



Fernando Gallego, "Cristo Bendiciendo," c. 1495

How to Be Catholic When Your Bishops Are Not

Now is not the time for simpering fecklessly. Now is the time to follow Jesus Christ and be more Catholic than ever.

[Jennifer Fitz](#)

The McCarrick scandals are proving to be a breaking point for many Catholics. Here we have not a man engaged in a struggle against temptation – who of us isn't? – but a man [whose shamelessly predatory behavior was tacitly condoned by countless church leaders](#)

[at the highest levels](#), and whose depraved behavior was *normal* in many clerical circles. How many loving Catholic parents have sent their sons off to seminary never imagining [the ordeal of sexual harassment, molestation and lifelong moral compromise](#) that awaited?

It is no wonder that many who were lately warming up to the Church are now disgusted at the thought of conversion. It is no wonder that many lifelong Catholics are considering whether their faith can withstand such hypocrisy and corruption. Trite admonishments that “no one’s perfect” or “there is no perfect church” ring hollow when you consider that the man laying hands on your teens at Confirmation would not scruple to let a brother bishop go to bed with those same teens.

How does an honest Catholic hold on to the faith in such putrid circumstances?

Catholicism Not Clericalism

In a conversation recently, several friends shared childhood stories of molestation and sexual harassment openly tolerated in their parishes. I remarked what a blessing it was to be raised in a home where groping someone was never for an instant considered acceptable behavior.

When we set aside basic standards of moral decency out of so-called “respect for authority,” we are worshipping a false god. We are making the person in leadership higher than God’s law. We put God on a lower rung, and raise our parish priest, bishop, or cardinal to something higher than God. Is it any wonder in God’s providence the rotten fruits of that idolatry are being revealed as we celebrate [the 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*](#)?

The first step in holding onto your Catholic faith is making the decision that you will worship God alone. Our readings over the past few weeks have made it clear [what God thinks of bad pastors](#).

Why Stay Catholic?

There are many reasons people are attracted to the Catholic faith. It could be the family heritage; it could be the beauty of Catholic traditions; it could be the exact right convergence of time and place

and spiritual experiences. People become Catholic a billion different ways for a billion different reasons.

We stay Catholic for a single reason: Because it is true.

If you have never tested the evidence for the *truth* of your Catholic faith, may I suggest now is the opportune moment? Your logical reasoning won't be swayed by any sentimental attachments, you can be sure of that.

There are historical and rational proofs for the truth of Catholicism. If you make the effort, you can *know* that Catholicism consists of a reasonable, evidence-based set of beliefs. You deserve this gift. Don't settle for anything less.

Evangelizing not Enabling

But here's a challenge for you: Do you actually live as if the Catholic faith is true?

We now know that many of our bishops do not. We can look around the pews and see that many ordinary Catholics do not either. We go through the motions, but our lives are basically the same as everyone else's. Jesus Christ is the one most important thing to every man, woman and child alive today, and yet we content ourselves with a vague hope that everyone will be fine, and that we ourselves have no particular responsibility in the grand scheme of things.

That's not what Jesus Christ said. Jesus Christ gave every Christian a mission to go and make disciples. Are you doing that? Are you actively praying, sacrificing, and working to bring others into a deeper, fuller relationship with God?

We have seen that our Church is infected with nasty, self-serving, slothful men who would rather protect their neat little lives than take the courageous steps needed to carry out the mission God has given them. Are you one of them?

God Gave You a Brain

When my dad was aggravated at us kids for some stupid foible, he'd mutter, "Use your head for something other than a decoration!"

It's good advice. What are some ways you can use your head to confront the crisis in the Church today?

1. If you find yourself wanting to protect abusers, learn about boundary-setting and healthy relationships. Chances are if you grew up thinking "discretion" and "respect" meant covering up for Father Groper, then other relationships in your life aren't that healthy either. Now's a good time to start changing that.

2. Support good ministries. Not everyone in the Church is corrupt. Put your money and time into the good work being done by people you know. This might be official parish or diocesan programs, it might be formally-organized apostolates, or it might be just you and some friends carrying out the works of mercy on your own.

3. Demand accountability. What is the state of the Church's leadership today? It is like a group of teenagers caught in the act and then crying, "Why don't you trust me?" Is your parish or diocese transparent with the management of your money? Great. Be involved in maintaining that transparency. If not, when Father or Bishop comes to you asking for funds to cover a genuinely-needed expense, let him know the contractor can send you a bill directly and you'll pay it. Men who behave childishly get treated like children.

