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# The Marks of the Church

by

**REV. DR. JOHN K. CARTWRIGHT**

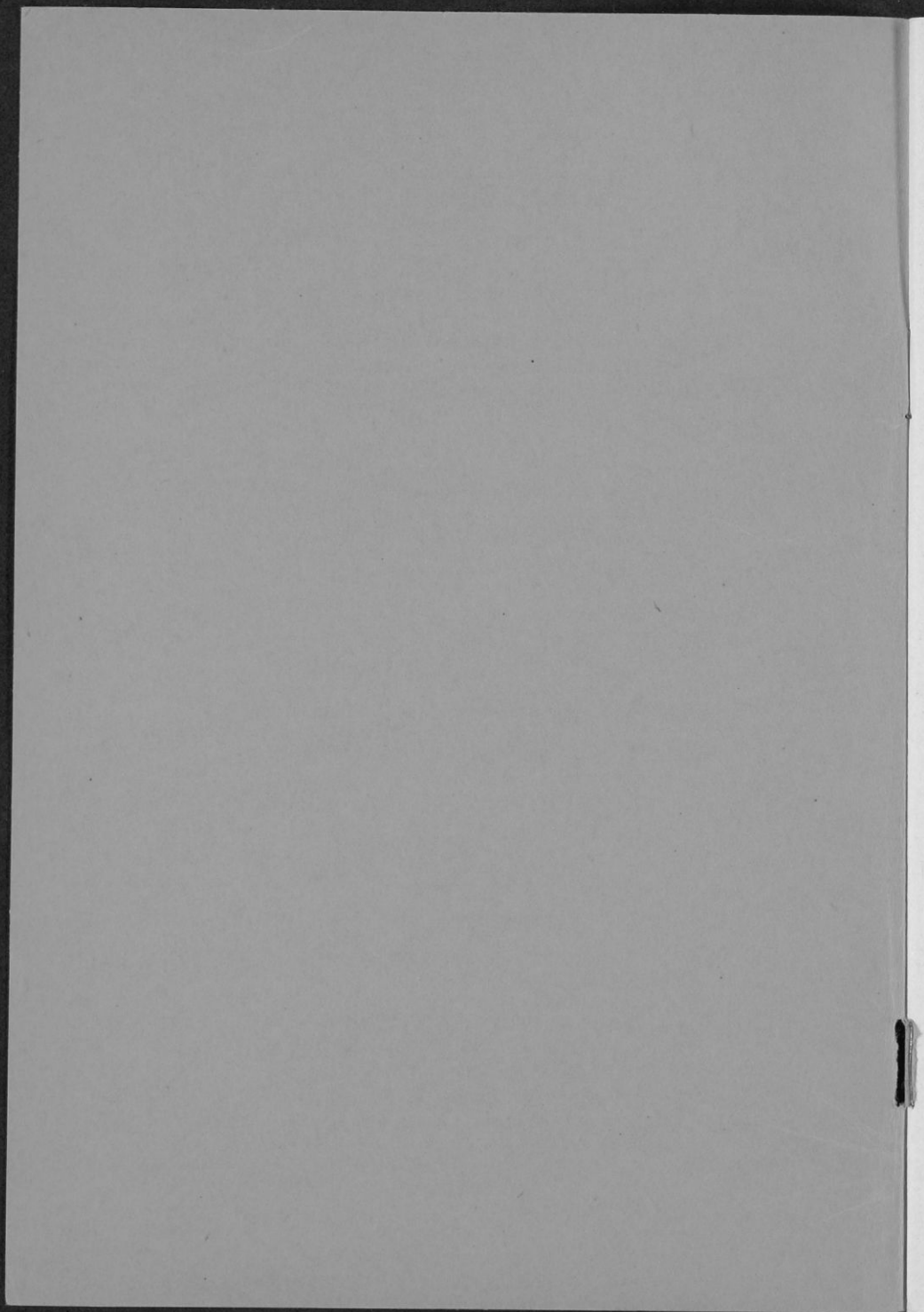
**Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the  
Sulpician Seminary and Assistant Rector  
of St. Patrick's Church, Washington, D. C.**

**Four addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour,  
sponsored by the National Council of Catholic Men  
with the co-operation of the National Broadcasting  
Company and its Associated Stations.**

- I. The Catholicity of the Church**
- II. The Unity of the Church**
- III. The Apostolicity of the Church**
- IV. The Holiness of the Church**



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(THIRD EDITION 17,500)

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1314 Massachusetts Avenue  
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Printed and distributed by Our Sunday Visitor  
Huntington, Indiana



Imprimatur:

✠ John Francis Noll, D. D.

Bishop of Fort Wayne.

Feast of The Annunciation, March 25, 1931.

#### AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

In asserting that she is the true Church of Christ and in claiming final authority in matters of religious belief, the Catholic Church asks very much of the believer. To this great act of confidence the believer is brought by the grace of God, but, humanly speaking, his act is also based on intelligent and reasonable considerations. The chief of such considerations are known as the Marks of the Church, whose probative force is outlined in these discourses. It has given the author great pleasure to know by letters from many quarters that the treatment of the subject has been gratifying to Catholics and has aroused the interest of non-Catholics.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the Great Popes  
who for 1900 years  
Ruled the Catholic Church

## THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. John K. Cartwright, in the Catholic Hour, March 1, 1931)

The Church of Christ whose essential constitution was set before you during the series of addresses concluded last Sunday is endowed with certain characteristics whose delineation helps further to clarify its nature and purpose. The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, all of ancient times but repeated even today by faithful Christians everywhere, tell us how we may recognize the Church of Christ. "I believe," says the Christian, "in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." It is of these characteristics or marks that I am to speak, and tonight I single out one such quality, Catholicity, which gives our Church its name.

