

July 16, 2010

And they just said nothing.

by Pastor Ralph Ovadal, Pilgrims Covenant Church, Monroe, Wisconsin

"We are especially looking for people who already will be at Lifest to help for a period of time . . . If you know you are coming to Lifest, and already will have a ticket, and are willing to spend a few hours helping people know God's love through our Catholic faith, let us know!"

Roman Catholic Priest Tom Long

Friday, July 9, some of us from Pilgrims Covenant Church traveled the 140 miles from Monroe to Oshkosh in order to witness for Christ at the main gate of a supposedly "Christian"—evangelical—event called Lifest. I had previously written a short article on that event, including comments on a couple of thoroughly corrupted "evangelical" keynote speakers, the ungodly bands, and their anything but Christian music. I also called attention to the issue which it seems is being largely ignored by the few other critics of Lifest—I hasten to say at least the ones I am aware of—and that is involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in Lifest.

Mixed in among the many evangelical sponsors of Lifest was the Roman Catholic Green Bay diocese; among the speakers were several Roman Catholics, including a priest; among the "worship," a number of Roman Catholic masses; among the activities, daily rosary recitations; among the services, daily confessions to priests on site and "free spiritual walks with a certified Catholic spiritual director." Lifest draws an average of 17,000 fans per day. Event officials estimate that approximately 25% of those fans are actually Roman Catholics. By neo-evangelical definitions, they would all, Roman Catholic and Protestant, be evangelical together—all brothers and sisters in Christ.

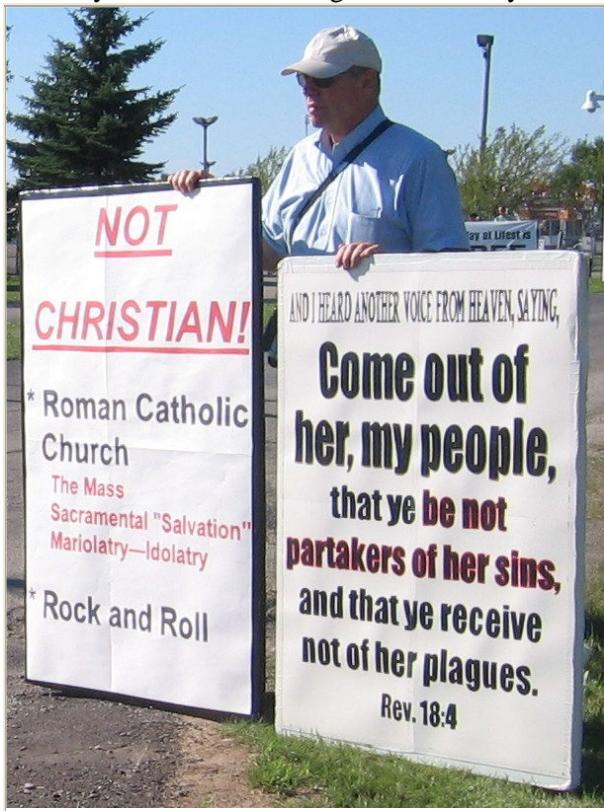
According to the web site of the Green Bay diocese, Lifest is a golden opportunity for the diocese to engage in "evangelization" of the "nearly 20,000 people across multiple groups, including youth, young adults, and families." We are also informed that, "For the fourth consecutive year, the Diocese of Green Bay will host an information table at the Lifest hospitality center"; and this year, "members of the diocese are invited to purchase 'United in the Eucharist' T-shirts and wear them to Lifest. The blue T-shirts with white lettering and graphics can be purchased for \$7." Yes, be sure to wear those shirts to Lifest; it will help with the "evangelization" and desensitization of thousands of neo-evangelicals, including a great many young people who do not have a clue that the Eucharist is a heathenish, blasphemous ritual which makes a mockery of our great High Priest Christ Jesus and His sacrifice on Calvary's cross. This does not reflect well on their ministers, to say the least. By the way, the shirts were a hit; we saw Roman Catholics wearing them at Lifest. It certainly bears mentioning as well that the Franciscan Sisters had a recruiting booth at Lifest. According to the sisters' web site, the purpose of this was to have "young women come in contact with our vocation team."

But please allow me to tell you a little about what we did at Lifest, since that will lead into why I have titled this article as I have. For several reasons, we ended up going to Lifest during the day on a Friday, so the only ones available from our church to go were my two grown daughters. Certainly there was no shortage of Lifest fans during the time we chose to witness, and "*there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few*" (1 Sam. 14:6). The setup of Lifest was ideal for our witness. The actual grounds have parking, but far more attendees parked in the extensive parking in the huge county park directly across the road from those grounds. So the two ladies stood on that side of the public road handing out our *An Urgent Plea to Roman Catholics* each with one of our gospel tracts included, specifically *The Value of Our Souls*. I stood on the other side of the road from them at the



Franciscan Sisters recruitment booth.
Photo credit: Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity

main Lifest entrance, holding two large signs, handing out tracts, doing some preaching, and as it turned out, a whole lot of contending “*for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*,” primarily with Roman Catholics who chose to debate me in defense of popery. Those poor people had almost no real knowledge of the Scriptures and very little true knowledge of the history, the dogma, and the claims of their own church.



