

ADJ 8710

Sermon Outlines

For A Full Year

On

The Sacraments

And

Means Of Grace

By The Most Rev. John F. Noll, D.D.



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## INTRODUCTION

Dear Father:

The sermons to be preached in all the churches of Indiana from the first Sunday of Advent this year until the last Sunday after Pentecost next year will deal with the supernatural, with grace, and with the means provided by Christ for the channeling of grace to individual souls.

The little Catechism treats this subject, but the immature minds of children do not gather the full import of the significance of grace, and as adults do not comprehend it much better.

Just as Protestants who claim to believe in "justification by faith alone" have very hazy notions concerning the meaning of "justification," so their concept of "faith" is not ours at all.

It should be made very clear to our people that because man's destiny is supernatural it requires supernatural means for its acquisition. They need to know that only God can be the Author of things supernatural, that the Son of God did institute them, and commissioned His Church to distribute them and to apply them to individuals through duly empowered representatives.

The Sacramental system, therefore, is not merely important, but absolutely necessary in the plan that God devised for the salvation of human beings.

If there is frequent reiteration of some points in these sermons, it is done designedly. Catholic people, mingling daily with non-Catholics, should know the Catholic position thoroughly, and also that of Protestants in relation to the supernatural life.

The rejection of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Eucharist, and of the Mass by Protestantism, could not have been due to the lack of Bible support for these doctrines and practices, but rather to the fact that, having lost Apostolic succession, the clergy of the re-

formed churches were powerless to forgive sin, and to produce the Eucharist.

The world is in sore need of the Catholic doctrine dealing with grace and the means of communicating it. Such will be the purpose of fifty sermons. As usual the sermons have Christmas and Palm Sunday free.

Every priest who uses these sermons will readily understand why so much attention is given to the Sacrament of Matrimony, the manner of preparing for it, and the manner of fulfilling its duties.

NOVEMBER 28

## The Sacraments

For a correct understanding of the purpose and effects of the Sacraments it is necessary to have a correct grasp (1) of the original condition in which God created man, and what happened to the entire human race through Adam's fall. Without knowing the facts about those matters we cannot understand (2) the Incarnation and the Redemption by the Son of God; nor (3) the Church of Christ, nor the office of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

(1) God had willed that the human race should ever be as Adam was at the time of his creation, which means that every human being should possess not only the life natural to his soul and body, but also a supernatural life of soul, and an immortal life of body. The latter were conferred on Adam as "gifts," and not as "rights," and would become the endowments of his descendants only if he, representing the entire human race during a loyalty test, would merit the retention of the undeserved gifts for himself and their transmission to his posterity.

He proved himself *disloyal*, lost his *supernatural* status of soul, and his immortal status of body. In other words, he *fell* from the supernatural plane to the natural before he begot any children. Those whom he did beget, and their children and children's children throughout all generations inherited human nature bereft of God-remembrance as to soul, through grace, and subject to mortality and other evils as to body. In other words, they inherited a fallen nature, tainted with Original Sin. Heaven, God's home of supernatural glory, was necessarily closed against the human race deprived of the qualifications for a *supernatural* destiny.

(2) The Holy Trinity, in the celestial Paradise, looked down with pity on mankind, thus estranged from its loving Maker, and deprived of union with Him both here and hereafter. It rested with God either to pardon

outright Adam's disloyalty, shared by all his descendants, or demand full reparation which, of course, would have to be infinite, because, by his sin, Adam had attacked infinite majesty and goodness and love. God demanded condign reparation, which meant that He Himself must make it.

Since God the *Father* created Adam and the soul of every human being thereafter, God the *Son* volunteered to take upon Himself the burden of *Reparation* or *Redemption*. God the *Father* was willing that it should be so, for St. John tells us "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son" (John III, 16). The good tidings were communicated immediately to Adam and Eve, and actual grace was given to both whereby they were able to repent of their sin as far as it was *personal*, through their faith in the Redeemer to come and the antecedent application of His merits to their souls. God's chosen people in the Old Law, who were kept reminded by one prophet after another of the promised *Messias*, were liberated from Original Sin in the same manner. However their admission into Heaven would be delayed until the redemption was completed. You will recall from the Bible that Christ visited them between His death and His resurrection to apprise them that mankind's debt had been fully paid. God's chosen people of the New Law would be "justified" or have the supernatural life restored to their souls, by the application of Christ's merits through the Sacraments.

(3) Each of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity would have a part in the salvation of every human soul. The distribution of the merits of the Redemption was to be effected by the *Holy Spirit* through the Church, which He would guide and sanctify after its establishment by the Son of God.

During the series of instructions on the Sacraments you will hear much about *Grace*, which is absolutely necessary for the soul's sanctification and everlasting salvation, but the Author of grace, its Giver, its Preserver, its Restorer is the *Holy Spirit*.

The exalted dignity of the human person becomes clear when we consider that the three divine Per-



sons cooperated, each in a particular way, respectively in the creation, the redemption, the sanctification of the human soul. It is no wonder that Christ, the Redeemer, asked the question "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark VIII, 38); and "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Matt. XVI, 26).

Comparatively few are they who have a sufficient realization of the soul's value as is manifested by the manner in which they live. The missionary, who leaves home, relatives and friends, to go to a pagan land in the hope of saving a single soul at the cost of his own life, does realize it. The martyrs all realized it; the saints throughout the ages have realized it.

You who think of your soul only on Sunday—and then only under pressure from without—certainly do not realize its value.

It is the soul redeemed and sanctified that has such indescribable value; it is not the soul estranged from God and serving the devil by a sinful life.

If we have hitherto taken our faith as a matter of course; if we have not sufficiently appreciated the inestimable blessings we receive through our Church; if we seldom raise our minds and our hearts to *God the Father* for having made it possible for us to live eternally; to *God the Son*, our Redeemer, Who ransomed us from eternal misery; to *God, the Holy Ghost*, Who, day after day, operates within our souls in an invisible manner, then let us resolve to make it a daily practice at least briefly to reflect on these momentous facts.

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## DECEMBER 5

### How the World was Prepared for the Redeemer

In our last Instruction we learned that God, Who declined to do anything for the fallen angels, offered Himself to make atonement for the sin of Adam and to reopen Heaven for fallen man. Today let us consider

how He prepared the human race for the coming of the Divine Redeemer.

The Incarnation of the Son of God was delayed some thousands of years, in order to convince man how helpless, how weak, how treacherous he was when left to himself—living on a purely natural plane.

The very first son born to Adam killed his brother, he becoming the first victim of death. Later descendants became so corrupt that God sent a universal deluge to destroy "all flesh" with the exception of eight people. Later, from the scattered people (1) God selected one group which He formed into a nation, which He would instruct and prepare for the reception of the Divine Redeemer; (2) through prophets He foretold all the circumstances of His coming, of His ministry and His death; (3) He came in a miraculous manner, yet not as the chosen people expected Him.

(1) God called, from Haran, in Mesopotamia, whose people were given to idolatry, a certain Abram, whose name He changed into Abraham, which means "the father of a great people." Abraham responded promptly, leaving that land with Sarah, his wife, his nephew, Lot, and his servants for the land of Canaan, where they were instructed in the knowledge of the true God, taught worship by sacrifice, and were kept mindful of their fallen state and of the Redeemer, Who would later come into the world.

To Abraham God said: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and magnify thy name . . . and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Gen. XII, 2-3). He tested Abraham's loyalty and faith by requesting that he offer his own son Isaac on the altar of sacrifice. In this he was a figure of God sacrificing His only Son.

It was at this time that Melchisedech, also a figure of Christ as Priest, offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. Under Abraham God instituted the rite of Circumcision, by which all males were dedicated to the future Redeemer, a type of Baptism in the New Law. By that rite the descendants of Abraham were made members

of the true religion of the Old Law, as Baptism makes us members of the true religion of the New Law.

Sinners lived among saints under Abraham as they now live under the Pope even after the completion of the work of Redemption. We read of God's threat to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah, because of the wickedness which prevailed in them, and of Abraham's plea for mercy if only ten just people could be found in them. There were not that many "just" and, therefore, the cities were destroyed by fire.

After Abraham's death God selected as his successors, in turn, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, who was sold to Egyptians as Christ was sold to His enemies "for thirty pieces of silver." Dying, Joseph prophesied the coming of the "The Desired of Nations," to be born of the tribe of Juda. (Aggeus II, 8).

Then came Moses to whom God gave the Ten Commandments, and whom he selected to lead the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land. Through him God fed the Jews miraculously by Manna from Heaven. This was a figure of the Holy Eucharist, as also was the tabernacle which Moses erected.

(2) Settled in Palestine God placed Judges over the Jews to govern them and to keep them in the true faith. Later He allowed them to have Kings, as they requested, but chiefly to punish those who did not live in accordance with His laws.

The second King was David, of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Juda, who was also a prophet, whose Psalms are filled with allusions to the future Redeemer's divinity, His suffering, His Resurrection, his Ascension into Heaven, His priesthood, and the triumph of His Church.

The Jewish people continued to be instructed and warned by prophets inspired by God, Who, in the aggregate, foretold every circumstance concerning the coming, the life and work, the passion and death of the future Redeemer—the Messias, as the Jews were wont to refer to Him. For instance, Isaias foretold that He would spring from the House of David, be born of a Virgin, be

heralded by John the Baptist, perform great miracles, rise from the dead and be glorified.

Despite all this instruction the Jews became divided into many sects, became indifferentists, and thought of the predicted Messiah only as a temporal Liberator. The Pharisees among the Jews observed the law outwardly and by lip service, as many Catholics do today, but inwardly they were, as Christ Himself characterized them, "hypocrites."

The Sadducees among them denied the immortality of the soul, and utterly disregarded God's Commandments, as many people do today.

The Essenes among them observed the Commandments very strictly, but saw no need of organized religion. They, too, have their imitators today.

At the time of Christ's coming, Palestine was under the rule of pagan Rome, and the spiritual leaders of the people were more devoted to politics than to religion.

(3) It was not surprising, therefore, that the Jewish people were not prepared to give Christ a warm welcome when He came. You are sufficiently familiar with the immediate preparation for Christ's coming to make unnecessary its repetition here. He came as the second Adam, born of an Immaculate Virgin—the second Eve, who, it was prophesied back in Eden, would crush the serpent's or the devil's head. Although Mary lived at Nazareth the Savior was born at Bethlehem, as prophesied, amid a heavenly scene, but witnessed only by a few persons on earth.

As soon as the extraordinary event became the subject of discussion king Herod, the pagan ruling from Jerusalem only six miles away, sought to take His life. Learning of this from an angel Joseph took Mary and the child into Egypt to remain until Herod's death. Thereafter Joseph and Mary journeyed to Nazareth, where the Creator of the Universe, "was subject to them." Outside of His visit to the Jerusalem temple at the age of twelve with Joseph and Mary, nothing is reported about Jesus until He was thirty years of age, when He began

His public ministry. This started with the miracle of Cana, a town situated very close to Nazareth. His ministry continued for three years, during which time His name and fame reached every corner of Palestine.

The common people followed Him, believed in Him, loved Him, but their spiritual leaders, by open antagonism and deceit, brought about His death, which, of course, was intended by Almighty God as the ransom or reparation price for the sin of the first Adam.

During His public ministry Christ founded His Church, a spiritual Kingdom, to become co-extensive with the world and to endure until its end. He instituted Sacraments, whereby the merits of His passion and death would be brought to every individual member of His Kingdom, through the Holy Spirit, the Church's life principle and its members' supernatural Life-Giver.

We live in this new order, elevated above that of the original creation. Redeemed by the very Son of God, we are made partakers of the divine nature, adopted as children of God and, therefore, as brothers and sisters of Christ.

With such means of sanctification at our disposal, there is no justification whatsoever for any Catholic to live his life separated from the closest union with God. There is no justification for the *indifferent* Catholic, the Catholic *sinner*, for the *worldly-minded* Catholic.

Just as God held His chosen people in the Old Law far more responsible than He held the pagan people who surrounded them, so does He hold Catholics more blameable than people who are not of their faith, who do not enjoy their advantages, whose souls have never been under the influence of grace, and who, for a reason known only to God, have not been favored as they have been.

Deep gratitude, to which daily expression should be given; sincere loyalty, and the frequent use of the Sacraments, should characterize Catholic lives.

## DECEMBER 12

## The Old Dispensation and the New

In order that you may the better appreciate what the Son of God did for us, let us compare God's religion in the Old Law to the religion which the Son of God brought directly from Heaven for all mankind under the New Law. (1) The Old Law was of divine origin, yet not founded by God Incarnate; (2) it was to be a religion of preparation, not for Heaven, but for the reception of the Incarnate God; and (3) its worship and ordinances were not channels of grace, but only types and figures of the divinely instituted means of grace in the New Law.

(1) Knowledge of the history of the Old Law is most helpful to the understanding of the New Law. Moses, through whom God founded it, resembled Christ more than any other character in history. He was the only one to whom God appeared in person to make a revelation. We read in Deuteronomy (XXXIV, 10): "there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face"; and in Exodus: (XXXIII, 11) we read: "The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man is wont to speak to his friend." Such was the effect of this, that when the Israelites saw him descend from Mount Sinai, where he had conversed with God, from Whom he had also received the Ten Commandments, they "were afraid to come near him; and till he had done speaking with them he put a veil on his face." He far surpassed any prophet or teacher before the time of Christ.

Encouraged by the near presence of God Moses asked: "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory," but God answered: "Thou canst not see My face, for no man shall see Me and live."

But Christ not only had seen God face to face, but from all eternity lived with the Father and the Holy Spirit, was Himself God, the very image of the Father, and He could say: "No man knows the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Hence St. John, Christ's favorite among the Apostles, wrote:

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Moses led the Israelites, strangers and slaves in Egypt, to an *earthly* Promised Land. Christ came to lead us, estranged from God, cast out of paradise because of sin, into the *Heavenly* Promised Land.

Moses released the Israelites from the bondage in which they were held by Pharaoh; Christ liberated mankind from the more severe and humiliating bondage of Satan.

Moses was a mediator, an intercessor, for the Israelites before God. He said to the people: “You have sinned a great sin; but now I will go up unto the Lord; perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sins.” To God he said in their name: “This people have sinned greatly and have made themselves gods of gold; yet now if Thou wilt, forgive their sins; and if Thou will not forgive their sin, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book.”

Christ our Savior came as the great Mediator between God and man, did procure the forgiveness of mankind’s sin, and actually gave up His life in order that the Father might forgive.

(2) I have told you how God selected Abraham to take leadership over a people who would become great in number, who would live under a sort of theocracy, having inspired teachers called prophets, and priests who would be mediators between the people and their God, especially through the offering of sacrifices.

At times God allowed the Israelites to be conquered and taken captive by other nations as temporal punishment for their sins, but also for another reason, which is mentioned by Tobias: “Give glory to your Lord, ye children of Israel . . . because He has scattered you among the Gentiles who know not Him; that you may declare His wonderful work, and make them know that there is no other Almighty God besides Him” (Tob. XIII, 3-4).

Thus we find holy men outside of Palestine, such as Job in Arabia, Jonas in Ninive, Daniel in Babylon. Pagan kings often sought Jewish prophets to interpret their dreams, or such handwriting as appeared on the wall at

Balthasar's feast. Inspired men of the Old Law were always thinking of the future Redeemer, Who was to be born a Jew, but establish a "universal Kingdom." David referred to Christ as "a priest forever," Who would offer the reality of which the sacrifice of Melchisedech who lived in Abraham's time, was a figure. The Prophet Malachy told the Jews that there was no merit in the oblation of animal sacrifices except insofar as they were types of the "clean oblation" which would be offered among the Gentiles from the rising to the setting of the sun.

Hence you will have noted a very intimate connection between the Old Law and the New. It may, in truth, be said that the Catholic Church dates back to "our Patriarch Abraham," as he is designated in the Mass.

David Goldstein, the convert from Judaism, refers to the Christian religion as the "flowering of Israel" whose types and figures lost themselves in the reality.

Recently a Jewish physician and scientist not only became a Catholic, but joined the Trappists and gave as the reason for his conversion: "Protestants are divided into hundreds of disagreeing sects, the Jewish religion laid no claim to be other than a religion for Jews, while the Catholic Church proposes its religion as the single divine religion, and invites all men equally to accept it."

The Christmas angel reminded us that Christ came "for *all* men"; and we know that He ordered the Apostles to "make disciples of *all* nations." St. Paul, than whom there was no more ardent Jew before his conversion, tells us that "God wills *all* men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Hence the Old Law religion was to be a *preparation* for the New, to lead to the New. It lacked the means of grace by which it could itself save.

(3) Certain ordinances in the Old Law might be likened to the Sacraments, but they did not produce grace of themselves. They could only arouse in those on whom they were conferred sentiments of their dependence on God, of sorrow for sin, of gratitude for favors, etc.

The Rite of Circumcision removed Original Sin,



but only as it implied faith in the future Redeemer on the part of the adult, and faith in the same Redeemer, through the parents of the child, in the case of infants.

The Pascal Lamb was a sacred thing, but only in so far as it prefigured "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world."

Purifications in the Old Law were related to Sacraments in the New; and the ordination of priests was regarded as important, because God had directed that they be chosen from the Tribe of Levi only, and had prescribed, in detail, the manner in which they would be elevated to the office and the manner in which they should conduct it. But the priesthood of the Old Law and the sacrifices of the Old Law, which were offered as acts of public worship, were sacred in Heaven's eyes only in so far as they prefigured the great High Priest, Who would come down from Heaven to immolate Himself on the cross as a *bloody* sacrifice, and in the Mass daily until the end of the world, as an *unbloody* sacrifice.

It should be clear to you, therefore, that we who belong to the Kingdom established by the Son of God, in which all the prophecies, promises and ordinances of the Old Law are fulfilled, in which God's presence is not merely indicated by the "pillar of fire," or by the moving cloud, or by the Ark of the Covenant, but is *actual* in the Church to which we belong, in the Sacraments we receive, in the real indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

These preliminary observations should convince you of the inestimable privileges enjoyed by Catholics in the New Law. Members of other churches lack the means by which divine grace is conferred by God on souls, lack the great Eucharistic Sacrifice, by which the Son of God descends repeatedly from Heaven into the midst of even a small congregation, lack the Sacrament in which God unites Himself personally with the individual.

Follow our future instructions carefully, in order that you may have a more accurate and firmer grasp of the significance of *Grace* of which the Sacraments are intended to be God's channels. Understanding these

things, you will appreciate your faith and will make use of these divine things for a high degree of sanctification.

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## DECEMBER 19

### The Savior Showed Us How to Live

We have seen that God Himself descended from Heaven to earth in order to "redeem" or "repurchase" man from the dominion of the devil, under whose sway he fell through the disobedience of Adam, who, alone having the fullness of human nature, represented all mankind in his trial. But the Redeemer, the "Light of the World," also showed all people how to live if they would profit by His Redemption. They must (1) follow the example of Christ; (2) trust in the power of God to make them perfect; and (3) live the supernatural life.

(1) St. Paul (Philip II, 5) writes: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," which means that we must think as Christ thought, and not as the "sensual" man, as the man of the world thinks. We must subordinate the things of time to the things of eternity, "seek the things that are above and not the things of earth," do all "whether eat or drink or whatever we do, for the honor and glory of God."

St. Paul writes further: "*Put ye on* the Lord, Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences" (Rom. XIII, 14). This perfect imitation of Christ cannot be accomplished of a sudden, but requires a steady, long-time effort. But numerous people have tried it according to Christ's injunction, "be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. V, 48). St. Paul, who had succeeded in that effort, calls on his converts to be "imitators of me, as I am of Christ." He was not born as poor as Jesus; did not live as secluded as Jesus did for thirty years; did not confine the exercise of his ministry to his own country. But he did preach fearlessly, invite persecution, gloried in his "sufferings and tribulations," became "all things to all men in order to save all," was willing to die "for the brethren."

The laity, of course, are not expected to engage in that kind of a ministry, but they must, in their private conduct, in their homes, in their neighborhood, and among their friends, imitate the conduct of Christ. They too must be "the light of the world." St. Paul (2 Cor. V, 15-17) tells us that in redeeming mankind, He would have "all not live to themselves, but unto Him, Who died for them and rose again." To live as Christ did, divine aid, called the "grace of God" is needed. St. Paul, in the Christmas Epistle, tells us that this "has appeared unto all men." He also states its purpose "instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live temperately, piously and godly in this world."

(2) If God was interested enough in man's salvation to subject His own divine Son to hardships and privations and persecutions and death for his sake, He is certainly always ready to treat the redeemed with limitless generosity. Does not St. Paul observe: "He who has not spared even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, why hath He not, with Him, given us all things" (Rom. VIII, 32)?

It is not surprising that the preternatural gifts bestowed on Adam, should not have been restored to his descendants. Why should the *members* of Christ's body, the Church, be treated better than Christ Himself, the *Head*? Jesus asked two of His disciples, "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and so to enter into His glory?" (Luke XXIV, 26).

St. Paul tells us that we are "joint heirs with Christ *if we suffer with Him*, that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom. VIII, 17). Hence temporal afflictions should not alienate us from God in the slightest degree, but should rather draw us closer to Him. It is not the material but the spiritual, not the temporal but the eternal, that counts. When we are in possession of God's grace we are in possession of Him, and that should satisfy the heart of any person.

United to God by grace we have every reason to have confidence in our prayers, provided they relate to matters which conduce to our best welfare.

Speaking of the boy Christ St. Luke tells us that

he "grew in wisdom and age and grace before God and man." This brief characterization of the humanity of Christ was intended to be the highest eulogy. Therefore our ambition should be to *grow in grace* and *heavenly wisdom* as we grow in age. That goal is within the reach of every one who, living in sanctifying grace, corresponds with actual grace—and in eternity it will become clear to us that nothing else really mattered here on earth.

(3) Our separated brethren speak of Christianity as "a way of life"; without identifying Christianity with the Church, they hold that a Christian is one who lives "Christlike," whether he belongs to a religious organization or not. Not understanding the meaning of "grace" or of the "supernatural," they hold either that a natural good life will save, or that only the "righteousness of Christ," in whom the Christian trusts, can save.

Catholics, on the other hand, teach that the redeemed men must be incorporated into Christ by a special Sacrament, whereby he is also a member of Christ's body, the Church, become a "new creature," and must henceforth lead a supernatural life. Declaring oneself a Christian does not elevate one to a supernatural status. One must be enrolled as a citizen in Christ's supernatural Kingdom, and live as a child of God, guided by the Church. Heaven is for God's children only.

Faith without grace is worthless, as are good works without grace. To understand this is of prime importance, and its realization will come only from frequent advertence to it.

Future instructions, which will deal with this subject, should be of vast help to you. Therefore follow them; reflect frequently on a truth, a fact, which your best non-Catholic friends never think of, and of which the generality of Catholics seem to be unconscious, namely, that we must *supernaturalize* our good works.

You must lead the supernatural life, established and promoted by grace and, by inference, make frequent use of those supernatural means which convey, support and increase it.

Never lose sight of the fact that there is an essen-

tial, even an infinite, difference between Christ's Church and all others. The sacramental system which they have rejected, which they lost by severing themselves from the "body of Christ," is absolutely needed for the salvation of any creature. It is through the Sacraments that the merits of Christ's passion and death, by which He brought redemption to mankind generally, are applied to individual souls.

No Protestant Church claims more than two Sacraments, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and since their Lord's Supper is really not a Sacrament, they can really claim only one, and that they have borrowed from our Church. Claiming Baptism to be a Sacrament, in theory, most of them regard it only as a *symbol* in practice, which means that they recognize no Sacraments, as Catholics understand them.

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## DECEMBER 26

### The Office of the Holy Spirit

You have been told that the merits of Christ's Redemption reach the individual through the Sacraments, which were committed to the Church He founded, of which the Holy Spirit would be the supernatural life principle. At the time of Christ's Ascension, the body of the Church—a divine work—was complete, but it had not yet received its divine supernatural life-giving principle—the Holy Spirit, Who would abide in it, guide and protect it, and perform wonders through it until the end of time. (1) In the Church the Holy Spirit is the source of Infallibility; (2) in the soul, the source of sanctifying grace, through the Sacraments, and (3) of actual graces offered us many times a day.

(1) If the Church is divine in character, it must be infallible. If its guide is the Holy Spirit of God, it cannot err in matters of faith or morals. Therefore, what you are taught concerning doctrine, the Mass, Grace and the Sacraments must be true. If the Holy Spirit is the source of supernatural life and its members share it, they can become saints and, despite the damage done by

Adam, attain the glorious supernatural bliss of Paradise. As the sap of the tree penetrates the entire trunk, branches, and leaves, so grace permeates the whole man.

More than that, the Holy Spirit Himself, so truly takes possession of the human soul in grace, that He actually dwells in it. Hence St. Paul calls the human soul His tabernacle, and the body which houses the soul, His temple.

Since Christ's Ascension we live under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Christ had said "hitherto My Father works and now I work." He, in turn, committed His Church and its members to the care of the Holy Spirit.

Christ Himself was called the "Anointed" because His human nature had the consecration of the Holy Spirit, and in the New Testament frequent reference is made to "the Spirit of Christ." St. Paul, for instance, wrote "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Before leaving the world Christ promised to send His Holy Spirit in Person, just as He Himself had come in Person, and not by His "influence" only, as He came to the Church of the Old Law.

When you were born of the Holy Spirit, you were placed through Him in a state of union with God, and that union is strengthened and made closer by the other Sacraments instituted by Christ—because grace is lodged in them.

(2) The Holy Spirit comes to the soul in such an individual way that St. Paul writes "You are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom. VIII, 9.) In another place St. Paul writes: "Do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you?" (1 Cor. VI, 19).

Through the grace of the Holy Spirit Christ's words are verified "I am come that they may have life and that they have it more abundantly." The Old Law had no Sacraments. It had washings and purifications, but these did not, of themselves, convey grace. In the New Law we may actually become God's sons by adoption, and therefore co-heirs with Christ of the bliss and glory of Heaven. Most members of Christ's Church are not

conscious of their lofty dignity and of the supernatural state in which they live. In fact, they live little differently than the unregenerated in the world; they live *for* the world; they incessantly "grieve the Holy Spirit." They seldom think of their special consecration to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, by which they are registered in Heaven as God's own. Hence they do not realize that they are 100 times more responsible than others. "The sensual man," says St. Paul, "perceives not the things of the Spirit of God"; and even most Catholics do not, because they live like the sensual-minded outside the Church. The "spiritual man" follows the Holy Spirit, remains conscious of His intimate relationship with God; and if he should, by sin, lose his baptismal innocence, resorts immediately to a Sacrament, which restores it. The "spiritual man's" home is Heaven, and he lives in this world as a wayfarer, keeps himself unspotted in spite of it, so that he may make himself daily more worthy of everlasting union with God.

(3) When Christ promised to send the "Holy" Spirit, He, in the same breath, warned against the "evil" spirit, whom He called "the Prince of this world." The Holy Spirit would operate on the heart and soul of man, and the evil spirit on his senses and appetites, and animal instincts. The Holy Spirit would enlighten the mind and give strength to the will, while the evil spirit would take advantage of the natural darkness of the one and weakness of the other.

We can merit for Heaven only by corresponding with the Holy Spirit's actual graces. When Peter addressed the multitude representing many nations on Pentecost 3,000 persons who heard him became converted, while others were driven by their bad will to have him arrested and banished from Jerusalem. The former followed, the latter resisted, the Holy Spirit.

Some of you will profit by this instruction, while others will not get one iota of benefit from it.

If learned men fail to see the truth of Catholicity, it is because they have no disposition to do so.

St. Paul says that we could not have even a good thought without the Holy Spirit. We need His help to

make any work or service meritorious. Yet do we not almost ignore the Holy Spirit in our prayers and reflections? We profess belief in His equality with the Father and the Son when we make the sign of the cross, and when we recite the Nicene Creed, in which it is declared "He is glorified equally with the Father and the Son." We adore Him, usually quite unconsciously, when we say the *Gloria Patri*, but that is the most attention that the average person gives to the Holy Spirit.

You have heard that by His Redemption the Son of God merited the grace of salvation for all men, but you are not of those who believe that a mere trust in His merits will save you. Christ made your salvation *possible, you must make it actual* through a steady *cooperation* with the grace earned by Christ and dispensed to your individual soul through the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul called "the wisdom of this world," to which so many of us pay reverence, by its proper name "foolishness." Isn't he a fool who prefers this world to the next, who pampers his body while he completely neglects his soul? Catholic sinners are the worst fools because they are better informed.

