

Does the philosophy change you?

Post by “Joshua” of June 14, 2023 at 2:20 PM

Yeah, fellow recovering Catholic altar boy here. 17 years in Catholic schools, baptized, confessed, and, against my better judgment, confirmed.

Learned young to lie early and often. When I got my first job at 16 I would skip Sunday mass for "work"; "work" in my private vernacular being to leave the house in my work uniform and go browse the books at Barnes and Noble. Imagine my surprise reading the Alexandrian novelist André Aciman years later: *"People who read are hiders. They hide who they are. People who hide don't always like who they are."*

One of my prouder moments in secondary school was the paper we were asked to write on Natural Family Planning--or in very public vernacular, Vatican Roulette. I tore that whole business up one side and down the other. I didn't know at the time that I was really embarking on a long campaign which Christopher Hitchens was already defining in the aftermath of 9/11:

Quote

Here we are then, I was thinking, in a war to the finish between everything I love and everything I hate. Fine. We will win and they will lose. A pity that we let them pick the time and place of the challenge, but we can and we will make up for that.

It could just as truthfully be argued that the conflict in question was not so different to the one articulated by Lucian of Samosata all those centuries ago. It was then and still is "war to the knife" between those on the one side who look for their reward in another life, and who more than merely scorn at the pleasure and beauty and wonder of this world, and those of us on the other who would do all in our power to make this one life truly worth living.

So reflecting on my early Catholicism is, for the second time today, like finding an old friend in Thoreau: *"The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well?"*