

WHY I WROTE COMMON SENSE CATHOLICISM

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When I was in the Air Force, in the late 1960s, I became interested in politics. It was a turbulent time, and this was certainly true of California, where I was stationed. My first political leanings, some may be surprised to learn, were liberal-left. That didn't last long.

When I was discharged, I attended New York University. I quickly became more skeptical of liberalism, seeing in it a utopian vision that didn't square with reality. I was also dismayed at the hypocrisy and double standards that were evident among the left-wing students and professors whom I encountered.

It was my roots, more blue collar than white, that allowed me to size up the dreamers and the frauds on the Left. Such an upbringing imports a heady dose of common sense.

My grandfather (a retired New York City policeman) and my grandmother, both of whom were born in Ireland, played a major role in raising me. My mother was a nurse who worked nights, so I didn't see much of her until the weekend. My father abandoned my sister and me when we were very young. It was my mother and grandparents who anchored me in Catholicism and common sense, setting the stage for my transition to conservatism.

I spent 20 years in education before becoming president of the Catholic League, four of them in a Catholic elementary school in Spanish Harlem, and sixteen as a professor of sociology and political science at a Catholic college in Pittsburgh (I also did a year at The Heritage Foundation near the end of my college teaching years).

In my new book, I write, "from my years spent as a college professor, I can testify that some of the stupidest people I have ever met teach college." I define stupidity as "a lack of common sense, as in sound judgment." I also write that "it is entirely possible to be well educated yet not possess common sense. This is especially true of intellectuals—*they are more likely to lack common sense.*"

What is it that makes many intellectuals stupid (I hasten to add I am not indicting all of them)? Above all, it is their rejection of nature, and nature's God. And because they get that wrong, they get it all wrong.

The Founders understood human nature, and that is why, despite obvious flaws, America has enjoyed unparalleled freedom and prosperity. That is now imperiled, mostly because of the deep thinkers who reject nature and nature's God. Their stupid ideas are the reigning ideas in education and in our cultural institutions. They have also found their way into law and public policy.

No institution in society better understands human nature than the Catholic Church. Its teachings are a repository of wisdom. The Church is not at war with nature, or nature's God; on the contrary, it is at home with them.

The contrast between the norms and values of the dominant culture, and those that inhere in Catholicism, shine brightly. This is brought to light when we consider the goals of the French Revolution, namely, freedom, equality, and fraternity. These were, and still are, noble ends, but they were completely obliterated by the intellectuals and the architects of the French Revolution, and they are now imperiled by the contemporary wizards of our day.

The dreamers understand liberty as license; the Church knows better. The blue-sky thinkers envision a world where male-female differences, and the inequalities that mark the

economic classes, will be eliminated; the Church knows better. The bookworms do not seek fraternity in tradition and religion—they hate both; the Church knows better.

We live in strange times.

There was a time, not too long ago, when it was illegal to burn the American flag on a courthouse lawn, but it was legal to erect a Nativity scene in the same spot. Now the reverse is true.

When TV bloomed in the 1950s, we never saw the bedroom of Ralph and Alice in “The Honeymooners.” Now there is nothing we don’t see.

It seems like only yesterday when men who thought they were women, and vice versa, were housed in the asylum. Now they are housed in the university.

Up until just recently, we rewarded those who worked hard. Now college students are told that working hard is a microaggression, a sign of patriarchy that must be eradicated.

Respecting Western civilization was the norm for most of my life. Now the professors want to tear it down.

From the beginning of Hollywood movies, up until at least the 1970s, priests and nuns were portrayed positively. They have since been trashed.

The bottom line is this: Freedom, equality, and fraternity have been distorted by the brainy ones who think they know better. They don’t.

The deep thinkers believe human nature and the Almighty are a fiction, and as a result they have created a social and cultural mess. Their own lives, and the ideas they entertain, are a colossal train wreck.

Common Sense Catholicism is the only cure for the stupidity

that these geniuses have bequeathed. Hope you enjoy the book.