Try to create an habitual consciousness of your dignity, of the presence of the Holy Spirit within you. Apply to the life of your soul the same principle you apply to your body, that is, avoid what is harmful to it, feed it, correspond to grace. Be actuated by the profit motive, so that every day you will not only avoid the wrong, but perform works of supernatural merit.

You could receive no better advice from the priest than that which St. Paul gave to Timothy (2 Tim. II, 3) "Labor as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." This means you must be active supernaturally by faithfully cooperating with the grace earned and dispensed by His Holy Spirit to you.

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## JANUARY 2

### The Supernatural

If the word "natural" denotes "what belongs or conforms to our *nature* as human beings," then "super-



natural" implies that there are things *above or beyond our nature*, which we could not possess or procure by our own power. It should be clear that everything in the order in which God lives must be beyond our natural powers to attain—His divine life, the means of participating in it, His Heavenly bliss and the aids by which alone it can be acquired. Let us only briefly declare (1) what are some of these supernatural things; (2) how feeble is the non-Catholic concept of the supernatural; and (3) what is God's supernatural plan of salvation.

(1) A few examples will clarify what is meant by the supernatural:

(a) The truths which we learn by divine revelation and could not be learned by human reason alone, are supernatural. Such truths are, for instance, the Holy Trinity, the nature of the reward awaiting those who, with the help of God's grace, serve Him through love.

(b) Miracles performed by divine power are supernatural, as are also those genuine apparitions of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, on which the Church has pronounced.

(c) The spiritual kingdom founded by Christ in this world—His Church—is supernatural in origin, in its guidance and protection.

(d) Those sacred things to which Christ gave power to impart grace, and which we call "Sacraments," are supernatural.

(2) Essential for salvation as are the supernaturally founded Church and its means of grace, the non-Catholic world is unacquainted with them. Speak to the best informed among them about "the supernatural," and they immediately think of miracles or the mysteries of spiritualism, or other preternatural phenomena.

That the end of man is supernatural they have never thought about; that a supernatural end can be gained only through supernatural aids—elementary as is such a truth—has never occurred to them.

Protestants do claim to believe in divine revelation, as it is presented in the Bible, but they never associate it with the one Church which gave the Bible to them. It never dawns on them that sons of this Church wrote the

Bible, and that its reliability as genuine and inspired could be determined only by this Church.

How they remain ignorant of the beginnings of Christianity, of the conversion of most of the western world, of the loyalty of hundreds of thousands of Christians even unto martyrdom long before it was possible for people to have the Bible, can be explained only on the theory that the prejudices in which they have been reared obscure even this historical truth.

The Bible was preserved and its teaching perpetuated only because it was in the hands of the divine Church.

(3) The Bible presents no clear plan of salvation, while Christ's Church does. But she is able to support that plan by Holy Scripture. Because of its bad interpretation the Bible, a precious and inspired book, has only confused people about what God's plan of salvation is. God constituted Himself the end of man, as He was man's Creator.

If, since the time of Adam's fall, the souls of men are not created in a supernatural condition, evidently they must be elevated to that state if God Himself is to be their ultimate end—because the order in which He lives is divine and not human. It should be equally clear that man must enjoy union with God even here in this world if he would hope to be united to Him in everlasting glory.

Because the generality of people have never tasted the supernatural they are victims of all that is wrong in the world, of its unbelief, of its secularism, of the chaos so conspicuous in the political, the social and economic orders; of the infidelity, immorality which are everywhere rampant.

What was needed by the human race as such, nineteen centuries ago, is needed today by every human being, a personal redemption by the application of the merits of Christ's atonement. The chief fruit of His redemption is divine grace or the supernatural life, but it must be conveyed to every individual, one by one, through a special Sacrament of Regeneration, and that supernatural life must be sustained by other sacred

ordinances which could be instituted only by Christ the Savior.

The Son of God came down to our level in order to raise us up to His—and evidently His life is supernatural, divine.

There are those who believe that the plan of salvation today could be different from what Christ originally determined. In fact people tell us quite frankly that His Church fell into error, which would mean that His solemn words and promises were not kept. God's plan for salvation could not possibly be altered if it was conceived by infinite wisdom, and if He would be with His Church "all days even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. XXVIII, 20), and if His Church was to be guided and protected and "kept in truth" (John XVI, 13) by the Holy Spirit, Who was infused into it on Pentecost, from which day it has been a divine organism, a living Teacher, a living Sanctifier.

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## JANUARY 9

### The Supernatural

You have been told that the world outside the Catholic Church does not understand the supernatural; and because Catholics live in that world they find it difficult to retain a clear concept of it, even though they partake of supernatural things. But since the Bible calls "the world, the flesh and the devil" the chief dangers to our salvation, let us see how they destroy people's interest in the supernatural, and even their belief in its reality. St. John refers to these three evils as "the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life" (1 John II, 16). Let us, therefore, briefly see how (1) the world; (2) the flesh; and (3) the devil are opposed to the supernatural.

(1) The world in which we live is material, which is the antithesis of "spiritual"; its goods are temporal, while our destiny is eternal; its pleasures are for the body only, while our calling is to a complete happiness of

soul. This is why St. James tells us that "friendship with the world is enmity before God" (Jas. IV, 4).

Now most people in the world have no definite knowledge about any other world. Hindus and Mohammedans and other pagans believe in the continuation of life beyond the grave, but lack divine revelation concerning its character. They believe that one of their remote ancestors received some revelation, but do not know that God Himself actually came to earth, not only to reveal hidden religious truths, but to elevate us to a divine plane, and by supernatural assistance to keep each united to God Himself.

One-half of all Americans have a pagan point of view; another fourth, calling themselves Christians, subject revealed truths to their private judgment to pass on their acceptability to themselves. They claim that the individual must make his own contacts with God, independent of a Church or of Sacraments. In fact, they hold that we set aside Christ if we look for help through His Church, the Mass, through Mary and the Saints, or if we seek grace or forgiveness of sin through Sacraments.

The world and the supernatural are at odds and, therefore, we can draw no spiritual help from the world's influence. It is purely secular and material. Yet how many Catholics actually love the world, its spirit, its axioms, and, therefore, follow it, rather than their Church which, representing Christ, must warn against it and rebuke it!

(2) We think of the "flesh" and the "spirit"; of the "carnal" and "spiritual" as opposites. Members of most other churches are taught that by Adam's fall all people inherit a corrupt nature, whose appetites and passions cannot be controlled, that, therefore, their gratification will not be imputed to us if we have a strong faith in Christ as a "Savior," Who antecedently atoned for all our misdeeds. But the unchurched do not usually hold that. They rather believe that the gratification of a natural instinct cannot be sinful, and some even hold that we can perfect our human nature without any divine assistance.

Both groups are very wrong. Protestants who claim to accept the Bible as their rule of faith will find reference, in practically all of its seventy-two books, to the dominion the soul must exercise over the body, the spiritual over the animal man. Spiritual death is pronounced on those who will live "according to the flesh." St. Paul tells us that if he were not wont to chastize his body even he would become a castaway. By our souls we are "only a little less than the angels"; by our bodies only a little more than animals. Our duty is to become more and more like the angels if we hope in eternity to share their bliss.

(3) Every professed Christian must believe in the devil, and most pagans—even our Indian tribes—have always believed in evil spirits. If they were not created "evil," then they must have fallen from a "good" or lofty plane. According to Christian doctrine the devils were originally "angels," created in a supernatural condition, which, like Adam, they forfeited, and to recover which, unlike Adam, they were not given another chance. Hence they hate God, envy us, who, after their fall, were created for the same destiny as that which was originally theirs.

Holy Scripture reminds us that we must "watch and pray" because the devil, like a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter V, 8); it also reminds us that the devil is "a deceiver from the beginning" (John 8, 44) that he often puts on the "appearance of an angel of light" (2 Cor. XI, 14) in order the better to deceive us; that he lays "snares" for us by making "evil appear good and good evil."

St. Paul tells us that our chief combat in this world is not against "flesh and blood," by which he means our own evil inclinations and the bad example around us, but against "The spirits of wickedness in high places" (Eph. VI, 12). Hence we are urged "to resist strong in faith" (1 Pet. V, 9). With God's grace we are far more powerful than all the devils in hell combined. The evident lesson is that if we use God's grace, day after day, we shall be able to foil his assaults, under whatever guise they are made. The chief reason why God allows the devil to molest and tempt us is to afford us opportun-

ities of defeating him—and every defeat means a victory, and new merit for Heaven.

Place the letter “d” before “evil,” and you have “devil”; remove a letter “o” from the word “good” and you have “God.” The devil is the personification of evil; God is the personification of good—the Supreme Good. The devil hates the Church as a work of God and not of man. Isn’t that a reason why you should love it, listen to it, use its powerful Sacraments?

In the first book of the Bible we read of Satan’s attempt to seduce Eve, in which he was successful. He was even brazen enough to tempt Christ, but was repulsed. Persecution of the Church, whether by Communists or the sects, is instigated by evil powers, yet too often Catholics give encouragement to these enemies of God and man.

You are so vulnerable if you do not correspond with grace, vulnerable through your appetites, your senses, your passions, your vanity, your ill-temper.

Since our everlasting salvation will be impossible if we follow the way of the world, allow our flesh to gain mastery over our spirit, and permit the devil rather than God to rule our lives, let us earnestly resolve to live the supernatural life, the only source of genuine happiness even here. Supernatural living is the only sure way to Heaven.

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## JANUARY 16

### Institutor of Means of Grace

Outside the Catholic Church Christ is presented (1) as a Teacher; (2) as a Savior; but not (3) as the Institutor of means of grace. Without the means of grace His office as Teacher and Savior would not meet the requirements of salvation.

(1) Christ came from Heaven to earth in order to be “the Light of the World,” a divine Teacher, Who could teach with authority, and thus dispel the chaos in which the world, over a period of thousands of years, had become involved. He was to be a Teacher not only

during the three years of His public life, but through His Church, with which He promised to remain "all days even to the consummation of the world" (Matt XXVIII, 20). His work of teaching was not fully completed upon His return to Heaven, and that is why He told His Apostles that He would send them the Holy Spirit to guide the Church, to bring to mind "whatsoever I have told you" and to "keep it in truth" (John XVI, 13).

Because the Church needs a spokesman to make its voice heard, He provided for one in Peter and his successors, declaring that He would "bind in Heaven" whatsoever the teaching body of His Church would "bind on earth" (Matt. XVI, 19).

The Catholic Church has this teaching body, whose authority is respected as much as that of Christ Himself, as He declared it must be—"he who hears you hears Me" (Luke X, 16).

Outside the Catholic Church there is no universal teaching body, no international voice which can declare what is divine teaching. The individual must try to find out for himself what is to be believed and done for salvation by reading the Bible, which the primitive Christians did not have, and which individuals could not possibly have had until the printing press, invented in the fifteenth century, made it available to all. In the meantime all of Europe was united together in one faith by the living teacher in Christ's Church.

(2) Mankind in general was redeemed from the slavery of Satan by the Savior from Heaven "Christ the Son of the living God" (Matt. XVI, 16). But no individual is saved by the mere fact of this redemption, which made salvation *possible, but not actual* for every individual. The merits of His redemption must be applied to everyone, not by mere "self-dedication" and "self-appropriation" of the Savior, but in harmony with his whole plan of salvation.

Citizenship in His Kingdom was one requirement. This is effected by the same rebirth through which individuals are made "new creatures," "children of God," and "heirs of Heaven."

This rebirth is not effected merely by accepting

Christ as Savior. That teaching is the leading heresy of our age. Acceptance of Christ without also accepting the binding force of the Ten Commandments, which He never abrogated, which, as God, He could not abrogate, is nothing less than blasphemy.

The merits of Christ, our Savior, are applied in an entirely different manner to the individual. They reach him through channels of grace which He Himself instituted, one of which actually does effect a rebirth, an adoption of the individual by God as His child. The others are designed to keep him in the relationship of child, to unite him more closely to God, and to enable him to perform works of *supernatural value* by which, in addition to faith, people help earn merit for Heaven.

(3) We have frequently called your attention to the fact that the Sacraments are the chief means of grace, or the channels of supernatural and divine life. Other means are prayer, the Mass, and other forms of private and public devotions, with which we shall deal later.

Just as one might be well instructed in secular knowledge without it being helpful because he never makes use of it, so one might be a finished theologian, might have all the knowledge contained in the Catholic Encyclopedia, and still be a rogue. In other words, knowledge of one's religion is not all-sufficient. By the same token one might accept Christ as his Savior, and still be damned because he refuses to regulate his life by the unchangeable moral law.

If Protestants do not stress the Sacraments as means of grace, it is only because, having no claims to Apostolic succession through the valid reception of Holy Orders, they are not empowered to administer any of the Sacraments except Baptism, in whose efficacy most of them do not really believe. Every early Christian sect that has survived, even as a small remnant, from the fourth and fifth centuries, has retained all the seven Sacraments, because it did not lose the Sacrament by which, for instance, its clergy are enabled to forgive sin, to consecrate at the altar, etc.



The merits of Christ the Savior are not channelled to the soul in any other way than through those divine ordinances to which we give the name "Sacraments."

Only today, for instance, we noticed in the daily paper an account of a Protestant ordination service, which consisted of an ordination address delivered by one minister, and an ordination "charge" delivered by another, assisted by two elders of the congregation. Such an ordination, of course, imparts no powers.

If we are repeating ourselves on the need of the Sacraments, on the need of the Church for the salvation of every individual, it is because most of your Protestant friends have been instructed to believe that the Church is not necessary, the priesthood is not necessary, Sacraments are not necessary, because salvation is reached by individual contact with Christ through faith alone, that, howsoever guilty of sin one may be by trampling the Commandments of God under foot, he is saved through the overshadowing of his soul by the righteousness of Christ—and hence his sins are not imputed to him. This is a rather easy, but a most unsafe way, of salvation.

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## JANUARY 23

### The Church's Sacramental System

The absolute need of definite divine ordinances for the bestowal, the strengthening and even the restoration of grace to a soul which came into being without it, should be apparent. The Church calls these grace-conferring ordinances "Sacraments." They are seven in number, and the Catechism has a common definition for all. It reads: "Sacraments are (1) outward signs; (2) of inward grace; (3) instituted by Christ. Now let us try to comprehend this definition.

(1) The Holy Ghost came on Pentecost under a *visible* and *audible sign*. The tongues of fire not only indicated, but imparted enlightenment to the Apostles and the gift of tongues.

Grace is something invisible, and we would not

know that we were receiving it unless the outward sign or ceremony designed to symbolize and empowered by Christ to impart it were employed. We call the outward ceremony "the matter" of the Sacrament, and the words by which it is administered "the form."

You will recall that Christ, Who could have cured without the use of either words or ceremonies, nearly always used them, even when He wrought His miracles for human bodies. He *touch*ed the eyes of the blind man (Matt. IX, 29); He *touch*ed the leper (Matt VIII, 3); He *took hold of the hand* of the daughter of Jairus (Matt. IX, 25); by *words* He ordered the paralytic to "arise and walk" (Matt. IX, 6); He *breath*ed on the Apostles, when He imparted to them the Holy Spirit (John XX, 21).

In Baptism the Holy Spirit and His grace are imparted for the removal of Original Sin by the application of water, which signifies "cleansing power." When the Apostles administered *Confirmation*, they "imposed *hands*" on those already baptised" (Acts. VIII, 17). In the *Holy Eucharist* the *bread and wine* constitute the "matter" of the Sacrament, and the *words* of consecration the form. The matter of the Sacrament of Penance is the *Confession* of sins, and the form "the absolution imparted." In *Extreme Unction* the priest anoints the five senses with holy oil (James V, 14-15). In *Holy Orders* there is the *imposition of hands* by the Bishop, *anointing with oil*, and the delivery of the sacred vessels. These are the outward signs of the inward grace when the office of the priesthood is received. *Christian Marriage* is a sign or type of the union between Christ and the Church. (Eph. V, 32).

(2) The visible signs, which are the "matter" of the Sacraments, could not of themselves impart grace, but they are, and can be, together with the forms used, the channels by which the grace of God is brought to the individual soul. No one will question the fact that God can impart His grace through sacred signs or ordinances as well as He can confer it directly.

There is no question about Christ having instituted Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Christ ordered

Saul to be baptized for that purpose; and Peter told the multitude on Pentecost "repent and be baptized every one of you . . . for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts II, 38). Evidently if our sins were taken away by Baptism, the supernatural life of grace was imparted to our souls.

The action is immediate once the matter and form of the Sacrament are properly used. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood *abideth* in Me" (John VI, 57). "Whose sins you shall forgive they *are forgiven* them" (John XX, 23); "If he (the sick person who is anointed) be in sin; they *shall be forgiven him*" (James V, 15).

Baptism confers sanctifying grace the first time; and penance restores it after it will have been lost by sin. These Sacraments are called "the Sacraments of the dead," because they are imparted to those who are bereft of supernatural life. The other five Sacraments are called "Sacraments of the Living" because they may be imparted only to those who are alive supernaturally; their purpose is to increase and strengthen other grace already existent in the soul.

(3) I hardly need to tell you that only God, the Author of grace, could institute Sacraments, by which grace, His own divine life, is imparted to the human soul. When we speak about the grace conveyed by the Sacrament we mean "sanctifying grace," often called "habitual grace," which elevates the soul from the natural to the supernatural condition, and is intended to keep it in that condition. The actual graces imparted by the Sacraments are known as "sacramental graces," designed to strengthen the person against the temptations and dangers which he must continue to face even after he will have been closely united to God through the Sacrament received.

Since the Sacraments are all of divine institution, and were committed by Christ to His Church, they can be received, with the one exception of Baptism, only from a Bishop or priest duly delegated by the Church to administer them. If an exception is made for Baptism it is because it is so absolutely necessary for

salvation that its reception is not made dependent on one who might not be available at a time when it is sorely needed, namely, when one is dying.

Non-Catholics have not the faintest grasp of the Sacramental system, yet in God's plan of salvation its need is paramount. The clergymen of their church, having lost Apostolic succession, are not empowered to administer any Sacraments. They may as ordinary lay people administer Baptism because of the reason already mentioned.

Catholics, on the other hand, accept the Sacraments as a matter of course, while they seldom reflect on the inestimable benefits their soul-life derives from them. No one who has even a mediocre grasp of what the Sacraments accomplish would remain, even for a single hour, outside the state of grace.

Divine grace called by Holy Scripture "the pearl of great price," is the most precious thing outside Heaven, yet it is available to you in great measure if you will only "come to drink at the Savior's fountains." Your indifference towards the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist will, of course, not be excused by God.

If spiritual things are far above material things, then you are not justified—nor should you wish to be—in showing so much concern for your body and so little for your soul.

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## JANUARY 30

### Only God's Church Can Have Them

In our last instruction we pointed out that the Church must possess "means" of conferring grace or supernatural life on the soul, in order to qualify it for life with God and His angels throughout eternity; that God alone could be the Author of such "means," since He alone can bestow grace, defined as His greatest *free* supernatural gift. Today let us consider (1) the number of the Sacraments; (2) who may receive them; and (3) why modern Protestantism lacks them.

(1) From the time of the Apostles the Church has

recognized seven Sacraments, each responding to a special need of the soul at special times during the Christian's progress through life here to life eternal. There is birth in the natural order; there must be birth in the supernatural order. The new-born child must grow in strength, and so must the new-born soul. The body of the child must be nourished by material food; the soul by spiritual food.

There is no way of restoring life *to the body* after its death, but because of the importance of it Christ did provide a Sacrament for the restoration of the supernatural life *to the soul*, in order to give it repeated chances for salvation. Through the Sacraments we receive special graces at the very periods of life when they are most needed—at birth, at entrance into youth, after having lost God's friendship, when we embrace a new state of life, and when we are in danger of death.

The oldest Christian sects, which separated from the Mother Church in the fourth and fifth centuries, retained *all seven* Sacraments, and can legitimately have them because they did not lose apostolic succession. This is true also of Orientals, formed into a separate body by the Constantinople Schism, and who, today, are divided among many national churches and call themselves the "Orthodox Churches."

The grace produced by the Sacraments flow from the infinite merits of Christ, and not from the worthiness of the person who administers them. They are not administered recklessly, and would be invalid if conferred on any one against his will.

(2) It has been the practice of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches, constituting three-fourths of all Christians in the world, to baptize infants, even though they are unable to apply for it on their own initiative. The Church can reasonably presume that if the child understood the purpose and the effects of Baptism it would want it. Against this practice Protestants quote the words of Christ: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark XVI, 16). That those words apply to the adult only is clear from the fact that whole families were baptized by St. Paul (Acts XVI, 15;

1 Cor. I, 16). No adult would be admitted to Baptism in the Catholic Church unless he would willingly and honestly declare *that he believed* in the full teaching of the Church. Surely every parent would want his babe, an inheritor of Original Sin to be relieved of it and be elevated to the supernatural life.

Origen, who lived in the second century, declared that the practice of baptizing infants dates back to Apostolic times; and St. Irenaeus, who also lived in the second century writes: "Christ came to save all; through Him are born again unto God, infants and children, boys and youths and elders."

A Council of the Church held in 416 taught the *necessity* of infant Baptism, and later Councils reiterated this need. In fact, no other position could be defended by those who understand the first purpose of Baptism, namely, the conferring of supernatural life to the soul destined to a supernatural end.

The need of Baptism is also made clear by the fact that no one can validly receive any other Sacraments unless he will have first been baptized. It is declared by the Church to be the "first and most necessary" Sacrament.

We have already seen that five of the seven Sacraments are not received worthily unless the soul be already in the possession of sanctifying grace.

(3) You may wonder why modern Protestantism lacks the seven Sacraments when Christian churches of much earlier origin hold to them. The explanation is clear although you never hear that explanation from Protestant churchmen themselves. The reason is that four of the seven Sacraments, namely, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance and Holy Orders, can be validly administered only by one who himself has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders, and that can be conferred only by one who can prove his succession from the Apostolic times. It was the Apostles only, whom Christ empowered and authorized to forgive sins, to consecrate the Holy Eucharist; therefore only their successors can exercise that power today. The reformers knew this very well and, therefore, they abolished all the Sacraments

except Baptism which any one, in case of necessity, can administer. Since some have what they call "communion service," or the "Lord's Supper," they speak of it as a Sacrament, but from what I have just said it is clear that they cannot have the Holy Eucharist in the Catholic sense.

Lacking the Sacraments Protestants must reduce the condition of salvation to the minimum, and that minimum is a "personal trust in the merits of Christ" without the intermediary of the Church, of a priest, or of any Sacrament.

Since most of them do not believe in Original Sin there is no good reason why they should use even the Sacrament of Baptism. They speak often of the spiritual life, but never of the supernatural life, concerning which they have only the most vague idea; they speak of grace, because Holy Scripture speaks of it, but they have not the Catholic concept of grace, the most precious thing a human being can possess in this life.

Do not merely accept the teaching of the Church concerning the seven Sacraments, but see in them the only means, combined with prayer, for your sanctification. One cannot reach the supernatural end for which he was created unless he live a supernatural life. Think of grace not only as supernatural, but as *divine* life in your souls, by which you are most intimately associated even now with the God Who is to be your "reward exceeding great" forever.

No Catholic could be indifferent in the service of God, or indifferent about living in the state of grace, if he devoted only a few minutes each day to reflection on the grandeur of grace, and the intimate personal union with Christ which it furnishes.

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## FEBRUARY 6

### Christ's Ministry Continued

What Christ was in Person during His public life, that the Church has been ever since. He summed up His mission in the few words: "I am the way, the truth

and the life." His way the Church makes known to us through the Commandments; His *truth* through the Creed, and His *life* she is able to impart to us and to sustain it through the Sacraments. None but Christ's own Church is authorized to teach in His name, and none other is commissioned to exercise His supernatural life-giving ministry.

St. Paul (1 Cor. IV, 1) calls himself a "minister of Christ and a dispenser of the mysteries of God," and so could every duly ordained priest say of himself. His ministry consists chiefly (1) in exercising Christ's priesthood through the Mass, and (2) in dispensing grace through the Sacraments.

(1) Everyone familiar with modern religions knows that they lack these two very essential features of Christ's ministry. We have already told you how it is to be explained. No one can bestow the priesthood on himself. Christ selected the first candidates for His priesthood, prepared them for it for three years, and then ordained and commissioned them Himself. These alone were to select others and, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, pass down through the centuries the identical ministry committed to them. But since those who, in the sixteenth century, founded new religions, were not empowered to confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the men who succeeded them lacked the priesthood and, therefore, their followers were deprived of all Sacraments except Baptism, which, because of its absolute necessity for salvation, does not require a duly ordained clergyman.

From that time the Protestant ministry has consisted chiefly of preaching, and down to this day Protestants call their clergymen "preachers." They are not entitled even to that office, because it too requires a "commission from Christ or His Church," which they never received. We tell you this, prompted not by prejudice or dislike, but only to declare an easily provable fact, which it is important for you to consider.

To most Protestants even the one Sacrament they may confer, namely, Baptism, is only a symbol, but even the Old Law had many symbols, which St. Paul called



“weak and beggarly elements,” because they could confer no divine life of themselves. That was true even of circumcision whose merit depended on faith in the future Messias.

(2) The Sacraments, on the other hand, while outward signs, are empowered by Christ, Who instituted them, *actually to confer grace* or supernatural life on the soul. They are called “mysteries” because of their truly divine effect. Sanctifying grace is imparted to the soul in no other manner than through the Sacraments, because Christ did not institute any other way. Perfect contrition, born of perfect love, can impart grace and forgive sins if one knows nothing about the Sacraments, but he must be disposed to apply for the Sacraments if he *should learn* of them.

The purpose of the Sacraments is to sanctify the soul or to make it holy, to infuse divine life into it, or to nourish the divine life of which it is already in possession. The divine effect takes place unless the recipient himself places an obstacle in the way. An unwillingness to be baptized would prevent the act of Baptism from producing grace. An unrepented grievous sin would prevent the benefit or the imparting of grace by the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Extreme Unction.

Sacraments are “sensible” signs, because they are perceived by the senses. Men could not perceive channels of grace in any other way. And, of course, only God could give to any sensible thing the power of conferring grace. Not even the Apostles could have instituted “means of grace,” which the Sacraments are.

Just as the invisible nature of Christ operated through His humanity, so the grace of the Sacraments is channeled through its outward symbol. For instance, in Baptism “water” signifies a “cleansing,” but it also actually does cleanse the soul from Original and all other sins, because Christ gave it that power.

So it is with the imposition of hands and the anointing with oil in Confirmation; with the contrite confession of sins and the absolution of the priest, in the Sacrament of Penance; so it is with all the other

Sacraments; that is, what is known as the "matter and form" of the Sacraments do not of themselves have power to accomplish the wonderful effects attributed to them except by their selection for that purpose by Him, Who instituted the same—God Himself.

Do not ever yield to the notion that there is little difference between your Church and all others. There is not only a substantial, but actually an "essential" difference not only in their nature and character, but also in the form of worship and ministry. That of the Catholic Church is divine and that of all others is human. Just as Sacraments could not be instituted by man, much less could a Church which pretends to promise salvation to its affiliates. If anything is clear in Holy Scripture, it is that Christ instituted "the" Church, "My" Church, and not churches.

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## FEBRUARY 13

### "Seven" Sacraments

In a wide sense a Sacrament is a "symbol of a sacred and mysterious thing." In that sense the Old Testament had Sacraments, such as Circumcision, which more than any other ordinance of the Old Law had the character of a true Sacrament, because it effected regeneration. It was a pattern of Baptism.

Then there was the eating of the Pascal Lamb and the consumption of the "loaves of proposition," figures of the Holy Eucharist. Furthermore they had various purifications, types of the Sacrament of Penance; and the rite by which the Levitical priesthood was perpetuated, a figure of Holy Orders.

But in the New Law there are (1) *seven* Sacraments; (2) all instituted by Christ; and (3) they have their efficacy from Christ's redemption, which is applied through them to individual souls.