4. Be more Catholic than ever. Now is not the time for simpering fecklessly. Now is the time to put on your grown-up clothes. God is Truth, God is Love, God is Justice, God is Mercy. There is no love without truth. There is no mercy without justice. Give yourself completely to God and you will not be able to help but carry out your part in reforming the Church.

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COMMENT ON THE ARTICLE BY FR. PEROZICH

1. GIVE YOURSELF COMPLETELY TO GOD: BE MORE CATHOLIC

a. Each day pray in petition for yourself, for forgiveness for your sins, for fidelity in the Church, for its leaders, for your families and friends.

- b. Read the Bible, interpret it through the catechism to discern the truth among the words of the day in the world and in articles and in homilies
- c. Get to Mass and receive Holy Communion frequently (state of grace being the norm)
- d. Participate where there you can live out your faith in truth, not compromise. If the parish, diocese, bishop is compromised and you are not able to promote the truth, attend Mass for Holy Communion and the word, and find an “intentional community” which is faithful and which allows you to live out your faith.
- e. No matter what goes on in His church, Jesus still is the Good Shepherd, and we turn to Him in times when other shepherds are lacking or causing scandal.

2. BE DISCERNING, EVANGELIZING, AND DO NOT BE AN ENABLER OF EVIL OR SIN

- a. Bishops and priests are granted respect for their office, yet may speak their own ideas rather than God’s truth. God speaks also in His Word, and clerics should reflect that Word.
- b. If a prophet (cleric) speaks falsely, his prophecy will not come true, the Bible says. Sometimes we don’t publicly disagree, but we do not walk in ambiguity or lies.
- c. Teach the truths inculcated in you from the clear catechisms of your youth. Remind yourself each day that you and other baptized persons are foreknown and chosen to be part of God’s family, predestined to bear the image of Jesus forever in your soul united to His Spirit and a temple for the Holy Spirit, justified and redeemed from sin, called to go out with this truth in your entire life albeit imperfectly, and glorified with the power of the Spirit for promoting faith in Jesus in His Catholic Church,
- d. Avoid novelties, things that are newly proposed and avoid studied ambiguities which blur the truth such as the new idea of accompaniment of one another. Tolerate your fellow Christians in their person, never approve of their sin. You are being told to do this now by accepting sexual behaviors, attractions, identities, adultery which no longer is called such by some leaders, to welcome everyone without repentance or conversion. This is not Catholic. This is not Christian.

3. BE GENEROUS IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF TRUE CATHOLIC EVANGELIZATION

a. Learn about the organizations asking you for money, of the many you receive in the mail each day or in the pews on Sunday. Avoid scandalous ones, ambiguous ones, purely social ones; give to those who bring Jesus' truth of repentance and conversion.

b. Have a charity account ready to help organizations and individuals, but help prudently. If you are giving, demand accountability.

c. When a Catholic organization or cleric you deem ambiguous or unfaithful asks for money, deny them with a kind note respecting their person, but letting them know to which faithful organizations you will be directing your donations and why. They cannot kick you out of the church or the parish.

4. DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY

a. Just because a priest or bishop or religious says something that does not make it true.

b. Use your brain as the above article says.

c. If you are confused, ask for clarity.

d. Avoid verbose explanations. Multiplication of words is a technique to confuse.

e. I did so with my bishop twice. One parish has a trans giving out holy communion. I asked if he approved it. He said it was up to the pastor. I asked why he said LGBTQ were not welcome in parishes. He said his experience was that in many they were not. I replied that all are welcome, they just need to convert to chastity to which he angrily and repeatedly said, "They don't need to convert, they don't need to convert." I was told my teachings were not Catholic

5. SCANDAL BEYOND PHYSICAL SEXUAL CONTACT

a. Sexual seduction by bishops and priests of adult males is evil and scandalous, just as with minors.

b. Promotion of LGBTQ identity and behavior by bishops and priests is scandalous.

c. Intimate activity with a person outside Holy Matrimony is scandalous, as is Holy Communion in this case.

d. Insistence on accompaniment and welcome for adultery without repentance conversion is neither Catholic nor faithful nor tolerant love. It is scandalous

e. Fleecing the flock in misuse of the faithful's money, failure to teach the truth, distorting doctrine, promoting ambiguity rather than clarity is scandalous. If you feel this be the case, you have a right to inform your pastors with kindness as to how you are living your faith apart from their ways because you do not feel guided to Christ.

f. You are not little children before the clergy, but need to follow conscience as illuminated by the Bible with the catechism, not a conscience formed by novel ideas that are being preached today. Be faithful to Jesus.