

Mary Loyola
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CREDO

A SIMPLE EXPLANATION OF THE CHIEF POINTS
OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

BY

MOTHER MARY LOYOLA

(OF THE BAR CONVENT, YORK)



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY
407 Bergen Street
Brooklyn, New York

Price, Five Cents



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C R E D O

FOUR hundred years ago, this England of ours was, throughout its length and breadth, a Catholic land.

Its people were taught by one teacher, the successor of him who sent the message of the Gospel to its shores—Gregory, himself the successor of Peter, the Rock on which Christ built His Church. For nigh a thousand years men lived and died in obedience to Peter. They did not wrangle about their belief, but, like the first disciples they “persevered in the doctrine of the apostles,” hearing the Church as Christ had commanded (Matt. xviii. 17), and against which He had promised the gates of hell should never prevail. There were bad men then as now, but when they turned to God there was no question as to what must be done to regain His friendship. They had sinned by breaking His Commandments and those of His Church; they must repent, and make use of the Sacraments which the Church in His Name held out to them.

Thus our forefathers lived and died for nearly a thousand years. Then came a day when the English people were told that Christ’s promise had failed, that the gates of hell had prevailed against His Church, and that, instead of the old faith she had handed down to them, they must take a new religion which swept away all they had believed in and loved. “The Church,” said the new teachers, “had kept the word of God from the people. The Bible must now be put into the hands of all men. Leisured and unleisured, learned and ignorant, old and young, must study it, and believe and practise only what they found therein. They must make this book their sole rule of faith, and find their way to heaven by it as best they might.”

What has been the result of this teaching? Not only the hundred and eighty Protestant sects we see around

us in England and Wales, all contradicting one another, all giving out that they alone are right, but the falling away from all religion, the denial of everything the Bible teaches, and of the Bible itself. This is what the people of England are coming to. Some years ago it was discovered that we with our immortal souls are descended from apes; now we are taught that we have no souls at all; that our belief about God, and Jesus Christ, and the soul, about a heaven to reward the good, and a hell to punish the wicked, is stupid superstition. There is no God, no soul, no conscience, no free will. We are no better than the beasts of the field. Wicked men may do all manner of evil without fear of punishment; good men must bear all the hard things of this life without hope of a better life to come. Good and evil are only names. We can no more help what we do than the wild animals that attack and devour us. So for us, as for them, there is nothing after death—why should there be?

What wonder that men and women taught by such teachers give themselves up without fear and without remorse to every kind of pleasure, lawful and unlawful! That men, women, and children, without joy in this world and without hope for a better, take their own lives rather than face a passing pain; and what wonder that many, weary of all this contradiction and uncertainty about the one thing necessary, and terrified at the loss of all religious belief with which the next generation is threatened, turn again to the old Church, under whose guidance their forefathers lived and died in peaceful trust!

Let us see what are the main doctrines of this Church, whose members far outnumber those of all other bodies of Christians put together; that gives what men in all ages crave for—certainty on the tremendous questions: God, the soul, and the life to come; that helps and comforts the poor, the afflicted, the downtrodden, and alone can lead securely through the perils of this world to the eternal happiness of the world to come.

FAITH

God—The Church teaches that there is but one God, the Creator of all things. He is supreme, that is, over all other beings, for He alone exists of Himself. He had no beginning; He will have no end. He is everywhere. He knows and sees all things, even our most secret thoughts. He can do all things; nothing can resist His Will.

God is a Spirit. He has no form, and therefore we cannot see Him in this life. But he is a real Person, containing in Himself all that is good. All power, wisdom, holiness, beauty, goodness—everything that calls for adoration, for praise, for love and service, is found in Him. Because He is infinitely above us, He is incomprehensible. We cannot understand Him, and many of the things He does and permits are a puzzle to us now. But because of His infinite Wisdom and Goodness we know that all He does is right and good, and we adore what we cannot understand. The day will come when all men will see the reason of God's ways with His creatures, and will own that "He has done all things well."

In this one God there are Three Persons, equal in all things—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. How these Three Persons are all one and the same God is a mystery, that is, a truth above reason, but revealed by God. Many people nowadays refuse to believe what they cannot understand. This is foolish, for how many wonders there are around us and within us that our reason cannot grasp. The midnight skies, the flowery fields, the soul which checks and approves us by turns—all these things are full of mystery. To deny what they cannot comprehend is to act against the very reason freethinkers pretend to stand by. In all things relating to God we have to remember that He is a Being infinitely above us. He would not be God if we could understand Him. But in reward for our faith during this time of trial, we shall one day see far into the mysteries that perplex

us now. The mystery of Three Persons in one God is called the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Jesus Christ—The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity has two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man. He is truly God because He has one and the same nature with God the Father. He is truly man because He has the nature of man, having a body and soul like ours. He was always God, born of the Father from all eternity. He has been man only from the time of His Incarnation, when He took to Himself the nature of man in the womb of Mary ever Virgin. He has a true human Mother, and because He is God, His Mother is truly Mother of God. He had no father on earth; St. Joseph was only His guardian or foster-father.