The Church of Christ is Catholic. No mere national religion is consonant with the doctrines of Jesus Christ. His message was addressed to all men and all times and must therefore be universal or Catholic. Applied to matters of taste, the word "Catholic" means that a person's interests are not confined to one class of objects but take in a complete, wide-ranging view. Applied to only one among the churches it implies the (perhaps tacit) admission that this church is in some way wider in its authority and appeal than other ones, that it is not local, nor national, nor of a caste, nor of a race, that it does not depend for its existence on casual and temporary circumstances, that it is universal both

in time and in space, that it transcends the limitations of human institutions, that from its divine charter it derives its power to attract the human soul wherever be its natural habitat, and that from its Divine Founder it has a charge and burden not to rest content with any local or temporary status or achievement, however successful and splendid, but to move on restlessly and relentlessly until it has extended the elevating and consoling Gospel of Christ literally to all mankind.

So understood the term Catholic is not a mere description that happens to fit the situation of the Church at this given time. It is a quality that belongs to the very essence of the Church of Christ. Our most ancient creed—that of the Apostles—uses the term. The Church was described as Catholic and Universal even before its boundaries were very far extended, because those who used the name knew that it was the will of Christ for the Church to give a message to the race in its entirety. "Christian," said an early writer, "is my name; Catholic is my surname."

The purpose of the Christian religion is transcendently sublime. It must have not merely the inherent dignity of truth, but its truths must be made accessible to all mankind as the salvation of which they are the expression was extended by the all-embracing arms of Christ upon the cross. No esoteric doctrine confined to the elect, no mystic cult understood only by the initiate, no difficult philosophy penetrated only by subtle and gifted intellects, no system of worship limited by tribal or national tradition, no grouping of religious interests based upon devotion to one fanatically chosen principle—not these nor any other sort of limited parti-



ceptions of the divine are worthy of the religion that God Himself came on earth to preach.

For centuries before His coming it was dimly yet surely realized that when He came His message to mankind would be a universal and catholic one. The Jewish people had a limited and national religion. It was their natural tendency to rest content in the thought of the prerogative restricted to their race, and in their dreams of the future of religion to picture no more general benefit to mankind than might be implied by their own military conquest of the world. Yet among them were inspired teachers whose minds rose to higher dreams, and from time to time some eloquent prophecy or gracious psalm would rouse the sordid thoughts of men to concepts and anticipations of the universal realm of an ideal King of Peace. The Psalmist says: "And I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. . . . And he shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth . . . . and all the kings of the earth shall adore him: all nations shall serve him . . . . and in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed . . . . and the whole earth shall be filled with his majesty" (PSALMS ii and lxxi).

Such was the forecast made by the Hebrew seers, a vision in which these simple prophets of the better hope believed and yet with which their wistful eyes were never to be blessed.

Six or seven hundred years later Christ changed the prophecy and dream into a constitution and command. Gathering his little band on a Galilean hillside He gave His charge: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations."

All nations! A mission to teach the world! A



bold idea to tell them to teach anyone, since scarcely anyone seemed their inferior, but to give a universal mission to eleven pitiful Jewish fishermen when anyone could see that the universal mission to mankind had already been fulfilled!

For in that year 29 A. D., Christ and the Apostles dwelt in the center of the great Empire that had become to millions the mediatrix of all the blessings of God's natural providence to man. The conquest of nature had been achieved after the painful struggles of untold generations. The primitive rudeness of the first tribes had come up through barbarism to civilization. The peoples of a hundred tongues had been united in one commonwealth. The commerce of a thousand markets had been ordered along the highways and protected by the fleets and legions of all-victorious generals. The memories of the race had been preserved on precious parchments in great libraries. The dreams of poets and dramatists and thinkers, the noblest results of humanity's intelligence, had been compared and given currency through schools and academies. And all was guarded in the framework of the Roman Peace extended over territories vast enough to seem to be the world and fenced in only by the ocean and by distant streams. The Genius of Rome and the Emperor presided over this great system and was worshipped in every temple. And when, under these tutelary deities, famous and brilliant men spoke the language of Greece and Rome and traveled in the security of world-citizenship from Britain to the Sudan and from Cadiz to Armenia, it might seem justifiable to suppose that whatever universal mission to mankind might be had already in the Roman Empire been accomplished. Had anyone who

knew the world been present on the occasion of that charge to the Apostles he must have felt pity or scorn for the idea of their carrying out a universal mission. His rational mind must have felt that in the great civilization all around them was the permanent home of the human spirit and in this little band merely one of the superficial phenomena that found refuge within it.

So he might have thought, and so might we, in that year 29. But now we can look back with time-taught wisdom and can see that Rome has had enduring life, not from the great Empire, but from the institution founded that day on the Galilean hillside.

For there dwelt in the breasts of those few men a powerful and indestructible conviction. It was the sense of Catholicity that made them Apostles. It was not enough for them to appreciate for themselves the consolation of the Christian message. It was never sufficient for them or for any of their successors that their Gospel seemed beautiful to the first family or the first city or the first province that they reached. The glory and the beauty of their Gospel were of imperial character and destiny. They were meant to prevail over all mankind by their native grandeur and by the unresting zeal of their Apostles. The Gospel of Christ was not only Christian, it was Catholic. So said the Creed of the primitive Church when its spread was not actual but potential. So said Ignatius in the second century when Christianity had already shown its Catholic force by prevailing over the most popular region of the empire. So said Cyprian in the third when the Church was actually Catholic and strong enough to struggle determinedly against the decrees

of Decius and Valerian. So said Augustine in the fifth century when the Church was already the Church of Civilization: "Securus judicat orbis terrarum." Not a nation's but the world's recognition is the test and characteristic of the Catholic religion of Christ.

This belief in the Catholicity of their office, in the universal validity of their message, was what gave the preachers of the Christian gospel a force absolutely unique. The expansive principle of imperialism that had been such a wonderful secret of the Roman Commonwealth had been but for a time and then had ceased to be. But this dynamic of Catholicity in the Church came to be a source of power that has outlasted all kingdoms and all republics.

Only three centuries and the very institution that in Christ's time had seemed to overawe all others was itself to submit officially to Catholicity. The genius of Rome and Augustus gave place to the cross of Christ on the imperial Labarum. The senate gave way to the councils of Christian bishops. The Emperor in his purple sat beside the legates of Rome at Nicaea. The principles of Christian morality were woven into the Roman jurisprudence. The Empire, still great and majestic, itself recognized the superior grandeur and universality of the Catholic Church.

