**Are Your Motives Credible?**

Have you ever asked yourself why you believe in God? Or better yet, someone asks you bluntly why you’re Catholic? The genesis of the question in both instances is a natural curiosity to know and understand the meaning behind our beliefs. This line of questioning offers us a great opportunity to truthfully know and understand the why behind our belief in Jesus Christ and His Church.

When we speak about our belief in Christ, words alone do not sufficiently provide a complete answer. The reality is the relationship between faith and good works or faith and reason must work hand in hand if we are to adequately present a genuine profession of our faith. It’s one thing to say “I believe,” as professed in the Creed, it’s another to actually live out the Creed.

**Genuine Motives**

When someone asks you the motives behind your belief in Jesus Christ, what should resonate first and foremost is your visible, authentic living of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:17-20). A specific term we relate to this way of living is referred to as the “Kerygma.” What the Kerygma means is an authentic and faithful living out of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ (The Creed). Further, it is a genuine application of our Catholic faith in daily life culminating in an active sacramental life centered on Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

A great biblical example of the motive of faith is found in St. Paul’s letter to the Romans where he says; “Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you. Live peaceably with all.” (12:17-18) Another example is Christ teaching in the temple where he reminds his parishioners; “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any man’s will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking in my own authority. (7:13-15)

**Credibility and Conversion**

What makes our motives credible with respect to the faith is that they aim at assisting others before ourselves. Many can state the reasons to believe in God and provide volumes of evidence toward the existence of God and His authority. But what pierces the heart is that we believe that God has revealed Himself to us out of love and others see this belief genuinely lived out. The miracles of Christ found in Sacred Scripture, the lives of the Saints, the gift of the Church herself as the bride of Christ provide ample motives of credibility. St. John reminds us how much God indeed loves us through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross (3:16).

St. Paul tells us that in order to gain everything we most lose everything in Christ (Phil 3:8). This reflects a credible way to live our life in Him. The motive behind this way of living is a genuine intimacy with our Lord where we actively pray on a daily basis culminating in our faithful participation at Mass. These actions in turn reflect our active witness of the Gospel e.g. an intention to actively engage the world in Christ.

The great Evangelist G.K. Chesterton, who I recommend to anyone who desires to learn more about the relationship between God and Man, aptly sums up the credibility of our motives in this way:

“The truth is, of course, that the curtness of the Ten Commandments is an evidence, not of the gloom and narrowness of a religion, but, on the contrary, of its liberality and humanity. It is shorter to state the things forbidden than the things permitted: precisely because most things are permitted, and only a few things are forbidden.”