

CATHOLIC ANALYSIS

Analysis by **Oswald Sobrino**, J.D., M.A., who has **published** in *New Blackfriars* (U.K.), *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, *The Catholic Answer*, *New Oxford Review*, *CatholicExchange.com*, and the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly*. He is a lay graduate student at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit. © 2002-07 Oswald Sobrino.



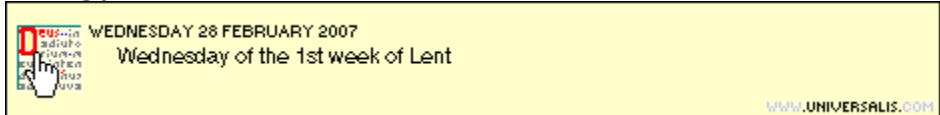
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Benedict XVI



"There is much in Christianity which

Monday, October 16, 2006

Catholic Apologist/Evangelist Steve Ray

Last night I had the pleasure of hearing Catholic apologist Steve Ray speak at a local parish. (I met him for the first time, although he and I both attend the same parish, because he is frequently on the road.) Many of you know his story from the Ignatius Press book entitled *Crossing the Tiber*. The book tells the story of his entry into the Catholic Church from his devout Baptist background. His passionate love for the truth--it reminds me of that other convert Scott Hahn--led him to search and dig into history and the Bible for the full and complete truth. He found the fullness of truth in the Catholic Church. He is a dynamic speaker; he is clear; and, as I understand it, never got a college degree. My friends, he's way above many highly credentialed speakers I have heard and from whom I have learned little or nothing!

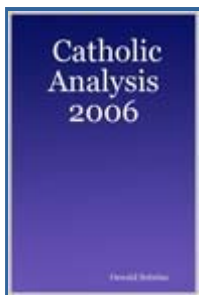
In his enthusiastic talk, Steve Ray made some memorable points. I will share some of them here to encourage you to visit his **website** which contains a wealth of information and resources.

1. Like many others, Ray was captured by this thought

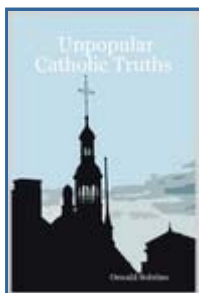
can be subjected to exact analysis. But the ultimate things are shrouded in the silent mysteries of God." --Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988)

"For the reader who lacks an upright intention, the rectitude of the writer is hard to find." St. Josemaría Escrivá (1902-1975)

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of John Henry Cardinal Newman: "To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant."

2. Ray loves Protestants (including, of course, his still devout Baptist parents). He loves them so much that he insists on sharing with them the excitement of finding the fullness of truth in the Catholic Church. Ray rightly rejects the false ecumenism which says that we should not seek to share the Catholic faith with active Protestants. Ray has a wonderful analogy for the situation of Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic Church is like a big ship outfitted for a journey across the ocean by a powerful master who wants his people to settle in a new promised land. On this big ship, there is food (the Eucharist), there is a crew (the magisterium or teaching authority), and there is a captain (the Pope). But during the course of the voyage, some of the passengers rebelled, cut off some wood, made some rafts, took some supplies, and set out to sail on their own. Whatever good things the "rafters" possessed came from the big ship. The closer the rafts stayed to the big ship the more likely the rafts would also get to the promised land. Ray views himself as having been born on one of those rafts representing the approximately 33,000 Protestant denominations that have split off from the Catholic Church and from each other. Once he made it to the big ship, the Catholic Church, Ray does not want to use the cannons on the big ship to sink the rafts. He wants to bring the people whom he loves who are still on the rafts onto the big ship. It is a false ecumenism to be indifferent to the people on the rafts. It is a false ecumenism to not signal them to come over and explain to them how much better it will be on the ship. I agree with Ray when he says, "Evangelism does not end until everyone is at this altar [the Catholic altar]."

