

# **The Testimony of Former Catholic Nun Peggy O'Neil**

**Saved by Grace at the age of 70 after  
practicing as a Nun for 50 Years!**

## **Introduction**

This is the story of my conversion to Christ at age 70, after practicing as a nun in the Catholic Church for 50 years. I write this in the hope that it will help others come to an understanding of the True Gospel of Salvation.

## **My Early Home Life**

I was born in Ballybunion, Co. Kerry in 1921 - the town where the River Shannon meets the sea. My parents, and all our neighbors, were staunch practicing Catholics, faithful to all the precepts of the Roman Catholic Church. The family rosary included the Litany of the blessed virgin, where Mary was invoked under a number of wonderful titles - Mystical Rose, Tower of ivory, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven; to name but a few. In my home, I was surrounded by religion and Catholic culture in the form of statues, pictures of Mary and the "Saints," Holy water, Rosary beads, Scapulars, Medals, and Relics. The Sacred Heart Lamp was always lit beside the picture of the family consecration to the sacred heart.

## **Schooling**

At school, I was well grounded in Catholic doctrine. I learned about the Mass, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and what was forbidden and commanded by each commandment. To my surprise I found I had only learned about nine commandments. The second one, which forbids us to make statues, was left out! In my parish church were some beautiful statues, and on Sundays after Mass, I used to light a candle before the statue of St. Teresa of Lisieux, and then I knelt down and prayed to her. Later I went to the local convent school where many teachers were nuns. I grew up with the idea that nuns were very special people before God, and their kind of life was the highest calling for any woman.

## **Life As A Nun**

At the age of seventeen, I said goodbye to my father and mother, my two sisters and seven brothers and entered the convent. The first seven years were spent in the south of France, in Beziers, a town whose name has its way into Church history, not too far from Lourdes. The Order I entered was dedicated to education. After college training I worked as a schoolteacher in

England for thirty-five years. Side-by-side with my teaching was my religious life. Before and after school, there were long periods given to prayer and religious exercises, and Mass every morning in the convent chapel. During my fifty years as a nun, regardless of the inevitable ups and downs of life, I was very happy. Happy to believe that I was following what I then thought was my God given vocation. The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience I had made were perpetual and final.

## **A Life Changing Discovery**

All of this changed in 1989 when I saw my nephew with an interest in the Bible. He also said that he left the Catholic Church. From early childhood we were told that the Catholic Church was the one true church outside of which there was no salvation. Why then should my nephew or anyone else leave it? I loved the Catholic Church, and everything about it, and implicitly believed all its teachings, never once doubting or questioning any of them. For me the Catholic religion was the only true religion in the world, but now for the first time I began to examine the faith into which I had been born. I soon found that some things I believed were nowhere in the Bible. Not only were there additions, but also some Catholic doctrines even contradicted the Bible. Proverbs 30:6 condemns as a potential liar anyone who would add to God's Word. Proverbs 30:6 KJV: *"Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar"*. To anyone who would contradict it, Romans 3:4 says: *"let God be true, but every man a liar."* Could this include the Pope?

As time went on I realized that the Catholic Church had a false gospel – one that is the exact opposite of the Gospel revealed in the Bible. The Gospel is the basic, most important doctrine in the Bible, as in it, God makes known His plan of salvation. Today there are thousands of false religions in the world and every religion including Catholicism has devised a different Gospel. A church stands or falls by the Gospel it preaches, at the age of 70 I had no option but to leave the Roman Catholic Church, which for so long I had greatly trusted.

## **God's Plan Of Salvation**

God's plan of salvation was to send a Saviour, Jesus Christ, and because of Him, He could effect salvation as a free gift for His people. The Roman Catholic plan of salvation is that God sent a Saviour, but the salvation He brought us was not complete, nor is it offered as a gift to us. Added to the work of Jesus must be what we do to save ourselves. The difference between the True Gospel and the gospel of Rome, is shown by comparing Scripture with the written decrees of the Council of Trent which was held by the Catholic Church over five hundred years ago and has not changed to this day—

## **Council of Trent**

*"To those who work well unto the end and trust in God, eternal life is to be*

offered, both as grace mercifully promised by God Himself through Jesus Christ as a reward to be faithfully given to their good works and merits.”

## **Romans 4:5**

Romans 4:5 KJV: *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

From this we can see that the Catholic Church teaches that we have to work for salvation and in contrast, God’s Word teaches that we do not work for salvation, but that Heaven will be given to all who believe that Jesus has done all the work on their behalf.

As a Catholic I knew that Jesus was God who came on earth both as God and man to save us. I knew many facts about Jesus from reading the four gospels, and thirteen of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary gave a daily reminder of the major events in His life. I knew Jesus as a person, but I did not know Him as Saviour. I did not know the atoning and saving work He accomplished on my behalf. The Jesus I knew was a Saviour who left me to struggle all my life trying to save myself by keeping the Ten Commandments, Sacraments, Prayers, and Penance. The more I did, the better chance I had of going to Heaven. I was in fact trying to do what Jesus had already done for me, hoping that in the end with Mary’s help and that of the Church I would be good enough to make it to heaven. I did not know that the Bible tells us that it is *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* – Titus 3:5 KJV

All of our good works fall short of God’s standard! *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* – Isaiah 64:6 KJV.

God’s standard is perfection; God’s standard is Jesus Christ. For us this is humanly impossible, but the good news of the Gospel is that what God requires, He has provided! On the cross the sins of His people were put to the account of Jesus and His perfection was put to our account. His righteousness in exchange for our sins. At the moment we embrace this awesome truth God no longer sees our sin but sees us clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, even the righteousness of God. At that moment we have appropriated to us a salvation which we can never lose.

After 50 years of serving as a Nun in the Roman Catholic Church I came to this profound realization and put my whole faith and trust in the saving work of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 KJV: *“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;”*

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