

The 'gospel truth' according to 'Father' Paul Symonds

In the latter part of February I received a phone call from a Christian man who asked me if I had heard that Ballymena was awash with rumours that a local Roman Catholic priest had 'got saved' and that he was buying gospel tracts in the local Faith Mission bookshop and distributing them.

I asked the caller if he could give me the name of the priest at the centre of the rumours and he said he was sure it was '**Father' Paul Symonds**. I wrote an article about **Paul Symonds** in my June 2006 News From The Front newsletter called '**The "Ecumenical Wizardry" of Jesuit Paul Symonds**' and that newsletter can be accessed on <http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-june-2006/> (scroll down about two thirds)

I chose the title of that article deliberately because this Roman Catholic priest verges on the brink of having the ability to 'cast a spell' over his listeners and to 'hoodwink' people who, with their professed theological 'know-how', should not be subject to what is clearly a 'strong delusion' that he is putting forth.

It is clear from current events that a much more detailed warning about '**The "gospel truth" according to 'Father' Paul Symonds**' needs to be sounded and that is the purpose of this article. Of necessity I will reproduce in this article some portions from my previous article but there will be much more included that will expose, from his own lips and pen, just precisely what this trained Jesuit, Paul Symonds, really means when he speaks about his faith.

God's people who read this article would do well to bear in mind these Collins English Dictionary definitions –

'Jesuit' – 1. A member of a Roman Catholic religious order (The Society of Jesus) founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1534 with the aim of defending [Roman] Catholicism against the Reformation. 2. A person given to subtle and equivocating [to equivocate is to avoid speaking directly or honestly] arguments.

From 'The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius' [founder of the Jesuits] by Jesuit Louis J Puhl, we read this on page 160 'If we wish to proceed securely in all things, we must hold fast to the following principle: What seems to me white, I will believe black, if the hierarchical Church [The Magisterium composed of the Pope and his Bishops] so defines'.

When someone is truly converted to Christ they receive two gracious [unmerited] gifts from God –

1. 'Eternal Life' [Romans 6:23] and
2. God's permanently indwelling Holy Spirit [Ephesians 4:30].

What is the personal testimony of Paul Symonds on these life-changing matters? In the book published in 1998 by the *'Evangelical Catholic Initiative'* called **'Adventures in Reconciliation — 29 Catholic Testimonies'**, Paul Symonds wrote [p226] **'From my experience I have always believed that in my baptism in the Methodist Church [as an unbelieving infant] I received the gift of new life and the Holy Spirit'**. He is a firm believer in the heresy of 'Baptismal Regeneration' and you will see and hear him publicly testify to that later in this article.

However, as an example of his 'equivocating' [something less than direct or honest] language, having stated on page 226 that he believed he had received **'new life'** and **'the Holy Spirit'** when he was baptized as a baby in the Methodist Church, he then went on to write on page 228, **'It was in the Catholic Church that I first met the living Lord Jesus'**. If that were so then who or what on earth does he believe he 'met' when he was baptized as a baby in the Methodist Church and supposedly received **'new life'** and **'the Holy Spirit'**? These contradictory statements just don't 'stack up'.

What I plan to do later in this article is to give you links that will take you to extracts from a public debate that I organized back in 1995 in the Lough Moss Leisure Centre in Carryduff on the subject of 'Getting to Heaven'. On the Roman Catholic side of the debate there was 'Father' Paul Symonds and on the Biblical Christian side of the debate there was my brother in Christ, Rob Zins, Director of 'A Christian Witness to Roman Catholicism' – this link will take you to Rob's ministry website <http://www.cwrc-rz.org/>

I have divided the debate DVD extracts (audio only with visual stills) up into 6 'segments' and after I give you the links to listen each of them in turn I will then set out for you a synopsis of the important points that I believe that you should have noted as you listened to Paul Symonds speak in each segment. Now, herewith are the segments and points to listen out for –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7D5oHtFvGF8>

Segment 1.

Paul Symonds here addressed the question as he phrased it 'But how do we come to know Jesus Christ and so be enabled to open our hearts to the gift of eternal life'? An Evangelical, Biblical Christian would understand this question in terms of 'But how does someone get saved'?

Paul Symonds basically pointed to 2 necessities as follows –

1. Contact with 'the Church'
2. Participation in 'The Sacraments' [particular emphasis is given by him to baptism].

In this answer Paul Symonds was being totally faithful to Roman Catholic teaching as outlined for instance in **the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church**.

Please follow this line of thinking with me. **Paragraph 1129** states ‘The [Roman Catholic] Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation’. **Paragraph 1210** states ‘Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation [or Chrismation], the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

Obviously not every Roman Catholic can or does qualify to participate in every one of these seven ‘sacraments’ so as regards becoming a Christian [as understood in Roman Catholic terms] we read this in **paragraph 1212** ‘The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist – lay the foundation of every Christian life’. Roman Catholics must look to the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church for the foundation of their ‘Christian life’ – in contrast the Bible says that true believers should be “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” [Hebrews 12:2] “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” [1 Corinthians 3:11].

Rome regards herself as the ‘One true Church’ and believes that normally only her priests [except in a ‘case of necessity’ where baptism is concerned] can properly ‘perform’ these sacraments. Listen to these teachings from Rome’s **Code of Canon Law. Canon 861** ‘The ordinary minister of baptism is a Bishop, a priest or a deacon’ **Canon 882** ‘The ordinary minister of confirmation is a Bishop. A priest can also validly offer this sacrament’. **Canon 900** ‘The only minister, who, in the person of Christ, can bring into being the sacrament of the Eucharist is a validly ordained priest’.

Paul Symonds stated that for Roman Catholics ‘the first step on the road to heaven’ was to ‘come into contact with the [Roman Catholic] Church’ and he stated that for him that happened when he was at primary school. Perhaps I need to remind him that in his testimony in ‘Adventures in Reconciliation’ he stated ‘**From my experience I have always believed that in my baptism in the Methodist Church [as an unbelieving infant] I received the gift of new life and the Holy Spirit**’ – that baptism took place years before he attended primary school so is he now telling us that this baptism was not his ‘first step on the road to heaven’ even though he believes that in it he ‘received the gift of new life and the Holy Spirit’. Again, something here doesn’t ‘stack up’.

Paul Symonds affirmed the Roman Catholic heresy of ‘Baptismal Regeneration’ when he stated ‘Baptism introduces us to Christ – it is an effective and not just a symbolic encounter’ and he quotes Acts 2:38 to infer that sins are remitted through being baptized with water.

Again, he was fully endorsing official Roman Catholic teaching – **Canon 849** ‘Baptism is the gateway to the sacraments, is necessary for salvation...By it people are freed from sins, are born again as children of God...are incorporated into the Church. It is validly conferred only by a washing in real water with the proper form of words’.

John MacArthur in his Study Bible has these helpful comments on 'Acts 2:38 "for the remission of sins". This might be better translated 'because of the remission of sins'. Baptism does not produce forgiveness and cleansing from sin. The reality of forgiveness precedes the rite of baptism...Every believer enjoys the complete remission of sins'.

Rome teaches that 'Confirmation' is to be administered to people who have been baptized, have been instructed and are able 'to renew the baptismal promises'. They must have attained 'the age of discretion' [see **Canons 889 & 891**].

