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COURTSHIP *and* MARRIAGE

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

BY PRIESTS OF THE
SOCIETY OF JESUS

ASSOCIATE EDITORS of "AMERICA"

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CHAPTER I
COURTSHIP

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.



THE time of courtship is a season of joy. Sacred and pure is that affection which in the love of God draws together two young hearts that they may be united into one by the power and grace of a Sacrament. Matrimony, as celebrated in the Church, is indeed a "great Sacrament," and courtship is the natural approach to it. The Church has never been an enemy of human joy, and in her motherly tenderness she delights with the young in their happiness.

But courtship must have God's blessing upon it. It is more than a mere sentimental holiday. There is question of a great choice, of a momentous contract to be made for life. At such a time, if ever, there is need of prayer, prudence and caution. Implicit obedience must be given at this period to the ruling of the Church. Thoughtlessly, and at times indignantly, the young may be tempted to sweep aside the Church's wisdom of twenty centuries and the Divine authority bestowed upon her by Christ. Naturally, they will desire to follow their own inclination. Nevertheless they should convince themselves that whatever the Church has ordained in this important matter is best for the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of mankind, and of themselves in particular.

APPROACHING THE CHOICE

In this attitude of mind and with God's blessing, they may safely approach that choice upon which their happiness

for life depends. Though the promptings of nature may be strong, they should not permit themselves to be carried away by them to the neglect of reason, or the dictates of religion; nor should they be deaf to the prudent advice of those placed over them by God.

Beauty in woman and strength in man are gifts of a bountiful Creator. But they are not the greatest of His gifts, nor should they be allowed to determine the choice of a mate for life. Riches and rank and education open up long, alluring vistas of worldly prospects, but they hold no guarantee of happiness. Mutual attraction might seem a safer guide, but often it is founded upon mere external qualities. Only when a hasty marriage has been concluded and the first tide of mutual affection slowly subsides, will the hidden rocks of adverse and contrary traits of character appear, on which love and happiness will both make shipwreck.

LENGTH OF COURTSHIP

The first object of courtship is to test one's knowledge and love of the person with whom one contemplates marriage. A year's time, if properly used, should be sufficient for this purpose. To protract its duration beyond measure is not merely unreasonable, but may be exceedingly dangerous or wrong. It is utterly base and unjust for a young man heedlessly to prolong a courtship and then disappoint the girl. It is no less detestable when a jilt of a woman plays with the affections of a sincere young man.

The ideal age of matrimony, which will indicate the ideal age of courtship, is said to be the twentieth year for the bride, but the man should be some years older. Economic conditions must naturally be taken into account. If statistics are reliable there would seem to be less danger for the first-born child, if the mother is about twenty years of

age. If both the parents are young, they will retain their youthfulness as they develop with their children, and their lives can more readily blend in perfect harmony.

QUALITY OF THE BRIDE

In discussing the considerations that should determine the choice of a partner for life each of the two parties will be dealt with separately.

What then, in the first place, is to determine the young man in the selection of his future wife? Evidently those qualities which secure for him a religious and a happy home. Some of the principal points to be considered in regard to the prospective bride are the following: How does she act towards parents, brothers and sisters? Is she helpful in the home, considerate of the needs and solicitous for the happiness of others? Or is she sweet indeed to him, but ill-tempered towards others? Does she obey her parents? Is she wanting in filial gratitude and piety? Does she fail to value highly her holy religion? Is she but feebly imbued with the spirit of Divine faith? If she has the deep-seated faults suggested here she is most unlikely to bring happiness into his future home, or properly to rear the children God may bestow. Grace of person, charm of manner, education, and whatever other qualities she may possess will not counterbalance these radical defects. Foolish the young man who would wed her!

IS SHE A HOME-MAKER?

That she is skilful at the keys of the piano, that she can delicately paint china, make "fudge" or cleverly charm a circle of acquaintances is all very well; but these accomplishments are only the condiments of life. They are not the substantials. What is of importance is her ability to

take a mother's place in the household and to do the thousand needful things that may be required of her according to her station in life. Will the table be properly set, the food well prepared, the house tidy, and the children brought up in the love of God? Is she a woman who will comfort and support her husband in suffering and trial and lift up to Heaven the thoughts of both husband and children, drawing them ever closer to God? Such are the things that count for time and for eternity.

It is in the home of the intended bride that the suitor must acquaint himself with these facts, and they will be best revealed when his visits come unexpectedly. It is in everyday life that the future bride and bridegroom must learn to know each other, since it is here that they must later work and save and pray together. Each, therefore, should make it a point to study the other not only when on parade, but particularly when off guard.

Not expensive garments, which make thrift impossible, but modesty and virtue should be the true ornaments of the woman whom a Catholic young man would wed. Not brilliancy at parties and dances, but love of home is the jewel of the wife. To an inordinate desire for amusement on the part of the bride will correspond a cold hearth and a neglected home. These warnings are especially necessary in our time, since never before was the Christian home so greatly endangered.

THE WOMAN'S CHOICE

But the young woman, too, must be prudent in the choice which she makes. The same watchfulness is demanded of her, that she may be able to realize the fulfilment of her hopes. Fine clothes, smooth words, and skill in dancing are in themselves no marital recommendations. They are likely to prove a snare and a deception to the girl that makes her

choice because of them. Popularity, too, on the part of the young man may have been bought by easy spending and by habits that will prove destructive of all home life. The girl that looks no further, as is so often the case, will live to mourn her folly.

Here, then, are some of the considerations that call for her serious reflection and inquiry. What are the prospects of her intended husband? What are his ideals and purposes in life? Is he a true Christian man, faithful to his religious duties? Is he thrifty, steady, reliable in his work and his habits? Can he support a family? Is his character such that it gives reasonably assured promise of the future? Is he a man of principle, honest and honorable?

It is not sufficient to trust his words, as is too often done, in spite of the advice of parents and friends. Is his family record completely known to his future bride? There may be hereditary traits, sickness, insanity, into which she or her parents must carefully inquire. Not her own happiness and welfare alone are to be considered, but likewise the consequences which will come upon her children. She should understand, at all events, what the chances and conditions are before she binds herself for life.

INVETERATE HABITS

Under no circumstances let her trust a drunkard, an addict to drugs and similar evil habits. Let her not count upon a promise of reform. There is no reasonable hope that he will ever permanently change his ways, no matter how amiable he may be. Let her not imagine that her intended will surely prove an exception. If addicted to evil habits he is not to be trusted, and it is worse than folly for her to yoke herself with him for life. Here again she must remember that there are other than mere personal consid-

erations to be taken into account. She is not merely throwing away her own life, but she will bring the children God may give her into a home filled with misery and unhappiness.

Rightly to take the measure of a young man, let her assure herself of his devotion in church, and of his regularity and earnestness in the performance of all his religious duties. No excuse is to be admitted for absence from Mass unless it is plainly impossible for him to attend. For the young man of character and religious instincts will never miss Mass for a trifle, and he will find time to frequent the Sacraments.

AVOID SECRECY

Everything in courtship should be above board. Nothing should be kept secret from parents and those who have the right to know. The parents' counsel should be asked in all things, who in performing this sacred duty must themselves be guided by right reason and religion, seeking truly the best interests, spiritual no less than temporal, of the child they love. Recourse, in fine, should be had to the confessor when moral difficulties or doubts arise on any side.

The place for a girl to receive visits is her own home. Secret meetings should not be indulged in. The young man who desires them cannot be trusted with the reputation of an honorable girl.

There are men who, with adroit flatteries and apparently honest promises, will carry on a courtship with no intention of marriage. The girl's virtue, or her chances of marriage are endangered by such courtship.

On going out with a male companion the parents' consent should be obtained. Thus the girl will be protected and the young man himself will have good reason to hope for a happy marriage, if he himself is worthy. He, too,

must protect himself in a similar manner that he may not in his own turn be caught in the toils of a designing woman. The parents, we need not repeat, must be influenced only by the high motives already set forth.

MAKING THE CHOICE

In the earlier stages of courtship several young men may properly call on the girl. The parents may consent that she go out in the company of such as are known to be honest and honorable. As soon, however, as she decides to exclude a suitor she should immediately, with gentleness but with determination, let him understand that his company is not desired.

Let her accept no presents from any one during this time, but keep her freedom unimpaired until her final choice is made. She will be respected the more for insisting that she be addressed by her family name during all this period. The youth who is truly worthy of her will best know how to value her firmness.

Girls often fail to appreciate the serious consequences likely to follow from familiarities permitted by them and from secret meetings with those of the other sex. Familiarities are always dangerous, and the more intimate or objectionable they are, the greater is the temptation to which they expose both parties. This holds true even should the suitor be well-intentioned. Familiarities, as experience has shown in countless instances, may unexpectedly lead to the most dangerous results. It is rashness and folly to permit them. Firmness from the first and a sacred regard at all times for the virtues of womanhood will prevent humiliations for the Catholic girl, and a possible fall that would cast its shadow over all her life.

Woman is always the great sufferer from such sins. Yet

often she is directly to blame for the consequences that so terribly react upon herself. Indecency in dress is a constant invitation to sensuality. It not merely arouses sinful thoughts and passions, but breaks down the bars of restraint that should safeguard the sacredness of womanhood and protect her virtue. It is easy for a girl to forfeit a man's high esteem. She cannot be too watchful. Yet many of our Catholic girls who are doubtless innocent themselves do not seem even to advert to the dangers to which they are exposing themselves and others.

THE ENGAGEMENT

When finally the girl's choice has been made, she must no longer permit the attentions of other suitors. The engagement should be made with the consent and blessing of the parents. When the engagement has taken place, the marriage should follow without much delay, or at least as soon as, all circumstances considered, is reasonably convenient. Special prayer is needed for this purpose and the frequent and fervent reception of the Sacraments. To the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and to her Spouse St. Joseph let them have recourse, and find a home together in the Heart of Christ. Occasions of privacy that would prove a danger to them should be avoided, and they should bear in mind the protecting presence of their Guardian Angels. Lavish expenditures on the bride should at no time be encouraged by her. Money should not be squandered, but saved to build up the home.

If the positive counsels given here are duly observed, all improprieties, follies, lavishness and, in particular, all offenses against the Divine Majesty will readily be avoided, the joy of courtship will not be lessened, but it will rather be increased a hundredfold. Its fruits will be holiness and happiness through all the days of married life.

CHAPTER II

THE MODERN GALAHAD

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

LIFE, we are told, is a warfare. This is particularly true of the Catholic young man who strives to be true to his Catholic principles. He is cast into the midst of an irreligious world. Blasphemous language and immoral words assail his ears. A literature filled with unsound social and religious thought is likely to be thrust into his hands. In addition he must bravely fight the struggle with his own strong passions that always seek to gain the upper hand. Yet he has no reason for despair. Christ is with him and his victory is assured if only he will strive to follow his Divine Leader with firm confidence and a knightly heart.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Character is the first quality needed in the Catholic young man. There must be no half-heartedness in his adherence to his religion. He must be prepared to defend the Faith and be eager to advance its interests. A positive Christianity is demanded of him. The restless activity wherewith the enemies of the Church seek for her destruction should serve as an incentive to urge him not to be outdone in his zeal and energy for the cause of Christ.

If he is a man of character he will not permit himself to be influenced by the example of those about him who are not of the Faith, nor will he be misled by the lives of lukewarm Catholics who are a shame and disgrace to the

holy Church. His confidence is not in himself, but in the strength of his Redeemer.

Should he nevertheless have the misfortune to fall, he can still show his manhood by rising at once with the help of God. An act of perfect contrition, together with the purpose of a humble Confession, at once places him again erect upon his feet, resolved by the grace of God to fall no more. The man who is thrown and remains upon the ground is despicable, but he who leaps up to renew the combat is terrible to his foe. Where occasions of sin lie in wait his prudence will teach him to escape the danger by avoiding it. So the wise men eluded the guile of Herod by taking another route than that by which they had come.

THE FOREMOST ENEMY

The greatest danger which everywhere besets the Catholic young man is the temptation to impurity, whether in thought, desire, word or action. Original sin has left its taint in the concupiscence of fallen nature. Fortitude and perseverance are required, and above all the grace of God, to combat this successfully. In some the struggle will be greater than in others, but all must arm themselves against this first and most persistent enemy. Defeat may mean physical as well as spiritual ruin. It means unhappiness, the destruction of self-respect, the lowering of all man's noblest ideals, and finally, it may mean the loss of faith.

The struggle against purity begins within the heart and mind of man. Here are the outermost trenches, the first defenses. If they are taken the victory is already won by the ever-watchful foe. The state of grace has been lost and the soul itself has surrendered to the inveterate enemy of our human nature. It can only be a question now of completing the ruin, unless God's love is regained. We are not responsible for thoughts or images that come unbidden,

from which we seek to turn the mind, and in which we take no pleasure. Full knowledge and complete consent are required, as we know, to commit a mortal sin. By God's grace, therefore, it lies within the power of every one to keep his soul pure in the sight of his Creator.

You cannot be surprised into a mortal sin before you are aware. But an ignominious surrender to impure thoughts and imaginations, an indulgence in them, will lead to desires, and these to secret acts, and thence the way lies open to every form of shameless immorality, to foul words and fouler deeds.

GUARDING THE SENSES

The first tactics necessary, therefore, in this spiritual warfare which we know to be of far greater consequences than any mere earthly conflict can ever be, are to keep a strict guard upon our senses. The eye must not be permitted to rest with pleasure upon objects that will fill the mind with impure images, nor the ear to listen with satisfaction to immoral conversation, or the tongue to participate in it. So, too, must the sense of touch be sacredly guarded, while we know that excess in food or drink adds fuel to the fires of sensuality.

Indecent amusements of every kind, dances and familiarities with those of the other sex that are unbecoming in a Christian, theatres and places of pleasure that incite to sin, must be avoided as the flames of hell. Above all, the Catholic young man should keep far from him all unclean company, as he would flee from contagion itself. A foul-mouthed, impure comrade is worse than a garment infected with the pest. His presence breathes corruption and death. Should the Catholic young man himself unfortunately have contracted habits of impurity, his certain

remedy is frequent Confession and Communion, with the firm determination to conquer, by the grace of God. Let him instantly pray for this victory to his Immaculate Queen and Mother.

Clean of heart, clean of mind, clean of soul and body, the Catholic young man feels within him the dignity of his Christian manhood. Not for all the world would he sacrifice this virtue. He is a true member of Christ and his body is the unprofaned temple of the Holy Ghost. The poet's words are no exaggeration as applied to him: his strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure.

RESPECT FOR WOMAN

Particularly important is the respect which he must have for womankind. Neither in his thoughts nor in his actions should he allow himself the least license in this regard. No undue familiarities may ever be taken. If woman herself forgets the sacredness and modesty that should encompass her and plays the temptress to his soul, he can do one thing only, and that is avoid her as he loves his manhood and the grace of God. If Catholic young men were severely to discourage by their disapproval the prevalent immodesties of dress, in which Catholic women not seldom foolishly indulge after the fashions of the day, there would be a higher standard set for the Catholic life of our time.

Vile and debasing is the habit of swearing and blaspheming. Better that the tongue should shrivel and cling to the palate than that it ever should deliberately utter a single profanity. As a guard against this evil and a reparation for it the Holy Name Society has been instituted, that Christ may be honored in the lives of true Catholic men.

RADICALISM

One of the greatest perils to which the Catholic young man can be exposed in industrial life, is false radicalism. While the wealthy are apt to disregard their Christian principles for the sake of gain, and so drift from the Church, the religion of the workers is no less imperiled by extreme radical and Socialistic influences. They are told not to heed the Church or the priest, and that economic questions have no bearing on religion. Every cunning attempt is made to destroy their loyalty to their pastors. Doctrines, which no Catholic can hold, are common in the literature often scattered broadcast among them. Even those who are opposed to Socialism may frequently be deeply infected with its unsound views.

The Catholic young man should learn that the Church is equally opposed to a system of greed and profiteering, and demands for the laboring man the full measure of justice to which he is entitled. He should familiarize himself with Catholic social principles. He must not only be deeply grounded in his religion so as to be able to give reasons for the faith that is in him, but he should be conversant also with the Church's teaching upon the questions of the day. For this purpose it is indispensable that he should acquaint himself with the Catholic literature upon these subjects, and indeed upon every point of consequence in life. Otherwise his ignorance may make of him an easy prey for any demagogue, and he will find himself involved in hopeless confusion when striving to defend his Catholic principles.

Catholic journals, Catholic books, Catholic literature are a strict necessity for the Catholic young man. It is of the utmost importance that he render himself conversant with them. As the Socialist is immersed in his own papers, periodicals and books, so the Catholic young man must

absorb his own splendid literature. There is no other way in which he can fittingly prepare himself for the battle of life, and become an intelligent and zealous champion of his Faith.

THE LAY APOSTOLATE

As was said in the beginning, there is Catholic work of every kind to be done by him in the cause of Christ, and for the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind. The interests of the Church are not to be promoted by bishops and priests exclusively. They are the common concern of the laity as well. The latter, no less than the Pope himself, are members of that mystical body, the Church, whereof Christ is the Head. Everything, therefore, that concerns her development or her interests, in parish, city, country, or in the foreign missions, is a matter of earnest solicitude for every loyal Catholic, whether man or woman. Vast is the variety of enterprises in which the Catholic laity can interest themselves, while they should not forget their civic and social duties.

Militant, zealous, enterprising Catholic young men, thoroughly trained in their holy religion, are the crying need of the times. Slackers there are in abundance who imagine that they have done their duty when they have carelessly assisted at Sunday Mass. We need men who will defend the Church intelligently and loyally. We have political Catholics enough, who advertise their religion for what it can pay them in votes or money, and who represent the Church upon public occasions for the glory and influence that it brings them. We want none of these.

We are Catholics not for what the Church can give us in the material order, but for what we ourselves can give to her in our labors and our sacrifices. Sufficient, and more than sufficient for us are the spiritual gifts that

Christ will bestow in overwhelming abundance, beyond all that eye has seen, or ear heard, or tongue can utter, in return for the use we make of our means, our strength and our talents in His service.

FILIAL PIETY

Finally, to bring down God's blessing upon all his work and upon the entire course of his life, the Catholic young man should never forget or neglect the honor and respect he owes his parents and the obedience due to them. He should delight in the fact that he is able in some measure to repay them for the good that they have done to him. With advancing years his tenderness and love for them should constantly increase.

Nor will the Catholic young man forget the love and devotion towards his heavenly Queen and Mother. He can truly show himself a son by his beautiful obedience in all things to her loving will in his regard, which is ever one with the will of Christ and the desires of the Sacred Heart. In devotion to her he possesses a sure means of preserving his purity inviolate, or in regaining it should he have lapsed into sin.

In particular will he show his spirit of faith and obedience by the most frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist. Here is the final means of overcoming his faults and failings. It is a practice that should particularly appeal to the Catholic young man and is especially needed by him. There is no way of retaining his purity except by prayer and the Sacraments. The Holy Eucharist, too, will inflame his heart with the love of Christ and with zeal for His holy Church. It is the bread of the strong and the wine that begets virgins.

CHAPTER III

THE DAWN OF WOMANHOOD

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

THE Catholic young woman is in a special sense the hope of the Church. To her guardianship are committed the purity, the virtue and the piety of the human race. Should the young man fail to rise to the full stature of his Christian ideals, regrettable as this must always be, yet the hope still remains that woman, by her strength of inspiration and her loyalty to God, may lift him up with her. But if woman herself, and in particular Catholic woman, for whose welfare the Church has done so much, should fail, the earth indeed would be a darksome place and pitiable the prospect for the children who in the future will depend upon her for their guidance and instruction.

In a world that is mad for pleasure and regardless of moral restraints, we look to the Catholic young woman for the preservation of the noblest Christian standards of life. Never was womanhood on trial as it is today. The Catholic young woman, in particular, is called upon to maintain before a godless world the honor of her Catholic Faith. It is of the dangers to which she is exposed that the present chapter mainly deals.

THE SHIELD OF MODESTY

Christian modesty, in the first place, is her safeguard. It will manifest itself in her voice, her gait, her whole demeanor. It is the keynote of the Catholic life in woman.

The standards of the modern world are in too many instances based upon a pagan code of morals. The Catholic young woman must therefore set an example of that true Christian womanhood which is a thousand times more charming than all the glitter of an empty world, devoid of charity and faith.

Modesty will show itself particularly in her choice of dress. This, in a manner, is an index to her mind. Does she dress simply and becoming? Is she vested according to the dignity which God has given her? Redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, she is called to be a living temple of the Holy Ghost. Sacred is her body. Least of all may it be made an invitation to licentious thoughts. The evil effect of such conduct would return tenfold upon her own head. Catholic young girls and women should set the world at defiance by the strict observance of the least demand of Christian modesty. They will thus win the admiration of all whose esteem they rightly value.

