

A Personal Relationship With Jesus

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I'm a cradle Catholic, but I had never heard anyone mentioned a personal relationship with Jesus until after I turned 64. I first heard of this idea during a bible study session, when one non-Catholic Christian said: "It doesn't matter what church you belong to; your personal relationship with Jesus is all that is important." I didn't agree for I was taught that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church, but not knowing what to say, I remained silent. I thought: Wow! What's a good way to keep people away from church. I quickly forgot about this idea, but a few weeks later, I heard the same expression, this time from a practicing Catholic. Again, I didn't agree nor did I know what to say; I brushed off the idea as no more than an attempt to be politically correct. I didn't think about this idea afterward, but then, it hit me one day when a priest told the same group, myself included, that until recently, he didn't know that our relationship with Jesus is so important. Well! I was perplexed, but at least he didn't say, it doesn't matter what church you belong to, I thought. I pondered upon what he said, and decided to check it out. And, behold, here's what I found, Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 299, 796, 1309: (299) *Because God creates through wisdom, his creation is ordered: "You have arranged all things by measure and number and weight."*¹⁵¹*The universe, created in and by the eternal Word, the "image of the invisible God", is destined for and addressed to man, himself created in the "image of God" and called to a personal relationship with God.*¹⁵² (796) *The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship.* (1039) *In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare.*⁶²⁴ (See CCC for full text and foot notes 151, 152, and 624)

Wow! I had no idea that calling to a personal relationship with God is the teaching of the Catholic Church. But here it is. Written down in black and white. So I accept, I believe, and I submit myself to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Now, knowing that a personal relationship with Jesus is important, I asked myself, "What is my personal relationship with Jesus? Is it a hi-and-bye relationship, or is it a close one?" I know my personal relationship with Jesus is better than just hi-and-bye, but I can't quantify it. I wondered if spending one hour weekly with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration, or celebrating His life, death, and resurrection in the Holy Mass indicative of a close relationship. I don't know what I ought to do to foster a personal relationship with Jesus, but I do know what Jesus wants me to do to have the closest, the most intimate personal relationship with Him. He wants me to eat His flesh and drink His blood so that I can remain in Him and He in me. He said: Jn 6: 56, "*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*" Can any relationship be more personal, more intimate, or closer than to be in each other?

So to the friends who told me about a personal relationship with Jesus, I thank you. I apologize for considering your good words as a way to keep people away from church, and as an attempt to be politically correct. I now believe that a personal relationship with Jesus is all that is important, but, my friends, if you want to have a close personal relationship with Jesus, close enough to remain in Him and He in you; it does matter what church you belong to.

God Bless,