Jesus Christ became man to redeem us from sin and hell, and to show us the way to heaven. During thirty-three years He gave us an example of every virtue for our imitation. He preached His divine doctrine, trained His apostles, and founded His Church, then He laid down His life on the Cross for our redemption. On the third day after His death He proved Himself to be God by rising from the dead by His own power. Forty days after His Resurrection He remained on earth, teaching the Apostles how they and their successors were to carry on His work to the end of time. On the fortieth day He ascended into heaven in their presence, and ten days later He sent down upon them His Holy Spirit, who was to lead them into all truth and to abide with them for ever.

The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is the same Lord and God as they are. He came down upon the Apostles on Whitsunday to enable them to preach the Gospel and to plant the Church. He is the Lover and Sanctifier of our souls, cleansing, strengthening, comforting them, helping them to deserve by good works the rewards of heaven.

My Soul—God has loved each one of us from eternity. We had no claims on His love. He drew us out of nothing. He gave us all that we have and are—our body with all its senses, our soul with its three powers, memory, understanding, and will. He made this soul to His own image and likeness. Like Him, it is a spirit and can never die. The body will soon be a little dust in the grave, but the soul will live on for ever, for it is made for eternity. At the Last Day it will be joined again to the very same body it had in life, and body and soul will begin a new life which will never end. What will this new life be like? To answer this question, we must ask another: Why did God make us?

God, who is infinitely wise and good, must have a noble end in all His works, and the higher the work the nobler must be the end. Man is the highest of His visible works, therefore man must have the highest of all ends. God made me, not to live simply for myself, not for the service of those around me, not for any creature, however high, however dear, but for Himself. He has made this soul of mine to know, love, and serve Him, and to enjoy the same happiness He has Himself. Since this is its end, it can never be satisfied and at rest unless it is carrying out this end. As God's creatures, belonging completely to Him, we should be bound to serve Him without any reward, but He has promised us the grandest of rewards for serving Him during the short time we have to spend here on earth—no less than the possession of Himself, with all that He has; the satisfying of every desire of our soul; joys that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived—and this for ever.

The chief thing, then, that I have to do in this world is to secure for myself the everlasting happiness of the world to come—to save my soul. But this word "to save" brings a solemn, even terrifying truth before me. God is infinite in all His perfections

—infinitely good and loving, and infinitely just. He cannot make a creature for an end, and give it every help to reach that end, and then leave it to itself without caring whether it reaches the end or not. He cannot command it to know, love, and serve Him, and not mind if it disobeys His command. He must either reward or punish. If I save my soul, my whole self, body and soul, are saved from utter and hopeless ruin. If I lose my soul, all is lost.

The Particular Judgment—In the moment of death our time of trial will be over, and we shall be called to give an account of the use we have made of it. Trembling and alone, our soul will be presented before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ to give an account of every thought, word, and deed of its life on earth. “It is appointed unto men once to die; and after this, the judgment.”¹ The Judgment is followed by the sentence which fixes the state of the soul for eternity. If it is found free from the least stain of sin, and with no debt of punishment owing to the Divine Justice, it passes at once to its place in heaven. If there is on it the guilt of even one grievous offence against God, it is banished from His presence for ever. Hell must be its abode for eternity, for only in this life are repentance and change possible. If it is free from grievous but stained with venial sin, or has a debt of punishment still due for forgiven sin, it will be saved, “yet so as by fire.”² It will be sent to Purgatory, the place of suffering and expiation, where it must remain till it has paid the last farthing. The judgment immediately after death is called the particular judgment, because each soul appears singly before Christ our Lord, and alone with Him the life is examined and the sentence passed.

The General Judgment—But there is a General Judgment to come at the Last Day, that the sentence passed

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

² Matth. xvi. 27; Apoc. xxi. 27; I Cor. iii. 15.

on each may be made known to all; that the Justice of God, which so often allows the good to suffer in this life whilst the wicked prosper, may be made known to all men; and chiefly, that Jesus Christ, so humbled and despised on earth, may be glorified in the sight of all mankind. At the sound of the Archangel's trumpet all men will rise from their graves with the same bodies they had in life, but very different from what they are now. The bodies of the just will be beautiful and glorious; those of the wicked hideous and loathsome. "Then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man," that is, the Cross, "in heaven, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty. And all nations shall be gathered before Him." Then every thought, word, and deed shall be made known, and the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. Then will Christ say to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; and to the just, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The Angels will separate the good from the bad, "and these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting."

Life Everlasting—This means the glory and happiness of heaven, where the good shall see, love and enjoy God for ever. This happiness is so great that the Scripture says of it, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

There is another eternity which the Scripture calls "eternal death." It is the eternity of those whose names are not in the book of life; who have been too busy with the things of this world to attend to "the one thing necessary"; who have died the enemies of God. Men try to keep the awful fact of hell out of mind, as if this would prevent its being a reality. Or they try to believe it will not last for ever.

Yet what can be plainer than our Lord's words, repeated again and again, "where the fire is not extinguished." "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." He bids even His friends think of that terrible eternity with fear. "Fear Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell, yea I say to you, fear Him." It is especially when temptation is strong that we need this check of holy fear. A saint used to pray, "My God, if ever Thy love should grow cold in my heart, at least let the thought of Thy punishments keep me from falling into sin."