At the feet of Mary Immaculate let the Catholic maiden learn whether her apparel indeed finds favor in the eyes of her Queen, her Mother and her true Model. So will she be certain to meet with approval in the sight of God and of His holy Angels, and no less in the sight of all true Christian men. So will her joy abound and invest her with a beauty that no art of man can give.

DEALING WITH STRANGERS

Modesty will teach her to place a guard upon her senses through which death enters into the soul. Modesty will be the protection of her womanly virtue. But there are special perils against which she must be warned, lest temptation may come upon her unawares. Particular watchfulness is required in her conduct towards strangers of

the other sex. A few directions in this regard are necessary.

Prudence forbids that she should trust herself to a stranger whose interest she may seem to have inspired. To take presents, to accept invitations, or, finally, to admit familiarities, might be the beginning of her downfall. A girl's instinct will tell her that she must stand upon her guard. Her own self-respect should be her protection. She cannot afford to disregard the reasonably established conventions. The more adroit a stranger may be in his flatteries, the more he is to be distrusted. Seeming innocence is no safeguard. Let her heed the counsel of her parents and keep nothing secret from them. The highways of the world are thickly strewn with blasted lives of girls who once, perhaps, were innocent as she.

Not morbidity, but Christian wisdom is counseled her, which would leave her days the richer with the true joys that last, not for a brief passion, but through the long years of life.

IN SHOP OR OFFICE

Most exposed is the girl who must earn her livelihood in shop or office. Attentions from her "boss" or foreman, with evil designs, are not uncommon. Again there is but one natural safeguard, and that is an immediate and full disclosure to parents or guardians of whatever may be said or done aside from matters pertaining to her work. Such attention is often paid by married men. The pity is that Catholic girls, on realizing that their virtue is exposed, may nevertheless fear to put an end to these familiarities lest they lose their position.

In all cases of doubt let the confessor be consulted and his advice followed absolutely. The obedient man, the Scripture tells us, shall speak of victory. Such dangers may

often also exist in domestic service. Whatever comes to pass; the surest means of safety for the girl are her mighty supernatural aids and her prompt avoidance of all occasions of sin, together with an instant disclosure of all doubtful conditions to those whom she can trust. Should she have neither parents nor guardians, she can still have recourse to the confessor.

There is here no question of prudishness on her part, or of repelling the respectable Catholic young man who from worthy motives seeks to make her acquaintance, unless, indeed, she should wish to make the nobler choice of dedicating her life entirely to the Divine Spouse of her soul. But under all circumstances her Catholic instinct must tell her when the bounds of decorum are transgressed. Men who are deserving of her consideration will respect her the more for the high value she herself sets upon her own virtue. Prayer and the frequentation of the Holy Table should be her source of light and strength. So will she fill her days with happiness and with the delight of serving her race.

GIRL FRIENDS

In this connection the choice of girl friends must be considered. There are those who are ever ready to teach her the ways of sin, who themselves have lost all modesty, and whose conversation reeks of things that should not so much as be mentioned by the lips of Christians. The girl in shop and factory may often be exposed to such company. There are those who boast of their many young men friends and of the money lavishly spent upon them by their male companions. Flirtation is their highest aim in life, until, poor moths! their wings are singed.

They will urge secrecy upon her and disregard for her parents. They will insist upon her casting off the restraints of home, and will seek to lead her along the way of perdi-

tion which they themselves have chosen. Of what concern is it to them that their own virtue has gone? They have long ago cast modesty to the winds. Their purity was sure to share the same fate.

Let the "chums" of Catholic girls be found among those of their own Faith, and especially among their friends of the sodality. Under no consideration should they enter into companionship with such as disregard the Fourth and Sixth Commandments.

AMUSEMENTS AND DANCES

Of particular importance is the character of the places of amusement which they visit. The Church does not forbid any reasonable enjoyment needed for our recreation, but she cannot allow what will lead us into sin. Indecent theatres or moving-pictures and dangerous places of pleasure must evidently be avoided without fail.

Public dance-halls, where vice is likely to be encountered in many forms, are not fit places for a self-respecting Catholic young woman. It was here that the downward path began for many an unfortunate girl. Objectionable dances are always to be excluded, no matter where they may be held. Nor should a girl tolerate liberties in dancing which would not be permitted at other times. Let her avoid this pastime altogether if it is an occasion of sin to her. All are aware of the pagan degradation to which the passion for immodest dances has led the modern world. Why should Catholics follow after it in that broad way which leads to eternal perdition? Yet the Church would lay no ban upon innocent recreation.

HER READING

Of no less consequence may be the nature of the reading selected by the Catholic young woman. The popularity

of a book is often determined by its salaciousness and total disregard for Christian modesty, purity and morality. Is she wasting her time and besmirching her soul with perusal of such literature? Is she unfitting herself for her real duties in after-life by dwelling in a false, imaginary world of sensational romance, which her novel-reading habit has created for her? There are good novels she may read in moderation, and much splendid Catholic literature of every kind with which she should become familiar. Above all she is to acquaint herself better with her holy Faith that she may be prepared to defend and promote it with all her energy.

Besides the literature which can serve this purpose, she should have at hand some spiritual books, whence she can draw light and consolation for her inner life. Possibly she has a parish or sodality library to consult. Her means, even though small, will enable her to subscribe to one or more excellent Catholic publications, such as may best answer her own wants. For advice on this important question she can turn to her pastor, confessor, or some trustworthy friend; but she must be certain that her confidence is not misplaced.

MAKING HOME HOMELIKE

Helpfulness in the home is another virtue to be supremely cultivated. Not only does the spirit of charity and filial piety suggest that every opportunity be taken to relieve the mother at her work, but every girl should learn in her turn to make a home homelike. This is woman's first and most necessary knowledge and must take precedence over every other accomplishment. No matter what her state of life may be later, she will never have reason to regret the skill and knowledge acquired in the faithful performance of all the household duties.

Not only must she learn to care for her household in all its details, great and small, but she must also possess the important art of thrift and saving if later she is ever to preside over a happy home. The extravagance of dress, in which girls indulge beyond their state or income, offers a poor inducement for an honest and reasonable young man to foster their acquaintance. He will naturally shrink from the burden of providing, especially in his early days of struggle, for such expenditures. If he is wise he will look elsewhere for his mate. Nor will such girls ever be happy, for there will always be others who can outdo them and so a rankling jealousy will be left to fester in their hearts.

HER WORK IN THE WORLD

Not such is the true Christian maiden who realizes to the full her immense possibilities for good. Neither is she an idler, whether rich or poor. There is work in the house to do, or a livelihood she must gain; but over and above this there are endless occupations for the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind in which the Catholic young woman can engage whenever her time and her duties permit it. There is no place in this world for the idle poor or the idle rich. Works of zeal and charity are everywhere demanding the cooperation of Catholics. Let Catholic young women unite and do their part for the salvation of the world. There are settlement houses, catechism centers, vacation schools, mission and parish works of every kind, not to speak of all the obvious needs round about them and of the special opportunities for doing good that God may send each one in particular. Their prayer as well as their work should be filled with apostolic fervor, directed to the salvation of souls and united with the intentions of the Sacred Heart.

APING MAN

The Catholic woman should, in fine, guard against the false doctrines of those who believe that to ape man is the supreme vocation of woman. Such views are entirely unworthy. Woman is not "lesser man," as imitation would imply. She has received her own beauty, virtue and gifts from the Almighty Creator. In developing these, according to the will of God, lies her strength and perfection, and not in making herself a poor and pitiable counterfeit of what she was never intended to be. In seeking to eliminate the differences of sex she is only degrading herself. "Beware of imitations" is especially true in her regard.

The Catholic woman must be a true woman, a woman after the heart of God and not after the debased conception of modern paganism. Her sublime ideal is the Virgin Mother of God. To this let her always return. So will she retain perennially, even unto wrinkles and gray hair, all her sweetness and purity, and the world will be saved with her. For how can woman be prepared for her great calling if all her maiden days were spent in mere frivolity or worldliness, in seeking to make herself other than the model shown to her upon the mount, Mary Immaculate? The path of Mary is the shortest road to Christ, the highway to His Sacred Heart.

CHAPTER IV

A GREAT SACRAMENT

J. HARDING FISHER, S.J.

ONE of the strongest forces in human nature is love, love of God, love of self, love of the neighbor. And among these stands out with special prominence that love, made up of a number of elements, which impels man and woman in the flower of their youth to single out a member of the other sex as the object of so overwhelming an affection that it makes them leave their father's home and unite their destinies in a new home of their own, consecrating and perpetuating their love by passing on to others the precious spark of life which they themselves have received. This love finds its justification and crown in that holy state, blessed by God, replete with happiness of a most sacred kind, conferring on individuals a new dignity as husband and wife and a new relation to society by their membership in the family.

This state of life arises from an agreement by which two persons, a man and a woman, bind themselves to live together in a stable union until death, and is called the married state. Its main purpose is to raise a family in a manner befitting the dignity of human nature; its secondary ends are to enable husband and wife by mutual love and assistance, rendered not merely as a free gift but as a strict obligation of conscience to bear the burdens of life more easily, to obtain a fuller measure of its legitimate joys, and to work out with greater security their eternal salvation.

The rearing of children to the honor and service of God,

mutual aid and comfort, and the avoidance of temptation to which those living in the world in celibacy are subject—these are the ends of marriage; and the promise to take each other as husband and wife signifies the transfer, between the two persons who make the promise, of all the rights and the undertaking of all the duties which are implied in the attaining of these three ends.

OBLIGATIONS OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is not something invented by man; it is the institution of nature, and, as such, its character is made clear to all men by the natural law. Men and women are free to enter the married state or not, just as they please. There is no obligation of taking a wife or a husband. Any individual may remain single if he so desires. But when a man and a woman promise to take each other for husband and wife, they must accept all the conditions and duties of matrimony, which have been prescribed by God. If they accept its privileges, they must accept its obligations. They cannot reject any of its essential qualities, they cannot determine what its nature shall be according to their own pleasure; they must submit to the laws which God has made for it.

Any act, therefore, by which married people, while availing themselves of the privileges and rights of matrimony, strive to defeat the law of nature and render futile God's purpose in instituting matrimony, is a mortal sin and a crime of such grievous nature that it is calculated to bring down upon them Divine punishment in this life and in the world to come. Ignorance on this matter is inexcusable, since both husband and wife are bound in conscience to have recourse in cases of doubt to the advice and direction of a prudent confessor.

THE UNITY OF MARRIAGE

One of the characteristics of marriage determined by the natural law is its unity. According to the designs of God, manifested by reason quite independently of revelation, the family, as far as the parents are concerned, is to be made up of one husband and one wife. That this is so is clear from the consideration of the ends of marriage.

The rearing of children would be very precarious if the affection of the parents was not concentrated on their common offspring. What frequently happens in the case of stepchildren is quite sufficient to show that the hearts of parents are divided and the hearts of children are lacerated, when there are half-brothers and half-sisters in the same household. The mutual love and comfort of the husband and wife would not be secured if there were room for odious and unjust comparisons and preferences, jealousies and rivalries, such as would be inevitable if a man might have several wives. Were such a state of things permissible, there would be an end to that equality between husband and wife which is the basis and the only guarantee of permanent conjugal joy.

THE DISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE

That indissolubility is also an attribute of marriage is likewise clear from the natural law, for divorce would work, and actually does work, where it is practiced, to the detriment of the child, the family, the parents, society and the race in general. The possibility of divorce would act, and does act, as a strong deterrent to raising a family, for parents, and especially wives, would be afraid to bring children into the world, if there were no absolute guarantee of permanency in their union, and if they knew that it would not

be difficult for the other parent of the child to go off and marry again.

The spectacle of the utterly disastrous results of actual divorce on the children is too patent to need proof. To say nothing of the lack of material care, there is the demoralizing effect on the child's character and development, which is inevitable, when the child sees itself forced to choose between father and mother, and often is brought up to hate either the one or the other. There is an end also to that security and confidence in parental affection which is essential for the proper moral growth of the normal child.

DIVORCE FORBIDDEN

With divorce as a possibility, marriage is lightly contracted, and ill-assorted unions result. If marriage is only an experiment that may be terminated at will, little or no care will be exercised in the choice of a partner; little forbearance will be shown in disagreements arising from unavoidable differences of character and disposition; the affections, instead of being restrained, will be allowed to wander to other persons, with illicit desires and cooling of love as a consequence.

Marriage, contracted under such conditions, instead of being a sacred union tending to uplift its participants to higher things, becomes debased; and, being regarded as a mere temporary arrangement, easily degenerates into a school of passion, in which the prospect of divorce only too often provides incentives to gross sin, to callous selfishness and to crying injustice.

Divorce logically leads to free love and is only another form of legalized adultery; it frustrates the primary and often the secondary end of marriage; it breaks down standards of morality; it deprives the State of citizens and stands

in the way of their proper education. The State is powerless to break the marriage bond, notwithstanding it claims to have the right to do so; the Church likewise is powerless to dissolve it; only in those three cases explicitly provided for by the revelation of God can she declare that the marriage bond is dissolved.*

THE SACRED CHARACTER OF MARRIAGE

The natural law demands of two persons who desire to enter the conjugal state nothing more than what is required for contracts in general, namely, that the persons who are parties to it should be capable, physically and morally, of performing its obligations, and willing and free to do so. But the religious sense of mankind has differentiated the matrimonial contract from other contracts and invested it with a sacred character. Hence both barbarous and civilized peoples have generally been of the opinion that marriage is not fittingly entered into, unless the transfer of marital rights is attended by more or less solemn religious ceremonies. The reason for this practically universal attitude arises from the fact, more or less dimly perceived by man, that marriage, by its very nature, is destined to multiply Divine worshipers, to people heaven and earth with friends of God and to enable the human race to fulfil more effectually its obligations towards the Supreme Master.

THE STATE'S ATTITUDE

Civil law, as a rule, has not concerned itself particularly about the religious celebration, although for the most part it has extended to it either its approval or its toleration.

*Yet for grave reasons, though the marriage has been consummated, the Church may permit a separation which does not imply any severance of the marriage bond, nor the possibility of contracting a new marriage so long as both parties are still alive.

The State's interest in matrimony is restricted to the civil aspects of the contract. This contract, however, even legislators have placed in a class by itself by surrounding it with conditions, not required of other contracts but which must be observed in the case of marriage if it is to have a legal status and legal rights. From this it appears that both the religious sense of mankind and the legislative bodies of civilized countries have agreed to regard matrimony as a thing apart in the realm of contracts.

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE

The Church has gone further. She declares not merely that marriage, at all times and in all places, is a contract of a very special kind, but that it is also, when contracted by two Christians, a Sacrament.

God instituted marriage as a natural contract by the very fact that He created human nature with the aptitude and desire for matrimony: He reinforced His creative act by the blessing given in Paradise to marriage when He said: "Increase and multiply"; He, also, in the person of Jesus Christ, elevated the natural contract to the dignity of a visible sign of inward grace. As a consequence, when a man and a woman, provided they are Christians, take each other for husband and wife, in the manner prescribed by the Church, by that very act they receive the Sacrament, and all those supernatural helps are given them, or will be given them when required, which are necessary for them in order to live their married life in a manner worthy of Christians.

The Church therefore holds that every contract of marriage, made by Christians, is at the same time a Sacrament; that in the case of Christian marriage the contract and the Sacrament are one and the same thing: so that if there is no Sacrament, there is no valid contract; and conversely,

if there is no valid contract, there is no Sacrament. It should be carefully noted, however, that this doctrine applies only to Christian marriage and not to marriage between non-Christians.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

A very important consequence follows from this. Since between Christians there can be no contract of marriage which is not at the same time a Sacrament; and since, moreover, the Church is the Divinely appointed custodian of the Sacraments; it follows that the Church has the right and the duty to determine what is necessary for the licit and valid reception of the Sacrament, or in other words, under what circumstances Christians may or can contract marriage. The Church does not legislate for marriages which are not sacramental in character: she concedes to the State the right to lay down certain regulations to be observed, if the marriage is to have civil effects; nevertheless she has her own independent code of law on the subject, and in all questions touching Christian wedlock she reserves to herself the final judgment as to the conditions under which her subjects can contract valid and licit matrimony.

THE CHURCH'S CONTROL OF MARRIAGE

The question arises: Whence does the Church derive the right to legislate on the matter of Christian marriage? The answer is clear. She derives it from Jesus Christ. Christ has the indisputable right to determine when and under what circumstances He permits the sacramental bond of matrimony to be contracted. This right is founded first on His absolute dominion over the living and the dead, which He possesses in virtue of His Godhead; it also has

its roots in the fact that it was God who created Adam and formed Eve to be his helpmate; furthermore, it was Christ who made matrimony a Sacrament. No one, therefore, can question His right to legislate for the Sacrament of matrimony.

Now Christ has shared with the Church His own authority in this matter. This is a matter of Faith, which all Catholics are bound to believe. The Church, therefore, acts within her rights and according to the terms of the charter she has received from God Himself, when she promulgates and interprets the wishes of her Founder. She does not derive her power from her subjects, but from Him alone who says, "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (Luke x. 16). Therefore Catholics are bound to submit to the Church's laws on matrimony.

Nor has the Church shown herself concerned to have the approval of the world at large on her matrimonial legislation. In point of fact, fair-minded, intelligent criticism of her attitude freely admits that she has exercised, by her control over wedlock, untold influence for the betterment of the human race and especially for the happiness of the weaker sex. But when all is said it still remains true that the Church does not solicit such criticism, she is not disturbed by it when hostile, nor elated by it when favorable. She relies for her support on the unimpeachable authority of the God-Man. She simply commands, and Catholics are bound to obey.

THE QUESTION OF IMPEDIMENTS

It is necessary for valid matrimony that the persons contracting it should be capable, physically and morally, of assuming its obligations. This is only another way of say-

ing that the prospective husband and wife must be free from impediments. Some of these impediments, while not invalidating matrimony, render it illicit; other impediments make marriage not merely illicit, but invalid.

Formerly it was possible, though illicit, for Catholics to be married without having a priest perform the ceremony; but, as it frequently happened that they were ignorant of existing impediments and took no steps to procure dispensations, a number of marriages were also invalid and had to be revalidated. Nowadays the Church has taken effective means to prevent the occurrence of such catastrophes. Practically no marriage of a Catholic is valid unless a priest officiates, and as no priest is allowed to officiate unless he has made sure that no impediment stands in the way, or at least has procured a dispensation, sufficient precautions will be taken by the very fact that the persons desirous of contracting marriage present themselves to the priest for examination, and make no attempt to conceal any impediment that may exist.

KINDS OF IMPEDIMENTS

Some impediments are set up by the primary precepts of the natural law. An example is the impediment which absolutely forbids marriage between parents and their children.

Other impediments are established by the secondary precepts of the natural law or by positive Divine legislation. God can dispense from such impediments; but the Church, only as far as, and in the way He might permit. An example is the bar which stands in the way of contracting a second marriage while the parties to the first marriage are both alive. Once a marriage, therefore, has been ratified and consummated the marriage bond can be dissolved

only by the death of either husband or wife, except in the case of the Pauline Privilege. If the marriage has been ratified but not consummated, the marriage bond can be dissolved only by the Religious Profession of one of the married persons, or by an annulment given by the Pope for grave reasons.

Other impediments are of a purely ecclesiastical origin, for example, most of the impediments arising from forbidden degrees of kinships, from legal or spiritual affinity, from the duty of chastity assumed with Holy Orders, and the solemn vow of chastity taken at the time of profession in an approved Religious Order, from the lack of publicity demanded by the Church, from difference of religion, or from the fact that one of the persons desiring to marry is unbaptized.

The above enumeration does not include all the impediments, but it shows the general classes. All of them alike, as well as those not here included, are far from being arbitrary; they are founded either on the demands of reason or the nature of the marriage contract, the laws of life itself or the laws which safeguard social relations. They have for their purpose to maintain the conventions taught by nature itself; to promote the security of the family, and to advance the moral and religious interests of husband and wife and children. From some of them dispensations can be obtained, from others dispensations cannot be obtained.

AN IMPORTANT WARNING

It is important, therefore, that those who contemplate entering the state of wedlock should consult their pastor in good time and be very frank and truthful in answering his questions. Nor should they resent such questions. They are not prompted by curiosity, but are a strict ful-

filment of duty, for it is enjoined on the conscience of every priest to make careful investigation before proceeding to the celebration of marriage and to satisfy himself that there is no reason why the persons desiring it should not be joined in holy matrimony.

The Church is very solicitous that there shall be no mistakes, and that the two persons who propose to take each other as husband and wife shall really do so and not find out later, to their grief and humiliation, that an unsuspected impediment acted as a bar to their marriage, and that, in spite of appearances, they were not married at all. The desire to prevent such misfortunes underlies the Church's insistence on the proclamation of the banns.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE BANNS

Catholics sometimes shrink from the publicity attaching to the banns. The modesty which prompts the feeling is commendable, but should not be indulged in to the possible detriment of life-long happiness. The object of the Church in calling the attention of the parish to the fact that a marriage is about to take place is not to invade the sacred privacy of personal concerns, but to safeguard the happiness of her children and to shield the man and the woman from the possibility of entering unlawfully into the marital relations and so of building their wedded joys on foundations of sand.

