

## An Open Letter to My Catholic Friends

Shortly after John and I began to exchange email correspondence, he generated a newsletter in which he inserted our comments to each other – without my consent of course. Now, I know that email is public, and you shouldn't write anything you don't expect to see in print somewhere when someone seeks damage to you, but it's unseemly to begin posting conversations without first notifying the other party you're going to do so. My email in box suddenly became flooded with emails. Many were angry and hurt emails; the emails from people who are so enamored with Martignoni the man that they tend to forget Christ their Savior in order to protect John. It's for this reason that I feel the need to write this letter.

I want to make it clear that I in no way seek to offend anyone. It's not my intention to attack, or to belittle. The last thing I want to do is to create an atmosphere of hate or discontent, and it's my prayer that nothing I say will be taken in that way. However, it's also very likely that given the content of my website and ministry, that goal will almost certainly not be realized. There are two main reasons for this. First, the content of this site is critical of a man who has developed a strong, and dedicated following. Many of those people love John Martignoni, and will never leave his teaching, regardless of what is presented to them – even if it's the truth. This is to be expected, because John has been successful in bringing thousands of people to his ministry that are already Catholic. The second reason is that Martignoni himself works tirelessly to see to it that I'm personally marginalized, rather than address the issues. That's fine, I can take it, and it's not about me. But the unfortunate fact is that he will be successful with many people using this tactic, because there are those who actually want to be given a reason to turn away from the critical commentary and analysis this site offers, and that gives them an easy way to do that.

With all of that said, I want you to realize that this site exists for three major reasons: number one is that I have a heart for Catholics. This site would not exist if I didn't care about Catholics, or about those who are thinking about becoming Catholic, or for those who are struggling with their Catholic beliefs, and are now looking for answers. Mr. Martignoni is not a big enough fish to worry about, but some of his teachings are because they are often misleading, inaccurate, and they have a vehicle that potentially reaches thousands. Catholics today need more than the "because the Catechism" says so mentality. They need truth, reasonable answers, and more than the same old "were the oldest Church," or "we have the fullness of the faith" arguments. They need meat and potatoes teaching, logical argument, and plain good sense.

The second major reason this site exists is to challenge Mr. Martignoni himself. For some time I've listened to his programs, read his materials, and reviewed his arguments, and the one common theme that presents itself time and again is his less than meaningful approach to Christian apologetics. His personal issues with Protestantism and those who reference the Bible as their sole source of truth have no place in his apologetics unless he addresses the issues objectively. Personal grudges don't count. Christian apologetics is about defending the faith, not lashing out at those who disagree with you, and it's not about grinding your own personal religious ax. I have no grudge against Mr. Martignoni, and Catholics need to know this. Just because I disagree with him and much of his teaching, doesn't mean I have any personal problem with him. Don't let him push you in the direction that gets you thinking that I have something against the man other than his teaching. As a person seeking truth, whether you're a Catholic, a non-believer, or a member of any other faith asking questions, don't let John steer you away from the real issues. Keep on track, and insist that he does also. If he's allowed to continue to build a case for the Catholic faith on nothing more than empty feelings, he'll be doing you, as well as himself, a great disservice.

The third reason this site exists is because I've been led to create it. Like John, I seek to defend my faith – that's all. John's site exists to promote the Catholic faith, and mine exists to defend Christianity from false teaching and misinformation. We both have our callings, and I think mine is as legitimate as his. If he sees that as an attack, there's really not much I can do about that. I just want you to know that it's not John Martignoni who should tell you how to think. Every one of us should use our own brains, and personally reason out our faith. God tells us in Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together." I'm sure you'd agree that as Christians and Catholics, we should all be ready to think for ourselves, and the only way to do that is to seek information, analyze, digest, ask questions, and work toward a true, and valid understanding of God, and what He wants for each of us. Following one man (or any group of men) because we're told what we want to hear, can be dangerous, and unproductive. As we're challenged by the outside world to defend our beliefs, we need to be ready to hear what the other side has to say. That's just good sense. It's in this way that we grow in our walk with Jesus. The truth is that Catholics and Protestants have more in common than Mr. Martignoni would have us believe. We're brothers and sisters in Christ, even though we might sometimes disagree.

Thank you, and may God bless you, and guide you in your search for truth.

Mike Patrick