



English Martyrs Catholic Church

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CONFIRMATION 2019 - the Church

The Venerable Fulton Sheen - the Church which the world hates

There are not over a hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church — which is, of course, quite a different thing.

These millions can hardly be blamed for hating Catholics because Catholics “adore statues”; because they “put the Blessed Mother on the same level with God”; because they say “indulgence is a permission to commit sin”; because the Pope “is a Fascist”; because the “Church is the defender of Capitalism.” If the Church taught or believed any one of these things it should be hated, but the fact is that the Church does not believe nor teach any one of them. It follows then that the hatred of the millions is directed against error and not against truth. As a matter of fact, if we Catholics believed all of the untruths and lies which were said against the Church, we probably would hate the Church a thousand times more than they do.

If I were not a Catholic, and were looking for the true Church in the world today, I would look for the one Church which did not get along well with the world; in other words, I would look for the Church which the world hates... Look for the Church that is hated by the world, as Christ was hated by the world. Look for the Church which is accused of being behind the times, as Our Lord was accused of being ignorant and never having learned. Look for the Church which men sneer at as socially inferior, as they sneered at Our Lord because He came from Nazareth. Look for the Church which is accused of having a devil, as Our Lord was accused of being possessed by Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils. Look for the Church which, in seasons of bigotry, men say must be destroyed in the name of God as men crucified Christ and thought they had done a service to God. Look for the Church which the world rejects because it claims it is infallible, as Pilate rejected Christ because He called Himself the Truth. Look for the Church which is rejected by the world as Our Lord was rejected by men...

If then, the hatred of the Church is founded on erroneous beliefs, it follows that basic need of the day is instruction. Love depends on knowledge for we cannot aspire nor desire the unknown. Our great country is filled with what might be called marginal Christians, i.e., those who live on the fringe of religion and who are descendants of Christian living parents, but who now are Christians only in name. They retain a few of its ideals out of indolence and force of habit; they knew the glorious history of Christianity only through certain emasculated forms of it, which have married the spirit of the age and are now dying with it. Of Catholicism and its sacraments, its pardon, its grace, its certitude and its peace, they know nothing except a few inherited prejudices. And yet they are good people who want to do the right thing, but who have no definite philosophy concerning it. They educate their children without religion, and yet they resent the compromising morals of their children. They would be angry if you told them they were not Christian, and yet they do not believe that Christ is God. They resent being called pagans and yet they never take a practical cognisance of the existence of God. There is only one thing of which they are certain and that is that things are not right as they are. It is just that single certitude which makes them what might be called the great “potentials,” for they are ready to be pulled in either of two directions. Within a short time they must take sides; they must either gather with Christ or they must scatter; they must either be with Him or against Him; they must either be on the cross as other Christs, or under it as other executioners. Which way will these marginal Christians tend?... Only this much is certain. Being human and having hearts they want more than class struggle and economics; they want Life, they want Truth, and they want Love. In a word, they want Christ.

It is to these millions who believe wrong things about the Church and to these marginal Christians, that this little book is sent. It is not to prove that they are “wrong”; it is not to prove that we are “right”; it is merely to present the truth in order that the truth may conquer through the grace of God.”

Are you ready and willing to present the truth about the Church? Venerable Fulton Sheen, pray for us.