

My Testimony in Christ
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Myself born & brought up in a traditional Roman Catholic family based in Kerala, India. From Childhood itself, I had an active participation with all the spiritual activities & spiritual organization carried out by our Churches & was keen to maintain the top places in Sunday school exams. After all these catechism studies when I look back to my previous time, I realize that (it is true that by the grace of Lord born in a nominal Christian family), there is no in-depth knowledge in Christ's teachings & Bible even though I completed 11 yrs (10+1) in Sunday school (catechism). Instead, our churches are giving prior importance to learn & preach history of Churches rather than the deep study of Word of God/God's plan, which should be the basic goal of a Christian. Due to this reason, whenever I used to read the Bible those days, I just read it n never tried to go for the inner meaning and message of God. Here I want to share my testimony with all of you by the grace of Lord.

While I was in Mumbai, I had connections with Born Again Christians who protested the teachings of Catholics. Whenever they say against such belief, I used to be very furious and protested that these are baseless. But these arguments forced me to learn Bible more and lead to know some solid facts. Though I have learned some facts, I always used to go for my own justification to support the traditional belief to prove that all these cannot be practical. Due to close tie up with society & strong catholic family background n relations, I did not submit to God's will. Currently, I am employed within a private firm in Saudi and these spiritual thoughts were working within me. I used to protest n have verbal fight with such people, especially with my eldest brother who had received this inner vision of God few years back. As usual I had strong verbal fight with my brother who too working in Saudi on 12th Sept 2003 about this subject & I always tried to cut his words n never agreed with him on these facts. But after that talk of half an hour I felt very disappointed n guilty that I misjudged him. On 14th September, 2003 (Sunday) midnight, God visited me in a very special way; I was forced to get up from the bed with a dreadful fear and a feeling that going to die next moment, feeling of shaking the mind first n then the whole body. I knelt down in the room and started to pray with tears along with the rosary which I had. I used to do carry n recite this rosary even though in Saudi-a place where there is no freedom to worship or pray except for Muslims.

But on that special midnight, God started to open my inner eyes to know the truth. I began to lift both hands, rosary in one hand and started to recite n pray to Mother Mary n the prayer continued for few minutes, but there was no change of state ...suddenly the inner spirit urged me strongly to keep down the rosary & pray to Lord Jesus Christ with whole heart & mind. I put down rosary n with tears prayed "**Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of this World, be merciful & forgive me, am a sinner**". Miraculously, on the spot, there I experienced an amazing healing by Lord Jesus Christ...Again I prayed with Bible in one hand...& I heard a voice speaking within me..."**You are a fool, Why should you depend on other objects & persons who cannot speak, hear, walk or move, instead to Lord who is living and abiding within "**. On that night, the Spirit of God revealed "**Why should we pray to any other objects or persons who had gone into silence (died), if Lord Jesus Christ who died, risen & living forever, can give us eternal salvation & eternal life?.**" From that very moment onwards, I am fearful to such objects & images...even I am afraid to see such things especially while praying. I started to think why God should indulge with me like this. Then, I refreshed my mind back that for a long time I

was in strong arguments with such Born again people and their beliefs, especially in the matter of image or idol worship & baptism...I was telling them that images are just for remembrance n not for worship n re: child baptism also I had justification that the best time for a person to be baptized is child, coz, this is the time a person doesn't have any sins, pure & innocent. Even until that time I didn't know the inner or spiritual meaning of Baptism, but only a ritual followed by Christians...

But after this experience of Spirit of God, I decided to go in depth into the Bible to know the truth & real facts. When I went in depth, I realized that my assumptions were entirely wrong. When I realized this, first of all I could not accept, coz, I was holding a strong Catholic background n was slowly trying to hide my face from God for this worldly reason. But, God was chasing me continuously and He again started to work through me. Due to my disobedience to obey the Word of God, He pulled away my sleep entirely; I could not sleep for complete **3 days & 2 nights**. Just imagine a person who could not sleep continuously for 60 hours! Obviously such person will get mad. But as I said before, His plan for us is to be saved not to be perished. But on that 3rd night, I joined a prayer group who **worshipped the Lord in Truth & Holy Spirit**. It was a transforming experience in my life. We together prayed for a minimum of 2 hours...n on that night, I could sleep well after a gap of 60 hours. Praise The Lord..!!! Later I submitted myself to the Lord to be purified by His Holy Blood n received Lord Jesus as my personal Savior and Lord even though I was a Christian n followed the teachings of Catholic Church till that moment. As the Scripture says

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved.**

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:8-10).

Re. **Image or idol worship** I feared a lot when I realized the depth of anger/condemnation from God to those who doing such things. Bible says.

- "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness [of any thing] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth:5 Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me;6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments". (Exodus 20:4-6; 2nd commandment as per Bible)
- "Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth [it] in [a] secret [place]. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen...." (Deuteronomy 27:15)
- For the LORD will judge his people and he will repent himself concerning his servants. The idols of the nations are Silver & Gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak; eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them; and so will all who trust in them." (Psalms 135:14-18)

Many Christian denominations trying to justify this practice of keeping statues or images for spiritual purpose by quoting the incident of God's instruction to make a bronze serpent to get rid of death (Numbers 21:6-9). But they are willingly forgetting the real fact that this same image of bronze snake made by Moses in the wilderness had become an object of idol worship & therefore were destroyed by King Hezekiah who feared the Lord (2 Kings 18:4). So people are knowingly ignoring the true fact that this image has been destroyed not to practice idol worship, which is displeasing to Lord.

So I believe from these verses that there is no sufficient justification I can put forward as a catholic to support keeping statues and images in the churches, instead church is suppressing the 2nd commandment of God and splitting the last commandment into two in order to complete 10 commandments through catechism & church teachings !!. As the 10th Commandment is:-

- "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that [is] thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17)..