Following the practice of centuries, therefore, the Church demands that after she has herself made every endeavor to ascertain whether or not a hidden impediment exists, a last effort shall be made in the same direction in order to render assurance doubly sure. With a view, then, to removing any vestige of doubt, announcement is made for three successive festivals, usually Sundays, at High Mass,

to the effect that such and such persons contemplate marriage, and that any one knowing reasons why their marriage should not take place, should manifest them to the proper authorities.

To submit to ecclesiastical discipline in this regard is the mark of a good Catholic, an act of ordinary prudence, and an effective means of preventing serious mistakes. Bashfulness, however natural, should not be allowed to stand in the ways of the laws of the Church, especially where it is of immense importance that no mistake should take place.

When making arrangements, therefore, for matrimony Catholics should leave time for the publication of the banns. As this ordinarily takes place at the High Mass on Sundays, at least a month's notice should be given to the pastor before the date planned for the wedding. It may be left to the parish priest of the bride to see that the banns are published wherever it may be necessary to satisfy ecclesiastical requirements. In cases which call for an exception, a dispensation from the publication of the banns may be obtained from the proper authorities; but this takes time. If distressing delays and interference with plans result, the prospective bride and groom will have only themselves to blame.

VALID AND LICIT MATRIMONY

Some years ago, that is, before Easter of 1908, Catholics could be validly married in the United States, with the exception of a very few places, by a magistrate, a city clerk, or by a Protestant minister. It was sinful to have a civil officer perform the ceremony; to have a Protestant minister perform it was not only sinful, but the Catholic married by him was excommunicated. Nevertheless the

Church recognized such marriages to be valid. Marriages of this kind would not be valid now.

It may be stated as a general rule that since April 11, 1909, in China, and since April 19, 1908, in other parts of the world, no marriage in which one or both of the persons are Latin Catholics or have been baptized in the Latin Church, is valid unless a priest asks and receives from both bride and groom the marriage promises. There are several exceptions allowed in the legislation of the Church, but they are of so infrequent occurrence that they need not be mentioned. Nor will any chance priest suffice. For *valid* matrimony this priest must be either the pastor of the parish where the marriage is performed, or the Ordinary, that is, the Bishop of the diocese in which it is performed, or a priest delegated to perform the marriage either by the pastor of the parish where it takes place or the Ordinary of the diocese in which the parish is situated. In addition there must be present two witnesses.

An example will make the law clear. Suppose the marriage is to take place in the parish of St. Vincent's in Madras. In that case it is essential that the pastor of St. Vincent's or the Bishop of Madras should be present at the marriage and ask and receive the marriage consent; or should some other priest be desired, that this priest should be delegated to perform the marriage either by the pastor of St. Vincent's or by the Bishop of Madras.

Ordinarily the marriage should be performed by the pastor of the bride. This rule should not be deviated from without the pastor's permission. A person is said to belong to a parish if he has lived for at least a month within its limits or has taken up his residence there with the intention of remaining permanently.

CHAPTER V

THE BRIDE IN THE SANCTUARY

J. HARDING FISHER, S.J.

SINCE the Sacrament of Matrimony is nothing more than the natural contract of marriage elevated to the supernatural order, and since, whenever Catholics make the contract, they at the same time receive the Sacrament; it is clear that nothing more is required for the administration of the Sacrament than the making of the contract, and that the ministers of the Sacrament are, not the priest, but the contracting parties themselves.

ESSENTIALS OF THE CEREMONY

At the present time, as has already been explained, for the valid celebration of marriage, nothing more is required by the Church than that the two persons who enter the conjugal state should be asked by a duly authorized priest if they take each other for husband and wife, and that they should signify their mutual consent in presence of two witnesses and the priest.

The important part of the ceremony, therefore, is contained in the brief answer, "I will," spoken by the man and the woman in answer to the questions addressed by the priest to each in turn, usually in the following formula: "N., wilt thou take N., here present, for thy lawful wife (thy lawful husband), according to the rite of our Holy Mother Church?" When this question has been asked by the priest and answered affirmatively by the man and woman, the contract and the Sacrament are complete, and the

man and woman are husband and wife. What follows, though it is a very beautiful part of the ceremony, is not essential.

NON-ESSENTIALS OF THE CEREMONY

The time-honored words that follow, in which the nature of the conjugal consent is amplified and insisted on and which are spoken after the priest has joined the hands of the newly-married couple, are consecrated by long-established custom, and express the lasting and heroic character of the contract. When the Church makes both husband and wife say calmly and deliberately: "I, N. N., take thee, N. N., for my lawful wife (my lawful husband) to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part," she bids them pledge themselves before all the world to the unity and indissolubility that are characteristics of true marriage to mutual fidelity and love, and to whole-hearted comfort and support, in spite of trials and difficulties, and to the repudiation of the modern bane of society, the hope of divorce.

It is only after they have thus bound themselves over to the observance of the Catholic ideal of marriage, that the Church bids her priest to give the marriage the approval of the Church: "I join you in marriage in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," and to sprinkle the husband and wife with holy water, in token of the purity that marks their nuptials and the holiness that should be in their lives.

THE BLESSING OF THE RING

And then, with that solicitude for woman which has always characterized the Church, the priest blesses the ring

with a special blessing for the bride: "Bless, O Lord, this ring, which we bless in Thy name, that she who is to wear it, keeping true faith unto her husband, may abide in Thy peace and in obedience to Thy will, and ever live with him in mutual love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

There is a mystical significance in the form of the cross with which the priest then sprinkles the ring with holy water, which is at the same time a silent admonition to a life of holiness, and a warning that marriage does not consist merely in the sharing of joys, but also in the sharing of sorrows.

Once more, with tender concern for the weaker member of the union, the Church, as if she would leave nothing undone to insure the happiness of the wife, makes the husband renew his solemn promises, as he puts the ring on the finger of the bride, saying: "With this ring I thee wed, and I plight unto thee my troth." The Church wishes the ring to be a constant reminder to the husband that he has taken on himself the keeping of his wife's health and happiness and holiness; and to both alike, an external acceptance of the fact that their marriage made on earth, has been ratified in heaven, the fragile band of gold signifying the strong bond of love, both of which are to be guarded intact till death. Other prayers follow, which complete the ceremony and invoke the Divine assistance and protection on the newly-wedded couple.

THE NUPTIAL MASS

It is a noteworthy fact, not perhaps universally recognized by Catholics, that the marriage ceremony, properly so called, does not include that blessing of blessings on Catholic wedlock, which is known as the "nuptial blessing."

Those who would have the fullest benediction of God on their marriage, who would have the Church implore her spouse, Jesus Christ, to open the flood-gates of Divine graces on their wedded life, with all that these graces imply for happiness and holiness, for length of years in which to see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and after fullness of joyous days here on earth an eternity of beatific bliss in heaven, must be present at the Nuptial Mass which follows the marriage ceremony.

The nuptial blessing in which the Church pours out, in the presence of God and of the Blessed Sacrament, her loving desires for her children, just joined in marriage, is reserved for those for whom she celebrates the Nuptial Mass. It is given only during the Holy Sacrifice. Those who will not have the Mass, cannot have the blessing.

No Catholic celebrates his marriage in full conformity with the spirit and desires of the Church without this Mass, just as no Catholic is buried with all the prayers reserved for the Church's dear dead except at a Requiem Mass. This being the case, the wonder is that more Catholics do not insist on a Nuptial Mass when they are married.

A BEAUTIFUL FUNCTION

Certainly the Nuptial Mass is one of the most beautiful and touching functions that could be imagined. In it are blended to a remarkable degree the poetry and the piety, the solemnity and the sacredness, that should appeal to every Catholic's heart. At the altar-rail the bride meets the man of her choice and with his hand in hers goes into the sanctuary. Only on this occasion does the Church invite her officially to participate in the Holy Sacrifice, so close to the Holy of Holies. Everything in Mass has its application to the marriage. The versicles and the prayers, the Epistle,

the Gradual and the Gospel have their special fitness; and the Church concentrates all her wisdom on making the occasion memorable for its sacred beauty.

Husband and wife kneel so near the tabernacle that they can almost touch the paten and the chalice, as they are offered with the bread and wine so soon to be changed into the Adorable Body and Precious Blood of Jesus Christ; and they know that the offering is for them. They can almost hear, perhaps actually hear, the august word of consecration that brings down the Divine Victim from heaven to earth; and they know that His coming is for them.

After the Our Father they go to the steps of the altar and there, within a few feet of the Sacramental Christ, so close that He can hear their heart-beats, they are hallowed with that special blessing, which is so precious that it may be given but once; so sacred that it may be bestowed only between the Consecration and the Communion of the Holy Sacrifice; so filled with tokens of joy that ordinarily it is bestowed solely during the periods when the Church and her children are rejoicing and not when they are in penance; and so extraordinary that according to the words of the Church, it was the only one of the blessings given by God in the beginning not taken away in the punishment of original sin and the wrath of the flood.

Turning towards the husband and wife, just after the *Pater Noster*, the celebrant says:

O God, who by Thy might hast out of nothing made all things, who, in the beginning, didst create the world, and having made man, to Thy image, didst give him woman to be his constant help-mate, fashioning her body from his very flesh and thereby teaching us that it is never lawful to put asunder what it has pleased Thee to make of one substance; O God, who hast consecrated wedlock by a surpassing mystery, since in holy matrimony is shown forth the Sacrament of Christ and His Church; O God, who dost join woman to man, that theirs may be the blessing given by Thee in the beginning, and which was the only one not taken away as part

of the punishment inflicted for the sin of our first parents, the only one left untouched by Thy wrath at the time of the flood; look down in mercy on this Thy handmaid, who is about to enter upon her wedded life, and who seeks to be strengthened by Thy protection.

May the yoke she has to bear be one of love and peace; faithful and chaste, may she marry in Christ; may her whole life be modeled on that of the holy women; may she be pleasing to her husband as was Rachel; may she be wise as was Rebecca; may she be long-lived and true as was Sara; may he who is the author of all evil have no part in her actions; all the days of her life, may she be true to the troth she has plighted, faithful in obedience, innocent and pure, strengthened against weakness by wholesome discipline; may she be respected for her seriousness, venerated for her modesty, schooled in Divine wisdom, rich in children, worthy of all praise and above reproach, and in the end may she enter into a blessed rest and have a place in heaven. And may she and her husband see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and come to the good old age to which they look forward.

When the time for Communion arrives, they again approach the altar, and receive their Lord, not with the congregation at the altar-rail, but by themselves, where the priest of God stands as he offers the Holy Sacrifice. Later they again kneel at the steps of the altar to receive a last blessing, not the blessing given to all the people, but to themselves alone.

Such is the Nuptial Mass. It is so strangely beautiful that it is no wonder the Church urges on all her children not to fail to have it said at their marriage; the wonder is that foolish Catholics, wanting in faith or touched by the spirit of the world, prefer to conform to the demands of non-Catholic fashion rather than to the counsel of the Church. The proper way for Catholics to be married is at a Nuptial Mass. Wedded life has so many responsibilities, it involves such sacrifices, it entails such trials, it calls for such courage, that no one can afford to forego the special helps which God is ready to give, but only to those who have a Catholic marriage in the fullest sense of the word.

CHAPTER VI

MIXED MARRIAGES

WALTER DWIGHT, S.J.

ALL our readers are doubtless familiar with that striking painting called "Diana or Christ?" Its central figure is a beautiful Roman maiden, charged with being a Christian, whom a magistrate is examining. Her wealthy, high-born pagan suitor is at her side and seems to be whispering, "Just offer a grain of incense to that statue of Diana there to show you do not believe in Christ. That simple act will restore you to liberty, and then we'll be happily married."

We do not know whether that girl chose life with a pagan husband rather than death for Christ, but at any rate she realized fully that choose she must. But too many of our Catholic youths and maidens today do not realize that marrying a non-Catholic amounts practically to endangering so seriously their faith and that of their children, that on the choice they make rest consequences quite as momentous and far-reaching as were those that followed that Roman maiden's decision. Yet a little serious reflection should make it clear to all true Catholics how sternly the Church has always opposed such unions, and how perilous and unholy she considers them. Moreover, facts and statistics prove but too well that the mixed marriage is often followed by the Catholic person's loss of faith, and more often still by the loss of the children's.

MIXED MARRIAGES OPPOSED BY THE PATRIARCHS

Even in the Old Testament striking instances abound of the evil results of mixed marriages and of Almighty

God's abhorrence of them. We read in the sixth chapter of Genesis, for example, how "the sons of God" that is, the sons of Seth, who represented the children of faith, married "the daughters of men" who were Cain's descendants and represented the children of unbelief, and from these "mixed marriages" resulted so great a corruption of the human race that the deluge was required to cleanse the world.

Warned perhaps by that disaster, the Patriarchs opposed mixed marriages. Abraham for example made his servant swear by the God of heaven and earth that he would not take a wife for Isaac "of the daughters of the Chanaanites" (Gen. xxiv, 3), but from Abraham's own country and kindred. Isaac in turn laid the same command on his son Jacob saying, "Take not a wife of the stock of Chanaan" (Gen. xxvii, 1). And when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai He solemnly forbade any of the Chosen People to "take of their [the surrounding pagan nations'] daughters a wife for thy son" lest he should fall into idolatry.

Josue, too, warned the Israelites: "If you will embrace the errors of these nations that dwell among you, and make marriages with them . . . they shall be a pit and a snare in your way and a stumbling-block at your side and stakes in your eyes till He [God] take you away and destroy you" (Josue xxiii, 12, 13), and in the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, we have the following rigorous prohibition of mixed marriages and the unanswerable reason for it: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them [the unbelieving peoples]. Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son: for they will turn away thy son from following me, that he may rather serve strange gods, and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled and will quickly destroy thee."

Samson's blindness, captivity and death resulted from

his having relations with a Philistine woman instead of marrying a Jewish maiden; Solomon, who, though his youth had promised so well, in later life turned away to follow strange gods through his love for the pagan women he had married; and the wicked King Achab chose as his wife Jezabel, a Sidonian woman, and then set up an altar to Baal: these are such well-known instances of how unions with unbelievers were punished during the Old Dispensation that they need only be mentioned as a warning for the Catholics of today.

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MIXED MARRIAGES

With regard to the teaching of the New Testament about mixed marriages, it is clear from the rules St. Paul lays down in the seventh chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians that Christians were never meant to be the wives or husbands of unbelievers. Down through the ages the mind of the Church on this subject has always been the same. In the year 305, for instance, the Council of Elvira decreed: "If heretics are unwilling to enter the Church, let not the daughters of Catholics be given to them. It pleases not the Church of God to give them to Jews or to heretics." About 365 the Council of Laodicea decreed: "It behooveth not that members of the Church should join their sons indiscriminately in marriage with heretics"; and in 506 the Council of Agatho declared: "It is not befitting for Catholics to join in marriage with all sorts of heretics, or to give their sons or daughters to them: only should they accept of them if they become Christians and Catholics."

Coming to more modern times we see that the doctrine and discipline of the Church regarding mixed marriages has not grown milder. Pope Benedict XIV, who lived in the eighteenth century, affirms in his Constitution to the Bishops

of Poland, the antiquity of that discipline with which the Holy See has ever reprobated the marriage of Catholics with heretics," and then expresses his extreme grief that "Catholics can be found who disgracefully deluded by an unhealthy affection, neither abhor these hateful marriages nor abstain from them, even though the Catholic Church has always condemned and forbidden them."

In the following century Pope Pius IX, in an Encyclical he sent in the year 1858 to all the Bishops of the Church, exhorts them zealously to turn away the Catholics entrusted to them from their mixed marriages, and observes: "All know what the Catholic Church has always felt about these marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics, as she has always reprobated them because of the disgraceful communication in Divine worship [with non-Catholics], the peril of apostasy impending over the Catholic and the perverse training of the children."

HOW THE CHURCH CELEBRATES "PARLOR MARRIAGES"

In this connection nothing better indicates the Church's attitude toward mixed marriages than the way she behaves when there is question of such a marriage. First of all the Church does her best to dissuade the Catholic party from contracting the marriage. If there is no hope of succeeding in that, she reluctantly grants the dispensation that will make the marriage lawful.

But this permission to wed a non-Catholic the Church will not give her children until the non-Catholic party to the marriage has made a solemn promise that the Catholic party will be allowed the free exercise of his or her religion and that the children born of the union will be brought up Catholics. The Catholic party also is required to promise

to do all that is prudently possible to bring about the conversion of the non-Catholic party.

None but the Catholic marriage ceremony is of course permitted; no banns are published, and the wedding instead of taking place in church must, as a rule, be celebrated elsewhere. The priest, without any sacred vestment on, merely acts as the Church's authorized witness of the contract, but pronounces no blessing on the union and a Nuptial Mass cannot of course be said. Indeed nothing emphasizes more strikingly the Church's attitude toward her children who marry non-Catholics than the coldness, brevity and bareness of the ceremonial used as a "parlor marriage" compared with the warmth, beauty and magnificence with which she celebrates the nuptials of those who are married at Mass.

WHY THE CHURCH ABHORS MIXED MARRIAGES

But why, it may be asked, does the Church regard mixed marriages with such marked disfavor?

In the first place, because as the Heaven-commissioned guardian of Christ's Sacraments she must do her utmost to keep them from being received by the unfit or the unworthy. In the second place because she feels, tender mother that she is, the deepest concern for the spiritual welfare of her children. The Catholic man or woman who marries a baptized Protestant confers in all probability a holy Sacrament on one unworthy to receive it, and receives the same from one unfit to confer it, and therefore makes an unbecoming use of a holy thing. If even a marriage contracted by devout Catholics, with all the blessings of the Church and with all the graces conferred by the worthy reception of the Sacrament, sometimes turns out unhappily,

what can that Catholic expect who marries one not of his faith?

HER OPPOSITION MOST REASONABLE

Moreover, the Church has sadly learned from her long centuries of experience that the Catholic party in these marriages is in constant danger, as a rule, of perversion, and should the Church show herself indifferent to this grave spiritual peril of her children, she would not be a true mother at all. If Holy Church can possibly prevent it, she will not allow a single one of her communicants to lose his faith. But mixed marriages, as she knows but too well, have caused millions and millions to lose their faith. Hence her strong opposition to such unions.

Indeed, what else can the Catholic party expect but violent temptations to become perverts? Though solemn promises have of course been exacted, the Protestant is quite incapable of understanding the Catholic's religious needs or obligations. The Protestant husband, for instance, is quite willing perhaps to go to Vespers now and then with his wife, and quarrels arise because she in turn will not accompany him to prayer-meeting. The upshot may be that for peace at any price she will go "just once" to her husband's church, and finds there so many superior social advantages that before long she hears Mass no more, and the minister is called in to baptize her babies.

If mothers do not come to such a sad pass as this, the children grow up to see parents whom they love equally well, become divided in opinion and in practice on questions which the children are taught at church and Sunday School to be of prime importance. What is the result? At best lukewarm Catholics, soon passing as they grow older into indifference in religion. "Father was a Presby-

terian, and a better man than most Catholics I know," grown-up children will argue, "so it can't make such difference after all what one believes." Then they end, perhaps, by giving up Mass altogether and contracting a Protestant marriage themselves.

Or perhaps the Catholic father or mother of the family meets a sudden and untimely death and leaves behind a flock of little children who soon come wholly under the influence of the Protestant party to the marriage, of Protestant aunts and uncles, or even of a new Protestant step-parent. It is not hard then to see what will become of those boys' and girls' Catholic faith.

LITTLE HOPE OF HAPPINESS

Seldom, moreover, is there true and lasting domestic peace in the home that a mixed marriage has established. Husband and wife, no matter how perfectly they may agree on all other subjects, differ widely on the one thing that the Catholic is bound to believe to be the most important of all, namely, the fact that the Catholic religion is the only true one, together with the innumerable practical questions, that that belief involves. Sunday Mass, Friday abstinence, Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Catholic education and Catholic marriages, things which the Catholic party is bound in conscience to insist on as the children grow up are likely to be regarded, if not with hostility, at best with indifference by the non-Catholic party, and the result is constant wrangling and quarreling which often end no doubt in the Catholic's yielding the point for the sake of peace, or else making some miserable compromise which will be a practical betrayal of the Church's cause.

Then, too, the fact that the Catholic party at these unions is indissolubly married until the non-Catholic party

dies, whereas the non-Catholic party, on growing tired of his or her spouse, can easily find some way of procuring a divorce in order to marry someone else, is a consideration that should give pause, it would seem, to any Catholic youth or maiden who is contemplating a mixed marriage. Moreover, that serious abuse and perversion of the marriage relation, euphemistically styled "birth-control," now so deplorably prevalent outside the Church, is likely to be so severe a temptation to the Catholic party of a mixed marriage, that he or she will doubtless find it practically impossible to resist it.

