

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Priest and Victim,

What you are about to read is a translation of the book *Símbolo de la Fe*, or *Symbol of Faith*. This book, as you may know, was originally written in Spanish by Fr. Carlos Javier Castro Tello, MSpS and Mrs. María del Pilar Sarabia. Given the richness it contains and all the benefits we can get from it, the Apostleship of the Cross in the United States of America wanted to make it available for you in English. The process of translation originated with the idea of having more resources available for those who want to know or deepen into the Spirituality of the Cross. We also wanted to make this translation available for you during this year that our Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI declared as the Year of Faith. And now that we have the First Encyclical of Pope Francis *Lumen Fidei* (The Light of Faith) could have not been a better time to make this translation available for you. The authors of the book are aware of this translation, and they were very supportive of it.

I want to underline the fact that this translation is not made by some of the most well-known translators or publishers among the English-speaking people. Nevertheless, it would be unfair not to underline the great effort that the people who have made this translation possible invested, and the good job they have done. I am very grateful to Vicki Leone, Marcia Gimenez and Sandra Mejia for their hard work in this translation. They were the ones who dedicated long hours of their precious time to this project. I am pretty sure that what triggered them to invest such an amount of energy and effort is the love they have for the Spirituality of the Cross and the desire they have that many people may benefit from it. Thank you Marcia, Vicki and Sandra for your service.

We hope that one day, in the near future, we may find the means to make this translation available in a hard-copy book. Meanwhile, I hope that you will enrich your relationship with the Lord by reading this translation. I ask you to, please, spread the news that this book is available online. Please spread the word, not only among members of the Apostleship of the Cross or the Family of the Cross, but let other people who do not know our Spirituality know about this book.

I hope and pray that this book may contribute to give glory to God in our deepening and living out of the Spirituality of the Cross. I also pray that you and I may be blessed with an increase of the virtue of faith in our lives.

Truly yours in Christ Priest and Victim,

Brother Manuel Rosiles, MSpS

## PROLOGUE

Those of us who, forty years ago, were avidly reading a commentary on the Creed by a young theology professor from the Universities of Tübingen and Regensburg. Joseph Ratzinger, would never have imagined that said book, the *Introduction to Christianity*, would come to be such a classic piece of the post council theology (including, in its original language, an unbeaten record for a theology book of 11 editions in one year). But it would have been harder to imagine that, several decades later, the author would be elected Successor of Saint Peter with the name Benedict XVI, after being Archbishop of München and later Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Publishing company *Sigueme* had the honor of publishing this extraordinarily valuable work in Spanish a few short months after the German edition, (albeit in a poorly translated edition which was later revised in 2000). Even though this is not the first published work from this German theologian, it is, however, his most well known and most publicized work, and the one that reflects his “theological character” the best.

If we wanted to point out some of its characteristics, I would mention first, his concern to go back to the basics in the field of faith. Just as the Spanish theologian Olegario Gonzalez de Cardedal mentions in the prologue to the first Spanish edition, “Ratzinger has dared make every theologian’s dream come true: tell yourself and others what Christianity is about, in a valid and intellectually legitimate manner”. And in this regard, what better than a commentary on the profession of Christian faith, the *Creed*.

Moreover, in this work we can find that from the beginning Joseph Ratzinger tries to reconcile human reason and the faith which makes the Christian message meaningful and relevant when confronted to the man of today, paradoxically swinging between two extremes: a demand for intellectual coherence from religion, and an attitude of superficiality which leads them to dismiss anything that sounds too much like “theory”, as a synonym of abstract and not real. Ratzinger is *reasonable*, without being rationalist. And he doesn’t ignore even the *risk of faith*: the first part of the book is one of the best expositions on the topic of the meaning of “believe”.

I also think it would very difficult to find a personality in this 20th century who better embodies a confluence of theology, mysticism and “pastorality”; he is, paraphrasing the Emmaus passage, able to illumine the minds and, at the same time, inflame the hearts. This is also something that another great contemporary thinker wished for theology, Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Finally, among many other merits of said work, I would like to talk about the language and style utilized: they are a fantastic synthesis of depth and simplicity, of scientific facts and clear discourse. Very few books within this genre include so many images, examples and references to diverse authors. Suffice it to say that both the prologue and the First Chapter each begin with stories (the story about “Hans’ joy” and the kierkegaardian parable of the burning circus and the

clown”). When making a reference to his papal teachings, it is very interesting that the first quote on his first encyclical does not come from a Father of the Church, but Fredrik Nietzsche himself! (Deus Caritas Est, #3, quote 1).

I would like to now draw from my personal experience: when a few years back I came upon a writer (whose name I won’t mention, for obvious reasons), who wanted to prepare for his marriage by deepening his knowledge of the Christian faith, I didn’t have to think twice to offer him, in spite of a slight hesitation at first, the book *Introduction to Christianity*; and I must say he benefitted greatly from the experience.

The authors of the work in your hands, Mrs. Pilar Sarabia and Fr. Carlos Castro, MSpS, are convinced – I even dare say fascinated – by the thought process of Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI. But that is not the source of their originality. Coming from completely different backgrounds, (she a mother and wife, he a religious priest who teaches Sacred Scripture), they are bound together by the profound knowledge they have of the Works of the Cross, and especially of their founder, Conchita Cabrera de Armida. From this coincidence arose, as a challenge almost, the possibility of portraying the extraordinary convergence to be found, once you get past the evident differences of language and “theological paradigms”, between the thoughts of Benedict XVI and Conchita’s mystical experience. We are not talking about “simplistic parallelisms”; we are talking about, rather, what Von Balthasar mentions, using the image of the “work of art”: when they are real, there are more similarities among themselves, in spite of geographic or chronological differences (even if they are centuries or millennia apart), than when you compare the original work of art and a cheap imitation. Conchita’s and Joseph Ratzinger’s Christian experiences are so authentic, and their encounter with the God of Jesus Christ so similar, that we find surprising convergences.

Whoever wishes to see for him/herself, is holding the chance in his/her hands.

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