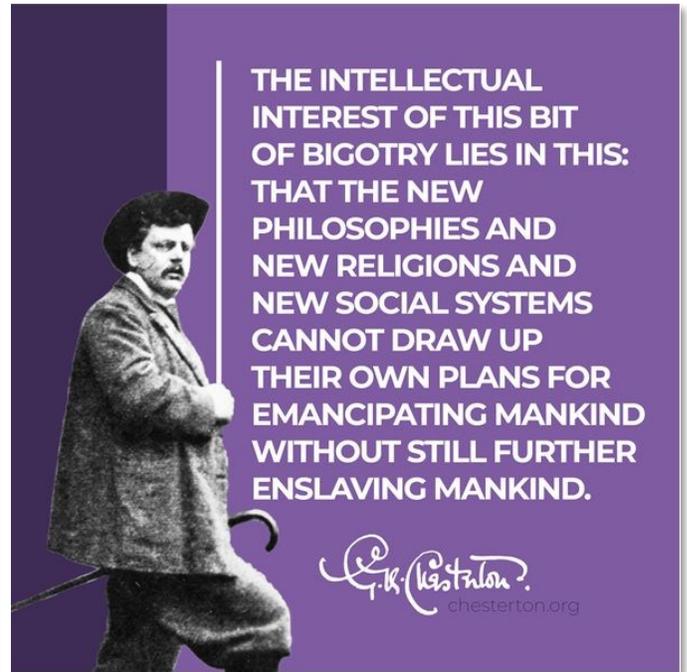
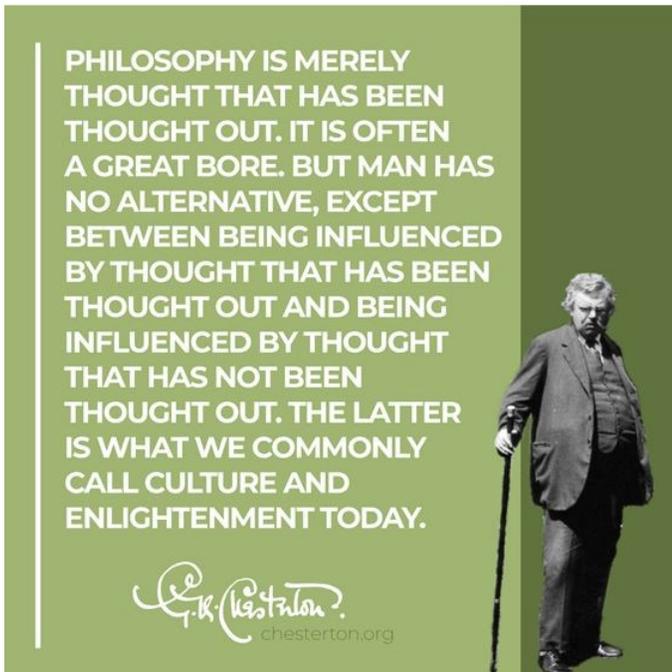
Books are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or from the author's web site at:

[deaconscorner.org](https://deaconscorner.org)

**Deacon Chuck Lanham** is a Catholic author, columnist, speaker, theologian and philosopher, a jack-of-all-trades like his father (though far from a master of anything) and a servant of God. He is the author of **The Voices of God: Hearing God in the Silence**, **Echoes of Love: Effervescent Memories** and has written over 500 essays on religion, faith, morality, theology, and philosophy.

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**Colloquī**, the present infinitive of *colloquor* (Latin: *to talk, to discuss or to converse*) is a Deacon's Corner weekly journal. Its mission and purpose to encourage serious discussion, to promote reasoned debate, and to provide serious content for those who hope to find their own pathway to God. Each week **Colloquī** will contain articles on theology, philosophy, faith, religion, Catholicism, and much more. Be forewarned! Essays may and often will contain fuel for controversy, but always with the expressed intent to seek the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, so help us God.

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