



All Things to All People: A Catholic Church for the Twenty-First Century

Louis DeThomasis

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The word but was used by Jesus often to clarify to his disciples his teaching was different from the conventional wisdom of the time: "But I say to you..." This was never more true when he was speaking about how the disciples (right up to today) were to act toward one another and toward those outside the group. Louis DeThomasis, a well-respected De La Salle Christian Brother and President Emeritus of St. Mary's University of Minnesota, uses this method of Jesus to look at the Catholic Church today and how it must change if it is to carry out the mission it has been given by its founder. "Even if at times the observations of this book may seem quite critical (or certainly at least impolitical or undiplomatic, given the clashes and tensions in the church today)," he insists, "I think it's about time that the People of God find the courage to speak out to all Jesus' followers and to all people of good faith, and to speak up to all institutional church leaders forcefully, although always with Christian love. Love for the church does not preclude criticism of or about the church. If we become 'one' in the church (as we pray every day in the Creed), it seems to me indisputable- whether we are conservative, moderate, or progressive by nature- that we desperately need to increase our knowledge and understanding of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, in a caring, supportive, and loving Christian Spirit." Buckle up for an old-fashioned but good-spirited Catholic brawl about the future of the Catholic Church in the twenty-first century. You may not agree with every one of Brother Louis' arguments, but they will cause you to think about what kind of Church we need and want...or, better yet, what kind of church Jesus wants us to be.

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