So it was while the Empire retained all its elements of grandeur. Yet in after ages, when but a misty twilight remained after all this splendor, what was it that caused the sun of civilization to reverse its course, to rise again from the quarter of its setting and to thrill the hearts of Medieval men as with the glowing of another dawn? It was the

Church which by its principle of Catholicity still retained the secret of expansive force when all human institutions had lost their grasp and their utility. The consuls and magistrates might shrink from the responsibilities of office and abandon the commonweal to its downward course. But the Church could not let go, for even when war and ruin were so widespread as to threaten the very destruction of all civilization the Church felt herself still Catholic. Still the Gospel must be spread, if not to civilized men, then to barbarians. Therefore when the legions had long disappeared from Britain it was still the Church's necessity to send there her army of Apostolic monks. To Ireland, which the Romans had never trod, went Patrick with the cross. To the German forests, to the plains of Prussia, to the mountains and fiords of Scandinavia spread the new and spiritual imperialism of the Catholic Church of Christ.

The Catholic Church of that time rendered such conspicuous service to mankind that men visibly enthroned her above all their institutions. The twenty thousand sovereignties of Feudal Europe had no principle of unity save in the Church, and so at the height of the great Medieval civilization, the spiritual and Catholic character of their culture and religion was symbolized and given effect in the throne of a Gregory, an Alexander and an Innocent.

Yet let no one think that this spiritual primacy of the Catholic Church was of the Middle Ages only. It is true that the Medieval expression of it passed away. It is true that division and rancors succeeded to the dream of Catholic Christendom. The Reformation displaced the sovereignty of the

Roman Pontiff over the civil institutions of mankind. It seemed for a moment to displace him from his Catholic government as well.

Seemed to, but only seemed. Even in the shock and turmoil of the Reformation the Church did not cease to be loyal to her essential principle. She did not rest content to be the Church of Austria or Italy or Spain. The policy of her rulers still insisted that she was the Church of Europe and the world. The zeal of her missionaries at that very time made her the church of the newly discovered Americas, of India, of Japan. The Reformation might tear whole nations from her. New peoples, however, were added across the distant seas. The Reformation might destroy the consent which had formerly enabled the Church to preside over the civil and pacific institutions of the peoples. Despoiled thus of all privilege; reduced to her essential and native strength the Church has still to display the marvelous efficiency of that naked spiritual strength, by remaining Catholic, universal.

For no one can deny today that the Catholic Church is still the heart and centre of Christianity. Three hundred million souls are reckoned as her children, a number far greater than those who made up Christendom at the height of its Medieval splendor. All around her, it is true, are separate Christian Churches, nearly as numerous in their total as are her own members. But the two hundred millions of non-Catholic Christendom are divided into two hundred different denominations, beliefs and politics, while she with her three hundred million is one and undivided. And by that great imperial and Catholic life of hers she strengthens all the rest.

Only a few days ago it was the privilege of our

generation to realize in the most striking way, perhaps, that history has ever known, this universality of the Catholic Church. Out from Rome over the waves of ether went the voice of Pius XI, the present representative and head of the universal Church. In most literal fashion was prophecy verified; for the islands heard—the island-continent whose names the original Apostles never knew and which, but a century ago, were still peopled with savages. Today they are dwelt in by sons and daughters of the Church who by their faith and devotion exemplify in those distant quarters of the world the quality from which the Church derives its most distinctive name. Pius, the Catholic Pontiff, spoke to Catholics in every quarter of the globe. Never at any time, and least of all today, could any but the Catholic Church provide in listeners to that voice a willingness to hear which would be so universal, so grateful and so deep.

Truly the islands heard. Truly the uttermost parts of the earth seemed on that day the possession of Him who spoke in the name of Christ. Truly the command to the Apostles seemed carried out when Pius XI was able to make the whole world listen, and at one moment, to a message fragrant with the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in Whom, if they would hear, "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

## THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. John K. Cartwright, in the Catholic Hour, March 8, 1931)

Last week we considered the quality of the Church called *Catholicity*, the great extension of the Church through all the world is not an accident, but part of her very nature and essence. Christ could not have founded a Church meant only for a part of mankind. Therefore He told His Apostles to go and teach *all* nations. The Church today is given the name "Catholic" in recognition of her actual fulfilment of that mission to all mankind.

Tonight we have to consider another quality intimately connected with the first. The Church is not only Catholic. She is also One. Her world-wide extension is not a mere confederation of loosely united societies. It is the covering of the world by one society. The Church is strong in the absolute cohesion of its parts. In every section of the globe Catholics are consistent with Catholics in every other section, inspired by the same religious confidence, pursuing the same ends of salvation, using the same means established by Christ. The Catholic Church not only exists everywhere, but is everywhere recognizable as one and the selfsame. This is what we mean by the Unity of the Church, and it is a portentous and miraculous thing.

Three hundred million people identical in beliefs and principles! This would be marvellous even did the three hundred million live in the same geographic area. It is doubly marvellous when you consider the unity as existing all over the globe. The diversity of speech and race and nationality and



condition are very great: all the human factors are as discrepant as they can be. Yet the spiritual and religious factor is the same for all of them.

To this Unity there is no parallel in human institutions. Take political matters for example. In proportion as governmental system expands, in that proportion does it become necessary for it to change in Protean fashion so as to reconcile all sorts of opposing human elements. It is proverbial that the sun never sets on the British Empire. It is also proverbial that the Empire has had to change its governmental relation to the peoples in every zone. Some countries are governed as possessions, some as dominions, some as mandates, some as free states and so on. The English Monarchy is a sign of unity for these scattered territories. But the unity is only symbolic of a good-will that exists merely as long as it happens to exist. There is no unity of authority. There is no power to hold the parts at one.

