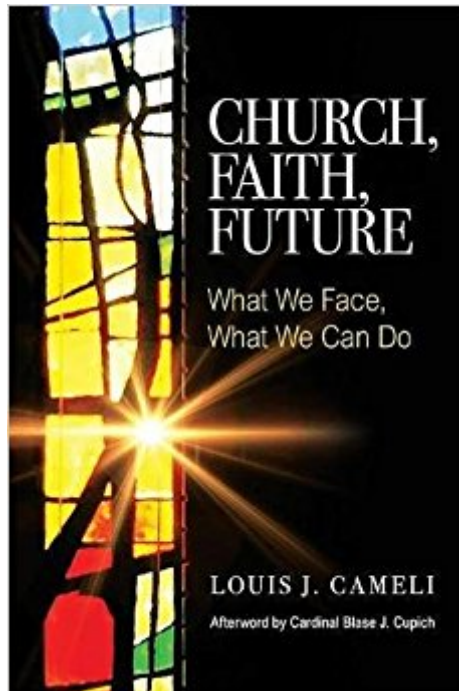




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Church, Faith, Future: What We Face, What We Can Do



Synopsis

In this challenging but hopeful new book, *Church, Faith, Future: What We Face, What We Can Do*, Father Louis J. Cameli renders a carefully composed portrait of the church in North America today. Drawing on philosophy, history, cultural analysis, and sociology, he offers a sobering picture of where church and faith stand in our society and where they seem to be headed. Identifying several possible ways forward, Fr. Cameli points out the way he sees as the most promising and most faithful to Catholic tradition. In a fascinating afterword to the book, Cardinal Blase Cupich enters into dialogue with Fr. Cameli's thinking, describing how the Archdiocese of Chicago has begun to address the issues and the directions indicated.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Father Louis J. Cameli is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the archbishop's delegate for Formation and Mission. Father Cameli has published numerous books on faith formation and spirituality. He has also served as a director for priests' retreats and as a presenter for priests' convocations in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand.

"Church, Faith, Future" acknowledges the state of the Church today and where we are going. I might have to buy ten or more of Fr. Cameli's new book in order to get people to read the book. This is not because it isn't a great book but because people don't seem to read meaningful, faith filled text anymore. Why? Our

secularized society doesn't point us in the direction of holy books or conversations at a deep level about Christ and His Church. Why did I read it? Two reasons come to mind: Fr. Cameli is a thoughtful priest who embeds Christ and His Church in all that he does and because this is our future as a Church we are attempting to envision. The author doesn't have a crystal ball but attends to the details that would help us to understand the faith of the future Church. There are four pivotal questions that guide our reading. "What can we expect? Is there anything unexpected that we could possibly expect? What can we do? What ought we to do?" I would encourage readers to answer those questions for themselves before they read the answers that Fr. Cameli offers us. It is such a pleasure when you find that what you thought coincides with what Fr. Cameli offers us! This review will also appear in a forthcoming issue of the CATHOLIC LIBRARY WORLD published by the Catholic Library Association. For example, the author's understanding of the next generation is powerfully stated: "The next generation does not so much deliberately leave faith, religion and church as drift away from realities that they have never really known. They don't decide, they meander without much information or formation." (p.41). He goes on to admonish the previous generation in their failure to communicate the joys and challenges of our faith. To me, this means that our job is much more important to make sure that conversation and works take place on some level so all believers and non-believers have a sense of the Church. Part of the issue is the sense that Church is routine and how that plays out. According to Fr. Cameli, "Evangelizers can also raise a second set of questions. ...What will offer me fulfillment? How can I find happiness?...evangelization takes up the themes, sharpens the questions and raises the underlying question, What are you really looking for?" (p.61) This section calls up the those pivotal issues that most people are asking and when they see others are working in that direction - they get the call to discipleship. As a community of believers we want to share our thoughts/feelings/beliefs with other believers and ones that are becoming believers. We seem to be okay when our physical prowess takes hard work in the gym day after day, so does our spiritual, Christian life take work. It should be part of our everyday workout. Prayer, good works and a sense of belonging to Christ are the 3 variables we need to attend to. What our Lord asks: "We and our contemporaries hear Jesus' question, "Are you going to stay?" John 6:67 (p. 87). It is amazing how our Church grew from the first 11 to over millions! Finally, in this faith demanding book, we read the words of the Cardinal of Chicago, blessing the work of Father Cameli and reinforcing the belief that Christ continues to reveal Himself to us. Our openness to His word brings the joy of the Gospels and the desire to be disciples. This is an inspiring book written by a person who constantly and continuously follows the

Scriptures and offers to others His wisdom and that of our Cardinal.

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