

For Open Minds Only



I have to confess, **I don't understand the latest pronouncements** of Benedict XVI.

I cannot comprehend why he would use his powerful media platform *to chide Europeans for "getting tired" of Christianity*, when anyone with their eyes wide open is capable of understanding the abandonment of **a religious system that has very little to do with Jesus.**

A sincere person wishing to quench their spiritual thirst **can easily get lost** in the *catacombs* of an institution that distorts His message. Such an one will end up entering a labyrinth that houses **confusing contradictions**, the chilling cold of **a 'faith' without love** and folkloric traditions that seem strange to citizens of the Twenty-First Century. In the worst of the cases, she might even end up stumbling across **the unimaginable horror of the abuse** of the most fragile and defenseless.

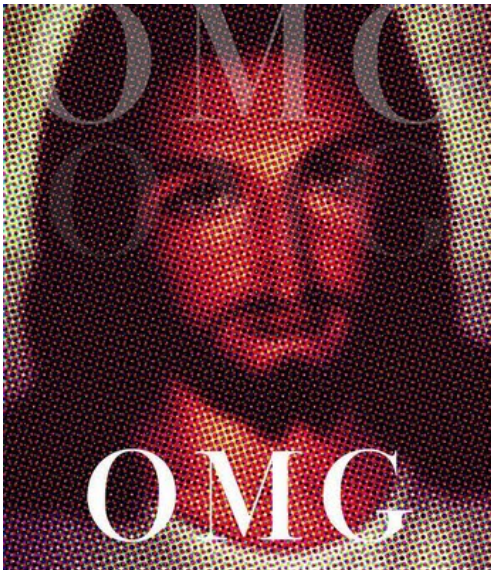
Furthermore, to make matters worse, this same Institution sees fit to give her lectures on morality. **Today's spiritual seeker** often finds himself in a *cul-de-sac* that is both discouraging and surreal.

But hold on, it should be said: my intention here is not just to go against Rome. In many offshoots of the Protestant side **the same religious system** takes it upon itself to enslave people, burdening them with a series of rules and ridiculous prohibitions that fly in the face of the joyful and liberating message of Jesus. These are churches in which **legalistic dogma replaces love and poorly interpreted "commandments"** *flatten without any mercy* weak human beings. *Clones are called for.* Not imperfect people like you and I: in search of purpose and peace, meaning and... God.



Today, "Holy Monday", we continue to celebrate the Resurrection. It's a shame that these religious systems have made so boring and even so *misunderstood* something that should fascinate us. Just think of it. *We should be celebrating – really partying – such an unequalled event.* **The First Man capable of defeating Death**, a subject worthy of the greatest epic blockbuster.

Hollywood is tireless in its intent to serve up plastic, unreal heroes. And yet, right here we have the case, historically documented and backed up by hundreds of witnesses, of the first Man Who came back to life *after three days in a tomb*. Perhaps we should rename this day "**The Return of the Chosen One**". "The Birth of the Second Adam". "The Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ".



What a newsflash! And yet (speaking for the agnostics here), if it *were true*, then **where would we find this resuscitated Jesus?** I think the answer just might surprise you.

It surprises all of us, because the only thing they have taught us is **a Christ risen, but trapped**, prisoner of the golden paint of the cathedral. **Inspirational, but immobilized**, hostage of *a complicated religious liturgy, incomprehensible and... boring.*

Don't look for Him there! Come out of the religious tomb of the West and go look for Him where He used to go when He lived among us, *incarnate*:

Go down to the street, to the square, to the hospitals, and even to the seediest "dives". **Love-Made-Man** moves with much more **liberty and grace** there; He feels more welcome in the midst of the human chaos of "Biutiful" than in the opulent corridors of "The Da Vinci Code".

But hold on! Who gives me the right to say such shocking things (anticipating the objections of the Religious Mind)? Nothing less than *the Carpenter's own story.*



It seems that, once back to life, **Jesus never presented Himself the way people expected.** They took Him for the *gardener of the graveyard.* For *a traveller in a hurry.* And even, for *an early-rising fisherman* on the shores of the lake He knew so well. In this last case, His followers were surprised to find Him there: next to a fire, breakfast already ready.

What an intimate and comforting invitation, the personal seal of a God who calls Himself *Emmanuel* ("God with us") and Who does everything He can to seek us and to find us. There, where we live: in love, offering forgiveness and with His Arms wide open. *In spite of everything.*

Is it possible to find Him today? **Where is He hiding, within this multimedia "Matrix"** that engulfs us, multiplying millions of voices and interpretations?

If you happen to be seeking Him, I can assure you that your own experience will be *completely your own.* We're talking about a Person Who knows you to the core, a Someone living and real, so you better get ready: **He will show up where you least expect to see Him,** right in the middle of your personal need.

He also shows Himself in a powerful way through what I lovingly call *The Magical Book of My Master*, through four accounts of eyewitnesses who knew Him intimately (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). An adult reading of the Gospels, with an open mind, will allow you to make up your own mind and form your own opinions with complete freedom.

My encounter with Him began here, with all my questions and doubts. And yes: armed with an open, yet critical, mind.

After a certain amount of time I responded to His brief, personal invitation:
"Follow Me".

Upon opening my mind – and my heart -
from that day forward, nothing has ever been as it was before.

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The English translation of “Sólo para mentes abiertas”, published on 25 April 2011 on the blog “La Religión es un opio” (<http://paulflemingbarcelona.blogspot.com>).

Thanks for reading!

Paul