Some of our readers will perhaps object that the foregoing strictures on mixed marriages are too severe and sweeping, for all such unions do not end unhappily, and are not always followed by perversion and loss of faith. Indeed many instances can be cited of Catholics who have brought about the conversion of their non-Catholic spouses, and even if one parent remains a Protestant the children of the marriage are sometimes so well brought up that they actually become priests or Sisters. Granted. But does not the very rarity of such cases and the astonishment they cause prove most strikingly the rule?

SOME STATISTICS

Perhaps the following statistics will have weight: One of our Bishops asserts that out of 450 cases of mixed marriages which fell under his notice "Four hundred proved fatal to faith and ninety per cent of the offspring of these marriages were lost to the Church," and if lost to the Church they were probably lost to God.

According to statistics quoted by Father John A. Schmitt in his valuable pamphlet, "How to Get Married," we find that "When one parent is Catholic and the other

Protestant, sixty-six out of every one hundred young men have no religion; that is two-thirds are lost to the Faith.

As to the moral dangers which threaten the offspring of mixed marriages let the following fact be considered: The superior of one of our Houses of the Good Shepherd learned on questioning a number of young girls whom the courts found it necessary to commit to the Sisters' care, that 90 out of 120 were the fruit of mixed marriages. Comment here is surely needless.

CONVERSION BEFORE THE WEDDING

Yet nothing better than that is to be expected as long as Catholics meditating matrimony have an eye to the attractiveness, income or social standing of the one they choose as a life-partner, while they pass over as a matter of quite minor importance what is really the chiefest question of all to be considered: "Is my intended a good Catholic?" If a Catholic girl is so unfortunate as to find herself engaged to a non-Catholic suitor she must make him a Catholic before she marries him. If she is a woman of character she will insist that he take a course of instructions on the teaching of the Church and thus learn that if there is a true church, it must be the Catholic Church.

Finally her prayers and example can win for him the gift of faith. This is the only sensible way of proceeding. It is folly to hope for his conversion after the wedding. If out of love for his bride-to-be he will not seriously consider the claims of Catholicism before he has made her his wife, he certainly will not do so after the wedding. When the non-Catholic party of the contemplated marriage is a woman, the necessity of conversion is of course all the greater, for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the children will embrace the religion of the mother.

CHAPTER VII

THE CATHOLIC HOME

J. HARDING FISHER, S.J.

THE home of homes was Nazareth, and the family of families was the Holy Family, and the reason for both one and the other was simply this, that Nazareth was the home of the Sacred Heart. Evil stopped at the door of the little white house where Jesus and Mary and Joseph lived; from it all unkindness and bitterness were banished; over its lintel was written, invisibly but unmistakably, a welcome to all that was good. Not wealth, nor influence, nor even friends were its treasure; yet it was rich beyond compare, because it sheltered the Heart of the Divine Son of Man. God not only crossed its portals, He lived within its lowly walls; Satan and his wiles were forbidden an entrance; angel wings fluttered about it; the Lily of Israel, the Foster-father of Christ, the Boy Jesus dwelt there in peace; and the blessing of the Most High was on it.

THE MODEL HOME

The Holy Family was the first shrine of the Sacred Heart, it is the type of all holy families. Those who would form their domestic life on a sure model, should make the mystical pilgrimage that wends its way during the hours of prayer over the waters of the Mediterranean and up through the valleys of Galilee to the obscure village that clings to the rocky slope of the northernmost of Nazareth's many hills. But they must not look for the home of the Sacred

Heart among the wealthy dwellings; for it is humble, and unpretentious, and it shelters humble folk: a laboring man, still in the prime of life but worn by toiling for a daily wage; a woman, scarcely yet in the full maturity of her growth, poorly clad, but fair beyond the power of words to describe; and a Boy, the most winsome that ever knelt by a mother's side.

Here were passed the wondrous years when Jesus was growing from boyhood to youth, and from youth to manhood; here was given that marvelous example of obedience and of labor that has been the strength of the poor, and the consolation of the subject; here were wrought out in detail those lessons of domestic conduct that have been the constant direction of fathers and mothers, and the unfailing inspiration of sons and daughters; here was shown the pattern of the ideal life.

All of us have bowed in sorrow as we knelt before the Pietà and watched the Blessed Mother gazing in speechless anguish on the blood-stained, mangled, murdered body of her Son; we have fixed our thoughts upon her, as the tear-drops glistened on her pallid cheeks and she looked upon the dying Christ upon the Cross; we have wondered at the mystery of the manger and have marveled at the faith and tenderness of the young Madonna, lost in adoration of the Babe upon the niggard straw.

These scenes the artists and the preachers and the poets have kept before us. And they do well. For on Calvary and at Bethlehem there are lessons to be learned, of which we shall all sometime have dire need. But for most of us the place of more homely, though not less necessary, instruction, the scene of what should be the subject of our more frequent contemplation, is not the hill of skulls nor the wind-swept cave, but the worshipful and ever memorable cottage in the least of all cities of forgotten Galilee, a spot

from which even the guileless Nathaniel doubted that good could come.

THE HOLY FAMILY

The trial of faith now and again sears the soul of every Christian, sometimes in their life all men find themselves near the Cross; but there is never a child so lowly and never a man so great, that does not have to spend a large portion, if not the entirety, of his days in that sacred place to which we have given the name of home.

All of us are what our homes have made us. The chief formative influence in the shaping of character is that first fashioning of manners and of thought that is given near the hearthstone when the child is increasing, as all must do, in age, and, as all thought to do, in wisdom and grace with God and man. It was in His home that Jesus garnered the strength to face the public ministry and to crown it by climbing the hill of crucifixion; it was at Nazareth that He schooled His Heart to its all-forgiving love of man; it was in the Holy House of Loretto that He waxed strong, full of wisdom and the grace of God. So it is with us all. Happy the man, and happy the woman whose childhood has been passed in a home like that where for so many years dwelt the Sacred Heart of Our Lord.

In the Holy Family—and all other families are holy only so far as they approximate to it—there was insight into things supernatural. The Holy Family did not regard itself as an isolated thing set in the midst of no higher ambition than the gratification of self, no loftier pleasure than the tingling of sense or the thrill of power or the exultation of pride. The Holy Family recognized that naught on earth is of value if it leads not to God. Mary and Joseph, and of course, Our Lord, pierced the veil that blinded their fellows,

their minds went soaring up to the Creator of all, from whom has come down all that we have, and to whom must be brought all that we do and all that we are. And the pity of it is that more homes are not like it.

MARY AND JOSEPH

Mary took Jesus' hand in the morning of His life, when He was mysteriously increasing in wisdom, and pointed out to Him the fathomless blue of the heavens, and spoke with Him of the mansions in the home of His Father. Joseph set Him an example, though Christ, of course, needed it not, of purity and courage and devotion to duty.

If Catholic homes are to be homes of the Sacred Heart, homes where the spirit of Christ is in honor, homes to which the Saviour turns for comfort, as to Martha's home in the days of old, fathers and mothers must train the hearts of their children, as Mary and Joseph, be it said in all reverence, trained the Heart of the growing Christ. Who is to teach baby lips the holy names but the parent? Who is to accustom faltering steps to walk in the ways that lead unto life, and accustom him to bear for his Lord the day's burden and heat, and to recognize His yoke for what it is, a yoke that is sweet and light? Who indeed but the parent?

WORLDLY PARENTS

If Catholic homes were more like the home at Nazareth, if Catholic parents were more like Mary and Joseph, Catholic children would be more like the Child Jesus, and would live in subjection and increase in the only true wisdom and in the only true grace, the grace and the wisdom of the Holy Ghost; fewer children would be a judgment on their parents, fewer hearts would be in ashes, fewer hopes would be in vain.

Catholic men of wealth, to their shame be it said, are striving to make their children the slaves of gold. Catholic women of fashion are bartering their children's eternal interests for the smile of a social set. It was not so at Nazareth. Catholic men of honest toil are giving the sweat of their brows and the blood of their hearts that their children may rise by their labors and be better off than themselves; Catholic women of humble means have their needles ever at work that their children may wear the clothes of a decent respectability and move with people of modest competence. This is not wrong. St. Joseph toiled for the Boy Jesus, and Mary wove His seamless robe. The shame is in this, that, though poor, many parents are thoroughly worldly, no less so in fact than the rich, for they fix their thoughts on the things of time, and have scarcely a thought for the things that endure, the things of worth, the things of eternity. It was not so at Nazareth. It was not so in the home of the Sacred Heart.

THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

No family can hope for happiness except in the measure of its likeness to the Holy Family; and no family can be like the Holy Family unless it knows and loves Jesus Christ, unless it makes Him the center of its hopes, the framer of its laws, the teacher of its ideals; and the model of its virtues.

But oh, the joy that is in store for those homes in which the Sacred Heart is in honor! They will not indeed see the blood mantling with pleasure in the cheeks of the Boy of twelve, as He turns His face homewards after His brief exile in the Temple; but they will experience a joy like His, as they close the door on a world whose law is self and enter a sanctuary where all is love. They will not have the

privilege of sitting down to table with the Son of God and ministering to His needs; but they will feel His benign presence and will have the consolation of knowing that He takes as done to Himself what they do for His friends. They will not have Christ in the full flower of His manhood to take the instruments of toil from their hands as He did from the hands of St. Joseph when he was tired and old; but they will have other helpers to relieve them, generous with filial love that they have learned from the example of the most devoted of sons. Christ will not be there in visible forms to smooth their pillows and ease their pain, and to light up the passage that leads to death; but they will have the Sacrament of His love within their breasts, and they will see Him with the eye of faith, beckoning from beyond the grave and calling them home.

Who would fear to go hand in hand with Christ up to the white throne of God, to go from a home where Christ has been King here on earth to a home where He is King in His Father's Kingdom? Yet strange though it seems and almost passing belief, such is the happiness that awaits all those who make their homes, homes of the Sacred Heart.

THE MOTHER'S PART

The making of the home depends first and above all on the mother; her influence is the all important element in the fashioning of the ways of her little ones after the Divine Model; from the mother's Catholic heart, guided by natural prudence and inspired by Christian faith, must come the dominant influence which lifts the thoughts of her household, husband, children and servants beyond the skies to the mansions prepared by Christ for those He loves in His Heavenly Father's home. The father, too, has his part, and the sons and daughters.

CATHOLIC ATMOSPHERE

And yet there are other elements, which go to the making of a Catholic home, which, although only secondary, are very important and are neglected only with great loss. Material objects help very effectively to the creation of a proper atmosphere. In the Catholic home, wherever the eye turns, it should meet with Catholic objects, pictures and statues of Christ, the Blessed Mother, and the Saints. Questionable things, in bad taste and bordering on the illicit, which have little or no artistic value and serve no other purpose than to suggest unholy thoughts and fan into flame the smouldering embers of concupiscence, which lie in the depths of every heart, should be rigorously banished.

There should be nothing in the home from which Our Lady, should she deign to pay a visit, would turn away her gaze; nothing on which eyes looking on the Sacred Host exposed at Benediction, might blush to remember; nothing that would trouble the white thoughts of the most innocent child. The world is filled today with such shocking representations and public taste has become so debased, that our own views on the matter of indecency are in danger of being distorted. There were no such objects in the Holy House of Nazareth, there should be none in Catholic homes.

CATHOLIC LITERATURE

Nor should there be in the Catholic home books or magazines or newspapers, in which the reading matter is pagan and demoralizing, and the illustrations are as daring and impure as the law will allow. Such things are only too common, and the priest is often amazed and horrified to find lying on the family table periodicals and novels and daily journals which are a direct menace to morality and

should be taken, not with pure fingers, but with tongs and dropped in the fire. They taint the principles, they weaken faith, they obscure the vision of God, they destroy the love of holy things, they banish the Angels, they are an invitation to the devils of hell.

When the child enters the Catholic home, it should find there an atmosphere of piety, purity and love, a corrective for the evil it has seen in the streets, an inspiration to higher thoughts, an antidote for the corrupting influence of the world. Catholic books should be there, lives of the Saints who have lived up to Catholic ideals and fought the good fight and won their way to eternal life through many tribulations; from these the child will learn something of its glorious Catholic ancestry and model its life on Catholic ideals. Catholic magazines should be there, the weekly of the diocese, a review which defends Catholic principles, a monthly which is devoted to piety.

Above all, the crucifix should be there, in every room if possible, where it will meet the gaze of the child at its first waking moment and remain in its thoughts as its eyes close in sleep. The crucifix is the most eloquent book in the world, it has a marvelous power to instil lessons of Christian piety and fortitude. The Catholic home is not a proper home unless the crucifix is largely in evidence, and has the place of honor, and is the crown and the strength and the inspiration of the household.

CHAPTER VIII

DEDICATED MOTHERHOOD

JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J.

IN the Catholic family the father rules by authority, the mother by love. The duties of the former bring him directly in contact with the outside world. Indirectly they link his household with the life and the activities around it. The father is the breadwinner of the family. By toil of head or hand he must support his wife and children. He must go down into the arena of life and fight there to safeguard the interests of his loved ones. Every morning he is obliged to leave the sanctuary of his home for his day's work whether it be that of motorman or millionaire.

THE MOTHER'S SPHERE

But the mother's sphere is the home. Here it is that her influence is felt. Here she is mistress and queen.

In the home she comes in constant, permanent contact with her children. While the father is absent for his daily toil, she remains to watch over them and to protect them. At certain stages in the life of the child, the mother is its sole companion. She guards his helpless infancy. Her sweet voice teaches him the first words he speaks, the name of the great Father in heaven, and of that earthly father, whose face bends down together with her own over his little cot. Her hands smooth his fevered brow, rock him to sleep, shield him from danger, dry his tears. Then the mother is a wonderful and mysterious being to the child, his idol, his fairy, his play-fellow, his queen. The child

turns to her in all his joys, in all his fears and needs. The one word most often on his lips is "Mother."

THE MOTHER'S INFLUENCE LASTING

Although that intimate and rare companionship of the mother and the child diminishes, or to be more correct, changes in its manifestations as the child grows stronger and more self-reliant, it substantially persists through life. Even the strong man cannot free himself from its holy influences. Though the mother may no more be near him, it is to her he instinctively turns, in thought at least, to share with her his rewards or tell her of his trials. The young man looks to her for guidance. She it is who tells him of life's pitfalls and self-control. She teaches him where to find strength and courage against himself. He is not ashamed to kneel at her feet and unfold his temptations and faults.

The union of the mother and the son, of the mother and the daughter shows us authority vested with grace and tenderness guiding the children of future generations, molding them into noble men and women, shaping their destinies for time and eternity.

The influence of the mother on her children is also most decisive. The mother's face is the one into which the child constantly looks, the mother's voice the one that rings most often in his ears. Her ways, her conduct are the factors which at every moment enter unconsciously into his life, his habits, his very fiber and being. It is the mother that the child takes for his model. In that mold his character is formed.

THE CHILDREN'S MODEL

It is of the highest importance, therefore, for the Catholic mother that in her conduct, in her daily acts, even the

least and apparently the most insignificant, she should be a model to her children. Children are essentially imitators. They have a wonderful faculty of reproducing the traits which they perceive in others. Their natures are impressionable, devoid as yet of all artificiality and self-consciousness. They are easily led by the emotion of the present and almost unconsciously yield to it.

Artists tell us that the artistic taste can be developed by contact with perfect models, with beautiful things, by the sublime views which nature presents, mountains clothed with verdure or helmeted with snow, silver lakes shimmering under the rays of the sinking sun, noble cathedrals, a ravishing piece of music, a magnificent painting, a majestic statue. Spiritual writers tell us also that the sense of virtue, the love of the true and the good can be fostered in the hearth by the influence of a noble model. Our Lord Himself understood this and to make virtue more easy of imitation clothed Himself in the vesture of our frail humanity to be the pattern on which we might fashion our lives.

The Catholic mother must become a living model of virtue to her children. She can do so in two ways: positively and negatively. Positively, by actually practicing herself and then teaching her children the virtues which should be the ornament of a Catholic household; negatively, by avoiding those defects which, however insignificant, may have the greatest influence for evil on the lives of her children. It is of the latter that we speak here.

HER PERSONAL LIFE

The most serious defect which the Catholic mother must avoid is the neglect of her own spiritual life. This, it is true, directly concerns herself alone. But though she is the first and the greatest sufferer from this defect, it is one that

will surely, though perhaps slowly, affect her children. If the mother is not in all things guided by the spirit of faith, so that the inner life remains unwarmed by the love of God; if she has not the holy fear of the Creator in her heart; if the great truths of religion, the necessity of the salvation of the soul, the dread of sin and its punishments have not made a deep and lasting impression on her heart, she cannot impress these truths in a vital and striking manner on the hearts of her children.

The household of the mother whose faith is weak, whose heart is not inflamed by prayer and union with God, is not the one in which the noblest virtues bloom. The cold and chilling atmosphere which the indifferent mother carries around her cannot foster the growth of those delicate flowers of holiness, of self-control, of purity, of Christian mortification, of mutual love and forbearance which are the signs of the presence of God in the heart.

RESULTS OF SUCH NEGLECT

How can the mother make her little one love the religion in which they have been baptized, if she feels only a dwindling enthusiasm for its mysteries? With what success can she tell them of the life, the sufferings and the death of the Man-God, if her heart does not thrill with sorrow over His agony, His abandonment, His betrayal and His shame? Is it possible that she can instill into the minds of her children the horror of sin, if she harbors any unhallowed passion or gives ear to suggestions of the tempter that would make her false to her essential duties of wife and mother?

If she does not hate sin above all the evils of life, she will not impress its hideousness on the minds of her daughters and her sons. If she does not love prayer she will not

teach its beauty to her little flock. If her soul is essentially worldly and her ideals and standards those, not of the Catholic mother, but of the misguided semi-pagans about her, even though she may make a pretence at teaching her children the lessons of the Faith, her words will lack unction and power. They will not have a lasting effect. Her children will grow up, familiar with the forms of Catholic devotion, but their lives will not be thoroughly molded by the principles of Catholicism, because their mother's heart and soul were out of touch with them.

The first lesson, therefore, the mother must learn is to free her soul from the influence of that spiritual malady, indifference to the great principles of her religion. She must deepen her spiritual life. She must be united to God by faith, prayer, by the reception of the Sacraments, the spirit of devotion, of mortification and self-sacrifice.

THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE

If the atmosphere which the mother carries with her unconsciously in her conduct must be thoroughly unworldly, spiritual and Catholic, she must also take care that in the acts which directly concern the spiritual life, she be an example to her children. If the mother does not give the example of fidelity she cannot enforce the observance of religious duties. She cannot neglect the duty of prayer and at the same time ask her children to be attentive to it. The observant eyes of her little ones will notice that mother does not join them in the task she imposes. If she bids them kneel morning and night to offer their labors to God and to thank Him for His protection, and never joins them in that duty, her words will lose their authority. If she is never seen at prayer together with them, the children will begin to suspect that they may omit it with impunity and will finally

neglect it altogether. It is from the mother that they must learn the beauty of prayer, its necessity for them in the hour of danger and temptation, the obligation incumbent upon them all through life to keep their hearts united to God by that golden link.

A PRAYERFUL MOTHER

A prayerful mother carries about her in the household something of the peace, the calm, the beauty and sweetness of another world, something of that ineffable grace and charm of Our Lady herself, as she went about her duties in the humble house of Nazareth. By her own prayerful life, by the insistence with which she inculcates the duty of prayer on her offspring, and the regularity with which she gives the example of its daily practice, she will become a source of blessings to her household.

The memory to her children of her sweet presence as she knelt with them at home morning and night, at Our Lady's shrine in the parish church, before the little red light burning in front of the tabernacle; her care to teach them the sign of the Cross and the prayers dear to the heart of Catholics; her words of encouragement as they prepared for Confession and Holy Communion, the little ejaculations she taught them to say in the hour of danger and temptation: these can never be forgotten. In later years, when his mother will have long ago gone to her reward, the gray-haired man will lovingly remember and repeat again the prayers which she taught him and which, when a little child, his hands clasped in hers, he repeated at her knees.

HOLY CONVERSATION

The mother not only must not forget to pray and to teach this duty to her little ones, but she must not forget

to speak to them of God, of His goodness, His power, His magnificence, His beauty and above all of His love. She can commit no greater fault than to be silent about Him, and the duty of love and obedience we owe Him above all things. The neglect of such a duty cannot be too much deplored.