The Catholic Church—How are men to escape the punishments of the life to come, and reach the eternal happiness prepared for them? Our Lord tells us. "Hear the Church," He says (Matt. xviii. 17). He knew that learning and study are not enough: He knew that most of His followers would be poor and simple, bound to work all day and every day for their daily bread, and unable to puzzle out hard questions. So He made an easy way to heaven for all men. He did not say, "Read the Bible," but "Hear the Church." The Bible is the holiest of books, and of inestimable worth to the disciples of Christ. But because it is the word of God, it is too deep to be understood throughout by anyone, however spiritual, however learned, and Christ never meant it to take the place of the living voice of His Church. There must be an authority to tell us that it *is* the word of God, and to decide important and difficult questions as they arise. A mother in the midst of her little children teaches by word of mouth. She may open a book before them and encourage them to read, but they read under her guidance, and for the explanation of hard passages they turn to her. Catholics are encouraged to read the Scriptures: her priests and religious read them daily, but they read as children of the Church.

The Catholic Church is the union of all the faithful under one Head, Jesus Christ our Lord. She has four marks by which we may know her: she is One;

she is Holy; she is Catholic; she is Apostolic. The Church is One because all her members agree in one Faith, have all the same Sacrifice and Sacraments, and are all united under one Head. There is no difference among Catholics in matters of faith. In habits and tastes, in pious practices even, there is plenty of variety. But in questions of faith they are absolutely One. Catholics in Ireland and in Japan, in the university and in the factory, hold precisely the same doctrines, not because they seem reasonable, but because they are the teaching of the Church, which Christ has commanded them to hear. Catholics worship God everywhere by the offering of the same Sacrifice, the holy Mass; they are all brought on their way to heaven by the same seven Sacraments, and all acknowledge as their supreme Head on earth the Vicar or representative of Christ, the Bishop of Rome.

The Church is Holy because she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children. She leads all to the faithful observance of God's commandments, to an uninterrupted fight with the devil, the world, and their own corrupt inclinations and passions, to a hatred for sin, and to the practice of good works. She not only exhorts us to holiness, but by her Sacraments, her feasts, and devotions she helps us to become holy. And she proves her right to the mark of holiness by the multitude of her saints. There are bad Catholics, no doubt, as there was cockle among the wheat in our Lord's parable, but they are bad because they disobey the Church and neglect the means of grace she offers them.

The Church is Catholic or Universal because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and is the one Ark of Salvation for all. She is the only Church that can go back nineteen hundred years to the time of Jesus Christ; the only Church that has preached to all nations, and is found in every country of the

world. And she is the only Church appointed by God to bring men to eternal salvation. This does not mean that none but Catholics get to heaven. Many Protestants are saved and many Catholics are lost. But since Christ has appointed a Church as the great means for the salvation of men, it follows (1) that all men are bound to make use of this means, and to enter the Catholic Church as soon as they recognize her as the Church founded by Christ; and (2) that it is far easier to be saved within this Church than without, even though a man may be in good faith without.

The Church is Apostolic because she holds the doctrines and traditions of the Apostles, and because, through the unbroken succession of her Pastors, she derives her orders and her mission from them. Scripture is the written, tradition the unwritten word of God. The Apostles taught chiefly by word of mouth, as they had themselves been taught by our Lord. During the forty days after the Resurrection He told them many things concerning "the Kingdom of God" which are not contained in Scripture, but which have come down to us in various ways—by the teaching of the Church everywhere and always, in creeds or professions of faith, in holy rites and ceremonies, in the prayers of public worship, and in the writings of the holy Fathers and Doctors, for tradition is written as well as unwritten. This teaching of tradition has the Holy Ghost for its guardian, and is as inspired and binding as the written words of Scripture. Through the unbroken succession of her chief Pastors, from Peter to Benedict XV., our Bishops and priests derive their sacred orders and their right to teach the faithful from the Apostles, who received these powers from our Lord Himself.

Infallibility of the Pope—To the Apostles Christ said, "Go, teach all nations. He that heareth you heareth Me." And that all might teach the same thing, He put one of them, Peter, over the rest. He made him the visible Head of the Church on earth when

He said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven."¹ "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep."² He also prayed that his faith might never fail, and commanded him to confirm his brethren.³ Peter was to tend the whole flock: the sheep as well as the lambs, those who have to feed, or the Church teaching, and those to be fed or the Church taught—all were to depend on Peter. And because God is faithful, He has taken care that Peter and his successors, the Bishops of Rome, shall not lead the flock astray. For the sake of the Church, therefore, the Bishop of Rome, who is called the Pope, is preserved by God from error whenever he defines a doctrine concerning *faith*—that is, what we have to believe—or *morals*—that is, what we have to do—to be held by the whole Church. This is what is meant by the Pope's Infallibility. It does not mean that the Pope cannot do wrong. A Pope might do great wrong; he might even lose his soul. But no Pope can teach wrong when speaking to the whole Church as its Head. Although the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope was only defined in 1870, it has always been the teaching of the Church, though not binding on Catholics before 1870. The *definition* of a doctrine is not the *invention* of a doctrine, but merely its clearer manifestation, as when we unroll a scroll we bring to light what was really there before. The Divinity of our Lord was not defined till the fifth century, yet, surely, it was held by the Church from the beginning. As new needs and errors arise, the Church declares more fully what has always been part of Catholic truth.