Paul Symonds stated that in 'Confirmation' people are 'sealed' with the Holy Spirit and cites Ephesians 4:30. The Biblical reality is that all true believers are 'sealed' with the Holy Spirit the instant they are truly converted as we read in Ephesians 1:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

Paul Symonds referred to the Sacrifice of Christ at Calvary as having been 'once and for all' and listeners might infer from this that he believes the sacrifice was finished, in time, at Calvary. Not so! As a faithful Roman Catholic priest, he would also endorse the teaching of Rome that states concerning the Eucharist in **Canon 899** 'In it Christ the Lord, through the ministry of the priest OFFERS HIMSELF, substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine, TO GOD THE FATHER, and gives himself as spiritual nourishment to the faithful who are associated with him in his offering'.

In relation to the Eucharist Paul Symonds said it was the source of 'hope and strength' for the Marist nuns who influenced his mother into becoming a Roman Catholic. He then basically stated that as we are 'body and spirit' we can in part be built up spiritually by physical [consecrated bread and wine] means [as does Canon 899's reference to 'spiritual nourishment'].

I would Biblically refute that by quoting these portions from a talk that I gave on 'Transubstantiation' –

Physical 'ingestion' does not affect the 'spiritual' condition of a person yet the 1994 Catholic Catechism states

[Para:1392]

'What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life'

[Para:1393]

'Holy Communion separates us from sin'

[Para: 1394]

'the Eucharist strengthens our charity...and this living charity [not the blood of Christ] wipes away venial sins'

[Para: 1396]

'Communion renews, strengthens and deepens...incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism'

Concerning **physical 'ingestion'** -

The Lord Himself said in **Matthew 15:11, 17-18**

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and **is cast out into the draught?** 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

The truth is that a '**consecrated**' and supposedly '**transubstantiated**' piece of bread has no '**POWER TO CHANGE**' anyone or anything. In fact, given time, the only thing that will change is 'the bread' itself, when it becomes '**mouldy old dough**'. It is '**corruptible**' despite Rome's claim of it having the '**incorruptible Christ**' at the very heart of its being!

Our 'spiritual' state is governed by the HEART and not by the STOMACH

Listen to Paul in **1 Corinthians 8:8**

"But meat [food] commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse"

No wonder the Psalmist wrote in **Psalms 119:11**

"Thy WORD have I hidden in mine HEART, that I might not sin against thee"

God's Word, the scriptures are referred to as '**milk**' as '**meat**' as '**bread**' and as '**honey**' and Jesus Himself said of those same scriptures in **John 5:39** that these

"are they which testify of me"

To read and 'digest' the Word of God is to 'feed' on Christ

Paul Symonds spoke of God's 'free gift of salvation'. But just how 'free' is it according to Rome? **Paragraph 2010** of the Catholic Catechism states 'no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification at the beginning of their conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can [then] MERIT for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity and FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE'. If a person has to 'merit' something they must of necessity first perform some work that 'merits' a reward and that is precisely the false teaching and thinking about God's salvation that the Apostle Paul roundly rejects in **Ephesians 2:8-9** "For by grace are ye SAVED through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS [that would earn 'merit'] lest any man should boast'.

On this matter of the 'free gift of salvation' I would also alert you in advance to watch out for the quote given in segment 6 of the DVD segments when Paul Symonds quotes from the writings of one of his favorite Roman Catholic theologians, deceased **Jesuit Henri de Lubac**. Interestingly the quote is from de Lubac's book entitled '**Catholicism**' and from the chapter '**Salvation through the Church**' – In contrast to this claim of 'Salvation through the Church' the supposed first Pope, the Apostle Peter, wrote concerning Christ [not 'the Church'] – **"Neither is there salvation in any other" [Acts 4:12]**.

Paul Symonds taught that the [Roman Catholic] Church and its sacraments are 'how we come to know Jesus Christ and so be enabled to open our hearts to the gift of eternal life'. God's Word gives an altogether different teaching and truth in this matter.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 10: 14 "How then shall they call on him [for salvation] in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him [for salvation] of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear [of the Saviour] without a preacher?" [No mentions here of any 'church' or any sacramental priesthood].

In contrast to Paul Symonds' 'false gospel' of sacramentalism for salvation we read of the God-ordained and appointed way of salvation in 1 Corinthians 1:21 "For it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching [not priestly-orchestrated sacramental observance] to save them that believe". People who hear the gospel preached and believe it are those who "after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" [Ephesians 1:13].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StwGdO0uGPQ>

Segment 2.

In this short segment Paul Symonds affirmed his belief in the Roman Catholic teaching of 'transubstantiation'. He stated that the Eucharist is a 'thanksgiving' but failed to mention that it is also according to Rome **[Canon 897]** 'The most august sacrament...in which the Sacrifice of the cross is for ever perpetuated'.

The Rev J A Coleman in his little booklet 'The Tragedy of The Mass' quoted from 'Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery' [page 5] as follows 'In the Sacrifice of the Mass our Lord is immolated [Collins English Dictionary – 'Immolate' – to kill or offer as a sacrifice; to sacrifice something highly valued] when he begins to be present sacramentally...under the appearances of bread and wine'.

The Rev Coleman also quotes from 'Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma' by Ludwig Ott as follows [pages 412-413] 'The Sacrifice of the Mass is not merely a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving but also a sacrifice of expiation and impetration [procures removal]...As a propitiatory sacrifice the Sacrifice of the Mass effects the remission of sins and the punishment for sins...the Eucharistic Sacrifice of propitiation can, as the Council of Trent expressly asserted, be offered, not merely for the living, but also for the poor souls in Purgatory'.

Some years ago, for research/information purposes, Margaret and I attended some public lectures in Belfast on Roman Catholicism given by 'Father' Patrick McCafferty and, when speaking about The Eucharist, Patrick was making much of it being a 'thanksgiving' to the virtual exclusion of it being a 'sacrifice'. When it came to the feedback/question time from the audience one Roman Catholic man pointed out very forcibly to Patrick that the Eucharist was not just a 'thanksgiving' but also a 'sacrifice'.

In the Catholic Catechism under the section headed 'What is this sacrament [The Eucharist] called' we read in **paragraph 1330** 'The "Holy Sacrifice" because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Saviour and includes the Church's offering'. In relation to the underlined portion I immediately thought of the words of **Psalm 49:6-8** "They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches. None of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of their soul is precious".

In Indianapolis in 1987 at an ecumenical, charismatic gathering one of the lead speakers was 'Father' Tom Forrest who headed up The Decade of Evangelisation called by the late Pope John Paul II. In a report of this event, David Cloud wrote

*'Another illustration of the gross heresy countenanced in the charismatic-ecumenical movement is seen in a speech in Indianapolis by priest Tom Forrest. Forrest is a Catholic priest based in Rome and is in charge of the Roman Catholic programme to "evangelise" the world by the year 2000. He works hand in hand with the pope and is a great lover of Roman heresies. One morning in Indianapolis Forrest spoke to the Roman Catholic session and said **"Our role in evangelisation is not just to make Christians; our job is to make people as richly and as fully Christian as we can make them by bringing them into the Catholic church".** Forrest continued by glorying in the Catholic distinctives. He praised God for the sacraments. He praised God for the mass. He praised God for the priesthood "according to the order of Melchisidec" [a blasphemous claim as Christ alone is such a priest according to Hebrews 5:5-10 & Hebrews 7:14-21 & 24-25] He praised God for Mary, the "Queen of Paradise" who is praying for us all...He praised God for the Papacy...for Catholic tradition, for saints, for the liturgy...for purgatory'.*

Here was a deluded, high-ranking Roman Catholic priest 'trusting in' and 'boasting in' Rome's 'multitude of spiritual riches' as being the means of making people 'as richly and fully Christian' as is possible, even to the extent of supposedly adding the Church's offering to the Sacrifice of Christ during 'The Sacrifice of the Mass' to obtain forgiveness of sins for people. What a soul-damning delusion that is refuted by Peter who explains what we previously read in Psalm 49 of how 'the redemption of their soul is precious' – Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:18-19 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold from your vain manner of life, received by TRADITION from your fathers, but with the PRECIOUS blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" [no mention of, room for or need here for any 'Church's offering'].

