

We Miss You!

Dear Friend,

- Are you a Catholic who now feels separated from the Church?
- Have you felt as if you are not welcome?
- Would you like to feel at home in the Catholic Church again?
- Have you left the Catholic Church because of a divorce or remarriage?
- Were you raised Catholic but do not come or seldom come to Church anymore?
- Do you only attend on Easter and Christmas and wish to connect more to your faith?

You're not alone. There are many people who have been raised Catholic but through the years have moved away from the Church.

There are many reasons why people become separated from their faith community. For some, it is due to a disagreement or confusion regarding Church regulations, often in the situation of divorce and remarriage. Sometimes separation occurs due to a disagreement with a priest, a religious sister, or another parish member. Sometimes people are disenchanted because of the hypocrisy of some Church members. For others, it is a theological or moral disagreement which becomes the reason for the distance that has grown between them and the Church. Some are scandalized and shocked that some priests and bishops have abused people and they've simply had enough.

I've been told by many inactive Catholics that since leaving the Church they feel there is something missing in their life. Even though they don't go to Mass they still pray and consider themselves spiritual. I get that. There is deep within us a dimension within our souls longing to connect with God. My inactive Catholic friends tell me that what they miss most is receiving Holy Communion. That makes sense to me, since the Eucharist is the sacrament that unites us: unites us with God and with the Church.

All of Christian history shows us that the Church is made up of saints and sinners. Even the saints were imperfect -- and we are *all* sinners. But it is especially tragic when a Church leader sins. It has a big ripple effect. At every Mass at which I celebrate, and every night before I go to bed, I ask God's forgiveness for all those whom I have offended and hurt in any way. I know that one day I will have to appear before God and to give an account for my life as a priest, and I am in need of God's mercy.

So I have a special place in my heart for those hurt or alienated by the Church. No one should hurt, especially if that pain comes from the very institution Christ founded to be His living presence in the world. I want you to know that I am available to meet with you and do what we can do to bring about healing.

I'll listen to your story. I want you come talk it out with me. I won't judge; I hope to be an instrument of healing. The pain people feel weighs them down and drains their life of energy and joy, preventing them from moving beyond that hurt. I really hope I can be a catalyst to help rebuild a relationship with God, or help re-connect you with the Church. I'll provide any information you need and to explain the rationale about why the Church teaches what it teaches. My hope is that you will take another look at the Church that was once an important part of your life, and I prayerfully long for the day when you will welcome Jesus who comes to you through the sacraments and in the life of the Church.

If you would like to talk with me about the Church, have questions about what the Church teaches and why, or if you want to talk about a hurt from the Church or some Church representative, please reach out me.

If you're not quite ready yet to visit, here are a couple of websites that I recommend:

- [Catholics Come Home](#)
- [Once Catholic](#)

And lastly, I came across this quote during my own struggles within the Church. I want to share it with you; perhaps it might help express what you might be feeling:

“How much I must criticize you, my church, and yet how much I love you. You have made me suffer more than anyone and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I should like to see you destroyed and yet I need your presence. You have given me such scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness. Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false, yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous, and more beautiful.

Countless times I have felt like slamming the door of my soul in your face, and yet, every night, I have prayed that I might die in your sure arms. No, I cannot be free of you, for I am one with you, even if not completely you. Then too ... where would I go? To build another church? But I could not build one without the same defects, for they are my defects, and again, if I were to build another church, it would be my church, not Christ's church. No, I am old enough. I know better.” - Carlo Carretto

Prayerfully,

Father Bill

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