

## **“COME HOME TO ROME”**

This statement is made on a sign for a local Roman Catholic Church, the implication being that the various religious groups claiming to be Christian came out from Roman Catholicism as being the original church. Some Protestant groups readily admit that they came out of Rome as a result of what is known as the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, and they just sought to reform Roman Catholicism. The Bible teaches that Christians should “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). For one to determine whether or not that faith “once delivered” is the Roman Catholic Church one needs to examine whether or not that church teaches that faith.

One thing that is immediately noticeable is that Roman Catholicism claims that the Pope is the “Vicar of Christ” and thus the representative of Christ on earth. One can examine the “faith which was once delivered to the saints” from end to end and will not find mention of a “Vicar of Christ” or of a “Pope” as the “earthly head of the church.” Indeed, that original faith nowhere teaches that a man—any man—is the “earthly head of the church.” Roman Catholics would have us believe that Peter was the first “Pope.” However, by their own rules, Peter would not qualify as he was a married man—one who had a mother-in-law (Mat. 8:14). Also, that faith “once delivered to the saints” teaches that in the latter days some should depart from that faith (1 Tim. 4:1–3). Two of the departures mentioned are “forbidding to marry” and “commanding to abstain from meats.” For centuries Roman Catholicism banned the eating of meat on Fridays, something nowhere commanded in Scripture. Also, to this day, the teaching of Roman Catholicism is that its “priesthood” is to be celibate (unmarried). Other doctrines of Roman Catholicism could be given to show that they do not adhere to that “faith which was once delivered to the saints” (and therefore it cannot be the true church from which all other churches of men have departed), but these we have mentioned are sufficient to make the point.

To determine which church is the right church, one must always make reference to the “faith which was once delivered to the saints.” If a religious group teaches that which is contrary to that faith, it **cannot** be the church that Jesus built.

When one studies history, it is clear that there have always been those who have sought to preach and teach that one original faith. Sadly, because of the power of the Roman Catholic Church, many were classified as “heretics” through the centuries because they determined to preach and teach the Truth. As a result, many suffered severe persecution and even death because they would not bow to apostate religion. When the records are studied, one can see traces of the kingdom stretching back centuries before the Reformation of the 16th century. One can be encouraged by reading of the sacrifices that were made by so many during what have been referred to as the “Dark Ages” when Roman Catholicism held sway across the Western hemisphere.

May we, as God’s people today, “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” even when we are pressured from those outside of the church and from those “change agents” within the church that would seek to turn the Lord’s church into just another denomination.

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