Compare this with the Unity of the Church. Here the Pope is no mere symbolic ruler. He is the authoritative and effectual head of the widely scattered membership. This is what we mean when we say: "The Church is One." The parts of her empire are kept together by a bond of conscience which consists in the conviction of each individual that he is bound to obedience to the Supreme Head. Differences of temperament or character may be seen in the individuals, differences of tendency in the various countries. Were there no supreme and indisputable center of unity these tendencies might very well grow until there would be independent units and separate denominations. But there is a head and Catholics feel that union with him is a

paramount consideration. When that sovereign speaks on matters that pertain to religion, the parts of the Church obey and perfect unity is maintained.

I do not speak here enthusiastically or without definite meaning. The Unity of the Church is actually controlled and secured by the Head and by the administrative officers under him. It is a juridical fact, not a sentimental one. Many religions of the world show a vague outward unity to the superficial observer who does not know enough about them to hear the "two and seventy different sects dispute." But in the Catholic Church the Unity is very perfect and very real even to the close observer, because the chief authorities of the Church jealously guard every detail that is essential, carefully crystallize every doctrine that is traditional, carefully administer the teaching of everything that concerns the salvation of the soul. No part of the Church escapes the scrutiny and the care of the Holy See. In every quarter she sends her special representatives. In every such place they have to regulate ecclesiastical activities, not according to some vague "best judgment" but according to definite rules and statutes embodied in the Code of Canon Law. Whatever the difference in appearance between an American bishop and a Chinese one, whatever the divergence in the problems of a missionary in Korea and one in Samoa, whatever the difference in status between a Catholic primate in Austria and a persecuted priest in Russia—all of these find in one volume the principles of administration which make the Church and keep it One.

This code, however, is only one of administration. It is only the safeguard of the more fundamental

things with which the Unity of Christ's Church is concerned.

The provinces of the religious life to which that authority extends are three: the province of worship, that of morality, and that of faith.

First as to worship. The Church has Unity of worship.

Above all there is agreement as to the principle of the thing. For all Catholics worship is not merely *a* duty, but *the* highest duty of the creature. There is no dispute or confusion of mind about that. There is no trafficking with the naturalistic notion that perhaps God does not want to be worshipped, that He might prefer some other activity of ours, might be better pleased with our industry than with our prayers. For Catholics all things must be done for God's glory, but the First Commandment is that of the worship and love of God. The Church has sanctioned and even originated many of the better forms of human endeavor and has been a great social blessing to mankind. But these things are her by-products. Her real mission in the world is to make it holy, that is, to bring it on its knees before the throne of God. The Church is at one on this throughout the earth today. So much for the principle.

But there is unity also in the manner of worshipping God. To this end many ways are proposed by the many religions. A traveller might find even a curious variety of rites in ours in merely exterior or in non-essential things. But there is for all Catholics just one great and excelling manner of worshipping God and that is through participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Catholics everywhere are identical in what they think about that. They

may be used to different ceremonies, ritual, languages and forms of prayer. But about the essence of the Mass they are at one: it is the perpetuation of the sacrifice of Calvary through the offering of Christ's person on the altar. It is this for *all* Catholics. A Catholic from Abyssinia may have seen the Mass offered in a different language and with different rites from those that are familiar to a Catholic from China. But both of them concentrate their devotional life on the Mass, because both of them know that when the priest pronounces the words of Christ at the Last Supper he becomes the instrument of divine power in bringing Christ present on the altar. If both of them were present at the moment of consecration in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, both of them would fall in adoration of the same Eucharistic God. Both of them would realize that they were engaged in the transcendent act of devotion which makes all peoples one through the brotherhood of the Redeemer.

Second as to morality. The Church's moral standard is the same for all.

Nowadays there is a popular idea that morals change, because in the last analysis they are only customs. One set of customs has grown up in Arabia and for Arabians that is morals. Another set has grown up in England and suits the English, and for them that is morals. According to this idea goodness is a shifting value because it consists not in agreement with any one and absolute standard, but merely in conformity with what your neighbors expect and demand of you.

Now this is directly the contrary of what the Catholic Church insists on. Her special characteristic is precisely this—not to be content with

customs, not to recognize or sanction mank'nd just as it is. The law of conduct which she cherishes is intended to raise men to something better than they are. This is a law given by God and paramount to all the customs, conventions and conveniences of all the races, tongues and tribes.

It was quite a recognized thing in ancient Rome for the best people to amuse themselves on holidays by watching gladiators kill each other. It was the custom, and therefore, according to some people, moral. The Church, however, did not recognize the custom. She insisted that it was everlastingly wrong and wicked.

It was the custom for the Fiji Islanders in their untutored condition to eat the bodies of enemies slain in battle. Because customary this seemed good. The Catholic Church through its missionaries will insist that the law of God is against the custom.

It is the custom of the desert tribes to practice polygamy, and their native religions sanction the practice. When the Catholic Church approaches them she does not acquiesce in the custom, but recommends to them the eternal and consistent law of Christ in which is embodied no custom, but the social welfare of the human race.

In our own surroundings since the World War certain lines of conduct, formerly discountenanced, have become quite usual and customary. An easy philosophy might tolerate these courses, might appeal to the proverbial changeableness of the world. But the Catholic Church condemned these things before the war, she condemns them now, and she condemns them in every place and every class of society.

Through teaching and preaching the Church

commends this unchanging law to men. Through the confessional she administers it. So through the dignity and unchanging grandeur of a superior law mankind is won away from the degradations incident to his own mutability.

Thirdly, the Church is One in her beliefs.

In all merely mundane matters we have become accustomed to tolerate and even to respect change and variety. We have found it useful to uphold two principles: one of experiment to improve conditions, the other of voting to give a chance to every interest. In scientific questions we pass over errors so that truth may be discovered. In political ones we allow all men to express their discordant desires so that compromise and satisfaction may be arrived at. These two principles are principles of variety, not of unity. But in secular affairs variety is now recognized as the criterion of health.

Religion on the other hand concerns itself neither with experiment nor voting, nor with changing things at all, but with eternal truth. Eternal truth is one and does not vary. On these matters opinions mean nothing and tests are worthless. The whole issue lies in whether God has spoken. In His silence ours is inevitable. In the presence of His revelation we must give not opinion but belief.