At the main gate of Lifest.

But I want to go back to the main gate. As I mentioned, it was a perfect place to proclaim truth. Those parking on the Lifest grounds turned in right in front of my signs. Occupants of cars going by and often standing still in the road in front of the gates read the signs. Shuttle carts bringing loads of people from the parking lots in the park across the road drove right past the signs. All of the people walking from the county park lots—and there were a great deal of them—came past the signs. The police officer directing traffic as well as a good number of Lifest staff standing at the gate to check tickets, answer questions, and direct cars into the park all saw the signs. They also heard my preaching, and that goes to the title of this report.

My conversations with Roman Catholic people ended up with me sharing one last gospel exhortation by preaching to them as they walked away and into Lifest. As I did this, more Roman Catholics in the immediate area would shout out that they too were Roman Catholics and proud of it. And so, each time I also preached to the many evangelicals standing nearby, including the numerous Lifest staff. Each time I asked them how they could say they love the Lord Jesus Christ yet be a party to Him being blasphemed in the Romanist masses, briefly sharing the essential facts of the mass. Then I would ask those calling themselves evangelicals how they could claim to love the Roman Catholic people when they were encouraging them in their false hope and dark superstitions, so paving the road to hell for them. Finally, I would

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As we were leaving Lifest, just beginning the walk to our own car, the Lord led us right to a Roman Catholic priest who had a dozen teenagers from his church with him. In fact, it was the very priest who had just conducted a mass at Lifest! With those young people listening, the priest and I engaged in a long, wide-ranging exchange in which he sought to defend his church and her dogmas against the Word of God as well as the condemnation of Rome’s own history. The so-called “real presence” in the mass, justification, and *Sola Scriptura* versus the authority of the Roman church were the three central issues in our debate, mostly because I made them so. It is tempting to relate some of the content of that intense exchange, but suffice it to say, the Spirit of the Lord will always strongly support His people in such a situation, and truth will win the day.

I must mention, there were times when it almost seemed I could see the centuries rolled back as I looked into the eyes of that very zealous young priest. What I mean is, I could almost see the reflections of the burning martyrs in the raw contempt I saw in the priest’s eyes. How easy it is for us to contend against Rome these days! How those martyrs would mourn if they saw how few of their descendants in the faith are contenders for “the captain of their salvation” (Heb. 2:10). Yet here is more good news: the young people heard everything I shared, and every one of them accepted tracts from us as well!



Protestant pastor debates popish priest (in black) while Roman Catholic young people listen.

point to Roman Catholics and preach, “There is a Roman Catholic: will you share the gospel with him? Do you love his soul enough to share Christ with him and show him the only way to be saved: by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone? Who among you will share Christ with that Roman Catholic?”



Music lovers could meet and greet musicians in the Artist's tent during Lifest. Picture and caption from the *Northwestern*.

acre shrine to “Our Lady of Guadalupe” which is currently drawing thousands upon thousands of “pilgrims” to La Crosse. For many months prior to the shrine dedication, the area media, print and electronic, were filled with glowing reports on the shrine complete with quotes from Roman Catholic priests explaining the spiritual blessings and necessity of Mariolatry. Yet, in spite of an extensive search, the only quotes we can find from evangelical ministers are from me. I was interviewed by the local radio and television stations as well as the *La Crosse Tribune* newspaper. Now I take no pride in that; rather I feel only sorrow. My only point in bringing it up is to ask: Where were the local pastors in the face of that months long media campaign for Romish idolatry, including on the shrine’s day of dedication? Apparently, they just said nothing, at least beyond their own little circles. If there is an exception to that shameful silence, I truly hope it is drawn to our attention so that I can not only correct my assumption but rejoice as well!

Ministers cannot do everything and be every place, but when the issue is Rome’s public mocking of the faith of Jesus and her spiritual fornication with neo-evangelicals, it seems as if the vast majority do nothing and are no place. Last December, members of our church traveled to Des Plaines, Illinois to witness to thousands of “pilgrims” in front of a shrine of “Our Lady of Guadalupe” on her feast day. Actually, it is a multi-day event which draws 100,000 Roman Catholics! A local Christian police officer, happy to see our witness, told me he had not seen any other Christians do likewise. Again, where are the local pastors? What is their response to the pilgrimage of 100,000 lost Roman Catholics into their town? If the police officer was right, apparently they just said nothing. I truly hope he was wrong, but the available evidence certainly would suggest that he may be right or at least not far from wrong! Again, I would rejoice to stand corrected.