(1) It is an article of faith that there are seven Sacraments, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony. This was declared very clearly by the Council

of Trent. Luther did not deny the existence of seven Sacraments until he realized that some of them depended on the validity of one of them, namely, that of Holy Orders, which he was not empowered to confer on another. In the year 1520 he declared that there were *three* Sacraments, Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist; then in 1523 he reduced the number to *two*, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But if the Lord's Supper was to contain the body and blood of Christ, it, too, could be effected only through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. This naturally left only Baptism for Protestants. They may have that Sacrament because it is the teaching of the Church that any one, Catholic, Protestant, Jew or even a pagan, may administer Baptism validly, if only he has the intention of doing that which Christ had in mind when He instituted that Sacrament, and performs the rite correctly.

Zwingli and Calvin were also forced to hold to the two Sacrament theory, but they were as powerless as Luther to produce the Eucharist, as Catholics believe in it, for their Lord's Supper.

Up until their time, which meant for fifteen centuries, the entire Christian world accepted and made use of the *seven* Sacraments. The Orthodox Churches, five hundred years older than any form of Protestantism, have all the seven Sacraments, because they have Bishops validly consecrated and, therefore, empowered to confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

(2) Christ instituted *all seven* Sacraments. If Holy Scripture does not clearly state that He instituted some of them it is quoted in favor of all of them.

Fathers of the Church hold that when Christ had Himself baptized by St. John He intended to have water used for the cleansing of the soul from sin. Of course He had no sin, but by His example He would impress on mankind for all time that what He commanded (John III, 5): "Unless a man be born again of *water and the Holy Ghost* he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Then before His Ascension He commanded His Apostles to go into the whole world to preach the gospel and to baptize: "Go, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. XXVIII, 19).

It was only after the Church was formally established on Pentecost that *Baptism* became necessary as a "door of entrance" into the Church.

Christ promised, before His passion, that those who believed in Him should receive the Holy Ghost. While it is not recorded, in so many words, that Christ instituted the Sacrament of *Confirmation* we learn that it was administered by the Apostles soon after they themselves received the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. We read (Acts VIII, 14-16) "When the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God they sent to them Peter and John who, when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; because He had not yet come upon any of them, but they were only baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus. Then *they laid hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost.*"

The institution of the *Holy Eucharist* is clearly recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and its promise recorded by St. John. St. Paul tells us that he received a special revelation from Christ Himself concerning its institution.

The Sacrament of *Penance* was instituted by Christ Himself on the day of His Resurrection when, breathing on the Apostles, He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John XX, 23).

*Extreme Unction* is referred to by St. James in the words: "Is any man sick among you let him call in the priests of the Church" etc. (James V, 14-15).

*Holy Orders* was instituted when Christ empowered the Apostles and their successors until the end of time to do what He had done at the Last Supper, namely, to change bread and wine into His body and blood.

*Matrimony* is referred to by Paul as "a great Sacrament." Sometimes the word "Sacrament" here is translated "mystery," but it amounts to the same thing. Matrimony, however, differs from the other Sacraments in this that it needs a priest only as a witness. It be-

comes automatically a Sacrament for those who are "in the Church."

Christ had to be the institutor of all the Sacraments because they were to confer the merits of His own passion and death. If Christ is the meritorious cause of the Sacraments He must have been their author, and that is why the Council of Trent teaches that they were all instituted by Christ.

(3) When I said that Holy Scripture does not say, in so many words, that Christ instituted the seven, I had in mind that, while it refers to all the seven Sacraments it does not declare definitely that Extreme Unction and Matrimony were instituted by Him. The fact that they are all referred to in the Bible at least makes it clear that they could not have been instituted after the time of the Apostles.

In his first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. IV, 1) St. Paul refers to himself only as the *minister* of Sacraments and not as the author of any of them: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and as dispensers of the mysteries of God." Here we see the word "mysteries" used in the sense of "Sacrament."

The rejection of six of the seven Sacraments by modern religions does not at all mean that there is no historical or scriptural basis for the seven. It rather means, as we have said repeatedly, that five of them could not possibly be conferred by men calling themselves "ministers of Christ" without having received the Sacrament of Holy Orders from one who had himself validly received it as a successor of the Apostles.

For fifteen centuries history shows all Christians to have accepted the seven; and the Bible, as we have seen, mentions all seven, even if it does not, in every instance, call it a "Sacrament." Protestants call Baptism a "sacrament," yet the Bible does not so call it.

It is of divine faith that all the Sacraments confer sanctifying grace, and that all impart special Sacramental graces and, therefore, Catholics should be eager to receive them. Three of them may be received only once in a lifetime; Holy Orders can be received only by comparatively few; and Matrimony may not be repeated a

second time during the life of the partner with whom he or she contracted the original. But the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist may be received with great frequency, and no Catholic should need any exhortation whatsoever to take advantage of this privilege.

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## FEBRUARY 20

### What Grace Is

When you humbly acknowledge your sinfulness before God in an Act of Contrition you mention several reasons why. You tell your Heavenly Father that you are heartily sorry, first of all, because you have offended Him, Who is infinitely good and deserving of your love; then you lament the loss of His *grace*, and with it all right to Heaven.

As long as you remain free from mortal sin after the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism you live in a *state* of grace, which is maintained and strengthened and increased by other Sacraments, instituted by Christ for the application to your individual soul of the infinite merits of His Redemption.

(1) That many people do not fully comprehend the full import of Baptism is clear from the answer they are wont to give to the question "What is Baptism for?" The common answer is "Baptism takes away original sin, and, in the case of an adult, all sin." But Baptism does *not merely take away* something from the soul. It brings to it the most precious gift which God, even with His almighty power, could bestow on a creature, namely, His own divine life, which elevates the soul to a supernatural state, which qualifies it for an eternal existence in the bliss of God's own Paradise, which places the soul in the condition which was Adam's before his fall, the condition of all the angels before the fall of many of them.

Last year all the world congratulated Philip Mountbatten when, through his marriage to Princess Elizabeth, he was elevated to a position in the royal family. But when God's grace enters the human soul it becomes

elevated to a much higher order, to a divine order, and if at the time of its separation from the body in death, it still possesses that rank, it will share, throughout eternity, all the joy of the heavenly kingdom.

(2) The grace imparted by Baptism and all the Sacraments is called "Sanctifying" Grace, which effects an intimate union of the soul with God, making it, according to St. Peter, a "participant of the divine nature." It incorporates the person who possesses it into Christ; it engrafts him on Christ as the branch is engrafted on a tree. Just as a branch so engrafted draws from the life of the tree itself, so the person incorporated into Christ draws divine life from Him. Christ expressed that thought beautifully in the Parable of the Vine and the Branches, as follows: "I am the Vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit . . . As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains on the vine so neither can you, unless you abide in Me." After uttering these words Jesus said to His disciples: "These things I have spoken to you that your joy may be made full."

Surely there is reason for the person who is a living branch of Christ's Mystical Body, united to the Vine, Christ, to rejoice, to be extraordinarily happy, no matter what his material or physical lot in this world might be.

St. Paul reminded the Philippians (IV, 3) that, because of their possession of Sanctifying Grace, their "names were written in the Book of Life," which meant that they had a title to Heaven. If Heaven be the greatest treasure with which Almighty God could enrich an angel or human being, then the means to Heaven, namely, the state of Sanctifying Grace, must be the next most precious treasure He could bestow.

(3) When we speak of the need of Grace for the performance of supernatural good works and for the conquest of temptation, we refer to an altogether different kind of Grace—a passing supernatural aid rather than the permanent supernatural condition of soul.

That grace is called "Actual," and is given whenever needed to every human being, Catholic, Protestant, pagan. It is often called "the Grace of Assistance" be-

cause its purpose is *to assist* one to avoid evil and to do good. But even this grace is absolutely necessary for the earning of Heaven. Christ had that in mind when He said: "Without Me you can do nothing." He meant "nothing available for salvation."

Heaven is a place of supernatural bliss, and Sanctifying Grace is needed as a "ticket of entry," and actual grace is needed to give supernatural value to our works. These works must have a supernatural character if they are to merit supernatural reward. The means must always be of the same nature as the end for the acquisition of which they are intended.

Actual grace offered to us by God works to our detriment unless we cooperate with it. Just as the earth can produce no fruits without rain, and the rain can produce no fruits without the earth, so we can produce *no supernatural* fruits without the grace of God, and the grace of God can produce no fruits without our cooperation.

Actual grace is often defined as an "enlightening of the mind" and as "a strengthening of the will." In other words, it suggests to the mind what the person should do or refrain from doing, and strengthens the will to act accordingly. Its effects were demonstrated in a most powerful way on Pentecost when the minds of the Apostles were enlightened as they had never been before; and when their wills were so strengthened that they allowed nothing to stand in the way of the execution of their commission to "change the face of the earth" amid the greatest difficulties.

From what has been said you should need no further exhortation to prize sanctifying grace above all else, above riches or honors or pleasures, above life itself. You should never remain for a day in mortal sin, but do all you can to preserve yourself from falling by faithful cooperation with "Actual Grace;" and by the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist to maintain and strengthen the supernatural state of soul in which you were "constituted" when, by Baptism, you were made God's child and an heir of Heaven.



## FEBRUARY 27

## Lenten Regulations

A season for penance and repentance, covering a period of forty days, dates back to the early centuries. Christ, although He did not and could not sin, observed forty days of strict fast and abstinence in the desert, as Moses and Elias, great saints of the Old Law, did before Him.

Every person who has sinned must do penance in some form.

(1) The Bible recommends three kinds of penance, namely, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and the Church would like to have her people practice all three kinds during Lent: (a) by attending weekday Mass and the midweek public Lenten devotions; (b) by fasting according to the mitigated law in each diocese, and (c) by devoting to religious and charitable causes money saved by the practice of self-denial.

(2) Lenten regulations are not identical all over the world, as the Church permits Bishops to modify them according to the circumstances of places and times. In most dioceses of the United States the Lenten law reads in substance as follows:

(a) The Lenten fast and abstinence begin on Ash Wednesday and cease on Holy Saturday at mid-day. All the days of Lent, except Sundays, are fast days. The Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent (excepting the Wednesday in Holy Week) Ember Saturday and Holy Saturday until noon, are also days of abstinence.

(b) Those who have passed their twenty-first birthday and have not yet passed their fifty-ninth birthday are obliged to fast. The sick and the convalescent, those to whom fasting would cause grave injury to health or would cause such exhaustion as would interfere with their daily duties, are excused from the Lenten fast. Those who are in doubt whether or not they are excused should consult their confessor or pastor.

(c) Those who are obliged to fast are allowed but one full meal a day, either at noon or in the evening. They may eat meat only once a day, on the days meat is permitted. In the morning a small breakfast, meat excluded, is permitted. People may use the customary fruit juice in the morning. The luncheon should not exceed one-third of the dinner.

In some dioceses the breakfast and collation combined may equal the principal meal in quantity.

(d) The law of abstinence from meat, which applies to all Catholics except infants, forbids the eating of meat and soups or gravy made of meat; it does not, however, exclude the cooking and seasoning of food with drippings or lard.

(3) By virtue of an Indult granted to the Bishops of the United States by the Holy See for working people, most Bishops permit working people and their families to eat meat once a day throughout Lent, except on Fridays, Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday until noon.

This Indult allows the same people to have meat at the main meal on the Ember Days and Vigils (Christmas excepted) throughout the year.

The term "working man" includes the working woman if she is the chief bread-winner of the home. But those who avail themselves of the Indult are expected to perform some other work of penance, for example, to abstain from alcoholic drinks, candies, tobacco, etc., and attend public Lenten devotions. Attendance at daily Mass is highly recommended.

In order that they may catch the spirit of Lent at its very beginning, the Church prepares the people for it from Septuagesima Sunday. Most people begin Lent well, but grow more lax rather than more earnest and fervent as the days pass. The world needs the blessing of Heaven today as never before, and to procure it every follower of Christ should not only repent and do penance in his own behalf, but for others who seldom get down on their knees.

## MARCH 6

## More About Grace

Grace may be defined as a "supernatural gift bestowed by God's infinite love on man and angel, to fit them for the supernatural end for which both were destined." Its name derives from "gratis," which means that it is a "free gift" super-added to the soul just as it was in the case of Adam before his fall.

(1) The angels, at the time of their creation, received the life of grace directly from God, as did Adam and Eve also. Many of the angels forfeited it by the sin of rebellion and never recovered it, because no reparation by a Divine Person was made in their behalf. With its loss went their opportunity to share in God's glory in Heaven.

The souls of Adam and Eve were also deprived of the supernatural life of grace when they sinned by an act of serious disobedience to their Creator. If sanctifying grace was made available to Adam after his repentance, aided by actual grace; if it is made available to you, his descendants, it is due to the "costly redemption" effected for us by God's beloved Son. But *the fact* of the Redemption did not restore grace to all men, as most sects teach today. They hold that the merits of the Redemption are applied to the individual person who voluntarily takes Christ as His Savior, whether it be followed by affiliation with any religious organization or not. But the application of Christ's merits, they believe, effect no change in the soul whatsoever. Their sins, after repentance, are simply "covered" by the righteousness of Christ so that they say, they are not imputed to them.

Catholics believe, on the other hand, that the merits of the Redeemer are applied to the individual, one by one, not merely by a belief in the efficacy of Christ's atonement, but through sacramental ordinances, instituted by Him, to be dispensed through accredited officials in His Kingdom on earth—His Church.

(2) Only infants, constituted in grace by a regenerating Sacrament, are admitted into God's heavenly

Kingdom without the aid of "actual" grace. They receive Heaven as a gift, but others need special supernatural aid for their preservation from sin, to which all persons are still prone, and for the performance of works meritorious of eternal life. That is what Christ had in mind when He said "Without Me you can do nothing. If any one does not abide in Me he shall be cast aside as the branch and wither, and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire and they shall burn" (John XV, 5-6).

Most non-Catholics fail to grasp the significance or even the need of the supernatural life, because they do not take into account the fact brought home so forcibly on reflection that God lives in an infinitely higher order than that in which we are created. If we be destined to share eternally God's bliss in that order our souls must eventually be elevated to a divine plane while we are still here below. Perseverance on that plane is dependent on good works, influenced and aided by "actual grace."

It is unfortunate that this doctrine of the Catholic Church, so reasonable, is sadly misunderstood. The Church is charged with teaching that man is saved only by the performance of good works of the natural order and, therefore, having only natural value. Because the Catholic Church still teaches the need of penance as well as repentance, the necessity of observing all the Commandments, they draw that unjustifiable conclusion. As a matter of fact Catholics make far more of the merits of Christ than others do; and they alone believe that good works performed in the state of grace have any value for heaven.

(3) Holy Scripture teaches us the wonderful change wrought in the soul by sanctifying grace without calling it by that name. It tells us that we are made "new creatures," "new men," "children of God and heirs of Heaven." It tells us that the Holy Spirit enters the soul with sanctifying grace (I Cor. VI, 19) and continues to dwell in the soul as in a tabernacle; that the body which houses the soul becomes "a temple of the Holy Ghost."

Christ refers to what we call "grace" as "a fountain

of water springing into life everlasting" (John IV, 14). says we "become partakers of the divine nature."

Just as cold black iron, when thrown into a furnace, partakes of the nature of the fire, becomes red as the fire, throws forth heat as the fire, so we, when our soul becomes united to God, become Godlike; the soul reflects His own divine image because it possesses His divine life.

Speaking of those who had become converts to the Church by faith and baptism, St. Paul writes: (I Cor. III, 16): "Know you not that you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?" In another place (2 Cor. VI, 16) He writes: "You are the temple of the living God."

St. Augustine says "as the body without the soul is dead, so the soul without the grace of the Holy Spirit is dead for Heaven." It lacks the wedding garment referred to by Christ in His "Parable of the Supper."

You have heard people say that because they have accepted Christ as their Savior, they are already "saved." Without understanding what sanctifying grace is, they believe that once they make a firm profession of faith they cannot be lost. This doctrine is most unscriptural. Grace can be lost by mortal sin, which means by a serious, wilful violation of a Commandment of God. If any one had a reason to believe that he was "saved," St. Paul did, because Christ Himself referred to him as a "vessel of election." Yet this Apostle, living in grace and free from actual sin according to the text, was not certain of his salvation. He wrote (I Cor. IV, 4): "I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified." The same Apostle tells us (2 Cor. IV, 7): "We carry our treasure (grace) in earthen vessels" and, therefore, warned the Philippians (Phil. II, 12): "Work out your salvation in fear and trembling."

The Council of Trent tells us that while we might be reasonably certain that we are in the state of grace, without a special revelation we could not have absolute certainty.

## MARCH 13

## Sanctifying Grace

You would certainly be impressed by the extraordinary value of sanctifying grace if you took account of all that the Church teaches about it. Let us, therefore, consider (1) what the Church does teach about sanctifying grace; (2) about the Sacraments which confer it; and (3) what is necessary for the valid and licit reception of the Sacraments.

(1) The Church teaches (a) that sanctifying grace makes our souls holy and pleasing to God; (b) that it brings God Himself into the soul and places it on the road which leads to Heaven, because it is the seed of eternal glory; (c) that good works performed in the state of grace are all meritorious of Heaven; (d) that sanctifying grace can be increased and strengthened; (e) that it is lost by the commission of mortal sin; and (b) that it can be again recovered through one of the Sacraments.

Grace is something to which no creature, not even an angel, has any claim. It is the "pearl of great price" to which Christ refers in one of His parables. It makes each soul possessing it worth more than all the world. It was earned by the costly redemption effected by God, Who came to earth in order that the supernatural life of grace might be restored to man.

Grace elevates us to the rank of God's children and, therefore, makes of us brethren of Jesus Christ. It transfigures the soul as Christ's divinity transfigured His body on Thabor, fills it with divine life, so that even the body becomes "a temple of the Holy Spirit."

(2) About the Sacraments the teaching of the Church is as follows: (a) there are seven Sacraments; (b) they were all instituted by Christ Himself; (c) they are all channels of divine grace; (d) three of them may be received only once because they stamp an indelible character on the soul; (e) all the Sacraments except the Holy Eucharist exist only at the moment they are conferred, while, of course, their effects endure; (f) the Sacrament of Holy Orders must be received by the

clergyman if, as God's minister, he would confer the other Sacraments—except Baptism and Matrimony; (g) the same clergyman must employ the proper form and use the proper words.

That the Church has always taught that there are *seven* Sacraments is clear from the fact that the Orthodox Church, which broke away from Rome one thousand years ago, still teaches the same; and Christian sects formed several centuries earlier by breaking away from the Holy See still retain the seven Sacraments.

(3) About the valid and licit reception of Sacraments the Church teaches (a) six of them cannot be conferred validly before Baptism, which must always be the first Sacrament; (b) a woman cannot receive Holy Orders; (c) a priest cannot receive Matrimony; (d) an adult cannot receive any Sacrament validly without the intention or will to receive it; (e) for the valid reception of the Sacrament the subject must be capable of receiving it.

Those who hold that the Catholic Church ever forced the faith on people or baptized them against their will make a very false charge, because it is the clear teaching of the Church that for all except infants faith must be a voluntary act. Not even Baptism could be validly received by one who opposed it.

You would not be justified, therefore, in baptising, except conditionally, a neighbor or a friend in danger of death, if he were unconscious. You would not be permitted to baptize him even conditionally if you had a good reason to believe that he would not want it.

To receive all Sacraments, except Baptism and Penance, the state of grace is required. Hence one who, in the state of mortal sin, receives any one of the other Sacraments, would receive the same unworthily, which means that he would be guilty of a sacrilege.

Since the Sacraments play such an important part in the sanctification and salvation of the human soul, every Catholic should know at least as much about them as we have taught in this instruction, but more

important than the knowledge of what Sacraments are, and of what they do for the soul, is the frequent reception of those Sacraments which may be received over and over, and which are designed to keep God in your soul and to make the union between yourself and God more intimate. Your glory in Heaven will be greater or less in accordance with the abundance of grace or the lack of it possessed by your soul at the time of death.

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MARCH 20

### The Law of Mutual Cooperation

St. Augustine wrote: "He who made us without our cooperation will not save us without our cooperation." The acquisition of everlasting bliss in Heaven depends on the universal role of cooperation between a free God Who bestows grace, sanctifying and actual, and the free man who accepts it and utilizes it for the purpose for which it was given. This is easy to illustrate (1) by examples; (2) by the experience of everyone; and (3) by the very nature of the heavenly reward.

(1) Addressing the people of two cities of Judea Christ said: "Woe to thee, Corozain! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been worked the miracles that have been worked in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." (Matt. XI, 21). He does not say that the inhabitants of Corozain and Bethsaida were more wicked than those of Tyre and Sidon, but that they were held more responsible because they had witnessed His miracles without profiting by them. Hence He continued: "It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you" (Ibid. 22).

On another occasion, speaking of the Israelitic people generally, Jesus warned them that the Kingdom of Heaven would be taken away from them and given to another nation, yielding more fruit, within the same generation. What he predicted took place when Jerusalem



was destroyed by Titus, and its temple so completely razed that not one stone was left on another. Since then the Jewish people have been dispersed over the earth, without a nation or government, without a priesthood and sacrifice.

God had been good to the Jews, selecting them as His own people, sending them holy kings and teachers, and finally sending His own divine Son to their little nation, with the declared purpose of "saving the lost sheep of the tribe of Israel." But the people did not cooperate, as we learn from the touching plaint of Jesus, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not!" (Matt. XXIII, 37)

(2) Just as Judas had received the same instructions from Christ and witnessed the same holy example as the other Apostles without profiting by the same, so we observe well-informed Catholics, even of good families, resist the voice of their conscience and fall deeply into sin.

Everyone who truly wills it can become a saint, just as the unwilling person is sure to alienate himself from God and His mercies. Christ contrasts the "faithful servant who enters the joy of the Lord" with the "unprofitable servant, ordered to be cast into exterior darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. XXV, 30).

God is more generous with His graces to some than to others. To some He gives five talents, to others one, but to *all* sufficient for the accomplishment of good and the avoidance of evil. He gives in proportion to the manner with which we cooperate. The servant who used the five talents well, received five more. Christ Himself assures us that "he that hath, to him shall be given and he shall abound" (Matt. XXV, 28).

One who would hope to receive new actual grace in quantity after having long resisted it, must, first of all repent after praying for sufficient grace properly to do so, which will always be given him. But delay is danger-

ous for "now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. VI, 2).

(3) Man must reach his eternal destiny as a free man, because Heaven is a *reward*, and not a gift except for baptized infants.

God imposes the terms and the creature-man must accept them, and regulate his life in keeping with them. We have often emphasized the fact that Heaven's reward is "the joy of the Lord," which is *of a divine order* and, therefore, supernatural. This being true it cannot be attained without the assistance of *supernatural aids* which, as you are now aware, is God's grace—sanctifying and actual. The former is dispensed by the Holy Spirit through the Church by means of special ordinances instituted by Christ, and known as "the Sacraments." The latter comes directly from the Holy Spirit to every adult on earth in large or small measure, usually in keeping with the worthiness of the subject and his willingness to correspond.

We *must* possess sanctifying grace if we would have our good works, performed with the help of actual grace, become meritorious of everlasting life.

The lesson is paramount, and therefore should sink deeply into the consciousness of all of you. Nearly all Catholics were placed in a *state of grace*, and started on the way to Heaven even in infancy. Thus, from the dawn of reason have had access to a Sacrament by which the supernatural state of the soul could be restored after it was forfeited by the commission of grievous sin and, therefore, there is absolutely no excuse for them not to "live in the state of grace"; no excuse not to store up merit in Heaven day after day.

Protestants believe that a *trust* in the merits of Christ, apart from the Sacraments, will insure their salvation. Even if they were correct Catholics would be in a far better position. They believe as firmly as Protestants do in the need of having Christ's merits applied to their souls. They have an even greater trust in Christ; but in addition to this, the merits of His passion and death are channeled to them individually by means of the Sacraments.

The more freely we drink from the "fountains of grace," the more holy we shall become; and we have Christ's promise that if we do our salvation is assured.

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## MARCH 27

### Faith Must be Backed by Grace

If the truths of divine revelation are "supernatural truths," then the acceptance of them on the sole authority of God's Church implies a "supernatural act of faith." Yet that is not what your Protestant friends understand by faith. To them it means a trust in Christ as their Savior, which, of course, is only a part of faith. What faith really means is expressed in the *Act of Faith*, which you are wont frequently to recite. Supernatural faith must spring from supernatural grace and be associated with the love of God in order to be meritorious. Theoretically speaking we do not love unless we are united to Him, unless we let Him in our souls and reign there.

We "live by faith" (1) when we regulate our conduct by it; (2) when we bow our intellects to its teaching; and (3) when we judge the right or wrong of everything by its dictates.

(1) There is nothing so charming as "simple" faith. The great scientist Newton, because of his daily study of the vast universe, acquired such reverence for its Creator that whenever he heard His name spoken, or whenever he encountered it in a book, he bowed his head in an act of faith.

Louis Pasteur, the renowned French scientist, enjoyed the faith of the peasants of his country. Such faith characterized the great grandparents of us all. Illiterate as most of them were, their faith was a sort of instinct, which enabled them to readily detect religious error, as well as what was not in keeping with the moral law. They "lived by faith." It regulated their conduct, their judgment and dictated—always rightly—all their decisions.

The same can be said of the millions who, in the early centuries, loved Christ enough to give up their

lives rather than their faith when put to a test. They were not as well instructed in the different truths of faith as you are, but they accepted cheerfully and humbly what those taught them who were agents of a divine Church. What is more, they felt more realistically than we do the intimate union they had with Christ through grace and the Heavenly Father, Whom they had to love and serve as His children. Believing themselves to be tabernacles of the Holy Ghost they would allow no defilement to enter their souls.

(2) When we reason about matters of faith we show by our attitude and action that we may entertain doubts about such matters. During the Civil War days a southern priest tells how he was called to the bedside of a non-Catholic soldier at the point of death in a Catholic hospital. This man had become so impressed with the simple faith and the beautiful life of his Sister-nurse that he wanted to die in her religion.

Since the priest had very little time to instruct him, he examined him only on the few things which every adult must believe before receiving Baptism. The priest asked the dying man whether he believed in the Holy Trinity. He answered that he did not know, and then he turned to the Sister and asked whether she believed in that truth. When she answered in the affirmative, the man said, "Then I also believe in it." The priest asked whether he believed in the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Redemption of mankind by His death on the cross. The only answer the man was able to give was "I shall believe in them if the Sister does."

Many a person receives his first stimulus to conversion from the simple faith and piety of a Catholic friend. In fact, ten times more people are led to the examination of the Catholic Church's claims by the example of good Catholics than are led to it by arguments in favor of her doctrine.

The real Catholic never has any trouble with any of the teachings of His Church if he whole-heartedly subscribes to the belief that what she teaches and, therefore, whatever it be, must be true. Arguments supporting the divine doctrines are helpful towards the strengthen-

ing of our faith and enable us to defend it when it is attacked or questioned by our friends or neighbors. But since "God wills that all men be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. II, 4), all that is actually needful is that they recognize an infinitely good God, desirous of sharing His happiness with us, an infinitely loving God Who came down from Heaven in the capacity of Savior, of Teacher and Who founded in this world a supernatural kingdom in which people were to have citizenship, and through which they would be directed and nourished by supernatural things.

(3) It is quite common even for Catholics to ask questions about their faith, not chiefly for its strengthening, but rather because they show an unwillingness to accept the same unless they are supported by arguments from reason, which to them would be convincing.

St. Paul, himself a convert and a great convert-maker, kept before the people only the fundamental truths, namely, those of the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Resurrection, man's supernatural destiny, and how it could be lost by sin. He felt it was more important that people should *live* the supernatural life. He was ever reminding them that having become children of God by adoption they must live as His children; that having laid aside the "old" man they should put on the "new"; that having foresworn the world they might not live in keeping with its spirit; that the things which they did as pagans should not even be "known to them as Christians"; that they should have only one mind in relation to religion and conduct, and that was "the mind of Christ Jesus."

In such manner all Catholics should live and act today. They should have the mind of the Church which is the mind of Christ, and regulate their conduct according to that mind, no matter how differently their friends or neighbors might think and act.

Christ tells us that we cannot love both God and mammon; that we cannot serve "two masters"; that we may not love the world because it is at "enmity with God." As followers of Christ it is our duty to live

according to His standards, and thereby to be "the light of the world," attracting others to our better way of life and influencing them to adopt it. If we ourselves follow the standards of the world we not only give encouragement to those who are now indifferent to religion, and keep them away from the Church. They reason wrongly (but with some excuse) when they ask themselves "why should I, against inconveniences and difficulties, become a Catholic if Catholics live no better than I do at present?"

