

## ***What Is Religion***

The word 'Religion' is so often misunderstood, because of how it is misused. Religion is often stereotyped as being a cult, an exclusive club and a medium for judging and condemning every little thing about you.

**“Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. To adore God is to acknowledge him as God, at the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love.” Catechism 2096**

The most essential aspect of religion is that religion is the practice of your faith. It is the active expression of “I Believe”. Religion is not limited to a name or a title, but rather for the way in which you express it. There are many different forms and types of religions, but how will someone else know that you are Catholic? Is it because you go to Church once a week, have a rosary dangling from the rearview mirror, or rather is it because in all matters of life you seek unity with all people, in the bold solidarity and compassion of your being?

**“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”**

**James: 27**

**“This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts. You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition.” Mark 7: 6-8**

What is your religion? Is it the traditions of old? The grandness of my faith and my piety? Religion the beautiful expression of God’s love, the way we reach out to one another, to care, love and support all of God’s creation, from the unborn infant, to the persecuted Christian, those in prison, those who have no faith, the elderly and the dying. Religion is not found in the “stale air of closed rooms” [Pope Francis] but in the fragrance of our souls reaching to others with the love of God.

**“Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves.” James 1: 22**

Jesus,

teach me to love as you loved.

Help me to express my faith in all ways and at all times,  
making my religion the sweet fragrance of our love in action.

Grant that I may never live for myself and my own ideas of faith,  
but for others, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I pray this in your name.

AMEN