The Communion of Saints—The Church is in Heaven where it is called the Church Triumphant, and in Purgatory, where it is the Church Suffering, and on earth, where it is the Church Militant, or fighting.

¹ Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

² John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

³ Luke xxii. 32.

All its members, in Heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory, are in communion with each other, as being one body in Jesus Christ; that is, there is a holy friendship between them, a loving intercourse, and an interchange of good offices. The faithful on earth are in communion with each other by professing the same faith, obeying the same authority, and assisting each other by their prayers and good works. We are in communion with the Saints in Heaven by honoring them as the glorified members of the Church; and also by our praying to them, and by their praying for us. And we are in communion with the souls in Purgatory by helping them with our prayers and good works. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins."¹

Purgatory—We know that there is a place of temporal punishment after death, from the constant teaching of the Church; and from Holy Scripture, which declares that God will render to every man according to his works; that nothing defiled shall enter Heaven; and that some will be saved; "yet so as by fire."² Those souls go to Purgatory that depart this life in *venial* sin; or that have not fully paid the debt of *temporal* punishment due to those sins of which the guilt has been forgiven. Temporal punishment is that which will have an end, either in this world or in the world to come.

Sin—Sin is an offence against God, by any thought, word, deed or omission against the law of God. There are two kinds of sin, original and actual.

Original sin is the sin of Adam when he ate the forbidden fruit. Every child of Adam, with one exception, the immaculate Mother of God, has inherited the guilt or stain of original sin from him who was the origin and head of all mankind. Actual sin is that which we ourselves commit, Actual sin is either mortal or venial.

¹ Macch. xii. 46. ² I Cor. iii. 15.

Mortal or deadly sin is so called because it kills the soul by taking away sanctifying grace, which is its supernatural life. The soul has a natural life, which enables us to move, think, and speak, and a supernatural life, which is the friendship of God, given to it by sanctifying grace. It is its supernatural life that makes it beautiful and pleasing in the sight of God. This is the life that is destroyed by mortal sin. Men see no change after mortal sin; we walk, work, laugh as before. But in the sight of God and His Angels there is a terrible change—our soul has become hideous and loathsome. All the reward laid up for us in heaven by our good works is forfeited, and no good work done in the state of mortal sin can merit an eternal reward. We deserve eternal punishment, and if we die in this state our soul will fall straight into the flames of hell, where the body will join it on the Last Day.

Three things are required to make a mortal sin: (1) grave matter, (2) full knowledge, (3) full consent.

(1) GRAVE MATTER—The sinful thought, word, deed, or omission must be something of very great importance, *e. g.*, injuring our neighbor's character in a serious matter, stealing a large sum, or a small sum from a very poor person.

(2) FULL KNOWLEDGE—Not done by mistake, or before we knew clearly what we were about. The mind must think of the sinfulness of the act at the time it is done.

(3) FULL CONSENT.—The will must deliberately agree to the temptation, whether of thought, word, or deed. If there was not full knowledge or full consent, but hesitation in rejecting the temptation, the sin is venial, the soul is injured but not killed.

Venial sin means pardonable. This sin is so called because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin. A lie of excuse, a small injury to our neighbor, do not make us enemies of God, or take away sanctifying grace. Nevertheless, venial sin is a great evil, the

greatest of all evils after mortal sin, and we should be heartily sorry for it. It deprives us of many graces, it lessens our fear of offending God, and in this way often leads to mortal sin. No one ever comes to mortal sin except through carelessness about venial sin. Every venial sin will be punished, either in this life or in the next.

HOPE

Besides believing what God has told us, we are commanded to hope for what He has promised us, and to show our love for Him by doing what He requires of us. In other words, we have to worship Him by Faith, Hope, and Charity. Because God is infinitely powerful, infinitely good, and faithful to His promises, we are bound to hope that He will give us eternal happiness in the life to come, and all things necessary to obtain it, if we do what He requires of us; and that He will provide the things necessary for this life if we ask for them as we ought. Hope brings such brightness and happiness into our lives, that we might have thought a command concerning it would be unnecessary. But God knows how ready we are to despond whenever trouble or difficulty comes in our way. Hence He has laid it upon us as a command to hope in Him and to hope always. More than this, we may not weaken our hope by giving way to discouragement. God is always merciful. He will forgive us whenever we turn to Him with sorrow after falling into sin, and He will never let us be tried beyond our strength.

But we must not sin by presumption. To expect that He will give us Heaven when we are breaking His Commandments, or that He will preserve us from sin when we wilfully go into the occasion of sin, or to live in mortal sin relying on His mercy for the hour of our death—this is not the virtue of hope, but a sin against the First Commandment. We are bound to make acts of hope, especially in time of temptation,

and at the hour of death, and to show our hope in God all through life, by

Prayer—To do any good work towards our salvation we need the help of God's grace, which we obtain chiefly by prayer and the holy sacraments. "Ask and you shall receive," says our Blessed Lord. Prayer is the raising up of our mind and heart to God, by thinking of Him, by adoring, praising, and thanking Him, and by begging of Him all blessings for soul and body. Prayer, then, is not all *asking*. To lift up our hearts to God in joy and thankfulness when things go well with us, is prayer. To bow our heads and our hearts in patient resignation in our hours of trouble and of mourning, is prayer. To praise God for what He is in Himself, for His goodness, His glory, His mercy, this is the highest prayer. In the Our Father, the best of all prayers, our Lord teaches us the chief things to be desired and prayed for.