Returning to Paul Symonds and his personal affirmation of his belief in 'transubstantiation' it is worth noting precisely what he said about the Mass. He spoke of 'we take bread and wine...invoke the Holy Spirit...speak the words of Jesus...**This is my body...This is my blood**...we believe the Lord meant what he said...so that by the power of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine become the body and blood of the glorious, risen Lord'.

In the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church we read in **Paragraph 1376** ‘it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church fittingly and properly called ‘transubstantiation’.

In 1st Corinthians 11 verses 24-25 the Apostle Paul recounts the events of the last supper as follows -

“And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me”.

Echoing the account, as recorded in Luke 22:19-20, in Paul’s inspired account we do not find the Lord specifically saying of ‘the wine’, “this is my blood”. In relation to these accounts Rome takes the Lord ‘literally’ when he speaks of ‘the bread’ but Rome takes the words of the Lord metaphorically or symbolically when he speaks of ‘the cup’.

What was even more disturbing was the claim by Paul Symonds that Rome’s priests can orchestrate the actions of the Holy Spirit – he spoke of ‘invoking the Holy Spirit’ – this is the language of spiritism and occultism.

No human being can orchestrate or control the actions of the Holy Spirit who sovereignly moves according to His own will just like the, humanly-speaking, uncontrollable wind as we read in John 3:8.

Nowhere in the accounts of the last supper do we find the Lord stating that by using His words as an ‘invoking incantation’ that the Holy Spirit would then come and ‘transubstantiate’ mere bread and wine into His literal body. In fact, when the Apostle Paul is ending his inspired comments on what is often referred to as ‘The Lord’s Table’ he says in verses 26 “For as often as ye eat **this bread** and drink **this cup** ye do show the Lord’s death till he come”.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, using the language of its day, in Chapter XXIX: VI sets out a very good scripturally-based assessment of Rome’s claims –

‘That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ’s body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason and overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament [a remembrance of Calvary] and hath been and is the cause of manifold superstitions; yea of gross idolatries’.

The reality is that the Mass is 'gross idolatry' for the Council of Trent instructs Roman Catholics, in Chapter V, under a heading of 'The Worship and Veneration to be shown to This Most Holy Sacrament', as follows – 'all the faithful of Christ may, in accordance with a custom always received in the Catholic Church, give to this most holy sacrament [the supposedly transubstantiated wafer] in veneration, the worship of *latria* [Rome's highest form of 'worship'] which is due to the true God'. As a Roman Catholic priest holds aloft a supposedly transubstantiated piece of bread, Roman Catholics must worship **it** as 'the true God' – this is 'gross idolatry' and Paul Symonds practices and promotes it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELxomVD1_Ys

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQhI3JHqgoU>

Segments 3 & 4.

In these segments we heard Paul Symonds publicly seeking to justify the role of the sacrifice-offering/sin-pardoning Roman Catholic priesthood. He described their role as 'making His [Christ's] saving grace present'. It is not for any sinful human being to determine when or how Almighty God will deal graciously with a sinner – that is God's sovereign prerogative alone and He acts graciously in the true conversion of a sinner when His Holy Spirit moves by His determination alone in convicting and converting power.

God alone determines when He will act graciously – sinful man cannot 'manipulate' the grace of God. The whole Roman Catholic teaching of '**ex opere operato**' [Hardon's Pocket Catholic Dictionary - A term defined by the Council of Trent to describe how the sacraments confer the grace they signify... "**from the work performed**" – *Cecil's comments - What a travesty of truth to claim that the unmerited 'grace' of God can be obtained from Him through performing some 'work'*] is a devilish claim for Rome's priests to 'be like the most high' [Isaiah 13:14].

Paul Symonds likened the Roman Catholic priestly call to those who were called to the Old Testament Aaronic priesthood. That priesthood was made forever redundant by the finished work of Christ on the cross. We read in Hebrews 10:11-12 & 14

"And every [Aaronic] priest standeth daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices [just like Roman Catholic priests do today by offering daily 'The Sacrifice of The Mass'] which can never take away sins; But this man [Christ] after he had offered one sacrifice for sins [on the cross] for ever, sat down on the right hand of God...For by one offering he hath perfected [given a perfect standing before God to] them that are sanctified' [those truly converted and now set apart for God –all true believers].

In speaking of the Roman priesthood's claim to forgive sins Paul Symonds spoke of their 'power and responsibility to release people from their sins' and of course that supposedly happens during 'confession'. Former Roman Catholic, Jim McCarthy in his book 'The Gospel According to Rome' has some helpful comments on this claim. He wrote on pages 80-81 –

'When King David repented of his adultery, he confessed his sin *directly to God*. No priest. No ritual. No sacrament. Just a broken man owning up to his sin before His maker...Confession *directly to God* was also the experience of Nehemiah [1:4-11], Daniel [9:3-19] and Ezra [9:5-10]. New Testament Christians can also go directly to God with their sins ... "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" [1 John 1:9]. Jim also wrote on these pages that Christians 'go not to a Judge but to their Father with Jesus at their side [for] "If anyone sins we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" [1 John 2:1-2].

Paul Symonds quoted John 20:22-23 to substantiate this claim that priests have the power to forgive sins in Christ's name – "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; Whosoever's sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them and whosoever's sins ye retain, they are retained". In understanding scripture it is always necessary to consider all relevant verses on a particular topic and these verses must be understood in the light of for instance Luke 24:45-47 "Then opened he [Christ] their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; And that repentance and remission of sins should be **preached** in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem".

In Antioch we read of Paul saying in Acts 13:38 "Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren that through this man [Christ] is **preached** unto you the forgiveness of sins". Earlier I also quoted Paul when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:21 "For it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** [not priestly-orchestrated sacramental observance] to save them that believe".

Returning to Jim McCarthy's book 'The Gospel According to Rome' we read on page 82 'The disciples were to go forth and proclaim the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ...This is the very thing we find the disciples doing in the book of Acts. Peter for example proclaimed Christ to Cornelius saying, "...whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" ...There were also occasions when the disciples found it necessary to proclaim the sins of some retained. Simon the magician was one such person. Simon heard the gospel, said he believed and was baptised. Shortly afterward he revealed his true motive. He thought he could obtain magical powers from the apostles. Peter told Simon he was still in his sins [Acts 8:21-22]'.

Perhaps I could add to this by saying that Peter didn't then tell Simon to seek out some priest to whom he should confess his sins in order to obtain God's forgiveness. Peter said to Simon "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and **pray God** if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" [Acts 8:22].

One of the earliest joys in my Christian life was to meet former Roman Catholic priest, **Bart Brewer**, at a conference in London – Bart went to be with the Lord in 2005 and this link will take you to a short tribute that I penned in memory of Bart <http://www.takeheed.info/tribute-to-bart-brewer/>

In his book **'Pilgrimage from Rome'**, Bart wrote about his experiences of 'taking confession' during his time as a Roman Catholic priest. On page 55 he wrote 'Although my first experience of taking confession had been harsh and disturbing, I soon adjusted, although I never liked the duty'. Quoting then from the Council of Trent [Session 14: Chapter III], Bart wrote

'Canon VI:"If anyone denies that sacramental confession was instituted by divine law or is necessary to salvation; or says that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Catholic Church has always observed from the beginning and still observes, is at variance with the institution and command of Christ and is a human contrivance, let him be anathema' *[Cecil's comments – according to this if you don't accept Rome's teaching on confessing sins to their priests you cannot be saved and you are under the curse of God!]*.

