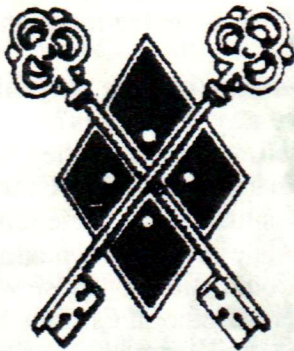


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What About...?

*Answers to the Most
Commonly Asked
Questions
About
The Liberal Catholic
Church*



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The Liberal Catholic Church
Province of the U.S.A.

The Liberal Catholic Church? I've never heard of it.

That's because no one has told you about it or because you haven't read about it somewhere. No one can learn without being taught. In fact, tens of thousands of persons have heard about The Liberal Catholic Church because they are members, and thousands more know about us because they have read about us somewhere. Our St. Alban's Press publishes many books, and we are listed in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Christian Church*, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, *The Encyclopedia Britannica* and many other reference works. Our Church is active in thirty countries throughout the world. In America, our Parishes are located from coast to coast. Our membership is smaller than other Christian Churches, and we Liberal Catholics tend to remain quiet. Traditionally, we do not proselytize.

Aren't "liberal" and "catholic" a contradiction of terms?

No, of course not. We use the term "liberal" in the same sense that the word is used in the phrase "liberal arts," meaning that which makes you free. The term "catholic" means "universal." We use the term "catholic" (a) to mean the all-inclusive Church of Christ, and (b) to indicate that we maintain the original, ancient form of the Christian Church.

What's the difference between you and the regular Catholic Church?

Well, we *are* the "regular" Catholic Church, or, rather, a branch of it. Probably you have the idea that the Roman Catholic Church is the "regular" Catholic Church, but there are some thirty branches of the Catholic Church, of which the Roman branch is the largest and best-known.

But there are major differences between the Liberal and Roman Catholic Churches: first, we teach and practice complete freedom of conscience; second, we emphasize the mystical life. Of course, there are many other differences, but these are the main ones.

Does that mean that you can believe anything you want and that your church doesn't have any teachings?

It's not that people "believe anything they want," but that people are trying to understand spiritual matters. Our Church does not wish to put people in the hypocritical situation of pretending to believe the official dogma of their churches while privately believing differently. Instead, we wish to provide a spiritual foundation for those who are seeking answers.

Furthermore, The Liberal Catholic Church has a full complement of teachings which it has inherited from the ancient Christian mystics and gnostics. However, we are not dogmatic: we do not insist that our Members must believe these teachings. We have a saying: "A truth is not a truth for a person, until that person sees it to be true for him/herself."

Do you take orders from the Pope?

No. The Liberal Catholic Church is not connected with or affiliated in any way with the Roman Catholic Church or the Vatican. The Liberal Catholic Church has its own Synod of Bishops which elects one of its members as Presiding Bishop for a certain time period, after which a new Presiding Bishop is elected. Each country (Province) also has a Provincial Bishop.

Are divorced persons excommunicated?

No. The Liberal Catholic Church has no excommunication procedure, nor does it believe that divorced persons should be excommunicated.

Do you allow birth control?

The Liberal Catholic Church believes and practices complete freedom of conscience. The LCC has taken no official position on birth control.

What about hell?

This Church does not believe in hell or eternal damnation, nor did the original, mystical Christians who believed in life as a "theatre of development," a process sometimes known as "reincarnation."

Isn't reincarnation some kind of weird Hindu idea?

Hardly. The concept of reincarnation is the world's most widely-held religious belief. Indeed, a Gallup Poll taken in 1985 showed that a majority of Americans either believe in reincarnation or believe in its possibility! Further, reincarnation was taught by early Christian theologians such as Origen, St. Clement, and even St. Augustine. There are even reincarnationist references in the Old and New Testaments (see *Reincarnation: Fact or Fallacy?* by Fr. Geoffrey Hodson).

What are your church services like?

The Rites of the Church are in "the language of the people." Our Services, which are very traditional in form, language, and music and resemble pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Services, sound the note of joy at God's Holy Presence. Dreary cries of mercy and self-abnegation are never heard in The LCC.

Are your teachings Biblical?

Definitely. All of our teachings are to be found in the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the so-called Apocrypha. By the way, the Apocrypha was accepted and used by Jesus Christ Himself, as well as the Apostles and the early Christians. If your Bible doesn't have the Apocrypha, you have an incomplete Bible. Additionally, we also have kept as a sacred treasure the oral tradition passed on by Christ to his Apostles for forty days after the Resurrection. Following ancient practice, these teachings are given orally ("mouth to ear") in our study groups.

Why are your Priests married?

Not all of our Priests are married, the matter of clerical celibacy being optional in our Church. But the fact is that the Apostles were married, so the Sacrament of Marriage is left to the discretion of the individual.

How does the Church support itself?

Like other Churches, The Liberal Catholic Church is supported by its Parishioners through donations and fund-raising events. The Clergy of The LCC, like St. Paul, are "worker-priests." This means that our Clergy receive no salary or other remuneration for their service; rather, each man, whether he be Deacon, Priest, or Bishop, holds a secular job in addition to his clerical duties.

Do you have women priests?

No. Following the example set by Jesus Himself, and having an understanding of the esoteric and mystical principles involved in Ordination, we have no women in Orders. We do have the ancient Office of Deaconess, and there are many women of The LCC who are Deaconesses and who are actively involved in the sacred Work of the Deaconess. Additionally, other women of the Church find many Paths of Service within The LCC, including serving on Vestry Boards and our corporation boards. In our experience, those who complain most about our not having women in Holy Orders are those who are not members of The LCC and who have no intention of ever being members.

I'm interested in your Church, but I had a bad experience with religion once....

You probably had a bad meal once, too, but you didn't stop eating. You probably had a bad night's sleep once, but you didn't stop sleeping. And perhaps you once owned a car that was a lemon, but you didn't stop buying cars—except for that brand. Perhaps now is the time to try a "different brand" of religion, an authentic, ancient, esoteric and initiatic religion—The Liberal Catholic Church.



The Church of St. Albert
The Liberal Catholic Church
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Holy Eucharist: 10 AM Sundays
Healing & Benediction: 7 PM Thursdays