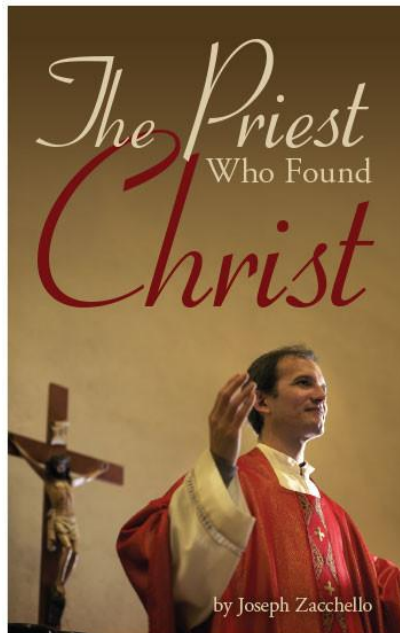# The Priest Who Found Christ
By Joseph Zacchello – Former Catholic Priest

I was born in Venice, Italy. After twelve years of study in a Roman Catholic Seminary, the Church ordained me as a priest. I was sent to the Italian Church of Blessed Mother Cabrini in Chicago. For four years I preached in Chicago, and later in New York. I never questioned if my sermons or instructions were according to the Bible. My only work and ambition was to please the Pope.

One Sunday, by chance, I tuned in a Protestant radio program. I was going to change the station. I was not to listen to Protestant sermons. Interested, I do not know why, I kept listening. My theology was shaken by this Bible test which I heard over the radio. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." (Acts 16:31). I concluded that it was not a sin against the Holy Spirit to have assurance of one's salvation.

I was not converted then, but my mind was full of doubts about the Roman religion. I became concerned more about the teachings of the Bible than about the dogma and decrees of my Pope. People were giving me a generous offering for thirty minutes of Mass. I promised to relieve the souls of their relatives from the fires of purgatory.

But when I looked at the big crucifix upon the altar it seemed that Christ was speaking to me. "You are stealing money through false promises. Souls of believers do not go to a place of torment! I have said, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours (Revelations 14:13).' God does not need daily sacrifices. My sacrifice was complete. My work of salvation was perfect. The Father approved it by raising Me from the dead. 'For by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are being sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).' If the priests and the Pope have the power of liberating souls from purgatory with

Masses and indulgences, why do they wait for an offering?"

I could no longer face the Christ on the altar. As I preached that the Pope was the Vicar of Christ, the successor of Peter, a voice seemed to rebuke me again. "You saw men kissing the Pope's feet. Do you really believe that he represents Me? I came to serve the people. I washed men's feet. Do you really believe that God has built His church upon a man when the Bible clearly says that Christ's Vicar on earth is the Holy Spirit!" (See John 14:26).

I was teaching my people to go to Mary, to the Saints, instead of going directly to Christ. But a voice within me was saying, "Who has saved you upon the cross? Who paid your debts by shedding His blood: Mary, the Saints, or I, Jesus? My believers should adore Me – in spirit and truth."
My doubts were really tormenting me inside the confessional box. People were coming to me, kneeling down before me, and confessing their sins. And I, with a sign of the cross was promising that I had the power to forgive their sins. I, a sinnner, was taking God's place. The Holy Spirit said, "You are depriving God of His glory. If sinners want forgiveness for their sins, they must go to God and not to you. They have broken God's law. To God, therefore, they must make confession. No man can forgive sins. 'You shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins (St. Matthew 1:21).' 'For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).'"

I could not stay any longer in the Roman Catholic Church. I could not continue to serve two masters, the Pope and Christ. I could not believe two contradictory teachings, tradition and the Bible. I had to choose between Christ and the Pope; between tradition and the Bible.

I chose Christ and the Bible! I left the Roman priesthood and the Roman religion and began sharing Jesus Christ with Catholics. I am urging Christians to witness, without fear, to win their Roman Catholic friends to Christ.

Friend, do you realize your need of Christ's salvation from sin? Do you desire His offer of forgiveness and peace? Will you now call upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save you? He said, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out" (St. John 6:37). See Romans 3:23; 6:23; St. John 3:16; 1:12; 1 John 5:11-12. – *Joseph Zacchello*

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