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Mail Call



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MAIL-CALL

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Introduction

POST-WAR EDITION

It was a genuine pleasure to learn that so many servicemen were interested in "Mail Call" that their requests have already exhausted the first edition. Now, many of you will have been discharged and returned to civilian life. The eternal truths presented in these letters do not change. The edifice of your spiritual life must still be built and enlarged and remodeled. It is true the danger of a sudden and heroic death is more remote in your civilian pursuits, but living a good life still requires great courage, constant effort, and repeated instruction.

The bulletins and their spiritual substance will be helpful to the working man who labors shoulder to shoulder with so many fellow employees—each can apply them to his personal campaign for holiness. You will want to know Christ and His Church better; for all must live closer to God if the peace we are building is to be sanctified and made permanent. These letters are only the introduction to the storehouse which is the Church—you have the invitation to join those working for God, because they love Him, and loving Him because they are beginning to know Him. To have been the medium of introduction between God and one soul is reward enough for any man, and bounteous recompense for this assignment of love.

FATHER SCHOTT

He Is There!

Since most families have been torn apart by the exigencies of war, and the mutual helpfulness which comes from such intimacies is a thing of the past, many are experiencing a frustration and a loneliness that they never thought possible. The usual supports of family and friendship have been destroyed and men are "on their own." This sense of hopelessness would never come to a man who has trained himself to remember the abiding presence of God everywhere. *No matter where we are, He is there!* The Holy Scripture assures us:

"If I ascend into Heaven, thou art there; if I descend into Hell, thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there also is Thy hand leading me: and Thy hand shall hold me. And I said: perhaps darkness shall cover me: and night shall be my light in my pleasures. But darkness shall not be dark to thee, and night shall be light as the day: the darkness thereof and the light thereof are alike to thee."
—Ps. 138, 8.

Therefore, God rides the airways with our brave pilots and crews; God scrapes the ocean's floor with our submarines; He is in Iceland and Alaska and in Australia and the South Pacific; He is on every fighting front and

on every outlook post; He is in every tank and He marches with every infantry man; He is on guard with the anti-aircraft gunners and He patrols with the coast guards. He is with the hale and hearty as they perform their heroic herculean tasks; He is at the bedside of the sick and wounded and the dying. He is in the Induction and Reception Centers; He is in our National Cemeteries. He boards the train and rides to our unknown destination; He accompanies us into the crowded transport ships; He sails with every convoy; He arrives at every A.P.O. address; His presence takes away the bitterness of farewell in every home port, and it is the friendly greeting in every foreign base—there is no camp where He is not the real Commanding Officer. *God is where you were, where you are now, and where you are going to be.* God is with the war-workers crowding our factory lines and assembly plants; He is with the families whom we left; He is with our friends scattered over the globe; He is with us—*He is God!*

God Is Not Blind!

One of the most comforting and at the same time, one of the most disturbing convictions is to know that God is not only present but that *He sees us.* When we are alone and we are tempted to break the Command-

ments, God sees us; when we are with a gang encouraging each other to forget our consciences and grab the present moment's promise of unlawful pleasure, God sees us; when we sin, God sees us; when we repent, God sees us; when it's deepest night, God sees us; when it's sunny noon, God sees us. God sees us reading this *Bulletin*; He sees us throw it away because it bothers us; He sees us meditate on it because it encourages us—*God sees us!*

God Is Not A Helpless Old Grandmother In A Rocking Chair

God is not simply present as a bystander; He is with us because He wants to participate in our every thought, word, and act. He assures us of His constant help.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find;

knock, and it shall be open to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be open.”—*Matt. 7, 7.*

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”—*Matt. 11, 28.*

Our failures are our own. God will accomplish through us, unless we prevent Him, all those things which are for our ultimate betterment. The limitations which are upon us in no way impede God—He is all-powerful. The only break, which can occur in the chain, must be manufactured by us. We can refuse God's help and we can make ourselves unworthy of it. We can shackle God's hands or we can accept His proffered assistance.

*We Are Never Alone Or Helpless!
God, Everywhere, Sees Us And
Helps Us!*

Who Is This Christ?

The world is again admitting its failure. The wars and devastation, ruthlessness and carnage which now engulf so many countries give testimony that men have failed to order things properly. The guilt is with mankind—God has done more than His share to safeguard human beings but His directions have been refused. Christ, the Son of God, came to teach men how to live and how to die successfully, but His admonitions are not heeded. The coming of Christ and the system He taught—Christianity—should have and would have avoided all these needless horrors but man would not accept His teachings.

There can be no doubt in any reasoning man's mind that Christ was God.

1) *Christ Claimed To Be God.*

2) *Christ Proved His Claim.*

His Claims—The charge on which Christ was brought to the Supreme Court of the Jews to be tried was because *He claimed Divine Honors*. This was an offense punished by death and yet when the Judge (Caiphas) demanded of Christ, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be Christ the Son of God," (*Matt.* 26; 63) Christ's clear and convincing answer was, "Thou hast said it." In our idiom it would be equivalent to saying, "I certainly am what you have just said."

a) *His Teachings*—He foretold accurately the future—His sagacity was admitted to be divine.

b) *His Miracles*—He cured instantaneously—He raised the dead to life—He arose on the third day as He foretold.

c) *His Church*—The institution He founded has been preserved intact throughout all the ravages of centuries.

*Christ Is God and Therefore
Christianity Is Divine*

The reason why Christianity has not been effective is because through the weakness of its nominal adherents it lacks its full natural attractiveness and its ability to accomplish its purpose. *It is not Christianity that has been found wanting but the weakness of so-called Christians has failed men.*

*Where Have These Christians
Failed?*

1) They made of Christianity a religion to suit themselves. They "*toned it down*" and "*explained it away*" until they had made a convenient religious pattern. This manufactured "Christianity" did not intrude itself into their lives but left them free to think and to act according to their own desires. (Many Servicemen lived this sort of religion during their civilian days—some are still trying to get

along on it, but as they approach the fighting fronts they know that they are "playing for keeps" and their religion must be real or they are already beaten.)

2) There were those, too, who gave out a *false picture of Christian virtues*. These he-men envisioned religious virtues as weaknesses, lack of backbone and red blood—something all right for women and children and occasional Sundays and weddings and funerals. This condition was probably introduced by those who wear their religion on their coat sleeves, for everyone to admire and practice except themselves. The effort for a real religious life challenges the best that the strongest man can give. Christian virtues are not easy—the best proof of this is to try them.

3) Another reason for the

eclipse of Christianity is the *atmosphere of materialism* in which most of the world is plunged. If material things are as important as people tried to make them, then spiritual things are a waste of time. You can't ride two horses at the same time—you must make a choice. The way you practice your religion shows *your choice!*

How long is it since you have done something to proclaim Christ and Christianity to the men with whom you live? Does your language show your buddies that Christ is God? Do your actions demonstrate that Christ's commandments are real? Take your stand now with Christ—He will never let you down—everything else fails at some time as you have already found out.

Real Religion

We hear constantly that the men of the fighting fronts are religious. What does this mean? *Being religious fundamentally means, recognizing that God exists and that every man has a soul; and then realizing the dependence of the one on the other.* Reason tells us that there is Someone who has made all things that are made. Reason tells us that there is something in us when we are alive "that makes us tick"—the soul. Reason proclaims the dependence of the soul upon Him Who gave her life. The acknowledgment of such dependence and its attendant implications is basically religion.

So, 'One's As Good As Another?'

In any camp in the land, you will hear any evening, "One religion is as good as another, as long as you are sincere. After all, we are all serving the same God. It's not important what you believe as long as you lead a good life." *Why should one religion be as good as another? We discriminate, after consulting authorities, in investing our money, choosing carefully that which seems best. Why would such choice be out of place in religion?*

There is only one God to be served, that is true, but did it ever occur that possibly just because of this fact there is only one way in which to serve that

one God? Those who do not admit that *beliefs rule life* do not know what they are talking about. Catholics believe Christ is present in the Most Blessed Sacrament; non-Catholics do not. Catholics adore the Most Blessed Sacrament; non-Catholics do not. Non-Catholics think they have a right personally to interpret the Bible; Catholics do not. Non-Catholics read the Bible and draw their own conclusions; Catholics go to the authoritative interpreter—the Church—and accept her decisions.

In other words, beliefs shape and mold actions; *as we believe, so we act. It should be obvious to any thinking person that these contradictory statements cannot both be the expression of the one true God. If the one is true, the other is false.* The spirit of charity prompts us to respect the opinions of all serious-minded men, but it would be a misguided motive which would encourage us to accept as true that which is contrary to what we know to be true. We respect the seriousness of such misinformed people but we condemn the untruthfulness of their doctrines. We are intolerant, yes, for us 2 plus 2 equals 4 always and everywhere, and Christ is present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, always and everywhere, and founded His own, one particular Church.

Credentials

Every ambassador who presents himself must give faithful evidence of his authenticity. The Catholic Church points with pride to the distinguishing characteristics which mark her exclusive title of the Christ-founded Church.

The Catholic Church is *one in doctrine* and *one in government*. All Catholics believe the same doctrines and recognize the same ruling head. *Christ could teach only one doctrine*. It is insulting to a man's intelligence to think that mutually contradictory doctrines can both be Christ-given. Government by one head is a natural safeguard set up by Christ to preserve and perpetuate His unity of doctrine.

The Catholic Church is productive of holiness. Saints live in every generation and are admitted to be so by contemporaries and by successors. *Christ's Church was established as a ladder to God*. It does give sanctity to those who climb up its well-worn rungs.

The Catholic Church traces its origin directly to Christ through His nearest associates—the Apostles. There are no other *organizations* still existing that were present and founded at that time. *The apostolicity of the Church is so apparent, simply because Christ intended that it should be one of those tell-tale evidences of recognizing His Church*.

The Catholic Church is spread throughout the world. *A God-given religion must be adaptable to all peoples of all nations*. *The Catholic* is at home everywhere—he is truly Catholic, a world-wide citizen. Our Catholic Servicemen have found Catholics everywhere.

The Catholic Church is the Church of Christ. Do you appreciate your heritage? We respect those who practice their religion according to the light of their own consciences—we are tolerant and patient with all misinformation, but we are and we must remain intolerant of error.

Here It Is

It is the common experience of each one of us that our tendencies are always downwards; although we know that we are composed of body and soul, of matter and spirit, we quickly learn that the pull is mostly in one direction. We knew the reason for this condition when we came to realize that our spiritual nature had been mortally wounded in the Original Sin of our first parents and we were destined to limp through life. *The only cure for this lopsided constitution of ours is to reinforce and strengthen the spiritual element in us. The only method by which this can be accomplished is by the infusion of God's grace into our souls.* The chief way which God has arranged for doing this is through His Church. God was well aware of our weakness and He knew He would have to come to our aid, so He devised a means by which His strength could always be drawn upon when we needed Him. The only time we ever get into trouble is when we forget or we fail to use this supply of God's strength, God's grace, which Christ has earned for us and dispenses through the medium of His Church.

Christ's Church—Your Church

Christ founded a distinct society which He called His Church. ("I will build my church," *Matt.* 16:18). Christ intended that this

living organization should teach his doctrines, govern its members, and sanctify all people.

This Is Christ's Church!

Teachings:

"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." *Matt.* 28: 19.

Christ speaks as God and gives the order to teach all His doctrines and promises to be associated with His Church until the end of the world. Christ demands that people assent to His Church. "He that believeth not shall be condemned." *Mark* 16:16.

Governing:

"Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven." *Matt.* 18:18.

Christ's Church is the boss and her powers are binding on earth and in heaven; she is a real organization with authoritative power and not a loosely knit group because of a friendly mutual interest.

Sanctifying:

Christ gave to His Church Seven Sacraments—seven channels by which His grace would

be distributed to needy men. Only Christ's Church would have those seven sacraments for it was He who endowed her, and where these seven sacraments are not present there is no Church of Christ. The Church is similar to a large filling station which has been erected along life's highway to meet our needs as our spiritual motors stop or run dry. We can always have our tanks filled to overflowing if we choose—we can never exhaust the supply, but we can thoughtlessly refuse the help.

As our Army advances on all battlefronts of the world we are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of keeping the road *open* to our supplies and keeping it *short*. *The same tactics will mean victory on the*

spiritual front, an open and a short line to the supply of God's grace so that we can make frequent and unimpeded trips to our source of supplies—Christ's Church. Weary and struggling man must come to learn again of this font of God's help. Every Catholic, wherever he be, must realize the priceless possession which is his in the Church. The flood gates of God's grace are always ready to engulf us if we open our souls to welcome it. The sacraments are so many faucets to convey this spiritual gas to our weak motors; if we are stalled along the road we have chosen this position. Let us look to our souls and charge them with the spiritual grace which Christ offers constantly through His Church—your Church.

Your Commanding Officer

When you entered the Service, one of the first things that impressed you was the unquestioned obedience everyone gave to his superiors. In every real organization there must be the power of imposing a command and a punishment for those who break the laws. A Catholic is taught unqualified obedience to his Church so this ought not to be too difficult for you. A Catholic may fail at times to comply with the Church's commands, but that is only a testification of *personal human weakness*—there is no question of the Church's *power to command*. This *ability to govern* is one of the necessary constitutive elements of the Church of Christ; if it were absent it would imply that an intelligent God has failed to properly equip His agency—the Church.

Who Is Your Boss?

There is so much talk about freedom today that many people have come to think that this means absence of authority. A moment's thought will convince anyone that we must always submit to one authority or another. Msgr. Sheen has put it well when he remarks: "*The real problem is not whether we will accept law and authority, but rather, which law and authority we will accept.* Even though this is a free country, I find that if I do not obey the authority of the

warden; if I do not accept the authority of the pure-food commission, then I shall have to accept the authority of an undertaker; if I do not accept the authority of the traffic lights, I shall have to accept the authority of a jailer." Applying this reasoning to religious matters, if I do not accept the authority of the Church, I must accept the authority of private opinion. *We are not free from authority—we are only free to comply with authority.*

The Church Has Authority

For a society to be effective it must have a definite purpose, proper and proportionate means to achieve that end, and adequate authority to bind the members of the society. *Eternal life is the purpose of the Church; grace and the sacraments are the proportionate means, and the hierarchical administration under the direction of the Holy Father, is the authoritative element.* When it pleased Christ to unite in a society all who believed in Him, He was bound to provide that society with the authority necessary for the accomplishment of its work. In other words, Christ was bound to appoint leaders invested with the triple power, legislative, judicial and executive; for such a society always implies law, and law implies the right to judge its guilty transgressors and the

right to impose penalties. This actual grant of power is narrated in the Gospels (*St. Matt. XVI, 16, and St. John XXI, 15*). In addition, the conduct of the Apostles and their successors indicates the constant use of such authoritative power, viz., making laws, pronouncing judgments and inflicting penalties.

Has The Church Obedience?

We must obey not only those mandates of the Church which please us—we must obey all her commands. *This does not demand a blind allegiance; it does presuppose a reasoned conviction of Christ's establishment and complete endowment of His Church.* Pope Leo XIII said in one of his letters, "*The Church*

has received from Her Founder, since Her very origin, all that She requires for the pursuing of Her Divine mission across the changeable ocean of human affairs." (*Au Milieu des Sollicitudes.*) As far as we are concerned, it is a question of obedience. Many contemporary writers have said this in one way or another. One of them says, substantially, the very heart and soul of true religion is obedience. The world went from God by disobedience and the road back is to retrace our steps by obedience.

Make your actions testify to your respect for the Church's authority. Be at Mass every Sunday. Your real commanding officer has given the order—give Him your obedience.

Front-Page News

A Catholic could properly be defined as, "a baptized Christian who is subject to the pope." This bond with the Holy Father is an ultimate and decisive indication of Catholicism. History records how the Church's enemies have derisively dubbed Catholics, "papists." The importance of the Papacy can not be over-estimated; it is the cornerstone which so many builders have rejected as they constructed their dream castles.

"Thou Art Peter"

The story of the appointment of Peter as the first Pope is well known. It is narrated in *St. Matt. 16*, Christ has just inquired of the Apostles what the people thought of Him. In answer, He received many confusing opinions. Not satisfied with these retorts, He asks again, "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter answered immediately, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." And then Christ uttered those ponderous words, "*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in Heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound al-*

so in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven."

