

## ~ Pope Gives Apology to All Injured by Church ~

Pope John Paul II has made over a hundred confessions of Christian failure. Both Catholics and non-Catholics are a little weary and wary of all this apologizing. John Leo, in the March 27, 2000, *U.S. News & World Report*, said, "That's nice, but can you please be a bit more specific?" Perhaps John Leo and many like him do not understand the present Pope's dilemma. It is hard to apologize for some sixteen centuries of very cruel and terrible history. This is especially difficult when one must apologize for those who were supposed to be the vicegerents of Christ on earth. How could Christ's representatives have such a bloody and merciless history? His task is even more difficult when he must confess this long and dark history without acknowledgment of guilt. Somehow sins just happened but there are no specific sinners. Everyone is sorry that these terrible things happened, but how does this help?

An historic confession in a formal theological statement, "Memory and Reconciliation", made by the pontiff at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, March 12, 2000, was built

into the liturgy of a papal mass. The church has begun to face up to the sins its members have committed through the centuries. However, those that committed many of these sins are long since dead, and as far as anyone knows, never acknowledged their sins. Some have been canonized as saints. What difference does sin make anyway? Can the present pope cast a mantle over the centuries past that will cover all the church's sinful acts?

An apology is better than no apology. At least there is an admission of wrongdoing that injured, perhaps more correctly, killed, maimed, tortured, persecuted, and relentlessly pursued those stalwart souls who stood apart from the corruption and vice of enthroned papal splendor. In some countries, the persecution was so terrible that the Protestant Reformation could not take root. Spain, under Muslim rule, was an advanced nation in medicine, science, and cultural freedom. When the Catholic Church came to power in Spain, this all changed into a totalitarian state, driving Jews and Muslims out. The Holy (?)

Inquisition, the most cruel and diabolical torture ever devised by man, flourished—let no man call this Christian love. Science and freedom of every kind withered, while the church and state exercised totalitarian control over every aspect of society. This brought about the Dark Ages as all Europe succumbed to the same authoritarian rule.

In 1160, Peter Waldo, the earliest reformer, started the movement that became known as the Waldensians. The papal authorities drove the Waldensians, women and children, out of their homes in mid-winter without food or sufficient clothing. Anyone who sheltered them or offered them refuge would be killed. Later, Wycliff, Huss, Zwingli, Tyndale, Luther, etc., provided the momentum to start and consummate a reformation in Europe.

The Catholic Church is painfully aware of its very dark history. Let no one think this applies only to ancient times. In our lifetime, we saw the Catholic Church in league with the Nazi-Fascist regimes that overran Europe while attempting to dominate the whole world. The Nazis deliberately murdered some six million Jews and Gypsies in death camps. Did the Catholic Church protest the death of innocent people? No! Yet, the

present pope intervened to save a murderer from a death sentence. They also operated the “ratlines” after the war that provided false passports to countless thousands of Fascist criminals who then were sent to South America to escape prosecution for their war crimes. No provisions were made for the captured Russians when the Nazis invaded. Their homes were burned and destroyed, and thousands and tens of thousands were left to die without food in open fields. Did the Catholic Church protest against this inhuman treatment? The Catholic Church signed the Lateran Treaty with Fascist Italy in 1929 and the Reich Concordat in July 1933. Over fifty million people died because of Axis aggression. Does the present pope really own up to the church’s responsibility?

*Does confession of sin release from punishment?*

Somehow the idea is promoted that confession of sin brings forgiveness with automatic release from punishment. When a man confesses to murder, does society release him from punishment? No! When God passed before Moses, he proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression

and sin, and that will by **no means clear the guilty.**" ( Exodus 34: 6, 7) As Abel's blood cried out for retribution, so all the righteous blood that has been shed cannot go unrequited.