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APRIL 3

### Union with God

We have seen that our faith does not deserve the name unless it be *active* for our own growth in love for God, for our sanctification, and for the drawing of others to God. If through the possession of sanctifying grace God actually dwells in our souls, how can we live (1) unconscious of that fact; (2) without communing with Him constantly; and (3) without great care not to offend Him?

(1) You would have been more habitually conscious of God's presence within you if your parents had daily reminded you of it from the time you could understand simple language. You probably received your first instructions about God entering your soul when you began your preparation for first Holy Communion, yet from the day of your Baptism the three Divine persons really and actually dwelt in your pure soul. Because the generality of children were not so instructed through their early childhood on the personal presence of God in their souls, they grew up with the erroneous notion that only through Holy Communion does God the Son pay a passing visit to them.

Just as we can have a cold belief in the Incarnation, without reflecting on the infinite goodness of God, and in the Redemption, without pouring out our heart in

gratitude, so we can believe in the truth of God's indwelling in the soul, and in the fact of Christ's personal visit to us in Holy Communion without an outpouring of our heart's love in return for such intimate love displayed by Him for us. It all adds up to this, that we can perform works of piety without having a lively faith because we seldom reflect or meditate, and do not nourish our faith by spiritual reading.

(2) If, when in the state of grace, God lives in the tabernacle of your soul as truly as Jesus dwells in the tabernacle of your parish church, how is it that you seldom turn your thoughts to Him, commune with Him by spontaneous prayers and aspirations of love. It shows that God, Who does not need you for His happiness, is a thousand times more interested in your welfare than you yourselves are.

You should need no other argument in proof of your soul's worth than God's intervention in its sanctification and salvation. He so loves it because He made it for Himself, because it reflects His own image, enjoys His own divine life. He doesn't want you to deliver it to the devil, or even to have you prize it less than the whole world. He wants your hearts to be pure, so that you may see Him more clearly even on earth. He wants all your love for your own eternal sake, and you cannot love Him with your whole heart, if most of its love goes out to the world, to things that are harmful to your soul. His is a disinterested love and merits more serious consideration. Because of His personal presence within you St. Paul tells you that you should "pray without ceasing."

That can be done without effort. You simply do for His sake everything that is not sinful, offering to Him your work, your recreation, your rest, your meals. All this requires only the expression of your intention to do "all for Him."

(3) If you were truly conscious of God's presence in your soul, you could never offend Him in His very face. Your prayers would be fervent and interesting instead of cold and dry. You would be truly humble and, therefore, would cheerfully accept the trials, hardships and sufferings and misunderstandings with which the aver-

age life is so full. These things would be borne for love of the God Who sends them, in order that you might make of them stepping-stones to bliss eternal.

Many people pray for detachment, but do not want it; they pray for a "clean heart," but feed it with reading unclean; they know the purpose of Lent, but seek to be excused from its insignificant hardships. You must analyse what you say to God in stock prayers, lest you may find yourselves to be speaking dishonestly to Him.

No heart that has given itself to God has ever been disappointed, because God always floods it with happiness. But how many hearts have been broken by other loves, especially if, in their pursuit, God was driven out of the heart?

Infinite love bestowed on us by God will always be a mystery to those who make light of their own soul's worth, and destiny. The wisest and most consistent person is the one who makes a life profession of loving God, and of promoting His cause by the practice of spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

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APRIL 10

Palm Sunday

APRIL 17

Easter

APRIL 24

Original Sin and Baptism

If you will recall the teaching of Holy Scripture concerning Original Sin, you will understand why Baptism is not only important, but necessary for everyone's salvation. If we inherited human nature tainted at its source or *origin*, a soul bereft of that life, without which God could not be united to it either here or hereafter, then every one must go through a re-birth. That is what Christ Himself calls Baptism. Let us consider (1) the



nature of Baptism; (2) its miraculous effects; (3) the beauty of the baptized soul.

(1) The word Baptism is derived from a Greek word which means "a washing," or "cleansing," or an "immersing." Many Protestants understand it only as "immersion" and, therefore, maintain that the Catholic practice of "pouring the water" on the head of the person being baptized is not valid.

They give another reason for the immersion method. They say that Baptism represents, according to St. Paul, the "burial of the person and his resurrection." They claim that the immersion of the subject into a pool signifies a burial, and that his exit from it denotes resurrection. But that argument is weak when we consider that a re-birth, or as St. Paul expresses it "the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new", implies a dying to sin and a rising to a better life.

The Catholic Church does not reject Baptism by immersion, provided the one who baptizes uses the proper "form" while immersing the subject, and has the intention of doing that for which Christ instituted Baptism.

But since one needs not to be immersed in order to be *washed*, the Catholic Church adopted, for her practice, the method of *pouring* water on the head, because this method alone can be used on all people in all circumstances.

St. Paul baptized while he was in prison and, evidently, there was no pool of water there; he baptized whole families, and it is not likely that he immersed babies. Sick people, dying in hospitals, often call for Baptism, but they cannot be immersed.

(2) The raising of the dead to life is not a greater miracle than the raising of the soul to a supernatural state. St. Augustine says "while Christ raised only a few people from the dead corporally, He raised hundreds from the dead spiritually." Baptism not only removes Original Sin from the soul of the *child*, and *all sin* from

believing adults, but it actually confers divine life on the soul. St. Paul calls it "the washing of regeneration" (Titus III, 5); and St. Peter (2 Peter I, 4) speaks of it as conferring divine life. St. Paul also tells us that its effect is to transfer the one who receives it from the "power of darkness to the kingdom of the Son of God's love." This Kingdom is God's Church and, therefore, Baptism enrolls the individual as a member of the Church of Christ.

Jesus Himself refers to Baptism as a "re-birth" (John III, 5) when he says: "Unless a man be 'born again' of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." This text also proves the absolute necessity of Baptism, and of the need of baptizing infants as well as adults. While the text reads "Unless a *man*," the original, as well as the Latin, reads "unless *any one*."

Surely not even the infant, tainted with Original Sin, would be entitled to the supernatural bliss of Heaven, into which, according to Holy Scripture, "nothing defiled can enter."

To the one who reflects the Catholic teaching seems elementary, namely, that if God does not live in a human order but in a divine order, in an order that befits a God, then no person, living only in a human order, can expect everlasting union with God unless he, by some ordinance instituted by God Himself, be elevated from the human to the divine order, from the natural to the supernatural state. This should be easy to explain to your non-Catholic friends, who would readily grasp the soundness of the argument. It is something that has never properly been brought home to them and, therefore, they have never reflected on it.

(3) If the creation of the material world was so great a work of God that the mind becomes bewildered and reels in contemplating its vastness and glory, what must be the investment of the soul with divine grace, reflecting not natural but supernatural beauty, not temporal, but eternal glory!

A little babe is brought into your church and held over a font by a sponsor chosen by its parents. The Sacrament of Baptism is administered, and in an instant a new spiritual world is born within it, incomparably more marvelous than anything in the material universe. God communicates His own divine life to that babe's soul, and so loveable does it become that He *adopts it as His child*, so that it becomes a "domestic of God," a little brother or sister of His beloved Son.

Saints who were wont to contemplate this marvel have wondered whether one could look upon a soul so clothed in the glory of God and live.

This little child was taken to the parish church as a *creature* of God and brought home as His *child*. The mother who looks into the face of that babe so frequently every day should ponder the interior beauty possessed by her child from that day on; and her ambition should be, like that of its own guardian angel, to protect the divine life within it. It becomes the duty of the parents, of course, to see that this child of God will be reared as such, that it will be taught to pray to Him, and then be formed in a Christian school.

That child has rights of the supernatural as well as of the natural order, and these must be respected, encouraged and realized through the parents. Its supernatural life may lie dormant for six years, just as the life bulb of a lily sown in the earth in the fall lies dormant until spring. But this flower root was planted only that it might germinate into fuller life. So, too, sanctifying grace at the dawn of reason should grow and expand. At that time there is the terrible possibility of sin to destroy the beauty of soul. Parents and sponsors must do their utmost to prevent that thing from happening.

It is unfortunate that the general impression prevails outside the Catholic Church that we become "children of God" by the very fact of creation. Such a conclusion could not be reached by good logic. *By creation* we become "creatures," and not "children," of God. Recalling that the offspring belongs to the same order as the parent, no creature can be a child of God unless per-

sonally adopted by God, and elevated to a divine plane. If your non-Catholic friends understood this truth—and it should be understood so easily—they would at once perceive how different must be the interior of the baptized as compared to the unbaptized child. Innocence does not spell interior beauty; neither does exterior beauty or loveliness. The beauty of the soul is not visible to the bodily eye, but reason readily endorses the teaching of faith that if a new “birth,” a “regeneration,” that divine life is infused into the soul, it is beautified beyond all comprehension.

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MAY 1

## Baptism

Baptism was instituted by Christ to confer on the individual soul the supernatural life of which it was deprived at creation, but which it absolutely needs for supernatural eternal bliss.

(1) When God created Adam and Eve He added to the natural life of their souls a life much like unto His own. St. Peter (2 Peter, I, 4) speaks of it “as a participation of the divine nature.” When they sinned they forfeited this higher life, because it cannot co-exist with sin in the soul. They forfeited it not only for themselves but for their descendants, because Adam was put on trial, not only personally, but also as a representative of the human race. The human nature which the 2,000,000,000 people now in the world have inherited from him was tainted as its source, and this taint is known as *Original Sin*, which might be defined as the soul’s *privation* of the divine life which, though not belonging to its nature, is nevertheless needful if the soul would enter the supernatural glory of God when it returns to Him at death.

In His goodness God provided for the restoration of the supernatural life by the application of the merits of the divine Redeemer through the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is, therefore, called by Christ (John III, 5) a “rebirth”: “unless one be born again of water

and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”

Baptism is so important that, without it, one could not possibly hope for a state of life in the other world higher than that which is in keeping with the *natural* life of the soul—a state of natural happiness.

God Himself lives in a much higher order, in a divine order, and the creature must be elevated to that order, not at death, but during life, so that he may merit supernaturally by his good works assisted by God's grace.

Baptism is, because of its very purpose, the *first* Sacrament received and it is called the “most necessary” Sacrament because of Christ's own utterance quoted above.

(2) When referring to the Sacramental System we spoke of a transfer of the creature from the order in which he was created to the Kingdom of “the Son of God's love,” or from the natural to the supernatural order, and because this transfer is absolutely necessary if the creature would be placed on the way to Heaven, Baptism in case of necessity may be administered by any one who believes in its regenerative power and performs the ceremony correctly. It is necessary for the person who baptizes to do that which the Church requires, and to say *while pouring water* on the head of the person, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”

It should not be difficult for people to believe that we do not become children of God by the mere fact of creation. By creation we become creatures; by baptism we become *children of God by adoption*, and citizens in His Kingdom. One may live most of his life in the United States, yet he does not become a citizen of the United States on that account. If he had been born in some other country, he becomes a citizen of the United States only when he submits to a formal ceremony of naturalization. So it is with man in relation to the other world. He must submit to a process of supernaturalization, which is effected by Baptism.

(3) The Church requires one or two Sponsors for the baptized person and expects them, in case parents should predecease the child, to interest them in the spiritual life and in the religious practice of the one for whom they were selected as god-father and god-mother.

Too many Catholic parents select Sponsors without any relationship to the duty which they are expected to perform. You need not be told how many children must be reared by others because of the death of one or both parents, because of their separation through a civil divorce and, therefore, how important it is that there be someone obligated to take the place of a deceased or neglectful parent for the proper religious and spiritual upbringing of the child.

Sponsors also fill another function. One must believe as well as be baptized in order to be saved. But the infant cannot make a profession of faith. The Sponsors, therefore, do it for the child. Because they do make this profession of faith in its name, and promise, also in its name, to renounce Satan and all his works and pomps, it is clear that they have an obligation to see that the child will profess and practice its faith after it will obtain the age of reason.

Therefore always select as Sponsors only those who themselves are good, practical Catholics, so that they may consistently direct the child and set it the right kind of example.

Sponsors are chosen not merely to comply with the law of the Church, but for the fulfillment of a very serious obligation. They should recognize that obligation and take a delight in filling it, becoming by the seriousness of that obligation "a guardian angel" to the child, with which they contract a spiritual relationship.

Do not delay the child's Baptism beyond a week or ten days at the most. The life of the infant is delicate and fragile, and therefore is always danger of it dying without Baptism. But do it also in order that almost from the day of its birth it may become by adoption God's own child.

Then during the six or seven years to follow always think of the child as "full of grace," as innocent and holy as an angel in Heaven. Should it be taken by God during those years be not only reconciled, but happy that it has gone into the everlasting bliss and glory for which it was created, while you and your interests here on earth will be furthered by its intercession.

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MAY 8

### Confirmation

In these days even the child has a hard battle to fight because he receives little encouragement to right living either from his relatives or neighbors. But Christ provided His Church with a Sacrament which is designed to make the recipient, even a child, a soldier in His army. The battle against sin, temptation, bad example, begins with the dawn of reason and that is why the child needs the special graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. He receives that assistance (1) from the Holy Spirit in person; (2) from the sacramental grace which the Sacrament confers; and (3) from the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

(1) Children learn in the Catechism that the Holy Spirit comes to them in a "special manner" through the Sacrament of Confirmation. What is meant "by special manner"? It means that while the Holy Ghost comes to the soul through His grace in other Sacraments, He comes in *person* in the Sacrament of Confirmation, just as the Son of God, Who instituted the seven Sacraments, comes to the soul *in person* in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Spirit comes, not for a mere passing visit, but to *live* in the soul, make of it His "tabernacle," and of the body which houses it, "His temple."

Most parents do not realize what happens at Confirmation, as they do not realize sufficiently what happens in Baptism. They regard Confirmation as one of the Sacraments which all should receive, and seem to act on the theory that when it is over the child will

have complied with an obligation, which is now ended. As a matter of fact, Confirmation is only the *beginning* of a life of Catholic Action, only the beginning of a militant, active service in the army of Christ. A child may be still too young, and unprepared to explain his faith, defend it competently or to answer questions about it, but he can do much, in the manner that counts most, by his good example.

If you ask the average child what new duties he assumes when he receives the Sacrament of Confirmation, he will answer that he must pray more and try harder to conquer his faults, but would he not be obliged to do these things even as a child of God? While Confirmation should have the effect of making the child "a more perfect Christian," more spiritual, its real purpose is to enable him to work in the open and accomplish more, not for himself, but for the cause of Christ.

(2) The Sacrament does not make the child strong of a sudden, but sows in his soul the seeds which should steadily mature into fruit. Just as the farmer must cooperate with nature if he would hope to have a harvest from the seeds he sows, from the grain he plants, so must the Catholic cooperate with the Sacramental graces brought with the Holy Spirit to his soul through Confirmation. Of course, the child will continue to need encouragement from his parents, from his older brothers and sisters, and from his sponsors.

That is the sole purpose of sponsors, yet they seem not to realize it. They are *asked* to become "sponsors" of the child, and assume that the office ends after they will have led the child to the Bishop. Their office *begins* only at that time. They contract a spiritual relationship with the child, and are obligated, especially if parents are neglecting their duty, to take a deep interest in his welfare.

Just as *human* agents lead children astray, even more than the evil spirit, so must *human* agents protect the innocence of the child. Just as the devil uses human agents, so also must God.

Of course, Confirmation, like the other four Sacraments of the living, increases sanctifying grace, but it



also imparts a special grace to enable the recipient to fulfill his duties as a soldier, while it stamps the soul indelibly, "seals it with the seal of the Holy Spirit" as a soldier "forever" in Christ's army.

(3) The gifts of the Holy Ghost mentioned by Isaias (XI, 1-3) as characterizing Christ Himself as the Anointed of God, are "Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and the Fear of the Lord. Four of these gifts are intended for the mind, and the other three for the will. Those intended for the mind evidently cannot be immediately effective in the small child.

The gift last mentioned by Isaias—Fear of the Lord—usually has the greatest effect on the child. It impels his tender conscience to avoid offending God from fear of punishment. Since the greatest person in the world is powerless before God and, therefore, has reason to "fear" the consequences of rebellion or even indifference in His service, it is called "the beginning of wisdom." Our world would be an entirely different world today if its political leaders, the members of Cabinets and Parliaments, were filled with a little more "fear of the Lord."

*Piety* should be associated with fear because then it would be backed by love. Piety leads the person to see God as a Father instead of a Judge and, therefore, it leads to prayer, reverence, and service.

*Knowledge* enlightens to the mind to know what pleases and displeases God. Fortitude strengthens the will so that one may have the courage to follow what the gift of knowledge proposes. The gift of *Counsel* is designed to make us prudent, cautious. *Understanding* reduces mechanical faith and mechanical service. *Wisdom* prompts us to relate everything we do in this world to our ultimate end, to choose and use the best means of attaining it. It helps us to live and act in accordance with God's plan of salvation, to subordinate the temporal to the eternal in everything.

We have repeatedly, in this course of instructions, emphasized not only the importance, but the *need*, of

the Church's Sacraments. Baptism and Confirmation can be received only once because "once a child of God and once a soldier of Christ" it was assumed that we would always be true and loyal, and certainly not become apostates or traitors. But the Sacraments which we may receive more than once and even frequently we should receive often, such as those of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. That means we should resort to the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist for growth in grace and in love of God without any compulsion or even suggestion from others. Why should one have to be urged to do that which will make him eternally rich and happy?

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MAY 15

### Catholic Action

You all will recall how, during the late war, the only observable interest which engaged the attention of every one was that war. Its progress was kept before the public in prominent headlines in every newspaper; the leading articles in every magazines dealt with some phase of it; so did national and international radio broadcasts; day after day people were pressed to purchase war stamps and bonds; they were organized for civilian defense; they made sacrifices by the forced ration of foods. Through these media every one became war-conscious.

Now, if religion's first duty is the glorification of God, if "the one thing necessary" is the salvation of our soul, then we should all be (1) religion-conscious; (2) vie with one another to work for the cause of Christ; and (3) organize with others to do this systematically.

(1) We often speak of "religious fanatics," but one cannot become too fanatical for religion provided he thinks and acts prudently. Some one recently said "religion is something worth while becoming crazy for."

If the world needs anything it needs its attention drawn to the religion and teachings of Jesus Christ. If

the heads of nations only helped that cause, the citizenry would be deeply moved and probably follow, and the ills of separate nations, as well as of the world at large, would become automatically removed.

Pope Pius XII said on the eve of Lent in the year 1941: "People in human society have need to know God. The tremendous present-day events are principally the consequence of negation of God; and irreligion, like contagion, disturbs and corrupts the soul of people, and like a fire threatens Europe and other continents. It is the proof through which our Lord, with powerful voice, wishes to recall mankind to the faith and divine service."

If, in our country the radio were to flash a ten second religious thought; if before the feature movie were shown, a signal were sounded on "right living" much as we were wont to hear about war bonds; if the daily newspaper editors wrote more on the subject of religion; if the comics, devoured by millions of children, turned our thoughts towards God, towards religion, towards better morality, nearly every one would become religion-conscious, and, to be consistent, would begin to practice it.

Out of this interest would ensue a general recognition of the sovereignty of God, of the allegiance of which both ruler and subject owe to Him, of the source of man's rights and of his correlated duties to both God and his fellow-men; of the eternal law of justice and charity as applied to human relations; and such recognition would determine the basis for the establishment of a tranquil order of society, and even insure its permanence.

(2) Why should Catholics not be at least as zealous as Communists? They work for the devil and a bad conscience, which should inspire every one else to work for God and a good conscience. It is the evil of Communism and the zeal of Communists which necessitated the spending of billions of dollars of American money under the Marshall Plan.

But let us suppose that religion and right living were uppermost in every one's mind, as representing the

“one thing necessary,” religious instruction would be brought to every child in the nation; religious prayers would reach every home; family life would become holier and happier and, therefore, the divorce evil would soon disappear; the nation’s \$15,000,000,000 crime bill would be reduced by four-fifths; the lewd magazines would go out of existence; in the light of its almost divine dignity and its divine everlasting destiny the child would be wanted and, therefore, the practice of contraception would become a rare thing; the Christian brotherhood which would develop would cure the evils of capitalism and of class conflict; Socialism and Communism would lose their appeal; and millions would probably knock at the priest’s door for instruction.

To establish just such a condition of society God became Incarnate; to bring such a state of society to realization through the sanctification of the individual, is the one mission of the Church; it is the thing for which Christ taught us to pray in the first petition of that prayer par excellence, which He enjoined on all children of the common Heavenly Father: that His name may be hallowed; that His Kingdom may come; that His will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven. It is not, therefore, a phantasy for which I plead, but for the things which St. Paul demanded the “elect of God,” the “chosen generation,” the “fellow citizens of the saints,” to make actual.

(3) Catholic Action means “organized action.” The individual is not supposed to go out on his own, but to unite with a parish society or a city-wide group approved by the Bishop, and with a mandate from him to labor systematically with their priests for the extension of the cause of Christ.

This “cause” of Christ embraces many things. It means bringing the light of faith to others, the removal of the prejudices in which they have been reared, the refutation of errors to which they are committed, the defense of Christ’s code of morality; and an apostolate of example to prove that that code can be observed.

Christ certainly thought of the perversity of the human will, of the evil inclination of the human being

when He became Incarnate, promulgated His law and instituted divine ordinances which make easy the observance of His religion in its entirety. It were surprising if others were not weaker than Catholics because most of our citizenry have never possessed sanctifying grace, have never been elevated, as Catholics have been, to the rank of soldiers in Christ's army; have never been armed, as they are, with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. With the divine religion backing us, there should be no grounds for despair or even for discouragement.

The world was once entirely pagan, and it was converted to Christianity by comparatively few persons. Christ said to His mission "I have overcome the world" and St. John tells us: "This is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith." If Christ has since lost the world that He overcame, it is because of the lack of zeal and the indifference of His followers. If a victory for faith is not taking place in the world today it is due to the same reasons, namely, the unwillingness of the followers of Christ to fight for Him.

You are actually enrolled in Christ's army and will remain so enrolled not only until death, but for all eternity. If you allow Christ's cause to suffer defeat it will be held against you everlastingly. It is through Confirmation that the laity is elevated to the rank of a "royal priesthood," when it becomes their duty to live not only as "more perfect Christians," but to fight in the front ranks of God's army for the winning of the world to Christ.

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MAY 22

### The Holy Eucharist Foretold

You are quite familiar with the miracle which our Divine Savior wrought in the desert in favor of thousands who had remained with Him for three days without having had anything to eat; and you will recall that 1500 years before, God, through Moses, head of the Israelitic religion, had also fed a large throng in the desert with Manna, or with a "bread from Heaven"

(Edodus XVI, 4). Following Christ's miracle of the "loaves and fishes" He walked over the waves of the Sea of Galilee to Capharnaum, where there was a large synagogue, erected by a pagan ruler, whose son had been miraculously cured by Jesus. The people who had witnessed the two extraordinary miracles crowded the synagogue, and Jesus took the occasion to promise that He would, in the near future, give His own flesh to men as food for their souls.

Let us see how the reaction of His hearers resembled that of non-Catholics today: (1) they refused to believe that He meant literally what He said then; (2) many who had begun to believe Him refused to listen to Him any longer; and (3) rejecting the graces offered they even became hostile.

(1) In the sixth chapter of St. John the promise of the Eucharist is very clearly recorded. Speaking to the throng in the synagogue Christ said: (vs. 26-27): "Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek Me not because you have seen signs but because you have eaten of the loaves and have been filled. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for that which endures unto life everlasting, which the Son of man *will* give you."

Then Christ said to them (vs. 49-52): "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the Manna in the desert and have died. This is the bread that comes down from Heaven so that if any one eats of it he shall not die. I am the living bread that has come down from Heaven. If any one eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread I will give is My flesh for the life of the world."

That promise was so unexpected and so extraordinary that the people refused to accept it. To one another they said: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat" (vs. 53), but Christ renewed His promise under oath: "Amen, amen I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you" (vs. 54). To renew from them the notion that He was talking figuratively, He reiterated His clear words over and over (vs. 55-59): "He who

eats My flesh and drinks My blood has life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My body is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and as I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the bread which has come down from Heaven; not as your fathers ate the Manna and died. He who eats this bread shall live forever."

Followers of modern Protestantism speak and act in the same manner as did the people who heard Christ in the Capharnaum synagogue. While maintaining that they accept the Bible as inspired, they insist on the right to sit in private judgment on God's own clear teaching.

(2) St. John tells us that when Jesus saw how His teachings was received He said to the people "Does this scandalize you? What, then, if you should see the Son of man ascending where he was before" (vs. 62-63). Then we read: "From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer went with him" (vs. 67).

Would it not have been Christ's duty to point out to them that He was talking in a figurative manner if that were the case? Could He, as God, have permitted the people to be deceived? That He meant precisely what He said, in its most literal meaning, is clear from Christ's reaction. We read (vs. 68): "Jesus, therefore, said to the twelve. Do you also wish to go away." The evident implication is that Christ was willing to permit even His apostles to leave Him if they, understanding it or not, did not accept His promise in its literal sense. For the twelve Apostles Peter spoke: "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life, and we have come to believe and to know that Thou are the Christ, the Son of God" (vs. 69-70).

The hesitancy of the Apostles to accept this strange teaching was quite natural since they had not received the Holy Spirit. But that hesitation vanished when they saw that Christ was most serious, and evidently meant that He would fulfill, in a literal sense, what He had then so solemnly promised.

Therefore the Apostles were not surprised at the Last Supper when Christ actually fulfilled the promise He had made. It was His last night on earth, and if His promise was ever to be realized the time was at hand.

(3) What took place at the Last Supper was, therefore, the literal fulfillment of the promise Christ made a year previously, and the Apostles unhesitatingly received Christ's flesh and blood in Holy Communion. So prominent a place was the Eucharist and the Mass to have in Christ's religion that the whole Christian world for fifteen centuries accepted the same without any exception. Other heresies broke out in Christendom in the early centuries, but none relating to the Holy Eucharist. When, about one thousand years after Christ, Berengarius was bold enough to attack the Eucharist, he was spontaneously rebuked by the people and withdrew his protest.

It may not be known to our Protestant brethren, but even today three-fourths of all Christians believe as we do concerning the Eucharist and the Mass. There is a reason why the one-fourth should not so believe, but there is no reason why they should, as they are, become hostile. Their disbelief is to be explained by the same argument by which we have explained their opposition to other Catholic teaching, namely, by the fact that their spiritual leaders, enjoying no commission to produce the Holy Eucharist or to forgive sins through the Sacrament of Penance, are reluctant to concede that the clergy of the Catholic Church has any such commission and power despite the plain words of Holy Scripture. It is this superior claim, of which they are jealous, that renders them hostile. What they call their own "Lord's Supper," they maintain, is only commemorative of an incident which Christ told His followers to remember.

But if anything is clearly established in the New Testament, it is the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist as Catholics believe it. We have quoted from St. John regarding the promise of the Eucharist in the Catholic



sense, and we shall, in our next instruction, quote St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. Paul for proof that Christ actually kept His promise.

How non-Catholics can claim that they accept Christ and are saved by accepting Him, and at the same time not only doubt but repudiate His solemn promise made under oath about giving His actual flesh and blood to His followers; how they can repudiate the clear gospel record dealing with the fulfilment of that promise; how they can repudiate His other promises, such as that relating to the protection of His Church from error "all days," and still claim they "accept Christ," is incomprehensible. Belief in the efficacy of His redemption, combined with the repudiation of His teaching, of the Church He established, of the Sacraments He instituted, is certainly not "accepting Christ."

Do you ever take the trouble to call the attention of your non-Catholic friends to this glaring inconsistency?

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MAY 29

## The Holy Eucharist

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is called by St. Thomas a "compendium of all mysteries." All the attributes of God are revealed in it. The Bible Protestant cannot disown the Eucharist, but because his religious leaders cannot produce, they use force to explain it away. To others it seems "too good to be true." But let us note (1) that it is not difficult to accept; (2) Christ prepared people for it; and (3) it is taught more clearly in the Bible than many other doctrine.

(1) Doesn't it require extraordinary faith to accept the Catholic teaching on the Holy Eucharist?