Christ promises to give Peter *full and complete power* and certainly we can expect God to keep His promise. The actual fulfillment of the promise is recorded in *St. John, 21*. Christ asked Peter three times, "*lovest thou Me more than these?*" Peter assures Him of his love, then Christ commands the first and second times, "*feed My lambs;*" the third time He directs, "*feed My sheep.*" In other words, *all My disciples and all My followers are entrusted to you.*

Peter Used This Power

One needs only to read the Acts of the Apostles to witness the active jurisdiction of Peter. Who preached first and baptized the believers? Who of the apostles worked the first miracle? Who ruled the first heretic? Who received the first pagan into the Church? Who headed the first apostolic council? Peter is the answer to all these questions. He both claimed and exercised the supreme power of the Church.

Either—Or

We argue, if Christ was not God then He was either the greatest imposter the world has ever known or a madman. Obviously, Christ cannot have been a

good man if His claim of divinity was a lie. Similarly, we argue, if the Pope is not the Vicar of Christ on earth then he is the greatest scoundrel that lives. There is no middle way. We cannot look upon the Pope as a trusted spiritual guide and then deny his right to exact obedience of all Christians in matters of faith and morals. The truth is, he does demand such obedience, and this is either because Christ so directed him, or he is the most unscrupulous imposter that lives. Even his enemies would deny this horn of the necessary dilemma, so the Holy Father must be the Vicar of Christ. Christ intended His Church for all men of every generation. The ultimate power of government was to be transmitted from the first head, Peter, to all those who would hold that position. So it has been for almost twenty centuries and so it will be.

Does it seem unreasonable then to see the deep reverence, the

dutiful loyalty, the filial obedience paid by every genuine Catholic to the Pope? Even the non-Catholic historian Macauley pays almost a prophetic tribute, "The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs . . . She (the Papacy) saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot in Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca, and she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

Identify Yourself

From the first day that you enter the Service you are being called out and being recognized. It is critically important to our country that you and your undoubted patriotism may always be known. You are proud to stand forth and be counted as a loyal American—a member and a supporter of the greatest nation in the world. You will never permit anyone to doubt your allegiance for a moment; you will quickly speak up if anyone questions your faithfulness; you are an American and you want the world to know it!

Is your Catholicity of less importance than your Americanism?

Are you ashamed of being a Catholic?

It happens so often that Catholic men in the Service keep quiet about their religion—they never speak of it—their actions are no different than those of their non-Catholic comrades — they fear to be thought peculiar. Men know each other for months and associate and recreate together constantly, and yet they avoid any mention of their religion.

Why all this secrecy?

Is your Religion something to hide?

Is your brand of Religion the kind that withers and dies when exposed to the air?

It Takes A "He-Man"

We live in a world where it's not quite the proper thing to be religious; queer people are religious—religion is one of those things that makes people odd. It's not to our credit that such an atmosphere is true of our day, and you can put it down now that it's not for such things that your comrades are out there fighting and dying right this moment. To the men who have been "out there" *Religion Is Real* and they are going to keep it real, those who come back.

What You Would Expect

You would think that man who had been chosen to serve God in the Catholic Faith would be eternally grateful for this gift. He was baptized, most likely, as a babe and received God's grace into his soul. When he was able to distinguish right from wrong, he went to confession and his sins were removed; a short time later into that sin-free soul came Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. When temptations became more intense another Sacrament, Confirmation, made him still stronger and more able to resist these attacks; he knows that when he takes on the duties of a married man the Sacrament of Matrimony will enable him to accomplish this difficult task; and when his day of accounting comes, a final

anointing and flood of God's grace will help him enter eternity. These are the realizations that every Catholic man should carry with him every wakeful moment.

Why should he not be happy at the great gifts God has given him?

Why should he hide them and pretend they do not belong to him?

The Real McCoy

A genuine Catholic service-man allows others to see and appreciate the beauty and the strength of his religion. He makes it his first business to find the priest and inquire the time of Confession and Sunday Mass—when a new man comes to camp he investigates and gives him the information. He will show his religion by his respect for the name of Jesus Christ

even if he is the only one in a company or even in a whole division who respects that name—even when there are only men around; his religious convictions will be seen in his thoughts, words and actions in regard to purity in spite of all the campaigns to change his mind and make him one more of those with "barnyard morals." His religious training will have taught him the sinfulness of excess in drinking, etc.—his religion has given him a way of life and he's going to live it—that's the real Catholic.

His example helps many a weak man and informs many a confused comrade—He's a dynamo from which living current lights the drab days of ordinary existence—He's brilliant with God's grace and that will not be "blacked out."

The "Makins" Of Man

One of the most devastating errors of the pre-war generation was that men were getting better and better. *There was no particular reason for this continual improvement, except the popular fallacy that an advance in years must mean progress in virtue.* The argument in support of this contention sounded something like this—the more years men lived, the more men would learn about living and consequently they must live better than ever before and would go on and on and possibly within our lives they would reach perfection. How rosy and false these dreams were is only too evident as we contemplate and prosecute the most ruthless and most universal war in which men have ever been engaged. *There was something radically wrong with the whole idea that humanity was progressively virtuous.* The foundations of this house which civilization was building was not the granite of truth but the worm-eaten and corroded support of oft-repeated falsehood.

It is true that man can be "*a little less than an angel,*" but this is not the result of an accident but it is the product of skillful planning and of constant effort. The important realization that can come to men is that *they are not as God orig-*

inally intended that they should be. God created man with definite prerogatives beyond his natural constitution: He had God-like qualities which almost touched Heaven.

These spiritual advantages and supernatural qualities were a gift of the Creator to the first created man. It was God's intention that every man born into the world would have these endowments, but the first man, Adam, acting as the Head of the human race, rejected these gifts when he committed Original Sin. *It is this first serious transgression of God's laws which wounded and weakened our human nature.*

After Adam, we are all a fallen race, and we share in his punishment as we would have participated in his strength had he remained faithful. It doesn't help to argue that we had no personal responsibility in the sin of Adam and therefore ought to have no personal guilt. For just as we, by birth, become a member of a certain race, or family, or nation, so too, we, by human birth, become a member of humanity with its restrictions. We may rise from this position later in life, but our birth determines our beginnings. Spiritually, too, we may extricate ourselves from the spiritual bon-

dage of original sin and grow to the promised stature of the image of God, but we must start with the serious handicap of Original Sin.

Modern men have chosen to disregard original sin. It was not a very pleasant thing, so it was discarded. This would have been quite comfortable only it did not work. Arguing similarly, we might do away with filling our car with gas, because it is certainly very difficult and unhandy. *We must accept the constitutional rules which run our machines, and we must admit the constitutional condition of men.* Our human nature has been vitiated by Original Sin which is our common heritage. This is why there is the constant struggle within us between virtue and vice. There is never an enduring tranquillity because the assertiveness of our fallen nature is restive—the pull-down is much stronger than the pull-up. Men, left to themselves, will not grow to grace towards Heaven but will grow to grass on earth.

You can't depend on yourself too much; you have a limp and will always have it. *Original Sin mortally wounded you, and there must always be a recognized weakness in you.* You can compensate for this wound and overcome some of its effects, but this is not done by denying its existence. We get nowhere by playing the proverbial ostrich. We are born with Original Sin; Baptism cleanses the soul from its stain; the effects of this rejection of God are always with us in the constant battle between the natural and the supernatural. We will be good if we conquer the bad that is in us and not because we have lived long with this wickedness. Our country will be good when its citizens are good, but no one can be good until he admits that he is naturally bad and that he must constantly fight to be good.

This Fight can be won in the briefest honest life; it can be lost in the longest blind life!

The Beginning

Many Christians have been living lives divorced from God. It was much more convenient to float with the current of materialism that surrounded us than to buck the tide and keep climbing towards God. The world went adrift because those who should have served as the anchors failed in their jobs. Men were attempting to be satisfied with the natural. Defeat was inevitable! Man is composed of *body and soul*, and it is the supernatural alone which can put him at ease. *Life must be lived on the supernatural plane if it is to be complete—half measures will not work—we've found that out from bitter experience.*

The Church follows her sons wherever they go — Catholic Chaplains are on every fighting front. There is only one reason for this faithful shepherding of the flock of Christ and that is because priests are able to bring the Sacraments to men's souls. The Priest is the channel chosen by God to convey the grace of the Sacraments to souls. It is true God did not need to use priests for this task but He chose to so arrange it, and we must abide by His decision. A priest has been near us since the day of our birth, and it is our fervent prayer that a priest will attend us on our death beds. Use the priest while he is near and then

you need not worry about the future—the great High Priest will care for that.

True To Your Heritage

When we were baptized we were made *Children of God*. This is the most stupendous event of our lives. Previous to our reception of this sacrament we were immeshed in the sin of our First Parents—we were outside the friendship of God; *at Baptism we were adopted by God—we had the green light to go right through to Him*. This is not a free use of words, but it is the soberest fact. Once Original Sin had been removed by the sacrament, God's grace flooded our souls and He claimed us for His own. We would belong to Him as long as the life-line of God's grace was not cut by serious sin. We would live the supernatural life God had destined for us here, as long as this freedom from mortal sin continued; at death this supernatural life would continue with a keener realization and appreciation because we would no longer be hampered by our earthly bodies. The supernatural would come into its own, and the natural would not chain it down to earth.

Put your finger on the spot! Most of the trouble in this world is because men have forgotten their destiny—men have tried to

be content with the natural when it is only the supernatural which can satisfy—men were trying to escape their family tie with God.

We are God's children, whether we like it or not and whether we acknowledge it or not. We can be happy and really successful only in this intimacy with God. Mortal sin sabotages humanity for it breaks the contact of a human being with his only source of supplies. We belong to God, and we cannot escape Him even if we wanted to.

Servicemen—These Are The Questions:

1) Have I been living on the nat-

ural or supernatural plane?

- 2) Am I in mortal sin or in the grace of God?
- 3) Do I act as if I belonged to God?
- 4) Do I realize that I, a Child of God, am responsible to Him for my every thought, word and act?
- 5) Has today been lived in the presence and company of God?

If the other days of this year are to be for God, for His Victory and my own victory, if this year is to be the beginning of the Victory Years, then today and I must be spent with God, in His grace and friendship!

Superman

We Americans have cultivated the habit of using the supplies at hand and not bothering too much about our resources. There was always more than we needed; we never thought of the tomorrows. Acute need has taught us not only to generously grasp and save ourselves today, but we begin to understand that we must investigate our resources and envision future needs. A similar attitude of mind prevailed in our spiritual lives; many were living lives of spiritual penury and want when, if they had fallen back on the supplies stored up in their souls they might have travelled the highroad of God's grace instead of the surface existence which quickly fails them.

The Hidden Treasure

At baptism we become "children of God." This was to be only a beginning, but many have seemed to be content to remain children. God's plan was different. As we grew up the Sacrament of Confirmation was bestowed upon us. *We were maturing, and appropriate and necessary graces were deposited in our souls.* The importance of the occasion was shown by the fact that a Bishop, with the fullness of the priesthood upon him, came to confer this sacrament. Elaborate ritual and the impressive liturgy of the Church joined hands to make unforgettable

this moment of our *spiritual majority*. We were now adults in the Church of Christ; we were no longer just childish members; we were fighting soldiers in the army of Christ. This was Confirmation Day, and the strength commensurate with our new tasks and opportunities came at this special visit of the Holy Ghost to take possession of our souls. We were ready for the fight!

It's In Us—What Has Come Out Of Us?

How long has it been since you thought about these special confirmation graces? Have you bestirred them, cultivated them, used them, or have you been content to let them slough off through the pagan environment in which we live? The problem of living as a Christian is particularly difficult because of the non-Christian world which surrounds us, and *many of our failures are due to the forgetfulness of the courageous graces which are banked in the souls of the Confirmed.*

There Is Power To Burn In You!

There is an axiom in the spiritual life that God always gives us the strength necessary to perform any task He has intended for us. It is the *will of God, our salvation, and in Confirmation we are made strong to achieve*

this salvation as an adult in our modern world and in our present circumstances. If there is a failure, it cannot be attributed to God—he has done His part. If there be a failure, it is wholly ours, and there will be dismal failures unless we support ourselves, and lean on the strength of God which He has made available for us.

You Must Be A Superman!

Supernatural means something more than natural; a man must be more than mere man, he must be a superman, and this extra something is the grace of God when it is put to work. Look deep into your heart, and recognize again the accolade of Confirmation graces; the spirit of Wis-

dom, of Understanding, of Counsel, of Fortitude, of Knowledge, of Piety, and of Fear of the Lord. These were the special gifts that the Holy Ghost brought with Himself to your soul. How long have they remained dormant in your keeping? Put them into action! You received your citizenship papers in the Kingdom of Christ when you were baptized—you were enlisted and commissioned in His army when you were confirmed—you are equipped, you must fight, or you are a traitor to Christ's cause!

Be a superman in this spiritual struggle by using the supernatural equipment in the ammunition cache of graces in your confirmed soul.

Through These Gates

With the advance of aviation we're beginning to realize better what it means to live in one's element. We understand now that there is instant death for us if we get beyond the oxygen belt in the upper strata of the atmosphere. We cannot breathe, we cannot exist without oxygen. It would be a great help to us if we could as easily see the effects of mortal sin in a soul. The grace of God—freedom from mortal sin, is as necessary for the life of the soul as oxygen is necessary for the body; the soul dies outside its element. Commanding Officers have some idea of this truth. They frequently request every Catholic man in their outfits to go to Confession as they prepare to move into battle so that they will have the courage that they have witnessed in those who have just received this sacrament. *It is the testimony of our fighting fronts that there is no fear of physical death in those who are free from spiritual death.*

We Make Mistakes

It is a characteristic of human beings that we often fail to do those things which we know are correct—knowledge is no definite guarantee of proper conduct. It is a part of the personal history of each one of us that we have had failures like the rest of humanity. God knew

this weakness of our make-up, and He arranged that we might correct our errors and profit from our mistakes. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance so that men might not be the victims of their own foolishness and frailty.

Enemies Of God To Friends Of God

Penance is the one sacrament which is administered as a judicial process—a priest acts as a judge on the sins which the penitent makes known to him. Christ delegated His power of forgiving and of retaining sins to His apostles and to their successors, the priests. The sinner takes a very active part in this Sacrament, for by *Contrition*, he recognizes the gravity of his offense against God and wills to avoid this sin in the future; in *Confession*, he submits his sins to the priest's judgment; and by the *satisfaction*, he accepts the imposed penance and he makes the recompense demanded by the judge. The road of friendship of God must be made at the stations—*Contrition*, *Confession*, *Satisfaction*, and *Absolution*.

Don't Worry About God!

Penance affects the soul and not the body. *Contrition* is a product of the will and it does not change one external circumstance. The drunkard does not

lose his taste for liquor, or the lustful dull his appetite of the flesh. The same temptations will exist and the same weaknesses are present in the sinner; the only change is in the soul. Future sins may happen, but they do not affect the genuine contrition of the previous confessions—forgiven sins are destroyed and cannot be resurrected.

Confessing our sins hurts our pride, but it helps our humility. It rarely occurs to a Catholic to cheat in confession, because it brings no relief; in fact he commits spiritual suicide. All we need do is tell our sins simply, nakedly, truthfully; not exaggerating them, minimizing them, excusing or explaining them away. After we have made a reasonably diligent search (not a torturing self-analysis) and told our sins honestly with sufficient frankness—we need have no further concern; the ultimate responsibility is the priest's, if he needs to know anything more he will ask! *Satisfaction* for sin is just another evidence of God's liberality—there is nothing that we can do which will compensate the injury offered to God by sin. It is only God's generous

acceptance that takes the trifling penance imposed by the confessor and gives it such value, and not the quality or quantity of the work itself. Most people try to perform their penance before their next confession, but failure would not bring back the sins, although we might thereby be guilty of a new sin of negligence.

