

January 28, 1966

Dear Isabelle,

My solution to the many things that disturb you and so many other Catholics is first, of all and fundamentally, my faith in Christ. He was the Incarnate Son of God and founded His Church on the Rock of Peter and guaranteed it against the wiles of Satan. "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it." This Church is a living organism, the Mystical Body of Christ. Since it is living, it changes as does anything living. A marble statue does not change, but a living human being does, and so does the Church of Christ, the Catholic Church, His Mystical Body, a living organism. As Cardinal Newman has said, "To live is to change and to live much is to change often."

The Church that Christ founded is also an infallible teaching institution as regards faith and morals, things that really count, a sure guide in all else. So the current changes taking place in the external trappings of this living Church disturb me no more than do the changes that take place in a living human being; changes in style for example, long hair for men, or short hair, changes in women's styles, etc. Not that I like some of these peculiar doings. Of course we have to adjust to these changes just as we have to adjust to our parents growing older. But it is a shame to let these inevitable external changes disturb our peace of soul. Our peace should be based on Christ, the "Corner Stone" of His living Church, founded on the Rock of Peter. Christ, as the Son of God, is changeless, so our peace of soul, if based on Him, is changeless. "My peace I give unto you", he has told us. His peace. But if one founds his peace on something other than Christ, such as the peculiar antics of human beings, even clerics, including the hierarchy and the Pope, all of whom are fallible except the Holy Father when he speaks "ex cathedra" on matters of Faith and Morals, such "peace" because founded on a shifting foundation, is a shifting and unstable "peace". It is really not peace at all, but rather disturbance, turmoil and confusion of mind.

So resting my peace of soul on Christ, it makes no difference to me whether people sing or keep silence during Mass, for example, whether they receive the Holy Eucharist kneeling, sitting, or standing, even on their heads; whether they march around the church singing hymns or jazz. I cling to Christ, dwelling in the Tabernacle and within my own soul, and thus enjoy continual and unchanging peace in spite of the many things I don't like, that are going on, that I don't any more (humanly speaking) than in growing old myself.

Devotedly in Christ,

John
(John Markoe, S. J.
Creighton University, Omaha, Nebr.)

This was written by Father to a friend in Minneapolis

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