Not at all, if we, as do all Protestants, accept the teaching of the Church or even the historical fact that God the Son, purely out of love for man, descended from Heaven, took a human body and soul, and lived here on earth for 33 years. Since every Christian believes the

further fact that out of pure love for man the Son of God, while on earth, subjected Himself to poverty, to persecution, to hunger and fasting, and finally permitted Himself to be tortured and cruelly murdered, belief in the Eucharist should be easy. It would require much more faith to believe these things, which are generally accepted, than, after believing them, to believe that the same infinitely good God invented a means of remaining on earth with men "all days even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. XXVIII, 20) in order to continue His love *for the individual* by nourishing his soul, as He nourished the souls of the Apostles at the Last Supper, with His Sacred Body and Blood.

If God's love be infinite then we could not even conceive of it going too far; if there were any limit to His love it would not be infinite, as all His attributes must be. Understand we are not saying that man was worthy of this infinite love of God. We are merely saying that it is as easy to believe in the Holy Eucharist as to believe in the Incarnation and the Redemption, which is expected of every Christian.

The Holy Eucharist seems very reasonable also in the light of what God's people in the Old Law enjoyed. They enjoyed the very perceptible Presence of God in the Ark of the Covenant, which was held most sacred by the Jews precisely because God manifested His Presence in it. If one accepts the teaching of St. Paul that the symbols and even the realities of the Old Law were mere types and figures of what the New Law was to have how can he honestly reject the clear teaching of the New Testament concerning the Holy Eucharist?

In the Old Law the Jews actually had "bread from Heaven," a miraculous bread, called "Manna," to which Christ referred—as St. John quotes Him in the sixth Chapter of his Gospel—as something considerably less than the Christians were to have in the New Law.

(2) Instead of requiring great faith to accept the Holy Eucharist, the rejection of the Holy Eucharist is a flagrant violation of the faith the Protestant is expected to have. To prepare the large concourse of people for

the acceptance of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, Christ first of all multiplied the loaves and then walked on the waters of Lake Genesareth. Because of these miracles the crowd which already had been with Him for three days, remained another day and followed Jesus to Capharnaum, where He took the opportunity to relate these miracles to a future miracle which He would perform, in which His own flesh and blood would be offered as the food of souls. He said to the multitude: "Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for that which endures unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man *will* give you" (John VI, 27). We would here refer you to the balance of Chapter VI of St. John's Gospel, where you will note that Christ would not endure a rejection of His clearly stated promise; that He was willing to let His disciples "go away from Him" rather than that they should even doubt. He was willing to dismiss the very Apostles themselves, whom He had already had with Him for two years, if they showed a disposition to question the plain meaning of His words. This was a whole year before the Last Supper. Hence the apostles were not surprised when, the night before He died, He fulfilled His promise. He could not have postponed it longer.

(3) There is no doctrine of religion so clearly and frequently stated in Holy Scripture as the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. Its institution is mentioned by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul tells us that he received a special revelation on the subject from Christ. Then he proclaimed the doctrine in the same words used by the evangelists and Paul (1 Cor. XI, 23-30).

St. Paul speaks of some people receiving Holy Eucharist unworthily, and he declares that they receive unworthily because in sin "they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"; "he who eats and drinks unworthily without distinguishing the body of the Lord, eats, and drinks judgment unto himself." If His body were not present in the Holy Eucharist, people could not "Distinguish that body"; if what one receives were mere symbols of Christ's body and blood, one could not "drink

judgment (or damnation) to himself."

All Christians could not have been wrong all the time; but all Christians, from the days of the Apostles until the sixteenth century, did believe in the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice and as a sacrament; they attended Mass and received Holy Communion. The altars in the catacombs, which were built by the first Christians, eager and ready to become martyrs for the faith, are living witnesses to the practice of these first Christians of attending Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist.

The more than 100,000,000 Oriental Christians, separated from Rome, believe as Catholics do; so also do the High Church Episcopalians. Lutherans teach that in Holy Communion the true body and blood of Christ are received, even though these clergymen do not claim Apostolic succession.

If we can believe in the Incarnation, as all Catholics do, and as most Protestants do; if we can believe in the crucifixion of a God, as practically all Christians claim they do, then certainly it should not be difficult to believe in the Holy Eucharist, the Mass, or any other truth of faith whatsoever. The value of the human soul and, therefore, the infinite love which God must entertain for it, and the anxiety of God that it be made safe for all eternity at any cost, are the keys to the solution of practically every momentous truth of faith.

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JUNE 5

### The Eucharist as a Sacrifice

Before instituting the official form of worship to be featured in His religion until the end of time, Jesus, with the Apostles, observed the Jewish feast of the "Passover," which commemorated the liberation of the Israelites from the tyranny of the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Just as God commanded that that event should be commemorated every year throughout the Old Law, so did Christ command that what He did at the Last Supper be

commemorated throughout the New Law, or "until the end of time."

On the feast of the Passover, a lamb was sacrificed and then eaten. At the Last Supper and thereafter "from every place from the rising to the setting of the sun" the unbloody offering of the Lamb of God would be made, for the glorification of God and for the application of the fruits of Christ's redemption to souls everywhere and throughout all ages.

That the Eucharist offering of the Last Supper is a real sacrifice is clear (1) from the Bible; (2) from the teaching of the Church; and (3) from the liturgies followed by the first Christians.

(1) Christ had frequently declared Himself to be the "Son of God" as well as "the Son of man." When He promised the Eucharist His hearers asked one another "How can this 'Man' give us His flesh to eat?" Evidently He could do it if He was God, and to prove that He was God He wrought two miracles which should have disposed the people to accept His divinity. He fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread; and then to show that His body, glorified, would not be subject to the laws of physical bodies, He walked on the waves over the waters. Impressed by those miracles the Jews still wanted another sign and asked (John VI, 30-31): "What sign do you show then that we may see and believe; our fathers did eat Manna in the desert, as is written, 'He gave them bread from Heaven to eat'?"

This gave just the proper opportunity to Jesus to set them right. He answered: (vs. 32-35): "Amen, amen I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven, but My Father gave you the true bread from Heaven. I am the bread of life: I am the living bread which came down from Heaven, and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world."

You will note that Christ's hearers understood Him as we Catholics do, and began to ask the question which Protestants ask: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

This all took place a year before Jesus died. Then on the eve of that death He fulfilled His solemn promise. In St. Matthew (XXVI, 26-28) we read: "And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave it to His disciples, and said: 'Take and eat, this is My body.' And taking a cup, He gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of this for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins.'"

You will note that Christ, acting as "the priest according to the Order of Melchisedech" (Hebr. V, 6), connected His unbloody offering of the Last Supper to the bloody offering on the cross.

St. Mark records what happened at the Last Supper in almost identical words. He writes: "And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessing it, broke and gave it to them, and said: 'Take; this is My body'; and taking a cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it; and he said to them: 'This is My blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many'" (Mark XIV, 22-25).

St. Luke (XXII, 19-20) writes: "And having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which shall be shed for you.'"

St. Paul (1 Cor. XI, 23-25), speaking of the special revelation he received from Christ on the Eucharist, uses almost the same words recorded by the three evangelists above.

(2) Just as the Pascal Lamb was not only sacrificed, but also eaten, so, St. Paul says: "Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed" (1 Cor. V, 8). His glorified body, with the new properties it would have after His resurrection, was to be given in Holy Communion for the nourishment of souls "until I come" (1 Cor. XI). If the New Law was to be the perfection of the Old, then it certainly must have a form of worship far superior to that which the Israelites had. They were ordered by God

Himself to worship Him by sacrifice, but the Prophet Malachy, who lived 500 years before Christ, told the Israelites that their symbolic sacrifices would soon come to an end in favor of a "clean oblation" which would be offered in every place among the Gentiles.

Every ecclesiastical writer of the early centuries held that the Eucharist was a true sacrifice. St. Irenæus, who lived in the second century, (*Adversus Haereses*) wrote: "This oblation the Church received from the Apostles, and in the whole world she offers it to God."

St. Cyprian, in the third century, compares the sacrifice of the Mass to the pagan sacrifices, and rebukes those who receive Christ's body and blood before their "conscience has been purged by sacrifice and the hand of the priest" (*Epis. ad Thibar*).

In similar strain write Saints Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Hilary, Ephrem, John Chrysostom, of the fourth century; and Saints Ambrose, Jerome and Gaudentius of the fifth century.

(3) In the earliest liturgy or missal used in the Church we find the prayer immediately following the consecration of the Mass: "Wherefore, O Lord, we thy servants and likewise Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed passion, of the same Christ Thy Son, our Lord, together with His Resurrection from the grave, and also His glorious Ascension into Heaven, offer up to Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thine own gifts bestowed upon us, a Victim which is pure, a Victim which is holy, a Victim which is stainless, the holy Bread of life everlasting, and the Chalice of eternal salvation."

The Protestant historian, Grotius, in his *Votum pro Pace*, writes: "I find in all the Liturgies, Greek, Latin, Arabi, Syriac, and others, prayers to God that He would consecrate, by His Spirit, the gifts offered, and make them the body and blood of His Son. I was right, therefore, in saying that a custom so ancient and universal that it must be considered to have come down from the primitive times, ought not to have been changed."

The Mass was to be a "memorial" of Christ's death, but a *living* memorial—not a mere monument as a nation

is wont to erect to a great president of general here. There can be no Eucharist or Communion of the body and blood of Christ without the *Consecration*, which in religion implies sacrifice.

Christ came from Heaven to earth not merely to redeem man, but to found a religion in which the Holy Trinity would be infinitely and, therefore, adequately glorified without interruption. One act of glorification would have been sufficient to make amends for mankind's sins, but it would not meet the chief requirement of religion, namely, to worship, to atone, to thank, to petition, the Almighty in a manner worthy of Him by all people of every generation.. God is worthy of the highest worship every day, every moment of the day, and the Eucharistic sacrifice is offered every moment of the day or night somewhere. The Christian religion would not be perfect if it did not have such a sacrificial offering as the Mass.

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JUNE 12

### Offer the Mass with the Priest

Catholics must correct the habit of attending Mass mechanically chiefly for their own good. The Mass is a divine Sacrificial Act, and has too much significance for you, to justify a routine attendance at the same. The priest offers it every day, while you are obliged to participate in it only once a week, yet it is your sacrifice as well as his.

You should be thinking today of tomorrow's Mass, determine the special purposes for which you will offer it with the priest, and manage to be in your pew before the priest comes out from the sacristy.

In the Mass there is (1) a part of preparation; (2) a part in which you join the priest in his oblation and make an oblation of your own; and (3) a part in which you receive what was consecrated.

(1) If you are not at Mass from its very beginning, you fail to acknowledge your sins and your unworthiness



to participate in so holy an offering, as the priest says the Confiteor; you deprive yourself of the special absolution which the priest pronounces in the words: "May the omnipotent and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution and remission of your sins."

It has never been the mind of the Church that you should be present at Mass only physically, or that you should say prayers in your own way, without any relation to the purpose of the Mass, or without any association with the priest who impersonates Christ Himself.

It is very true that one may say the Rosary or other prayers, but these should begin only after one will have united himself with the priest offering the Sacrifice and has specified the intentions for which one would have the Sacrifice applied, at least in part.

Every Mass has infinite value and, therefore, it should first be offered for the infinite glorification of God, as an adequate atonement for sin, for the spread of God's Kingdom on earth. It can be offered for these things without any detriment to your own intentions, whether your intentions be to procure blessings for yourself or for others, or help for the departed. Every Mass is fully capable of covering all these intentions.

We venture to say that most people come to Mass without offering it for any intentions whatsoever.

(2) While you are told that you do not sin mortally if you are present for the Mass from the Offertory on, that does not mean that you do not sin at all if you miss the first part of the Mass known as the "Mass of the Catechumens."

In the early ages of the Church, the faithful would chant the offertory verse (which differs in every Mass) while marching in procession, and carrying the gifts they brought from their homes. These they took into the sanctuary where they were blessed during the Holy Sacrifice, and from among them the offerings for the Holy Sacrifice itself were taken. To offer, means to present a gift to Almighty God; to honor, to thank, to petition and to make expiation. Bread and wine have no special value in themselves, but draw their value from their use

in the sacrifice, during which they will be changed into the very body and blood of Christ.

When the priest raises the paten with the host and offers it to God, you should gather and place on that paten next to the host all your trials, difficulties, and sufferings of a physical nature. When he offers the chalice of salvation, you should place therein all your loneliness, homesickness, temptations, and all suffering of a mental or spiritual nature, that all may be united to the elements which will be transformed into Christ, a sacrificial Victim, holy and pleasing unto God.

Just as the priest prepares the bread and the wine for the Holy Sacrifice, so you, the faithful members of the mystical body of Christ, must prepare your hearts for what will soon follow.

(3) After the words of Consecration have been spoken, the priest presents the Body and Blood of Christ to the majesty of God. God is well pleased with His beloved Son, and accepts the gift most graciously. As we have become one with Christ, our hearts, our sacrificial hearts, have also become a pleasing gift in the sight of Almighty God. As we address "Our Father Who art in Heaven," we pray that His Will be done. Once more we acknowledge our unworthiness, and then proceed to the table of the Lord to partake of the sacrificial meal. By that act we become most intimately united to Christ, and can say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me." When we can not receive Christ sacramentally we should do so spiritually with an ardent desire to receive Him.

We must live our offering. It is only before the altar of God that we can draw that supernatural strength that will keep us up under the burden of each day. If we try to live in union with Christ, then there will be happiness in our hearts regardless of all outward circumstances. Each day will bring us closer to His heart, each day we shall grow in love and grace until that day when we shall surrender our sacrificial hearts to Christ, not before His altar on earth, but before His throne of glory in Heaven!

Let me close this instruction, as I began it, namely, by asking you, for your own sake, to take the Mass seriously, to have intentions in your *mind* for which you will offer it, and in your hearts stir up sorrow for your sins and love for Him Who, day by day, makes Himself available to you as a "perfect gift," an infinite gift, in Whom "the Father is well pleased."

Since the Heavenly Father will be pleased with your dispositions, with your offering made to Him in conjunction with His divine Son, I hardly need to tell you that you will profit immensely by every Mass in which you participate.

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JUNE 19

## The Sacrament of Penance

Those who believe in the need of the Sacrament of Baptism to cleanse the soul from Original Sin, and from whatever actual sins were committed prior to the reception of Baptism, cannot consistently reject the Sacrament of Penance, which was instituted for the purpose of forgiving sins committed *after* Baptism.

For the average person what would be the benefit of a Sacrament designed to take away sins committed up to a certain time in his life, if there were no other Sacrament to take away sins committed *after* that time?

A Sacrament to remove actual sin is so reasonable that opposition to it can be due only (1) to wrong impressions concerning its application; or (2) to the notion that sin can be forgiven without sorrow for it; or (3) that confession is unnatural.

(1) One reason why many people antecedently repudiate the Sacrament of Penance is that they are influenced by the erroneous notions they have held concerning the Catholic practice. They labor under the impression, for instance, that the only requisite for forgiveness is the confession of sins to the priest; and never having inspected a confessional, assume, as they have often been told, that the relationship between the

priest and penitent is so close that the confessional itself may be a source of wrong.

Today people flock to psychologists and psycho-analysts not only to tell them their inmost secrets, but to be probed by all kinds of questions. There is no probing, no asking of questions, in the confessional unless it chances to be necessary. The individual acknowledges his chief faults, beginning from his last confession, receives a little advice from the priest, is given a penance to perform, and then upon assurance of sorrow and amendment, is given absolution.

Instead of being repellent, the Sacrament of Penance has been the principal reason for the conversion of many people. The late Gilbert Chesterton said that his chief reason for becoming a Catholic was "to have my sins forgiven."

(2) As a matter of fact, the mere confession of one's sins to a Priest, Bishop or Pope, unless there be genuine sorrow for the sins, coupled with a firm resolution of amendment, would not obtain forgiveness for them.

It is the Sacrament and not the priest, that forgives sins, just as it is the Sacrament of Baptism, and not the one who administers it, that takes away sins committed prior to the reception of that Sacrament.

For the valid and worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance the person must examine his conscience, then awaken sorrow for his sins, confess them, and perform the penance assigned. Only then does absolution pronounced by the priest become effective.

If you asked what the Scripture warrant is for the Sacrament of Penance, we would ask you to examine the words of Christ addressed to the Apostles on the day of the Resurrection, and quoted by St. John (XX, 21-23). Christ prefaces His commission with the remark: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (V. 22).

From these words it is clear that the mission of the Apostles was to be identical with that of Christ; and His mission, according to His own words, was to "save the lost sheep"; "to call the sinner to penance." True He

had died for sinners, but His merits must be applied to each individual soul.

Because the Apostles were only men and, as such, had no divine power, the significance of the balance of the text is very clear: "When He had said this, He breathed upon them and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.'"

It was by the power of the Holy Spirit, by the power of God Himself, operating through the Sacrament of Penance, that the Apostles and evidently their real successors, were empowered to forgive sin in God's name.

(3) To those who claim that confession of sins was intended to be public, we might only refer to the many instances of Christ dealing with individual sinners—with Zachaeus, the Samaritan Woman, Magdalen, Peter, the thief on the cross. In fact, there is not a single instance of Christ pronouncing a whole group forgiven. The public confession of sins often took place among the early Christians, but it was in addition rather than as a substitute for private confession.

It has always been God's policy to deal with man through man. When He gave His Ten Commandments to the Israelites, congregated at the foot of Mount Sinai, He did not promulgate them directly, but called Moses aside, and commissioned him to deliver these Commandments to the people. When the ten lepers came to Christ to ask for assistance, He said to them: "Go show yourselves to the priest." Leprosy was a figure of sin, and even in the Old Law the priest was expected to pronounce people forgiven.

The Sacrament of Penance, so needful in God's plan of salvation, is also a most natural thing. How often do we hear it remarked that "murder will out." How often do we hear people speak of the relief they find in telling to another what disturbs and agitates their hearts?

Those who patronize the Sacrament of Penance feel much better, because they know for a certainty that what they have told will never be revealed—will never even stop in the mind of the priest to whom the story is told.

The priest could not remember a person's confession if he would, because he hears so many. Immediately following one confession he hears another, and after having heard a dozen or fifty or a hundred on the same afternoon or evening, he could not possibly recall any particular confession. But, as a matter of fact, he is not permitted to try to do so.

Christ wanted His representatives throughout the centuries to be physicians of souls, but they cannot act in that capacity unless they become acquainted with the affliction or disease, just as no physician of the body could do anything for a patient until after a diagnosis.

Not what modern religions teach and practice, but what was taught and practiced all through the centuries must be taken into account. The Greek Orthodox Church, several centuries older than Protestantism, has the Sacrament of Penance, and so have the remnants of sects which were formed a thousand years before Protestantism was born. Hence the practice of confession was prevalent in the Christian Church at the time the schisms from the universal Church took place. Apostolic succession is required in the clergyman who administers the Sacrament of Penance—and modern churches, of course, cannot claim that. Their clergymen, therefore, cannot claim the power to forgive sin.

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JUNE 26

### The Sacrament of Penance

Just as we take the Sacrament of Baptism for granted, which cleanses the soul from sin and adorns it with divine beauty, so do we take the Sacrament of Penance for granted, which reclaims the soul from the devil and starts it once more on the road that leads to Heaven. It is God, of course, Who confers sanctifying grace, and Who restores it but always through a Sacrament instituted by Christ.

Let us consider now the wonderful effects of the Sacrament of Penance when the three chief conditions

are fulfilled namely: (1) confession of sins; (2) supernatural sorrow; and (3) the absolution of a priest.

(1) We have called your attention to the wonderful transformation of the soul as soon as the act of regeneration takes place through Baptism. We reminded you that the child of the parent taken to the Church for Baptism, it is carried home as a child of *God*, beautiful in soul beyond all description, and that it remains in that state of blessedness and holiness until, with full knowledge of God's law and with full consent of the will, it later in life violates God's law in a serious matter.

When you line up with scores of others before the confessional on Saturday evening or afternoon, we are certain that you do not reflect on the miracles taking place in that tribune. Assuming that all the penitents have lost the state of grace there is wrought within their souls a spiritual resurrection no less astounding than a physical resurrection from the dead would be.

A soul, once possessed of sanctifying grace and now bereft of it, will have been transformed from beauty to a state of deformity more repulsive to the eyes of God than the remains of a dead human body, made hideous by corruption, would be repulsive to your vision.

Never does the mercy of God, which David said "I shall sing always," and which he declared to be "above all God's work," so manifest itself as in God's tribunal of mercy here on earth, which is the confessional.

The sinner merely acknowledges humbly and with sorrow before God and before His representative the sins he has committed, and the priest, by the words of absolution pronounces him forgiven, just as Christ, in person, pronounced forgiveness to the thief on the cross, to Mary Magdalen, and the young sick man with the palsy.

(2) Recital of sins, as a child might recite a prayer whose words he does not understand, is not sufficient for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance. Sorrow must be felt in the heart and expressed in words by the one-time child of God who had deserted him, turned traitor to Christ, and begun to follow Satan. That sow-

row must be supernatural, which means that it must have at least some relationship to the God of love, and it must be coupled with a firm resolution of amendment.

I hardly need to tell you that sorrow for a sin is to be gauged by one's determination not to recommit it, or at least his sincere effort, through the use of the proper means, to prevent its re-commission.

Priests fear that many people approach the Sacrament of Penance in a routine manner because, as little children, they started to make their confession in that way. As a child you had little to confess and, therefore, little for which to be sorry. You were told to tell your sins and to make an Act of Contrition for them, most of the words of which you did not even comprehend—and the way children start is the way in which most of them continue to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

The examination of conscience is seldom complete, and thought of amendment does not enter seriously into the mind of the average person. We call him a "penitent," which implies that he is filled with repentance for what he has done, and that implies, in turn, his decision to improve with the aid of God's grace.

(3) We have reminded you that it is God Who forgives sins and, therefore, the question asked by many Protestants "how can your priest forgive sins" is legitimate and deserves the proper answer.

Even a pagan who administers the Sacrament of Baptism properly and with the right instruction, forgives sin, because it is *Sacrament and not the one who confers it*, which cleanse the soul and imparts grace. So it is with the Sacrament of Penance. Christ empowered the Apostles and their successors to forgive sins in His name, *through a Sacrament* in which, again, it is God Who operates and confers grace. No priest nor Bishop nor Pope can, of his own power, confer grace. You could conceivably make your confession to the pope and receive his absolution and still leave the confessional unforgiven, either because you would not make a complete confession, or because you would not have supernatural sorrow, associated with the determination to amend your life.



The absolution of the priest, which is a part of the Sacrament, is effective only when the person receiving it will have complied with the other conditions for the efficacious reception of the Sacrament.

But when you will have done your part, the priest's part, which consists in absolution, will, in a moment, remove every scar of sin from your soul, and re-instate you not only in favor with God, but restore your baptismal innocence.

St. Paul, speaking to his new converts, said: "You were hitherto darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk, then, as children of light" (Eph. V. 8). If that advice is applicable to every baptized person, it is equally applicable to every one who, after falling back into the darkness of sin, is restored to "light of grace."

Through Lent the thought in the liturgy of the Church runs "Today you should hear His voice harden not your hearts" (Heb. III, 8), which means that if your conscience accuses you of having violated any of God's laws in a serious matter, you should hearken to the call of His grace, and receive the Sacrament of Penance. You should receive it often, because you have learned from your little Catechism that "we must take more care of our soul than we do of our body." If you did not wash your body oftener than once in two or three months, you would be ashamed to appear in public. If you do not wash your soul with greater frequency, you should be ashamed to be under the eyes of God, Who sees you every moment of the day and night, and calls on you to re-instate yourself in His favor.

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### JULY 3

#### Actual Grace vs. Actual Sin

We have spoken of Actual Grace, but the Catechism also refers to "Actual" Sin. As the infusion of sanctifying grace into the soul the first time removes Original sin, so Actual grace (1) prevents Actual sin; (2) enables us to grow in grace and to become closely united to

God; and (3) enables us to merit Heaven.

(1) Sin and grace cannot so-exist in the soul; they are like darkness and light, which are mutually exclusive. But just as grace is not merely the privation of sin, but something very *positive* and beautiful and divine, so sin is not merely the absence of grace, but is *destructive* of the merits of what ever good works we had previously performed.

In the Tower of London they have the largest diamond in the world, and whenever it is on display there is an armed guard placed near it to protect it. Because the soul of a child or of an adult in the state of grace is much more precious before God than all the diamonds in the world, God has placed every human being a special "guardian angel" to protect that treasure surpassing all the world in value.

But divine grace in the soul is always threatened and is in danger of being robbed, as Holy Scripture tells us, by the invasion of the devil, and by our neglect to make use of actual grace, which God imparts daily for the enlightenment of our minds and the strengthening of our wills.

It is precisely because God foreknew that the average person would not, at all times, correspond with His graces, would even oppose them, and thus lose the inestimable treasure of sanctifying grace that He instituted another Sacrament *for its restoration*.

(2) Sanctifying grace can be augmented or increased day by day by the faithful use of actual graces, which are nothing less than inspirations and special assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Without fully comprehending what grace means most Protestants are taught that once one becomes united *by faith* he is saved for all times. To support this belief they quote *one* Scripture *text* against which dozens of others could well be quoted for its refutation. Their text is "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts XVI, 31).

Holy Scripture tells us that he who "is holy should be sanctified still" (Apoc. XXIII, 11), or made *more*

righteous, which means that he should grow in grace. St. Luke tells us that the human soul of Christ "grew in grace" as He grew in age and wisdom (Luke II, 52).

If *faith alone* produced jurisdiction all believers would enter Heaven in the same condition of soul, while the Bible tells us that, in Heaven, they will "differ in glory as one star differs from another" (I Cor. XV, 41). St. John (Apoc. XIV, 13) calls those blessed "who died in the Lord, because *their works* follow them"—the supernaturally good works they perform with the help of actual grace, and the benefit of which they do not lose by the commission of mortal sin.

If grace is marvelous when it is brought to the soul the first time, it is no less marvelous *in its restoration* through the Sacrament of Penance. This Sacrament effects a miracle of no less magnitude than that which Christ performed when He raised Lazarus from the grave. The former is a spiritual, and the latter was a physical miracle, both equally requiring the almighty power of God.

(3) You have been reminded of a certain fact so frequently that it should be easy for you to *think accordingly*, namely, that the reward we hope to receive in Heaven is supernatural, and therefore, the works by which we earn it must also have supernatural value. But no good works performed when we are bereft of sanctifying grace can merit supernatural rewards. The only value they can have is to attract the mercy of God and induce Him to give to us sufficient actual grace for a thorough repentance.

Every reflecting person will apply to the promotion of the supernatural life the principles followed by everyone on earth in relation to his natural or physical life. One who receives a large inheritance never wilfully destroys it. Every one is much concerned about the growth of his bank account, about social security, about employment. Now should not people be much more concerned about having a bank account in Heaven, about making themselves eternally secure? This is only another way of asking whether they should not be much concerned

about growth in grace through prayer and the performance of good work. We earn our physical living by work, and we could earn our supernatural merit here by working for God, for others, under a supernatural motivation.

There is never any need for unemployment; there is never a depression in the spiritual life and, therefore, there is no reason why we should not become and remain supernaturally rich even here on earth, rejoicing all the while that, by retaining these riches, we shall be made eternally rich with God and his angels in Heaven.

Do you make the Morning Offering regularly by which you offer to God all the prayers and the good deeds of the day for His glory and for your own growth in His favor and love? When you do this, you "supernaturalize" these works in keeping with St. Paul's advice: "Whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. III, 17).

St. Ignatius adopted that as a motto for all members of the Society of Jesus for all time.

When the Church encouraged the Apostleship of Prayer in League with the Sacred Heart, it urged the *Morning Offering*, whereby our own motto for the day becomes "all for God."



JULY 10

Contrition

We have seen that for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance we must first of all examine our conscience, to ascertain in what ways and how often we have offended God grievously since we received the same Sacrament the last time. Then we should awaken sorrow for our sins. This done, we enter the confessional, and acknowledge our sins to God's representative, the physician of souls, the priest. The priest, in turn, gives us absolution, in the name of Christ, and also stipulates a penance, which we are expected to perform after our confession.

Our sorrow for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance must be (1) supernatural; (2) must be combined with a firm resolution of amendment; and (3) we must reflect if we would awaken it.

(1) The most important part of these several requirements is supernatural sorrow for our sins, because God will certainly not forgive us, even through the Sacrament, if we are not sorry for having offended Him, and if we have no intention to desist from committing the same sins anew.