The *Absolution* of the priest must be given to every truly penitent sinner who approaches the Sacrament—this is something you need not trouble your mind about in the least; *it's the priest's joy to welcome a returned sinner in God's name.*

Here we have the ladder out of the mire of sin to the eternal battlements of heaven; here is release from slavery, here is friendship with God, here is life for the soul—here is the gate of heaven—*open it frequently and walk in!*

It will always remain a mystery how sinners can pass by the gates of the kingdom of heaven and prefer to remain in sin! Refusal of confession by sinners is a deliberate choice to refuse God admittance to our souls and our lives.

A Good Confession

When we shut God out of our lives, then we experience the only real tragedy we shall ever know. When our soul is a captive of mortal sin, then we have accepted defeat. The mortal sinner is the most abject failure in the world; he has severed the life-line of God's grace to his soul; he has sold out his priceless soul for the mortal sin which possesses it.

Break The Bonds And Breathe Again!

Christ knew that men were weak and would fall into serious sin and so He instituted and left for our use the Sacrament of Penance. Catholics can break the chains of sin which tie down their souls, if they will but make a good Confession. In the midst of the most cruel war, peace comes to the soul that has welcomed the return of God to it.

Men in the service—any priest will hear your confession, any time!

There is nothing to prevent any man from the reception of this Sacrament, except his own personal refusal. There will be some who claim a language handicap; this is a purely and imaginary difficulty. Follow these suggestions and you will make a good Confession:

Before: Examine Your Conscience—Make a true appraisal of your thoughts, words and ac-

tions, neither excusing or imputing false motives; ascertain the approximate number of times; be honest with yourself and with God.

During: 1) Tell the priest How long it has been since your last good Confession.

2) *Tell your sins in English, you know them best that way; call them by the names you know, the priest will understand. If you want the Confessor to help you, ask his assistance; all that he is, all that experience and study have made him, all that prayer and God's grace has inspired him, all the knowledge of his own sinfulness and God's mercy, all admiration for your courage in overcoming your natural embarrassment, all these qualities are associated in the person of your priest—confessor—use him and all that he is.*

3) *After the priest has assigned your penance, make your act of contrition. You may say it in any language in which you know it. God understands all languages. The words are not so important, but the contrition, the sorrow for sin, which must accompany the confession is absolutely essential—no sin can be forgiven unless we are sorry for it!*

If you do not know an Act of Contrition in any language and time permits you will find this

form helpful—"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because these sins offend You Who are so good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Your grace to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

After: As soon as possible say the prayers or do the good work which has been given you as a penance (it should be completed before your next Confession); this Penance has a very special value because of its association with the Sacrament.

Two Considerations Which Help!

God made it that way! The reason we must tell our sins to the priest is because he is no

mind-reader. Christ gave to His priest a conditional grant of power to absolve from sin; the priest must make a judgment in each case "to bind or to loose," and he can weigh the case only after the penitent has told him his sins.

Everybody is ashamed! When we narrate our sins to the priest—a fellow human being—we are embarrassed. This is natural and helps our humility and encourages our contrition. Then, too, once a sin has been told it becomes a sin confessed, and we can be proud of the courage which prompted us to use this Sacrament. This is the order, this is the way:—

Sin—Committed

Sin—Confessed

Sin—Repented

Sin—Absolved

Sin—Forgiven!

Emergencies Happen!

Many servicemen ask for instruction in the Act of Perfect Contrition. I am fully aware of the cause of this questioning, but it might easily have its urgency in the realization of many that the fighting fronts are just around the corner. When a man is getting ready for that final inspection he polishes up all his equipment—when a man is anticipating death and judgment he looks to all the spiritual aids of which he has ever heard.

Most men know now that they cannot depend on the assistance of a Chaplain at the last moment. There are not enough Chaplains to go around and even if one is fortunate enough to have one with his outfit, he cannot spend a long time with one man for others need him too. There will hardly be time before our death for an adequate confession, even if there should be a priest available. What can a man do for himself in these circumstances?

The wisdom of God has foreseen all eventualities; He knew our helplessness at this awful moment; He made it possible for us to help ourselves. *The Perfect Act of Contrition is the life-preserver that is thrown by a loving God to a man drowning in sin.* We do not need to wait until we are in actual physical danger to use this life-preserver; we ought to use it the moment we have al-

lowed ourselves to be in spiritual danger. The moment we have fallen into sin and realize what has happened—that moment we ought to elicit the most perfect Act of Contrition of which we are capable.

Sin is an offense against God—

Contrition is genuine sorrow for that offense—Perfect Contrition is prompted solely by our realization of the goodness of the God Whom we have offended.

When other motives, for example, loss of heaven and fear of hell, etc., join our sorrow, then we have imperfect Contrition, or attrition. Attrition plus the Sacrament of Penance is the normal means for a Catholic to rid himself of his sins—Perfect Contrition with the promise of Confession is the extraordinary means of removing sin from souls—it's the best we can do at the moment.

Perfect Contrition destroys sin directly, although it carries with it the obligation of future Confession as soon as possible. Perfect Contrition turns from sin in disgust because we have offended God Who is so good. We may not feel the sorrow in the least—feelings have nothing to do with the conviction and choice of our wills. To say and mean, *"O my God I am sorry for having offended You Who are so good,"* is a Perfect Act of Con-

trition. No set form of words is necessary to express our real sorrow, a very brief ejaculation may readily contain all the necessary elements, as long as its motives are genuine, as for example the cry, "My Lord and My God" wrung from a heart conscious of its failures and of God's goodness. However, many men have asked for a set form of the Act of Perfect Contrition which they might commit to memory and use frequently. Many men have found this Act of Contrition helpful—learn it—use it—you will have it when you need it.

"O my God, I am sorry that I have sinned against you, for you are so good; I will never

commit these sins again. I firmly resolve with the help of Your Grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life."
Amen.

Use this Act of Contrition whenever you offend the good God, because you love Him. At least say it each evening before you fall off to sleep. Whenever you are in danger have this Act of Contrition on your lips and in your hearts. When any buddy is dying say this Act of Contrition with Him, whisper it into the ear of those who are apparently unconscious.

Know it—Love it—Use it!

Save Souls through it!

The key of Heaven—Perfect Contrition!

Be Busy With Christ!

We know that Jesus Christ is God and therefore that there are no limits to His power. We are aware that Jesus Christ was man and as such lived and died on this earth. What we should never have known, unless we were told, was that Jesus Christ so loved His fellow men that He chose to employ His Godly power so that He might remain forever on earth with His weak brothers.

Belief in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the distinguishing mark of the genuine Catholic.

We may talk of fatiguing labors undertaken solely for the glory of God; we may accept suffering and hardship and poverty and dishonor to emulate the Master; we may be internationally famous for our works of kindness and charity; we may spend ourselves completely in the works of God, yet all these are a complete waste of time unless they are all inaugurated, carried on, and completed in relation to Christ's dwelling in our midst.

Christ came into the world and has never departed from it!—

He deliberately chose the lowly appearance of bread and wine so that he would not frighten us away. He knew how narrow these human minds of ours are,

and that when He would demand that we receive Him as food it would unduly tax our credulity unless He retained the appearances of food. Thus at the Last Supper He became bread and wine (as far as externals were concerned) by His command "This is My Body—this is My Blood."

And so as long as there are priests to continue His directions and celebrate Mass, there will be Christ Who is food and drink for His people. The early Christians understood this; they received Christ in Holy Communion at daily Mass. It was left for a proud and haughty people to refuse the proffered assistance of Christ and to rediscover our utter helplessness without Him. Once more a distraught and war-torn world is admitting the complete failure of its vaunted powers. Something is missing and that something is Jesus Christ.

He has been the *lonely Christ* of the Tabernacle, but He has not been the *busy Christ* of the office, of the factory, of the mill, of the mine, of the kitchen, of the camp, of the ball room, of the amusement park. Those whom He has trusted to bring Him to these places have refused His Command—He has remained the Prisoner of the Tabernacle.

There are some who have not failed Christ. There are over 100,000 Servicemen who are receiving Him in Holy Communion every day—they are parading Him in their barracks and on the fields of battle.

There is the soldier and his wife who both receive Holy Communion each morning at 7 o'clock so that they can spend this time together with Christ.

There are the few on the Home Front who welcome Christ regularly in their hearts and show Him to their neighbors as they work and play.

There must be many, many more who will join this marching army of Christ-Receivers and Christ-Paraders before this be-

comes a Christ's World.

Our plea to all Servicemen is—Receive Holy Communion as often as you go to Mass. Build up your spirituality now for the difficult and dangerous days ahead! Put Christ in your heart and lean on Him! It is either forge ahead because Christ strengthens our weakness, or it is the betrayal of Christ with the pleasure kiss of words without action. If America is to accomplish her destiny, the Americans must be powerful by the power which Christ alone imbues. It must be Christ in us Who prevails or we fail—Americans dare not be Christ-less!

Meet Christ and your family and friends at the Communion railing!

Make A Touch!

Every Catholic must attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day. Sickness or an important duty from which you cannot be excused are the only legitimate reasons for absence from Mass. The Serviceman, who understands, will want to attend Mass as often as possible; that's why many of these men are now getting to daily Mass—they want to recharge their souls—they want to touch God.

The Mass Is Not An Endurance Contest!

Those who think that attendance at Mass is simply the act of spending a half-hour in a particular church and going through a series of motions do not know what the Mass is. *The Mass must be understood and participated in*, if it is to be what Almighty God intended it should be when He instituted it.

The Mass Is A Sacrifice!

We hear a great deal about **sacrifice** during these war days, and it is not difficult for us to understand that when we give up our money, our comforts, our lives or whatever we hold dear for some noble purpose, *we are making a sacrifice*. This reasoning is only an indication of the real meaning of this word. Originally to sacrifice (sacer and facere) signified *to make something sacred*. This "sacredizing"

was accomplished by setting this thing aside and reserving it for a holy purpose. *Strictly speaking a sacrifice from the beginning meant the careful choice of a sensible gift (one that could be seen and felt) and the public offering of it to God by an authorized agent (the priest) and the consumption or destruction of it to testify to God's dominion over His creatures*. The Mass fulfills all these requirements, for the bread and wine which are clearly evident to all, are especially set aside and ceremoniously offered by a priest to Almighty God; as the Mass progresses the consumption of these gifts is accomplished and the Creator's supremacy is acknowledged.

Man's Way!

Until the 16th century no religion had ever been conceived without the idea of the sacrificial ceremony within it. There is every evidence today that an effort is being made to re-introduce this element in the groups where it had been outlawed because of its associations. *To offer a sacrifice is man's one method of proper expression to his God*. It is the way of human nature, of men, to demonstrate outwardly what is felt in the heart. And so the Catholic offers the Sacrifice of the Mass to God because he feels the obligation of sending an expression of his

heartfelt convictions to his Creator.

Because *God is so good in Himself*, we want to praise Him. (We always congratulate the one who is good at sports, etc.,—in fact we join in the presentation of a trophy to him.)

Because *God has been so good to us*, we want to express our gratitude. (We don't just say "thank you" to one who has done a kindness for us, we like to give them a box of candy or a fountain pen.)

Because *we have not been good to God*, we want to show our sorrow. (We are often not satisfied with an apology to an offended friend, we prefer to give a gift as a concrete expression of our repentance.)

Because *we want to be good*, we ask favors from God. (It is a human habit to make a petition by giving a present, viz.,—the politicians' cigars.)

All these duties we owe to God (adoration, thanksgiving, repentance, petition) and must be given expression not only in words but in deeds. *We must show by what we do that we adore and thank God and that we are repentant and petition Him.* These are the things that a Catholic does in a human way in his offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass. God does not need the Mass, but we need to express what we think and know of God. Use the Mass, frequently, to say, "I adore and thank God and I am sorry for offending Him and I ask His constant assistance."

Use the Mass to touch God!

To Marry Or Not To Marry—Now?

Since the exodus of service-men overseas has been so accelerated, everyday's mail contains this question, "*Should I get married now?*" Young people, both men and women, faced with a lengthy military service are perplexed as they try intelligently to plan their lives. The importance of this answer cannot be overemphasized—it is not an overstatement to say that *in all probability your spiritual and temporal welfare will be determined by the correct solution of this query.* There is no set answer which will hold in all cases; every situation is different and your best method of procedure is to visit a priest and discuss frankly your personal problem and its ramifications with him. There are, however, a few broad outlines which might help you clarify your thinking.

There are many prudent people who will say that now is *not the time to be married.* Many good reasons can be given to support this opinion.

1. There can be little or no family life after marriage and most likely for some time to come. It is no help to either husband or wife to begin the intimacies of married life and then suddenly to have them broken asunder by the necessary separations which military service demands. This enforced break-up

of family life is one of the gravest moral perils induced by the war.

2. *How shall their children be cared for and supported?* If the wife must work to earn her livelihood, what will happen when her motherhood makes it impossible for her to retain her job?

3. It's *an emotional approach* to say that by getting married, one feels that he has something real to fight for and something valuable to return to after the war. Genuine love is not destroyed by a few months of delay; all history is filled with examples in which marriages had to be postponed because of demands of something bigger than the individuals, viz., a career, scholarship, sickness, etc.

Father Gartland, succinctly gives this very good advice, when it can be followed:

"Fight First—Marry Later."

There are cases where it may seem best to *marry now.* These thoughts should be carefully considered before the decision is reached:

1. *How long have you known the girl?* How frequently have you been in her company? Is she from the old home town? Is she of your social level? Does she know what you look like in civilian clothes or has she been captivated by a uniform? Do you know each other's families? Is

she a Catholic with a knowledge of the perpetuity (no-divorce) of marriage? Is she the person with whom you want to spend the rest of your life? Is she the person whom you want to mother your sons and daughters? Will she help you and your children to save your souls?

2. How much in love are you?

Can you be in each other's company without becoming the victims of your passions and permitting your association to descend to a sinful plane? Is sin a regular part of every party? Are you demanding the privileges of married life and cheapening and destroying your love for each other?

These questions are by no means exhaustive, but are mere-

ly indicative of the lines of thought which must present themselves to prudent persons before they assume the awful responsibility of marriage in wartime. You will easily understand that much more remains to be said on the subject, but you must take the initiative to investigate your own situation. Your chaplain, your pastor, any priest with whom you can be most frank and confidential, will be happy to place himself and his priesthood at your disposal. Your parents will be able to give you the accumulated advice of years of married life.

Use your priests—use your parents! Pray to God and He will strengthen your decision!

The Answer!

We would say a word to you about the marriage privileges. Many men are shocked when they enter the service, at the attitude of their buddies towards sex. Ignorance and misinformation may excuse some, but every Catholic man should know the place of sex in God's plan. Don't accept the unreal and distorted imagination of your irreligious comrades; any priest will be happy to answer frankly and completely any honest question on this subject. *You have to know, but be sure that your knowledge is correct, for only "the pure of heart will see God."*

Sex has almost become a mania in our day. It is the constant subject of conversation; it forms the theme for almost every novel, play, and movie. It has been magnified to such a degree that it seems to be an obsession for many. This is to be expected for as Monsignor Sheen reminds us: *"Think about your mouth for five minutes, and you have an undue concentration of saliva. Think about your heart for five minutes, and you will believe you have heart trouble. Stand on a stage and think about your hands, and they will begin to feel as big as hams. The balance and equilibrium of the whole system is disturbed when an organ is isolated from its function in the whole organism, or divorced from*

its higher purpose." Consequently those who are always talking, reading, and thinking about sex are apt to be prepossessed by it.

There is probably no subject about which so much misinformation is broadcast as about sex, and yet our attitude to it is likely to determine our attitude to nearly everything else. There is a natural reticence (modesty) about this subject; however, there is no one more anxious than the Church that a correct knowledge of it should be given to every person. It is only when this function is isolated from the personality and separated from its purpose that it assumes a position out-of-proportion to its proper place.

Sex is one of the powers with which God has endowed the body. A distinct pleasure has been attached to it because God was anxious that men should properly employ its functions. Man is by nature selfish, and he would not have been anxious to cooperate with the Creator in peopling the earth if a great enticement had not been held out to him.

When God placed upon mankind the terrible responsibility for human life—this participation in His power of creation—He knew that He was fearfully burdening men and women. To bring children into the world, to

assume the responsibility for their eternal destiny, to suffer as mothers have to suffer and to make the sacrifices that fathers have to make, well, it was asking a great deal and God never asks without giving abundantly in return.

