



"Drowning in the Tiber (Part 2)"
Responding to Francis Beckwith's *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic*
tiber020809(2)
Selected Scriptures



Introduction: Francis Beckwith's book, *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic*

* Those who have endorsed the book....

* Two temptations Beckwith asks that his Catholic and Protestant Readers each avoid

I. Chapter One - Beckwith begins by relating the account of his reconciliation with Rome

II. Chapter Two - A summary of his growing up in Las Vegas

III. Chapters Three and Four - Beckwith relates his journey into Academia

A. Here we have some very significant turns in the story

IV. Chapters Five and Six - Beckwith turns a corner to the intellectual reasons why he would convert to Rome

A. Suffice to say there's nothing new here

- He argues that the church fathers were more Roman Catholic than Protestant.
- He cites Fathers who sound reformed and then cites the same fathers claiming that they now sound RC. He pits the Fathers against themselves.
- He claims that the early church creeds were RC and that even the canon of Scripture was decided by Rome.
- He claims that sola Scriptura is not logical (does so after misrepresenting what sola scriptura is). He even goes so far as to say that there are essential Christian doctrines and practices that one would not derive from Scripture alone.
- Along the way he quotes evangelical scholars in his favor, but misrepresents what they are saying.

B. He goes on to attempt to justify Rome's grace-works salvation from Scripture

- He claims that the teaching of Jesus doesn't square with a belief in forensic justification.
- Last judgment - sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46) – works judgment
- Matthew 19 - Rich Young Ruler
- Misunderstands the parable of the soils
- Romans 4; James and works

Conclusion: Final observations . . .

- Beckwith appears to have never really left Rome (he was always ecumenically minded toward her)
- He has been influenced by the Catholic charismatic movement and mysticism in general
- His work in the area of church history is simplistic and decidedly one-sided
- His work as a theologian and exegete is wanting to say the least
- He gives no evidence of wrestling with both sides of the issues at a top level or of having read works by Catholic scholars that refute his own positions - as a professor in a so-called Christian school he would have access to all sorts of works like these
- You get the impression that this was the direction he was heading, it's where he wanted to go, and he only needed some surface rational for doing so
- He views his move to Rome much like a major denominational shift – sort of like someone moving from Wesleyanism to Presbyterianism
- He refuses to face the fact that the Roman Catholic Church anathematizes or assigns to condemnation his "evangelical Christian friends"