3. Ray is highly intelligent. As a sharp and talented Protestant apologist before his entry into the Catholic Church, he could easily overwhelm Catholics. So it is worth paying attention to what questions Ray now admits troubled him when he was a Protestant arguing with Catholics. As a Protestant, Ray found these questions hard to handle: 1.) Where did you get your Bible? 2.) Who has the authority to close the canon of Scripture? The answer to both questions is that the Catholic Church preserved the Bible and determined the content of the canon. That reality is why history is the



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best apologist for the Catholic Church. The key for Ray's entry into the Catholic Church and for many others is the **apostolic succession** that is the source of the Church's inspired authority to determine the canon of Scripture.

4. Ray also advises Catholic on how to answer the question, "Are you born again?" According to Ray, a Catholic should answer, "Yes, I am born again in the **biblical** way of water and the Spirit as Jesus says in John 3:3-5. I was born again in my Baptism" (my paraphrase and conflation of Ray's remarks). Jesus did not say that being born again was simply accepting Him as your personal Lord and Savior. Being born again involves much more than simply making that decision that all adult candidates for Baptism must make and that parents make on behalf of infants until they are old enough to ratify their parents' pledge. Those who wish to be born again must go ahead and be baptized because Jesus said that we must be born again of water and the Spirit. Thus, the **biblical** way of being born again is sacramental Baptism. That's why at Pentecost, Peter told the crowd to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:37-38; see also 1 Peter 3:21).

5. Finally, Ray tackles the sex abuse scandals in the Church. People asked him if he regretted becoming Catholic because of the scandals and why he did not leave the Catholic Church. Ray shot back and asked why his questioners had not left the United States. Ray explained that there was a major sex scandal in the Oval Office during the presidency of Bill Clinton. But that Americans did not abandon the country. The country moved on and did not collapse.

Go to his website and learn at this [link](#). I also highly recommend his videos and DVD's.

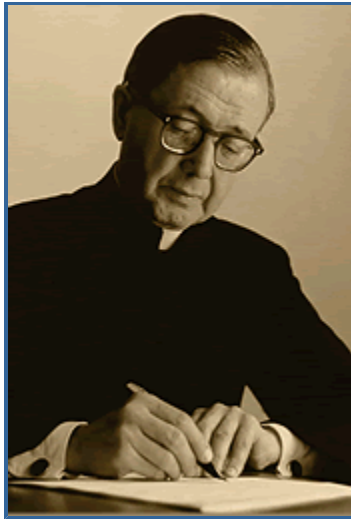
posted by Oswald Sobrino at 7:24 AM

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I wholeheartedly agree that Steve Ray is a tremendous asset to the Catholic Church. I have purchased his videos and placed them in my church's library. Like the saying goes, "Converts make the best Catholics." Steve Ray is a Truth Seeker who has found his home.



posted by [Minnesota Mary](#) : 11:52 AM

Steve has been here to Guam twice, and we really hope to get him back. Here's a short "snippet" of his wonderful raft analogy that he presented while giving a talk at our Basilica last year: **The Raft.**

posted by [Chuck White](#) : 6:21 PM

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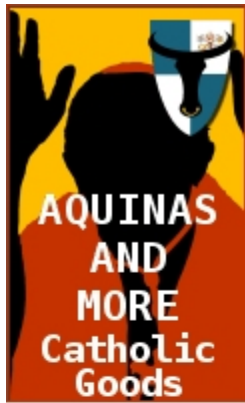
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under pressure.

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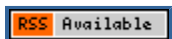
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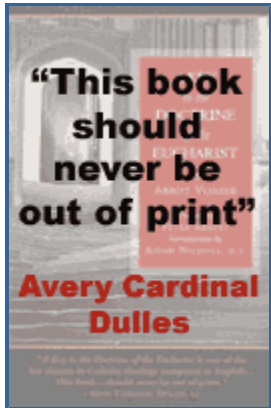
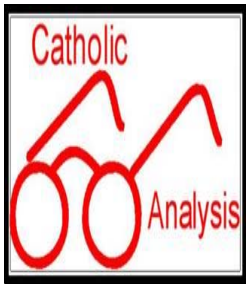
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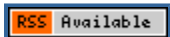
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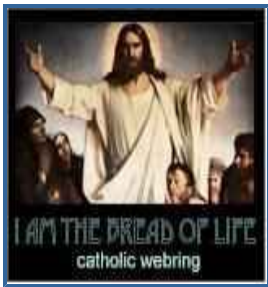
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