

Be A Nun - That Must Be The Answer

By Former Catholic Nun Shirley Waltz



I was deeply concerned with the problem of how to live close to God and above temptation, and I came to the conclusion that separation from the world into a cloister must be the solution.

I was not born into a Roman Catholic family, but was exposed to much of its influence during my childhood. As a teenager, I was determined to find the answer. I began to read all the books I could find on Roman Catholicism and the lives of the "Saints." I was thrilled as I read the lives of St. Bernadette, St. Theresa, St. Francis, St. Claire and many others. The Ave Maria Hour became my favorite radio program. One thing, however, that impressed me about the lives of the Roman Catholic Saints was their lack of assurance of eternal life — for I knew that the Bible said: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13). For a while I dismissed this problem and became acquainted with the nuns at the convent near my home and also with the parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes Church. With their assistance I chose the Carmelite Order and was determined to stay there for life after my graduation from high school. Surely then I could devote my time to God and live free from temptation!

The next step was Roman Catholic instruction. About a month before my high school graduation, a friend of mine, Gilbert Hetes, who was studying to be a priest, gave me a book on Roman Catholic doctrine. Up to this time I knew little or nothing of what the Roman Catholic Church taught doctrinally. I felt sure that what little difficulties would arise could be smoothed out

satisfactorily.

As I began to read, my eyes were immediately opened to the Roman Catholic teaching on works for salvation. I knew that the Bible said in Ephesians 2:8,9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." As I continued to read the Roman Catholic doctrine book, I knew I could never become part of a system that taught its people to trust in their own righteous acts for salvation, when the Bible says, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). I studied the Roman Catholic doctrines of the Mass, the Papacy, Purgatory, Confession, Penance, Sacraments, Perpetual Virginity, Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. I investigated its claims of being the only True Church, Apostolic Succession, Papal Infallibility, etc. I learned that they admitted many of their doctrines were not found in the Bible. I discovered that the Bible references they gave for their doctrines did not support them, but refuted them.

God was leading me, and it was not long before a book called "Absolute Surrender" by Andrew Murray fell into my hands. As I read it, I saw that I did not have to try to live the Christian life any more than I had to work for my salvation. I came to know Christ as my all-sufficient Lord. Just as I trusted in His one perfect sacrifice on Calvary for my salvation, so I learned that as I daily yield to Him my life—He will provide the strength for me to live a victorious Christian life. I experienced the truth of Paul's inspiring testimony, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

The story is not ended, though, for I realized that to enter a convent would be against the will of God rather than to honor Him. My heart went out to the girls who had entered the convents under the spurious guarantee of gaining merits and ultimately Heaven. I no longer wanted to become a Roman Catholic. Now I desire that they might come to know the Lord Jesus Christ in a real way. God opened the way for me to go to Providence-Barrington Bible College in Providence, Rhode Island. For three years I studied God's Word and prepared for full-time Christian service. While there, God deepened my burden to be a missionary to the Roman Catholic people—the "Religious, but lost."

After my graduation, God led me to work at the "Conversion Center," which is being used for the evangelization of Roman Catholic priests, nuns, and "whosoever will." By His grace we desire that many will find as their all-sufficient Savior, Jesus Christ Who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Will you now give your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him fully as your all-sufficient Savior? It is written, "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,

sat down on the right hand of God; ... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:11-14). — *Shirley Waltz*

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