Yet there are unfortunately Catholic mothers who frequently hold long conversations before their children on worldly subjects, on the topics that engross the attention of the public, the frivolous subjects of dress and fashion, their neighbors' faults, the novels and the plays popular for the moment, but who never speak of God, of His Church, its history, its sufferings, its glories, its saints, its martyrs, the dangers it is subjected to from its own children and its enemies. What can we think of the Catholic mother who never tells her children of the struggles of the martyrs, of the glorious days of the early Church, when to be a Christian was to be a saint; who never speaks of the catacombs, of the heroism of boys like Tarcisius and Pancratius who gave up their lives for Christ, and of the glorious deaths of those virgins, Agnes, Cecilia, Lucy, Anastasia and their companions and imitators?

Can a Catholic mother who delights her children and rightly, with the fairy tales that come from the East, be silent on that Divine story, the birth of the Man-God in lowliness and poverty in the little manger of Bethlehem, His life, His sufferings, His death? If she wants to interest, instruct and ennoble them, can she do anything better than to tell them those stories from the Old Testament, the tragedy of our First Parents' fall, the fratricidal jealousy of Cain, the death of Abel, the story of the deluge, of Joseph and his brethren, of Judith, of Esther, of Gideon and his brave men, of the conquest of the Holy Land, with its splendors, the passage of the Jordan and the Red Sea, the warlike

proWess of David, the wisdom and the weakness of Solomon and the heroism of the Machabees?

SPIRITUAL READING

The Catholic mother neglects her duty if she does not now and then read a spiritual book to her children, one in keeping with their knowledge and their years. She is unfaithful to her duties if she does not thus from childhood teach them all the beauty that may be found in a Gospel parable, such as that of the Prodigal Son or the Wedding Feast; or in a chapter from the Imitation of Christ.

It is a general complaint that Catholics are not acquainted with Catholic literature. Are not Catholic mothers in some measure responsible? If they accustom their children to love what is truly and genuinely Catholic, they give them something that will be of the greatest spiritual value for the rest of their lives, a sense of what is noble and true, an intellectual and spiritual disrelish for all that is commonplace and coarse. Their children in future years will not be tempted to fritter away their time and their energies in reading the cheap magazine or the trashy novel, which, if they do not always corrupt the heart, necessarily lower Catholic standards of life and substitute for them the viewpoint of the worldling.

UNWORLDLINESS

There should be no room in the heart of the Catholic mother for anything that savors of the love of the world. If she and her children occupy a position in life of some dignity and importance, she has the right to see that they maintain it within the bounds of reason. She must see that by their education her children be prepared worthily to take their place in the rank in which God has placed them. But,

if she is wise and has at heart their real good, she will set their soul's welfare above anything and everything that the world can give. She must impress upon their hearts and minds the essential vanity, the fleeting and unsubstantial character, of social rank and position. She must not train them to luxury and ease, by pampering them and fostering their fondness for pleasure and self-indulgence, their inordinate love of display, amusement and dress; she must rather bring them up in a certain rugged simplicity, beneficial alike to both body and soul. She should, of course, ever remember that they are children and treat them with motherly tenderness and indulgence, but she must not make of them weaklings or worldlings.

Worldliness is cultivated in the homes of the poor as well as of the rich. Working-girls frequently spend every cent on clothes and the mother encourages them, or has taught them to be extravagant.

She must not allow that love of the world to develop in her children, nor its manifestations to go uncorrected. She can easily detect them. They are usually disobedience, selfishness, and pride. She should correct them by placing the example of Our Lord and Our Lady before her children and by seeing that they practise acts of the opposite virtues of subjection and humility. One of the best means to overcome this inborn tendency to worldliness in the hearts of her children, and their constant companion, selfishness, is to remind them that the rich are the stewards of the poor, that out of their wealth and abundance it is their duty to help their less favored brethren in the struggles and the trials of life.

As the children grow older and their minds open more and more, the Catholic mother must teach them the dangers of worldliness, must show them that as long as they are favored with the world's goods, the world will smile

upon them, but as soon as their fortune and their rank are lost, the world will coldly and contemptuously turn its back upon them. She must teach them that the world is essentially false and hypocritical. This will render them nobly independent of its favor and frown, and will teach them to put their trust in their own good and generous endeavors and the grace of God.

Social distinction, too, sought for at the expense of Catholic principles, by sacrificing personal integrity and honesty and by offering incense to those idols which the world worships—success, wealth, pleasure—never brings peace to the Catholic household. It produces unrest. It causes too often the loss of the grace of God. A Catholic mother should think seriously before she launches her children on that dangerous path. There are too many pitfalls lurking there. Too many others have fallen victims of the snares and the dangers in the way. Their tragic stories should be a warning.

CHANNELS OF GRACE

In all this the views of the Catholic mother must be thoroughly supernatural. In order to foster them, she must have recourse to those channels of grace which the Church puts at her disposal. Her strength must come from God. She needs it for herself in the hard but noble duties thrust upon her. She needs it for her husband in order that she may be to him in all things a loving and tender helpmate, sharing his burdens, encouraging him with her smile, her words, and far more so by the radiance of her high purpose, the nobility of her character, her devotion and love. She needs it for her children and household. Where is she to find it? Principally in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in the Sacraments.

Attendance at Holy Mass may be considered the spiritual thermometer that registers the degree of fervor in a Catholic community. If attendance at Mass is regular, constant, fervent and general, it may be said that, although neither sin nor scandal may be entirely absent, the spiritual condition of the community is substantially sound. Where, on the contrary, the Mass is in little honor, the spiritual condition leaves much to be desired. Where Mass is neglected by the people, faith dies away. Where it is loved, and where men and women crowd about the Altar as the Holy Sacrifice is offered, faith is still of a stout and vigorous growth.

Fidelity to Holy Mass has been for centuries the devotion of the sons and daughters of Ireland. That fidelity and devotion have undoubtedly been the means which, under God's Providence, has kept the Faith so strong in the Isle of Saints, in spite of war, hunger and persecution.

THE MOTHER AND THE MASS

Devotion to Holy Mass will work marvels in the heart of the Catholic mother. If she wishes to give a lasting example to her husband and her children, she must under no pretext, except in the case of real necessity, neglect it. Yet at times Catholic mothers may be found who with scanty reasons fail to comply with that essential duty of Catholics, which obliges them under pain of mortal sin to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

They pretend that the duties of the household, the care of their children, the fatigue undergone during the week, their health, and countless other reasons, which self-love is so skilful in trumping up, will not allow them to perform this duty. But they will find ample time on that very day on which they have failed to go to Mass, for parties and

entertainments, for idle reading and uncharitable gossip, for tasks far more arduous and exacting than the fatigue of walking a few blocks to the parish church and spending a brief half-hour in the presence of God. By this neglect they cause untold harm to their own souls and those of their children.

SPIRITUAL LOSSES

The Catholic mother that neglects Mass blocks up the channels of grace in her soul. Deprived of the supernatural strength to be found at the altar, weakened by her sloth and her lack of mortification, she is left to her unaided efforts. Her spiritual life becomes soulless and commonplace. Should this neglect be frequent and habitual, her faith decays. She no longer has the light and the strength needed for her labors, her trials and temptations. She will find out, sooner or later, if she does not amend, that she may expose herself to some real spiritual disaster. God will not treat her as His child if she openly violates His positive commands. Her household will not be blessed with those extraordinary favors which, it has been so often remarked in the history of the Church, are showered upon those families which love the Holy Sacrifice. Her carelessness disedifies her children. It has an evil influence upon her husband, and will but too easily lead him to neglect his duty. It becomes a scandal to the parish, for the parish has a certain right to the edification and the good example which she can and should give.

On the other hand there can be no more edifying sight in a Catholic community than the presence of the mother, the father and their little ones, their grown-up sons and daughters regularly and devoutly assisting at this great official act of Catholic worship. It is the family's open pro-

fession of faith. It unites the household in the bonds of the holiest union and love before God's altar. It is a sign, almost certain and infallible, of the union, the harmony, the spirit of obedience, of mutual respect and love that reign in the home.

USE OF THE SACRAMENTS

If the mother should frequently neglect Mass it often happens that she will, by an easy and natural step, neglect the Sacraments. If she does this what will become of her? No one needs the Sacraments more than she does, for her duties constantly demand of her the most painful sacrifices. She needs strength to make them generously. Glorious as are the privileges of motherhood, they entail the gravest responsibilities. At a time when so many shirk them, and when emancipation from their yoke is openly preached by those who neither fear God, nor reverence womanhood, the use of the means of grace is absolutely necessary. The Sacrament of Penance is needed, if she would keep her heart pure. She must frequently, daily, if possible, approach the Holy Table if she would keep it strong.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

We associate motherhood with all that is purest and fairest. We render to it the unconscious tribute of our hearts. There is something sacred about its very name. The Catholic mother, living under a dispensation in which the natural dignity of the marriage contract has been raised by God to the still nobler rank of a Sacrament, should embody the highest ideals of those virtues which we associate with her office.

The heart of the Catholic mother should become the sanctuary of the noblest virtues. Her purity, her patience,

her spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice should be without the slightest shadow or stain. She must watch over her heart. She may not allow any love or affection to enter there that may diminish her loyalty to her husband or her devotion and tenderness to her children. Self-indulgence, jealousy, harshness of manner and bitterness of words, flashes of ill-temper, petty spite, resentment, the spirit of criticism, peevishness, the neglect of the temporal or spiritual welfare and needs of her household, not to speak of grosser violations of the essential duties of her state of life, may mar the beauty of her soul.

The frequent reception of that Sacrament which has been given to cleanse the heart from all sin and imperfection, the examination of conscience necessary for its worthy reception, will make her know herself, her own weaknesses, and put her on guard. They will purify her soul and give her a peace and happiness which will shed its beams over the whole family.

If, on the contrary, the Sacrament of Penance is neglected, her soul will gradually lose its fervor and its purity. Weak and unaided nature will soon reassert itself. Small and venial defects will at first diminish her devotion. They will accumulate and grow more serious from day to day. As the burdens of motherhood, the cares of the household, worries and solicitude about the temporal welfare of the family increase; when trials test her mettle and adversities crowd upon her; when her duties become painful and her responsibilities irksome she may begin to murmur against the restraints of her state of life and yearn for that liberty, in which she sees many of her sex indulging; then she may be tempted to hearken to the world, the flesh and the devil as they tell her to emancipate herself and live out her own independent life.

Should such a state of soul come upon her and should

she neglect the Sacrament of Penance, and no longer have the faith, the humility and the courage to kneel at the feet of the priest to ask advice, and unfold the story of her weaknesses, she is on the brink of the precipice. As in the case of neglect of Holy Mass, the evil is not confined to her alone. The family is disedified, the scandal spreads from the mother to the father, and from him to the children. Too often the whole household is lost to the Faith. It is not uncommon to see that if its members lose the Faith, they lose also, honor, prosperity, happiness and peace.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

If the mother may not neglect the Sacrament of Penance she may not neglect that still nobler Sacrament for which it is the normal preparation.

The mother's life is a life of sacrifice. In the Blessed Eucharist she has the source of strength. Her life is one of pure and unselfish love. In Holy Communion, she receives in her heart Him who is Love personified, and its source. She needs strength for her duties and her labors. In Holy Communion the Divine Guest that deigns to visit her, is the strength of the virgins, the confessors and the martyrs. Coming into her soul, He will bring with Him comfort, courage, power. Sanctified by His sacred presence she will return to her family ready for the labors and trials of the day. No suffering can daunt her. No sacrifice, which she is called upon to make as mother or wife, as the guardian angel of her children, the adviser and co-worker of her husband, will appal her. Her God is in her heart. He labors and toils with her in the household. He guides her. Through Him, her husband and children are blessed. What can she fear?

The petty burdens and annoyances of the household, the

more severe trials that may come upon her, sickness, financial worries, loss of social position and prestige, the death even of her loved ones, will not disturb the calm and the peace of her soul. She will feel the sorrow and the pang. She will mourn like Rachel over her dead, the husband whom God gave her in the pride and beauty of her young life, and the little darling whom He has taken away to be the companion of the Angels. But great as may be her sorrows, they will not be without their balm. She will have in Holy Communion the consolation and the strength needed in this dark hour. God Himself will be her Comforter. He has promised that He will in heaven, with His own sacred hands, wipe away the tears from our eyes. He will, in a mysterious way in Holy Communion, fulfill in anticipation that sacred pledge, and in the radiance of His coming in to her sorrow-smitten soul, give her the assurance that all the trials and partings borne for His sweet Name, will have one day their reward exceeding great. She is but human and as such she cannot but mourn. But He is God and her mourning will be turned into joy.

Contrast with her the mother who neglects Holy Communion, is seen at the Sacred Table only at rare intervals, or even fails to fulfill her solemn duty of the Paschal time. She is weakening her soul, sapping her spiritual strength, and giving the worst possible example to her husband, to her children, to her friends, to the Catholics of the parish.

If it be true that peace, concord, mutual deference and love, joy, innocence, purity, the spirit of prayer, love of Our Lady, of the Saints and of the Adorable Heart of Christ, reign in the household of the mother who finds her greatest happiness in frequent and fervent Communion; so, on the other hand, as a punishment and a sign of God's displeasure, are these blessings often absent from the home of the mother who is seldom or never seen at the Holy Table. In the in-

ner circle of the household it is the mother who determines its spirit and its atmosphere. What is the result if she has little or no love for the Blessed Sacrament?

EFFECTS OF THIS NEGLECT

The spiritual tone is lowered. Prayer is neglected. The mother whose heart is estranged from God by her neglect and coldness, seldom speaks to her children of God, of holy things. She gradually loses that irresistible influence over her husband which comes from a life in union with God. How can she urge him, if he is negligent, to a duty which she shows by her own conduct she but little esteems? What must be his grief, if he is fervent, to see that the woman to whom he has pledged and faithfully kept the solemn promise of his love, and whose real happiness is the one object of his desires, is unfaithful to the noblest practices of her religion? For he knows well that only in them can she find the strength to fulfill her tasks and bear her burdens. She loses control over her children. She loses control over herself. She becomes peevish, harsh, uncharitable, impatient, irritable, selfish, proud. The peace of God does not reign in her heart. Peace soon departs from her home. Ill-temper, quarrels, jealousies disturb its harmony. Vanity, worldliness, the love of pleasure, of amusement, of the forbidden fruit tempt her. She has not God's grace and strength to resist.

Can we wonder then that at times there is a fall, a distaste, a spiritual tragedy, too often terminated by ruin and disgrace in the eyes of a scandalized world? The tragedy and the fall would have been avoided if that Catholic mother had frequently approached the Holy Table.

A CONSOLING PICTURE

Amid all the beauty and the grandeur that the Catholic Church can show to the world, there are few sights more consoling or nobler than that of the Catholic mother side by side with her husband, and surrounded by her little ones, her grown-up sons and daughters, kneeling at the altar to receive her God. United in their mutual love at home in all life's trials, in wealth and poverty, in sorrow or in joy, husband and wife here give a solemn pledge that they are still more united in the love of God. Their hearts have been cleansed by a sincere and contrite Confession for the reception of this great Sacrament. A solemn peace and a holy calm are in their soul. They are signed and sealed with the grace of God. In a moment God Himself, hidden under the sacramental veils, but really, truly and substantially present there, will deign to descend into their hearts. Now, more than ever, husband and wife feel that they tenderly and nobly love each other, for God Himself hallows their love by His coming. The children, united together in their purified affections, feel a deeper respect, a greater reverence for their parents and one another. All are strengthened, purified, consoled.

Let them not fear now. If God be with them, who shall be against them? The father may, without fear, go to his day's work. His hands and his heart have been strengthened. God will bless his toil. The mother may now take up the duties of the home. In her heart she still feels the sacred presence of the Virgin's Son, the Divine Child of Nazareth, who was obedient to Mary and Joseph. She need not fear. He will protect her loved ones. In their study, their work, their play, the children have a Divine Companion, a Fellow-worker and a Friend.

CHAPTER IX

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J.

“**A**ND He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.”

These words of St. Luke sum up the hidden life of Our Lord as a child and a young man in the home of Mary and Joseph at Nazareth. Few words in the Gospel are so full of meaning. They bring before us a wonderful picture and teach the most important and necessary lessons. They carry our minds and hearts back to those days of peace, holiness and happiness spent by the Holy Family under a humble roof. They give us in the three persons of that earthly trinity the model of all the virtues which should flourish in the Christian household.

The chaste and holy patriarch, Joseph, is the head of the household in Nazareth and there represents God's authority. As such he is the model of the Christian father. Our Blessed Lady, the Virgin Spouse of the holy patriarch, is at the same time the Virgin Mother of her God, the model of virginity and motherhood. Our Blessed Lord, who in His life gave examples of virtue suited to all classes of society, wished by the years of childhood spent at Nazareth, to be the model of children for all time to come.

THE HOLY HOUSE AT NAZARETH

Children love pictures. There should be no picture dearer and fairer to them than that of the Holy House

in that little town of Galilee, just as it was when the Holy Family dwelt there.

Nazareth, the White City, the city of purity and holiness, as the name would seem to imply, was situated in a smiling valley in Galilee. The valley was so beautiful that it was compared to Paradise. Its orchards and groves of palm, and olive, its vineyards creeping up the slopes of the hills, produced the richest and the rarest fruits. But its people were of the humbler and poorer class.

Nazareth could boast of no great leader, no great captain. It was despised and looked down upon by the rest of the Jews. A proverb was common among them that no good could come out of Nazareth. Yet Our Lord dwelt there in one of the humblest and poorest cottages that crowned its hillsides. The people little realized that out of the humility and the poverty of the home where Joseph and Jesus and Mary lived, the world was to derive the noblest lessons, and that He who is all power, goodness, greatness and love remained hidden there for many years teaching as much by His obedience and humility, as by the splendid miracles which He wrought when He walked upon the waves of the Sea of Galilee or summoned the dead back to life.

THE LESSONS OF NAZARETH

In His life Our Blessed Lord gives us the example of every virtue. There is not a single virtue which He asks us to practise which He did not practise Himself in an eminent degree. More than this, He practised it as a God-man, that is, in an infinitely perfect manner. Every page of the Gospel tells us in language which the simplest can understand, how He loved God, His Father, and the sinful men whom He came to redeem. They show us how His Divine Heart was touched with compassion for the suffering and the poor,

how He listened to their appeal. They describe in words, which even now, after two thousand years, touch the hardest hearts, how He forgave the sinner, how he prayed for His enemies on the Cross. We can read in those beautiful words of the four Evangelists of His meekness, of the patience with which He bore His sufferings, of His cruel agony, and His death. He is in all things our model. In the imitation of His virtues consists all our perfection. In following the path which He marked out, we cannot go astray. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He that followeth Him walketh not in darkness. For He is the Way, by His example; the Truth, by His teaching; the Life, by His holy grace.

THE CHILD OF NAZARETH

What lessons does Our Lord teach us from the solitude and the silence of the Holy House at Nazareth? Our Lord came on earth to win it back to obedience and submission to His heavenly Father from whose authority and rule it had strayed. He wished in His own Divine Person to give an example of the perfect fulfillment of those Commandments, which men had so long neglected and despised. At Nazareth, as a child and as a young man, He wished to give us a perfect model of submission to that Commandment which children are bound in a special manner to observe: "Honor thy father and mother." The perfect observance of this law is absolutely necessary for the individual, the family and society. By His life in the humble home of Mary and Joseph, by His labors there, Our Lord wished to restore filial obedience to the place of honor it had lost among His own people and in the pagan world.

THE HONOR DUE TO PARENTS

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land” (Exod. xx, 12). In the list of the Ten Commandments, the Fourth stands at the head of those which directly concern our duties toward our fellow-men. By this Commandment children are ordered to honor, love and obey their parents in all that is not sin.

No commandment is so reasonable and so natural. Reason and nature tell us that old age is to be respected. Scripture adds its voice and bids us “Rise before the hoary head and honor the person of the aged man.” It is quite evident, then, that on this score alone children should respect their father and mother, on account namely, of their age and their greater experience.

But there is a still nobler reason. Under God and after Him, children owe everything to their parents. They are the authors of the children’s being. With anxiety, with love and unceasing sacrifices, they have toiled for them. The father has spent his talents and his energy in their behalf, the mother for their sakes has faced and generously borne the severest trials and suffering. Their parents are the noblest benefactors of their children. They deserve, therefore, their gratitude and love. The venerable Tobias, in touching words, teaches his son this great lesson: “Hear, my son, the words of my mouth, and lay them as a foundation in thy heart, . . . thou shalt honor thy mother all the days of thy life, for thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee.”

Finally, children must honor their parents because they take God’s place here below, because they are the representatives of God and are clothed with His authority to guide and rule them. And if all authority is from God, that of the master over his servant, that of the ruler over the coun-

try, with still greater reason must we admit that the authority of the mother and the father over their sons and daughters is in a special manner derived from God, has His special sanction and is held sacred in His eyes.