Bart continued, 'This canon is a classic example of the misuse of scripture. Confession to a priest, secretly or openly was not commanded or ordained by Christ. Nowhere does the Bible say that such confession is necessary for salvation. The confessional is a mere invention of men...It is the privilege of every sinner, whoever he may be, to confess his sins directly to God'.

This last truth was denied by the late Pope John Paul II during one of his trips to America when according to this report in the Los Angeles Times [12 December 1984] we read, 'Rebutting a belief widely shared by Protestants and a growing number of Roman Catholics, Pope John Paul II on Tuesday dismissed the "widespread idea that one can obtain forgiveness directly from God" and exhorted Catholics to confess more often to their priests'

This quote-extract can be viewed on this rather lengthy link – [http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/access/675039382.html?dids=675039382:675039382&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:AI&type=historic&date=Dec+12%2C+1984&author=DON+A+SCHANKE&pub=Los+Angeles+Times+\(1886-Current+File\)&edition=&startpage=B11&desc=No+Forgiveness+%27Directly+From+God%2C%27+Pope+Says](http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/access/675039382.html?dids=675039382:675039382&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:AI&type=historic&date=Dec+12%2C+1984&author=DON+A+SCHANKE&pub=Los+Angeles+Times+(1886-Current+File)&edition=&startpage=B11&desc=No+Forgiveness+%27Directly+From+God%2C%27+Pope+Says)

Summing up his views on the 'confessional' Bart Brewer wrote [pages 56-57] 'Why does the church hold to the confessional as such an important part of its dogma? The chief reason is that obligatory confession keeps Catholics in submission...The confessional, linked as it is to penances and purgatory, is a yoke of bondage to Catholics, not only in this life, but even beyond the grave, as masses and prayers for the dead are said'.

The final words of that quotation from Bart Brewer will bring me rather nicely to the subject of the next segment on the DVD but before that let me direct your thoughts to the words of a former Jesuit priest called Jose Rico.

Earlier in this section I quoted from Hebrews 10. The book 'Far from Rome: Near to God' chronicles the testimonies of 50 converted, former Roman Catholic priests.

On pages 104-105, in the testimony of former Jesuit, Jose Rico we read this

'When I finished studying the Epistle to the Hebrews I felt that an invisible and omnipotent hand stripped me of my vestments and my priestly character. The only priesthood found was that recorded by St Peter "*Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*" [1Peter 2:5].

It is the same [priesthood] that is referred to in Hebrews "*By him therefore let us offer sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name*" [Hebrews 13:15] ...Christ became my "only" Saviour for none other had died on the cross for me. He also became my "sufficient saviour" because His blood is all-powerful to wash my sins from my soul.

How miserably the rites and ceremonies, the human traditions of Romanism, had failed to cleanse the soul for God...From that moment I knew myself as a new creature in Christ Jesus [2 Corinthians 5:17] ...Yes, I had "*passed from death unto life*" [John 5:24] ...In this manner the curtain fell that put an end to the tragedy that had existed throughout my nineteen long years [as a Jesuit] in the priesthood'.

God's people should pray earnestly that God would use His same 'omnipotent and stripping hand' in the life of trained Jesuit, Paul Symonds and through a sovereign, gracious work of true salvation bring down 'the curtain' on his time in the Roman Catholic priesthood.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eflnfP3-l7s>

Segment 5

The last quote I gave a few paragraphs earlier from former priest Bart Brewer made reference to 'prayers for the dead' and this and related topics are dealt with by Paul Symonds in this segment of the DVD. Paul Symonds fully endorses the Roman Catholic belief that there can be 'interaction' between the living and the dead.

Back in 1994 the Belfast Telegraph published a series of interviews on the subject of 'Heaven'. Local pastor, Derick Bingham, oversaw this series. He had clearly issued a set of pro-forma questions to various local 'religious' personalities and then their answers were published. One of those local religious 'personalities' was 'Father' Paul Symonds. In response to the question '*Do you think the people now in heaven can see us now on earth?*' Paul Symonds' answer was '**Yes and I believe friendly dialogue can go on between us too**'.

God's Word makes it very clear in Deuteronomy 18:9-11 that any attempt to communicate with the dead ['necromancy' – verse 11] is, in the sight of Almighty God, an 'abomination' [verse 9]. In 1st Samuel 28:7-25 we read of Saul's attempts to make contact, via a 'medium', with the deceased prophet Samuel. 3 chapters later we read that after being severely wounded in battle with the Philistines, and having asked his armour-bearer to end his life, a request that was refused, "Saul took a sword and fell on it" [1st Samuel 31:4].

We then read these very sobering words in 1st Chronicles 10:13-14 “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of a medium, to inquire of her and inquired not of the Lord, **therefore he slew him**, and turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse”.

King Saul had disobeyed God and had attempted to communicate with the dead and as a result, even though he committed suicide, we read that it was God who “**slew him**” – what a practical outworking of the truth of Proverbs 21:1 “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will”.

Apart from God’s prohibition about attempting to communicate with the dead, the nonsensical, in practical terms, of Paul Symonds’ claim that there can be ‘dialogue’ between the living here on earth and those who have died but are now in heaven just beggars belief.

How ‘on earth’ could some mere human, who is now in heaven, possibly ‘tune in’ to some attempted communication being offered up by one or perhaps simultaneously even more people down here on planet earth? They would need to omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent and those attributes belong alone to Almighty God.

Paul Symonds attempted to ‘impute’ the teaching of James 5:16 “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” to the realm of those now in heaven – they are, in his opinion, clearly so much more ‘righteous’ than mere mortals down here on earth and so they have more influence in having our prayers answered – that is basically what he said.

When someone is truly converted to Christ, they are said to be “made the righteousness of God in him [Christ]” [2 Corinthians 5:21]. The righteousness that is credited to the believer’s ‘account’ when he is converted is the righteousness of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. That is why believers are “accepted in the beloved” [Ephesians 1:6] – they are “accepted” by God because they are now ‘clothed’ in Christ’s perfect righteousness and not their own sinful, imperfect self-righteousness.

This perfect righteousness is not fashioned by any personal human works but is received as a gracious gift from God by faith alone as we read in Romans 4:4-5 “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, **but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly**, his faith is counted for righteousness”.

Once converted, faithful and obedient believers are to live righteous lives and God’s ‘ear’ is open to the prayers of such ‘righteous’ people. In contrast, the Psalmist quite rightly said in Psalm 66:18 “If I regard iniquity in my heart [if I behave in an unrighteous fashion] the Lord will not hear me”. James 5:16 applies to believers, here on earth, who are walking in fellowship with and obedience before God and who have not sinfully backslidden.

The good news for God's people is that there is someone who is perfectly righteous and who is right now in heaven praying for them. In 1 John 2:1 we read "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, **we have an advocate** with the Father, **Jesus Christ, the righteous**".

True Christians have one who 'pleads their cause' in heaven. He is the one who died to save them and who lives to keep them. He is the Lord Jesus Christ who according to Hebrews 7:25 "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing **he ever liveth to make intercession for them**".

Paul Symonds fully endorsed the false Roman Catholic exaltation of Mary and her supposed intercessory help claimed to be given to those who pray to her. Roman Catholicism robs Christ of many attributes and roles and robes Mary in them – a sin-free, Immaculate Conception is given to Mary by Rome but that belonged alone to Christ. A sin-free life is given to Mary by Rome but that belonged alone to Christ. A glorified human bodily existence in heaven is given to Mary by Rome but presently that belongs alone to Christ.