But back to Lifest. These things are not done in a dark corner. The event was very well publicized on Christian radio, in the local media; and everything one needs to know about Lifest can be found out at the event’s web site. Of course, there are pastors in our state, including in the Oshkosh area, who do not approve of packaging rock and Romanism as Christian and evangelical. Perhaps some did publicly raise their voices on behalf of the Lord and the lost in front of the Lifest gates, but as far as we can ascertain, most, if not all, just said nothing.

The response from the evangelicals was the same every single time. I preached. They stared at me, and they just said nothing, nothing at all! I suppose it was all very figurative of the times in which we live. The ecumenical movement is spreading faster than a prairie wildfire in a stiff wind, and the whore of Babylon is flaunting her blasphemy and idolatry everywhere with impunity. Roman Catholics are slipping into hell every day, and new converts are being daily brought into the pope’s flock. But where is the evangelical, Protestant—in the true, historic sense of the word—witness for Christ and against Rome? Where? In reality, there is a deafening silence.

In 2008, our church traveled 150 miles to La Crosse, Wisconsin to witness for Christ and against Rome at the dedication of a multiple-building,



A Lifest rocker “worshiping” God. The fire seems most appropriate. Photo credit: Lifest

Now again, no pastor can be everywhere and do everything. But when it comes to witnessing at ecumenical events and also witnessing for Christ against Rome and to Romanists, I would think every pastor could at least find the time to be somewhere and do something in the course of a year. It is, after all, a pretty target rich environment. I stress pastors because it is clear they have the first duty in both evangelism and the defense of the true faith. Beyond that, in many ways, it is easier for a minister to make a public stand for Christ against popery than it is for any other Christian. The minister does not work every day with Roman Catholics, and he does not get his living from the secular world but from the church. I am not saying Christian men and women have no responsibility in this; I am just saying ministers have the most of all for every reason and ought to take not only the lead but also the highest profile in this matter by far.

The Lord's true ministers are not acting like it when they just say nothing as Rome boldly extends her influence and her net. Silence in such a case ought not to be an option because silence in such a case is neither faithful nor right. The same standard should be applied to all those held to be leaders or teachers of the Lord's people, including those conservative Christian radio personalities who rightly and regularly blast moral evils such as abortion, political evils such as socialism, and spiritual evils such as the emerging church but who just say nothing when it comes to the history, the heresy, and the blasphemy of popery.

I cannot help but briefly make an application of what I just said to the Lifest event. The ungodly "Christian" rock culture has come about because of the support of some evangelical churches, but not all. Yet, from the pope down, the Roman Catholic Church supports and promotes that culture. The socialism and emergent teachings of the likes of Lifest speaker Jim Wallis are promoted by some "evangelical" churches, but not faithful ones. Yet rank economic socialism has been systematically taught and promoted by Rome from the top down since at least Thomas Aquinas. The pope's bishops have long had their representatives in the halls of the UN, the U.S. Congress, the state houses—in the case of FDR, via "Fr." John Ryan in the White House—pushing hard for socialist programs, initiatives, and even world government.



Lifest fan of the "Christian" band Skillet. Yes, it's a female.

Photo credit: Lifest

I am by far no expert on the emerging church, but I know enough to understand that in reality many emergent teachings trace back to that polluted fountain in Rome. And we could certainly say much concerning the corrupting influence of the Roman Catholic "gospel" and go on to talk of Romish influence, even inspiration, and certainly money, in advancing many other grievous dangers—spiritual, moral, and political. But I hope that I have been successful in making this last point. There are many false teachers and teachings masquerading as Christian, but the headwaters of spiritual error and corruption are in Rome. To ignore that is to sin against Christ Jesus, play the useful idiot in the devil's design, advance popery, and practically speaking, show hatred for lost Roman Catholics.

No, it is not faithful, wise, compassionate, or safe to just say nothing as Rome spreads her deceptions, influence, and pollution across our land, even using ignorant evangelicals as her helpers. Our Lord is being openly blasphemed; His church is being openly polluted; and millions of lost sinners are being openly led into eternal hell, thinking they are on their way to heaven. Silence is not a righteous option, but silent the most part of this generation of Christians has been and continues to be.

And I think I can almost see a multitude of Roman Catholics from our age standing before the judgment seat, looking over at the ministers of Christ's true church in this generation and saying, "They knew the awful truth about my church, and they knew the true gospel. They knew we were without God and without hope in the world, deceived by the devil, enslaved by the pope, and on the path to an eternity of torment. And they just said nothing."