Whenever you talk about the Sacrament of Penance with the non-Catholic you should emphasize its chief requisite, Contrition, because he entertains the notion that Catholics may sin as much as they choose, and may continue to offend God after they will have gone to confession. His prejudice against Confession would be well grounded if it were true that no sorrow and an amendment of life were required of the one who makes his confession. It is certainly not the Church's fault that such unwarranted impressions are held, because she certainly does emphasize the need of supernatural sorrow or contrition in her teaching on this Sacrament.

When we say sorrow must be supernatural, we mean that the sinner must grieve over his sins principally because he has offended God or has deserved God's punishment in the other world. Natural sorrow would not suffice. For instance, if a child regretted something he did because he received a severe punishment for it from his parents, that sorrow would not be supernatural. If a gambler is sorry because he lost a great deal of money in a game, that sorrow would not be supernatural.

Our sorrow must be related to God in some way. If we are sorry for our sins because by them we lost the right of Heaven and deserved the punishment of hell, the sorrow is supernatural, but imperfect. It is supernatural, because Heaven is what it is because God is there; and because the chief punishment of hell is the privation of God. But we should strive at a higher sorrow than that. It should arise from love. When we are sorry because we have offended God Who is infinitely

good, and because His laws, meant for our own good, should be observed, our sorrow is supernatural and perfect.

(2) Interior sorrow often manifests itself exteriorly as in the case of Magdalen, who bathed the feet of Christ with her tears (Luke VI); or of St. Peter who, after denying Christ, "went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. XXVI, 75).

However we do not gauge the one's sorrow by the manner in which it affects him exteriorly, because sorrow is really *grief of the soul* for having been disloyal and disobedient to God.

Sorrow, to be genuine, must be coupled with a "firm resolution of amendment." In fact, if you would satisfy yourself whether your sorrow is sincere and earnest, you need only to answer affirmatively the question: "Am I prepared to employ the means necessary to overcome the grievous sins which I am about to confess?"

What if a mother, after punishing a child for an act of disobedience, asked him whether he would ever do it again and he answered "Yes." She would likely give him another punishment more severe than the first.

Now you may not have in your mind that you will go on committing your sins, but your confession might be unworthy if you did not actually think about amendment. We fear that there are many who, because of routine, after examining their consciences, enter the confessional without having given any thought to the awakening of sorrow.

We have already told you that it is the Sacrament and not the priest who administers it, which takes away your sins, and that Sacrament would not have its effect if there were an obstacle in the way—and the absence of supernatural sorrow is an obstacle.

(3) The best way to awaken sorrow, after the examination of your conscience, is to try to realize that some of the sins you have committed, would, if they were not forgiven, make you deserving of everlasting punishment. You certainly want to have them forgiven and, therefore, you sincerely regret that you have com-

mitted them. This, as we have intimated, is imperfect contrition, although supernatural. Then you will try to recall your relationship to God as a child, who has been most disobedient to Him, as a soldier who should have actually been fighting for Him instead of acting as a traitor. You should bring to mind that the infinite love of God led Him to come down from Heaven to earth and to die on the cross for your salvation. You should try to elicit an act of perfect love, in which you tell Almighty God that you "love Him above all things from the bottom of your heart, *because He is infinitely worthy of such love,*" and that, therefore, you will not wilfully offend Him again in any serious manner.

Then you have the higher kind of contrition which, coupled with the confession of your sins and absolution, will effect a thorough cleansing of your soul. You should, of course, trust in the infinite mercy of God, and that mercy is displayed in the Sacrament of Penance, which is called "the Sacrament of Mercy."

After your confession you should feel that you are forgiven as thoroughly as was the young man to whom Christ said: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee"; as thoroughly as Magdalen felt that she was forgiven when Our Lord said "Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much."

Catholics are urged to receive the Sacrament of Penance often even if they do not fall into serious sins, because through that Sacrament they receive additional sanctifying grace. Frequent confession assists greatly in leading one to know his weakness, and it keeps him in the disposition to strive from day to day not only to overcome evil, but to do good.

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JULY 17

Extreme Unction—1

Some Protestant sects "anoint the sick" whether they be in a dying condition or not, but they do not hold such anointing to be a Sacrament. Their *opinion* amounts

to nothing in face of the practice of the Universal Church from the days of the Apostles, and of the practice today among three-fourths of all Christians.

Let us (1) examine the text of St. James (V, 14-15); (2) see what makes Extreme Unction a Sacrament; and (3) its secondary effects.

(1) The Scripture authority for the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is contained in the fifth chapter, 14th and 15th verses, of the Epistle of St. James. It reads:

"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."

That this practice was actually prescribed, is clear from its use in the Church from Apostolic times.

The Protestant version reads a little differently. It reads as follows: "Let him call for the 'elders' of the Church"; its implication being that elders were not priests, that they were lay-people and that, therefore, Extreme Unction is not a Sacrament. It would take too much time to argue about this play on words and their significance. But why should lay people be called in to pray for the sick and to anoint them with oil, when the spiritual care of the sick evidently belongs to the clergy? In the new translation even the Douay Version uses the word "elders," who, in Greek, are called "presbyters."

The word "presbyter" might be correctly translated "elder," but the important thing is to determine what the word "elder" connoted to the people of the first centuries, when the New Testament was written. The first priests were "elders" in the sense that they were not young. But it is presumptuous to suppose that the word "elder" had the same meaning then as in our day.

In all living languages, that very word has taken on an entirely new meaning in the past centuries. For instance, the word "signor" in Italian; "senor" in Spanish; "monsieur" in French, "sir" in English, are all derived from the Latin word "senior" whose strict meaning



is "elder." These words are applied not only to elderly people today, but also to young people. In England, even a baby baronet is entitled to the word "sir." Those words today ascribe a mark of dignity, and that the word "presbyter" connoted the dignity which belonged to the priesthood is clear from the fact that the official liturgical word for "priesthood" is "presbyteratus."

The order still stands: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." It is the Christian practice throughout the centuries which should settle the matter and it has ever been the practice for the relatives of the sick to call in a priest to anoint the afflicted one with consecrated oil, and to pray over him.

(2) That the anointing of oil, together with prayer, was not to be merely a symbol, but was actually to remove sin and to impart grace, is clear from the words "and the prayers of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him." This anointing must be a Sacrament, or it could not take away sins.

The olive oil used in the anointing of the sick is consecrated by the Bishop on Holy Thursday of each year, as is also the oil which is used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and others. Oil is a symbol of strength, having been used from time immemorial by athletes. It symbolizes, also, healing. Since it is administered "in the name of the Lord," every Christian should readily perceive that it must be one of the Sacraments, and, therefore, it is to be administered by an official representative of the Church.

How sick must a person be before this Sacrament may be administered?

He must be "in danger of death," either because of sickness or an accident. This does not mean that he must be near death's door. On the contrary, the Church would have relatives call for the priest to administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction as soon as the physician says there is danger. It would require a real miracle to

restore a sick person to health if he were actually dying.

(3) The physical effects of this Sacrament, or the "cure of the sick man" is secondary, that is why not all people who receive the Sacrament are restored to physical health. However, every Catholic priest can testify, and numerous physicians, Catholic and Protestant, will also testify, that immediately following the reception of Extreme Unction, the condition of many sick persons becomes improved, and they are often restored to health. In fact priests are sometimes asked by non-Catholics if they might receive this Sacrament, even though they were not ready to enter the Church—believing as they did, that Extreme Unction often starts restoration to health.

Does it not seem eminently fitting that a Sacrament should have been instituted by Christ, designed to prepare people for their entrance into eternity, to remove the "remains of sin," even of sin repented of but often viewed not too seriously; a Sacrament calculated to relieve the dying person of fears and anxieties, and to restore peace of mind, so that death may be faced, as it should be faced by the true Christian, bravely and even cheerfully?

You could hardly have followed our instructions on the Sacraments without being filled with gratitude to God for all that He does for the sanctification of the members of His Church—His own dear children, and heirs of life eternal in His paradise of glory and bliss.

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JULY 24

### Extremé Unction—2

Although you are told that there are some Sacraments which are not necessary for salvation, it does not mean that they should be regarded lightly. Every one of the seven was instituted by Christ for a very definite purpose, and every one, therefore, is of very great importance. One can conceive of a person saving his soul,

without receiving the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, but it is likely he would have a longer purgatory if he did not receive it.

If Baptism is necessary for salvation the reason is very clear. Without Baptism there would be no Christians, and every one in the entire world would still be pagan. There would be no members of the divine Church, which Christ established and ordered to be carried to all nations. But if the priest often risks his life to bring Extreme Unction to the dying that Sacrament also must be important.

Let us consider (1) when you should send for the priest to administer Extreme Unction; (2) how you should prepare the room for the Sacrament; and (3) how grateful you should be for this Sacrament.

(1) The teaching of the Church as we have been informed, is that one may receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction only if he be in danger of death by sickness or as the result of an accident. The Sacrament, therefore, could not be administered to one who was about to take a perilous trip, or venture on a dangerous undertaking. But when the physician in attendance pronounces the sickness of a Catholic dangerous the priest should be sent for. This applies even to a child who has attained the age of reason.

Many relatives of a dangerously sick patient hesitate to call the priest to anoint him or her for fear that the patient, not realizing his danger, would become scared into believing that death was imminent. Every one should know that Extreme Unction is not going to hasten death, but rather that one of its effects is actually to retard it. What patient would honestly wish to wait until he lapsed into unconsciousness before receiving this Sacrament? He should wish to receive it when he has the complete use of his reason and of his senses.

Neither should one hesitate to send for the priest because it would be a great inconvenience for him to respond to such a call as, for instance, when he is instructing the children in school, or instructing converts in the evening, or even after he will have retired at night.

Every parishioner has a claim on the priest's time, and particularly before he dies. If the priest can assist in removing the remains of sins, and in preparing the dying person for a greater welcome by his Judge, evidently he wants to do that.

Of course, a priest should not be called out at night if the physician believes that there will be no risk in delaying his visit until the next day.

Extreme Unction should be administered, according to the mind of the Church, by the pastor of the parish to which the person belongs, even if some other priest had been called to hear the patient's confession.

A priest may be summoned to anoint one who has just expired. Theologians believe with scientists that the soul does not leave the body immediately with the last breath of the dying person; that it may linger in the body for at least half an hour thereafter. Hence during that time the priest should be called to give conditional absolution and Extreme Unction.

(2) If the sick person is to be anointed in a hospital, it is likely that the good Sister, or one of the nurses, will prepare the things requisite for the administration of the Sacrament. But if the priest is called to the patient's home there should be placed at the side of the bed a stand or small table, properly covered, and on it a crucifix and a candle. There should also be a dish holding five pieces or small cotton balls.

Since the Viaticum (Holy Communion for the dying) is usually given immediately following Extreme Unction, there should be on the table a glass of water and a spoon and a finger towel.

If members of the immediate family or other relatives are present, they should reverently kneel round the bed, and pray while the priest administers the Sacrament. If, at the same time, he says prayers for the dying, they should, of course, make the responses.

If it be the will of God that the person should die, he will be all the better prepared for it after having received this Sacrament; but if it be God's will that he should recover, the Sacrament, according to the teaching

of St. James, will hasten the recovery. Therefore there could not possibly be a good reason for Catholics to have their loved ones wait until too late to call the priest to administer Extreme Unction.

Even non-Catholic physicians recognize that something extraordinary happens through Extreme Unction. The patient becomes usually more peaceful and calm, which disposition usually enables the physician's services to become more effectual.

Non-Catholics, who observe the effects of Extreme Unction, are agreed that the Catholic religion is the best one in which to die, even if it be a harder one in which to live.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was once asked by a clergyman what effects religious beliefs had on the minds of the dying, and his answer was: "So far I have observed persons nearing the end of life, the Roman Catholic understands the business of dying better than Protestants. I have seen a good many Roman Catholics on their death-bed, and it always appeared to me that they accepted the inevitable with a composure which showed that their belief, whether or not the best to live by, was a better one to die by."

(3) You have never heard, I am sure, that a Catholic who practiced his religion during life was ready to change it at the time of death. But it is quite common for Protestants who gave little thought to the Catholic religion during their lifetime asking for admission into the Church before they die.

St. James, who describes the effects of Extreme Unction, distinctly says this about one of the effects: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up."

Of course, Extreme Unction will not always have that effect; if it did a Catholic who received the Sacrament whenever he was seriously ill would never die. But the implication is—and every priest has witnessed it—that the person will often begin to recover even after the doctor will have told relatives "there is no hope."

This reminds me of telling you that one may receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction as often as he is brought low by a different illness. It can even be repeated during the same illness if it endures long and the person will have been able to be up and around after a previous anointing, and once more lapses into a serious condition.

In these days of more frequent sudden death by heart attacks or by apoplexy or cerebral hemorrhage, there is good reason for us to pray with the Church for protection "against a sudden and unprovided death." A sudden death is not an evil if a person should be ready for it, but it would be the worst thing that could happen if he should be in grievous sin. This thought should induce those who are not living as good practical Catholics, or who receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist only a few times a year, to change their ways, so that they will be better prepared to enter eternity should they be called suddenly without the advantages of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and of Holy Viaticum.

People do not truly love their relatives who are seriously ill if for a human reason they neglect to call for the priest to do what he can for them spiritually, and especially through the special Sacrament which was instituted for just such a crisis. Extreme Unction will not cause one to die a minute earlier, but will enable the person to die much better prepared. Neglect on the part of relatives to bring these benefits of the Church to the dying person will certainly not be recalled cheerfully by that relative after his or her death—and they will be held accountable by God for their responsibility for such neglect.

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JULY 31

Holy Orders—1

It could be presumed that Christ would institute a Sacrament to be administered by one who enjoys the fullness of His priesthood, designed to empower others

to administer the Sacraments generally. He did this when He instituted the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

We shall briefly consider (1) what Holy Orders is; (2) what the priest's chief function is; and (3) why the priest is needed.

(1) According to the Councils of Trent, Holy Orders—sometimes simply called “Order”—is a Sacrament instituted by Christ, by which there is set up in the Church a Hierarchy constituted of Bishops, priests and subordinate ministers, and it, like Baptism and Confirmation, imprints an indelible mark or character on the soul of the one who receives it.

The Priesthood is conferred by the Bishop, Archbishop, Cardinal or Pope, on one who had previously reached the office of Deacon. In the ceremony of ordination the Bishop imposes his hands on the candidate for the holy priesthood and invokes the Holy Ghost to enter his soul. He clothes the candidate with stole and chasuble, anoints his hands with the Oil of Catechumens, and presents him with a chalice containing wine and water with the paten, on which rests an unconsecrated host, saying:

Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate Mass, both for the living and the dead.

Thereupon the one being ordained celebrates Mass from the Offertory until the end jointly with the ordaining prelate.

Towards the end of the ceremony the Bishop again imposes his hands on the candidate's head, saying:

Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained (John XX, 22).

(2) It hardly needs to be said here that the Catholic clergyman is called a “priest” because his primary purpose is to lead the congregation in the worship of God by offering the New Testament Sacrifice instituted by Christ Himself at the Last Supper. It is called the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Evidently one could not have the power to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass or to forgive sins unless he were empowered to do both through a special Sacrament.

Mention is made in the New Testament of the transmittal of priestly powers to others by the Apostles themselves, in order that all people to whom the gospel would be preached might have the benefit of the services of the priesthood. In the Acts of the Apostles (XIII, 3) we read that Paul and Barnabas were ordained and consecrated Bishops "by prayer and the imposition of hands." In his second Epistle to Timothy (I, 6) St. Paul speaks of consecrating Timothy. Reference is also made to the elevation of men to the order of Deacon (Acts VI, 3-6).

The Church regards Holy Orders as the highest calling, and does the Holy Spirit, as we read in the case of Paul and Barnabas:

The Holy Spirit said to them: "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have taken them." Then they fasting and praying and imposing hands, sent them away. So they being sent by the Holy Spirit went to Seleucia (Acts XIII, 2).

In addressing Timothy, whom he had himself ordained St. Paul said:

I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands (2 Tim. I, 6).

(3) If Christ was to be with His Church until the end of the world, carrying on through her the same mission which He entrusted to the Apostles, then evidently the Apostles must have successors throughout the ages—Bishops and priests—duly commissioned to preach the gospel, to baptize, to forgive sins, and to carry out the injunction of Christ at the Last Supper when He offered the first Mass "do ye this in commemoration of Me."

St. Ignatius of Antioch, who died in the year 107, speaks of the Bishop as one who received his ministry from Christ. St. Cyprian, who died in the year 258, calls Bishops "successors of the Apostles by ordination." Pope Sylvester I, who died in the year 355, declared that



“The episcopal grace is given by God through men; men imposing hands; God bestowing the grace.” St. Gregory of Nyssa, who died in the year 395, said of the newly ordained priest: “He who was but yesterday one of the people becomes suddenly . . . the dispenser of hidden mysteries.”

The Greek Schismatics place the greatest emphasis on the need of the Sacrament of the Holy Orders, and those Anglicans, who hold that Apostolic succession is necessary, claim that they have the same because they received the Sacrament of the Holy Orders. Of course, the Catholic Church does not agree that the clergymen of the Church of England have valid orders, because the priesthood was abolished in England under Elizabeth in the sixteenth century.

In modern Protestant religions the clergyman unordained by a Sacrament is called a “preacher,” and does not even attempt to offer sacrifice, which God Himself constituted the one way of worshipping Him as no other being may be worshipped. The priest is irrevocably consecrated to God and his ministry is solely for the people. That is why he is and must be revered. He is God’s agent in this world for the spiritualization of the individual and society.

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## AUGUST 7

### Holy Orders—2

I reminded you several times during the course of our instructions on the Sacraments, that most of them depend on the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which one is empowered and commissioned to exercise the ministry of Christ; and I have told you that if Protestants do not have all seven Sacraments, it is because their clergy never received valid Holy Orders, which is needed for the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, the power of consecrating. In fact, they would also need Apostolic succession even for the commission to preach.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders was (1) instituted by Christ at the Last Supper; (2) it was conferred by the Apostles on others; and (3) it is preceded by the reception of other Orders known as *Minor* and *Major*.

(1) The first duty of the priest is to offer the sacrifice of the New Law, and to be the instrument by which Christ Himself can be a "priest forever." At the Last Supper our Divine Savior made it clear that He was establishing a new "Covenant" in His own blood. He related it to His immolation on the cross the next day.

It was foretold by David, and later emphasized by St. Paul, that He would be a "priest forever according to the order of Melchisdeck." He could not be a "priest forever" here on earth except through the instrumentality of others, empowered to offer the identical sacrifice He offered the night before He died. After He made that offering in person He said to the Apostles who were at the table with Him, and who had received Holy Communion at this first Mass "Do ye this in commemoration of Me" (Luke XXII, 20). St. Paul tells us that order would be carried out "until He comes," hence through succession of the Apostles.

Then three days later, on the day of His Resurrection, addressing the same Apostles, He empowered and commissioned them to forgive sins, with the words: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John XX, 22).

God's way of remitting sin and of conferring sanctifying grace through the ages was to be through Sacraments, but not every one is empowered to administer Sacraments, such as the Holy Eucharist and Penance. It was necessary, therefore, for Him to institute a Sacrament for each of these purposes, as He instituted a Sacrament to take away sin in the first instance. Holy Orders is not necessary for the conferring of Baptism, because being necessary for salvation, God could not make its reception in all cases dependent on the presence of the priest.

(2) We read in the New Testament (Acts XIII, 3) that Apostles consecrated Paul and Barnabas with "prayers and the imposition of hands"; and also (2 Tim. I, 6) that St. Paul, in turn, consecrated Timothy. Apostolic succession was thereby started, and has continued since the days of the Apostles down to our times.

While the imposition of hands with prayer is regarded as the essence of Holy Orders, the ceremony as it takes place today is an elaborate one. The Sacrament is conferred during the celebration of Mass which is interrupted several times. The candidates for ordination first prostrate themselves on their face before the altar while the Litany of All Saints is chanted; then the Bishop imposes his hands upon the head of each one separately, and all priests witnessing the ceremony, after placing the stole over their shoulders, do the same thing. Then the candidate is invested with stole and chasuble.

Following the singing of *Veni Creator Spiritus* the Bishop anoints the hands of each candidate with sacred chrism in the form of a cross, and empowers him to bless and to sanctify the things blessed. He then delivers to each the chalice and paten with words which impart to them the power to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I have told you that from the Offertory until the end those being ordained recite the Mass with the Bishop, and even the prayers of the Canon and Consecration, which are usually said inaudibly, are said loudly by both Bishop and those offering the Mass with him. This is called co-celebration.

After the Communion of the Mass the power of absolving from sin is imparted with the same words Christ addressed to the Apostles "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven" (John XX, 22).

The newly ordained promise their Bishop, or, if they be Religious, their high Superiors, respect and obedience.

(3) During the course of theology pursued by the candidate for the priesthood, the Bishop confers *Tonsure*

on him, at which time he is invested as a cleric, and reminded that he is "taking the Lord as his inheritance." The word "Tonsure" derives its meaning for the cutting of five bits of hair from the front, the back, both sides and the crown of the head by the Bishop. From that day until the end of his life, in Catholic countries, a small space on the crown of the head is kept shaven to remind others that he belongs entirely to God.

A year later *two Minor Orders* are conferred on the tonsured one, and after another year, *two other Minor Orders*, which delegate and commission them to take care of the church, serve at the altar and to exorcise.

Then later the *Subdiaconate* is conferred solemnly. From that day the candidate is obliged to recite the Divine Office throughout his life and to observe celibacy.

Then comes the Diaconate, about which we read much in the early Church, even during the time of the Apostles. It confers the power to preach, to baptize, to dispense Holy Communion. After pursuing further studies the deacon is ready for the order of priesthood.

When the priest is elevated to the Episcopate he receives the fullness of the priesthood, is empowered to transmit the Sacrament of Holy Orders to others, and given wider jurisdiction in the government of the Church.

No dignity is higher than that of the priesthood and no other service to mankind can compare to it. Therefore parents should regard themselves as specially honored by God if He invites their son to embrace this state of life. On the other hand, they should not exert pressure on their boy to prepare for the priesthood if he himself has not a leaning and a strong desire for it. The Church needs priests badly everywhere in the world; and if a young man should like to serve God professionally throughout life as His special agent in promoting the sanctification and salvation of souls, the priesthood offers him that glorious opportunity. It is a high vocation and, therefore, boys should pray from youth to ascertain whether God would have them embrace it.

## AUGUST 14

## Christian Marriage a Sacrament

Marriage is a sacred contract which had God as its Author Who, even in the Old Law, ordered the promulgation of an extensive code of laws for the families of His chosen People to observe. That Christ regarded it as a very sacred thing is clear from the rebuke He administered to those who disregarded its indissoluble character, and from His plain declaration that in His Church it would be a holy thing.

It is the teaching of the Church that Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. Let us, therefore, see (1) for whom marriage is a Sacrament; (2) under whose jurisdiction it falls as a Sacrament; and (3) what are some of the laws relating to it.

(1) Marriage is a Sacrament for all baptized persons. When two baptized persons, capable of marrying, give their consent in the presence of the proper witnesses, they not only are validly married, but receive a Sacrament.

In other words, the marriage is not first a contract and then a Sacrament, but the contract is itself a Sacrament entered into by two baptized persons. I hardly need to mention here that only the baptized can receive any Sacrament; that, therefore, while two unbaptized persons may enter a sacred marriage contract, they do not receive a Sacrament.

If the contract and the Sacrament are one, it follows that the same individuals who make the contract also administer the Sacrament. While a law of the Church requires that the marriage vows be pronounced in the presence of an authorized priest, his presence is only that of an official witness. That means that the two baptized persons, free to enter such a contract and promising to accept it "for better or worse until death," are really the ministers of the Sacrament. It is the only Sacrament, besides Baptism, which can be effected by lay people. The contract and the Sacrament are identical for the baptized, and when the espousing parties

enter such a contract they necessarily receive the Sacrament.

(2) Since Baptism admits the one baptized into the Church; and since Christian marriage itself is a Sacrament, evidently the Church has jurisdiction over it as a Sacrament, and has the right to make laws and to pass judgment on matters pertaining to its validity and to its lawfulness.

You have heard that there can be impediments to any marriage; hence they can impede marriage as a Sacrament also. According to God's own laws no one, already married, whose partner is still living, may validly contract another marriage. That was solemnly declared by God at the time He married our first parents, and it was reaffirmed by Christ.

Some laws relating to the contract of marriage are identical both in the State and in the Church, such as that relating to a marriage between very near relatives. But when the State gives permission to remarry to one who is already validly married for life, it assumes an authority which it does not have, because God, Who is superior to the State, has forbidden such second or third unions. You should write that to your Hollywood idols.

It is when people are under *diriment* impediments, or such as make a marriage impossible, that the Church declares a previous contract null and void. In other words, while you have heard about annulments of marriages by the Church, they were not actually annulments of a valid marriage, but rather a declaration that the original contract entered into was not a valid one and, therefore, was no marriage at all. The Church has made some laws intended to prevent marriages between certain people or under certain conditions, but since not all these interfere with the validity of the marriage, but rather with its lawfulness, they are called "*prohibitive* impediments."

(3) The Church forbids, for instance, a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic even if he should have been validly baptized. This is done because it is the business of the Church on earth to promote the faith of Christ,

and to protect the interests of God in this world generally. If, in the Old Law, when marriage was not a Sacrament, God forbade His chosen people, the Jews, to marry outside their faith, then there is a greater reason for the Church in the New Law to oppose a union between a Catholic and a non-Christian, or a Catholic and a Christian, who is outside the pale of the true Church, whether knowingly or unknowingly. It was Christ Who declared "A house divided against itself cannot stand" (Mark III, 25).

Just as I have noted that the State has no power over a law of God, so neither has the Church. When she is called on to judge whether or not a marriage had been validly contracted, the case is referred to the Diocesan Matrimonial Court, which makes a very careful investigation. If the court finds that a diriment impediment existed at the very time of the marriage, it gives a declaration of nullity, but this does not mean that it is granting a divorce with permission for a *second* marriage. It means that she declares that there was no real marriage in the first instance, therefore, if one or both parties see fit to marry again it becomes their first real marriage.

The Church can allow no dispensations for a marriage between people to whom divinely established diriment impediments apply. But she may grant dispensations and does so, for good reasons, when there is question only of *her* laws, and not of God's laws or a law of nature, interfering.

Never, for a moment, entertain the thought that your Church is old fashioned in reference to marriage. It is our modern generation which is "new fashioned" and in conflict with laws imposed either by nature itself, or those promulgated by God, the Father, the Author; or God the Son, Who elevated marriage to the rank of things holy, for all persons who had become God's children by Baptism.

The wisdom of the Church in her regulations dealing with the sacrament of Matrimony is made clearer and clearer with the passing of the years. Broken homes are

comparatively rare among Catholics, but a very common thing among others, separating children from parents, and weakening the very fabric of our nation, which can be no stronger than the families which comprise it.

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AUGUST 21

## God Wants to Bless Your Marriage

One of the most beautiful scenes recorded in the New Testament is the appearance of Jesus and Mary at the marriage feast of Cana, and the significance of their appearance at this wedding was immensely impressive. Cana is only a short distance from Nazareth, where Christ had lived with Mary and Joseph from the time of His return from Egypt, following the death of Herod.

That scene is repeated frequently in every parish church. Jesus (1) wants to be present at your marriage; (2) He will bless it if you are worthy; and (3) He wants you to regard marriage as something "holy."

(1) In accepting the invitation to the Cana wedding Christ wished to impress on all people for all times the fact that God wants to be invited to every wedding in order to bless it.

This is why He elevated marriage, according to St. Paul (Eph. V, 32) to the rank of a Sacrament which, for Christians, would not be dissociated from the contract itself. As a Sacrament it would confer special blessings and graces on the wedded pair, so that, throughout a long career, they might be truly happy, and in that state of life, and through the fulfillment of its duties, attain a high place in Heaven.