A role in heaven as monarch [Queen] is given to Mary by Rome but there is only one ruling monarch in heaven, Jesus Christ, who is "King of Kings" – there He is also the bridegroom who awaits His marriage to His bride and that is His Church, made up of the redeemed of all ages, and they will be by His side as "joint heirs" and not some false [Queen] Mary, crowned by Rome as their Queen of Heaven.

In the Catholic Catechism, we read in **paragraph 969** 'Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of **Advocate** [remember 1 John 2:1 that I quoted above], Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix'. These roles belong alone to the triune God of Heaven but Rome has credited them to their [Queen] Mary who is certainly not the Mary of The Scriptures.

Some years ago, I was very privileged to be asked to contribute to a DVD/video called '**Messages from Heaven**' that dealt with the claimed apparitions of and messages from the false Roman Catholic Mary. A former Roman Catholic, Jim Tetlow, compiled it, and you can view it on this link

http://www.eternal-productions.org/messages_video.html

(I would suggest omitting viewing chapters 1 and 3)

Back in February 1998 I received an invitation to debate with a Jesuit Priest, Richard Foley, on a Channel 5 TV programme called '**Crossfire**' on the subject of '**Should Mary be declared Co-Redemptrix?**' If you go to these links you can listen to that half-hour debate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYZgUiB20rM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzcBWW2CtFQ>

There is a relatively modern hymn that captures extremely well the Biblical reality of Christ's current heavenly role for His people and that exposes the unscriptural futility of Rome's claims of the need for 'prayers for and to the dead' and of her false and exalted claims for Mary.

I will conclude this section by quoting the first and last verses of this beautiful hymn.

**Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea
A great High Priest whose name is love
Who ever lives and pleads for me
My name is graven on His hands
My name is written on His heart
I know that while in heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart
No tongue can bid me thence depart**

**Behold Him there! The risen Lamb
My perfect, spotless, Righteousness
The Great unchangeable I AM
The King of Glory and of Grace
One with Himself I cannot die
My soul is purchased by His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ my Saviour and my God
With Christ my Saviour and my God**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL3hmvSUPF8>

Segment 6

What Paul Symonds said in this segment is of very deep personal significance to my own conversion and myself. If what he stated were true then I have been the victim of some giant 'delusion' and 'con'. Why do I say that? Well, in my own personal testimony that has been posted to our website for many years now I wrote this –

'Fearful of the consequences of my sin I decided to attend a church service on the evening of 19th August 1984. I can't recall what the preacher spoke about but I know that during the service God revealed to me that the sinless life and substitutionary death of Jesus Christ would solve my problem. HE was righteous [*"CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness" Romans 10:4*] and I needed HIS righteousness. I deserved punishment for my sins and HE didn't for HE was sinless but HE suffered in my place [*"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins {the substitute} the just for the unjust {the sinner} that he {by his sinless life and substitutionary sufferings and death - no work on my part} might bring us {not assist us to get there by our own works/endeavours} to God" 1st Peter 3:16*].

Here I saw Christ fulfilling the role of SUBSTITUTE as pictured in Leviticus 1:4 but the missing piece of the 'jig-saw' revealed to me by God was this. Before Christ was nailed to the cross He was stripped and the last garment removed was "his coat; now the coat was without seam [a picture of perfect righteousness] woven from the top throughout [the God-man who came to earth]" John 19:23. God revealed to me that not only was Christ taking "our [my] sins in his own body on the tree" 1st Peter 2:24 but He was also in exchange giving me His robe - His righteousness to cover me "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe" Romans 3:22.

That night I was clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith and in consequence I knew I was "accepted in the beloved" Ephesians 1:6...I knew that Christ had given me a perfect and permanent righteousness [HIS]

The imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to every truly born-again believer is a gracious and glorious truth 'enshrined' in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in Romans 1:16-17 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ...For in it is the righteousness of [would be better translated 'from'] God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith". The hymn quoted earlier so eloquently states- '**Behold Him there! The risen Lamb My perfect, spotless, Righteousness**'.

In this segment Paul Symonds firmly rejects this biblical truth of 'imputation' and in support of his belief quotes from the writings of deceased Jesuit, **Henri de Lubac**. Herewith are extracts from the quote used that was later sent to me by Paul Symonds -

'If God had willed to save us without our own co-operation, Christ's sacrifice by itself would have sufficed. BUT does not the very existence of our Saviour pre-suppose a lengthy period of collaboration on man's part? ...God did not desire to save mankind as a wreck is salvaged; he meant to raise up within it a life, his own life [Cecil's comments - Increasing 'sanctification', as believers are conformed more and more to the image of Christ, is evidence of salvation and not grounds for salvation] ...Christ did not come to take our place...but to enable us to raise ourselves through him to God. He came not to win for us an external pardon...but to change us inwardly. [Cecil's comments - Please remember the context - Lubac is explaining how he believes someone is 'saved, not 'sanctified'] Thenceforward humanity was to co-operate actively in its own salvation'.

In contrast to the views of Jesuits, Paul Symonds and Henri de Lubac, former Dominican priest, Richard Bennett, who edited the book I referred to earlier, 'Far from Rome: Near to God' that chronicles the testimonies of 50 converted, former Roman Catholic priests, writes on pages 358-360 [Banner of Truth 1997 edition]

'Under the same general heading, "Grace and Justification", the new Catechism attributes merit to man's "collaboration" with the grace of God...The same false hope of attaining merit by "collaboration" with the work of God is held out under the heading "Our participation in Christ's Sacrifice" ...There is no scriptural basis for the idea of being made partners with Christ in the paschal mystery. Christ "by himself purged our sins" [Hebrews 1:3].

The gospel excludes meritorious works on the part of man...The Catechism also teaches Roman Catholics to place their faith in the clergy, and substitutes the sacramental system, including penances and indulgences, for the biblical truth, that Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to the believer through faith alone...All the blessings of salvation are in Christ alone'.

Dr Eryl Davies, who retired last year as Principal of The Evangelical Theological College of Wales, in his book '**The Ultimate Rescue: Christ's Saving Work on The Cross**' wrote [pages 222-223]

'Justification...speaks of putting us in a right relationship to God and His law...And that is exactly what Jesus Christ achieved for us in His sacrifice. Because He fulfilled God's law on our behalf and suffered our punishment on the cross, **His righteousness is credited to us** when we believe personally on the Lord Jesus. The result is "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" [Romans 8:1]. Justification is the opposite of condemnation'.

Under a sub-heading of 'Imputation' Dr Davies also wrote [pages 227-228]

'There is another glorious aspect to justification, namely, God credits those who believe with the righteousness of Christ... "the obedience of one" [Romans 5:17-19] is credited to the believer'.

John Murray in his excellent book '**Redemption: Accomplished and Applied**' dealt with the heart of the false beliefs and teachings of Rome and Paul Symonds when he wrote on pages 118-127

'The truth of justification has suffered at the hands of human perversion as much as any doctrine of Scripture... Justification does not mean to make righteous, good or holy or upright... It is one of the primary errors of the Romish Church that it regards justification as the infusion of grace, as renewal and sanctification, whereby we are made holy...That is why Luther endured such travail of soul as long as he was governed by Romish distortion...The obedience of Christ must therefore be regarded as the *ground* of justification; **it is the righteousness which God not only takes into account but reckons to our account when he justifies the ungodly**... Righteousness wrought in us or wrought by us, even though it be altogether of the grace of God [as Rome teaches] and even though it be perfect in character, is not a God righteousness. It is, after all, a human righteousness...The righteousness of justification is the righteousness and obedience of Christ [Romans 5:17-19]'.

