



# We Do Not Know What We Do Not Know

( 2 )



Another sad realization is the leakage from the church. This has been sadly relayed to us by reliable non-Catholic clergymen who have become Catholic. They report when they were in their parish church work about a third of their congregation were often former Catholics. They were there in the Protestant churches not because they the new church reflected a greater faith but there was something in that church that drew them there. It was something they were not finding in the Catholic Church. In some cases they were reluctant to adhere to the high standards the Catholic Church in regards to family life and they felt more comfortable in this other congregation.

Another fact was reported to a meeting of catechists, held this past summer in California. A non-Catholic clergyman was asked to speak to the assembled catechists. He reported on how he had started a church in a small community in the United States with only three people, and now has thousands of adherents attending his church. He explained that all he had done was to meet people, socialize with them, get to know them and they got to know him and provide opportunities for the members to meet one another. They developed the community of his church. He went on to say that it was not his preaching, it was their socializing that brought them together. They are happy together in their growing church community.

There has been some criticism of social activities within the church. However they are very necessary for us because most of us like to meet new people. We like to be known. We like to be respected. We like to be appreciated. We like to be a friend and we like to have friends. In the community of the church we should be the best of friends. It is the best place to meet and make friends. Our Lord summarized the whole of religion: "To love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and to love your neighbour as yourself." This is not too hard but on the other hand for some it is not easy. We have to love our neighbour that we meet either in church or on the street. Everybody we meet today and during the week. We should love them, as we love ourselves. We do not have to marry them, but we do have to love them. Our Lord wants us to follow Him. "Follow Me" was his invitation.

Our life is not to be without some difficulties, pain and hurts. Sometimes friends inadvertently cause these. Sometimes we bring them on ourselves but we have to reach out to our neighbours. This is done ideally in our church. We go to church to worship God but when you know your neighbour it becomes more of a family reunion. Reach out please, with the hand of friendship and be sincere when you say Hello. Let them know in some way you would like to be friends and get to know them. You are my brother. You are my sister. Let us get to know each other as Christian friends. Let us worship together. Let us share with one another the great gift of faith because that is the greatest gift we have. Share our faith with your children. Share the faith with neighbours. Share the faith, as we all need it.

Here is one final step to take in the education for life. We have to get to know ourselves. I hope you do not mind but I would like to share a story of a clergyman who was visiting a nursing home. He was a fine looking man. He was well dressed. He appeared fit and he was very attractive in appearance. After he entered the home he said to the little old lady who was sitting close to the door, "Madam, do you know who I am." The old lady didn't even look up from the book she was reading and replied, "Go to the desk. They will tell you who you are."

We have to get to know our selves. That is done by self-examination. The Lord trusts us to make an examination of ourselves so we can understand what we have done by thought, by word, by action or omission. By doing so we are better aware of the truth about ourselves. You may have your own opinion of yourself. Neighbours have their opinion but the Lord knows what is the truth. So be open to reach out to neighbours in friendship. Let us be open to make a change in our lives if we conclude it is necessary and worthwhile. I do not know anyone who would say it is not necessary. The Sacrament of Confession is such a generous gift of Almighty God when He sent his son to pay our debts. They are delivered to us in this great Sacrament.

The final request after reconciliation is to make the necessary changes. Changes can be very difficult for some of us to undertake but they pay off in rich dividends. We have to change the way we talk to some people or the way we pray. We have to make sure we are talking with God and not simply asking of Him. We are sharing with the Lord asking Him by saying; "Please show me Lord where I should change." "I need to change but I do not see clearly what I should do. I want you to give me this privilege because you are my Savior and you are my friend. I want to make friends with your other children so that I am pleasing you and making reparations for what I have done that was not pleasing to you. If you find something difficult to change, please listen to our Lord when He said, "If you let me, I can make you a masterpiece." "If you let me, I can make you a masterpiece."