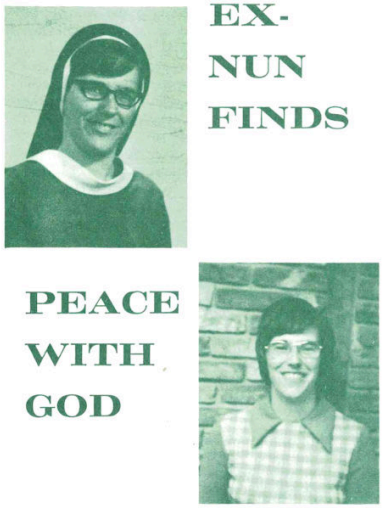
Ex-Nun Finds Peace With God

The Conversion of A Catholic Nun

By Wilma L. Sullivan, formerly Sister Wilma Marie R.S.M.



Being raised in the Roman Catholic Church by wonderful and loving parents, I came to realize that I had a strong desire to do the will of the Lord in what I considered to be a special way. The only way I felt I could serve the Lord to the fullest was by entering religious life. From 1967 to 1971, I was a member of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union. I thank the Lord for the experience, love and guidance that was given me there. However, my last two years were very difficult. I found division instead of unity. We were so busy "serving the Lord," we didn't have enough time to be with Him and share Him with each other. My life at this point was in total uncertainty because I felt our goal was to share Christ together and then turn to the world. To me, I was not being fed the spiritual food I needed to feed the world in which I lived. In 1971, I left religious life with the intent of finding out what I felt, why I felt it, and what to do when I found the answers.

While still in the convent, I had begun to question my faith in the Roman Catholic Church and the sacraments that I was receiving. I truly prayed to God that even though I didn't believe totally in the Eucharist, that He would somehow show me the truth. Since leaving the convent, I still remained Catholic, trying to do what I believed was right in the eyes of the Church. I still had many doubts about my faith, especially where Confession and the Eucharist were concerned. I believed in my heart that when I sinned, I sinned against God and, therefore, He should be my Confessor, not a man. The Bible gave me my answer in this regard in I Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between god and men, the man Christ Jesus."

My main problem, however, was my lack of faith in the Eucharist. It kept bothering me so I started to search for the answers in the Bible. In Hebrews

10:10-12 & 14, it says: “By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 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 forever, sat down on the right hand of God…For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

After reading these verses, I truly felt I had found the answer why I couldn’t believe that the bread and wine at Mass were actually Christ’s body and blood. He offered His body and blood once for all—not every day as the Catholic Church says they do in performing the same sacrifice; i.e., just before the actual consecration, the priest prays: “…let it (the bread and wine) become for us, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our Lord.” A great percentage of Catholics do not believe that the bread and wine are truly body and blood of Christ but only a remembrance of what He did for them. The second Vatican Council stated that if a person did not believe Christ was truly present in body at the Consecration, “let him be accursed.” I found another verse which gave me the ultimate solution for my decision. When Christ was dying on the cross, he said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). He was the ultimate sacrifice, He died once for all (every sin of every man, past, present and future) and no one could make any more offerings; He had done it all.

With these many questions in my mind, I entered the hospital for minor surgery in October of 1973. While there, I met a woman who was also a patient. Although I was there only a short time and didn’t know her well, I kept in contact with her daily for the next week. She invited me to her home to talk about spiritual things and since she knew I was an ex-nun and with my feeling that she needed someone to talk with, I accepted her invitation. Two of her friends were there and for the first time in my life, my religion was challenged. The most important thing I learned from this talk was that all good works one could do during his lifetime are not what makes it possible for a person to go to heaven. As it is shown in Isaiah 64:6, “All our righteousness are as filthy rags;” and again in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace are ye saved though faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Therefore, what saves you from going to Hell is not your good works, but your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.

During our discussion that first night, I was invited to go to their church, Calvary Baptist Church in Lansdale, PA. I did go, and after the second Sunday of going to Mass at the Catholic church, and then going to their church, I asked to speak to their Pastor, Robert Jordan, just to talk about my life and where I was headed.

Pastor Jordan gave me the testimony of how he was saved and what the Lord had done for him. He said that he had never realized that he was lost; neither did I, but praise the Lord, I did then.

I never knew I could go to Hell. Ever since I was a child, I had been taught

that God was a loving God and it would take a pretty bad person to go to Hell, if I would try to be good, go to confession when I was bad, and receive communion as often as possible, I would go to Heaven-if I died without any sins on my soul. In St. John's Gospel, the word believe is used 97 different times in his efforts to tell the Christians of that time and of the present time that their works didn't have anything to do with salvation but by simply believing, trusting in Christ, would a person be saved-once and for all. If you will recall, any time Christ performed a miracle, He asked only one thing of the person He intended to help, and that was faith-belief in Him and he was healed.

I came to realize that I was a sinner purely by being born into this world and that no baptism could take away that sin but only my faith and acceptance of Him as my personal Saviour- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16)-the baptism is an outward sign of an inward change. Through my acceptance and love of Him, I have the blessed assurance of going to Heaven when I die.

Just before I left the Catholic Church, I went to talk with a priest about my many disbelief's. We talked for about 45 minutes and at the conclusion of our talk, he told me that I would never leave the Catholic Church-never. I asked him why he felt that way and he told me that I was too steeped in the tradition of the Church. I answer: "I'm not seeking the tradition of any Church-I'm seeking God and I have found Him. I have come to realize that every word of the Bible is truly the Word of God and that through His Word and only His Word (not through any man made tradition or laws of any Church) the answers for not only life from day to day can be found, but also a blessed assurance of what will come for those who have been faithful to His Word."

My prayer for all who read this is that you will open your hearts to Christ. He is the only One Who can save you. No church can do it. I can't do it. No priest, minister or friend can do it. Christ is the only One and he won't do it until you open yourself totally to Him and are truly willing to "take your cross daily and follow Him." This does not mean having head knowledge of what Christ has done for you. Before you can be saved by Him, there must first be a true repentance for your sins and a knowledge of your going to Hell if you don't turn to Him to save you. Romans 10:9-10 says: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Since the day I was saved, Christ has totally changed my life and gives me peace, and the deepest conviction I have ever had. I pray that you too may come to know the Lord as your personal Saviour and thus become a true Christian for His sake and for the glory of Almighty God.

Romans 5:1, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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