This beautiful gospel truth of 'Imputed Righteousness' is captured most wonderfully in Zechariah 3:4 where we read "**Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment**". No wonder that the Lord Jesus, after he had taken the two on the road to Emmaus on a comprehensive Old Testament bible study said to them in Luke 24:42 "**all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms, concerning me**".

Earlier in His ministry He had declared in John 5:39 that “**the scriptures...are they which testify of me**”. It should be noted that in Zechariah 3 verse 1 there is opposition to this glorious truth of ‘Imputed Righteousness’ for we read there of “**Satan standing at his right hand to resist him**”. Today Rome and her spokespersons are standing ready ‘**to resist**’ a core message of the gospel for “**in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith...The just shall live by faith**” [Romans 1:17].

As a final rebuttal of the false teachings of Paul Symonds I want to quote from a ‘**Dictionary of Theological Terms**’ by **Dr Alan Cairns**. Under the heading of ‘Imputation’ on page 187 we read

‘It describes the act of God in visiting the guilt of believers on Christ and of conferring the righteousness of Christ upon believers...As Christ is not made a sinner by the imputation to Him of our sins, so we are not made holy by the imputation to us of His righteousness. The transfer is only of guilt from us to Him, and of merit from Him to us. He justly *[under God’s plan of salvation]* suffered the punishment due to our sins, and we justly *[under God’s plan of salvation]* receive the rewards due to His righteousness...Imputation, then is clearly indispensable to the Biblical doctrine of justification’.

This matter was at the very heart of the Protestant Reformation and this link will take you to an article by **John MacArthur** called ‘**The Protestant Protest**’ –

<https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/grace-to-you/read/articles/the-protestant-protest-9242.html>

In the wake of the Reformation, Rome’s **Council of Trent** set down Rome’s ‘Statement of Faith’ and responded to the teachings of ‘Reformation Protestantism’. On this matter of ‘Imputed Righteousness’ this was Rome’s verdict in **Session VI: Justification** –

Canon 9: If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema’.

Canon 12: If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema’.

Canon 24: If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.

Canon 30: If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification, the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema’.

These ‘anathemas’, particularly the one in **Canon 30**, show clearly the Jesuitical false nature of Paul Symonds’ public assertion that Rome teaches that God’s salvation is a ‘free gift’

On the grounds of this segment alone, never mind all the other errors identified in the earlier segments, Paul Symonds is clearly presenting “another gospel which is not another” [Galatians 1:6-7] and he should not be welcomed as a ‘fellow believer’ by professing evangelicals, but rather, he should be witnessed to by them.

Concluding comments

Back in 1990 the Belfast Telegraph carried an advert for ‘The Mournes Bible Week’ being held [11th-16th July] at the ecumenical/charismatic Christian Renewal Centre, Rostrevor. One of the speakers listed was ‘Rev Paul Symonds SJ – Columbanus Community, Belfast]. I have the tape of that talk – it is basically Paul Symonds’ ‘testimony’ and in it he confirms his training and ordination as a Jesuit. For some strange reason, known only to Paul Symonds himself [[and God of course] he denied to my face in the run-up to the debate that he took part in that he was a Jesuit and he claimed he was merely a CC [Catholic Curate].

Three other matters before and after that debate are worthy of mention as they show the subtle tactics employed by and the high-ranking influence exercised by Paul Symonds.

1. Before the debate involving Paul Symonds and Rob Zins took place in Carryduff I was invited by Paul Symonds to come to the house he was living in to have a meal with him and also with ‘Father’ Patrick McCafferty who was also scheduled to have 2 public debates with Rob Zins around the same time. I discussed the matter with my wife Margaret and she wisely felt that I should not go on my own to such a gathering. I contacted Paul Symonds and asked if his invitation could be extended to include Margaret and he agreed. Before leaving to go for the meal I said to Margaret that I felt that we should pray in our own house and give thanks in advance for the food we would receive later. The reason I suggested this was that I felt we [I] could be placed in an ‘ecumenically compromising situation’ if Paul Symonds asked me to give thanks for the food in his house – he would I believe have liked to have been able to report that he and I had prayed together. Sure enough, when we sat down for the meal Paul Symonds invited me to give thanks so I explained to him that Margaret and I had already given thanks for the food before leaving our own house and if he and Patrick wanted to give thanks we would wait [with our eyes wide open] for them to do so and that’s exactly what happened. I had quite rightly been very wary of Margaret and I becoming the victims of any Jesuitical ‘ecumenical entrapment’.

2. The year after the debate, in August 1996, I was informed, by our then Roman Catholic good friends and neighbours in Carryduff, that on a particular Sunday morning in their chapel, Paul Symonds had publicly prayed by name for my beloved father who had died the previous August 1995. Needless to say, I was less than pleased to be told about this and so I phoned Paul Symonds and asked him never to do such a thing again for, as my father had died 'in Christ,' he was now in the very presence of his Lord and Saviour and I also reminded Paul Symonds that praying for the dead is sinfully futile. In a follow-up letter to my phone call I sent Paul Symonds a copy of the book 'Protestants and Catholics – Do they now agree?' by John Ankerberg – a book that outlines clearly the 'great gulf' between Rome's 'gospel' and the Biblical gospel. In a 'thank you' acknowledgement letter Paul Symonds wrote –

'Thank you too for the copy of 'Protestant and Catholics: Do they now agree?' which was in fact lent to me last year by a dear friend whose father died on 23rd August this year. My friend, a Protestant, thought that book would help me prepare for the encounter with Rob Zins, How right he was!'

So, Paul Symonds received help for his debate with Rob Zins from his 'friend, a Protestant'. After doing a little 'detective work' I was able to establish that Paul Symonds' 'Protestant friend' was former Baptist Pastor and now Superintendent of the Methodist East Belfast Mission – **Gary Mason** who in recent months conducted the funeral service for local politician, David Ervine who died suddenly and unexpectedly.

3. Again in 1996, 'out of the blue' Margaret and I received an invitation from 'The Lord Chancellor and The Speaker of the House of Commons' to attend the 'National Prayer Breakfast' to be held in the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster on Wednesday 27th November 1996. However, when I looked at the 'Sponsoring Group' I noted the names of David Alton MP and the Earl of Longford. David Alton, a zealous Roman Catholic, was educated by Jesuits and has travelled worldwide promoting 'views Roman Catholic'. He has authored a number of books including one dealing with Roman Catholic 'pilgrimage' sites in England and Wales. Lord Longford converted to Roman Catholicism in 1940 and his wife similarly converted some 6 years later. Because of this Roman Catholic involvement, I quickly realised this would be something I could not possibly attend and so I wrote a short note declining the invitation but in the note I did ask to be kept informed of any other similar events. In a response to my letter, Yvonne Brooks, on behalf of the National Prayer Breakfast wrote **'We do not have any other events in London since this is the National Annual Breakfast. I understand that there are some smaller events held in different parts of the UK – Rev Paul Symonds would probably know about any held in Ireland'**. As a result of this letter I now knew how Margaret and I had come to receive this invitation 'out of the blue' – clearly Paul Symonds had suggested sending an invite to us to attend this Prayer Breakfast – yet again this was another Jesuitical attempt to entice us into 'ecumenical entrapment'.

Just in closing this section, another name listed as a National Prayer Breakfast 'sponsor' was that of former Unionist MP, John Taylor. On his 'testimony' tape Paul Symonds tells of how, when working in Europe he would organise ecumenical prayer times for the European Parliamentary Fellowship and that involved people like Sir Fred Catherwood and Northern Ireland MEPs John Taylor [Protestant/Unionist] and John Hume [Roman Catholic/Nationalist] who, according to Paul Symonds, sat together and prayed together.