To pray well, we must think of God or of what we say. If our mind wanders, we must recall it as well as we can. Wilful distractions are sinful, and displease God. This does not mean that we are never to think of our business or our worries when we speak to God. Prayer is a loving conversation with our Heavenly Father, who bids us ask Him like little children for all we want. If we are tired or anxious, if we cannot see how to make ends meet, if a coming trial frightens us, we may take our trouble straight to Him, who can and will help us. Above all, we should turn to Him when sin weighs us down. He does not want even mortal sin to hinder us from turning to Him with loving trust. Whatever we have done, and however often we have done it, He loves us still, and forbids us to be discouraged and think it is no use trying. He holds out His arms to us; He calls us back to Him, He promises to forgive us and restore to us all we have lost. However far a sinner may have wandered, he can always pray, and prayer is a certain means of recovering the friendship

of God. Therefore we must never give up prayer ; it is the rope thrown out to the drowning man, to which he must cling if he would be saved. And we must never think God does not hear us because the answer is long in coming. He always hears. But He expects us to wait and to trust. If what we ask is good for us, He will give it sooner or later. If it is not good for us, He will give us something better instead.

The Angels and Saints—Because our prayers are poor and weak, the Church encourages us to ask the Saints and Angels to pray for us. They stand in the presence of God, they are very dear to Him, and He willingly hears their prayer for their poor brethren who are still in the midst of trouble and danger. It is a great joy to them to pray for us, and we should be foolish indeed to neglect such a means of grace.

Some people tell us that they go straight to God. So do Catholics ; none go straighter. But sometimes they do like the so-called friends of Job. God was angry with these men for their cruelty to His afflicted servant, and when they went straight to Him for forgiveness, He said to them, "Go to My servant Job, and My servant Job shall pray for you. . . . And the Lord accepted the face of Job when he prayed for his friends." We go straight to God, but we take the advice of God Himself and go in good company.

Mary, Mother of God—Among our intercessors in Heaven is one whose office, holiness, and power with God place her far above the Angels and Saints. It is Holy Mary, the Mother of God. Mary is truly Mother of God because she is Mother of a Divine Person, because her Son who took His human nature from her is truly God. In raising Mary to so wonderful a dignity, God has exalted her above all other creatures ; the highest angel is His servant ; she is His Mother.

Because of her nearness to Him, He was bound for His own sake to save her from all that could displease

Him in her, and to enrich her with all the grace that would make her pleasing in His sight, and worthy, as far as a creature could be worthy, of the relation in which she was to stand to Himself. Would He endure sin in one who was to be so closely united to Him? Must He not do for His Mother what He had done for the angels and for Adam and Eve—create her soul free from sin and in friendship with Himself? The Church teaches that no stain of sin, original or actual, ever touched her. She was brought into being like other children, but, unlike all others, she was preserved from the original stain, and came into existence fair and pleasing in God's sight. The Precious Blood of her Divine Son, that was to win pardon for us, did more for her by preserving her from sin. Christ died for Mary as for us, and so in her hymn of praise she says, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." She is the first among the saved, only saved more grandly than any other. This privilege of exemption from original sin is called the Immaculate Conception.

It is God we glorify in honoring Mary. We praise Him for His one perfect creature, for her privileges, her dignity, her holiness, and for the power He has given her with Himself. For He who came to us by her, has willed to show us favor through her. Because she is so near and dear to Him, the Church would have us reverence and love her, and in all our necessities fly to her as to a mother. This we do whenever we say the Hail Mary. We ask her who is blessed among women to pray for us sinners; to pray for us now, in the needs of the present day and hour; to pray for us, above all, in that hour of our death which is to decide our eternity. The Church never separates the Mother from the Son. Three times each day she calls her children by the Angelus bell to thank God for the Incarnation of His Son, and to bless her by whom God-made Man was given to us. Thus, in every age and land and tongue do Catholics fulfil Mary's own prophecy, "All generations shall call me blessed."

CHARITY

The Ten Commandments

We are bound to love God because He is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely good to us. The love we are commanded to have is not an affectionate *feeling*, but a preference of Him above all things, so that we would not lose His friendship for the love or fear of anything whatsoever. We show that we love God by keeping His Commandments. Of these the first three concern our duty to God, the seven others our duty to our neighbor and to ourselves.

The First Commandment— By the First Commandment we are commanded to worship the one true and living God, by Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion. The sins against Faith are all false religions, wilful doubt, disbelief, or denial of any article of Faith, and also culpable ignorance of the doctrines of the Church. We expose ourselves to the danger of losing our Faith by neglecting our spiritual duties—the Sacraments, Mass, morning and night prayers, daily examination of conscience, grace at meals, etc.,—by reading bad books, going to non-Catholic schools, and taking part in the services or prayers of a false religion.

