

## Cafeteria Catholics

Over the years, you may have heard the term, “*Cafeteria Catholic*”. This is a phrase that is ascribed to those Catholics who feel that Church doctrines and dogmas are a matter of personal choice. Such individuals feel that certain Catholic teachings may be true for some – but not necessarily for them. They simply pass on the rest as if they had a choice. Those who fall into this category fall into the trap of **moral relativism** – “*what is true for you may not be true for me*”. Confession, fasting and abstinence, prayer, good works, the mass – even faith itself are simply passed over in what some falsely see as a *spiritual buffet*.

In **2 Thess. 2:15**, St. Paul tells us to “*hold fast to the tradition that we were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of theirs.*” To show how serious he is about this in the very next chapter, he goes on to say, “*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us*” (2 Thess. 3:6).

Jesus says of His Church in **Luke 10:16**, “*Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.*” When we reject Church teachings, we are really rejecting our Lord Jesus who identifies his very self with his Church in **Acts 9:4-5**.

The Church has God-given Authority (**Matt. 16:15-19, 18:15-18, John 16:12-15, 20:21-23**) to which we must submit as Catholics. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his Apostles the Holy Spirit would guide the Church to “*all truth*” about the things that were coming. This is why in **1 Tim. 3:15**, St. Paul calls the Church “*the pillar and foundation of truth.*”

When the Church declares a truth – it is not simply making something up that it is new. It is stating a revealed truth that the Church has always held. Historically, this is usually done in response to a heresy or other challenges to the faith. Groups such as “*Catholics for Choice*” and “*Call to Action*” have chosen to reject these revealed truths of God and have instead embraced a secular world view.

We must remember that Jesus established the Church as a means of dispensing God’s grace. Whereas, grace comes from God alone, the Church is His instrument, his channel for bestowing it upon us through the Sacraments. When we reject the Church, we reject *him* to his face. In the end, when it comes to our Catholic faith – the cafeteria is *closed*.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/2004/0409fea2.asp>