On the following links <https://www.scribd.com/document/144340669/EIPS-The-Jesuit-Oath-Exposed> and <http://www.truthontheweb.org/jesuit.htm> there are details of an oath that a Jesuit apparently takes at his 'induction'. This portion seemed rather applicable in the light of all that we have just considered –

'I _____, now in the presence of Almighty God, the blessed Virgin Mary, the blessed St. John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and all the saints, sacred host of Heaven, and to you, my Ghostly Father, the superior general of the Society of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius Loyola...declare and swear that His Holiness, the Pope, is Christ's Vice-Regent and is the true and only head of the Catholic or Universal Church throughout the earth...Therefore to the utmost of my power I will defend this doctrine and His Holiness's right and custom against all usurpers of the heretical or Protestant authority whatever, especially the Lutheran Church of Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and the now pretended authority and Churches of England and Scotland, and the branches of same now established in Ireland...I do further promise and declare that I will have no opinion or will of my own or any mental reservation whatever...but will unhesitatingly obey each and every command that I may receive from my superiors in the militia of the Pope and of Jesus Christ...I, _____, do swear by the blessed Trinity and blessed sacrament which I am now to receive to perform and on part to keep this my oath'.

For the sake of openness and fairness I should say that the authenticity of this 'oath' is rejected by Roman Catholic websites such as the one on this link http://www.reocities.com/okc_catholic/articles/jesuit_oath.html

Whatever the truth or otherwise of the Jesuit 'oath', Rev David Samuel in a Reformation Day rally in London on 17th October 1992 said this 'Rome's aims are, and always have been, inimical [hostile] to the Protestantism of this country. She is bent upon the overthrow and elimination of Protestantism...She will use all means at her disposal to bring about that particular objective...The strategy of the Church of Rome is the same today as it was in the time of Henry VIII, in the time of Elizabeth 1, in the time of the 18th and 19th Centuries...to bring our church and nation back into submission to the Papacy...half of the battle for Protestants is knowing what the Church of Rome is up to today and the other half is to know that there can be no compromise, no submission to the claims of Rome'.

It is clear that currently in the Ballymena area, a number of Protestant clergymen and significant numbers of their 'flocks' are failing in both halves of 'the battle' that David Samuel spoke of. They are failing to recognise the aims of Rome being advanced by Paul Symonds and they are compromising with and in effect submitting to the claims of Rome.

How can these people, who in theory should know better, be so easily and apparently willingly duped? The answer I believe is to be found in God's inspired Word in **2nd Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15** where the apostle Paul writes

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh [like Paul Symonds] preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him [as has happened with Paul Symonds] ...For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works”.

Just recently a Protestant church elder in the Ballymena area said to me – ‘But look how much good ‘Father’ Paul has done here’ – I explained to this lady that whilst Paul Symonds has perhaps done much to defuse tensions on a human level through his contacts with local ‘Protestant paramilitaries’, he has not and can never, so long as he remains a committed Roman Catholic priest, advance the true Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ for, as the apostle Paul identified, Paul Symonds preaches another Jesus, by another spirit and proclaims another gospel, whilst all the time having the appearance of a ‘minister of righteousness’. As things currently stand, I believe the sad reality is that for Paul Symonds, *‘his end shall be according to his works’*.

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 29 March 2007

POSTSCRIPT

The debate from which I have included audio extracts can be watched visually in full by going to these links –

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-maKb4At_4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iPE1LWeQio>

In the original version of this article I had included by way of further proof of the Jesuit ‘credentials’ of Paul Symonds a link to the web site of this group –

The Conference of European Provincials SJ

because in their listings for 1972-2004 they had 2 references to Paul Symonds as being a member of their grouping. When reformatting and updating this article (October 2017) I found that the web site is no longer online – fortunately however I had downloaded the relevant details back in 2007 so herewith are those details and the relevant entries for **Paul Symonds** are listed for **1982** and **1987** –

History of the Conference of European Provincials S.J. 1972 - 2004

[English]

- **18th - 20th May 1972.** A first ever meeting was held in Paris of the Provincials of Western Europe in the presence of Fr General Pedro Arrupe. At this meeting Fr Arrupe said that the Society needed to consider what it might do specifically in the "European milieu".
- **30th September 1972.** Fr General established the **Committee of European Provincials** (AR.XV.957). **Fr Simon Decloux (BME)** appointed President. Members ESP, GAL, BRI, HIB, NER, BSE, POR, the Delegate for Italy, and the President of the German Provincials' Committee.
- **14th - 15th January 1974.** The Committee met at Villa Cavaletti, Rome to review formation at the European level, the European institutions and other areas of possible European collaboration.
- **26th - 29th January 1976.** The Committee met again at Villa Cavaletti. The Statutes of the Committee were discussed. The Committee's existence was reconfirmed after CG32. Fr General consulted on a President and wider membership.
- **Fr Luk de Hovre (BSE)** named as President, and Fr Jean Weydart (GAL) as Secretary. The Committee made up of Belgium (BME & BSE), France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Yugoslavia.
- **25th - 29th January 1977.** A meeting at the General Curia in Rome discussed areas of co-operation at the European level.
- **31st January - 4th February 1978.** A meeting was held at Heverlee in Belgium. A visit was made to the European institutions.
- **1st - 4th February 1979.** A meeting at Southwell House, London discussed the Jesuit contribution to the European institutions.
- **31st January - 3rd February 1980.** Meeting at Berchmanskolleg in Munich. The composition and role of the Committee were discussed

- **29th January - 1st February 1981.** Meeting at Gallarate, Italy. Eurojess was set up. Luk De Hovre's mandate ended.
- **28th - 31st January 1982.** A meeting planned for Barcelona was cancelled and a small group of Provincials met in Rome with Fr Dezza, the Pontifical Delegate.
- **Fr Guy Jacqmotte (BSE)** named as new President in June 1982.
Secretary: Fr Paul Symonds (BRI).
- **27th - 30th January 1983.** A meeting held in Barcelona prepared for GC32 and the nomination of a new General.
- **9th - 13th February 1984.** A meeting was held In Marseilles in the presence of Fr General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. The future of the Committee was discussed. At present it was made up of only half the European Provincials. Should something be set up along the lines of the USA Conference? Knowledge of English would be necessary for all members. A document ***The Mission of the Society in Europe*** was produced.
- **21st - 24th March 1985.** The Committee met at Campion Hall, Oxford. It proposed that there should be a Directorate made up of eight Jesuits. They should establish a permanent Secretariat of the Committee, to be made up of an Executive Secretary, a person responsible for contacts and liaisons, and an administrative secretary. The first two should be appointed by Fr General for a period of three years. The Directorate should determine the work of the Secretariat.
- **24th - 25th May 1985.** The Directorate met at Heverlee, Belgium to discuss the setting-up of a Secretariat.
- **6th - 10th February 1986.** At a meeting in Lisbon the idea of a Secretariat began to take shape. The role and powers of a possible President of a Committee of European Provincials was discussed. A terna was prepared for Fr General.
- **Fr Ignasi Salvat (TAR)** was appointed as President of the Committee of European Provincials by Fr General on 23rd April 1986.
- **5th - 10th March 1987.** First meeting of the **Conference of European Provincials** in Zagreb. Henceforth the term 'Committee' would be used for a smaller meeting of Provincials in the years when the full Conference did not meet. The Statutes of the C.E.P. were agreed at Zagreb. **After this meeting Fr Paul Symonds ceased to be Secretary.** Fr Salvat appointed Fr Jean Beckers (BME) in his place.

