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Can I Hear An Amen?

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Distinctly Catholic

Pope Francis channeled the late, great Henri de Lubac today, saying at his morning Mass, "It's absurd to claim that we love Christ without the Church." DeLubac famously asked, "What would I know of Him but for Her?" We are not Christians because we happen to have been born in a place where there were Bibles laying about. And, our baptism invites friendship with Jesus by means of incorporating us into the Body of Christ, the Church. It is not "me and Jesus." Indeed, it can never be me and Jesus unless it is first me, a member of the Church, and Jesus. This key point of departure for Christian discipleship, to say nothing of all Catholic theology, does not mean we abandon our critical faculties. It does not require us to endorse everything that is said by any and all of the Church's ministers. It does mean that if we think we can love Christ and also hate the Church, we have deceived ourselves. It does mean that we can never let our own opinions trump the teaching of the Church. It does mean, too, that as members of the Body of Christ, we have a responsibility to bring our gifts and talents to the service of the Church, even when some officials in the Church seem not to want them! When Pope Francis says "I am a son of the Church," he is telling us something about the relationship a Christian should have to the Church, and he is telling the leaders of the Church the same thing too.

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