

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Genuine Catholic

‘Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven’’ (Matt., 7:21)

The greatest privilege any human being could possess is to belong to the one true Church of Jesus Christ. This privilege means that one is united to Jesus Christ as a living member of the human body is united to the head. It means that one has infallible assurance that the doctrines he is receiving about God and the means to attain to eternal life are true. It means that one has at his disposal the most effective means of reaching the goal for which he was created, especially the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

However, it may happen that a Catholic will come to believe that mere membership in the Church will save him, like fire insurance. This would be a grave error, as is evident from the words of Christ contained in today’s Gospel. He tells us that it is not sufficient that one acknowledge God as His Creator and Lord, but it is also necessary to obey all His commandments. *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven shall enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

The person who is a Catholic only in name and profession is really more blameworthy than one who is separated from the Church and was never a Catholic. Often such a person is not responsible for his lack of membership in the Church. Perhaps he is not aware of many of the obligations imposed by God’s laws, so that some of his actions, reprehensible though they may be in themselves, are not deserving of blame in the sight of God. If he lives up to his duties as he honestly sees them in his own conscience, he is pleasing God and will be rewarded by Him.

But the Catholic who boasts of his membership in the Church and yet does not live up to the principles of his faith is in a very unfortunate situation. He does not act in accordance with his belief. He believes that Our Lord is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, yet he seldom receives Holy Communion well, with little preparation etc. He believes that the Church has received from Jesus Christ the authority to make laws, yet he frequently violates those laws. He believes that the priests of the Church have the power to forgive sins, yet he rarely goes to confession. He believes that the law of God commands him to be pure and temperate and honest, yet he does not hesitate to transgress these laws. He believes that if he prays in time of temptation he will receive the grace to conquer the temptation, yet he neglects to pray.

Practical Application

Are you among those who say, “Lord, Lord,” but do not fulfil the will of God? Are you a Catholic in name only? If so, you cannot regard yourself as a genuine Catholic or a loyal follower of Jesus Christ.