



Pop goes CATHOLICISM Resource Sheet

Wikipedia

Media Information

URL: www.wikipedia.org

Description

Taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>: "Wikipedia is a free, web-based and collaborative multilingual encyclopedia... Its name is a portmanteau of the words wiki (a technology for creating collaborative websites, from the Hawaiian word... meaning "quick") and encyclopedia. Wikipedia's 13 million articles (2.9 million in English) have been written collaboratively by volunteers around the world, and almost all of its articles can be edited by anyone who can access the Wikipedia website. Launched in 2001 ... it is currently the largest and most popular general reference work on the Internet."

Faith Connection

Anyone comparing Wikipedia and the Catholic Church might decide they are quite opposite. At Wikipedia, literally anyone can contribute to teaching without any claim to authority. In the Church, teaching must be properly delegated within a top-down hierarchy of authority (the Magisterium, the teaching authority - the Pope and bishops, authorize priests who pass it to lay ministers, etc). And yet, the reality within these two massive entities is more complicated. The chaos that could be Wikipedia is moderated by an internal hierarchy of registered users, editors, and administrators such that the body of knowledge remains fairly consistent and reliable. Likewise, the Catholic Church acknowledges the reality of a *sensus fidelium* ('sense of the faithful') in which truth is recognized by the whole Church in a way that can work upward into the Magisterium. So what? So realizing that there is a legitimacy to the dialogue between authority and crowd leads to a better respected authority and a more empowered crowd. Furthermore, we have to look beneath the bumper sticker 'got you pegged' understanding of large organizations. Wikipedia is more than 'anyone can change it' and the Church is more than 'only what the Pope says.'

Related

Scripture:

John 20:21-23
Matthew 28:18-20

Catechism:

#88
#904

Discussion Questions

1. Does knowing Wikipedia has a hierarchy effect your opinion of it?
2. Why have most people never heard of a *sensus fidei*?
3. Do you think 'normal lay people' can change the Church? Why?
4. How do you feel about the Pope and bishops? Why?
5. What do you think of the idea of dialogue between authority and crowd?

