

MY EXPERIENCES WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

My first Experiences with the Catholic Church were when as Vice President and Secretary of the Melbourne Chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. I arranged Dinners and Fellowship Meetings with people from all Denominations , including a strong group from the Catholic Church, who had experienced the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Charismatic Renewal that swept round the World in the 1980's.

I embraced many Catholic Brothers and also Nuns in the Love that flowed in those meetings. Earlier I had personal contact with Cardinal George Pell, (In his training days at Ballarat College, he was keenly sought after by the Richmond Football Club ("GO Tigers) who wanted him as a Ruckman) then as Archbishop of Melbourne; in a Bible study I had given on morality I had commended Archbishop Pell for his stand against Homo-sexuality, so I wrote to him about it and also congratulated him on his Appointment as Archbishop of Sydney; he wrote me a very nice letter in return, and I was impressed by his statement "GOD has been good to me, and I hope with His help to be a blessing to the Priests and People of Sydney." (Love GOD & Love your Neighbour)

However when the Pope made him a Cardinal & called him to Rome to investigate the Church's Finances, he came against the Cardinals who want to use the money as they please. Remember Pope John Paul I also came determined to straighten out the finances; he only lasted a month; A book, written by a Catholic man of some standing. called "In GOD'S Name", (which I have read) claimed that he had been poisoned ; George Pell not only had the Cardinals against him but the Police were out to get him and some of the charges they made were ridiculous. Well it will all come out in the Judgement Day when the Righteous Judge shall Judge us all.

The time I had good fellowship with Catholics was when i was appointed Resident Supply to the Penola, S.A. Church , with also a fortnightly service at Dergholm in Victoria. I thoroughly enjoyed my 3 years of service there, preaching & giving Bible Studies and visiting ; Glen Clifford, the Session Clerk, lived in a large 2 story Victorian Mansion, and was a good friend. The Church was just down the road from the Catholic Church and the old about 14' x 10' blue stone room where Mary McKillop started her first school, on the cnr of Petticoat Lane and the modern school & Convent. What a Goer Mary McKillop was; when the local Bishop refused her request to start a Teaching Order, nothing daunted, Mary (perhaps about 1857) sailed off to Rome to see the Pope !!!

The Pope approved her request and the Catholic Schools were founded.

My wife Ena, who was an inspiration in our Sunday School, and I were friends with the Nuns; they asked me to talk to the school, and one night we went to have supper with them; I was amused to note their library did not include any romantic novels, (they were married to Christ) but for relaxation they read mystery novels by Agatha Christie, etc.

I got on well with the Minister's Fraternal and at Easter we exchanged Pulpits with the then Methodist Church, and had a combined Choir to sing Christmas Carols, led by the Catholic choirmaster. Penola had a strong Scottish background and a pipe Band; on St.Andrew's Sunday, they marched round the town playing their Pipes and come to Church I always had one to play "Amazing Grace" and one to read the Scripture.

My message from all this is that it is more important to "LOVE ONE ANOTHER" than to make Doctrine a strict basis of fellowship.

Let us walk together as Children of GOD, as Children of Light, and let our lights SHINE

Alfred Curtis 2023