It is the whole point of the action of the Catholic Church in the world that God *has* spoken and that He has appointed her the custodian of what He has said. Therefore in these matters the Church does not permit divergency of personal opinions. To do so would be disloyal to her divine trust. The fundamental condition of membership in the Catholic Church (though not the only condition) is to consent to sacrifice private judgment on revealed matters

to the tradition and teaching of the Church. If God has told her to teach the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, all must believe it as she teaches it. If she is the guardian for us of the Eucharist, then no process of debate or reasoning or voting on our part should determine our attitude to that mystery. If Christ is present there really and truly, the Church insists that all must believe and adore. And so she permits within herself no schools of thought on the last destiny of man. God has revealed through her the existence of Hell—and all must believe and tremble; the existence of Heaven—and all must believe and hope.

This Unity of belief on which the Catholic Church insists is the fundamental Unity of all. On the basis of this creed are brought together all kinds and conditions of mankind: the Alaskan and the South African, the sophisticated New Yorker and the pariah in Bengal, the Oxford graduate and the Breton peasant—all are made one by belief in a simple creed which equally transcends their intelligence and sanctifies their souls.

This Unity is the chief need of men today. Without it they wander among the varieties and vagaries of personal opinions, they are unable to resolve the "vague misgivings of the creature moving about in worlds not realized." The terrible spiritual hunger of mankind can be relieved only by a Church confident enough of her own message to insist on it and successful enough in presenting it to man to have achieved the miraculous Unity that no human institution can parallel.

Today the Church, One and Catholic, stands the same as she has stood throughout the ages. Others waver but she is firm. They practice many rites

and follow many faiths and honor many lords. For her there is "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." They are carried about with every wind of doctrine. Like the tents of the homeless nomads they are pitched at the cry of rest and lifted at the call of fear. They are refuges, not dwelling places. But she stands like an abiding city ever gloriously the self same. The light of God is upon her battlements. Therefore within her only is joy and quietness away from the outer din. Only behind her bulwarks dwelleth peace, and abundance only within her towers.



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## THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. John K. Cartwright, in the Catholic Hour, March 15, 1931)

Two weeks ago we examined the remarkable world-wide extension of the Church which we call its Catholicity. Last week we saw that this extension is not a superficial character, but a profound one, binding the souls of men together in a Unity of faith, worship and moral principle, which is a miracle of the spiritual order.

The Unity of the Church considered last week is one that actually holds together the scattered millions of Catholicism today. But the Church must be One and self-consistent not only at this or any other given time. She must be consistent through all periods of time, she must be identical today with her past self as well as with her future. This unity of the Church today with the Church yesterday and with the Church of all past generations is another miracle of human history. It is what we mean when we call the Church Apostolic.

It is evident that the Catholic Church today is the oldest and most venerable of the Christian Churches. She is admitted to be such even by those outside her membership. But this superior antiquity is not a mere historical accident. She is not older just because some church must be older than the rest. The Catholic Church is more than ancient. She is *primitive*. She dates her existence from the time of her foundation by Christ in the Apostles. It is this foundation that gives her her true character.

Merely to be older than some other church, even to be fifteen hundred years older, is impressive, but proves nothing. The Buddhist religion is much older than Christianity itself. Age in years is unimportant. But to be older in the sense that the Church dates back to Christ is to be older in the juridical sense of law and constitution and authenticity. The Catholic Church is not only old—she is of exactly the *right* age to be able to prove her connection with the Apostles and our Lord and thus to establish her superior claims on the belief and confidence of mankind. This quality we call, not age, but Apostolicity.

For the Christian religion is based not merely on a message but on the foundation of a trust. Jesus Christ was no casual prophet concerned with the spiritual needs of His own generation merely. His coming marked an era in human history and it is for this reason that our calendars are dated from His birth. He made provision for the perpetuation of His message through the world and time. Not only did He say: "Going, teach all *nations*," but also: "Behold I am with you all *days* even to the consummation of the world." He came to utter words of consolation, but He was not content that they should be interred with the ears that heard them. He was not content to give out His marvelous axioms of conduct, His luminous and thrilling parables and then let them be remembered or forgotten as the mythologies and folklores of the races of mankind have alternated between a chance oblivion and a chance preservation. He did not entrust His Gospel to papyrus that might lie hidden in the desert sands until discovered by the archaeologist. He did not write it on clay tablets which in

the shelves of a museum might attract only the dull and momentary wonder of the curious. He came to give mankind the great revelation of all centuries. And in order that this revelation might not perish, He placed it within living custody, charged its fostering to hearts that would thrill at the behest and its promulgation to lips that would tremble with the solemn joy and responsibility of repeating it. He founded a Church, a teaching Church, an authoritative corporation the highest law of whose nature was to *be*, that is, to continue to exist, to continue to propagate the Word.

That corporation, that society, that Church was to perpetuate itself therefore in Apostolic succession. To the Apostles He gave His teachings: it is from them we must hear them. To the Apostles He entrusted His Sacraments: it is from them we must accept those instrumentalities of grace.

But the foundation of the Apostolic Church took place nearly two thousand years ago. Therefore if any religious body claims today to speak for Christ I must examine its credentials. What right has it to speak to me in that august name? What sanction has Christ given it to be the guide of my soul? Has it the electric power of truth and grace, has that current descended to it through the ages? Or has that current been interrupted at any time by repudiation of the authority through which Christ intended to transmit to future times the forces and the splendors of His law and love?

It is impossible to stress too much the importance of this principle. In joining a church we are confiding to it the interest of the soul. The secrets and mysteries that underlie our life on earth, the standards that should determine our conduct, the nature

of our destiny, our means of arriving at the goal— all these are questions the answers to which do not depend on the elements of human knowledge. They cannot therefore be entrusted to any organization which represents merely the aggregate of human intelligence and human virtue. The answers to these questions can be known only if God has made them known. If He has made them known we must receive them only from those whom He has authorized to teach. The original depositaries of His authority were the twelve Apostles. Their present representatives in legitimate succession are the only ones who have that authority today by direct and constitutional inheritance. These are the bishops of the Catholic Church under the headship of the successor of the chief of the Apostles, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius XI.