IRREVERENCE IN THOUGHT

Yet too often children fail in the honor and respect due to their parents. They fail in thought, by thinking little of them, and in their hearts despising them. Their parents may not be perfect, they may even have serious defects. They may not have the education which they sought, with so much suffering, to give to their sons and daughters. They may not have the polish of manner and the refinement which they had to forego in their hard struggle to bring up their family in comfort and which they were anxious their children should receive. If in their heart their children look with displeasure or contempt upon their parents because of their defects and shortcomings, they are in a way casting a slur upon themselves and injuring their own character. For parents and children are, so to speak, one, and what disgraces the father and the mother is, in a certain sense, a disgrace also to the child. The Holy Ghost tells us in the Scriptures: "Glory not in the dishonor of thy father; for his shame is no glory to thee. If his understanding fail, have patience with him and despise him not when thou art in thy strength" (Ecclus. iii, 12-15). And in the Book of Proverbs we read: "Despise not thy mother when she is old."

IRREVERENCE IN WORD AND ACT

Children can grievously offend against the Fourth Commandment, against the respect and the honor they owe to their parents, by the unkind words they speak about them.

If we cannot, without offending God and the great law of charity, speak evil of the least among us, of the stranger, of the outcast or the fallen, what must be the sins of the child who speaks of the faults of his parents, who reveals their weaknesses, their sins perhaps? Children should be the first to protect the honor of their parents, to shield their reputation, to make any sacrifices to hide their shortcomings.

What can we think of a child's heartlessness and cruelty when he gossips about his parents' faults, exaggerates them, or makes fun of them? God hates such conduct and punishes it severely. "He that shall curse father and mother," He warns us in Holy Writ, "dying, let him die." And if not satisfied with criticizing parents in private and in the family circle, children do so publicly, and are rude and insulting toward them, break out into outbursts of temper, are stubborn, surly, openly disobedient and rebellious, God is still more angered. Holy Scripture sternly rebukes such conduct: "The eye that mocketh at his father, let the ravens of the brook pick it out." The child that dares to strike the father or the mother who gave him life, called him by the endearing name of child, and bore for his sake the most painful labors and sacrifices, sinks to the depths of degradation. There can be no punishment severe enough for such a wretch.

THE MODEL OF OBEDIENCE

The simple passage of the Gospel which describes Our Lord's life as a child begins with the startling words "And He was subject to them." He who is the Creator of heaven and earth, who flung the sun and the stars into space, clothed the earth with verdure, carved the columns of the mountains and the hills, poured out the rivers from the hollow of His hands, who orders the falling of the snows and

the dews, the rising of the sun and the sinking thereof, who gives life and being to all things, is subject to His own creatures. He honors and obeys them.

To whom does He thus subject Himself? To a humble artisan, a village carpenter, His adopted father; to a simple village maiden, His Mother; both His creatures, who exist only through His power, and His love, both infinitely inferior to Him in wisdom, in power, in knowledge, in holiness. He is subject to them in all things. He submits to them His will, His intellect, His faculties of mind and heart. He wishes all that they wish, He deems that which they command to be the will of God, to be the best for Him, the one thing which He has to do. He is convinced that in obeying their commands, He is fulfilling God's will just as much as if He were teaching the multitudes, healing the sick, or raising the dead.

He is subject to them at all times. There is not a moment of the day when He is not fulfilling to the letter that which they have asked or ordered Him to do. He is subject in all things. Our Blessed Lady asks Him to go and fetch water from the well. Without a murmur, the Divine Child fills the pitcher and bears it home. The holy patriarch, St. Joseph, summons Him to the workshop, and the Child, the same God who built this mighty universe out of nothing, puts His hands in the strong grasp of the humble workman and learns from him how to handle the axe and the saw. And Mary and Joseph wonder at this subjection, at this humility, this obedience. For that Child is their Creator and their God.

A MODEL OF LOVE

But Our Blessed Lord is not only a model of perfect obedience. He is a model of the most tender love. He sub-

jects His human understanding, will and faculties to His foster-father and His Virgin-Mother. But He does far more than that. He loves them strongly, tenderly. He shows them the deepest affection. In every thought and aspiration, in every action, He seeks their happiness. He cannot do enough for them.

Morning, noon and night, He is their delight, their joy. He comforts them in their sorrows, shares their burdens, tries to lighten their poverty, watches over them, protects them from danger and harm. He is never absent from the humble home. He is its light, its treasure. No son could be more loving. The hearts of Mary and Joseph must have been filled with holy joy as every morning the Divine Child knelt at their feet to receive their blessing and pronounced those words which must have sounded so sweetly in their ears: "Hail Mary," and "My Father." No human words could describe the joy and the happiness of Mary and Joseph, as they felt that at morn and noon and eve, in the midst of their labor and in the lonely hours of the night, Jesus was with them still.

OUR LORD AND OBEDIENCE

The first duty of the child is to obey. For that reason Our Lord gave the example of obedience and subjection to Mary and Joseph. He was the embodiment of the Fourth Commandment. He was so purposely, for the fulfilment of that Commandment is a duty which falls to the lot of every man and woman. No one can escape it. There is a time in the life of everyone when it becomes the main duty. The fulfilment of the Commandment is necessary for the happiness of the individual, the welfare of the family, the very existence of well-regulated society.

"Honor thy father and thy mother." No command is

so deeply engraven in the human heart. To honor the authors of our existence, those who are toiling for us, watching over our needs, who are making untold sacrifices in order that we may be happy, that our minds and hearts may be enlightened, strengthened and purified, who in all that they do are constantly thinking of us and giving us every proof of love and affection, is a strong impulse of our nature. There is not a nation on earth where this is not considered the first duty of childhood. Among the Jews, this Commandment was ever in honor and a special blessing, the blessing of a long, happy and peaceful old age was promised to those who faithfully observed it. Among the followers of Christ, this Commandment should be in still greater honor. In the Catholic family, the children should reproduce and imitate as far as possible the example of obedience to His Blessed Mother and His foster-father, which Our Lord gave in Nazareth.

HOW CHILDREN SHOULD OBEY

Without the spirit of obedience in the Catholic family peace, harmony and happiness are impossible. Children should obey as Our Lord Himself obeyed. Their obedience should be prompt, ready, entire, cheerful. They should obey quickly, without delay, not merely in the things they like but in all things doing just what they are told. They should obey, not moodily and sulkily but joyfully, cheerfully, thereby showing to their parents that they think it a privilege and an honor to fulfill their commands. Their obedience should be prompted by a tender love, a great reverence, a deep gratitude and affection. By this obedience, they will prove that they are trying to repay them for all their goodness. Their obedience will be for themselves and these loved ones a source of untold favors. God's blessing will rest on

the household where the father and the mother are thus obeyed and loved. A wonderful peace will abide there.

Obedient children make a happy household. For when this great Commandment is perfectly observed, the children are united to one another, and the parents more closely bound to their children, and the goodness and the virtue of their sons and daughters link the father and the mother to each other in a tenderer and a purer love.

RESULTS OF DISOBEDIENCE

On the contrary, if the children are disobedient and constantly murmur against the commands of their parents, if they criticize their orders, or still worse, if they make their defects the subject of their conversation; if they ridicule them or laugh at them, either among themselves or among strangers, if they speak disrespectfully to them, contradict them, show resentment because they have been punished, reproved, corrected or ordered to do that which is distasteful or difficult, such conduct is sure to produce the most disastrous results.

Disobedient children easily fall victims to their own weaknesses and sinful inclinations. Children need the advice and warnings of their elders, of those who know the dangers of the world, and whose experience entitles them to guide and command.

The growing boy needs his father's advice to keep him straight in the path of duty. He must obey him at all costs, if he would learn that lesson of discipline and self-control so necessary even for worldly success in life, but still more so for the happiness, peace and purity of his soul.

The young girl, grownig up in the midst of a corrupt world, is courting danger if she does not heed her mother's

warning when she tells her what she must do in order to keep her heart untainted by sinful pleasures. She is toying with pitch and will be defiled if she does not avoid that company whose dangers her mother has pointed out, and insists on going where she has been forbidden to be seen. She is giving proof of her own folly if she imagines that her mother is old-fashioned and behind the times, that her words of warning may be overlooked with impunity, that she can emancipate herself from her control and the restraints of a Catholic household, read what she pleases, dress as her vanity and worldliness incline her, see what everyone is seeing, go where she likes and with whom she likes. The young girl that acts thus will find a precipice in her path into which she may be plunged.

The disobedient son, the disobedient daughter are made the toys of their own passions. They fill the hearts of father and mother, of their more dutiful brothers and sisters, with sorrow and shame. The disobedient son, the wayward daughter break the heart of their parents. Countless fathers and mothers are today mourning in disgrace and sorrow over the wrecked lives of young boys and girls, youths and maidens, ruined in health, in honor, perhaps lost forever to their Faith and to God, because they never learned to practice that great Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," because they never realized that its observance was for them the path of honor, liberty and happiness.

THE LESSON OF WORK

But Our Lord in Nazareth teaches another lesson, the necessity and dignity of work. He knew that in one form or other the law of work presses upon every man. That task no one can shirk. The man or woman who does not

contribute by work of head, heart or hand to the welfare of society is a drone and should not be tolerated in the community. At every stage of our existence, in every condition of life, we are bound by that law. Children are not exempt from it, and according to the measure of their forces, their capacity and their knowledge they must contribute their share to the welfare of those about them.

They are especially bound to contribute by their work to the welfare and the happiness of their own family. No matter what be the social rank of the family of which they are members, the Catholic boy and girl should deem it a privilege to labor for its well-being. Wealth and social prestige should even be an incentive to hard work. For it is to those who enjoy these advantages that the poor and the less favored by this world's goods look for example. If the family be in need of the strength and the help which its younger members can lend, this is a powerful reason for the children to exert their energies to lessen its burdens.

The unceasing efforts of the children of a pious and fervent Catholic family should be to lessen the labors of the father who has so long toiled and suffered for them, to add to the little joys and comforts of the mother who has spent her whole life and energies for their welfare, and gradually to lift from their shoulders the weight of all responsibility and care in order that the evening of their days may be spent in peace and happiness.

THE IDLE CHILD

At one stage of its life the child can do very little to accomplish this end in a practical and direct way. The child must first pass through a period of preparation for the struggles and battles of the future. At such a time it can con-

tribute little toward the immediate welfare of the family. But even then the boy and the girl must fulfill the great law of work. They must prepare for the vocation and the tasks which later they will be called on to shoulder.

The precious hours which they spend in the classroom in the parochial school, the academy, or the college must not be wasted and fritted away. In those years the duty of labor and work binds them just as much as it does the grown man who has to labor to support his family. If they waste their time in idle and frivolous amusements, in a constant neglect of the duties of their state of life, make little of the sacrifices which their parents are making for them, and while these parents at home are perhaps stinting themselves to give them an education, wilfully throw away their time and their talents during six or seven of the most precious years of life, they are guilty of the greatest ingratitude toward their parents and of an act of injustice toward them, their family and themselves.

The idle boy and girl ruin their own lives. For them no hope of success, no chance for the rewards and the prizes that fall to the diligent and the persevering. Success is the reward of those alone who do something to win it. It never comes to the trifler and the sluggard. These never rise above the commonplace. They are failures. They waste their lives. They accomplish nothing for their own good, or that of others. They add nothing to the happiness of those about them. The sluggards, the idlers, the men and the women without grit or the sprit of self-control, never give to mankind a Columbus to discover a new world, an Edison to invent the incandescent light, a Marconi or an Orville Wright to conquer space with the wireless and the aëroplane. Idleness never made a statesman like Lincoln, a scientist like Pasteur, saints like St. Paul or St. Francis Xavier.

DANGERS OF IDLENESS

“The idle brain is the devil’s workshop.” If the idle boy and the idle girl, the lazy, shiftless, listless triflers of both sexes never accomplish anything worth while, they frequently foster in their hearts and inject into the hearts of others the worst defects and vices. They spread bad example around them. They breed discontent. They are a source of constant worry and anxiety to their parents and their superiors. The work which they shirk has to be placed on the shoulders of others. They thus become guilty of selfishness and injustice.

While they shirk the duty which is theirs, they seek out something to fill their time, to occupy in some way or other their foolish heads and their wayward hearts. The idle boy lets his imagination control and master him. He thus exposes himself to the attacks of temptation. The temptation finds him with his character already weakened and he becomes the victim of his own folly. Hard work would have saved him.

The ranks of the vain, giddy, thoughtless butterflies of fashion, who are to be seen at every worldly amusement, where modesty, reserve and self-respect are thrown to the winds, are made up of the idle daughters of the family, of young women, nominally Catholic, who have forgotten the meaning of work and who laugh at the restrictions and the sacrifices it imposes. Their father, their mother, their younger brothers and sisters at home, the poor, the outcast orphaned children, the sick, the infirm need their help. They stretch out to them trembling hands to beg relief in their physical or spiritual maladies but these spoiled natures have no ears, no heart to listen to their appeal. They must not be disturbed in their round of pleasure and self-indulgence, nor distracted from the circle of their silly and

sinful amusements. Idleness makes them selfish and cruel. The Catholic child must learn well the lesson of work given him in the house of Nazareth, if he would avoid these evils later on.

OUR LORD'S PROGRESS

After telling us that Our Lord was subject to Mary and Joseph, the Gospel adds that He "advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men." He advanced in grace with God, not that His soul could internally increase in beauty in the eyes of His Father, for it was filled with the plenitude of grace from the first instant of His conception, but that the outward acts which He performed were every day more pleasing to God. He advanced with men because, as He advanced in the years of boyhood and manhood, His acts won Him more and more love and admiration from all those with whom He came in contact. He advanced in wisdom, in knowledge, not in the knowledge and science of the things of the Godhead which were His from all eternity, but in the knowledge which as man He furthered by experience and through the gradual development of His human senses and intellect.

THE CATHOLIC CHILD'S PROGRESS

Children like their model, Our Lord, must also increase as they grow older in age and their physical being develops, in wisdom, in grace before God and men. Their progress in virtue must be evident to all. Their virtues must become more solid, their character stronger, their obedience more sturdy, their love toward their parents and one another more tender and affectionate. As they advance in years their defects and weaknesses must disappear, they must already begin to show that the responsibilities and the weightier duties

of life are beginning to make them more steady, more constant, more generous, ready for any call of duty, for any sacrifice it may impose.

HOW TO ADVANCE

Progress is the law of nature. It is seen in the birth of day growing into the beauties and the splendors of noon, in the growth of the human body from the feebleness of childhood to the strength of manhood, in the trees, the plants, the flowers. It is also the law of the spiritual life.

Our souls must grow. The soul of the child must grow, not with the growth of the tree or the plant, for the soul has not a material growth like that of a sturdy pine. It should grow interiorly in grace and beauty in the eyes of God. It will grow in this manner if the heart of the child is kept free from sin and all that offends God. The Catholic boy and girl will surely grow in the grace of God if they strengthen their souls with the frequent reception of the Body and the Blood of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, if they prepare for the reception of this great Sacrament by purifying themselves of all stain by the humble, sincere, and contrite confession of their sins never neglect the solemn duty of hearing Mass on holydays and Sundays, and love to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, if they are faithful members of Our Lady's Sodality, if they try to imitate her purity and goodness and the virtues of the holy patriarch her Spouse, if in all things they endeavor to be the friends of that Divine Child who, in order to redeem us and to curb our pride and our spirit of rebellion, was subject to Joseph and Mary in the humble home of Nazareth.

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

But they have one great Commandment to fulfill. One law is especially binding upon them. They must honor their father and mother. To the authors of their lives they owe reverence, obedience and love. To show them gratitude, to help them, to support them, to console them in their sorrows, their sickness, their needs, to surround their old age with every mark of affection and veneration, should be in their eyes not only a duty, but a privilege and their glory.

The obedient child makes the loving child, the strong, innocent son and daughter. Such children become a benefit and a blessing to the State. They are the guardians of that principle of authority which today is so much despised and outraged. They are the pride of the Catholic Church. For the obedient child grows up into the high-minded and noble-hearted mother and father. The obedient child is the child who, no matter what the vocation to which God calls him, knows what duty means and how to make the sacrifices which the fulfillment of that duty entails. The obedient child has a right to God's special blessing and favors. God Himself has promised this, and His word will not fail.

The solemn words of the Old Law: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land" (Exod. xx, 12), have been renewed in the New: "Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first Commandment with a promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth" (Ephes. vi, 2, 3). This is a great Commandment. It was so dear to the heart of Christ that His life was spent in its perfect observance. God severely punishes the cold, selfish and cruel heart that neglects it. In time and in eternity, He showers his choicest blessings on those who faithfully observe it.

CHAPTER X

THE FATHER'S SACRED TRUST

PAUL L. BLAKELY, S.J.

THE duties which flow from paternal authority are shared by both father and mother. Each has a part to play in the family and each must contribute to its happiness. To the mother falls the task for which woman is so well fitted by nature and so richly dowered by grace, of creating its atmosphere of piety, of infusing into it the spirit of religion, and of making it a sanctuary of happiness, in which all its members may take refuge from the coldness of the world, and shut out its chilling selfishness. In order to accomplish this work, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated, the mother is given by God authority to command, and to her voice obedience must be rendered under pain of sin. Nevertheless, the father is the head of the home, in him is vested the chief authority, and on him rests the ultimate responsibility for its well-being. He has very definite duties, and for the fulfillment of them he will be held to a strict account. One of the most important of these duties is to give his children a Catholic education.

THE NEED OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

“Why are Catholics so anxious,” a priest was once asked, “to see that their children are educated in Catholic schools?”

The answer to this question is really very easy. Every Catholic knows that the Church is a good, watchful mother, and when she tells him that his children ought to be in a Catholic school he knows that he is safe in obeying her.

Of course, there may be times when Catholic parents, not rich in the things of this world, may be tempted to send the children to the public school "where everything is free." But only those parents yield to this temptation who do not fully understand what they are doing in depriving the child of his right to a Catholic education, or who in reality are not very good Catholics. For the Faith is the greatest gift that Almighty God can bestow upon any human being. Good Catholics value it above everything else, and they wish, therefore, to do all that they can to preserve it in their children.

Catholics know that, ordinarily speaking, their children can obtain the religious training which today is needed more than ever before, only in the Catholic school. They know too, that a strict account of the care which they have exercised over the souls of their children will be exacted from them at the judgment seat of God. They remember the terrible words of our dear Lord, who pronounced so fearful a condemnation upon all who were the occasion of exposing the little ones to evil. "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea." Does this condemnation fall upon parents who freely send their children to schools in which God has no part, schools which Our Lord Jesus Christ would not be allowed to enter to talk to the children, to bless them, to receive their love and adoration? Unquestionably.

THE CHILD'S DESTINY

By the law of nature, father and mother are strictly bound to care for their children. This obligation is by no means fulfilled by providing for the child's physical and

mental welfare. Entrusted by the Creator to the guardianship of father and mother, the child is no mere entity of time, capable of a mental and physical development only, but a being truly made to the image of God. He has an immortal soul which makes him essentially different from a mere animal, and his destiny reaches far beyond the bounds of time and space. He comes from the hand of God; he must, after the period of his earthly existence, go back to God, to live through an eternity of happiness or pain. The choice between good and evil is within the power of his free-will, cooperating with the grace of God, but the actual line of his choice is deeply influenced by his early surroundings. In the intentions of the Church, every home should, therefore, be a sanctuary, and every father and mother a minister of grace, turning the unfolding mind of the child to thoughts of its eternal destiny.

PARENTAL OBLIGATIONS

As the world now is, the parent's duty toward his child is delegated in part to the school. For the time being, the teacher shares the duty and the authority of father and mother. Now the parents are bound in conscience not to delegate any part of their duty or authority to those who are either unable or unwilling to watch over the spiritual as well as the physical and mental welfare of their children. It is clear, then, that except for very grave reasons, approved by the proper ecclesiastical authority, a Catholic parent may not send his child to a school which by a law is obliged to exclude all training in supernatural religion.

"Their angels in Heaven always see the face of my Father," said Our Lord of the children He had gathered about him. But in the public school, the poor child will never hear a word of instruction on his religious duties,

on his obligation to love and serve God, and thereby to save his soul. In many cases it may even happen that the child will learn to look upon religion with a kind of indifference.

THE DEFECTS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Truth can never come to terms with error. It is a fact, which even the many non-Catholics today are recognizing, that it is dangerous in the extreme to exclude religious training from the school. It is also a fact that the public school, as we have it today, is absolutely forbidden to give any instruction in religion.

Where, then, will the children obtain the training in their religious duties, so essential, if they are to become good citizens of this world, and after this life, citizens of the kingdom of God? In the Sunday school? That is, at best, only a makeshift. It is better than nothing, but an hour once a week is certainly not enough. Can this religious training be given in the home? True, the home must do its part in the education of the child. Not even the parochial school can have its full effect unless father and mother do their share. But ordinarily not even the home can do all that is necessary; and experience shows that, as a rule, precisely those fathers and mothers who send their children to the public, when they could easily send them to the Catholic school, do the least for the religious instruction of their children at home. The truth is that many factors must unite to give the child the Catholic education which it needs, and the principal factors are the home and the parochial school.

