

I am a Roman Catholic. I believe in Jesus as the risen Christ, and am proud of the force for good that many Catholics have been down the ages. My question for the Pope would be, do I fit in his Church? I believe in a Church that is comfortable with other believers and also happy to be among those with no belief at all. I cannot believe that we can know for sure that God planned for his word to come through Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic church alone. I believe that the primary mission of the Church the pope leads is to manifest God's presence in its action for the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed. I can see the past logic of a male celibate clergy but would disregard it now in favour of a church which is comfortable about the sexuality and gender of all its members, from top to bottom. I celebrate the advances of Vatican Two which made the church more democratic and its liturgy understandable to the faithful.

So do I fit? Obviously my views are not acceptable today but does he regard it as even thinkable that they might succeed tomorrow? The Pope looks as though he has given up on all his outreach to secular Europe, that what he now wants is a smaller Church, one whose members are unquestioning of authority, happy to attend a Mass they do not understand, welcomes holocaust deniers with open arms while excluding progressives at the first hint of trouble, and believe in human rights only as long as the church has final power over what the term entails? Should I stay or should I go?

CONOR GEARTY