The sins against Hope are despair and presumption. The chief sins against Religion are the worship of false gods or idols, and the giving to any creature whatsoever the honor which belong to God alone. The First Commandment forbids us to give divine honor to the angels and saints, but we should give them the inferior honor due to them as the special friends of God; and we should give to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures a relative honor, as they relate to Christ and His Saints, and are memorials of them.

This Commandment forbids all dealing with the devil and superstitious practices, such as consulting spiritualists and fortune-tellers, and trusting to charms, omens, dreams, and such like fooleries. We must hold

in horror anything that might weaken our Faith. Cheap books that attack the very foundations of Faith—belief in God, the soul, the life to come—are scattered broadcast over the land. Men and women of every class, boys and girls, read them, and to thousands such reading means the loss of all Faith. We may not thus endanger our soul, and risk what is more precious than life. If Hope and Charity are lost, we may recover both by means of Faith. But if Faith itself fails, only a miracle of grace can restore it, and set our feet again in the way of salvation.

The Second Commandment—The Second Commandment requires us to speak with reverence of God and all holy persons and things, and to keep our lawful oaths and vows. It forbids all false, rash, unjust and unnecessary oaths, as also blaspheming, cursing, and profane words.

The Third Commandment—The Third Commandment requires us to keep the Sunday holy. The Church tells us this is to be done by hearing Mass and resting from servile works. Unless excused by some lawful reason, such as sickness, or grave danger of sickness, the necessity of remaining with little children, very bad weather, or great distance from church, every Catholic who has come to the use of reason is bound under pain of mortal sin to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy-days of Obligation. The duty of hearing Mass is not fulfilled by hearing a part of a Mass or a part of two. We are bound to be present at all the principal parts of one Mass, that is, from the Offertory to the Priest's Communion. It is a venial sin to be absent or late through our own fault during a less important portion of the Mass. Masters and mistresses are bound to see that those dependent on them are able to hear Mass on Days of Obligation. Children of seven years of age are as much bound to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy-days as grown-up people. If they miss Mass or are late through their

parents' neglect, how can such parents be excused from the guilt of mortal sin?

Of course, it is not enough to be bodily present at Mass. We must unite ourselves in some way with what the priest is doing at the altar, and raise our minds and hearts to God in prayer. We may follow the words and actions of the priest, and it is well to unite with him at least at the chief parts of the Mass—the Offertory, Consecration, and Priest's Communion.¹ We may say our beads or other prayers, or think of the sufferings and death of Christ which the Mass commemorates. But there must be reverence, attention, and prayer of one kind or another. It is a sin to talk, laugh, eat, sleep, or allow our minds to be filled with wilful distractions.

We are commanded to rest from unnecessary servile work on Sunday. Servile work is that in which the body is chiefly engaged. Liberal works which engage the mind more than the body are not forbidden. Innocent recreation that does not draw us from religious duties or give reasonable scandal is allowed. But we must remember that we are commanded to rest from servile work that we may have time and opportunity for prayer, going to the Sacraments, hearing instructions, and reading good books. Therefore if we can hear a sermon or go to Benediction it is well to do so. Children who need instruction in Christian doctrine should be sent to Catechism. Priests are obliged to instruct their people, and remind them frequently of the things they are bound to remember if they would save their souls. What, then, is to be said of those who avoid such reminders, and never hear a sermon if they can help it?

The Fourth Commandment—The love of our neighbor proves our love of God. Among those whom we are bound to love, our parents hold the first place. Children who love, honor, and obey their parents are

¹ See *Simple Prayer Book*.

in a marked degree protected and blessed by God. Undutiful children are often signally punished by Him. We have to love our parents not with a natural affection only, because of all they have done for us, but because they hold the place of God, and He commands us to honor and to love them.

We are bound never to sadden our parents by neglect or by unkind behavior. We are forbidden to speak rudely to them, and still more to ridicule, threaten, or strike them. We should hide and excuse their faults, and help them in their needs, both of soul and body. In serious sickness we must redouble our care, warn them of their danger, and get them the Sacraments in good time. After their death we should, if we are able, have masses said for the repose of their souls, and pray much for their deliverance from Purgatory.

Children are bound to obey their parents in all that is not sin. Even when of age, married, or independent, they are bound to love and reverence them. Those commands of parents are of most importance which concern the salvation of the soul, such as religious duties, companions, amusements, late hours, and the like.

We are commanded to obey, not our parents only, but also our Bishops and pastors, the civil authorities, and our lawful superiors. Our Bishop is appointed by the Vicar of Christ to govern the diocese to which we belong; we are bound, therefore, to reverence and obey him as the shepherd of our souls. We owe a like duty to priests sent by the Bishop to administer the Sacraments, to teach us the truths of our Faith, and to guide us to eternal life. The priest makes us children of God by holy Baptism, feeds us with the Bread of Life in Holy Communion, heals the wounds of our souls in the Sacrament of Penance, teaches us in sermons and instructions, comforts us in sorrow, counsels us in doubt, encourages us in temptation, visits our sick-bed, and soothes our last moments with the consolation of religion. We are bound to honor

him as the minister of God, to treat him and speak of him with respect, to be guided in what concerns our soul by his advice.