The whole source of much of the trouble in today's world is that men are seeking to have this pleasure without accepting the obligations—they are stealing that which does not belong to them and degrading one of the most beautiful things of life to a selfish means of pleasure.

The Church Looks At Souls

It is often said in derision that the Church is too much concerned with spiritualities, souls, etc., and has its head in the clouds. The real secret is that because the Church loves souls so much She stands alone in Her high regard for the bodies of men—for She respects the bodies that shelter those souls and that shelter, too, the life germ of unborn races. *Our Bodies carry germs to which God may someday unite immortal souls as He*

united our souls to the germs carried in the bodies of our fathers and mothers. Yes, every woman's body is meant to be the sanctuary of souls; every man's body carries a life germ to which may someday be united an immortal spirit.

All this is to be brought about through the intimacy and sanctity of marriage. Sex, then, rightly employed is not something sordid or impure; why it makes us sharers in the creative power of God. The purpose of the Sixth Commandment and the Ninth Commandment is simply to assist stumbling men to bridle this great power and to restrain the inordinate advances of selfish men, so that reason may rule instead of passion.

The sex instinct itself is natural and therefore sinless, as sinless as hunger and thirst. It is the instrument under Providence for the propagation and perpetuation of the race. It is only when reason is forced to abdicate and lust is enthroned that the power we have to people heaven becomes for us a personal ability to people hell.

The Bridge Between

With the constantly mounting casualty lists it is necessary for us all to face death and understand its purpose in God's plans. This critical moment is the one time we stand alone before the Divine Judge. Preparation for dying has more than usual interest for us now. Christ, through the medium of the Church, would follow us even to the abyss and beyond—He has given us a Sacrament that bridges the gap between life and death and life-eternal. It's consoling for us to know of the care that God would exercise for us at this awful moment; it is most practical for us to understand this last anointing—*Extreme Unction*. It is only in the clear and truthful presentation of these facts that the constant "courting of death" by our Chaplains at the fighting fronts takes on real meaning. Our priests will venture any danger, so that they might accompany a man through these perilous moments and extend to him the helping hand prepared by God's providence and established by Jesus Christ for them. Here is the touch of the Divine, and no one should be deprived of its strength.

Father Walter Farrell, O.P., in his *Companion to the Summa*, Vol. IV, has told the whole story. He says, "Extreme Unction is

another of those divinely instituted sluice gates which man has only to throw open to have his soul flooded by the living waters of divine life.

"The dying man is at the end of his resources. This prayer, which is the form of the sacrament is a supporting arm raising him from the pillow that he might accept the divine draught. He is slipping out of the arms of his mother, the Church, and in that prayer there are all good wishes and pent-up love that is too deep to find more lengthy expression. The priest says: 'May God by this anointing and His loving mercy pardon you whatever by sight, hearing, smell, taste, word, touch or step, you have done amiss,' anointing each of the members of the body as he says the appropriate words.

"It is a simple ceremony, a matter of a few moments. It is not unlike a Pullman porter's personal pride in his passengers' appearance as he fusses about, brushing shoes, coats, hats, straightening things so that everyone will be in perfect order when the train pulls in. Its simplicity suggests the little, insignificant touches that love prompts when it wants its loved one to look his best; like a mother's last moment poking, pulling, arranging of a child's clothes before entering the old home-

stead with its eagle-eyed inspection.

"As a matter of fact, the simile of a mother and her last-minute arrangement of a child's clothing is a quite accurate picture of the primary effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. It is not primarily ordered to reconciliation of a rebel with God nor to the resurrection of a man from the dead; it is to remove the slightest smudge from the face of a man's soul, to assure his mother, the Church, that the garments of his soul are spotless, that his robes hang just right, most becomingly. Mother Church is preparing to introduce her child to the ancestral mansion, the home of her forefathers, and she insists, lovingly, on her child looking its best.

"However, Extreme Unction is ready for whatever it may find in the soul. It is never caught unawares.

"Coming upon mortal sin in the soul of a dying man, it gets

in its destructive blows, not accidentally or indirectly, but with the efficiency of a detective who carries his gun even when off duty. Extreme Unction has hidden powers designed especially for this; its purpose, you see, is to prepare a man to meet his God, to groom the soul of a man for entry into the kingdom of heaven, however much grooming be necessary."

From these conclusions it must be apparent how important this Sacrament is to a world that is sending its Youth so regularly to the portals of death. It must not be left to chance—our reception of this great Sacrament. We must be able to depend on each other to procure for us the inestimable advantage of receiving Extreme Unction when we are in danger of death. God's helping hand is reaching out generously to our dying men and women. May our human hands assist in bringing God's inner-vating touch to weak and weary souls.

The Fight Is On

Only soldiers of Christ fight temptations: Traitors give up without a battle!

1) *Everyone living is tempted.* You have not been picked out and made the special target of the devil; you are simply sharing in the heritage of human nature.

2) *No temptation is ever a sin.* No matter how long it lasts or how strong it may become, temptation and sin are two entirely different things.

3) *God never permits us to be tempted beyond our strength.* When St. Paul complained about the terrible temptations which constantly harrassed him, Almighty God answered him: "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

Tempting

1) *The invitation.* Something evil is presented as something good. This may occur accidentally, or it may happen because of some action that is necessary. There is no sinfulness as long as this *suggestion to evil* takes place without wilful provocation.

2) *The Pleasure.* Our bodies are so closely knit together, that a mere suggestion in the mind is enough to cause a sensible delight. This experience is not sinful as long as it is not willed; feelings are not sins.

3) *The Choice.* The only force which can make a temptation into sin is the deliberate choice and

approval of it by the will. Your consent begets a *sin*, and the guilt is immediately attached to the soul; the outward act is only an expression of the interior choice. The sin is that you have chosen that which offends God.

Whence

1) *The World.* God is outlawed by the world and a constant struggle goes on between these two forces. Look at the magazines and books, the shows and movies of today's world and you see the overthrow of all that Christian morality holds dear; you see the sponsorship in them of the things that seek to dethrone God.

2) *The Flesh.* Man's first state of perfection was mortally wounded by Original Sin. The great gifts of God were thrown back into His face, and we all have been forced to live without the helps He intended for us. This intense spiritual weakness, abetted by induced physical seductions, has paved the pleasure road to hell with beguiling promises, (always promises) of happiness ahead.

3) *The Devil.* Satan hates good men for he knows they will take his place eternally with God. He still retains all the shrewdness with which he was originally endowed, and he devotes his existence to devising cunning means

which will prevent men from coming to heaven.

Why

1) *Proving our souls.* It's only when something has been put to a test that its true merit can be judged. Metal must be refined by fire that the dross may be removed. In the designs of Providence this same method of probing is employed to examine our protestations of love and loyalty.

2) *Progress in sanctity.* There is nothing that will so readily destroy self-pity and pride and cultivate humility as a serious temptation. *Humility is the cornerstone of sanctity, and it is often forged on the anvil of temptation.* Also, every temptation put to rout is a new declaration of our allegiance and love of God.

3) *Penance for sins.* Atonement must be made, either in this life or the next, for every sin

committed. Divine justice must be satisfied. Ample opportunity is offered many times in the struggles against temptations to compensate in our small way for the injury afflicted.

Conquer

1) *Be calm.* Have no fear that you will be overcome by the temptation. You are the only one who can make the choice, and no one can force a bad decision on you.

2) *Be circumspect.* The best attack is often a retreat from the field of battle, with new plans executed with the help of the Confessor, and new ammunition brought into play through the use of prayer and the Sacraments.

3) *Be confident.* Any person might be beaten if he depended on himself, but no person can be harmed who cooperates with the grace which God willingly gives to all who seek it.

Here's Your Life!

There are many things that surprise a man when he enters the Service and one of the most startling experiences is the prevalence of sin. *Many men seeking sin—men boasting of sin—men unashamed of sin—this condition is difficult for many of our boys to understand.* The answer is a triple one.

1) *Many men perform sinful acts because they do not know any better. Ignorance will excuse many from sinful guilt.* Be fair and don't blame men too easily—they may never have had the advantage of your training and education. God will never condemn a man for something which he had no opportunity to know. You can often "wise-up" such a fellow, and he will be grateful to you for the rest of his life.

2) *We are born inclined to sin—we have a wounded human nature.* In Adam's serious rebellion against God we all had a share for he is the father of the whole human race. *(We take the name and the classification of our families when we are born into them—we are given their limitations and advantages automatically. Coming from the family of human beings we were marked with the characteristics of its father (Adam), and we are restrained by its inherent weaknesses.)* Adam's sin of

pride, avarice and disobedience becomes our inheritance through our reception of human nature. This Original Sin of the head of the human race is ours, and we must understand it so that we may not be destroyed by surprise. *Original Sin is not a personal sin insofar that we have not committed it personally, but it is a family sin which we contracted by becoming a member of the human race. The human race suffered because of this sin and was left wounded.* The extra endowments which God had granted in Original Justice (immortality, immunity from suffering and death, etc.) were removed. Our human nature was left naked to fight its battle of coordinating the various conflicting elements (*spirituality vs. materiality*) which make up man. The fight goes on constantly, and it is only the participation in the life of God (grace) which gives the edge of supremacy to the spiritual nature of man. We are born now with leanings away from God—we are always inclined towards sin. The perfect balance in our animal and rational natures was destroyed, and they are perpetually at war. *The only thing which throws the balance towards God is the pull of His grace. The only cure for the infection is a reaching up and a leaning upon the*

outstretched hand of God. The seeds of civil war were planted within us when we shared in human nature and Original Sin.

3) *The devil is nobody's fool—he is very active* and he is always promoting sin—that's his business. Don't discount the devil; he is much more clever than we are and he is much stronger than we are naturally—it is only through the supernatural help of God's grace that the devil can be tamed and put in his place and held there. The devil is always "on the make" for sin, and it is up to us to break him down.

Servicemen, here are some of the explanations for the sin that surrounds you—they are not excuses but they are aids to understanding the life in which you now live. God has not "left us orphans," and we can handle all the occasions that arise—a temptation can never overpower us unless we are willing to "sell out" to it—to contract the guilt of a sin we must deliberately choose it.

Help yourself and your buddies by making at least your environment, free from serious sin!

The Enemy!

Our greatest enemy is an insidious one whom most people do not recognize. *The power of this enemy is gigantic, he is always fatal, he withers that upon which he breathes, he kills that which he touches.* He is always disguised, if he carried his true colors he would always be put to rout, but he is much too clever for that. His greatest advantage is always to appear as something other than what he really is. More people have been fooled by him than by all the other counterfeiters in the world put together. He is deadly in critical times like the present. He saps the very life's blood from us Americans and from our country. This traitorous enemy is mortal sin. We must ferret him out and crush him every time his head is raised. We dare not let ourselves open for the devastating blow which he always wields, if we are unprepared for his attack.

Recognize a mortal sin! A mortal sin must be a grievous matter!

It must be a serious matter; it can't be a trifle of any kind. If you willingly take the life of an innocent person, if you would steal another man's wife or property, if you ruin a comrade's reputation, if you, through your own fault, miss Sunday Mass, if you violate the purity of your

own body or that of any one else, if you destroy your reason through excessive drinking, if you deny God, abuse Him or His name, if you break any Commandment in a serious way, you have the "makings" for a mortal sin.

A mortal sin must have sufficient reflection!

You know what you are doing. It's no surprise attack, your education and training have prepared you to recognize this evil when it came along. It did not happen "before you knew what was coming off," you had *reflected* upon it, you had thought about it, you knew, you understood.

A mortal sin must have full consent of the will!

The temptation can come about a serious matter, and you are fully aware of the grievousness of the unsought invitation to evil, and it stays with you, and you can't seem to get rid of it . . . there is no mortal sin as long as your will has not consented. (The fact is that you earn God's grace for the fight you put up; if the devil finds that you always take a particular temptation and throw it back in his face and merit some grace for the battle, he grows weary of the attack and calls off his dogs.) If you are partially asleep you cannot have full con-

sent of the will; you cannot have any sin until you have deliberately chosen with a definite yes, the serious evil which has been suggested.

All three factors, *serious matter, full awareness, and deliberate choice* must be true at the same time about the same thing before there exists a mortal sin; *if anyone of them or any part of them is absent, there is no mortal sin.*

In God's Eyes!

A mortal sin kills the soul and makes us God's enemy. Just as an electric light bulb is dark and worthless and dead until the wire connecting the current is attached to it, so the soul without God's grace (in mortal sin) is dark and lifeless. *The mortal sinner refuses his allegiance to his Creator; he is absent without leave from his Commanding Officer—God.* He must return to duty or be judged and punished as the traitor he is.

In Our Own Eyes, If They Are Open!

Mortal sin seems to promise us happiness! However it is only a fantasy. We are not speaking

here of pleasure or momentary satisfaction, but of genuine happiness. *Remember that the human race has been seriously sinning now for thousands of years; men and women have tried every conceivable sin and yet not one person in all those centuries has ever achieved happiness through sin.* In view of this historical fact it is rather presumptuous to think that we would be the first to do what no other person in the history of the world has done. This apparent happiness is only a trick of the devil which he uses as bait!

Mortal sin seems to give freedom! We Americans are most chary of liberty—it is one of the things we are fighting for! The trouble arises from confusing liberty with license, however liberty is doing what we ought to do, whereas license is doing what we are able to do without any reference to its morality. These addicts of false freedom start off with loud voice proclaiming their freedom, when actually in time they are chained slaves no longer able to refuse the temptations to habitual sins which they have fostered.

Your Score With God!

We are told that one of the greatest difficulties about the Sacrament of Penance is the Examination of Conscience. Many times a strong man fears this ordeal because of a mistaken notice of what he is to do.

Mortal Sin

Three things must all be true about a sin before it is mortal—if any one of them is wanting, it is only a venial sin.

Grievous Matter—something serious, it cannot be a trifle.

Sufficient Reflection—you must be able to recognize the sin.

Full consent of the will—you must make a deliberate choice of the sin.

Every offense must be weighed in these scales, after it has been decided what Commandment has been broken.

The Commandments of God!

1. Have you willfully encouraged doubts against your faith; have you studied your religion; have you participated in non-Catholic religious services; have you prayed regularly or are you depending on some magic to save your soul?

2. Has your speech shown respect for the name of God or blasphemed (insulted) Him; have you called God to witness an untruth; have you cursed (wished evil to) anyone; have you kept your solemn promises to God?

3. Have you properly attended an entire Mass on Sunday and Holydays?

4. Have you shown love, respect, and obedience for your parents and superiors?

5. Have you ruined your health by excessive drinking or eating; have you promoted quarrels, hatreds, enmities, or fighting?

6-9. Have you guarded jealously the great power of becoming parents which God has loaned to you? Because of the seriousness of this tremendous trust every immodest thought, word (stories and songs) and action is grievous matter.

7-10. Have you taken anything belonging to another; have you returned the stolen article; do you pay your debts, return things found to the owners, cheated or envied the good fortune of others?

8. Do you lie; did you judge others rashly; did you repair the damage done to their character?

The Commandments Of The Church!

The Church commands us to fast (those over 21 to eat only one full meal) on certain days and to abstain (eat no meat) on Fridays and other set days. He who does not receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion at least once a year has cut himself adrift from the Church,

The Church has charge of the Sacraments. The Sacrament of Marriage must be performed according to the laws of the Church—a priest must witness the marriage of a Catholic.

The Capital Sins!

The Capital Sins are pride (exaggerated ego), covetousness (unreasonable attraction to material things), lust (disorderly sex instinct), envy, (sorrow at others success), gluttony, (excessive eating or drinking), anger, (unreasonable inclina-

tion to revenge), and sloth (neglect of our duty.)

Take your score and present it frankly and fully to your confessor. Be sorry because these sins offend God; absolution and forgiveness are always forthcoming. Do not allow shame and false self-respect to rob you of the peace of a good, pure conscience. Do a thorough job—your Confession is as good as your preparation for it has made it!