The Church which Christ founded was an organized society. Its membership was potentially unlimited, but its officials were limited in number and set apart from the rest. Their office was distinguished by three qualities:

First, it was authoritative. The Apostles were spiritual magistrates set over the multitude by God. They were not executive secretaries nor elected representatives nor public servants of the membership nor otherwise mere functionaries of the general will. They were depositaries of the authority of Christ Himself.

Second, their authority was united. They were not empowered as twelve separate emissaries with license to found twelve or twelve hundred churches. Christ gave them all great powers, but to one among them he gave the eminence of headship and the uni-

fyng power. They made therefore only one Church according to the will of Christ.

Third, this united authority was self-perpetuating. Originally twelve in number, Christ nevertheless willed their activity to ramify throughout the world. Mortal themselves, their function was an undying trust. Therefore they were given the right and the duty to transmit the office to successors who should in turn transmit it to newer generations, but always under the same form and constitution laid down by the Lord of the Apostles.

This was the threefold character of the original Apostolic Church. There is in the world today only one Church which retains the same constitutional structure impressed upon that primitive Church by the Saviour. There is only one Church today which places its confidence squarely on a tradition kept by its bishops and secured by their authoritative office. There is only one Church with such an episcopal constitution which preserves world-unity through the obedience of these high officers to an Apostolic Prince. Among all the two hundred denominations of Christendom there is but one which not merely has today a constitution identical with that of the original Church, but which can look back on an uninterrupted history of two thousand years for an unbroken series of bishops and of sovereign pontiffs.

If any of you has travelled in Europe, which is the parent land of all our civilization, he will have in his memory a thousand pictures which visualize the historic grandeur of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Last summer I stood within the walls of Milan Cathedral, that great monument of the Middle Ages which keeps alive within the present so much of the

magnificence of the past. One of the last bishops to preside from its throne is now the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius XI. But the roll-call of his predecessors is engraved in marble on the walls and takes us back through a long procession of the ages. It recalls to us Charles Borromeo and his nephew Frederick, Cardinals whose statesmanship and saintly lives were the rallying points for the Counter-Reformation. It takes us further still to the fourteenth century bishop who dreamed of and authorized the building of this marble splendor. Six hundred years ago, in the time of Christian unity, these stones were carved and fitted, but long before that time the predecessor of this edifice filled the same purpose here, and Christian bishops maintained the Apostolic succession and broke the bread of God. The struggles of might with right that marked the Middle Ages, the glory of an Alexander III, the exploits of a Bernard of Clairvaux are linked with this church and city. Century by century, beyond even that distant time we may read back to the day when Ambrose ruled here the Church of God, inventing a Christian psalmody that has been the foundation for all the music, sacred and profane, that graces the modern world, overawing the Emperor Theodosius with his moral stature, and winning the majestic mind of Augustine to an understanding of the Christian doctrine by his own depth and fervor. Here in Milan a still earlier bishop than Ambrose was doubtless the first to thrill with the triumphant news of the Church's peace under Constantine. And here still earlier a bishop in whose ears echoed the voices of Apostolic Fathers gave the first name to that list which, carved upon the walls, gives to the visitor of the twentieth century a thrill of admira-

tion at the epical record of two millennia of the teaching of Christian Apostolic truth.

But Milan, after all, is only one of the many sees of Christendom, and you might say: "Why talk to us of an Italian city which has nothing to do with us? Why speak of antiquity in this new country of ours?"

Why, indeed, except that the faith in this new country is identical with the faith in the old ones? And how should we know or discern that identity except that the faith of the old cities and the new is kept at one today as the parts of the primitive Apostolic Church were kept together by obedience to one Apostle?

For if we would seek the most glorious records and evidences of the Apostolic past, we shall not go to Milan, nor indeed to Antioch or Ephesus or Jerusalem. If we would see in all outward force and impressiveness the continuity of our Church today with the Church of all past ages, we must go to Rome.

That continuity is so evident that all must see it if they stop to consider. Allow me to read to you tonight what is perhaps the most eloquent expression of this truth ever written. Let me tell you first that the words are not those of a Catholic, they were written by Macaulay. Here they are:

"There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the

Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the Republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and useful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the Old . . . Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins



of St. Paul's" Macaulay, *Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes*).

May still exist?

Ninety-two years have passed since those words were written, and today the condition of the Catholic Church might give even greater cause for eloquence to the famous historian as it gives even greater cause for reverence and wonder to her children. The storms and changes of another century have been added to the record of her trials. The friction of her movement through the world has sometimes generated resistance, but this has perhaps dwindled in proportion to her accelerated progress. New struggles have come but new triumphs have resulted. The folkways of the world are destroyed and man moves in patterns of most intricate variety. But in the midst of all, the Church of the Apostles still exists, still repeats in their words her ancient faith, still pursues amidst the excitement of worldly hope or the sadness of worldly disappointment the same purpose in the same pathways. In the midst of this teeming modern world, so full of both the splendors and the degradations of the human spirit the Church stands, unconfused by the splendors and uncontaminated by the degradations. Still in the midst of all she holds out to man the Apostolic message of salvation identical with that which was preached by Peter and by John. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass."

## THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. John K. Cartwright, in the Catholic Hour, March 22, 1931)

The human soul thirsts for that contact with the Divine which we call holiness. It is through the Catholic Church that God provides that contact. He does not altogether deny the satisfaction of that thirst to any that sincerely seek Him. But it is in the Catholic Church, when all is said and done, that men find the surest way to God and the greatest nearness to Him. For this the Church was established. In her constancy and loyalty to this mission is the strongest evidence of her superior claim to the reverence and obedience of all Christians.

God is Holiness. The sinless integrity of the Divine Nature, the impossibility in it of any imperfection—this is Holiness itself.

It is by nearness to God that man becomes holy. Wholesomeness of life, attained by accommodating it to the divine standard: this is holiness in conduct. Sense of security and confidence in the goodness of God amidst the ultimate futility of merely human efforts: this is the holiness of worship and of religious love.

