

# **CONNIE'S CORNER**

**Imperfections  
by  
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**The Catholic Church has had television advertisements asking Catholics who left the Church to return. These members had various personal reasons for leaving. The reasons are not excuses, but their own true expressions of dissatisfaction. Some staunch Catholics can't understand why they left for another church or no church. The Church has always had imperfections because the members are imperfect beings. If going to Sunday Mass does not make you feel good when you leave, something is wrong. I want to tell you my reason for leaving the Church and later returning. Maybe this may help someone who is as imperfect as I.**

**My home parish was all black of which I was a proud member though I had concerns I would not verbalize. The church sits on the corner of a block long church owned property. When I attended Mass I could begin a new week with assurance God was with me. My problem began when Mass ended and some people congregated in front of the church to gossip. They talked about the priest, other members, who should be doing what, how things should be done, and who can tell them how much to tithe. Now I with my imperfect self sometimes had words to say, but most often I kept my mouth shut, walked to my car and drove off. I asked myself why I stayed at this parish. These people had more dislikes than Carter had liver pills. So to solve the problem I went to another parish after a few months of furlough from Sunday Mass.**

**The stoic parish I attended was closer to home. There was an eastern European priest who spoke with a heavy accent. I couldn't understand a word of his homily. I tried to find out who was saying Mass to avoid him. The parishioners were indifferent to each other and especially to me because I was black. I forced myself on them for "the handshake of peace". Their handshakes were limp and sweaty. Seldom a word was mentioned about how people of different nationalities and races share in the wonders of God. Everyone left the church with there eyes directed toward the exit and this included me. Some would miss the containers of holy water to make a quick exit. (I really had an effect on them and other black Catholics attending!!). I had to make another decision about three years later. Where was I the most comfortable? Well, my choice was with the gossipers of the little parish on the corner. When I heard gossip I would remind those doing the gossiping that they had just left church. Of course my comments were not always appreciated. I just continued to pray for them because negative words whisk into the atmosphere to return with a hard slap to the ones who said them. Since I have returned there is no gossiping in front of the church. Everyone appears cordial and respectful.**

**I learned something from the experiences. A church is full of the imperfects, but as parishioners we must voice our opinions without being offensive. Our Church has**

had imperfections for centuries because it is composed of people. If the Church was perfect then why would we need a special organization for black Catholics? Why would we need to voice our concerns to legitimize our traditions and heritage within the Church? We have been taught God created us with colorblind eyes. He gave us free will to make our choices whether we want Him in our hearts and whether we want to live in His image. I promised I was not going to leave the little church on the corner until I was called by the Lord. *Connie's Corner* became a result of wanting to contribute instead of complain.

Let's use strategies and techniques to bring our parishes as close to perfection as possible, but we must begin with ourselves. Don't let someone else do all the work and then you turn around to defile their name and what he/she does. We don't know when we will be called by Him to leave this place called earth. I tell you one thing for sure; I don't want Him angry with me when He calls. I can't stand 90 degree temperatures in the summer, let alone, the fires of hell. Let's not glorify imperfections with our mouths loaded with negatives that make all our taste buds turn sour. Let's use our minds and eyes to appreciate the ideas and thoughts of others instead of seeing only our own selfish side of issues. We need to discern what injustice is and what fairness is. In the future, the Church will still be imperfect, but with fewer imperfections because we cared to strive for perfection.

*In the name of the Father who loves me, the Son who lives within me, and the Holy Spirit who empowers me. Amen, Amen, Amen.*