"Come In, God"

It seems from the letters that we receive from the Servicemen that our greatest help that we can give at this moment is to furnish a comprehensive "examination of conscience," or as one Marine puts it "tell us the things that are wrong with us all and in a way that we will recognize what you are talking about."

When we speak of an examination of our conscience we usually mean an orderly review of our conduct in relation to the Commandments of God and the Precepts of the Church.

God's first commandment seems far removed from servicemen—it stresses the existence of God and the special place we must reserve for Him in our lives. The first part of this Commandment is emphasized by the men who are in the field when they testify "that there are no atheists (deniers of God) in the foxholes or in the cockpits of our fighting ships." These men know there is a God—they have touched Him, and they have seen Him operate.

The greatest task facing most servicemen is to make *God the Stranger—God the Friend*. God always remains the same so the change must be effected in ourselves. We must approach God differently, we must come to

know Him intimately, we must familiarize ourselves with God.

We come to know God better by prayer. Sometimes men in the service grow ashamed of praying because they think it is a sign of weakness. (It is true—it is a sign of weakness—it is the open confession that we human beings are frail and need God). On the other hand it takes a great deal more courage to kneel down and say your night prayers in a crowded barracks than in the privacy of your room back home. Many men have testified that they got their faith and the necessary strength from seeing some sturdy comrade publicly pray each night in spite of the chatter, wisecracks, and vulgarities that surrounded him. "If he can do it, so can I." This encouragement has started many a soul back to God.

Tie Your Day Up With God!

At reveille: The moment you jump out of bed and start dressing, "think of God and say a word to Him." Offer Him everything you will do that day, all your thoughts, words, and actions. That will help you to make them worthy of His acceptance.

During the day: When you are about to tackle a particularly tough assignment, call in God to give you a bit of a boost. When you come to your meals, (even if it is only ration K) thank God

for His supplies and ask His blessing.

At night: A review of the day, see where the failures happened and why they happened—ask God's pardon, say your Act of Contrition paying particular attention to "heartily sorry for having offended You who art so good" and "I firmly resolve to confess my sins, and to amend my life."

After they get into their bunks many servicemen take their rosary is finished and that's all-saying it. This practice takes care of their thoughts and keeps their minds away from the "bar-racks-talk." Our Blessed Mother is glad to hear from them and anxious to help them fight for her special virtue of purity. Many fall asleep before the Rosary is finished and that's all right with God, (there is an old tradition that the angels take up where we leave off and finish the rosary.)

Some men will make the Stations of the Cross which they did not have the opportunity of doing in a Chapel that day, by holding the Crucifix of their Rosary which has been especially blessed for this purpose and saying 20 Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glory be to the Fathers. (If anyone does not have a rosary or a crucifix with this special "Station Blessing" on it, we shall be happy to send them one if they will write and request it.)

In this manner the whole day can be sanctified; you are complying with Christ's command of "Pray always" and you are laying in a supply of spiritual strength that will take care of you under any circumstances. A serviceman who prays is one of God's servicemen—He will never let you down.

Think of God, say a word to Him—that's praying. "Pray Always."

What's In A Name?

Those with whom you live are a cross-section of the world, called from every sort of home and from all types of work, the educated and the unlettered; the perverted and the good; the honest and decent, and the wicked and decadent—these are your barracks-mates and mess-mates. Their language expresses their thoughts and their training. *You can judge a man by his speech!*

Are We A Christian Nation?

When you listen to the "barracks-talk" would you believe that Americans believed Jesus Christ is their God? If you are looking for excuses they are easy to find, as for example bad habits or faulty training. However, is there ever reason enough for a man-of-God to excuse the constant abuse of God's name? *You would not permit the name of a friend or a buddy to be insulted.* Any red-blooded man would fight, if the name of his mother, his wife, or the woman he loves, is cheapened or held up for ridicule or insult. A weak and indirect insinuation often is sufficient cause to draw blood.

How can it be then that we are so patient and long-suffering when the name of our God is abused and insulted? *Is it that we love God less, or not at all?* There can be no denying the fact that frequently curses and oaths

and vulgarities fill the mouths of many of those with whom we associate. These "weak-sisters" are not the real patriots. True Americans respect the name of their God, and they do not water down their courage by cowardly abuses of God's name. *Respect for God means respect for His name—love for God means love for His name!*

Must We Take It?

We do not permit the repeated and continued insulting of the name of anyone whom we cherish. *No one has the cause or the right to constantly bandy about and trifle with the name of Jesus Christ; He is our God!* We must first worship His name ourselves and then we must demand reverence for the Sacred name from those with whom we associate. You may be assured that he who insults the name of God will not be a dependable friend of yours in time of a crisis; he shows the yellow streak every time he stains his lips with the Holy Name; in addition he confesses his ignorance, for he knows not what to say so he borrows what he believes is a display of manliness and stumbles into a sinful insult to God's name. *No officer and no enlisted man has the right to abuse God; no true American will be associated with these vile-mouthed braggarts!*

Let Others Know!

Your attitude to the Holy Name and your conduct towards those who abuse this Sacred Name will be more effective than all the sermons in the world. Men may kid you at first, (it helps pass the time) but soon

there comes a realization within them that they can trust the man who keeps faith with his God. Help each other by protecting God's name, so that through that Holy Name by which all men are to be saved, our country may be preserved.

Not An Endurance Contest!

In an examination of conscience servicemen are apt to pass by the first three Commandments rapidly with the attitude that they refer little to them. We have seen already how prominent a place the first and second commandments hold in our lives with their demands for respect for God and for His name. We must express our reverence and love of God even more definitely and thus the third Commandment with its obligation of Sunday Mass. The Church has sought to follow her men and has given permission for Evening Mass for servicemen; thousands of men (who would never have thought of it at home) are gathering around the altar each day. The minimum is the Church's demand for Sunday Mass. All branches of the Service have regulations that a serviceman should be given the opportunity of attending Mass; hardly any duty (outside of the theater of war) is so essential that it cannot be postponed for a short time or arranged to be covered by someone else, so that a man can go to Mass.

Sunday!

"Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day" is the concise way in which God made known His intentions. It is very reasonable that part of each week should be devoted to praising and thanking God from Whom all things come.

Sunday was chosen by the Apostles instead of the Sabbath to distinguish this new religion from the old, and because Christ rose from the dead and the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on a Sunday.

To keep Sunday holy we must do two things:—

1. Abstain from servile works, that is all unnecessary physical work, it makes no difference if one is paid for it or not.
2. Practice the duties of your religion: this means primarily attendance at Mass.

We as Catholics, following Christ, believe and teach, that *the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ offered on our altar under the appearance of bread and wine, in commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross*. We further say that the Sacrifice of the Mass and of the Cross are *Identical* because the sacrificial gift—Christ, and the sacrificing Priest—Christ, are the same in both. The Mass brings Calvary to us. To assist at Mass is to stand by the Cross of Christ. The Church, realizing the magnitude of the Mass, was moved to insist that her children must participate in this sacrifice every Sunday and Holyday. This definite legislation was necessary simply because men had grown to love ease and self to such an

extent that they would not accept their obligation. To clear their vision and to return true values to their rightful place the Church had to insist on a minimum requirement. Once a person *realizes* what a Mass is, no command is needed. When Christ comes to die for us we will be there to share His suffering with Him.

A One-Way Ticket

The Scriptures are filled with accounts of God's mercy to sinners; however there is a striking distinction to be noticed. When the bad angels refused to worship God with their "we will not serve," He punished them immediately by thrusting them into hell for this deliberate grievous sin. God is merciful to those who have fallen into impurity, drunkenness, sloth, etc., although they

are grievous offenses against Him, but He knows that they are often sins of weakness, of passion. God did not give the rebel angels another chance and He is inclined to limit the chances of those who miss Mass for this seems to be a deliberate affront against God tantamount to saying "we will not serve you by attending Mass."

It is the testimony of experience, times without number, that *missing Mass is the parent-sin of losing one's faith*. If you could ask the inhabitants of hell what was the secret of their downfall, the majority would admit that it was this sin. The deliberateness of it makes true contrition very difficult to obtain. *God pities weakness, but He hates rebellion.*

Mass every Sunday and Holy-day!

You've Got A Boss

Servicemen live by authority. When larger groups of people are living in close companionship, it is very necessary that the roads on which they travel be clearly marked. *The life-line of authority is one of the first things that a new serviceman learns; he must respect and obey his superiors.* In time of war it is almost a blind obedience which is demanded because of the need for prompt and unhesitating movements. The root of all authority is in the fourth commandment — those who have faithfully obeyed the authority of the home have no trouble obeying the authority of the camp. The spoiled weakling is set for a rude awakening and some difficult days. In the Service, men are forced to obey, for such obedience is necessary to the proper prosecution of the war. It may well be that now since you have left home the duty to your parents takes on a new perspective. You never outgrow your obligations to those who brought you into this world, and if you really learn to appreciate them you will have no trouble now respecting the authority vested in your superiors.

God speaks of honor for our parents in the Fourth Commandment. The *honor* we owe our parents demands from us *reverence, love and obedience.*

The reasons for this are obvious, for next to God a man must thank his father and mother for the life of his body. Such was God's way of welding the whole human race into a family.

Reverence—It is a truism that we revere those from whom we receive benefits. The great gift of existence came from God through our parents and that is why they have been commissioned by Him with certain rights and authority so that they might be responsible for that with which He entrusted them. In many ways we can show our reverence to our parents as *receiving their corrections willingly, by excusing and hiding their faults and by always speaking well of them.*

Love—He who has respect for his parents will also love them. Gratitude demands love and we can show this proper affection by *being patient with our parents, by trying to please them by helping them especially in their old age, and by praying for them.*

Have You Written To Your Parents Recently?—Regularly?

Obey—He who has respect and love for his parents, will obey them and he will do this for his own good. Parents have learned many things in the hard school of experience, and they are anxious to protect their children from making mistakes. Their

counsel is usually very safe and should be followed. *Reverence and love for father and mother never ceases but obedience admits of limitations.* When a child has established himself independently and has moved from the parental home after his 21st birthday, then the obligation of obedience is not as strict as before, but the dutiful child will always hold the advice of his parents in high regard.

Every serviceman must obey those who have authority over

him—a refusal is punished rapidly and severely. Disobedience of any kind is a sin, but disobedience in the Service carries additional guilt for it impedes the war effort. The person who issues the command assumes full responsibility for the action!

Honor Your Parents!—

Honor Your Superiors!—

and you will honor God from whom all legitimate authority comes and to whom all who exercise authority must be responsible.

There's A Right Way!

In an examination of conscience there is one commandment that is regularly passed by quickly. This is the Fifth Commandment which says, "Thou shalt not kill." There is no question of taking another person's life in most minds for they understand that in a just war this may be the only means of defending our own lives, and in the case of an unjust aggressor the right to life can be lost. *The reason for the careless investigation of this commandment arises from the fact that people forget that anything which may wilfully abuse the health of the body can be a violation of this commandment.* Our reason was given to us to direct our care of our bodies and our souls. When our reason is gone then we are left to be the game of every passing mood and every violent suggestion. Reason is our safeguard and when this protection is removed, we are pushovers for any prompting of our lower natures.

Drunkenness has always been associated with armies. Some people are of the opinion that all servicemen are "drunks." *The truth is that a very small percentage of our servicemen will permit their reason to be stolen by intoxicants.* Now that so many young boys are entering

the Service there might be a danger that they might be confused about this matter, so we shall speak of it clearly.

Drinking in itself is no sin. This has always been the teaching of the Catholic Church. *The excess of drinking, like any other abuse, is sinful.* The degree of sinfulness depends on our wilfulness. Because excessive drinking of intoxicants removes our reason, it is easy to understand that this condition will lead to other serious sins.

With reason gone, man is left the victim of his animality which is all that remains. With our animal nature predominant and no reason to assert itself and safeguard us, it is but natural that sins of impurity are encouraged if an opportunity presents itself. When the flesh predominates and reason is clouded or obliterated then man will seek to satisfy the promptings of his flesh. What may have started out to be a pleasant party of sociality ends by becoming an orgy of sinfulness which will stain and may easily ruin all chances for happily married life in the future. A terrible toll to pay so that others may think that we are "good fellows."

If you know or suspect that you cannot stop drinking without going to excess, then you must forbid yourself to ever

start drinking. The capacities of men are different; you know yourself well enough never to venture out beyond your depth. Don't think you are a magician who can start a fire in a dry woods and get away with less than a forest conflagration. Accidents happen, it is true, but only a fool will play with the fire that he knows will destroy him.

Everyone admires the man who recognizes his weakness and refuses all intoxicants—*he is a man.* It takes more genuine courage to say no to the gang than to "just go along" with the crowd. There are those heroes, too, who say, no, simply to make the sacrifice and to encourage others who may be weak and need the companionship of example to make this difficult decision. (If you have found that you need assistance to bolster your strength, the best suggestion is to tap frequently the reservoir of God's grace, contained in the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, and you will find the help you need).

Charles Lamb has left us a

memorable expression which should deter any man from becoming a victim of intoxicants. He says:

"Could the youth (to whom I speak) to whom the flavor of his first drink is delicious as the opening scenes of life—look into my desolation and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will; to see his destruction and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-ruin; could he see my fevered eye—feverish with last night's drinking, and feverish—looking for this last night's repetition of the folly;—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all of its mounting temptation and to clasp his teeth against it."

Need more testimony be offered? I think not. Total abstinence is the only security.

See God!

The most difficult detail assigned to a modern serviceman is to guard inviolate his purity. War has always had a tendency to tear the natural safeguards of morality down, and in a pagan age like our own catastrophe has many helpmates. The Sixth Commandment has always been a stumbling block for the human race—there is a great deal of confusion about it because of ignorance and misinformation. The Church is most anxious that you would understand—ask the priest, he will be happy to explain everything for you.

Tomorrow's Fathers!

The power of sex which God has placed in each man is to make you able to be a father in the tomorrow. Many men make this mistake of thinking that their sexual power belongs to them simply because God has appointed them to guard it. When you put your money in the bank you do not give it to the banker, you simply deposit it for safe-keeping so that it may bear interest in due time. If the banker were to take your money and spend it, you would raise a riot, for it does not belong to him, it belongs to you. Sex is God's power which He has deposited in men with the provision that it bear interest in the manner He has outlined. We are only the bankers of this ability to be-

come fathers—we do not own it —God owns it and sets down the rules for its uses. Many of the troubles arise from the misconception of men who argue that their bodies are their own, and they can do what they want with them. *We are only the bankers —we are not the owners.*

As usual, God has been very kind and He has attached great pleasure to the sexual intimacy which generates children. God loves life and He wanted many souls to share heaven with Him, so He did everything to encourage new souls to be born. However, He did not want these children to be deprived of the assistance of their home and parents and thus the sexual intimacy was to be restricted only to the marriage state. When a man and women participate in this marriage intimacy, they say to each other, "You are the only person I really love; you are the only one whom I want to be the parent of my children." —This is the unity of genuine marriage—this is the "one flesh" by which the Scriptures refer to matrimony.

Immodest thoughts, impure thoughts, flesh thoughts, will come to you as long as there is flesh on your bones. If you put up a battle to control your thoughts, there is no sin, no mat-

ter how long the fight lasts or how intense it becomes. The fact is that you get some grace for the battle.

Immodest Speech, dirty stories come from sewer minds. The humor never excuses the dirt. Hanging a mortal sin on the soul of a friend is a costly way to provoke a laugh. The tongue which cradles the Eucharistic Christ in Holy Communion should not chisel a hole in hell for an acquaintance.

Immodest Actions, with or without an accomplice, are deliberate thefts of God's power and rights. Because of the serious consequences, any such extra-marital act is a mortal sin. There are not two sets of moral laws, one for men and one for

women; both are bound by the same law. No one wants a second-hand love or a soiled love. Marriage intimacy need not always produce children, it has other purposes, the fostering of a mutual love and the satisfying of the sexual appetite, but these are only extras which a generous God has attached to the ability to cooperate with Him in bringing others into this world. Nature reeks her own vengeance on those who make a plaything of God's greatest trust—you can see the results of this sin in any hospital.

