

Lukewarm Catholics

Because we live in precarious times, we must always be on our guard. We must wary not only of the things that would cause us to sin by our *actions* but also by those that would cause us to sin by our *inaction*. This is evident by the throngs of people who go to mass at Christmas and Easter but are mysteriously absent for the rest of the year.

It is also evident by our fear of public embarrassment which may cause us to recoil at the thought of making the sign of the cross in public or by refusing to come to the defense of our faith when the Church maligned at a party or around the water cooler at work. Jesus emphatically stated in **Matt. 5:14, 16**, “*You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.*” As such, we simply cannot pretend that we are not his children through baptism and then demand that he answer our prayers when we need something from him. Pope Pius V once state, “*All the evils of the world are due to lukewarm Catholics*”, because he understood the words of Jesus that we are to be the light of the world.

As Christians, we have a free will - however, the Holy Spirit does not coerce or force us to do good. God’s grace *enables* us to be filled with zeal for his word but we must cooperate with that grace. It gives us the *means* to do God’s will - but unless we say, “*Yes*” to God, we have taken his light and hidden it under a bushel (**Mark 4:21**).

Archbishop Fulton Sheen used to say, “*The easiest way to get to heaven is to take somebody by the hand and lead them there.*” If we keep the Good News of the Gospel to ourselves, we are no better than the condemned servant in **Matt. 25:24-30**. It is by **our** example that the world sees Jesus. This is why St. Francis of Assisi so wisely stated, “*Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary, use words.*”

In **Revelation 3:15-16**, God issues stern warning to those who choose not cooperate with his grace and instead choose to remain indifferent: “*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.*” This is a frightening prospect for *anybody* who claims to be a Christian.

Our separated Protestant brethren only have the Scriptures yet many of them are on fire for what they believe to be the fullness of truth. As Catholics, we truly *do* have the fullness of the Christian faith because we also have the Sacraments and the Authority of the Church that Christ left us (**Matt 16:15-18, 18:15-18, Luke 10:16, John 16:12-15, 20:21-23**). As Catholics, we have **ALL** the truth at our disposal – but what are we to *do* with that truth? In **Luke 12:48**, Jesus said, “*From everyone who has been given much, much will be required.*”

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1997/9709fea4.asp>