Respect and obedience are also due to the civil authorities—the King, and those appointed to maintain peace and order in the State. We are forbidden to rebel against our rulers, and to belong to any Secret Society that plots against the Church or State, or to any Society that by reason of its secrecy is condemned by the Church. We are bound to pay the taxes, and to obey the laws of our country as long as these are not against the Commandments of God. This duty of obedience to lawful superiors does not cease because those superiors are bad, so long as they do not call on their subjects to do what is bad.

Wives are commanded to be subject to their husbands.

Servants are bound to respect, obedience, and fidelity to those whose service they have entered. They may not be insolent to their master or mistress, or expose their faults or family secrets. They are bound to obey their lawful commands in the duties for which they are engaged, and to take care of all entrusted to them.

Masters and mistresses are bound to treat with kindness those subject to them, to provide them with proper food and lodging, and to give them opportunity for religious instruction, hearing Mass, and going to the Sacraments. They are obliged to protect them from dangerous occasions of sin, to require only reasonable work of them, and to pay them just and reasonable wages.

By the Fourth Commandment parents are bound to provide for their children, to instruct and correct them, to give them good example, and a good Catholic education. A first duty after birth is immediately to have the child baptized. It is a duty that is frightfully neglected. There are mothers who keep their children for days and weeks without baptism, though they

know that if it dies without the Sacrament it will never see God. To keep a child without baptism for any length of time, unless for some very grave reason, is a serious sin. The Church says, "Babes are to be brought to the font for baptism as soon as it can possibly be done, that a Sacrament without which no one can be saved may not be put off, to the danger of the child's soul." "As soon as possible" means, when there is someone to bring the baby and the baby can safely be brought.

The training of little children cannot begin too early, and it is a duty on which the salvation of parents as well as of their children may well depend. From their earliest years they must be taught the law of right and wrong, and be kept as far as possible from seeing or hearing evil. A child begins to notice and to imitate long before it can speak. How terrible will it be for the father or mother whose example has given it its first lesson in wickedness, who have set the little feet on the road that leads straight down to hell! But how happy are those parents who, remembering that God will require a strict account of the precious souls entrusted to them, guard them, from the beginning, from all that could bring them harm! Very early the mother should guide the little hand to make the sign of the Cross. Very soon should she lead her child to the love of Jesus and Mary. On her knee, from her lips, it should learn its first prayers and the first simple lessons of the Catechism. She must be on the watch as its natural disposition begins to appear. It must be gently but firmly checked as naughty ways show themselves. It must learn that the word of father or mother is to be obeyed at once, that it will not get what it wants by temper or by tears. As it grows older it must be taught its duties as a Catholic—Mass; prayer, morning and night; examination of conscience—and be trained to habits of truthfulness, industry, reverence for God and holy things, obedience to the laws of God and the Church. All this it should learn at home,

and more by example than by word. When the time comes for First Confession,¹ First Communion,² Confirmation,³ it is the mother's place to see that the child is properly prepared; and she must see that it afterwards goes regularly to its religious duties. Parents are bound to give their children a good Catholic education, and to guard them against companions, amusements, and reading, that might be occasions of harm. Children should be in bed early, and ought never to be out in the streets at night. In dealing with their children parents should avoid harshness and abuse, dislikes and partiality, and should spare no effort to make a comfortable and happy home for them. Correction must be just and moderate, not given when the parents is in a temper, not injurious to the child. Above all, parents should set an example to their children in the practice of morning and evening prayer, going to Mass and the Sacraments, the observance of honesty, sobriety, and the Church's law of abstinence. Let them avoid quarrelling, bad words, and words that injure their neighbor's character, and remember that what a child learns at home is, good or evil, learned for life.

The Fifth Commandment—forbids all wilful murder. Except in just war, in self-defense, or in the name of the law, we may not take the life of another. Neither may we take our own, either by direct suicide or by such vices as shorten life. The drunkard sins against this Commandment.

Not murder only, but the sins that lead to it—fighting, quarrelling, and injurious words, anger, hatred, and revenge—are forbidden by the Fifth Commandment. Scandal, also, and bad example, by which is meant any word or deed calculated to lead another into sin. All these come under sins against this Com-

¹ See *First Confession* and *A First Confession Book, for the Little Ones*.

² See *First Communion* and *Mass for First Communion*.

³ See *A Simple Confirmation Book*.

mandment, because they lead to the injury and spiritual death of our neighbor's soul.

The Sixth and Ninth Commandments forbid whatever is contrary to holy purity in thoughts, words, or actions. With regard to thoughts, it is important to remember that what is not wilful is not sinful. A thought may haunt us for days together, but as long as we would gladly be rid of it, and try to turn our mind away from it, there is no sin. Immodest plays and dances are forbidden by the Sixth Commandment, and it is sinful to look at them. This Commandment also forbids immodest songs, books, and pictures, because they are most dangerous to the soul and lead to mortal sin. We must beware of curiosity if we would avoid sin. We must resolutely deny ourselves such companions and amusements, such newspapers and novels, as we know to be dangerous. And we must avoid idleness.

The Seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another; for example, engaging in unjust lawsuits, borrowing with no intention or hope of being able to pay back, extravagance; to the injury of one's family and creditors, the taking of perquisites, without permission, by servants and others, negligence in doing the work which we have undertaken as teachers, workmen, servants, or in fulfilling the conditions of a contract as to time, materials, or manner.