You have often heard it said that "Marriages are made in Heaven." Cana's was, and every one should want his or hers to be. They are arranged there for those who make themselves worthy of such a display of interest by God, and who will pray for His assistance in the selection of a partner. But numerous are the marriages arranged by God's archenemy, who realizes that a bad marriage usually means a big victory for him. Its



evil effects may endure for generations. The devil realizes that a marriage is likely to result badly if he can assist a young man or woman in the selection of a partner; and he knows that he will have little interference, according to a declaration of Almighty God Himself, if, in preparing for marriage, youth will "shut God out of its life"; if youth will associate with people who have neither faith nor morality; if youth "will not live according to the spirit, but according to the flesh." Every pastor has seen unhappiness come to many, who, against their own better judgment, yielded to the stronger will of another.

(2) Even if Heaven were not interested in your future welfare on earth, you yourself should be; and your temporal welfare will depend largely on the kind of marriage you will contract. Our country is full of broken homes, of mismated married couples, and, therefore, of marriage failures. In fact, never before was marriage such a risk, and this should lead young people to use their heads more than their hearts, and to rely on their faith more than on their inclinations, in choosing a sweetheart.

Generally speaking youth should not begin keeping company with one whose family record is bad. Vice is often inherited, and good character is usually not formed in a home where good moral influence was lacking.

A young woman should not fraternize with one who has not ambition, whose rendezvous place is the saloon or the poolroom or the gambling hall. The young man should not court girls whose tastes are extravagant, whom he, therefore, would not likely be able to support and please; and the young woman should not go out with a young man who lives beyond his means, who does not pay his debts, who spends much money on her.

It is important, as we mentioned before, that young people should try to learn the character and disposition of others by observing their attitude towards their parents, towards their brothers and sisters. Since human nature does not change through marriage, every young married woman must expect her husband to treat her much as he

treats his sisters and mother, and every young man can be sure that the girl's attitude towards her brothers and father will later be her attitude toward him.

(3) We have reminded you that the importance which Almighty God attached to marriage was shown by the presence of Christ at the marriage of Cana; but its importance should be extremely clear even from the purpose which it is intended to serve. If, through marriage, Heaven is to be peopled; if the family, resulting from marriage, is the very foundation of society; if husband and wife are so closely united that, in the words of Genesis (XI, 23), they are expected to leave father and mother permanently and cleave to each other; if they are actually joined together by God Himself (Matt. XIX, 16), then certainly marriage is something very sacred and holy.

Precisely because marriage does hold such an important place in the plan of God, we are not surprised that Christ, in founding a new world-wide religion, should elevate marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament for all those capable of receiving a Sacrament, namely, the baptized—those who are incorporated into His Kingdom.

The union of Christ with His Church, which He came from Heaven to establish in His own blood, is certainly intimate, holy and perpetual, and, in the mind of Christ, so should marriage be.

If marriage is a life-long contract, if the weal or woe of society depends on its stability, then, even apart from religion, it is the most sacred alliance on earth.

Marriage is less sacredly considered by people in the United States than anywhere else in the world. We have innumerable marriage mills and divorce mills. Many people become acquainted today, tomorrow will procure a marriage license without difficulty, and will have even less difficulty in finding a Justice of the Peace, or a Protestant clergyman to witness their marriage.

County has vied with county to get the marriage business; state with state, to get divorce business—all from a purely financial motive.

Marriage mills and divorce mills are closely related. If we are to have hasty and thoughtless marriages, then we are naturally going to have machinery with which to break up these marriages. If it were difficult to procure a divorce, then people would give more thought and reflection to marriage, and exercise more caution in the selection of the marriage partner.

The State has the right to make certain demands in relation to marriage. It may establish, for instance, a minimum age; it may require a residence in the state or county for a certain period; it may require that the parties proposing to get married, receive a license from it; but it may not "put asunder" what God, from whom civil power is derived, "hath joined together."

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## AUGUST 28

### The State as Weak as Its Marriages

The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction exist only at the time they are being received; the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist endures as long as the species last; but the Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony endure throughout life.

St. Robert Bellarmine likened the Sacrament of Matrimony to that of the Holy Eucharist, because it continues beyond the time of the sacramental contract.

Since the family is based on marriage, and society on the family, evidently (1) no state can be stronger than its homes; (2) the state must be as unspiritual and irreligious as the families composing it; and (3) the reform of the state must begin in the home.

(1) Just as the Church orders a light to be burned before the tabernacle because the Eucharist endures as a Sacrament as long as the accidents under which it is contained endure; just as the Church demands that the species be carefully protected against desecration; so should the wedded couple be reminded of the continuation of their sacramental contract. They need to be reminded that the Sacrament is desecrated not only by

divorce and unfaithfulness, but even by the neglect of parental duties. This is the lesson which Catholics need to keep in mind, a lesson of which the generality of people of our country and of the world never even think. Of course, most marriages that take place in the United States are not Sacramental, and, therefore, not accompanied by the Sacramental graces, which the married need very much in a country whose social life is pagan.

If the family is the unit of society, evidently no state can be stronger than the families which compose it, and it is not likely that its constituent families will be made stronger until they take marriage itself more seriously. Today marriage is no more seriously considered than is the thing which disrupts it. If it begins without the blessing of God through His Church, it must be continued without sacramental graces, and, as you well know, it is becoming ever more and more unsafe as a permanent union.

George Washington declared, in his Farewell Address, that neither private nor public morality can exist apart from religious principles. If these principles are lacking in most homes they cannot exist in the nation.

(2) According to statistics issued by the United States government one-half of all the people of our nation are unaffiliated with any religious organization, which means that they have never learned the ABC's of religion. For the most part they have never received any Sacrament, not even that of Baptism, which must be the starting point of a spiritual and supernatural life. Of those who do belong to one of the more than 200 Protestant religions comparatively few are instructed in the faith. Even many of these have never been baptized because they have never been taught that it is essential for salvation.

Only one-tenth of the school population receives any knowledge of religion or morals in the school; and only one-half of all Catholic children do. Hence unless parents become their religious teachers and set the example of spiritual living there can be no reform of society along religious, spiritual or moral lines.

God obligates both the Church and Catholic parents to be the child's teachers and guides. The Church is so obligated because by Baptism the child became a child of God, and must be reared as a child of God by the Church of which it—also through Baptism—became a member; and by its parents, who evidently must do far more than most of them are doing to educate their children as "children of God." It is a plain duty which is imposed by the Sacrament of Matrimony.

From these observations it must be clear that society can be reformed today only by Catholics, every one of whom is God's adopted child, and nearly every one of whom is a professed soldier of Christ, and all of whom have the benefit of the grace and aid-giving Sacraments. For them to follow the unspiritual and irreligious among whom they live and work, rather than to lead the latter by their example and instruction, is a crime before God.

(3) If all homes were religious the state would be religious; if all homes were truly spiritual, the state would be spiritual-minded; if all people regulated their lives by the Commandments of God, these would become the basis of all laws passed by the State and Federal legislatures.

There were many centuries during which kings and emperors took their membership in the Church as seriously as the people, and cooperated with the Church in every possible manner. The citizenry was, therefore, Christian, instinctively, and even if poorly educated in the books, it had an innate sense of what was right and what was wrong. Marriage was held to be a very sacred contract by all the people and, therefore, divorce was not permitted by the State. Religion was a part of the educational system from the primary grade through college and university, and it was the norm by which people felt impelled to settle all national and international problems. If there had been such cooperation between the State and the Church during our lifetime there would have been no wars, no conflicts between capital and labor, no cultivation of hatred as between races and nations.

It must have occurred to you frequently during the late war and since, that Almighty God was never invoked at international conferences, that the heads of states never called on their citizenry to repent, do penance and pray for guidance for their statesmen. This itself is proof sufficient that the average State is neither religious nor spiritual-minded, that it tries to build on the sand of political opinions and expediency, and not on the rock, which is Christ.

A thousand years before the establishment of Christianity David declared "Unless God build the house, they labor in vain who build it." We have seen such vain labor on the part of the world's present-day leaders, yet, among themselves, they have never appealed to God to help them build the house of peace.

Just as the family is the unit of society, so should the heads of families and every individual in the family regard themselves as bound to assist in improving the religious and spiritual condition of their community. The community, built of families, is a larger unit of the state, and if all of them were greatly improved by the Catholics who are part of them, we would eventually, at least, have a religious and spiritual nation on which Heaven would look down with favor.

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## SEPTEMBER 4

### You Must Prove Your Freedom to Marry

Marriage, regarded as the holiest of all contracts from the beginning of the human race, was elevated by Christ to the rank of Sacrament for all Christians. Like all other Sacraments, it was placed by Christ in the custody of His Church. Five of the seven Sacraments offer grace and help to the individual. Matrimony and Holy Orders are, in a special manner, social Sacraments, and impart grace and help for the benefit of many—the former for all the members of the family, the latter for members of the Church.

According to Church legislation Catholics must (1) marry before a priest and two witnesses; (2) they must produce a certificate of Baptism and have the banns promulgated; and (3) strangers to the priest must prove by affidavit their freedom to marry.

(1) The Church is a sovereign society as well as the State, and since marriage is a Sacrament for Catholics, the Church must enact laws relating to Matrimony as a Sacrament.

The State has authority over marriage as a civil contract, and may exact the observance of certain forms, such as the procurement of a license; it may enact laws determining the age, the health, etc., of the applicant. In a similar manner the Church has authority over marriage as a Sacrament.

For a Catholic marriage is always a Sacrament, while it is never a Sacrament when contracted by two unbaptized persons. Because it is a Sacrament for Catholics they must pronounce their vows before an official representative of their Church, and in the presence of two witnesses. The official representative is the pastor of the bride, when both parties are Catholics, and the pastor of the Catholic, when one of the parties is a non-Catholic. No other priest may officiate at the marriage unless delegated by the proper pastor.

Since a Catholic cannot enter marriage without at the same time receiving a Sacrament, and since Catholics come to their Church for Sacraments, when a Catholic contracts a marriage before a Protestant minister, before a Justice of the Peace, it is null and void.

(2) Because the Sacrament of Matrimony presupposes the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism, a Baptismal Certificate is required from the pastor of the church in which the parties were baptized. If the Baptismal Certificate be almost impossible to secure because, for instance, one or both parties were baptized in a foreign country, then affidavits from parents or Baptism sponsors must be procured.

Not of absolute necessity, but of importance, is a Certificate of Confirmation also. It offers evidence that

the person, now seeking marriage, had a Catholic training beyond the time of the use of reason.

The Church requires that a forthcoming marriage be promulgated three times in all parish churches in which the prospective bride and groom had membership for six months. While it is not always possible to conform to the letter of this law, the wisdom of it in our days is clear if the priest who is to assist at the marriage is to be assured that no impediments obstruct a free marriage.

The civil law in many of our states, and in many other countries, has copied this Catholic Church policy by requiring that notice be served in the courts or to newspapers of a forthcoming marriage three weeks before a marriage license will be issued. The purpose of such a law is three-fold: (a) to prevent hasty marriages, which usually end in failure; (b) to prevent unlawful marriages; and (c) to prevent people diseased from marrying.

Thoughtful Catholics want the banns published. It is a challenge to people "to find fault if you can." Secret and unannounced marriages provoke very unkind gossip.

(3) When the pastor of the Catholic party is asked to witness a marriage between that parishioner and another Catholic who, to him, is an entire stranger, he must not only be furnished with proof of the Baptism, but also with evidence that the stranger is free to contract marriage. A stranger to the priest who is asked to perform the marriage, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, must take an oath, with his hand resting on the Bible, to the effect that he either was never married before, or that his consort to a previous marriage is dead. Evidence of the latter must be produced. A civil divorce and a license to contract a second marriage according to the laws of the State do not make a second marriage either licit or valid before God. Not even the non-Catholic's conversion to the Catholic Church would invalidate a previous valid marriage, except under the Pauline Privilege, which is explained elsewhere.



The Church, God's agent, must, especially in these days when divorce is so common, make sure that the applicants are eligible for marriage. So many non-Catholics do not feel that they are obligated by the laws of the Catholic Church, and do not hesitate to deceive the priest. But in nearly all cases they violate a law of God rather than a law of the Catholic Church.

If a Catholic contracts a marriage which endures for life he certainly should pray and exert prudence and caution in selecting a permanent mate. He should not take for granted that every young person under twenty-five is free to marry. In these days it is not out of place to ask the friend who wants to court you "Am I going with one who tried marriage before? In more cases than you think the answer would be "yes."

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## SEPTEMBER 11

### As a Sacrament Marriage Belongs to the Church

Since only baptized people are in position to receive Sacraments, marriage is a Sacrament only when the contracting parties are baptized. Otherwise it is only a natural contract which, however, because so declared by Almighty God, its Author, is binding unto death. The priest who performs the marriage and blesses it is only its witness in the name of the Church; the contracting parties, through their mutual consent, effect the binding contract.

Marriage is (1) a true Sacrament; (2) it binds husband and wife until death; and (3) as a Sacrament it is under the control of the Church.

(1) St. Paul (Eph. V, 23-32) teaches that Christian marriage is "a great Sacrament," because it represents the intimate and holy union between Christ and His Church. One would suppose that marriage would be given a Sacramental character in the Church of Christ not only because it is the foundation of a Chris-

tian home which, in turn, is the foundation of a Christian state of society, but also because special grace is needed by the contracting parties if the marriage bond must last "until death does them part." The Sacrament confers the graces needed for the wedded pair to meet their obligations and to carry their burden throughout life.

With the rejection of the sacramental character of marriage, following the origin of Protestantism, came also the disastrous plague of divorce, with all its attendant evils. Luther allowed the first divorce in Germany to the Prince of Hesse. Henry VIII, a King, granted himself the first divorce ever known in England.

That marriage was regarded as a Sacrament throughout the centuries is clear not only from the testimony of early Christian writers, but from the fact that the Greek Church—hundreds of years older than Protestantism—has always held it to be such.

A. S. Barnes, in his *The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments*, page 141, notes that representations in the catacombs, dating back to the fourth century or earlier, prove that marriage between Christians was regarded as a sacred rite.

(2) That the marriage bond was to bind until death is clear from the words which Almighty God addressed to Adam (Gen. II, 24), words quoted by Christ Himself (Matt. XIX, 5-6): "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore, now they are not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

In St. Mark (X, 11-12) Christ is quoted as saying: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, commits adultery against her, and if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she commits adultery." Our Savior is quoted by St. Luke in the same way (XVI, 18); and by St. Paul (1 Cor. VII, 2-11).

The most the Church is authorized by her divine Founder to allow in behalf of a married couple who cannot live happily, is a "separation," which does not give either the privilege of remarrying.

The Church may grant a dispensation by which a Catholic and an unmarried non-Catholic can validly marry, but she cannot grant a dispensation for a marriage between a Catholic and a divorcee, whether he was baptized or not. If you have ever heard that a Catholic, once married, has been permitted to remarry during the lifetime of the partner from which he or she was separated, the explanation is that, upon investigation, it was discovered that the first marriage was not valid in the eyes of God. If it was not a valid marriage, it was not a marriage at all and, therefore, the so-called second marriage is really the first true marriage.

(3) If marriage is a Sacrament, it should be clear that Christian marriage falls under the control of the Church, and not of the State. As you have already been told, the State may legislate concerning the age at which people may marry, concerning the procuring of a marriage license, and concerning certain civil effects of marriage. But it is not empowered by God, no more than is the Church, to dissolve a valid marriage, and to allow the separated parties to marry again. We know that this is done, in a wholesale way, in this country, but that does not make it licit before God.

There are Catholics who fail to understand all this, because they do not take account of the Sacrament character of marriage for all Christians. Many have the notion that if they should attempt a marriage with a divorcee before a Justice of the Peace, they only violate a law of God, and are no more married after such a ceremony than they were before. If the Pope cannot annul a valid marriage certainly a judge of a civil court is not empowered to do so.

In explaining the wrong of remarriage after divorce never say that "the Church" forbids it, but rather God forbade it back in Eden, and Christ forbade it most definitely, as Matthew, Mark and Luke quote Him, and as St. Paul clearly teaches.

## SEPTEMBER 18

## Church Cannot Annul a Valid Marriage

We have seen how sacred Christian marriage was intended to be, yet how lightly it has come to be regarded by our generation. We have pointed out that Almighty God Himself, Who sealed the first marriage contract, declared it to be indissoluble; that His Divine Son, Who came to be mankind's Teacher, left no room for people even to doubt its indissolubility.

We have quoted the Evangelists and St. Paul, who report Christ's characterization of a second marriage following a civil divorce as "adultery."

The law of God is expressed by the Church (Canon 119) in these words:

A valid marriage, ratified and consummated, can be dissolved by no human power, and by no other cause than death.

Let us remove some wrong impressions: (1) Legal Separation does not warrant remarriage; (2) the Church cannot annul a valid marriage; (3) what the Pauline Privilege implies.

(1) Although the Church permits separation for a just and serious cause, it cannot grant the right to those validly married to remarry, because God Himself forbids it. The Church recognizes as a valid and serious cause for a separation, but not for a new marriage, unfaithfulness on the part of one of the spouses, unless the other spouse consented to the crime, was responsible for it or condoned it, or committed the same crime.

It is Almighty God Himself, Who forbids such a marriage, and the Church only promulgates His law. Once God has emphatically spoken, the hands of His agent, the Church, are tied. Not only are the hands of the Church tied, but the hands of the State as well. No king or president, no Federal or State legislature, has any authority to alter a law of God, Who, after marrying the first human pair, declared:

“Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.”

Not only was that decision of God never abrogated, but it was solemnly reiterated by Christ when He said: “What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” He declared that its temporary suspension, as in the Old Law would not be tolerated in the New, because the union of man and woman in marriage would represent His own union with His Church, from which, according to His own testimony, He would never be separated. The Church is called Christ’s bride. Because husband and wife were to be united in a similar holy manner and need the blessing of God on their union, Christ’s first public act was to attend a marriage in order to bless it. Marriage is called by St. Paul a “great” sacrament, because of its mysterious relation to Christ and to His Church.

(2) If no one may marry a divorcee, then no one is permitted to carry on a courtship with a divorcee—because no one may keep regular company with one whom he or she is not permitted to marry. Because young divorcees are so numerous, Catholic youths are likely to meet them in social life without suspecting that they had once been married. It is, therefore, important that, before any Catholic young man or lady gives encouragement to a stranger, he or she elicit from him or her a statement on his or her freedom to marry. It seems impossible to believe that any Catholic, realizing the consequences of marrying a divorcee, should even dream of it, because such a marriage would be no marriage at all before God; in fact, in the very words of Christ and His Apostles it would be an adulterous union.

Marriage is a serious affair and, therefore, youths should proceed cautiously, pray and seek guidance, live religiously and morally, in order to be worthy of the blessing of Heaven needed to make them happy.

You have heard of some people being permitted to contract a second marriage during the lifetime of the spouse to a first marriage; but you judge wrongly if

you assume that that first marriage was actually valid in the eyes of God. Because of an impediment to a valid marriage the first contract was null and void.

(3) Holy Scripture justifies remarriage only in one instance. It is the dissolution of a natural contract (not Sacramental) between two unbaptized people, one of whom later embraces the faith and the other refuses to live peacefully with him or her on that account. Becoming separated, the convert is permitted to contract marriage with a member of God's Church if his or her former spouse refuses to return to him or her. This is called the Pauline Privilege.

You have also heard the Catholic Church charged with permitting a second marriage to rich people who were willing to pay well for a dispensation, but you have heard a wicked libel. You hardly need to be told that all of England could have been saved to the faith if the Pope had granted permission to Henry VIII to remarry. He surely would have paid any price. But the Church refused even him, as she was obliged to do.

Upon appeal to Rome there are far more marriages declared null in favor of the poor than of the rich. But understand correctly, that no dispensation was granted for a second marriage, but rather the first contract was proved to be null or invalid whereupon the so-called second marriage became the first.

It was your Church which changed completely the status of woman, which elevated her to the same rank and dignity enjoyed by the man; which protected her, which made her a partner in marriage, a partner in her husband's goods, which compelled her husband to be true to her throughout life, which took account of the rights and security of their children, which gave to the family a sacred character and, therefore, to society its unity and stability.

The world would probably be engulfed in barbarism today, if indeed the European population had not become extinct before America was discovered, if the Catholic Church had not saved it. In pagan and Mohammedan countries women are still treated as slaves and have few rights.

## SEPTEMBER 25

## The Divorce Evil

Although most people are called by God to embrace the state of Matrimony, it is becoming increasingly risky for a Catholic to enter a marriage contract except with one of his or her own religion.

The number of marriage failures has grown so rapidly from year to year in this nation that the United States now leads all countries of the world in divorces, as it also does in crime. Short-lived marriages are becoming so common that they no longer attract unfavorable attention.

Not many years ago the remarried divorcee was socially ostracized; but, today, despite the fact that before God he or she lives in adultery, no public animosity is shown toward him or her.

Despite the prohibition of divorce and remarriage by God and even by nature (1) the divorce rate is ever on the increase; (2) it has changed the mentality of the people; and (3) it is most injurious to society.

(1) From the latest statistics on divorces we cull these comparative ratios between marriages and divorces in several countries:

England had only one divorce in 1939 for every twenty marriages, but in 1946, there was one divorce for every five marriages;

France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries had an average of only one divorce to every 35 marriages.

In Canada, there was only one divorce for every 161 marriages, yet Canada borders the United States.

In the United States there was one divorce for every six marriages before the late war, but in 1946, one for every three or even two marriages in all cities, and the situation is growing worse.

In Detroit during 1945 every second marriage ended in divorce. In St. Louis there were as many divorces as marriages during the first four months of 1946. In Cali-

fornia there was a divorce for every 1.65 marriages. In some cities there were more divorces than marriages. Since most divorcees remarry it means that they actually "live" in adultery, and St. Paul clearly teaches that the adulterer will be damned eternally. Catholics will be safe for happiness here, sanctify themselves and bring up their children properly only if they marry among themselves "until death do them part."

The ratio of one to six before the late war was for the United States as a whole. In rural areas the ratio was one to eleven.

In some countries there were no divorces because they are not granted.

(2) The effect on the mentality of the American people is evident. They now take divorce as much for granted as marriage. Most non-Catholics no longer think of marriage as a permanent contract and hence, antecedently, assume the right to apply for a separation from their marriage partners if they should tire of them or become attracted to another.

Those who have that antecedent attitude cannot even marry validly, and for this reason the Church requires that the non-Catholic, desirous of marrying a Catholic, declare over his signature that he regards marriage as indissoluble except by death.

The Catholic who believes in the permanency of the marriage bond certainly should not marry one who does not believe in it with equal firmness, because the life-long fidelity of such a one could not be presumed.

How so many Protestants can maintain that the Bible is their rule of faith and still uphold the dissolution of the marriage bond is impossible to understand.

When you, therefore, answer questions about divorce, never say that your Church forbids it, but that it is forbidden in the clearest terms by God Himself, over Whose laws the Church has absolutely no jurisdiction. The Church is God's agent on earth and must defend His laws. She would not represent Him nor deserve the respect of people if she did not.



According to the law of Nature, marriage must be permanent if husband or wife is to be protected against the other forming a new friendship, or if the rights of the children to the care and support of both parents are to be safeguarded.

Children are innocent parties to every divorce, and a grave injustice is done to them when their father and mother separate and leave their fate to the civil court.

(3) A Cleveland Judge, who recently reported that he hears 4,000 divorce appeals every year, told the public in a statement that divorce is the greatest underlying reason for the decadence in government, because it contains in itself the very thing that is opposed to good government.

Since a nation is constituted of families, if half of it is constituted of *broken* families, with children separated from their true parents, and other children turned over to people who are neither their father nor their mother, one will agree that the Cleveland Judge utters an indisputable truth. Religion can be the only permanent bond of union between the individual and God.

For the same reason that a community suffers from disagreement among families, so the individual family suffers from disagreement between husband and wife on the matter of religion. Just as husband and wife become one through marriage, so should the children be one with their parents in religion in order to have the perfect home. It was Christ Himself, Who declared that "a house divided against itself cannot stand" (Mark III, 25).

If no nation can be better than its homes, of what will our nation be able to boast if from one-fourth to one-half its homes are not only disunited, unhappy, but broken?

The Judge, whom we have quoted, pointed out the remedy in these words: "Put religion back in the family; work towards having it fostered in the schools. Make the Ten Commandments the family rule of life. Cease paying attention to the irreligious and immoral ideas about love and marriage carried in so many American magazines."

About the time the Cleveland Judge spoke as we quoted him, a Chicago Judge resigned from his office because, he said, "I cannot continue being a party to the wholesale breaking up of homes."

The true Catholic marriage is blessed by God when it is prepared for in the right manner, and if God made it indissoluble, He will also make it possible for husband and wife to be permanently happy in their first marriage, and make parents happy in their children. Of course, they must cooperate with God all through their lives; dedicating their children to God, and rearing them in a religious home, both by teaching and example.

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## OCTOBER 2

### Biblical Reason for Remarriage

Many Catholics must still entertain the notion that remarriage after divorce during the lifetime of the divorcee, violates only a Catholic Church law, or they surely would not dare to attempt it.

Christ is invoked as allowing a remarriage after separation for one special reason—unfaithfulness. But let us see (1) what Christ did say; (2) How all Christians until recently understood marriage; and (3) note a false accusation.

(1) The New Testament furnishes us with four very plain pronouncements on the indissolubility of marriage. They are contained in the tenth chapter of St. Mark, verse 9:12; in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke, verse 18; in First Cor. VII, 10-11; in Romans VII, 2-3. St. Matthew also quotes Christ on the indissolubility of marriage in Chapter V. 32, and Chapter XIX, 9.

Although there are those who would justify divorce and a new marriage on the ground of unfaithfulness, a close inspection of Matthew's two texts make it very clear that Christ justified *only separation*, with no right to remarry. In both texts He very plainly declares: "He that marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery."

St. Luke writes "*Everyone* that puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he that marries a woman who has been put away from her husband commits adultery"; and St. Mark uses the word "*whoever*." He says: "*Whoever* puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if the wife puts away her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

There is hardly any doctrine of faith taught so clearly in Holy Scripture as the doctrine concerning marriage and divorce.

(2) That it was the custom of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, to regard marriage as a permanent contract is clear from the marriage ceremony in the ritual of every sect, and even in the ceremony performed by officers of the civil law. In every marriage ceremony, the words "until death do us part" occur. Therefore there may be no "trial" marriages. Everyone, Catholic or non-Catholic, who has entered such a union is living in the state of grievous sin.

There is no record of divorce being granted to anybody in Christian countries from the time of Christ until the sixteenth century, and even after that time they were of very rare occurrence. A civil marriage was unheard of among Christians until after the "Reformation," and not until the French Revolution was marriage held to be a civil contract. There are still many countries in which there is no such thing as a divorce law. According to contemporary historians Luther regretted more than anything else the permission to remarry granted by him to the Landgrave of Hesse.

The very words "matrimony," "wedlock," "conjugal" state, imply permanency. They signify that both husband and wife accept a common yoke, which they must carry throughout life.

(3) Quite commonly the Catholic Church is accused of pronouncing invalid every marriage which does not take place before her own clergy. This is a most wicked libel, because the Catholic Church passes no judgment on marriages of people who are not of her fold. She

takes for granted that they are valid, although, naturally, she would hold, as every Bible Protestant must hold, that marriage in which one of the parties is a divorcee with wife or husband still living, is invalid.

It is unfortunate that multitudes have been taught, and, therefore, falsely believe, that the Catholic Church repudiates marriages contracted by Protestants among themselves, and stamps as "illegitimate" the children of such alliances

The law that requires people to be married before their parish priest and two witnesses applies to marriages between Catholics only, or to a marriage in which one party is a Catholic. Since the Church holds that for the Catholic marriage is a Sacrament, and that Sacraments are in her custody, it is her business to determine on what conditions one of her own children may enter that holy state. She is deserving of great praise for defending the sanctity of Christian marriage in the face of the paganism which attacks it. Just as all of England could have been saved for the Church by compromising with the king, so today the Church could win a million converts in short order by receiving divorcees into her fold. But "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." That warning of Christ does not exempt the Pope or God's Church.

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## OCTOBER 9

### Bishops Dispense by Delegated Power

When St. Paul exhorts people to "marry in the Lord" he means that they should "marry in the Church."

Tertullian, who lived in the second century, in interpreting St. Paul's words, declares that Paul "is not advising, but strictly commanding."

The law against mixed marriages is a universal law of the Church. Therefore (1) only the head of the Universal Church can mitigate it; (2) good Catholics will not marry a non-Catholic; (3) they should not point to exceptional cases.