When David sinned by coveting his neighbor's wife, by taking his neighbor's wife, and by killing his neighbor, it did not go unnoticed by God. While the Lord did forgive David and he did not die for these sins, yet his punishment may have been worse than death. God said, "Therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house." (2 Samuel 12: 1-14) David lived to see his son, Absalom, seek his life, his kingdom divided, and experienced continual warfare. David showed greatness of character in living down his sin and showing a lifetime of contrition. God's forgiveness in no wise cleared the guilty.

*"Garnishing the tombs of the righteous"*

The religious leaders in Jesus' time came under his scathing criticism. He said, "Ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye

are the children of them which killed the prophets. **Fill ye up the measure of your fathers.**"

(Matthew 23: 29-33) The very arguments they used to show themselves above the vises of their fathers were the very same arguments Jesus turned upon them. They were the "children" of those who killed the prophets, and in line for punishment. God has kept record of all the righteous blood spilled, and not one drop will go unrequited.

In Revelation, we read about souls under the altar, that is, in the ashes, crying out, "How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6: 9, 10) In Revelation 16: 4-7, we read of when finally the righteous blood is brought into account. "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy ... Even so, Lord GOD Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." The present confessions of the church will not absolve centuries of spilling righteous blood. They are only admitting that they are the children of those who spilled all this blood and caused all this pain to so many for so long.

### *Crusades to take the Holy Land*

Referring to the Crusades and the Inquisition, the papal “Memory and Reconciliation” says, “Isn’t it a bit too easy to judge people of the past by the conscience of today...almost as if moral conscience were not situated in time?” John Leo says, “Correct answer: No. Many of the valiant crusaders used to warm up for their long trip to the Holy Land by butchering some local Jews, just for practice. The Christian moral conscience should have judged acts like these just as clearly in 1099 as the pope and most of the world would today.” One of the definitions of love is: “Love is kind”. We should never hold anyone who claims to be the vicegerent of Christ to a lesser standard. Let us never forget that the papal Crusades against the Holy Land were driven by the express purpose of securing Jerusalem. Every Bible student knows that the Kingdom of God will come from Jerusalem. Isaiah 2: 3 says, “For out of Zion [the place of David’s throne] shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Jerusalem “is the city of the great King,” (Matthew 5: 34, 35) and will be where his law will come from.

After the Crusades failed to gain Jerusalem for the papal powers,

we now find the present pope trying to wrest the Holy City away from the descendants of Abraham. If the papal powers had taken the Holy City in the Crusades, it is doubtful if they would be eager to share the Holy City with Arabs and Jews today. However, if they can’t possess that city, they do not want the Jews to have it, even though never has there been greater religious liberty in that city than now. Every Bible student knows that when the Jews possess the Holy City, the Kingdom of God on earth cannot be far off. The Catholic Church’s claims to be God’s Kingdom on earth are hollow unless they possess the Holy City. Jerusalem is in the right hands now with Israel.

The pope’s Crusade to take the Holy City by diplomacy will fail. Jesus said, “Salvation is of the Jews.” (John 4: 22) The real reason why the papacy has bitterly persecuted Jewry is out of fear of the truth that the Kingdom of God is to come through the Jews. What happens to the papal claims to be the Kingdom of God? Jesus said, “Swear not at all, neither by heaven; for it is God’s Throne: nor by earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King [Jehovah].” (Matthew 5: 34, 35)

When King David finally confessed his sin, he said, "I have sinned against the LORD." (2 Samuel 12: 13) All sins are against God, but sins of murder are sins that cannot receive acquittal by a mere confession of guilt much less by a general apology for wrongdoing somewhere at sometime. The present pope means to show that the Catholic Church is not presently engaged in mass murder and torture of those who possess another faith. That is welcome. However, it is in vain for him to expect acquittal by God for the tens of thousands, yes, even millions who have died because of the Catholic Church's involvement. If there is a God in heaven, righteous blood must be accounted for with just punishment. It is not in the power of people or nations to grant the Church acquittal. ☐

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