Mankind is made to the image of God. Surely there is in the image much that is worthy of attention and even admiration. The original endowment of the race is wonderful. The development of that endowment is still more wonderful. But more remarkable than either the gift or its development is the persistent discontent that fills man's soul, the eternal longing always to go beyond any actual achievement, how high soever it may be, the sense

of imperfection, insecurity, caducity that is of the very essence of the human in the midst of its most splendid triumph and most successful functionings. The more acute man's intellect, the more refined his aesthetic sense, the more developed his imaginative perceptions and his social conscience, the less is he contented with what he has attained. The more he seems to have approached perfection the more the possibility of perfection seems to recede from him. The more he elevates himself above the earth the more distinct the pure and everlasting stars appear. The more he tries to satisfy his longings the more reluctant is his restless heart. "Why," says the poet, "why have we longings of immortal pain and all we long for mortal?" and the saint—the holy one—gives the answer: "Because we are made not for mortal but for immortal things. Thou hast made us for thyself O God, and our heart is unquiet until it rest in Thee."

This is the thirst of man—his thirst for perfection—his thirst for God. This it is, whether he knows it or not, that impels him in his restless strivings. And mankind can never be content, as the brute is content, not because an invidious fate denies us the brute's satisfaction, but because He who made us made us for that communion with Himself which is the end of our being and which we call holiness.

To show us the way to that communion with God is the aim on earth of the Christian religion.

Many of you will think this truth so obvious as not to need repetition. It may be obvious, but it is denied. It is denied by many in the name of science. It is denied by others in the name of humanity. It is denied by still others who value religion only

inasmuch as it seems to be the satisfaction of man's earthly wants, or the expression of his civic duty, or the sublimation of his repressed emotions, or the poetic outpouring of his better feelings, or the gratification of his alleged desire to be at one with the universe. A certain celebrated sociologist has collected on one page of his book fourteen definitions of religion given by men of literary and scientific eminence. Of the fourteen definitions only five have anything to say concerning the relation of mankind to a personal God.

Now whatever we might think of all this on merely scientific or philosophic grounds, surely we can say this: These definitions of religion do not describe Christianity. Historically speaking, the religion which Christ preached was not a gospel of social betterment, nor of communing with nature, nor of relieving the subconscious urges, nor anything else of the kind. Whatever we may say about the others, the religion of Jesus Christ was a religion through which the individual human soul was to find contact with the personal God and Father in Heaven, through which the grace of living waters was to refresh his weariness, through which his dissatisfaction with things of earth might find compensation in heavenly treasures, through which the burdened might find rest and the sinful forgiveness, and the mortal might put on immortality. And all this was to be given the soul upon condition of its accepting the task of goodness and holiness. "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," said Jesus Christ. "Walk as becometh saints," said St. Paul and "For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, what-

soever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things." (Phil. iv, 8).

Christianity, therefore, as preached by Christ was a call to holiness. It meant this or it meant nothing.

There was a time when this seemed obvious to all who claimed the name of Christian. Catholic and Protestant might differ about many and important things—about the text of Scripture or its relation to tradition, about the meaning of Grace and the use of the sacraments. But originally Catholic and Protestant agreed at least about the end and purpose of the Christian religion. On this Martin Luther would have agreed with Pope Leo. X and Calvin with Pope Paul IV, that the Church of Christ was meant for the salvation of souls through holiness. Each of them might be willing to snatch the helm from the hand of the pilot, each of them might have his own theories about the art of navigation, but each of them wanted in the long run to steer by the same stars and to reach the same haven.

But now even that point of unanimity has disappeared among Christians of the various denominations. Now they disagree not only about the means to salvation, but about salvation itself. It has now come to be questioned not *how* man can be holy, but why he should want to be holy, whether there is anything to be gained at all in being holy. There is a religion of science, a religion of humanity, a religion of new thought, a religion of healing, a religion of consultation with departed spirits, a religion of social service. All these creeds and cults are preached, not only in their own name but under the title and prestige of Jesus of Nazareth, under

the traditional name of Christianity. In the eyes of many of the representatives of these ideas holiness is not sought and not desired. For some it seems not incongruous to have a religion with belief neither in God, the soul, nor immortality.

I do not wish improperly to blame the authors and disseminators of such doctrines. Many of them are sincere. Perhaps many of them are powerless to criticize their own beliefs. Many of them accomplish through their own zealous prosecution of their ideals programs of social usefulness. We might say various things to excuse or palliate these views. But assuredly they are under a delusion when they preach such doctrines in the name of Christ. For Christ was interested in making mankind holy through contract with the divine. Only that Church can represent Him which consistently represents that interest and prosecutes that end.

Now whatever be the confusion of the world at large about religions tendencies, certainly there is one institution the nature of whose mission cannot be disputed. Other denominations may and do have disputes as to what they are here for. The Catholic Church has no hesitancy about her mission. She has *one* supreme interest in the same things that interested Jesus and the Apostles. She has been a potent instrument for various kinds of good in the world. Her presence these two thousand years has saved our civilization. She founded and fostered the fine arts as well as the useful. Society has profited by her guidance even in the sense of material betterment. But these activities and benefits have been mere by-products of the Church. They have never caused her to forget her mission nor tempted her to shape it to some other purpose.

There were moments when her own prestige as a public institution was in prosperity and advancement, but the Church never thought of bargaining off the Gospel for the sake of continued popularity. Always through evil report and good report she was first and foremost the vessel of election and carried before the Gentiles the name of Christ as their God and Saviour. Always she sought whether through missionary or political or civic activities to implant more deeply in the minds of men the lessons of the gospel of holiness and salvation. Always she sought in her foundations and consecration of social institutions to surround men with the atmosphere and the reminders of the heavenly home, to set their faces towards eternity and to keep alive their experience of holiness through contact with the divine.

