

THIS APOLOGY DOESN'T RING TRUE

Pope John Paul II desired, as part of the Jubilee year 2000, to ask the world for “forgiveness for errors committed by her children in the past.” Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger chaired a committee comprised of selected members from the International Theological Commission to create the wording which would be “acceptable.”

Several ground rules were set up as work progressed. The document was not going to be a formal papal document. It would only serve as a *reference publication*, a “consultation” of thought. Its main purpose was to purify people’s memory of the past (i.e., minimize the impact of history). “... the idea is not to accuse the past,” Ratzinger said, “We are always sinners, and we want to understand this with humility and do penance, which renews the church and each one.” *Zenit*–Vatican City, Feb. 2, 2000.

“The Church is holy because it receives and communicates the holiness of Christ to humanity ...,” said Franciscan George Cotties, secretary to the International Theological Commission and Theologian of the Pontifical Household. He went on to say the past wrongs were not committed by the church but by sinners in the church.

“Then on March 12, 2000, Pope John Paul II asked for forgiveness for the past and present faults of the children of the church. This began at the entry to St. Peter’s Basilica when the pope prayed silently before Michelangelo’s *Pieta*. Then with a homily during Mass before an image of Mary, and then seven cardinals of the Roman Curia publicly confessed specific sins of the past and present sins of the world while venerating [worshipping] a special crucifix. Then the Pope embraced a large crucifix of Christ on the cross, kissed it as an expression of love and petition for pardon. *Zenit*–March 12, 2000.

What were the sins “confessed?”

Past (cardinals read statements)

- General confession for Christians “over the course of history for faults using non-evangelical methods in the ‘service of faith.’”
- Sins that caused divisions among Christians
- Faults committed against Jews
- Sins against love, peace, rights of people, respect for cultures and religions
- Acts that wounded the dignity of women and unity of mankind
- Wrongs against fundamental rights of people, abuse against children, marginalization of the poor, suppression of the unborn in maternal womb

Present (pope read statement)

For atheism, religious indifference, secularism, ethical relativism, violation of right to life, poverty, “we cannot but ask ourselves what our responsibilities are.” Then he added, “... this is not a judgment on the subjective responsibility of the brothers who have preceded us...”

How sincere was this confession? Did it match the heart cry of Jesus hanging on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."? Did it reach the depth of Daniel's prayer while in captivity, "We have sinned, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments." "O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear ... O Lord, hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord harken and do." Daniel 9:5,18,19.

Think of these following words spoken by Vatican officials. Cardinals mention *categories* of various sins. The Pope's response: "forgive our sins" "have mercy on your sinful children" "we urgently implore your forgiveness" "asking your forgiveness" "grant us your forgiveness" "forgive us and grant us the grace to heal" "we ask your forgiveness" "turn back to you in whole hearted repentance."

Then Auxiliary Archbishop Rino Fisichella of Rome said, "It was a simple gesture, but at the same time solemn." "Pope John Paul II wanted to give a complete global vision, making references to circumstances of the past, but without focusing on details *out of respect for history*["]. " ... the Church is not the one who has sinned, the sinners are Christians, and they have done so against the Church, the bride of Christ." *Zenit*–Rome, March 13, 2000. This in itself is what Revelation 13 said the papacy would do. It presumes God's authority. Their sins *have* been against God.

Many times Cardinal Ratzinger said the church can't sin, it is Christians who sin and need forgiveness. But later he said, "... in spite of the Church's sins, it continues to be the Church of saints." "... we are in a new situation in which the Church can confess its sins again with greater liberty ... " Yet through all the generalities in the solemn ceremony on March 12, and in spite of the document the International Theological Commission wrote called *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*, nothing is specific. Ratzinger himself said, "... the Church at present cannot constitute itself as a tribunal that passes sentences on the past."

If it can't judge the past, it can't ask God to forgive the sins of the past. If history is so obscure, how can the Catholic Church ask for forgiveness of the unknown? In fact, the National Catholic Register specifically said in the March 19-25, 2000, edition. "The confessions of sins and request for forgiveness did not include reference to any specific historical acts." Why? It would condemn popes, cardinals, church leaders – the very men that helped build the tradition and liturgy of the present church, making the very roots of the papacy crumble!

The whole process is based on a false pretense of where guilt lies, the seriousness of judgment and God's final eradication of sin and sinners. "... all of us, though not personally responsible and without encroaching on the judgment of God, who alone knows every heart, bears the burden of the errors and faults of those who have gone before us." Pope John Paul II said, "Christians are invited to acknowledge ... the faults which they have committed. But this *Mea Culpa* was only in general terms.

The voices from millions of people who died while being tortured because of the papacy cry out for truth of their unholy despotism. Additional millions lie in graves failing by papal standards to have ever satisfied the church for unforgiven sin because they did not pay

enough, do penance earnestly enough or confess to human potentates deeply enough their sins and offenses toward God. This whole pagan system is corrupt and void of anything that merits reconciliation with God.

“The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but *she is unchanged*. Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today.” *The Great Controversy*, p. 571.

“Everyone knows that the Church of Rome claims to be in errant and indefectible and that *she does not change her views*, ‘Yesterday, today and forever’ is her cry.” Jesuit E. Boyd Barrett, Ph.D., *Rome Stoops to Conquer*, Julian Messner (1935).

True confession comes with *promises* to turn from wrong, to turn from evil. General promises only represent a show. The Jews wanted to hear that the Holocaust was abhorred as well as hated and came partly because of Jesuit anti-Semitism. The Protestants wanted to hear profound remorse for the loss of over 150 million Christians by murder, but all they got were paltry words of her sorrow for “non-evangelical methods.” True sincerity of apology and begging for forgiveness from those hands were absent.

The confession looked good, sounded good, but crumbles before the bar of reason and turns integrity into a minuet. Why not be specific? Why “protect history” when it is history that needs to be purified by thoughtful confession? The whole affair was an off-key orchestration. The note reached the ear but was too confused to find its way to the heart.

Franklin S. Fowler Jr., M.D.
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