

Scandal in the Catholic Church

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Adapted from a reflection written for my day of Ordination - April 25, 2010

Now why would anybody in their right mind choose to go to school for six years just to be ordained in a church that is riddled with scandal? Why would anybody do that?

I had a class on Church History. The history of the Church is littered with scandal. Two thousand years of scandals, heresies, deceptions and wars. What I learned is that the history of the Church is littered with **humans**.

And in the midst of all that litter and scandal I also learned about some Saints.

So scandal is not what Church History is about. The real lesson of any Church History class is this: Led by the Holy Spirit, the Church is still here in spite of all the scandals. If this endeavor was of human origin, it would destroy itself, but nothing can snatch us away from the love of God.

I had other classes besides Church History: Moral Theology, Eucharist, Marriage, Hermeneutics (which is the study of scripture), Canon Law, Baptism, Music and Homiletics. I learned a lot in those six years, and there's still a lot I don't know. But what I learned in each of these classes is more than their content. The real lesson of all the classes I took is **how good it is to be Catholic!**

Being Catholic defines who we are. We aren't someone who is a member of the Catholic church. We **ARE** Catholic. We do all that Catholic stuff because we are called to make Jesus present in the world, and when we are led by the Holy Spirit, Christ is present in us and we can be Christ for others.

Nothing can snatch us away from the love of God. God loves us so much that He allows us free will. That means God allows us to make choices. It's like all of us are His 16-year-old daughter and He is letting us drive by ourselves... for the first time... **All The Time**. It's that kind of love. God hopes we make good choices but He doesn't control us. And likewise, God does not control what happens to us. But whatever choices we make, nothing can snatch us away from God's love for us.

This doesn't mean we don't stumble. Fifteen years ago, our little Queen of Peace parish was dragged through the headlines by the priest scandal. Like now, we all pay dearly for it. It's like all Catholics are on trial. Others judge our faith by what they read in the paper and what they hear on the news. As we try to defend ourselves to a jury of our peers, we question our own faith and we cross-examine what we believe and why.

There comes a time to choose. Do you curse the darkness or do you stand up and turn on a light? We are called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.

That, my friends, is why I'm writing these words. The real story of the priest scandal is not the scandal. It is our response as Catholics. In 2010 I was ordained a deacon along with 35 other men, into the Catholic Church that has withstood scandal for over 2000 years. The Catholic Church, led by the Holy Spirit, will always continue to make Jesus present in the world!

Nothing can snatch us away from the love of God. Let's stand up and turn on a light!