A well-known non-Catholic historian has given a beautiful description of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages which I am going to read to you:

“Never in the world before was there such a system. From her central seat at Rome, her all-seeing eye, like that of Providence itself, could equally take in a hemisphere at a glance, or examine the private life of any individual. Her boundless influences enveloped kings in their palaces, and relieved the beggar at the monastery gate. In all Europe there was not a man too obscure, too insignificant, or too desolate for her. Surrounded by her solemnities, every one received his name at her altar; her bells chimed at his marriage, her knell tolled at his funeral. She extorted from him the secrets of his life at her confessionals, and punished his faults by her penances. In his hour of sickness and trouble her servants sought him out, teach-

ing him, by her exquisite litanies, and prayers, to place his reliance on God, or strengthening Him for the trials of life by the example of the holy and just. Her prayers had an efficacy to give repose to the souls of his dead. When, even to his friends, his lifeless body had become an offence, in the name of God she received it into her consecrated ground, and under her shadow he rested till the great reckoning-day. From little better than a slave she raised his wife to be his equal, and, forbidding him to have more than one, met her recompense for those noble deeds in a firm friend at every fireside. Discountenancing all impure love, she put around that fireside the children of one mother, and made that mother little less than sacred in their eyes. In ages of lawlessness and rapine, among people but a step above savages, she vindicated the inviolability of her precincts against the hand of power, and made her temples a refuge and sanctuary for the despairing and oppressed. Truly she was the shadow of a great rock in many a weary land!" (Draper, J. W., *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*)

Now let me point out two facts about that beautiful picture.

First, it is a picture of society as sanctified, that is, made holy by the Catholic Church. The Church's system embraced all the personal and all the social life of man and put the holy saving sign of Christ on every stage and every process of his development.

Second, this picture is given as the picture of the past. But to Catholics it has all the *reality of the present*. There is scarcely a line that could not be written of life today as it is lived by Catholics. The Church no longer renders those services so



conspicuously, because the refusal of obedience of so many millions makes it impossible for her to color the externals of life as she did in the Middle Ages. But for the millions that do obey her in every land she still renders those identical services—still blesses the beginning of life and consoles at its departure, still gives holy impulses to the foundation of the Christian home in marriage, still administers the holy law of conduct in the confessional, still proclaims it before men as she did only a month or so ago on the lips of her sovereign pontiff. No longer is she asked by commonwealths to bless and anoint their kings; but she is asked by millions of individuals to make precious with holiness the comings and goings of their lives.

It seems to me that in this identity of purpose with the past lies the Catholic Church's greatest strength. In the Middle Ages the devotion to holiness and unworldliness might seem to have had a sanction from the condition of mankind. In the modern age the world seems more self-sufficient. With its scientific triumph, with its engineering skill, with its increased dominance of nature, with the spread of education, with the improvement of man's life and the facilitation of his livelihood, with an optimistic view of politics, with control of natural wealth, with a confidence in evolution, with a distrust of all but treason and its powers,—in this of all ages worldliness seems justified by its success. Yet the Catholic Church alone has never lost the sense of purpose in all the changes, has never been disturbed by the passing of success nor moved by the sneers of the successful so as to change her program from an unworldly to a worldly aim. This is truly a miraculous thing. And the greater

miracle is that precisely in this age, secular and world-contented as it is supposed to be, she has her greatest growth and greatest expansion for all the period of her history.

I am aware that there are many outside the Catholic Church who value and cherish the spiritual life and cultivate holiness and live in the light of God. By my words I would not insult their piety or cast discredit on the grace that dwells in them. Only I would have them remember, when they think of the Church for which I speak, her marvellous and unshaken loyalty to the higher view of life, a loyalty whose strength no other Church can emulate and from which in reality they derive the vitality of their own traditions of holiness.

All are aware of the success with which, in the Catholic Church, the love of holiness is communicated to the multitude. A scholarly non-Catholic in England has recently written a book on Catholicism and Christianity. It is his purpose in this volume to present his complaints about the Catholic Church on grounds of history, philosophy and human interests. He nevertheless found it right to say: The Catholic temper "is, generally speaking, unquestionably superior in general sensitiveness to the call of the supernatural, and consequently in the exercises and enjoyments of the life of devotion. Protestantism, as a movement, cannot compete with Catholicism in the appetite and capacity for fervent prayer, and in reverence for the sanctities of spiritual experience and for the visible symbols that set them forth. . . . It is probable that, of all the distinctive merits of Catholicism, this openness of heart for the eternal, the unseen, and the holy, next needs to be sought and cultivated by Protestants.

The vogue of mysticism in the Catholic Church has on the whole been sufficiently superior in extent, in strength, and in variety, to its vogue elsewhere, to warrant the plea that men should be willing to learn in this matter what the Church of Rome has to teach them." (Cadoux, p. 76, *Catholicism and Christianity*.)

This statement, the tribute from an unfriendly yet an honest pen, gives the whole case into our hands. To a Christian, to one who values holiness, there can be no greater proof of the Church's divinity than this, to admit her superior power of communicating holiness to man.

It has been the whole point of these four talks on the Marks of the Church to present the claims of the Catholic Church to superiority over all other actual and possible religions. She gives evidence of her divine establishment by virtue of her Catholicity, by virtue of her Unity, by virtue of her Apostolic tenure and descent. Above all she claims the evidence of divine approval and benediction by virtue of the warmth of Holiness that glows within the circle of her influence.

This region of light and warmth is not reserved by the Catholic Church to those born into it as a precinct of selfish privilege. The means of grace and salvation of their very nature contain a welcome and hold forth an invitation to all men of good will.

The proofs and arguments of a divine claim which the Catholic Church holds out in Unity, Apostolicity Catholicity, appeal to the reason and impress the thought. But the heart, says Pascal, has reasons that the mind knows not and it is with the reasoning of the heart that men recognize the glory of the

Church's holiness. To kneel before our altars at Mass and Benediction, to see the peace upon the face of the dying faithful, to witness the radiance of spiritual consolation in the touching eyes of the struggling mortals to whom the Church ministers is to see her Holiness and that of the God who sent her into the world as His representative.

It is to recognize:

“That light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That beauty in which all things work and move,  
That benediction which the eclipsing curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining love  
Which, through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst.”

It is to transcend this earthly dwelling-place and to know by foresight that peace which the world of itself cannot give, a peace of immortal holiness which through all the stirring joys and still solemnities of eternity shall never pass away.

CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS  
OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from his address at the inaugural program in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met. . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country. . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven: a strength, and a power divine through Christ: pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

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