THE VOICE OF THE BISHOPS

Our Bishops are constantly reminding parents of their duty to send their children to the Catholic school. We

must remember that the Bishops, men of prudence and learning, would not do this unless the necessity of a Catholic education were indeed great. We must also remember that the Bishop, who, as St. Paul says, is sent by the Holy Ghost to rule us in the Church of God, has a right to command us in this matter. Some Bishops have issued very severe but thoroughly justified regulations on this subject, even excluding from the Sacraments parents who insist upon sending their children to non-Catholic schools. Many years ago Pius IX issued a condemnation of what many people were saying, and still say, that "Catholics may approve of the system of educating youth, unconnected with the Catholic Faith."

THE WARNING OF THE COUNCILS

The American Bishops, gathered in the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, wrote that "Daily experience has demonstrated beyond doubt how grave are the evils and how deep-seated the dangers to which Catholic children are exposed by attending the public school." Since that day, as everyone knows, the danger has become very much greater. The Fathers of the Third Plenary Council warned the Faithful that a purely secular education, that is, one from which God is excluded, is "pernicious in the extreme to the faith and morals of the young." Surely these are grave warnings which no Catholic parent can safely disregard. The same Council says that the Church "can by no means permit Catholic parents, to whom pertains by the natural and the Divine law the right and duty of providing their children with a Christian education, to give them a purely secular education."

A wise old priest, who had had many years of experience in the work of saving souls, once remarked that in his opin-

ion, hardly any responsibility was so great as the responsibility of a Catholic father who sent his children to non-Catholic schools. "Think of standing before God to answer for their souls," he said. In fact, as every priest knows, perhaps the greatest single reason why today there are so many people who "believe in nothing," and why, unfortunately, there are many Catholics who have lost the Faith, is the public school, *the school from which Jesus Christ has been excluded by law.*

PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS THE BEST

So, then, the first reason why good Catholics wish their children educated in Catholic schools is the desire of their Mother, the Church, that it should be so. Of course, there are also many other reasons. Many a non-Catholic mother sends her daughter to the convent school because she knows that the influence of the Sisters will make her daughter a good, pure, sensible woman, and in more than one parochial school in this country every year non-Catholic parents ask admission for their boys and girls. The fact is that non-Catholic educators in increasing numbers are realizing that the parochial schools, free from "frills, fads and fancies," and in charge of devoted men and women, who make teaching a religious duty, have far more time to devote to the things that constitute a real education than the public schools, and will, therefore, produce better results.

The Catholic parent will choose nothing but the best for his little ones, made in the image of God, and bought by Jesus Christ at the price of His most Precious Blood. One school alone will teach the children to grow in deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in this knowledge to find new motives for serving Him more faithfully and loving Him ardently. It is the parochial school, the school which has

a welcome for Christ in every classroom and in the heart of every teacher and pupil; the school which alone is brave enough to confess Him in the face of the world that hates Him.

To the Catholic school alone may so holy a thing as the soul of an innocent Catholic child be safely entrusted. You may not be able to give your children the wealth of this world, but you can easily give them that which is far more precious, a Catholic education. "Do this and you shall live" in the hearts of grateful children and in the heart of Jesus Christ, your eternal reward, exceeding great.

CHAPTER XI

THE CALL OF CHRIST

JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J.

“**M**AN was created to praise, reverence and serve God and by this means to save his soul.” Such is man’s destiny and end. That is the first truth learned at our mother’s knee, the first lesson explained to us from the pages of the catechism. That truth is the most important of all the principles that can be impressed on our hearts. The fulfillment of this fundamental duty secures our happiness in time and in eternity.

We are bound by every reason of justice, gratitude and love to obey that law. Every motive of self-interest impels us to keep it. If we do not observe it, we expose ourselves to misery and unhappiness in this life and to the wrath of God in the next. All men are bound by it. It binds the Pope in the Vatican and the President in the White House, the millionaire as well as the humblest toiler, the lady of fashion as well as the artisan’s wife and the nun in the peace of her convent home. That law binds all men, at all times, in every condition and circumstance of life. No one can escape its obligations. Everyone must fulfill them personally. No one can hire a substitute to do that work for him. We are responsible each and every one of us, individually and singly, for our own souls. We must save our souls. No one can do that for us.

DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE

It is a truth of Faith that God wants all men to be saved, and that He gives them the means necessary to work out the

salvation of their souls, and thus obtain eternal happiness. But it is not God's wish that all men should be saved in the same way. He has appointed a different path for every man. It is true that no man can be saved without the faithful observance of the law of God, without the virtues of faith, hope and charity. This is the only way to salvation and to eternal happiness. But there are various ranks and conditions of life, different and widely separated spheres, in which men are to work out that salvation. Some will have to do it in the midst of wealth, some in the straits of poverty. One man will be summoned to work it out as a soldier or a statesman, another as a humble artisan, a third as a father in authority over his household, a fourth in the position of a subject and a son. For all these the way of the Commandments is the only way.

THE COMMON AND THE HIGHER WAY

But there are certain souls who are summoned to a higher way than that of the Commandments alone. These of course they must keep. For they are of the essence of Christianity, the foundation on which their spiritual life must be built. But in the service of God, there are two paths which open out before the Christian, the path of the Commandments and that of the Counsels. The story of the young man told us in the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew will help us to understand what this means.

One day a young man came to Our Lord. From all that the Gospel tells us of him, he must have been a young man of high ideals and blameless life. He had evidently been thinking of the various ways in which men may serve God. He had been puzzling, as many in similiar circumstances are doing today, about his vocation, the particular call which

God had for him, the special path in which God wanted him to walk in order to obtain eternal life. He was not satisfied with what he had so far done for God.

The question which he puts to Our Lord makes this plain: "Good master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" Our Lord answered: ". . . If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments." And when the young man, unconsciously painting the innocence and beauty of his soul, had told Our Lord that he had kept all the Commandments from his youth, and inquired what was yet wanting to him, Our Lord spoke these memorable words: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow me."

In these words Our Lord points out the two paths open to all men; that of the Commandments alone, and that of the Evangelical Counsels, in which, not content to keep the essentials of the law, men are willing to dedicate themselves to a closer following of Christ, to a life of poverty, abnegation and self-sacrifice. Our Lord, in these words, teaches that there is such a thing as a vocation.

WHAT IS A VOCATION?

While of course there is such a thing as a vocation for a life in the world, since it is undeniable that God wants certain individuals to live there and not in the cloister, or in the ranks of the clergy, we are not speaking here of vocation in such a sense, for that is the call given to the majority of mankind. We speak of what Catholics generally mean when they use the word. In that sense it is an invitation to the religious or ecclesiastical state. In the Catholic Church it is a gift conferred on certain individuals by God, in virtue

of which they follow with a pure intention the ecclesiastical profession in the priesthood or the Evangelical Counsels in the religious state by the practice of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

A vocation as the word implies, for it is derived from a Latin word meaning a calling, is a summons made to an individual to follow a certain path, and to assume certain responsibilities and obligations. It is a selection made by God Himself of certain souls by which He makes known to them that He wants them to do a special work, a work of higher dignity and worth than the tasks imposed upon the rest of men.

All men are destined by God to reverence, praise and serve Him. It can be even said that they are called to perfection, for Our Lord addressed the appeal: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," to all men. But to certain men, He addresses a special summons to live in a *state of perfection* where they may more easily attain the perfect life, where greater helps are given to reach it, and where its highest manifestations are to be found.

THE EXISTENCE OF VOCATIONS

It is evident from the life of Our Lord and the history of the Church that such vocations exist. From the words which Christ addressed to the young man we can see that a higher way and a nobler state are pointed out to him than the path of the Commandments which he had so nobly followed. Our Lord in His conversation with him showed that there is such a state as the state of perfection. In dealing with other souls He actually called them to that state. Thus when He called Andrew and Peter, and the sons of Zebedee from their fishing nets, and Matthew from his money-counter, He gave us to understand that He was calling them

for a special work and for a task and a duty of greater dignity and responsibility than those which He imposed upon others.

The vocation of Saul of Tarsus in the very beginning of the Church is another example. And down the following centuries even to the present day, God has spoken to the chosen few and called them to be His helpers in the salvation of souls in the solitude of the hermit's cell and the cloister, or in the ranks of the priesthood, in order that the truths of His holy religion might be preached to the multitudes and that His grace might be carried to their souls through the golden channels of His Sacraments.

While undoubtedly, even in the world, the Church has found and formed her Saints in great numbers, it is in the ranks of those who have followed the path of the Counsels that she has found those whose sanctity and virtues shine with a more resplendent luster. Kings and queens have been enrolled among her canonized saints. Saints are found among soldiers and statesmen, artisans and serving girls. Sts. Louis, of France, and Margaret, of Portugal, ruled kingdoms, St. Sebastian was a Roman officer, St. Melania a Roman lady of immense wealth. St. Isidore was a farmer, St. Crispin and Crispinian were shoemakers, St. Pantaleon was a doctor, St. Zita a serving girl. These sanctified themselves in the world. But a still greater number attained to holiness and perfection, not in the world, but in the religious life and in the ranks of the priesthood. Their names are dear to Catholic hearts, the names of Teresa of Jesus, the Carmelite nun, of Berchmans, Aloysius and Stanislaus, the patrons of Christian youth, of Dominic and Francis of Assisi, those two giants of the Middle Ages whom Pope Honorius in his prophetic dream beheld supporting the Lateran Basilica with their mighty arms, the soldier-saint, Ignatius, the gentle Bishop, Francis de Sales, and the Saint

who was the friend of the outcast and the poor, Vincent de Paul.

DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTLY VOCATION

There can be a vocation to observe the Counsels of perfection in the world, either with the vows usually made in a Religious Order or without them. But this is not usual. It is a vocation given to the comparatively few. Those who follow it, however, may by the grace of God attain to the greatest holiness and perfection. But when we speak of a vocation, we generally speak of a call to the priesthood or the religious life.

The young man starting out in life dreams of a noble future, a future of high achievements and stirring deeds. He pictures himself as a soldier winning great battles, as a statesman settling the most difficult problems of government, as an inventor solving some intricate problem of science and bestowing lasting benefits on the human race, as an orator rousing vast multitudes with the eloquence of his words. But in all his flights of fancy he can dream of no higher destiny, of no grander vocation than when he pictures himself at the altar, a priest of God.

There is no dignity to be compared with that of the priesthood. No office of statesman or king can compare in nobility with that of the humblest priest who in some palm-thatched chapel on a lonely isle in the far-off seas, offers up the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. No power can compare to that which the priest exercises when by his word, he brings God Himself from the height of Heaven to the altar or lifts his hands over the head of the repentant sinner and pronounces those words: "I absolve thee from thy sins." "The priest," says a great spiritual writer, "has the primacy of Abel, the patriarchate of Abraham, the dignity of Aaron,

the authority of Moses, the perfection of Samuel, the power of Peter, the unction of Christ." The priest's dignity consists mainly in this, that he has the power to offer the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass for the living and the dead, and of forgiving sins.

THE PRIEST'S POWER

"The priest," says Cardinal Manning, "is called to the nearest approach to Our Divine Redeemer, since he is called to be a fellow-worker with Him in gathering out the elect from this evil world. In him are summed up all the tokens of acceptance which God ever gave to man. The words he speaks are not human but Divine. 'This is my Body' has no equal except 'Let the light be.' In these words as in the other, there is omnipotence." The priest is God's steward. He is set over the household of the Church and the flock of Christ, to guide it to salvation. He is the herald of the Gospel, to preach its truths to all men. He is God's ambassador to communicate His will to His people. He is the physician of souls, to heal them of their spiritual maladies. In the priest are combined the noblest offices than man can fulfill, for he is the representative of Christ, at one and the same time, father, physician, teacher, guide, meditator, consoler, adviser, friend. His powers are not of earth, and men need not be afraid or jealous of them. They do not threaten any legitimate authority here below. They are given him only to draw men more and more to God and to one another.

In the exercise of those powers weak man is exalted in a certain sense above the Angels, for noble as are the natures and gifts of these bright spirits, they have not the power of the humblest priest. They cannot consecrate the Body and the Blood of Christ, nor pardon the sinner with a single

sentence and bring back peace and innocence to the remorse-smitten and sin-stained soul. "Speak not of royal purple," says St. John Chrysostom, "of diadems, or vesture of gold. These are but shadows, more transitory and fleeting than the flowers of spring, when compared with the powers and the privileges of the priesthood."

At some time or other the boy who has been brought up under Catholic influences, in a truly Catholic household, his heart still retaining, in all the buoyancy of its innocence and high ideals, dreams of being a priest, pictures himself at the altar. He thinks it would be the happiest moment of his life, if he could one day, with his consecrated hands bring the Bread of the strong to his mother and his father on the morning of his first Mass. The priesthood is such a lofty vocation that the pure and innocent boy, even though he may not finally be called to enter its ranks, looks upon it as the very pinnacle and crown of high achievement. The true Catholic in life has an instinctive reverence for the priest. Even the enemies of the Faith recognize that there is something mysterious in the manifestations and power of the Catholic priesthood.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

But besides a call to the priesthood, there is the vocation to the religious life. By that we mean a call from God given to both men and women to leave the world, to bid farewell to its joys and pleasures, to the happiness that reigns in the family circle, to father and mother, to give up one's independence and to consecrate liberty and life to God by the vow of obedience, to yield up the earthly possessions which a man might own or reasonably amass and embrace religious poverty, to consecrate heart and body to God by the vow of chastity.

In His answer to the young man Our Lord gave the general outline of such a life. If the young man to whom the call was addressed did not have the courage to heed it, others later on took Our Saviour's words to heart, and while millions were sanctifying themselves in the ordinary path of the Commandments, followed the more arduous path of the Evangelical Counsels and attained to holiness and perfection in their perfect observance. Thousands heard the call which the young man rejected.

The hermits of the deserts of Egypt listened to it, and by their piety, purity and courage made the desert blossom like the rose. It was heard in the last days of the Roman Empire, in the midst of a corrupt society, amid the crash of arms and the falling ruins of a world rushing to its destruction. Then the sons of Benedict rebuilt the civilization that without them would have entirely perished. In the centuries of faith, when Dominic and Francis of Assisi came to add new luster to the splendors of Catholic Europe, the religious life claimed from the world thousands of men and women to the cloisters of France, Italy and Spain. Later on Ignatius, Teresa, John Baptist de La Salle showed that it could still work wonders for souls, for the Church and for God.

It can do the same today, and even now the religious life calls to its hard, but noble, discipline the bravest of our youths and the purest and the fairest of our maidens. It is a call to sacrifice, to battle, sometimes to death. But it is a call which the brave and the generous should not fail to answer.

THE BEAUTY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religious life consists essentially in the observance of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. These are

the elements and the features common to all religious bodies. But every Religious Order has its own special spirit, end and purpose.

The Franciscans assume the responsibility, so to say, of showing to the world the virtues of simplicity and humility, and the strictest poverty. They have been for that reason one of the most beloved and popular of the great Orders of the Church. The Benedictine, the Trappist and the Carthusian wish to bring before the world the spirit of prayer, contemplation and solitude. The Carmelites and the Poor Clares unite the severest penitential spirit to the highest forms of contemplation. The Sons of St. Dominic are by their vocation preachers and heralds of the word of God. The priests of the Society of Jesus are missionaries, teachers and directors of souls. The Sisters of Charity, of Mercy and of the Good Shepherd bend over the bed of suffering and pain and minister to the outcast and the poor. The disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle form our boys and young men in the ways of true piety and science.

There is scarcely a condition in life, a need of society which is not met and filled by some Congregation of men or women, with the special authorization, sanction and blessing of the Catholic Church. While attending to all this, the members of these Orders and Congregations solemnly profess before the world that they intend by their piety, devotion and self-abnegation to follow more closely in the footsteps of Christ and to reproduce as far as possible in their lives the virtues of their Divine Model. A blessed state surely, for, as St. Bernard says, in the religious life, man lives with more purity, falls more rarely, rises more promptly from his falls, walks with greater security, is more frequently bedewed with heavenly graces, dies with more confidence in the mercy of God, passes more quickly

through the fires of Purgatory and is more richly rewarded. While the religious life requires greater courage and imposes more painful sacrifices than a life in the world, a vocation to that holy state is also a special sign and proof of God's love.

THE SIGNS OF A VOCATION

But how can I tell, many ask, that I have a vocation? Men cannot expect that God will call them in an extraordinary way to the priesthood or the religious life. We cannot expect that our vocation will be as explicit and as compelling as the vocation of Peter or his brother Apostles, as startling as that of the knight Tancred. As Tancred was riding on his charger in all the splendor of a wealthy lord of the thirteenth century, he was met by St. Francis of Assisi and some of his brethren. Approaching the knight, the Saint said but one word, "Follow me." Dismounting from his horse, Tancred there and then bade farewell to the world and its vanities and following Francis became one of his most devoted and pious sons.

Such vocations are extraordinary. We must not expect that God will work miracles or wonders in our favor. We must not even expect any extraordinary inspirations of motions of grace, at least normally and as a rule. A vocation may exist even when the individual feels a certain reluctance to embrace it. In the case of the priesthood, a special Commission of Cardinals appointed by Pius X has approved the following propositions with regard to the priestly vocation:

(1) No one ever has any right to ordination antecedently to the free choice of the bishop. (2) The condition which ought to be regarded in the candidate for ordination and which is called a priestly vocation, by no means consists, at least necessarily and ordinarily, in

a certain aspiration of the subject or invitation of the Holy Ghost to enter the priesthood. (3) But, on the contrary, in order that he may be rightly called by the bishop, nothing more is required in the candidate than a right intention, together with a fitness, consisting of those gifts of nature and grace, confirmed by that probity of life and sufficiency of learning, which furnish a well-founded hope that he may be able to discharge properly the duties of the priesthood and fulfill its holy obligations.

With regard to the priesthood, these views of the Cardinals, approved by the Holy Father, should set all scruples at rest in the case of those who have reached the moment of ordination. At that stage it is the Bishop who is to decide the candidate's vocation. The candidate has no right to the gift of the priesthood until the Bishop freely and of his own accord elects him to that state. And in choosing him, the Bishop need only look to the candidate's intention and to his mental and moral fitness.

If the candidate really and truly wishes to become a good priest, not for his own selfish ends, in order to lead an easy life and enjoy a certain amount of social prestige, or to further his ambitious schemes, but to have the honor of celebrating the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, the consolation and the privilege of forgiving the sinner and helping him to serve God; if he has the will to fulfill all the obligations of his state of life, and is gifted with sufficient intellectual culture and learning to do credit to his holy calling, if he has strength of will sufficient to enable him to lead a pure, chaste and continent life in the midst of the dangers which surround him, and wishes in all things to be what men mean when they say "a good priest," his vocation is sure and certain, provided the Bishop calls and chooses him. But this is the last stage of the vocation, its approval by legitimate authority. Let us examine the first intimations of vocation, when its voice begins to be heard in the heart.

NEGATIVE SIGNS OF VOCATION

By negative signs of vocation we mean the absence of any obstacle or impediment that might stand in the way of its fulfilment. Such obstacles are for instance the financial condition of a family. If a son or daughter is needed for the support of father, or mother, of brothers and sisters, too young to take care of themselves, it may be taken for granted that God does not at present call. Another obstacle would be the lack of the physical, mental or moral qualities necessary for this high calling whether to the priesthood alone or the religious life.

A certain amount of physical strength is necessary for the priest. He has before his ordination a long period of hard and taxing studies. As a priest he must be ready to spend long hours in the confessional, in the sick-room, at the Divine Office. If he is weak in body, he will not be able to fulfill his arduous duties with satisfaction to himself or to others. The religious Sister who is devoted to the work of the hospital, to the care of the orphans, of the sick, those religious who spend their lives in the instruction of the young, and the priest in the Religious Order which requires long hours of study and sends its members to the missions at home or abroad, need to be of a vigorous constitution.

What is said of the body applies with still greater force to the qualities of mind and heart. The world expects that the Sister, the religious and the priest shall be intelligently equipped for their work. It exacts a great deal more now in this respect than it did some years ago. The Church requires that her priests be men of culture, that they be acquainted with the great questions of the day, that they be able to represent their people worthily before the edu-

cated and the learned. If the man or woman who feels the call to the priesthood in the first case, and to the religious life in the second, is deficient in mental gifts, especially in that golden gift of a right judgment and the uncommon gift of commonsense, such a one is not called to serve God in the ranks of the clergy or in religion.

