

“True Christians Are Not Hypocrites!”

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Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

“The Church is full of hypocrites!” Have you ever heard that one? I have - many times. Usually, people make that claim as an excuse for why they do not attend Church. “You won’t catch me stepping foot inside that Church with all those hypocrites!”

On one occasion, I even had a man I didn’t know from Adam walk up to me and say, “You’re a hypocrite! All you Christians are hypocrites!” Evidently, the man noticed my clerical collar, as I was out doing hospital calls at the time, and felt that it was necessary to tell me how things are. He used a “hit and run” approach – he walked up to me, said what he had to say, and then briskly walked away before I could respond. It was a very good plan of attack: Get in, strike your blows, and get out, before your enemy can retaliate.

I’ve thought about that incident many times in the years since it happened. I can still picture myself standing there in shock, unable to utter a word, as I watched that man walk away. I wish I could go back in time, for I would chase after that man and say, “Excuse me, sir, but you are wrong. I am not a hypocrite, and neither are all Christians. You obviously do not know what the word hypocrite means.” Of course, I cannot go back in time, and I seriously doubt that it would have done any good to chase after that man. He seemed very convinced of his erroneous views and obviously had no desire to discuss them. But, he was wrong, and so are all those who follow his line of thinking.

You see, no true Christian is a hypocrite. A hypocrite is someone who says one thing, but believes another; someone who pretends to be something he/she is not. This definition does not apply to true Christians, for they do not say one thing, but believe another; they do not pretend to be something they are not.

The reason people, like the man who ambushed me, conclude that Christians are hypocrites is because they misunderstand what Christianity is. They think Christians claim to be perfect, or at least better than non-Christians, and they know from experience that Christians are far from perfect. Thus, they conclude, Christians are hypocrites.

But, no true Christian claims to be perfect. On the contrary, all true Christians acknowledge and confess that they are poor, miserable, sinners who deserve God’s temporal and eternal wrath and punishment. If they do not, well, they are not true Christians, for, as St. John writes, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). True Christians further acknowledge and confess that they completely lack any ability within themselves to atone for their sins or please God in any way. They know and believe that, on their own, they are lost. But, they also know and believe that God has not left them on their own, for He sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to live the perfect, sinless life they cannot live, and to suffer and die on the cross to pay the full price for all of their sins. Through God-given faith in Jesus, they have forgiveness, life, and salvation. Far from being hypocrites, they are exactly who they claim to be – sinners who need, and thankfully have, a Savior.

None of this is to say that you will not find hypocrites in Church. You surely will. As our Lord tells us, the weeds (unbelievers) will grow alongside of the wheat (believers) in the Church until the Last Day (cf. Matt. 13:24-30). He alone knows the pretenders from the believers; the hypocrites from the true Christians, and when He returns in glory, He will separate them for eternity, sending all hypocrites to eternal torment in Hell, and welcoming all true believers into the peace and comfort of His glorious Kingdom, which has no end.

I am not a hypocrite. I am a wretched sinner, to be sure, but no hypocrite. Neither are you if you acknowledge and confess your sinfulness and trust solely in Jesus Christ for your salvation. You are a hypocrite, however, if you deny your sinfulness and believe that you are good enough on your own to enter heaven. And, you are also a hypocrite if you claim to be a Christian, but stay away from Church because you believe it's "full of hypocrites," for it is hypocritical to claim to be a Christian while despising Christ's Church. So, put aside your hypocrisy and join a Church full of sinners today. You are more than welcome to visit our Church. I can't promise you that we have no hypocrites among us, but I can promise you that there are plenty of sinners just like you. And, I can also promise that you will always be pointed to the Lamb of God who takes your sin away.

In Christ,

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