Keep on constant watch, never lower your guard, call in Jesus Christ—in Holy Communion, so that you can protect your purity, —your stake in tomorrow's world—in tomorrow's heaven.

His And Yours!

When Almighty God gave the 7th Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" He already indicated that a man has a right to own things. *No one can steal something from a person unless that person really owns that thing.* This commandment refutes those who assert that "all things belong to all men." It is a natural reaction for a man to be more careful of his own possessions than of those things which are common property—Be it ever so humble and poor the fact of ownership gives the added incentive to careful guardianship.

G. I. Issued

Servicemen are issued by the Government the necessary clothing and equipment to accomplish the task to which they have been assigned. A *serviceman owns (for the time of his service) these G. I. issues.* No one has the right to presume that whatever the Government owns, or whatever another serviceman has been issued, can be "borrowed" because he too is serving the government. Each serviceman owns his own G.I. issues, and he has no right to any other man's.

Stealing is one of the most seriously punished crimes in the Service. When men are living in such companionship they must be able to depend on each others honesty. One thief can destroy the morale of a whole battalion,

and the officers will go to any extreme to ferret out the dishonesty and punish it severely.

Cards, Dice, Etc.

Gambling is not always sinful. Betting under certain conditions, can be lawful and a source of recreation. In any legitimate game of chance these four conditions must be present:

- 1) The money used must not be needed for any higher purpose. It must be "free money" that is, which we are permitted to use for recreation. If a man has an obligation to anyone (even himself) to use this money in some other way, he must not chance it on the turn of a crap or the throw of dice. If the "*betting money*" is proper "*recreation money*" then he may use it in any decent way he pleases.
- 2) *The bet on which the stake is placed must be an even chance.* If there is an unfair advantage on either side, then the bet is dishonest and sinful. Unless there is an equal chance on both sides, there can be no honest bet.
- 3) If the time given to these pursuits is needed for duty or other needs then it would be sinful to waste it in recreation. If the game becomes a passion robbing a man of healthful recreation

and necessary rest, then his gambling has become sinful.

- 4) As long as all those who participate in the game of chance can afford such recreation, then you may join them. If, however, your participation will make it possible for some weak character to feed his unruly gambling passion, then you may easily be the occasion of sin.

It is much better to seek other types of recreation than gambling while in the service, because of the many restraining conditions.

A Peculiarity!

A broken seventh commandment has a strange condition which must be fulfilled before forgiveness can be obtained. *Restitution—paying back—must*

be made for every theft before the guilt is removed.

- 1) If the exact thing cannot be returned, then its value must be replaced.
- 2) If the definite person cannot be reached, then it can be presumed that the real owner would be willing to have this recompense made to some charitable institution.
- 3) If such restitution cannot be made immediately, then the willingness must be present and the beginnings of the effort must be made so that forgiveness can be sought in the Sacred Tribunal of Penance.

Respect every man, and his possessions — God guards the legitimate ownership of everything!

You Are On Guard!

Someone has said, *the first casualty of war is truth*. We have been witness to the most complete disregard for the pledged word between nations that the world has ever seen, and in its wake has come the most brutalizing war that history has recorded. Unless truth is again welcomed back into the lives of men and of nations,—there will never be peace but only a succession of armistices during which to prepare for the next war. We hear so much about love of God and of neighbor; and the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, and yet *if truth will not be respected and honest dealings practiced and the plightful word held sacred, then we've done nothing but talk and we've built on sand*.

It Means You!

God has given a special commandment to safeguard truth and He intended that it should reach down and touch each one of us and in all the circumstances in which we might find ourselves. All men despise a liar—men without any religious affiliations will still respect truth and hate a lie. In the intimacy of service life there is probably no greater source of sin (with the possible exception of sins of the flesh) than the selfishness of untruth. You will meet many men who consider a lie as a clever

means of escaping a difficulty. Many of your comrades will not be able to understand your refusal to defend them and their actions with an untruth. The so-called "little white lie" will not even trouble the conscience of a good many for they have forgotten or never knew that it was the sin which made this important and not the present consequence. Nothing ever excuses an untruth; the end does not justify the means.

How To Tear Down!

We are going to list the various methods by which people destroy truth, so that you may recognize them and with God's help avoid them:

Lying—Speaking deliberately and intentionally contrary to one's mind.

Detraction—Unjustly injuring another's good name.

Calumny—Unjustly (and untruthfully) injuring another's good name.

Rash Judgment—Imputing a supposed sin to a man without sufficient reason.

Contumely—Unjustly dishonoring a man in his presence. The bitter horse-play of the barracks-clown may often have shades of this sin upon it, for its humor is always at the expense of someone.

All these species of sin carry

with them the obligation of repairing as far as possible the injury done. Untruth, in its various expressions does not only insult God, as every sin does, but in addition it works havoc in a natural way with people's lives. In addition to the ordinary sorrow for sin and the purpose of amendment of not repeating the sin, for God's forgiveness we must also have the firm intention of repairing the injury.

You will understand from what has already been said that *secrets must be safeguarded*. Your common life may make available for you much information which you may not reveal. Secrets which would imperil the life of our nation are obviously a sacred trust; personal secrets belong to the individual. If a secret comes to us either accidentally or intentionally we still must safeguard that secret—knowledge is not permission to reveal personal secrets. The contents of a letter also enjoy the same sacredness and the same safeguards.

The eighth commandment has

many ramifications and very serious and frequent applications to a serviceman's life. Much of the trouble in a barracks is caused because of the failure to know and respect the rights of others as expressed in the Eighth Commandment of God — much of neighborhood trouble would be eliminated by a new exemplification of this commandment, and nations could be good neighbors if they would rule their relationships by this same Eighth Commandment. Important!—why there is hardly anything more important as we look forward to a peaceful future—but we start this peace with ourselves and with those whom we meet and influence because of our association with them. *Respect truth even when it hurts* and be watchful of the clever disguises used by the devil to fool us into believing that truth can't be quite as important as it seems to be.

*Try it—be truthful today!
Keep the Eighth Commandment!
Build future peaceful days—
now!*

Believe It!

You men, who are now in training for the days of combat, are packing your kits with the few essentials which you must have when you get out there. It's surprising how many things we can do without if we must and how very few things are absolutely essential and indispensable. Our religious life too, will undergo such a shaving-down process, for much of its practice would be impossible on the fighting fronts—we've got to travel light and have everything right with us—we've got to pack our bags now.

One of the most necessary things you're required to have in that spiritual kit—your soul—is the virtue of faith. Faith is a stranger in today's world for many claim unless they can go through the experience for themselves they will not believe. Our young men have been listening to those who prat, "faith is simply believing a little farther than you can reason." (Just to keep the record clear, that's not faith, that's insanity.)

Faith is not a blind acceptance of absurdities—it is not a stupid bending of the head to things one would like to think true.

Faith is believing something because you trust the person who said it. Divine faith is rooted in God—it means believing something because God has

made it known, because God has guaranteed it.

Faith is the confession that if a man needs a Commander-in-Chief to guide him through all his days in the Service and to direct the visible things that surround him, he surely needs a teacher who can speak with authority on the truly important things which lie beyond the reach of sense, the whence, the why, and the whether of life and just how far God, Who made us, guides our stumbling feet and strengthens our weak wills.

In Two Worlds!

The genuine Catholic lives in two worlds, the natural world of food and drink and drills and studies and heat and cold and sand and ice and sickness and death and also the supernatural world of the presence of God and the avoidance of sin and with the virtues of faith and hope and charity and penance. *Many happenings in life only make sense when seen through the perspective of the supernatural.* Without faith we live in a mad-house, for then all existence is a crazy journey without rhyme or reason.

We must have faith in someone! It may be only our sergeant, our Commanding Officer or our Commander-in-Chief, but we must trust them or we have defeated ourselves and our com-

rades. The only choice we ever have in this life is whom are we to believe—we must make a decision. Is it not reasonable that we should believe the all-knowing God rather than any man? Whether we realize it or not, the fact remains that we live mostly by faith even with regard to the natural things of life for it is humanly impossible to experience all things personally.

On the supernatural plane, we can only live by faith for that is the only sight by which we can peer into the mysteries that we cannot touch or feel. *Faith we must have—our only choice is whom and what shall we trust.* Faith is like a muscle—it becomes stronger with practice—

it grows flabby without exercise.

How long is it since you said your Act of Faith learned in childhood? Resurrect it, if need be, and put it in your Morning Prayers, it will give meaning to your day and to your life. Here it is, say it, live it.

O My God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

Here's The Explanation!

In every outfit there are those men who have given up—they are the drag who hold back the others—they are the hopeless—they are the candidates for “section eight.” It is hope alone which keeps us going through the trials of our daily life—it is hope that sustains the men on the life rafts and those lost in the jungle and those in the midst of the fighting and those on the hospital cots. Hope of another day—a better day—is the only thing which keeps them going. Hope is indispensable to our servicemen—if you don't have hope—go out and get it!

Here's Real Hope!

Hope, as a Catholic understands it, is a supernatural virtue that disposes us confidently to expect from Almighty God, both eternal life and the means by which it can be obtained. Take away eternal life and the pattern of Christian living is destroyed—the only basis for hope is gone. *The grim consideration, as a matter of fact, is that life's tragedies must be lived at all events; the man without hope simply endures them, the man with hope sees in them something which at present is unintelligible, but which will in the future days indicate the sustaining Hand of God.* To the Hopeless, life is a crazy-quilt which doesn't make sense; to the Hope-

ful, it is a beautiful tapestry of which the right side for the moment is beyond the vision of earthly eyes.

You Want An Explanation!

Hope alone gives proper explanation to Christian living. It gives meaning to the present prosperity of the wicked and the apparent ill-fortune of the good as well as the many revolting facts met in everyday life. (Hope explains the orneriness of all C.O.'s, the toughness of every first-sergeant, the frequency of each lousy detail, the bad breaks which always come to us.) *All these happenings have a real interpretation in the light of the optimistic virtue — Christian hope—in the confidence in the order of things as established by God, namely that there is another life after this one and that there, finally, all will end properly.* God is very patient and at the end of His long day His way will prevail and *only His way.* (God's funny that way — He wants His own way and gets it!)

Touch God!

Faith sees God, but hope touches Him. Increasing the contacts with God increases hope. Prayer and the twin Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion are the chief avenues by which *men reach up and God stoops down to strengthen our weakness.* Every right use of

prayer and the Sacraments welds this bond between God and the hopeful soul more secure. To use them properly is to strengthen them.

*Unreasonable Excesses Are
Ruinous!*

Hope is snuffed out and destroyed either through presumption or despair. Look around you and see the dearth of hope in today's men. The constantly mounting roll of suicides testifies to those who have utterly despaired and have thrown up their hands and admitted their lack of hope and their total defeat—they are cowards. On the other hand, we have the millions who have decided to get all they can out of this life and let the next one take care of itself. They magnify the mercy of God until they distort His justice, and then they presume that regardless of what they do or say

God will save them in spite of themselves. (St. Augustine answered them long ago: "God created us without our help, but He will not save us without our help.")

*The destroyers of hope are
Presumption — over-confidence
and unreasonable hopefulness—
and despair—lack of sufficient
hope, distrust of God.*

*Confidence in life, based on
confidence in God is a peculiar
characteristic of the Christian
soul. We trust in God and right-
fully distrust our weak and cor-
rupt selves. A part of our daily
prayers must be: "O my God,
relying upon Thy infinite good-
ness and promises, I hope to ob-
tain pardon of my sins, the
help of Thy grace, and life ever-
lasting, through the merits of
Jesus Christ, my Lord and my
Redeemer. Amen."*

Build A New World!

Everyone ought to be able to recognize you, and the distinguishing feature ought to be the same mark that has always characterized Christians. You will remember how the first followers of Christ were pointed out because "they loved one another." This *mutual charity* still belongs to Christians and ought to make prominent every Catholic wherever he be.

Charity may seem to be an odd virtue to expect in a serviceman, and yet there are more opportunities to practice charity in the Service than anywhere else. *When men must live in close quarters, and they are always getting into each other's hair, (literally), it is difficult for many to remember the love of neighbor which they must have.* When small men (small in mind and in character) obtain to positions of authority and abuse their privilege so as to inflict unnecessary hardships upon others, it rankles men and saps the charity from their veins.

The thoughtlessness of others, the insincerity of those we trusted, the unfaithfulness of friends, the cut-throat tactics of those bitten by the promotion bug, the vulgarities of the uncivilized, the obscenities of the pagans and the ignorant, the boastfulness of the weak, the pride and selfishness of the dis-

couraged, the maliciousness of the wicked, the failure of those who are trying, living intimately with all these men, eating with them, sleeping with them, working with them, recreating with them, hardly makes for the environment in which charity has a chance to breathe, much less to live and grow strong. *Genuine charity can live anywhere; don't confuse the picture!*

There is Nothing More Distorted!

Even well-intentioned persons seem to formulate their own opinions of charity and then proceed to become lost in self-admiration at their efforts to conform to this pattern. Charity is actually nothing more than a *supernatural inclination to love God and to will His happiness.* It should be obvious that the most we can do towards God's happiness is to rejoice because of what He, our God, possesses. (As the young husband is proud of the attractions of his wife and the mother glories in the beauty of her children.)

Don't Make The Mistake!

More damage is done to real charity by confusing it with feelings than by any other misconception. We are not charitable because we feel charitable—no, love is not a sentiment; it is a *disposition of the will.* Sen-

timent and feeling are like flowers that grow upon charity at times and then vanish. Charity proves itself by actions better than in any other way.

Our Magna Carta

A Christian's design for living is brief and blunt. We must love everything, first God, the Creator, then His creation, because God is good and his handiwork is good. All men must be loved because of the prominence and excellence which God has given them in His creation.

God Has Made It Easy!

To love God would have been difficult if Christ, the Son of God, had not come to earth to redeem us. But now, we need not build up our imagination so that we love God; all we need to do is to bring ourselves in close union with Christ, strengthen our intimacy and our friendship with Him even to the point of *identification*. *We, Christ and I, must hold all things in common; His affections and aversions must be ours, we must love what Christ loves, blame what He blames, emphasize only those*

things which are important to Him, and despise what He condemns—then we are really loving God.

This Is Real Charity!

Your daily round of activities is filled with opportunities of demonstrating your love of your neighbor, not because you like him, but because you love God Who died for him and for you. Give yourself the assignment of five little acts of kindness to your companions each day, (arousing an oversleeping bunkmate, allowing someone to shave in your turn, doing a little more of your detail than your share, passing up the second helping to a more hungry buddy, not riding the company "goat," skipping an opportunity to make an impression for promotion, defending the "junior" of the outfit, accompanying the "outcast" to town), these and many similar things can be done to prove that our love of neighbor has followed us into the Service, and we are declaring ourselves, for the love of God Who loved us all first and best!

It Belongs To Us!

Arms of anguish and suffering are embracing the world. To a degree never before imagined, men are inflicting upon each other sickness and death. *There is not a corner of the globe that is not touched with the racking pain of men's cruelty to men.* Every step of progress in the fields of science and machinery has now been directed towards the taking of human life painfully and effectively. With a unity of purpose, never before achieved in the history of the world, men are determined to destroy their enemies. The daily casualty lists of the newspapers remind us of death and torture; one wounded and crippled are returning in great numbers from the battle fronts; the starvation and poverty and homelessness and tragedies of the victims of bombings are now a written record, until there is hardly an individual who has not been touched by the finger of pain.

We have come to the place where we must work this business of suffering into the pattern of living or lose our reason. How can God use this holocaust which men have prepared? How does suffering and death fit into the Christian plan? We've got to understand! *The true answer is contained in the fact that we are Christians.*

The Cross belonged to Christ

and is our heritage. Suffering reminds us that we have no lasting residence in the place where it is possible—we shall not remain eternally on earth but we shall make our way through earth's suffering to everlasting happiness with God in Heaven.

God uses suffering in many ways for us:

(1) It may be that through suffering, our health or our *bodies are protected*, as when a flame warns us of the heat. This is a natural occurrence which safeguards the "temple of God."

(2) Suffering is often the final means of *saving our souls*. *Many eyes are opened and consciences are righted* under the relentless whip of suffering. It is now a matter of history that many of our heroes have used their last few earthly moments to come to God.

