

Larry Tomczak: An Open Letter to Joe Biden

Dear Mr. Biden,

It's been said that the hallmark of a great leader is his ability to be a great listener. As you ask Americans to come together in unity, will you take a few minutes to listen to some heartfelt concerns? I promise to pray for you daily.

I was raised, like you, as a Roman Catholic in a blue-collar family. We never had an automobile or air conditioning, and we never took a vacation. My parents worked hard to give me 12 years of Catholic education. I shared my story in a book, *Clap Your Hands!*, reaching over a quarter-million people worldwide, to my surprise.

The theme of the book was for Catholics to likewise come together in unity as Christians rooted in authentic faith. My story was one of a church-going "Lost Soul" (the name of our Cleveland rock band) yet someone who never understood what Jesus meant when He said, "You must be born again" (John 3:7b). I never knew I needed to repent and put my total trust in Jesus and His finished work on the cross for my salvation. When I did, I experienced His transformative work in my life that has continued over 51 years and 45 years of marriage.

After working at the AFL-CIO Headquarters across the street from where you now reside, I entered full-time ministry. Traveling to 31 nations and throughout the United States, I've tried to help people discover a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I've pointed out that Hitler and Mussolini were Catholics. In our generation Madonna, Bill Maher and Nancy Pelosi were also raised Catholic. What matters though is not identifying with a religious label but aligning with the person of Jesus, then obeying in practice, not mere

profession, what He taught.

Over the decades Catholics like Dorothy Sayers and J.R. Tolkien (Oxfordites who teamed up with C.S. Lewis) attempted to draw people into this same relationship with God through their writings. They knew those who believe following Christ and His commandments can be done without “offending” people face a rude awakening.

Dorothy Sayers challenged readers: “I believe it to be a grave mistake to present Christianity as something charming with no offense to it. Seeing that Christ went about the world giving the most violent offense to all kinds of people, it would seem absurd to expect that the doctrine of His person can be so presented as to offend nobody. We cannot blink at the fact that gentle Jesus, meek and mild, was so straightforward and so inflammatory in His language that He was thrown out of church, stoned, hunted from place to place, and finally labeled a firebrand and a public danger.”

I know you attend Mass, carry a rosary and tell of your experiences with nuns, but have you ever genuinely been “born again”? On your desk you display a cherished photograph with the pope and self-identify as a Catholic, but if you were to die tonight, are you certain of your eternal salvation? Billy Graham and Rush Limbaugh were absolutely certain of their eternal home in heaven—are you?

Sayers, like me, focused on calling people to be authentic in their faith. I have a plaque in my study with these words on it: “Let it never be said of me that I presented the world a caricature of Christ.” This statement may be the only one I sensed God audibly spoke to me.

The question I pose to you, I pose to everyone: Is your faith based on truth or myth? Is it authentic or counterfeit?

In the greatest sermon ever given by the greatest teacher who ever lived, Jesus put it this way in the Sermon on the Mount,

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not ... and done many wonderful works in Your name?’ But then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice evil” (Matt. 7:21-23).

You may recall from a reading at Mass the account of two horrific tragedies addressed by Jesus.

As people speculated who to blame, Jesus simply confronted them with the reality that “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-5). He says the same to each of us during these tumultuous times.

The only other time in America’s history when there was such hostility, division and deaths like today was during the Civil War. Over the months, we’ve experienced a terrible pandemic, contested election, racial upheaval, skyrocketing violence, destruction in cities, impeachments, economic upheaval, storming of the Capitol, ongoing moral decline, irrational hatred and loss of freedoms.

In his day, President Lincoln believed the Civil War was God’s judgment on the United States. He called for repentance during a National Day of Prayer and Fasting in 1863. He said, “Nations, like individuals, are subject to punishment and divine chastisements.”

Soon thereafter the war ended as our political leaders inaugurated a Memorial Day event to honor deceased servicemen, reflect on their sacrifice and pray for rebirth as a nation. Isn’t that critically needed today?

Lincoln shared that he had his genuine conversion experience after he pondered the carnage and realized the tremendous toll because of our nation’s sins.

One of England’s greatest political leaders was William

Wilberforce. After he was genuinely converted, he became the champion in abolition of the slave trade in England that reverberated later to America. He brought about a righteous transformation, but it only took place after he genuinely repented in his born-again experience.

The Bible teaches that “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this comes the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). This is an appointment Joe Biden, Larry Tomczak and all humanity faces. Because of your age, numerous family deaths and your brain aneurysms, you’re acquainted with this reality.

Are you ready?

A changed life is at the core of a genuine conversion experience that begins when we repent, put our total trust in Jesus as our risen Lord and commit to follow Him in obedience. This is what separates the authentic from the counterfeit when so many Americans (some polls say 80%) profess to be Christians, yet something seems terribly amiss today.

Two questions: Are you truly a Christian? Will you lead us by your example in desperately needed national repentance?

Jesus made it clear regarding what it means to be a Christian. The terms He communicated were clearly recorded in sacred Scripture.

- A supreme love for Him (Luke 14:26) proven by obedience to His Word. “If a man loves Me, he will keep My Word” (John 14:23).
- A denial of self (Matt. 16:24). Not thinking less of self but thinking of self less.
- A deliberate choosing of the cross (Matt. 16:24). Dying to selfishness to serve God.
- A life spent following, not just finding Him (Matt. 16:24).

- A fervent love for all (John 13:35). We radically resist hatred, forgive others and love even our enemies as Jesus directed.
- An unswerving commitment to His Word (John 8:31). Practically applied today: protect the unborn; uphold marriage as ordained by God between a man and a woman.
- Forsaking all (approval of people, applause of men) to follow Him (Luke 14:33).

Here's the deal: Jesus advised us to "count the cost" in making this most important decision that really is the doorway to our destiny in this life and the next. He said it best: "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Since none of us has any guarantee of tomorrow, will you do as Jesus directed? {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.