(1) It is generally known among Catholics that their

Bishops may grant a dispensation to effect a valid marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, but it does not seem to be so commonly known that the Bishop has this power only by delegation from the Supreme Head of the Church.

The law forbidding marriages between Catholics and those who are not of that faith is a universal law in the Church. Therefore it can be dispensed only by him, who rules over the universal Church.

To make the relaxation of the law, when conditions warrant it, more practical, the Vicar of Christ delegates to Bishops, usually for a period of a few years at a time, the power to grant certain dispensations.

On the other hand, the Bishop, being unacquainted with the people for whom the dispensation is sought, must depend on the pastor of the Catholic party to pass judgment on the marriage in individual cases. The pastor, in turn, must expect the greatest honesty and sincerity in the applicant.

More frequently than not, there are two reasons alleged why the dispensation should be granted, namely, that the non-Catholic shows a disposition to take an interest in the faith, with probable conversion as a result, and that the Catholic party, weak in the faith, would possibly attempt marriage outside the Church.

(2) But is it not precisely because so many Catholics who wish to contract alliances with non-Catholics are weak, that there is a greater danger than there would otherwise be, of the Catholic becoming indifferent and raising his children in indifference?

A good Catholic, one to whom religion means more than life itself, one who fears that the blessing of God would not follow the marriage unless husband and wife, and later the entire family, enjoyed God's favor, always does his or her utmost to interest the non-Catholic long before marriage. He or she will always talk "religion" early in courtship before giving any promise of marriage to the non-Catholic.

We reiterate what we have already mentioned several times, that the attitude of such a Catholic would not be evidence of narrowness, but of loyalty to God, of

fidelity to his or her own conscience, of a sense of duty to the children, who might eventuate from the marriage.

The responsibility of risking the loss of faith to the next generation, after its continuance through the ancestry of the Catholic over a period of one thousand years, is certainly a terrible one.

Let us suppose that because of a mixed marriage today the faith which had been in the family of the Catholic for centuries would not be practiced by their children, nor by their children's children for another 200 or 300 years—and the frightful responsibility certainly will be apparent.

(3) It is very true that some mixed-marriages turn out happily for husband and wife, and that the children are reared according to the faith of the Catholic parent, but these cases are exceptional. They are quite naturally so, because God cannot condone indifference towards the religion which He brought to earth, and towards the Church which He calls His own bride; He cannot condone the inconsistency of a father who, while insisting on his children following the religion of the mother, is not himself interested in it.

St. Ambrose, who converted St. Augustine, writes: "There can be scarcely anything more grave than a marriage with one who is an alien to the faith . . . And how can that be called a union, in which there is discord as to faith?" (Ep. 19 A. D., Vigil).

St. Augustine, in defending the straight Catholic marriage before heretics of his time, wrote:

"These miserable people, believing in Christ, have their food at home in common, but the table of Christ they cannot have in common. Must we not weep at so often seeing the husband and wife vowing to each other in Christ to have their bodies faithfully united in one, whilst they rend the body of Christ through being attached to different communions? Great is the scandal, great the devil's triumph, great the ruin of souls." (Ep. 23, n. 5).

In every house to house canvas for a complete parish census the consequences of invalid marriages, of the discontinuance of religious practices by the Catholic, be-

come only too evident. Children are found to be un-baptized and reared without religious instruction, and of course, they do not attend Mass. The Catholic parents will certainly be held to a severe accounting by their Judge, and blamed for the non-practice of their faith of all succeeding generations.

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## OCTOBER 16

### Some Questions on Marriage

Let us today answer a few questions often asked about marriage. For instance: (1) what is meant by the impediment of consanguinity? (2) of affinity? (3) why must the banns of marriage be published? (4) may mixed marriages take place in the church? and (5) what is a clandestine marriage?

(1) The older ones of you learned from your Catechism that Catholics are not permitted to marry within the *fourth* degree of *kindred*, which is another word for *consanguinity* or blood relationship. However this provision was altered some years ago so that the impediment now covers only the *third* degree. Father and daughter, mother and son, are related in the first degree; first cousins in the second degree; second cousins in the third degree. Most states have a law conforming to that of the Church, which forbids first cousins to marry. Now while the Church extends her provision one degree further, namely, to second cousins, if there be good reason for such a marriage a dispensation is procurable.

(2) The impediment of *affinity* arises from every valid marriage between a man and the blood relatives of the woman; and between the woman and the blood relatives of the man. The relatives of the husband become related to the wife in the same degree as they are related to him by blood, and vice versa. Affinity is not contracted by a brother or sister of the husband, or by a brother or a sister of the wife. Hence a brother of the husband may marry the sister of his wife.

(3) The banns of marriage must be promulgated

chiefly for the purpose of eliciting information about the freedom to marry on the part of one or both parties.

Every priest has had experience with one who comes from some distant point and represents himself to some unsuspecting Catholic as being free to marry, while an investigation disclosed that he had deserted a wife, and oftentimes little children elsewhere. It must be remembered that our country has millions of comparatively young men and women who are divorced, and who, because the law would permit them to marry again, do not feel that they are obligated in conscience to apprise the friend whom they would marry that they had been previously married and since divorced. Since the termination of the war every community has young divorcees resulting from hasty and unpremeditated marriages.

Catholics should never ask for a dispensation from the bans, nor should they try to keep the marriage a close secret. The tongues of gossipers become busy and indulge in unkind insinuations. Is not there something very commendable about a bold announcement, which can be construed as an invitation to the public "to find fault if you can"?

Many states now follow the practice of the Church in demanding that people intending to marry publicize their intention some days before a license may be issued to them.

(4) In most dioceses of the United States mixed marriages may not take place in the church proper, even outside the sanctuary. This is due to the fact that the Church only *tolerates* mixed marriages. But there is no definite law binding on Bishops, which prevents a mixed-marriage in the Church.

Hence, there are places, especially in the south and in the west, where the priest has no home of his own, or where it is too small and unattractive for marriages. There mixed marriages are permitted in the church. They are also permitted in some dioceses in the north, because their Bishops believe that the marriage would take on a more sacred character if it were associated with more religion.

A mixed marriage in the home of the bride is also



discouraged by the Church, because it might leave the impression that the Church does *not* look on it with disfavor. Follow the diocesan custom, or you will create a great embarrassment for the priest.

(5) A clandestine marriage is one which is attempted without the presence of the parish priest, or one delegated by him, and without two witnesses. For Catholics that is not a marriage at all.

The witness at a Catholic marriage should also be a Catholic. If a Catholic should ask a non-Catholic friend to act as bridesmaid, it should always be as an additional witness, and not as one of the two required by the law.

Since people are expected to be married only once in a lifetime, they should even voluntarily seek to have it performed right. If they would have the biggest possible blessing come to it, they should enter marriage according to the will of God and His Church, which represents Him in this world.

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## OCTOBER 23

### Pre-Nuptial Promises

During one year (1945) clergymen of several denominations, including the Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, issued pamphlets condemnatory of the Catholic practice of requiring a non-Catholic, desirous of marrying a Catholic, to make certain commitments in writing before a dispensation for the mixed marriage will be granted. These pamphlets represent that such demands force the non-Catholic to sign away his rights as well as the rights of his children.

To many non-Catholics this charge may seem quite in place, but it is actually based on an assumption which is not warranted.

Let us make clear (1) that the Church would be disloyal to Christ if she did not take measures to conserve the faith; (2) the non-Catholic violates no principle in accepting the Catholic terms; and (3) what some of these terms are.

(1) In the pamphlet distributed by "The Commis-

sion on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America," entitled "If I Marry a Roman Catholic," it is represented that the Catholic Church requires certain commitments from Protestants for the one purpose of "gaining the non-Catholic and all children for the Catholic faith." This is not the purpose at all.

You are well aware that the Catholic Church urges you, with all the power of persuasion she can muster, not to marry a non-Catholic. There is no bigotry behind this position. The Church would rather have you receive a big blessing of God on your marriage by having faith marry faith, by providing for the Christian upbringing of children according to a program accepted by both parents.

We could accuse the Protestant churches of bigotry on the same grounds that they accuse us of it, because all of them dissuade their members from marrying Catholics. There are two classes of Protestants. The first, a minority, consists of those who have been strictly reared according to very definite doctrine, such as the Lutherans, and the other is constituted of those who are only *nominal* members, or at least know practically nothing concerning what their church teaches or stands for. Every priest who has instructed converts has met both kinds.

Only religious prejudice could explain the Protestant objection to a marriage with a Catholic, because the Catholic Church's standards are high, because it teaches everything which Protestant churches regard as fundamental, and because it is the "Mother Church," the Church to which two-thirds of all Christians in the world even now belong.

(2) The Protestant who marries a Catholic violates no religious principle, because he is usually committed to the idea that "one religion is as good as another." On the other hand, the Catholic honestly believes that Christ instituted only one Church and that his is that Church, a fact that can be proved historically as well as from the Bible.

If the Catholic Church honestly believes that there is *only one* divinely founded institution, and that hers is

that, she could not, without violating principle and without betraying Christ, be indifferent concerning how her children marry, or how they bring up their children.

Mixed marriages were forbidden by God Himself in the Old Law; and in the New Law, Christ, as St. Paul (Eph. V, 32) makes clear, arranged for sacramental marriages for His followers. St. Paul compares the union of husband and wife to the union between Christ and His Church, which was holy and sacred and indissoluble. Christ identifies His Church with Himself and, therefore, could not be expected to bless a union between a member of His Mystical Body and one who is not.

In the pamphlets, to which we have referred, it is also represented that if the Catholic Church requires the non-Catholic to receive a certain number of instructions in the religion of the Catholic party, Protestant churches should, with equal right, demand that the Catholic party take instruction in the religion of the Protestant party. This objection is not valid either, because one Protestant church does not require that members of other Protestant organizations take instructions. In the Federal Council of Churches there are some twenty-five Protestant denominations represented, and however much they may differ from one another in teaching, they are given the same standing.

(3) The Catholic Church believes marriage to be dissoluble only by death, and this is in keeping with the teaching of Christ. But most Protestants condone divorce and remarriage. They do not do this officially, but in practice most of their members can be divorced and remarried without losing their good standing in the churches. One of the commitments which Protestants seeking to marry Catholics are asked to make is an endorsement of the indissolubility of marriage. That gives great protection to the Catholic who does so believe, and it would certainly be a very poor bargain if the Catholic committed herself to be married until death, and the non-Catholic did not.

The commitments to which the non-Catholic party to a mixed marriage agrees are the following: the acceptance of the Catholic position on the purpose of

marriage; the permanency of marriage; the need of the Catholic to be married by a priest before two witnesses, and of the obligation of the Catholic to have his (her) children baptized and reared in the Catholic faith.

The Catholic would also be very inconsistent and disloyal to Christ if he permitted his children to be baptized and reared in a faith in which he didn't believe. The non-Catholic may not antecedently believe in the Catholic Church, but during a course of instructions he is likely to have his doubts and wrong notions removed.

The Catholic holds that Baptism elevates a child to the high rank of "child of God." It confers on the child the *right* to be reared as a child of God, and on the parents, as well as on the Church *the duty* of so rearing it.

It is also represented in the pamphlet that Catholics hold all Protestant marriages to be invalid or no marriages at all. The Church does not so teach. But she teaches that a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, if not performed by a priest after the proper dispensation is granted, is an invalid marriage, because the Church has jurisdiction over Sacraments. A contract is a contract only when both parties thereto agree to the same thing, and the Catholic cannot agree to marriage without also agreeing to the Sacrament, while the average non-Catholic cannot receive a Sacrament. There are nearly 70,000,000 unbaptized in the United States.

It should be clear to every informed person that the Church's chief reason for requiring the non-Catholic to make commitments is not to win new members. If expediency instead of principle actuated her she could increase her membership by 1,000,000 within a month, by accepting the Protestant attitude towards divorcees.

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## OCTOBER 30

### Do You Want a Prejudiced Life-Partner?

The Catholic who keeps company with a non-Catholic, yet hesitates to speak to him about taking instructions in the Catholic religion, is either unpardonably

timid, or lacks the conviction that there is only one religion in this world in which God Himself has a big interest. That religion is his—the religion founded by Christ Himself during three years of daily instruction imparted to His self-chosen Apostles, who were to spread it over the earth.

(1) No Catholic should be willing to have his or her partner live outside the true religion; (2) no Catholic should want a prejudiced life partner; and (3) no Catholic should wish to be under God's displeasure.

(1) To His own religion Christ gave His very self, and promised to be with it "all days even unto the consummation of the world." To it He sent the Holy Spirit, Who would abide with the Church forever, and keep it in truth. To it He committed such divine helps as, according to St. Paul, astonished the very angels in Heaven—the Sacraments capable of conferring divine life, preserving it and restoring it. To it He committed the perpetuation of the Sacrifice of Calvary, in which in nearly every place on earth, at every hour of the day, Christ continues to be our Victim, and the Dispenser of His merits to individual souls.

No other Church has any of these things. The only Sacrament others have is Baptism, and that does not make any person a Protestant, because it was instituted to make people Catholics.

Every Protestant boasts of his Bible, but you should surely know that his church got even that from us. But his church did not get with the Bible a Supreme Court competent to interpret it accurately.

Very many Catholics excuse themselves for not talking religion to their non-Catholic friends before marriage on the grounds that "a person should not become a Catholic just to get married." We do not ask people to become Catholics "just to get married." We ask them to examine the Church's claims to see whether they cannot believe in the religion of their Catholic partner, so that both may be able to believe alike, to serve God alike, to rear their children alike, and win God's blessing on a united home.

If the non-Catholic should ask you to examine his

church's claims, you could consistently refuse, both because you are certain that your Church is right, and because no Protestant churchman even claims to be able to prove that his particular religion traces its origin to Christ.

(2) It is very true that your non-Catholic friend may be prejudiced, but do you wish to have a husband or a wife, all through life, who is prejudiced against your religion or that of your children? If he be prejudiced, is not that a clear reason why you should have him take a course of instructions with an open mind? Does it not seem reasonable that he should wish to know something about the religion of the one he intends to marry, and a great deal about the religion in which he must agree to bring up his children?

Either he has no religion of his own, or he concedes that other religions are as good as his. You hold that yours is not only the Mother Church, but that it is essentially different from all others. Should he not be eager to find that out, and therefore, cheerfully take a course of instructions? If he has a real desire to become correctly informed, he can easily be convinced.

You could tell your non-Catholic friend that in requesting him to come to the parish priest for instruction you have no thought of "forcing" your faith on him; that the priest would not even receive him into the Church unless he could honestly say that he is convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion and wants to become a member. Some non-Catholics have, only to please their intended partners, agreed to take instructions without having their heart in the same, without even learning the essential difference there is between the Catholic Church and other religions. But you should tell *your* non-Catholic friend that you want him to be serious; that you would like to have him even propose objections he has heard raised against the Catholic faith.

(3) You must never forget that the devil is intensely interested in involving you in an unhappy marriage, and that he will never tire of trying his best to make you timid, to induce you to grow a little more careless about prayer and about the Sacraments during courtship than previously in your life.

Usually your non-Catholic friend becomes interested in the things in which you are interested. If he sees that you are *intensely* interested in your religion, that you derive a great deal of happiness from its practice, that you would rather sacrifice a date than to miss some special service in your church, you will have him half converted before you ask him to take instructions. In fact, if he observes that your religion means much to you, he would be greatly surprised if you did not ask him to begin to learn something about it.

If you live your Catholic ideals, it will be easier to convert him, for he will be glad to have a wife with such ideals, and will try to show her that he himself can live in accordance with them. Submerge your ideals and he will not be attracted to your religion. Why should he become a Catholic if your Church has not been able to do more for you than his has for him?

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## NOVEMBER 6

### The Way to Find the Right Partner

Marriage is a Sacrament, opening a special life-long vocation. Hence it should be prepared for (1) by prayer; (2) without impatience; and (3) with discretion.

(1) The Apostles were well instructed by Christ, yet before He took leave of them to return to Heaven whence He came, He directed them to observe a Novena to the Holy Ghost, Who would be sent to them for their further guidance and to bring them light and strength for the work entrusted to them.

At Notre Dame University, there is held annually a Novena among the students for a happy marriage, a practice which youths, beginning with high school age, should observe once a year.

You do not need to learn from the Catholic Church, because you can well learn from your own observations, that a very large proportion of marriages turn out unhappily. Inexperienced youth, which in other matters is grateful for guidance and direction, usually insists on

striking out in its own particular way for the finding of a life partner, not realizing that the devil takes delight in making a match for which he has innumerable young people in reserve, disposed, both by their lack of religious training and their loose notions of morality, to spoil rather than strengthen a marriage contract.

The Notre Dame students are urged to have special devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to St. Joseph in view of a marriage which they want to be successful and lasting, and to be blessed by Heaven.

We copy the following paragraph from a Religious Bulletin published by the University:

The Catholic Church holds up to us the Blessed Virgin as the ideal of pure womanhood, and St. Joseph as the ideal of manly chastity. And to prove that these models are possible of imitation she lays before us the long roll of saints, men and women, who consecrated their chastity to God. To see that these models still have ardent imitators you have only to watch the file of **rugged, healthy young men** approaching the Communion rail each morning. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

(2) Then Notre Dame students are urged not to engage in courtship until their school days are over. If this is good advice to young men who are through with high school and attending college, young men ranging from nineteen to twenty-three years of age, then it is certainly good advice for boys and girls attending high school. The advice is prompted both by the consideration that the students will not have serious distraction during their studies, and by the consideration that more mature youth is likely to make a more judicious decision. The hasty marriages which were contracted during the late war were more than 50% failures.

Every Catholic youth should be delighted to think that he has the benefit of the divine and human wisdom of the Catholic Church. She is possessed of divine wisdom because she is guided by Heaven through the Holy Ghost, and her human wisdom is the result of 1900 years of experience with people in this world.

You will make all kinds of mistakes if you will try



to be only worldly-wise in this day when the United States leads all nations of the world, even the pagan nations, in divorces, when four-fifths of the children in school are deprived entirely of religious instruction and guidance, when lust is identified with love, when the exterior of the human being is estimated more highly than the interior, when wealth is esteemed more highly than character.

(3) Do not marry a girl who is extravagant, who during courtship expects you to spend your money lavishly on her, who gives you no reason to believe that, after marriage, she would help you to save, or to make the least sacrifice for you or for your mutual benefit.

Should you have a good position, or have well-to-do parents, satisfy yourself during courtship that the girl thinks more of you than of your money. What her motive is will be easy to discover; for if she expects you to purchase expensive gifts for her, then she evidently thinks more of such gifts than of you. After marriage she might turn you down and sue you for most of your income by way of alimony.

The girl should not marry a young man who is selfish, who is spoiled by his parents, who has no ambition and lacks the moral courage to try to make anything of himself.

Do not think of marrying one who does not regard marriage as a very sacred state of life, who would prefer to be a society belle than a mother.

Do not contract a marriage before knowing the background of the girl whom you court, before knowing her parents, her ideals, her tastes, her willingness to cooperate with you, both in a spiritual and a material way.

Do not think of marrying one primarily for the purpose of reforming him. If he has been addicted to drink; if he has been known as a worthless sort of fellow, then, as a friend, you might expend your best efforts on his reformation without any view of marrying him. But do not risk a bad marriage.

Do not marry the man or the woman who has not a high regard for virtue, because you can be sure that, after marriage, you will be suspicious and jealous of him or

her. That is the lesson of history and the lesson of common sense. Holy Scripture makes it very clear that Almighty God will not bless a marriage which was not preceded by a clean courtship.

“Common sense” on the part of both parties is a prerequisite for happiness. You might call it level-headedness. This common sense is needed for the management of the home, for the following of a budget, for the proper rearing of children.

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## NOVEMBER 13

### Trial Marriages

We have referred to trial marriages as no marriages at all. Some years ago they were recommended by a Denver Judge as “companionate marriages,” and the first one to try it was the daughter of Haldeman-Julius, the atheistic publisher of hundreds of infidel and immoral little “blue books,” which you have frequently seen advertised in papers and magazines.

Why is the trial marriage (1) not a marriage at all? (2) Why is it an immoral union? and (3) What would be some of its consequences?

(1) The so-called “companionate marriage” is rendered invalid by two prenuptial agreements: (a) the agreement not to have children until, and if, and when, the contracting parties find it mutually agreeable to have them; and (b) the agreement that either party may divorce the other at any time, without giving any reason to the consort or to the Court.

The companionate marriage, as originally recommended, required that the wife would not call on the husband for support, because she would support herself and even live at home with her folks. Evidently, therefore, such an arrangement might be companionate, but not a marriage, because it is in conflict with the very purpose of marriage; under the cloak of marriage it would only glorify and give license to passion.

If the end of marriage, by its very nature, is pro-

creation, then nature prescribes its indissolubility, as God Himself did most explicitly.

Companionate marriage is neither more nor less than what has long been called "common law" marriage, which was not witnessed either by a clergyman or a justice of the peace, or by any other person.

(2) Evidently in a companionate marriage, which to all intents and purposes was to be temporary, neither party would want children, since they would be a great handicap should the two separate, and one who attempts marriage with a deliberate understanding not to have it become fruitful does not contract a real marriage.

The powerful nations of old allowed what, in our day, is termed "companionate marriages," but they first became weakened by that practice and finally became extinct.

Birth prevention, more commonly known today as birth control, or planned parenthood, if practiced by a multitude, must spell "race suicide," a name given to the practice by the late President Theodore Roosevelt. Whether it be practiced by the use of artificial appliances, or by deliberately checking the effect after the cause is placed, it not only strikes at the chief purpose of marriage, but it violates nature's law as well as God's.

What people need, generally speaking, and particularly in marriage, is "self-control." We become more truly men and women when we can control both our appetites and our passions, when we act and live temperately. Self-control is a virtue; it conduces to the welfare of both the physical and spiritual life, and the married have a real opportunity to acquire it.

(3) The woman, who decides not to receive financial support from her husband, will certainly not care to have children, which she would regard as a burden in several ways. They would interfere with her going to work and earning her own living, and they would also stand in the way of her social freedom, the chief excuse she alleges for entering such a bargain.

Under a companionate marriage the man is not

liable to alimony and, therefore, *he* would not want children, either because they might prolong the companionate union which he should like to have terminated, and would impose on him the obligation to bear the cost of support of the children, should he separate.

You do not hear so much about companionate marriages any longer, but they abound more than ever as "trial marriages." They are not promulgated or reported even under that name, but those who enter such a union, between themselves, decide that if it does not turn out to be happy it will be mutually satisfactory for either to go to the divorce court. Because of the possibility of separation they do not wait to see whether the marriage will result happily or not. Hence they often cultivate the friendship of another, which provokes a cause for separation.

Catholics today cannot be certain that the non-Catholic who, in a moment of fascination, shows a readiness to sign any agreement, will really accept marriage as indissoluble, or at heart accept the primary purpose of marriage, despite his signature. But when he does sign such an agreement under oath the Church accepts it as earnest and sincere and, therefore, will not allow remarriage of the Catholic party.

Would that marriage today were respected by non-Catholics as much as they respected it fifty years ago, and would that their attitude towards divorce were what it was then!

God can provide a happy marriage and a lasting marriage for every Catholic, and since He actually calls most Catholics to the married state He must be prepared to lead them into a happy life-long union and through it to a happy eternity— if the parties concerned will make themselves worthy of His interest in their marriage and its happiness. Since marriage is a holy vocation, it should be prepared for by prayer and an effort, through the frequent reception of Sacraments, to keep Heaven's interest.

You who have already married for life, "for better or worse," should help communicate this viewpoint to your children.

## NOVEMBER 20

## Frustrating the Purpose of Marriage

From the day Almighty God, after marrying Adam and Eve, bade them "increase and multiply," it has been held—by Jews before Christ and by Christians until our own time—that "the primary purpose of marriage is the procreation and education of children"; that its secondary purpose is "to furnish mutual assistance through the fusion of two lives, and to furnish a remedy for concupiscence."

Hence (1) the Planned Parenthood movement is wrong; (2) marital sacrifices are meritorious; and (3) selfishness spoils marriages.

(1) A childless marriage was regarded by God's people in the Old Law as the greatest human misfortune, because husband and wife shrank from the idea of entering Heaven alone. They craved the merit of sending many offspring, flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, to Heaven also.

When there is a deliberate intention to prevent the marriage from becoming fruitful, husband and wife defy God, Who stands by to create a human soul, and they order Him to desist from His intention. It should be clear, therefore, that the deliberate prevention of conception, except by abstaining from the use of the marriage privilege, is a serious sin not only against God, but against nature.

Today the limitation of the family is advocated under what is called "Planned Parenthood." There would be nothing wrong in this if the "planning" consisted in the exercise of self-control, the best builder of strength of character. Those who have learned through many years to "crucify their flesh with its vices and concupiscences" (Gal. V, 24); "to chastise their body and bring it under subjection" (1 Cor. IX, 27) should certainly be able to exercise self-control during that short period each month when the pregnancy which they would like to avoid would likely eventuate.

Children are the bond uniting father and mother in

mutual love, as the Holy Ghost Himself is the bond uniting the Eternal Father and His beloved Son.

Marriage has a lofty dignity and has far-reaching consequences, because Almighty God communicates to husband and wife a divine power which makes them co-creators with Him of human beings destined to live forever. When, through their influence, the beginnings of a human body are formed, God Himself creates an immortal soul to vivify it, and the being thus created, constituted of the body representing the very flesh and blood of parents, and of the soul made after the image and likeness of God, is "only a little less than the angels," and, like the angels, is destined to everlasting bliss with God throughout an endless eternity.

(2) In the seventh chapter of the Second Book of Maccabees we have a classic example of the manner in which temporal interests, temporal convenience, even temporal hardships, pains and sufferings should be cheerfully borne by parents because of the glory everlasting which they make it possible for their children to inherit. The story of the Maccabean mother and her children is so interesting that you should read it in the Bible.

That Maccabean mother and her seven children did suffer intensely, but the torments were all over within a day, and during the 2,000 years which have since elapsed, they have been an ineffably happy family in Heaven, mother rejoicing over the bravery of her children, and children over that of their mother, and each glorifying God for having given them the opportunity to reach everlasting salvation, no matter what it had cost.

(3) One of the reasons why many people become disillusioned early in married life is that they expected it to remain uninterruptedly happy, with no intermingling of sorrow with joy, of disappointments with satisfactions, of sufferings with pleasures.

Before a month will have elapsed, your faults, hidden during courtship, will become known to your wife, and hers to you. It will be your own fault if you had suppressed them. But you had no right to expect perfection in your partner; you had every reason to believe that he (she) was human, and that your dispositions

probably differed much. But if your love is true, it should make allowances for differences in tastes, in temperament.

It will rest with both of you to preserve the cheerfulness of the courtship days and of the honeymoon, even amid trials and difficulties, which are certain to come. Mutual forbearance, mutual service, mutual cooperation will become a delight, if you try to grow in mutual love. Of course, you must be sure during courtship that you are drawn together by genuine love instead of by physical attraction alone. Nothing is more true than that "beauty is only skin deep." A homely face may rest on a perfect body and vice versa.

You will get along well if you suppress selfishness; if you try to conquer your pronounced likes and dislikes; if you make sacrifices for the common good and for the establishment of a real home; if you have a common religion, and pray jointly to God for His support and blessing.

Make up your mind that you marry "for better or worse," "for richer or poorer," and that you will be married for life—then you will try harder to be sympathetic, to submerge self, to become brave and strong of will. You would have plenty of disappointments if you did not marry, and have no right to expect that married life is unalloyed bliss. Try for physical, moral and spiritual harmony, and your married life will be a success and happy, but not if you refuse to adjust yourself to unpleasant situations, as you would have to adjust yourself to them outside marriage. He may have to adjust himself to her inexperience as a cook, as she will have to adjust herself to his disposition to find fault. These matters can be harmoniously settled during a good-mood conference, but never when either is angry.

Your disposition, and that of your marriage partner, will be reflected in your children. Hence kindness, patience, self-control, cheerfulness, piety, should be cultivated until they become a state of mind and heart.

Shun books which deal with the subject of how to get the most satisfaction from the physical side of mar-

riage. Those who think only of the physical will regret their marriage before the end of the first year.

Marriage must be based on love, which, while it does not disregard the physical, relates chiefly to personality, congenial disposition, character—traits quite apart from the physical.

Modern books dealing with Sex are the cause of many marriages failures. Sex is related to marriage, but it certainly is not the whole of marriage.