- **17th - 22nd May 1988.** The Committee met in Mosta, Malta. Theme: 'What does Europe mean to you and how is it lived in your Province?' It approved the budget for the next two years. It also proposed a 'European Year' for scholastics as part of their formation and set up a committee led by Fr Jacques Gellard to study this. It also set up a committee led by Fr Mark Rotsaert to look at increasing collaboration between our centres of study, especially of theology.
- **20th - 25th April 1989.** The Committee met in Vienna. It considered Fr Mark Rotsaert's report on European collaboration in the formation of our scholastics. There had been strong resistance to the idea of a 'European year' because it would increase the length of formation.
- **2nd - 6th March 1990. Second General Assembly** of C.E.P. in Brussels. The GA heard reports on the current state of the Provinces in Eastern Europe and discussed the assistance given by the Provinces of Western Europe; this was at the explicit request of Fr General. Formation was discussed and the President was asked to set up Euro-groups for Directors of Formation Centres and for lecturers in Philosophy. The future of OCIPE, the Foyer Catholique and the European Schools was discussed.
- **February 1991.** First meeting of Directors of Formation Centre Euro-group in Chantilly, France
- **11th - 15th April 1991.** The Committee met in Warsaw. Nineteen Provincials took part. Once again Fr Mark Rotsaert's report on Formation in Europe was discussed. There was discussion about setting up a 'European Community' in Strasbourg. OCIPE was also discussed at length.
- **?? 1992.** The Committee met in Dublin. President Mary Robinson met the Provincials. They also visited Belfast.
- **18th - 22nd March 1993. Third General Assembly** of the C.E.P. in Geneva. Fr General was present throughout. A new version of the Statutes (21 March 1993) was approved. Henceforth the General Assembly would meet every two years with a Committee meeting in alternate years. (The Committee would now be made up of two Provincials from each Assistancy.) The Provincials voted on a terna for a new President. Fr Philip Harnett (HIB) received a large majority. Fr General immediately announced that he would appoint Fr Harnett President of the C.E.P. but deferred his appointment as Major Superior until he could clarify the latter's functions. The GA approved a

Declaration on OCIFE and another on the Foyer Catholique.

- **1st October 1993. Fr Philip Harnett (HIB)** takes over as President of the C.E.P. He is the first full-time President of the C.E.P.
- **14th - 18th April 1994.** The Committee met in Berlin. They discussed a Strategy Document prepared by Fr Harnett (with assistance from Fr Calvez). The Statutes of the C.E.P. were again revised and it was decided that in future meetings of the C.E.P. should be held in November. There was discussion about whether the President should reside in Brussels or Strasbourg.
- **11th July 1994.** Fr Philip Harnett appointed Major Superior. He moves his residence from Brussels to Strasbourg.
- **26th - 31st October 1995. Fourth General Assembly** of the C.E.P. in Manresa. Fr General was in attendance from 28th - 30th. The opening day was a workshop on the challenges presented by contemporary Europe. Two scholastics made a presentation on EJIF. The possibility of a Europe-wide Jesuit Cultural Review was discussed.
- **1st September 1996. Fr Gerwin Komma (ASR)** appointed acting President. Fr Harnett had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and Fr Komma had been in Strasbourg helping him since July. Fr Harnett died in December 1996.
- **November (?) 1996.** The Committee met in Rome.
- **23rd - 28th October 1997. Fifth General Assembly** of the C.E.P. in Dobogókő, Hungary. Fr General attended the latter part of the meeting. The Document The Mission of the Society in Europe was discussed and adopted. The Statutes of the C.E.P. were once again revised and provision made for Fr General to appoint an Executive Secretary of the C.E.P. who would be Assistant/Socius to the President. The Provincials unanimously decided not to meet annually. The Provincials prepared a terna for Fr General for a new President.
- **25th March 1988. Fr Alfred Darmanin (MAL)** is appointed President of the C.E.P. by Fr General.
- **12th - 16th November 1998.** The Committee met in Seville, Spain.
- **25th March 1999.** Fr Chris Dyckhoff (BRI) is appointed Assistant to the President.
- **21st - 26th October 1999. Sixth General Assembly** of C.E.P. in Rodízio, Portugal. Fr General was present throughout. This meeting took The Movement of Peoples in Europe as its main theme and it was decided that the C.E.P. should issue a statement on this subject. To the surprise of many the GA voted down a proposal to set up a C.E.P.

Task Force on Formation.

- **8th May 2000.** Fr General appoints **Fr Mark Rotsaert (BSE)** as Acting President of the C.E.P. This followed Fr General's acceptance of the resignation of Fr Alfred Darmanin.
- **29th September 2000. Extraordinary General Assembly** of the C.E.P. in Loyola. Fr General was present throughout. [This meeting followed on from the world meeting of Provincials] This meeting prepared a terna for Fr General. It also decided that the General Assembly should meet every year and insisted that the President should be full-time.
- **3rd October 2001.** Fr General appoints **Fr Mark Rotsaert** as President of the C.E.P. Fr Rotsaert continues to be Provincial of BSE.
- **14th November 2000.** The office of the C.E.P. moves to Brussels from Strasbourg.
- **17th - 20th November 2000.** The last meeting of the Committee. Ways to take forward the work of the C.E.P. were discussed. The changes necessary to the Statutes in the light of the Loyola meeting were decided upon. The Statement on the Movement of Peoples in Europe was agreed and issued.
- **19th - 24th October 2001. Seventh General Assembly** of the C.E.P. held at Le Châtelard, Lyons, France. Generally agreed to be a most successful meeting. The ECE, EOC and EOR assistancies all held preparatory meetings at Le Châtelard from the 17th. A 'Formation Committee' was set up to determine criteria for assessing our European Formation Centres by 2002, make an assessment of these by 2003, and make reasoned proposals for the future by 2004. Fr David Smolira (BRI) is named as chairman of this committee which is made up of one Provincial and one 'formation person' from each Assistancy. The necessary changes to the Statutes were agreed (and approved by Fr General in November 2001).
- **26th - 30th October 2002. Eighth General Assembly** of the C.E.P. at Lainz, Vienna, Austria. All members arrived on 24th October and separate Assistancy meetings were held until 26th October. On Friday 25th October EMR and EOC held their first ever joint meeting. Fr David Smolira (BRI) reports on the progress made by the Formation Committee and announces that it should be possible to make firm proposals at the General Assembly in 2003. A document The Mission of our Common Apostolic Works in Brussels and Strasbourg was discussed. The General Assembly mandated the President to set up a Task Force on the Movement of Peoples to be chaired by John Dardis (HIB). Fr General attended the meeting from 27th October until its conclusion.

- **27th September 2003. Fr Mark Rotsaert** (BSE) becomes full-time President of the C.E.P.
- **25th – 29th October 2003. Ninth General Assembly** of the C.E.P. at Czêstochowa, Poland. The proposals of the CEP Commission on European Centres of Jesuit Formation weren't approved. The Assembly mandated the President, in consultation with Fr. General, to appoint a small group of Provincials with the task to assist the President in taking forward the process of recommending to the General Assembly certain Centres as European Centres of Jesuit Formation. This President's group was mandated to report to the CEP General Assembly in October 2004 with a modified proposal.
- **30th October 2003. Fr Tommaso Guadagno** (ITA) succeeds Fr Chris Dyckhoff as Assistant to the President.
- **23rd – 27th October 2004. Tenth General Assembly** of the C.E.P. at Napoli, Italy.

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