But our congregation split this sentence and makes this into two in order to suppress commandment of image worship so as to complete 10 commandments. A short comparison of God's 10 commandments Vs Rome's "10" Commandments as below.

Rome's '10' Commandments	God's 10 Commandments	Specific Sin
1. "I am Yahweh your God. You shall have no gods except me."	1. I <i>am</i> the LORD thy God. . . . Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. (Exo 20:2-3)	Worship of false gods.
Why is this space empty?	2. "Thou shalt not make to thee a graven thing (image), nor the likeness of <i>any thing</i> that <i>is</i> in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that in the waters under the earth: Thou shalt not adore (bow down to) them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth <i>generation</i> of them that hate me." (Exo 20:4-5)	Making, bowing before or praying to graven images (i.e., statues, icons, etc.)
2. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."	3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." (Exo 20:7)	Using God's Name in vain; cursing in God's name.
3. "Remember to keep holy the Lord's day."	4. 8 "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day." (Exo 20:8)	Not Keeping Sabbath holy
4. "Honor your father and mother."	5. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the LORD thy God will give thee." (Exo 20:12)	Dishonoring the parents.
5. "You shall not kill."	6. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exo 20:13)	Murder
6. "You shall not commit adultery."	7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exo 20:13)	Adultery
7. "You shall not steal."	8. "Thou shalt not steal." (Exo 20:15)	Theft, Cheating
8. "You shall not bear false	9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness	False witness, false oaths

witness against your neighbor"	against thy neighbour." (Exo 20:16)	
9. "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."	10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house: neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ass, nor any thing that <i>is</i> his."(Exo 20:17)	Covetousness
10. "You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor."		

Secondly, **Baptism** : I was a strong supporter of Child baptism n believed that the suitable time of a human is child, to be baptized. But after realizing the fact when scrolling through the Word of God, it is vivid that this practice is wrong and doesn't have any Biblical authenticity-instead only a ritual followed traditionally from centuries. While looking back to the history of such practices, it's learned that until end of 3rd Century there was no child baptism, afterwards, this practice has been started, just for the convenience...

Introduction:-

It is learned that one of the main reason people support child baptism, coz, child is sinful at birth, so he/she should be baptized while as a child to get into heaven (if died as a child). While an individual does mistakes deliberately, it is called Sin .So if a child has a birth-sin, it is without child's awareness n willingness n the child is not at all responsible for that directly...In short **if a child has birth-sin, God has already prepared the solution for that sin through Jesus Christ..!!** So Repentance is needed for a sinner only. **Sinner who would like to repent on the sins only can be baptized.** There is not a single person in this world born of flesh, without sin. Scripture says "**All have Sinned and fall short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23)**. So how can a child is to be baptized for a thing which he/she don't know, instead parents should submit child to God in the church after birth, which is practiced by almost all the Christian denominations. But some "denominations" performs submission & baptism together, which is not as per the Word of God & cannot be justified as per Bible.

Some people say that baptism is necessary so as to be saved or to have salvation or to get deliverance from sin. But it is not correct. Baptism is the commandment of our Lord for those who believe that Jesus is Lord and must repent about his/her sins before baptism. So how can a child repent about sins while as a child? So **BAPTISM IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY THOSE WHO ARE SAVED TO WITNESS "JESUS IS LORD" TO THE WORLD"** as the Bible says this is the commandment of Lord before he entered into Heaven after his resurrection which He instructed us to follow.

For What: This is the commandment of Lord as below.

(1)And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. (Mark16:15-19)..

(2)And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in**

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen. (Mathew 28:18-20)

So it is clear that baptism is for those who believe n not for any one else. It may be a Gentile, but can **never be a child!!**

Meaning:-

Baptism is to bury the repented man who repent about his sins into the tomb of water, like dead body which is buried. It is symbolic representation & witnessing of Christ's death, burial & resurrection as per the Bible.

“Know you not, that **so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection: "(Romans 6:3-5)

So wearing new man while burying the old man relates to one who is immersed and coming up from the water during faith baptism. (Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4). So immersed baptism is not a human advice but justifies Word of God. It is the resemblance of death, burial & resurrection of Lord Jesus.

- For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ (dead to sin)** shall rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left **(dead to sin)** will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

So it is very clear that through faith Baptism we are symbolically dying with Christ n proclaiming the death, burial & resurrection of Lord (**victory over sin/dead to sin**). So a person died or living; it is the commandment that he/she should be **dead to sin in Christ to meet the Lord in clouds**. A person who could not follow immersed faith baptism cannot proclaim that, he/she is a partaker with Christ's death, burial n resurrection.

Origin of word "Baptism":-

This word originates from a Greek word "**Baptisdo**". The real meaning is "**To Immerse**"..

The Greek word which use to term "**To pour**" or "**To spread**" is "**Rayino**" or "**Rantiso**"

Who is to be Baptized:-?

Those who repent and become child of God after hearing the Word of God (Acts 2:41; 8:37-38; 10:48; 19:1-4). Moreover it is the commandment of Lord that the person should be a believer & accept Jesus as Lord & Saviour before Baptism..as below..

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be

damned.(Mark 16:16) . So Bible never entertains to baptize a child who cannot repent himself/herself...

When to be Baptized: - After repentance (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 8:36-38; 10:44-48; 16:14-15; 19:1-6)

In short, through Baptism, we are witnessing the Lord Jesus to the world. So **why should we ashamed of witnessing our Lord, who gave up His life for us..!!** ? As scripture says we have to confess our Lord before men so as to be confessed by Lord before Almighty Father.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven". (Mathew 10:32-33)

Thank you for your patience to read this & most welcome to share with your friends for His glory. May God bless you all abundantly!

With love n prayers...sojan