(3) *Suffering beautifies souls*. The hard marble of our souls must be subjected to the blows of the hammer and the chisel before a thing of beauty can be presented to the Creator.

(4) Suffering is often *punishment for sin*. Every injustice must be accounted for and some of it ought to be done in this life.

(5) Sometimes suffering cannot be explained by any of these attitudes; it is then we must

admit that *there is much in the mind of God that we don't know*. All we need realize is that our cross—our suffering, is ready when we are prepared to begin Calvary's climb with it. We must all go through this purifying experience, for we are not greater than our Master. Our love of our cross and our care for its faithful pilgrimage to crucifixion indicate our Catholic religion as well as any criterion that Christ gave us. Ask yourself how you can take it. The answer will indicate the reality of your Christianity to you.

Even when we do not live in tragic circumstances like today we can still use the Cross, in fact we must use it. *Your cross may be patient acceptance of suffering, of trial, of trouble, of sickness, of misfortune, or it*

may consist simply of living uncomplainingly the harrassing annoyances of everyday life. Nothing so much indicates the depth of our Christianity as our carrying of the cross which God permits us to share. Anyone may assist in the construction of our cross; it may be our enemy who deliberately plots our ruin; it may be disinterested persons whose indifference is difficult to bear; it may well be the blundering attempts of friends who because of their intimacy can forge a cross weighted with lead, or it may be a penance imposed on ourselves. Our superiors, our families, our roommates, our associates, our inferiors, ourselves, all may have a hand in shaping the cross of suffering that we must carry if we are to follow Christ.

Take up your cross and follow Christ!

Through This Door!

War takes its toll in the lives of those whom we know and love. Almost daily we hear of someone near to us who has paid the supreme price of patriotism. Death, with its cold clammy hand, has reached out to touch most of us. Not long ago I spoke with two parents who had recently lost their sons, and with two servicemen who had that day received word of the deaths of their brothers; the parents had been to a Requiem Mass, the soldiers had both gotten drunk. Herein lies the difference of attitude to death itself—what's the answer?

We must understand death! Death must be interpreted in this pattern of living, otherwise we find ourselves in a mad-house. We cannot brush this business aside and postpone our consideration of it until we are old, for it 'is now the young who are dying. We must look death in the eyes, recognize it for what it is and not fool ourselves about it. Our knowledge of death will determine our conduct and our attitude to everything else.

I must die! The most sobering thought in this life is that someday it will end for me. Others will continue to inhabit this workaday world, but my time here will be completed. There is an abruptness and decisiveness about death unlike

anything else in this world. There is no retracing our steps, once we have crossed the line. There have been millions of deaths, and there will be millions more. Some have sorrowed us and others we never even heard about but we are selfish enough to know that no matter how a death may sadden us and readjust our lives, there is actually only one important death for us, and that is our own. I must die, therefore I must understand death.

Death is not the end of living but only its real beginning! We are all traveling down a broad highway, when suddenly someone of our group leaves our company and makes a turn on another street and is gone from our sight. This does not mean that they have ceased to exist, it means only that for the time we are not in their company. There is a loneliness that comes over us for we miss their friendliness and their association—this is the human part. The truth is that they have gone on to a more permanent life, in fact an eternal life. For a genuine Catholic there ought not to be excessive unhappiness about the death of someone close to them, for other than the personal loneliness which death necessitates, there is the conviction that they are better off now than before.

For the work and pain and suffering and worry and uncertainty of this life are over; stretching before them is an eternity spent with God. The struggle is over and the regard is at hand.

The only important word! It does not matter greatly *when* (young or middle-aged or old) we die or *where* (in bed, in our own home town, or on the fighting front of some foreign shore). It matters tremendously *how* we die. If we are in the state of grace (free from mortal sin) then our death is a success; otherwise it is an irreparable failure. We get only the one chance! The choice we have made at the moment of our death endures for all eternity. God Himself cannot change our deliberate choice—that is the supremacy of a man's free will power, and nothing can destroy it.

They are not far away! There is consolation in the knowledge that the Church is made up of three parts, the *militant*—our-

selves working out our salvation; the *suffering*—the saved souls being purified for God's presence; the *triumphant*—the saints in Heaven with God. These three groups all belong to Christ's Church and can help each other; our prayers and sufferings can be offered for the Suffering Souls, and the Saints' intercession can assist both those in Purgatory and those on earth. This is the consolation which should hearten a Catholic --this is the explanation which gives meaning to death—this is the sunshine that fills our drab lives—this is living—this is dying.

Today—Death's Day! Foolish people delay their repentance and reordering of their lives until the day of their death. There is an old adage which gives the lie to such procrastination, it is: "As was today, so will be the day of your death." We don't change greatly; we must always be ready to go to God. Death is the door to Eternity, when it opens we meet God. Are you ready for that meeting now?

What's Next?

Several servicemen have suggested that we write about the one thing that is facing us all—death. A year ago, many of these healthy, young men never gave a moment's thought to the end of life, but with each casualty list, the reality is coming closer to home. It is the young who are dying—it is the healthy who are dying. There is no one secure from its shadows, but right now it seems to have its finger on the strong and virile, fighting youth of our country. There comes a day for each one of us which will be the day of our death—we may begin it as we have thousands of others, we may live it and probably will, as the many preceding days, but we shall never see its conclusion. Time will cease to exist for us because with our passage through the portals of death, eternity, endlessness has begun for us.

After Death—What?

There is one fact about which there can be little dispute and that is: After Death We Live. Yes, our souls are spirits which will always exist and the only consideration is, where shall they be? We choose their everlasting homes. We place them either in the eternal happiness, which is heaven, or in the eternal frustration, which is hell, or on the transitory state of purgation

which will lead ultimately to heaven. Daniel the Prophet indicates the definite Will of God here, (12, 2) "Those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always."

Heaven or hell, which shall it be?

You must choose *now*. After death—What?

Those who will spend their eternity with God in Heaven are those who lived with God while they were here on earth. Those who will live without God forever in Hell are those who refused Him and His claims while they lived. They did not want Him then, and He shall not inflict His presence on their perverted choices in the endless days of after death.

However, only the perfectly good come to heaven and only the totally depraved go to Hell. There must be a place for those who are in between these two extremes—there must be a state where the many of earth's inhabitants, who have not refused God completely but who have failed in many little things, may be purified of these failings, so that they might enter into perfect union with God

We know that no serious sin can be forgiven after death because that soul has deliberately

chosen to do without God; this choice is irrevocable after death. Yet we know from the Scriptures that some sins are forgiven for (2 Mach. 22, 46) "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins." The sins to be forgiven are those failings usually called *venial sins*. There is hardly one who cannot look back remorsefully over a road strewn with little selfishness, wasted opportunities, uncompleted tasks, idle words, indolence, small vanities, uncontrolled temper, impatience, shallow views, worldliness and laxities of one kind or another in the shepherding of his thoughts and desires. This state of transition, or purification, is called Purgatory.

Shall They Plead Of You In Vain?

Among those who send wistful petitions for our bounty are many whom we knew and loved—souls that beamed affectionately upon us through eyes which

the dust has quenched, souls that ministered to us through hands long since folded in peace, that tended us and ran our errands on weary feet now quiet forever, souls that fought aside of us and protected our lives with their own. The secluded graveyards of the world contain their ashes. They hold close fellowship with the rains and the long nights and the winter winds. How remote they are, and they were so close to us. And yet how quickly we forget. *It is probable that the dear dead who loved us are suffering for faults and infidelities which grew out of their love for us. If they had loved us less and God more, they would not have to suffer now.* What a startling and awesome thought; and yet God be praised, for He has made it possible to compensate for passionate treasons and cold betrayals toward the living by loyalties to the dead.

Pray for the Poor Souls in Purgatory! You have some buddies among them!

Make Your Reservation Now

Since many of our young men are due to have a place on the casualty lists of this war, there is a much greater interest in death and what comes after death. This is a very natural reaction, for we all want to know *where we are going and what will we do there*. We all admit that death ends this life. What then? Do we know anything about the next life? We know only what we have been told, and that's very little. For example, the little we know about heaven is very much confused by the environment in which we live. When people put away the theology of the Church, they fell back more and more on the imagery of Scripture. So we hear them talk and sing of Heaven as a place of harps and hymns and crowns of gold and streets of jasper. These, of course, are but symbols. As such they are good, as far as they go; but they give us no more idea of the life of Heaven than pictures of men with wings give us a notion of the being of Angels. The result is that for the average man, Heaven, thought of in terms of endless hymn-singing, is anything but attractive. This, however, is not the idea of the Church. *For Her, Heaven is the clear vision of the perfect possession of God with all that that implies.*

Where Is It?

No one knows. Our Lord never told us and the Church has given no decision. The chief thing to remember is that Heaven is happiness, a condition of the soul, and its location could be anywhere God chose. God being everywhere, He is present to all souls. In a very special manner He is the object of contemplation of the souls now in Heaven and is in possession of their unchangeable love. *God is with His Angels and Saints and that is Heaven.*

What Is It?

When St. Paul wished to make clear the happiness of heaven he spoke about seeing God "face to face." "Now we see in a mirror obscurely, but then (in heaven, we shall see) face to face. Now I know in part, then shall I know fully even as I have been fully known." (by God) (I Cor. 13, 12-13) This is the happiness of Heaven. It is called the Beatific Vision. *God penetrates the soul and the soul sees God and is happy eternally.*

In this life we get our knowledge of God indirectly through creatures. By reason, we rise from creature to Creator. In heaven we shall see God directly, there will be no creature between God and the soul.

Another reason for Heaven's

happiness is freedom from sin. *The inhabitants of heaven not only do not sin but they cannot.* This condition is not incompatible with perfect liberty. *Real liberty means freedom to do what is befitting the nature of the doer.* Sin is an abuse of liberty. It is a defect, an imperfection. The souls in Heaven have been confirmed by grace and all imperfections have been removed. To the perfect soul, sin is impossible.

"Beyond Lies God"

What awaits us in Heaven? No one has known as well as Christ Who was native there until He came to redeem us. He could not describe it for us. The incapacity, however, lies in us and in our human speech. The saints who were favored with special visions, attempting to describe Heaven, speak like stuttering children. About the best de-

scription is the written statement of St. Paul that Heaven defies description. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Cor. 2, 9) Let our reasoned judgment fortify our disturbing feelings. For Heaven lies on the other side of this blenching experience, called life. Death and judgment make a bleak and stormy passage. There is but one way of regarding our plunge into eternity as a tolerable prospect. *Christ made the passage before us.* He waded all its depths of bitterness and charted all its agonies. He waits for us with divine concern to join Him there,

It were a well spent journey though seven deaths lay between for eternity will be spent with God by those who have loved Him here.

Skip It!

There are some people who believe that because a serviceman had died bravely he will go to heaven—this is only wishful thinking. God will give every man what has been earned. Many men find it difficult to believe in hell, although they are frequently requesting people to go there. The notion of hell, they will tell you, is something medieval, outmoded, incompatible with present day living. For the modern, Christianity has been streamlined in this manner. "There is no more Hell." Salvation is no longer so urgent. Baptism is chiefly a ceremony. Faith is trust that God will always give us good things and never evil. Christianity is social action rather than worship of God."

No matter what persons may think or feel about Hell, it is how God sees it that is of importance. *It is easy for us to make excuses for ourselves saying that we could not have been really responsible, since we did not fully realize either the greatness of God or the consequent wickedness of sin.* We can be very sure that when God lays down an eternal punishment for sin it is because mortal sin deserves it, even though we find it difficult to see that there is anything wrong with the sin at all. It may well be that God's main reason for threatening to apply this great punishment for

serious sin was to teach us the nature and great evil of sin.

Christ spoke very clearly on this subject. He said those who were guilty of serious sin at the judgment would hear these words "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25, 41) All we need know about Hell is contained in these few words.

1) There are damned in Hell, "Cursed" by God. *There is a Hell.*

2) It will be "*everlasting.*"

3) These condemned will *suffer* because they are forced to "*depart* from God and because of the "*fire.*"

1) God has not created people to damn them in Hell. They damn themselves. *As a person lives, so he dies, and as he dies so he will live throughout the endless ages of eternity.* A traitor to his country is forced to pay with his life for the crime. These traitors must pay likewise. Those who live good lives are not worried about Hell any more than the orderly citizens are disturbed by the jails and penitentiaries in their midst. They know that these institutions are for the violators of laws and Hell is likewise for the violators of laws—God's laws.

2) Hell must last forever simply because the damned can never change their minds. *God*

simply ratifies the sentence that each one has composed for himself. Every condemned soul must confess that God's love has not been wanting nor His many offers of repentance. He who is lost must admit that he has persistently abused God's love and finally refused submission to repentance. Imagine the soul recalling the many graces that marked its progress through life. Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion, Penance, the prayers, the devotions of the Church, all sting now with the bitter recollection of abused graces. "We fools," cry the damned, "Salvation was so easy yet we would not take it. A little self-control, a little self-sacrifice, a little mortification and in reward everlasting happiness. But no—there was no time. For pleasure that ended in a few hours, there was time. But there was no time in life for God. But now in the eternity of Hell there is neither

time nor God, neither pleasure, nor business, or money, only suffering, sorrow and disappointment, and the remembrance how easy salvation could have been."

3) The greatest punishment of Hell is the soul's privation of its God. God must cast them off, and they can never be happy without Him. Added to this is the sensible punishments which Christ indicates by the word "fire." The Church teaches that this fire is real—it is not a figure of speech—it is not an exaggeration—it is soberest truth. *A just God must punish sin, and this is the means He has chosen.*

Mortal Sin is the reserved ticket for Hell—Hell is the prison of Mortal Sinners. God has promised forgiveness to the penitent sinner, but He has not promised him his own time for repentance.

Eternity is in the balance—no serviceman can afford to take a chance!

Keep This Line, Short

In times of war we learn a great deal about fighting tactics. It is most helpful to us who know that "this life is a constant warfare" to receive military maneuvers. Many of the methods employed on the battlefronts will furnish us with great assistance in the greatest fight we will ever have on our hands—the saving of our souls. Let us fight the good fight and use every bit of military strategy that we know.

Know Your Enemy

The more you can learn about your enemy the better you will be able to overcome him. We are prone to discount the devil and imagine he is a helpless, ignorant and unreal spirit. We forget that he is endowed with a keen, angelic, (though perverted) intelligence and is much more powerful than the ablest man. The devil has many co-workers among men. *All people in mortal sin* have enlisted in the army of Satan—they may be unconscious of their new allegiance, but they have definitely chosen to follow the devil as their leader. (The importance of choosing good companions and associates should be apparent to all.) The devil is very real and very able—his inductees into mortal sin are numerous—our enemy is ever vigilant and on the march.

Know Your Weakness

We are not as God wanted us

to be—we have been wounded through the failure of our first parents, and the weakness has been passed down to all human beings (except Our Blessed Mother.) As God created the first man, he possessed a body immune from suffering, a human life unthreatened by death, a mind wondrously intelligent and enlightened to truth, a will mightily firm and inclined strongly to real good, a soul highly endowed with holiness and abounding in grace to foster the fire of its charity; the whole person, body and soul destined for heaven's glory and joy, at peace within,—with his passions serving their good purpose, but subject to his reason; at peace without;—the earth yielding luxuriously to his wants; this was man as God created him.

Adam disobeyed God and committed original sin; in spite of all the aid which God had given him, he still chose to be proud, to harken to the enticements of the devil—to become another God, and thus offended God and robbed himself of all these extras with which he had been endowed. His whole being was shot through with weakness—his intellect was darkened, his will was weakened, his inclinations and emotions were perverted, grace was drained from his soul, the lower creations, ani-

mals and plants, were inimical to his bodily welfare, death was the end of this life and the entrance to an eternity which depended entirely on his earthly conduct. In other words, fallen man did not have much with which to work.

Know Your Supply Base

All these weaknesses can be overcome by the *grace of God* which He offers to us through prayer, sacrifice, and the sacraments. If the supply line is shortened, then frequently the strength of God can bolster our weaknesses; if the means of grace are used regularly, then we need have no fear that we will be starved out and overcome. Supplies are indispensable to the prosecution of a battle, and the grace of God is just as indispensable in the spir-

itual conflict in which we are engaged.