But where moral qualities are wanting, where the character is feeble and shifty, where there is a lack of piety and of faith, a reluctance to obey and to conquer oneself, a love of the pleasures of the world, especially of its grosser pleasures; if there is in the soul no love of the poor, coldness and indifference to suffering, and but little zeal for God's glory; if the aspirants to a vocation are not simple, truthful, sincere, humble and upright in all things, especially with God and His representatives, His priests; if worldly views are uppermost in the so-called attraction felt for the priestly and the religious life, it can be said that the signs of vocation are extremely weak or absent altogether. Until these obstacles are removed and these defects corrected it is not safe to proceed further.

POSITIVE SIGNS

We have seen that with regard to the priesthood the free election by the Bishop of the candidates, deemed to have the right intention and the mental and moral fitness for the priesthood, finally puts the seal of the Church's approbation on a vocation to that holy life. Within its proper sphere the same may be said of the candidates who present themselves for the religious life. A pure intention, mental and moral fitness, and the approval of the Superior of the Order or Congregation to which they aspire can settle for them the matter of their vocation. As was said

in the decision of the Cardinals, above referred to and approved by the great Pius X, the condition to be regarded in the candidate for ordination, and within its sphere also in the candidate for religious life, does not necessarily and ordinarily consist in a certain interior aspiration of the subject or invitation of the Holy Ghost to enter the priesthood.

Such is the teaching of the Pope who has done so much to foster the religious and priestly vocation. In rendering this decision he has done a splendid service to the Church in giving both to superiors and subjects a luminous verdict by which he makes the settlement of the difficult question of vocation far more easy than it seems to have been in the past.

But the Holy Father does not intend that men should not look to certain other signs by which to help themselves in this difficult question. These are as many as there are individual vocations. The tender-hearted and the self-sacrificing daughter of a true Catholic family who has practiced in her home the virtues of the Sister of Charity towards her aged father and mother, will be drawn to those Congregations where the poor and the outcasts are the object of special love and care. The young man with high ideals, of strong will and character will be drawn to those Orders where men work in the arduous tasks of the pulpit and the classroom for the building of the spiritual edifice. The Catholic girl who loves the solitude of the little sodality chapel, where she offered herself to Our Lady, who loves to spend her leisure hours in presence of her Eucharistic God, who has no taste for the hollow joys of the world, and thirsts for solitude and prayer, gives a fair sign that God wants her in those more secluded and cloistered Orders, whose members live the life of angels more than that of frail and weak mortals.

GUARDING THE TREASURE

A vocation is a treasure entrusted to us by God. The young man or woman to whom it is given, must jealously guard it. It may easily be lost. If, once given, it is rejected, it may not come a second time. It is not told us in the Gospel that Our Lord addressed a second call to the young man whose story began these words on the subject of vocation.

The treasure of a vocation must be safeguarded by the avoidance of sin in every shape and form, and its proximate occasions. A vocation must be fostered in its growth by prayer and especially by the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist. It must not be tainted in its luster by contact with the sinful amusements of the world. The young man preparing himself for the priesthood, the young woman who intends to dedicate her life to her Divine Spouse and her Heavenly Bridegroom, must guard their hearts, keep their affections under control, preserve their souls from the taint of sin, look for no other crown but that which Christ Himself will place upon their brow. To make themselves worthy of their high calling, the boy and the maid must be brave, generous and, above all things, pure.

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

Such is the call which everywhere is sounding in the ears of Catholic young men and women. The call is ever addressed to young, generous and brave hearts. It is the call of Christ Himself. It is a summons to the highest and the noblest kind of life which man can embrace here below, an appeal from the Master of the Vineyard for fellow-laborers in the great task of gathering the harvest of

souls. The world needs priests and religious to do God's work, to lead men to know and serve Him better. Souls are perishing in our own country at our own doors, perhaps in our own family. They need to be taught the truths of salvation. Our countrymen, with all their splendid virtues, do not know the truths of our holy religion. Often they have no religion of their own to lift them above the things of sense and to direct their gaze on the things of the soul, the great questions of salvation, the mighty problems of time and eternity. Men, women, children are stretching out their hands for guidance. The workers are few.

We need priests and religious. We need the example of our gentle Sisters to lead our children to the knowledge of their holy religion and to make them pure and noble men and women. We need the priest to preach the word of God, to help the people in their spiritual wants, to prepare the dying for the great journey from time to eternity, to bless the union of man and wife, to offer the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and thus bring down the blessing of God upon His people; to baptize the newly-born babe and forgive the penitent sinner. The religious is needed in the world to glorify God, to imitate more closely the virtues and the life of Our Lord; to show that the Catholic Church is ever the mother of a generous and high-souled race.

God speaks now as He has spoken in the past, and calls the generous and the brave to follow Him. If any one should hear that call, let him listen. In following it, he cannot go astray. He will glorify God, sanctify and perfect his own soul. He will become the instrument through which God will call countless others to His service.

When the King of kings calls, can a coward be found who will turn a deaf ear to the summons? A vocation is a sign of God's special favor and love towards a soul. Fidelity to it and to the sacrifices which it may impose, is

one of the greatest proofs that the soul loves God above all things. For such a soul, God has in store His choicest rewards: "And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting." (St. Matt. xix, 20.)

CHAPTER XII

AT THE JOURNEY'S END

J. HARDING FISHER, S.J.

INTO every family there comes at times sickness and death. It is important that Catholics should know and fulfill their duty on such occasions. If the illness is serious, if it is such that it constitutes a real though remote danger of death, the priest should be notified at once, for then, if ever, the Catholic has the right and the obligation to avail himself of the consolations and helps of religion. Those who fail, through their own deliberate neglect, to send for the priest until the patient has become unconscious, or has entered into his agony, are guilty of grievous sin, for which they are strictly accountable to God.

A FOOLISH IMPRESSION

There is, unfortunately, a reluctance among certain Catholics to call in the priest, for in their superstitious ignorance they look on his visit as a sort of warning of death. They think that the sick person will be frightened out of making a struggle for life by receiving the Last Sacraments, and that in some way or other they will seal his doom.

The consequence is that, at times, the priest is called to the sick-bed, only when the patient is actually dying, has lost the use of his senses, cannot make his Confession or elicit the acts necessary for gaining the plenary indulgence at the moment of death. This is a serious and irreparable

wrong. This unchristian way of acting involves the additional injustice of depriving the sick man of those further effects of Extreme Unction, by which he is strengthened against temptation, comforted in his depression, roused from torpor of soul, relieved from anxiety and fear, stimulated to encouraging and holy thoughts, and given assistance to enter his agony in the spirit of Christian fortitude, resignation and faith.

Extreme Unction, of its very nature, is intended to restore health of body, if this be profitable for the soul; but ordinarily this effect will not be produced, if the administration of that Sacrament is delayed until only a miracle can avert death. To put off receiving that Sacrament, therefore, until death, naturally speaking, is inevitable, is to rob the sick person of a powerful means of recovery provided by the merciful Providence of God.

Catholics should not be so un-Catholic as to let their misguided affections stand in the way of the spiritual and corporal profit of those whom they love. On the contrary, they should be eager to give them every opportunity to be restored to health of soul and body. As soon, therefore, as the illness begins to be dangerous, they should send word to their pastor.

CATHOLIC DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

Too much insistence cannot be laid on this point, which suggests another matter of prudence. Catholic nurses and doctors appreciate the necessity of telling the unwelcome truth about the approach of death. It would be well, therefore, for Catholics to employ only those nurses and doctors who are of the Faith. If, for some reason or other, a non-Catholic physician has charge of the case, he should be given clearly to understand that he is expected to warn his

patients as soon as the illness takes on a dangerous aspect. The same principle applies to hospitals.

Catholics should not go to non-Catholic hospitals when they can avoid doing so. Those in charge of such hospitals do not share our views as to the importance of the Last Sacraments; they often fail to realize that the ministrations of the priest have a tranquilizing rather than a disturbing effect on the patient; they sometimes conceal the serious character of the illness; and not infrequently they make difficulties about admitting the priest. Things are better in this regard than they were some years ago; but there is still enough of prejudice to justify the general statement, to which there may be exceptions, that non-Catholic hospitals constitute a serious moral danger for Catholics, a danger of dying without the Sacraments.

The moment of death is the most important in life. On it depends a whole eternity of happiness. Then, if ever, the person should be surrounded by Catholic influences and be given every chance of dying with all the helps and consolations of the Faith. Neglect in this matter sometimes results in catastrophies, and gives cause for lifelong but unavailing regret.

The right Catholic attitude in the presence of dangerous illness is summed up in the words of the Apostle, St. James: "Is any man sick among you? Let them bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall rise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." (James v. 14, 15.) In other illnesses, also, even though they are not unto death, the sick have a right to the Sacraments and to the ministrations of the priest, who will be found most ready to afford every consolation and help, if only he is informed of the sickness.

PREPARATIONS FOR SICK CALLS

It is one of the blessings of sickness that it brings, not only the priest, but the Lord Himself into the home. For other visitors much preparation has to be made; for the coming of the Blessed Sacrament, only a few things are necessary, things, however, required by the rubrics of the Church. When the sick person is to receive the Last Sacraments or Holy Communion, a small table should be made ready in the sick-room, covered with a scrupulously clean white cloth, and placed near the bed-side. On it there should be two lighted blessed candles of wax, a crucifix, some holy water, not Lourdes water, a glass filled with fresh water and a clean spoon. The front part of the table should be left free for the holy oils and the Blessed Sacrament. Nothing but the articles mentioned should be placed on the table.

If the priest desires to speak with the sick person in private, or to hear his Confession, the rest of the family should withdraw; but if the person is to receive Holy Communion or is to be anointed, the entire family should be in waiting to return as soon as the Confession is over, and then should be present, kneeling in reverence and united in prayer, while the Last Sacraments are administered and the prayers for the dying are read.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARMORY OF FAITH

WALTER DWIGHT, S.J.

THOSE who worthily receive the Sacrament of Matrimony are given a special grace, as we have seen, which enables them to bear patiently the burdens of their state, to love and to be faithful to each other, to bring up their children in the fear of God. This special Sacramental grace, which Catholic husbands and wives receive on their wedding day, is not only actively operative as long as they keep free from mortal sin, but it is wonderfully strengthened and augmented by Confession, Holy Communion, prayer, penance, almsgiving, and other practices of piety. So the more devout a Catholic couple are, the happier will be their married life and the lighter its burdens.

It is important, therefore, to know what devotions are best calculated to keep in God's grace and love those who have been married, and what pious practices will effectively enable them to show always that joyful readiness in doing the Divine will, which is the root and heart of true devotion. But, as those who are married, engrossed as they commonly must be, in the cares and responsibilities of their state and in the labor of maintaining and rearing a family, have little time for prayer, they cannot be expected to take up many pious practices. So a recipe for becoming truly devout is wanted that will be short, simple and easy; prayers, too, that will not take long to say, and practices that will hallow and supernaturalize every thought, word,

deed, trial and affliction that make up the ordinary daily life of married people.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

There seems to be nothing that better meets these needs than membership in the League of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This devotion is, of course, only a special way of manifesting love for Our Blessed Lord Himself. His unbounded love for us is symbolized by His Sacred Heart, surrounded by a crown of thorns and surmounted by a cross that rises from the midst of flames. It is as the seat of love despised and outraged, especially in the Sacrament of the Altar, and calling, therefore, for atonement and reparation on the part of the Faithful, that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the particular object of this devotion.

The League of the Sacred Heart is a world-wide union of Catholics pledged to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to promote His interests by prayer and sacrifice, and to make reparation for sin. Its members are in every walk of life. For one and all find the League a stimulus to solid piety. The organization of the League is singularly free from red tape; for just by handing in his name to a priest, and by engaging to say every morning a short prayer, any Catholic can become an associate.

The advantages of membership in the League are many and great. For instance, becoming a member increases the merit of all his actions, and secures him the prayers of millions of his fellow-associates; it gives him a share in the good works of nearly all the Religious Orders, and obtains for him rich indulgences; and best of all, it makes Our Blessed Lord so grateful that He has promised zealous Leaguers that their names will be written in His Heart never to be blotted out.

What wonder, then, that the Popes have given the League numerous approbations. Leo XII, for example, wrote: "This Apostleship is so beautiful a work and unites so much fruitfulness with so much simplicity that it assuredly deserves all the favor of ecclesiastical authority."

The salvation of souls is a wholly supernatural work, depending on God's grace; and this grace is commonly granted in response to prayer. Now, if the prayer of one just man is strong with God, what must be the power for saving souls of the united prayers of more than twenty-five million Leaguers! What makes these prayers yet stronger is the fact that they are all explicitly offered in union with those which Jesus is always saying in unnumbered tabernacles. Thousands of associates ask Our Lady to present their prayers to her Blessed Son; and, finally, lest the sins of the petitioners should keep the Sacred Heart from heeding their prayers, multitudes offer Our Lord, on every First Friday, the Communion of Reparation.

DUTIES OF LEAGUERS

The one essential obligation assumed by the League's associates is to make the morning offering, which runs thus: "O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee my prayers, works and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our Associates, and in particular for [the intention recommended each month]."

By offering this prayer the first thing every morning, the entire day can be consecrated to Our Blessed Lord, and every thought, word or action, of the Leaguers that is

not bad becomes an apostolic prayer. Every step, for instance, that the head of the family takes on his way to work, every stroke of the hammer or of the pen he makes, every kind and loving thought his wife entertains, every little action she performs while busy with the housework or her children, is changed by virtue of the morning offering to fine gold and brings comfort to the Heart of Christ.

All who engage to make the morning offering belong to the League's first degree, but many will, of course, aspire to the second degree, which involves saying in Our Lady's honor every day, one Our Father and ten Hail Marys. But the Leaguer is not full-fledged until he engages by entering the third degree to go to Holy Communion at least once a month, with the object not only of "appeasing the Sacred Heart of Jesus provoked to wrath by the sins of men," but also of repairing the insults offered daily to Himself and to His Vicar on earth.

Nothing will sooner disarm God's anger than a fervent Communion; for this method of making amends to Him for man's ingratitude is the one which Our Lord Himself ordered His handmaid, Blessed Margaret Mary, to adopt and propagate. To induce as many as possible to practice the Communion of Reparation, He promised to all who receive Communion on nine successive First Fridays the grace of final repentance. The First Friday, accordingly, has become the usual day for the Communion of Reparation, but it may be made at any time, and the oftener the better.

FREQUENT COMMUNION

For it can safely be said that since the promulgation on December 20, 1905, of Pope Pius's renowned Degree on Daily Communion, going often to the altar has been

steadily growing a holy commonplace in the lives of ordinary Christians. As the Decree makes very plain, all are worthy to receive Our Lord frequently and even every day, who are free from grave sin and who go to the altar with a right intention, that is to say, "Not out of routine or vainglory or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity and of seeking this Divine remedy for weakness and defects."

The Holy Eucharist, as it was instituted under the form of bread, is clearly meant by Our Divine Lord to be the common soul-food of Christians. Just as bread, which is a substantial of every meal, banishes hunger, renews the worn out tissues of the body and promotes its health and growth, in like manner the Supersubstantial Bread of the Holy Eucharist satisfies the hungry soul, repairs the losses that it suffers and makes it robust and strong.

But the Holy Eucharist seems particularly well adapted for helping husbands and wives to be faithful and true to one another. As it is in a special way the Sacrament of Union, there is nothing that will keep more abundant and efficacious the graces received on the wedding day than going often to Holy Communion. Holy writers discern in the miracle wrought at the marriage feast of Cana, when Our Lord, at His Mother's petition, changed water into wine, a mystical relationship between the Sacrament of Matrimony and that of the Holy Eucharist. For the miracle worked on that wedding day prefigured the Blessed Sacrament in which is perpetuated the Incarnation, or the marriage of Christ's Divinity with our humanity. The miracle also symbolizes the effects of Holy Communion, the most striking of which is the union or marriage of Christ to the soul of the worthy receiver.

Nothing will better help husband and wife to be loving

and forbearing than going often to Holy Communion. They should never remain away from the altar longer than a month; weekly Communion should be their ordinary practice, and the habit of receiving several times a week, or even every day, should be cultivated by those who can conveniently take it up. For frequent communicants, fortnightly Confession is sufficient. Mass-time will suffice for the immediate preparation for receiving worthily, and we can make ourselves fitter still by reciting, just before going to the altar, an act of perfect contrition, by which we express sorrow for all our sins, not merely because by them we lose Heaven and deserve Hell, but because they offend God, who is so good in Himself and has been so good to us. As an orderly thanksgiving after receiving the acts suggested in the couplet:

“Believe and grieve and hope, thank, love, adore,
Show thy soul’s wounds and holy gifts implore,”

will perhaps be found useful, but the thanksgiving for Our Lord’s coming should last through the entire day or week, and should find expression in the greater self-control, patience, kindness, industry and affectionateness which husbands and wives manifest after they have received Our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion.

CHILDREN’S COMMUNION

Not only should parents go to Holy Communion frequently but so should their children, and that, too, from the dawn of reason, for in the Decree issued by Pope Pius X, on August 8, 1910, he laid it down that “The proper time for First Communion is when the child begins to reason, that is about, whether under or over, the seventh year.” That means that the precept of Easter Communion is just as binding on such children as on their elders.

As to the child's necessary dispositions, the Holy Father explains that "The knowledge of religion required in the child to prepare himself suitably for First Communion is that by which he grasps according to his ability the mysteries of Faith, which are absolutely necessary for salvation and distinguishes the Eucharistic from the common and material bread, so that he can approach the most Holy Eucharist with the devotion which is most in keeping with his age."

In another portion of the Degree, the Pope urges that after their First Communion the little ones should "often approach the Holy Table and, if possible, even daily, as Christ Jesus and Mother Church desire." Suffer the little children to come very early in life to the Shepherd of their souls. And once their First Communion is made, let them go frequently to the altar thereafter. As a precocious knowledge of evil too often supplies in children the defect of age, innocence of heart will make up for a seeming lack of maturity in years, and going often to the Holy Table will keep their young hearts clean and pure and will be a wonderful help in making the little ones gentle, truthful and obedient.

DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

After the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Holy Eucharist, no doubt the most profitable devotion that the married can practice is devotion to Our Lady. "Behold all generations shall call me blessed," she prophesied, and husbands and wives, by modeling their lives on that Mary led with St. Joseph in the holy house of Nazareth will best do their part in keeping her prophecy fulfilled.

As a large portion of her life was passed in the marriage state, she feels, now that she is Queen of Heaven, a keen interest in those who are holily married, and just as she

went with haste over the hills to bring joy and sanctity to her married cousin, Elizabeth, and as she had her Divine Son work a wondrous miracle at the marriage feast of Cana just to spare her newly wedded friends a little embarrassment, she will now secure for married people, who try to imitate her virtues and who humbly implore her intercession, all the graces they need for living happily and holily together. Mary now bears in heaven, where charity is perfect, the triple title of Virgin, Mother and Queen, and because her Divine Son can never forget all that she is to Him, whatever she asks for those who strive to make their married life like hers, Our Blessed Lord will surely grant.

WHAT PRAYERS TO SAY

Therefore, let the Hail Mary, preceded by the Our Father, be said by husband and wife every night and every morning. Better still, if in addition to those prayers the Angelus were said thrice daily, in thanksgiving for the Incarnation. If the rosary were also thoughtfully and reverently recited every day as a household prayer, if graces were said before and after each meal, and if the prayer used on going to bed were an act of perfect contrition, preceded by a short examination of conscience, these excellent practices would doubtless bring rich blessings on the home and keep husband and wife, parents and children, closely united with one another.

SODALITIES

With the object of availing themselves of the spiritual advantages which canonically instituted and richly indulgenced confraternities and sodalities offer, all the members of a Catholic family ought to belong to one or more

of the pious associations in their parish. Let wives and mothers become members of the married women's sodality, let the girls of the family join the young ladies' sodality, the boys, the sodality organized for them, and let the head of the house become a zealous member of the Holy Name Society and perhaps also of the local Conference of St. Vincent de Paul.

Regular attendance at the meetings of these societies and the faithful observance of the practices of piety that membership entails, besides being a source of edification and good example in the parish, will prove of incalculable spiritual advantage to the members of the family themselves, for where many are gathered together in Christ's name, there His Divine spirit is most powerful. Married women, who are banded together in Our Lady's Sodality, will find the problems of married life easier to solve, and husbands, who pledge their fealty to Our Blessed Lord in the Society of the Holy Name, will be more faithful spouses and better providers. For wives can draw profit from the experience, counsel and good example of their fellow-sodalists, and husbands who promise to avoid all profanity and foul language and to go to Communion regularly with the members of the Holy Name Society, are not likely to bring disgrace, unhappiness or penury upon their wives and little ones.

How full of holiness and happiness will be the Catholic home in which such practices of piety as those described and counseled in the foregoing pages are kept vigorously flourishing! The Angel of Peace will always abide there, and husband and wife, surrounded by a flock of loving children, will joyfully proceed, hand in hand, to a serene old age, and then, because they have, by the beauty of their lives instructed many to justice, when their summons to Heaven comes, they will shine like stars for all eternity.

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