

Homily Notes
Fr. James Flynn
Sunday, May 22, 2010

Spiritual and Not Religious

According to the Gallup Research Poll conducted in 2010:
(These numbers include all faith groups: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, etc)

43.1% of Americans were either “weekly or almost weekly” church attendees
11% “about once per month”
25% “seldom”
20% “never”

Surprisingly, These numbers have remained fairly steady since 1992 with a slight increase of two percent from the year 2009 to 2010

Many in the “Seldom or Never” group claim, “I am Spiritual and Not Religious” Only about 10% of the country describes themselves as either “Atheist or Agnostic” Agnostics believe there could be a God, but we just don’t know him and Atheists outright reject the existence of God at all.”

For literally nearly two thousand years being religious and being spiritual were synonymous. If someone was practicing their religion they were considered spiritual and vice-versa. But, in the modern day there seems to be this notion that one can be “Spiritual” without being “Religious.”

Many of those who describe themselves as Spiritual and not Religious have a negative view of what people call “Organized Religion.”

So, what does it mean to be Religious? This means that a person adheres to a structure of belief that is not based off their own personal interpretation of who God is. Being religious means that a person holds to certain texts, rituals, practices and laws that help govern their life and inform their faith.

In all the world there is no singular organization that is more “Religious” than the Roman Catholic Church. We are by far the most organized and centralized religion in the entire world.

World Religions: (From adherents.com)

There are about 1.2 billion Catholics in the world

Christians: 2.1 billion; Islam 1.5 billion; Atheist: 1.1 billion; Hindu: 900 million
(about...1.2 billion Catholics; 300 million Orthodox; and 600 million other Christians)

It Should Be "Spiritual AND Religious"

Without religion then what you have is relativism. Relativism is the basic idea that truth is not universal. Truth is then subjective...or relative...to each person. The problem is if all truth is relative then **that** is a Universal Truth (i.e.: the absolute truth is that there is no absolute truth). and if there is one absolute truth then it must have come from somewhere....Right? and if there is one absolute truth then maybe there are more. (see your Homily Notes on the Existence of God).

Without organized religion then everyone gets to define what it means to be a Christian on their own. **They** become the Pope, Bishops, Bible and Tradition. This position does not make any real sense if you believe that God revealed himself, most especially through Jesus Christ.

While it is certainly true that the Catholic Church has done much to hurt itself. Through the centuries there have been many bad things the Church has done to put Herself in a bad light. But, that does not mean God does not have a structure for His Church.

Why do we need The Catholic Church? First: Answer these questions:

- 1) Is there a God?
- 2) Is Jesus the Son of God...the Second Person of the Holy Trinity?
- 3) Did he establish a Church?
- 4) Does he guide the Church through the Holy Spirit?

If you answered "Yes" to these questions then that is "The Answer." Most Christians, whether they are Catholic or Protestant, would answer "Yes" to these questions, even if they don't believe it is the Catholic Church that is the One, True, Church.

In the coming weeks we will be looking at the structure of the Catholic Church and Her Biblical roots and meanings so you can get a better idea as to why the Catholic Church