Know Your Allies

Most men fail in this struggle because they do not use the powerful ally who is always at hand. Through the institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Jesus Christ is willing and ready to come to us and assist in the fighting. We are weak when we attempt this struggle alone—we are strong when we lean on Christ. He has made Himself available to us at our beck and call—we can receive Him in Holy Communion at our instance. He will be our Commander-in-Chief, He will plan our strategy, He will bolster our courage, He will vanquish our enemies, He is our ally—

He Is Our God, Jesus Christ!

"There's A Time To Be Silent"

One of the most difficult things to understand is the silence with which many men surround their religion. Life in the service is one of enforced intimacy—men get to know everything about each other, that is everything except their religion. In fact they boast that they never discuss this subject because it is too controversial. At times men are constant companions, buddies, for more than a year and yet they do not know each other's religion.

*You can put it down that there is something wrong with the man's religion that cannot stand the inspection of a friendly and honest and truthful discussion.** Your Catholic religion ought to dominate your every thought and word and deed. Under such domination your speech and conduct ought to be different than those of other religions—it ought to bear the unmistakable trademark of Catholic. *The real thing is something which is impossible to hide and the real Catholic does not want to keep it a secret.* It's not something of which to be ashamed—it is the proudest possession of your life. There are some things which have a right to the privacy of secrecy but your religion is not one of them.

"There Is A Time To Shout"

When we have discovered

something good, our first inclination is to share it with our friends—we can hardly wait to tell them about our "find." Why should we be quiet about the best thing we have? It's not fair to those with whom we travel and with whom we live to deny them the advantages which we have. *Our Catholic religion was never intended to be static, it's got to be alive and growing or it dies.* Let men see and know the source of your spiritual strength. Talk about the reasons why you do certain acts and avoid others. (Of course you must first know the answers before you attempt to give them—introducing your religion to others may force you to do some studying and soul searching yourself and nothing could be more beneficial.)

For example: — When you've said your morning, meal, or evening *prayers*, have you stopped to explain that everything comes from God and therefore we ought to thank Him for gifts received and we must beg for help which we shall need? We delight in conversation with our friends so there is every reason why we should enjoy talking (praying) to our Best Friend (God).

When someone notices the *medal* that you wear have you compared it to the picture of a wife, girl friend or family that

most everyone carries in his wallet? And then added the explanation that the medal has no power in itself (any more than a picture has power) but that both help our weak human minds to concentrate our thoughts and visualize and recall our friends, so that we might more frequently get in touch with them and be mutually helpful to each other.

When you've refused to utter the usual *oaths or vulgarities* have you told them how you did not want to soil the tongue which receives and touches the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Communion?

When you've refused to laugh at the *dirty story* or to look at the *immoral pictures*; when you've been on a date and have refused to steal physical and illegitimate pleasures have you explained that you were not willing to offend God and to jeopardize your future happiness by lustful liberties that did not belong to you?

When you've rolled out of bed regularly each Sunday morning to attend *Mass*, did you tell them about the Eternal Magnet which draws you to the Chapel?

When you've refused to eat or

drink in preparation for *Holy Communion* have you described the privilege and joy which is yours when you received Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, into your soul?

When you've tipped your hat to your *priest-chaplain* have you explained who he is and what he does and why you respect him?

When the fellows had to wait for you until you had gone to *Confession* did you answer their questions later when they asked where the priest got the power to forgive sins and why you had to tell your sins to the priest, and how confession made sinning harder instead of easier?

When you respected *authority* and obeyed even though it was vested in an ignorant and abusive and unjust non-com, did you mention that your training was to follow authority unless it commanded something wicked?

When you've been *charitable* to the company goat have you given the answer of Christ "Love your neighbor."

Tell them and then tell them again—There is a time to shout and it's now!

You Need a Valid Excuse

Much confusion has arisen in the minds of some servicemen about their attendance at non-Catholic services. Some chaplains have added to this confusion by their erroneous instructions, so we are impelled to give the teaching of the Church on this doctrine.

From a Catholic viewpoint *there are only two kinds of religious services*, one Catholic and the other non-Catholic. *Catholics are to attend and participate only in Catholic services*; Catholics are allowed, by way of exception, to passively attend (never to take part) in a non-Catholic service only when there is a valid excuse, such as the funeral or wedding of an intimate friend or a relative. The reason for such attendance is the friendship and not the participation in the service.

At times you hear of a *General or an Inter-denominational Religious Service*; as far as a Catholic is concerned these are both non-Catholic Religious Services and you may not assist at them. Even when these services are conducted by a priest you should not attend them and your Bishop has given these directions to the priest-chaplains,—“If you must hold a general religious service (because there is no non-Catholic chaplain available) ask Catholic men to stay

away and to come only to Mass. At Mass tell them why—that too many of them have come to the notion that the general service is a substitute for Mass.” (Circular Letter of Military Ordinatee to Chaplains, n. 33, Aug. 14, 1943).

What To Do!

When you are at a place where no Mass is available on Sunday or a Holy Day, then take your Missal (a Mass Book) and say all the prayers of the Mass. (Most every serviceman has the small Military Missal compiled especially for him by Father Stedman and distributed by the National Catholic Community Service—if you have not yet received your copy drop us a card and we will send it to you.) *Some men say the Rosary too and these devotions can be held even when you are travelling or when you are on maneuvers or when you are fighting.* It's true, none of these takes the place of the Mass and everyone will understand that, but they are the best you can do under the circumstances and Almighty God will be satisfied with your offering. In fact, these are the prayers you should say when you cannot participate in the greatest of all prayers, the Mass.

We make this clear-cut distinction because there has been too much of this glib and prat-

truthfully say one multiplication table is as good as another when we know that only one is and can be true. (If we would attempt to figure our income tax another." We might just as according to our own multiplying, "one religion is as good as cation table we would certainly get ourselves into a lot of trouble. The Government insists that we use only the true multiplication table.) God's demands are the same—use the true religion. It's possible that ignorance may excuse, but when suspicion enters the mind, an investigation must be instigated and the real answer obtained.

*You've Got To Be Intolerant
And Tolerant!*

There will be those who say that we Catholics are intolerant and the answer is that *we are intolerant of untruth and so must every honest man be*. Just to be nice to people we cannot permit them to use their own erroneous measurements simply because they have grown fond of them; imagine allowing 500

gals, of gas for every coupon instead of 5 gals., their real value; or 5 pairs of shoes for one coupon instead of one pair, or 20 ounces for a pound, or 15 instead of 12 for a dozen. We would be forced to be intolerant of these untrue and dishonest measurements even though we were very fond of the people who were making the mistakes.

By the same token and motivated by the same religion we must be tolerant of unintentional mistakes, misinformed and therefore misleading conclusions, and all people who act and live in good faith. We must be tolerant of weakness but we must be intolerant and firm when it is a question of truth and honesty and right, even though it may be very unpopular and even if we stand alone. *Be tolerant in the right way for that is a religious virtue which makes for happy living together. Be intolerant in the right way, for we must hold the guard for truth and honesty or there can be no living together.*

"Today's Job"

Action is the order of the day. Now is not the time for delay or for indecision. There are many things to be done and we must all take an active part in the doing of them. The activity of a Catholic ought to be different from that of a non-Catholic. Our activity should influence our neighborhood to become like Christ wants it to be—this is Catholic Action. Many times you have heard the Holy Father, your Bishops and Priests extol Catholic Action. You agreed with what they said, but you've done little or nothing about it. There is a right technique which does this job. The method now used with great success was demonstrated in Belgium by Father Joseph Cardyn as early as 1925. An application of this approach will now be made to your service-life. The whole story is embodied in these three words,—Observe, Judge, Act.

Observe

Look around you with your eyes open. See the type of life being lived by your companions. It is your own crowd, your own barracks, your own company that now concerns you. Narrow the field down so that you can see it. It is not the Church at large with which you are now concerned, it is not even the Church in your own country or your own camp—it is rather just

your own intimates and their living according to one (and only one at a time) demand of the Church.

We might investigate the attendance at Sunday Mass. We have heard of thousands of servicemen participating in a field Mass, we have read glowing accounts of the large number of men who assist at Sunday and daily Mass; we have been impressed by the actual figures as published by the Bishop of the Army and Navy; we have admired the pictures of men at Mass near the front lines and in the fox-holes, these experiences are all part of the written record of World War No. 2. These are not the observations with which we are now concerned. *We are now to observe how many of our own Catholic companions go to Mass every Sunday.* Write down the names of the 25 men whom you see most frequently. Next, investigate their religion, and be sure of your answers, even if you must personally check their dog-tags. How many of these Catholics did you see at Mass last Sunday? Then take each Catholic whom you did not see at Mass and ask him if he attended and if so, where? Most likely they will readily tell the truth if they are not ashamed of missing Mass, ordinarily they are not ashamed

to admit it. List those who were legitimately excused. The number of Catholics who willingly missed Mass last Sunday will astonish you—they are the ones who are now *your problem*.

Judge

Look around you with the eyes of Christ. You are interested in seeing not only what is happening and who is doing it, but you are vitally concerned in estimating how all this agrees or disagrees with Christ's plan for men. The judgment in this problem is rather easy; *every Catholic knows of his obligation to attend Sunday Mass*; serious sickness and vitally essential work, which cannot be postponed, are the only acceptable excuses. We must come to the conclusion that there are some of our own intimates in mortal sin for deliberate missing of Mass last Sunday.

Action

Look around you with the eyes of Christ and then act as He would have done. You must work on these Mass-missers; (your investigation may have discovered another man or two who is willing to help with the problem, then you can form a cell for Catholic Action, or you

may have to carry on alone). Start with those whom you know best, talk to them privately and possibly you may be able to adjust a difficulty which will bring one or more back to their duty. You may have to offer to awaken some who have trouble hearing the call; you may have to walk to Chapel with another who is bashful; you may have to give one a clean shirt or loan him your uniform; you may have to arrange to buy breakfast for another; you may have to break down years of fear or embarrassment; you may have to teach some how to attend Mass; you may want to offer to introduce some to the Chaplain so as to destroy an unreasonable prejudice; you may have to take a man's detail so that he can be free to go to a later Mass; you may have to talk to the Sergeant or the C.O. about releasing a man for this particular time. There are thousands of different acts which you can do and must do if all the Catholics of your own little world are to be present at Mass every Sunday—this is the genuine Catholic Action of a Serviceman. As you will easily understand this same procedure, this same attack, can be used for any sore spot that needs correction.

Happy Days Are Here Again!

When you find something good, you want to tell the world about it. *Why have you been keeping quiet about the happiness that is yours when your soul is in the state of grace?* You will know many servicemen (some of them your own buddies) willing to try anything to have a good time. I should have said, almost anything, for the one thing that will produce happiness they avoid as they would smallpox—anything but that! Don't take my word for it. Give the test to yourself. When were you happiest? When were there no morning-after regrets following an evening of pleasure? The answer is not difficult. You remember, after a good confession, when you had righted things with God, how happy you were. You can't forget because it still holds true, that after you've made your peace with God—when your soul is free from serious sin—you are happy. You are not fair to the men with whom you live if you do not let them in on what you already know and experience. Happiness is for all—don't hold out on the poor fellows.

You've Got To Be Brave!

In one of our hospitals is a very brave marine. When a hand-grenade was thrown into his fox-hole, he threw himself on it—he was badly wounded. When he was questioned later

why he had done this heroic act, he finally admitted that *the reason was because he knew that he had been to Confession and Communion that morning*, but he did not know about the other two men who were in the same fox-hole.

The story has come back from the front of non-Catholic officers requesting the priest-chaplains to hear the Confessions of the men before they moved into battle, for they recognize that this preparation gives a fearlessness that makes them courageous. When things are right with God and a man knows it, then he realizes that nothing any man can do to him will really harm him.

Even those outside the Church recognize the sense of security possessed by men who have recently submitted their souls to the Sacrament of Penance. There is no fear in such hearts—there is only a supreme confidence that everything is now in God's hands, and He knows what is best, and He will provide what is needed. It is this knowledge which gives genuine courage and real bravery to our men. They, who have been out there, will tell you these facts if you will listen. Down deep in your heart you don't need to be told—your own experience will assure you that this is the way to get ready for

fighting—this is the only way to be sure of the outcome. Tell the others what you know—they have a right to know too.

Don't Wait!

Some foolish men say they will delay their confession until they are on the hot-spots. You are not delaying your physical training, your handling of arms, your adaptability in the machinery of war, until the bullets begin to fly—you are being hardened and groomed for the fighting now—you will take to the front lines the body you are preparing. You will also take to those belching clouds of fire and steel the same soul that has enlivened your body throughout the days of your life. If it is a soul that has been accustomed to be in habit-

ual serious sin—it will not suddenly find it easy to be in the state of grace and to remain so. As one man put it, *you've got to practice keeping your soul free from serious sin so that you can depend on it to be in good condition in the tight clinches.* The soul that you are nurturing now is the soul with which you will do battle.

Your body will be in condition—the Army or Navy will see to that. You are forced to train it and to prepare it.

Will your soul be in condition? Almighty God and His Church are prepared to make it ready—but you are the only one who can put these things to work!

It's a terrifying responsibility and it's all yours!

Speak Up, Men

What will you need when you get to the fighting fronts? What equipment is indispensable? What have the men who are there found to be most helpful? What must you concentrate on now, so that you are sure to have it when you need it?

Let The Fighting Men Speak Themselves—

From a South Pacific pilot of a flying fortress—“Don’t worry about me, Father, I’ll be ready for what’s coming. I’m not kidding myself, I’m going out so early in the game and I’ll be up so often that the odds are just against me. *I’ll always be in the state of Grace—*I’ve been practicing it for a long time now, so that when it’s time to go to God I’ll be ready to meet Him.” (He has gone to God and since he made sure to always be free from serious sin, he was ready to meet Him—that’s real preparation.)

From a Lieutenant in the Infantry—“I’ve averaged better than one Holy Communion a week since I’ve been in the Army. (This is a lot more than formerly, but I never realized how important it was.) It might sound funny to anyone else, but it really makes you feel good and ready when you go to Holy Communion often. It makes it a lot easier to stay out of sin too, and *now is the time to have a white soul.*”

From North Africa—“The weather was fair enough to have daily Mass on deck most every day and everybody was there. *I think all were thankful for this privilege as it tended to give one a feeling of security to be able to receive Holy Communion while in such possible danger.* Another new experience, aside from the voyage across was the feeling one gets (at least I did) when you attend Mass over here and realize that you are so many miles from home, but nothing is foreign or strange in this one respect.

It’s rather hard to put into words, but I think you know what I mean. Makes you feel good all the way through, anyway.

An officer from the South Pacific—“The Mass made Christmas for us. I know you will be interested in hearing that of all the Catholic men in my company, not one Catholic missed the opportunity to join the Infant in Holy Communion. It may seem odd, but after questioning my men, they offered their Communion and prayers for the folks back home.”

From New Guinea—“When you are at the front lines, the only thing you have time for is fighting and praying. *The amazing thing about it is that you do both at the same time and harder*

than you would think possible. I believe I enjoyed and was more impressed with this year's midnight Mass than ever before. Maybe, it was because I love my Religion more now that I have fought to help save it. Thank God, I'm alive and still appreciating the gift of the True Faith—the Catholic Church.”

From Sicily—“Father, you will never know what a deep devotion I have acquired for Our Blessed Lady—these “after battle days” give a fellow time to stop and think just how good the Lord has been to him. Mary must have been guiding me every day I was up front, or I would not have returned. I am trying to thank God, but I'll never be able to do enough.”

These men are testifying to

what they found valuable when they got to the fighting fronts. *They possessed this spiritual equipment because they had trained for it back here and they had laid in a supply.* No miracle happened to suddenly awaken them, they had worked on their spirituality while they were training here—they are warning all those who are yet to go into battle, they are saying,—“make sure you are in the state of grace; frequent Holy Communion makes it easier to stay out of sin and it gives you a sense of security even in danger; there's only time for fighting and praying and you do both together; the Blessed Mother protects you.”

These men know and they are telling you!