This Commandment forbids all manner of cheating in buying and selling, such as using false weights and measures, adulterating goods, also the wilful destruction of another's goods, the wasting of a master's time or property, and any other way of wronging our neighbor.

We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods if we are able, or else the sin will not be forgiven; we must also pay our debts. Those who are careless in paying their debts should remember that of the four sins crying to

Heaven for vengeance, two are "Oppression of the poor" and "Defrauding laborers of their wages." Many a poor dressmaker has been ruined by the withholding of the money which she has lost her night's rest to earn.

It will be no excuse to say we did not think of this. The poor are timid, and afraid to press for what belongs to them. But those who, relying on their helplessness, are cruel to them, will have a terrible account to settle when the day of reckoning comes.

As restitution of ill-gotten goods is often a matter of great difficulty, we should consult our confessor on the subject. He knows what human weakness is, he is our friend, always ready to put his knowledge and experience at our service; ways of helping us that we should never have thought of will occur to him—what a mistake to be afraid to ask the counsel that we need!

The Eighth Commandment guards our neighbor's good name. It forbids all false testimony, rash judgment, and lies.

False testimony is saying in a court of justice what we know to be untrue.

Rash judgment is condemning our neighbor in our own mind for a fault for which there is not sufficient evidence.

A lie is any word or act by which we intend to deceive. There are four kinds of lies: jocose lies, those told in jest; lies of excuse, told to escape some evil; malicious lies, told to injure another; sacrilegious lies, told to the Holy Ghost, in confession, a false oath. Jocose lies and lies of excuse, that harm no one, are generally venial sins only. Malicious lies are mortal or venial according to the harm intended. Sacrilegious lies are always mortal. If an untruth told in jest is so absurd as to deceive no one, there is, of course, no sin at all.

Calumny, detraction, and tale-bearing are also forbidden by this Commandment.

Calumny is taking away our neighbor's character by telling lies of him. Detraction is making known his secret faults without sufficient cause. To publish a fault that is known to most persons in a place or to so many that it must soon become public, is not detraction, but it may be against charity, because it is not loving our neighbors as ourselves. Any words which harm a person, and not a person only, but an institution, a college, a hospital, by lessening, without good reason, the good opinion had of them, are sinful. The guilt of the sin is multiplied by the number of persons who hear the harm said.

It is hardly possible to avoid hearing detraction: sin comes in when we listen to it willingly and encourage it by asking curious questions that bring out the misdoings of others. We may not be able to prevent uncharitable conversation, but we may at times be able prudently to change the subject; at least, we can show displeasure by inattention or silence. We should be much on our guard when talk turns on people whom we much dislike or of whom we are jealous. A good practical rule is to try to excuse the absent, and not to say of another what we should not like said of ourselves.

Tale-bearing to make mischief, or from pure love of gossip, is wrong. But if we know of any improper conduct being carried on, we should make it known to those in authority. To neglect to do this might make us answerable for such sins by concealment.

When we have injured our neighbor by speaking ill of him, we are bound to restore his good name as far as we are able. If we have been guilty of calumny we must tell those to whom we have spoken that what we said was untrue. If we have detracted, we must try to repair the harm we have done our neighbor by saying some good of him. We should beware, however, of bringing up again what is forgotten. On this point it is well to ask the advice of our confessor.

The Commandments of the Church

We are bound to obey the Church, because Christ has said to the pastors of the Church, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (Luke x).

There are six chief Commandments of the Church.

The First Commandment of the Church is to keep the Sundays and Holy-days of Obligation holy by hearing Mass and resting from servile works. The Holy-days of Obligation observed in England are Christmas Day, the Circumcision, the Epiphany, Ascension Thursday, Corpus Christi, SS. Peter and Paul, the Assumption of Our Lady, and All Saints. Persons who work in places of business are not bound to hear Mass on the eight Holy-days of the Church if this would interfere, injuriously to themselves, with their hours of employment.

The Second Commandment of the Church is to keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church, so that we may mortify the flesh and satisfy God for our sins.

Days of abstinence are days when the law of abstinence forbids the eating of flesh meat and broth made of meat, but does not exclude the use of eggs, milk and the products of milk (viz.: cheese and butter), and any seasonings of food, even those made from the fat of animals.

Fast days are those days when the law of fasting ordains that only one full meal be taken, but does not forbid a small portion of food in the morning and in the evening. As regards the kind of food and the amount to be taken, the approved custom of one's locality are to be observed. One may partake of fish and flesh meat at the same meal on days when the use of meat is permitted. The full meal may be taken

in the evening and the collation at noon. Abstinence only is enjoined on the Fridays throughout the year.

Fast and abstinence are required on the following days: Ash Wednesday and the Fridays and Saturdays in Lent, Ember days, Vigil of Pentecost, of the Assumption, of All Saints' Day and of Christmas Day. Fast only is ordained for all the other days of Lent.

The Ember days are: Wednesday, Friday and Saturday in the first full week of Lent; in Whitsun week; after September 14; after December 13.

The law of abstinence binds all who have completed their seventh year of age. The law of fasting embraces all who have completed their twenty-first year, until the beginning of their sixtieth year, unless dispensed by account of sickness, weak health, hard work of mind or body. The poor who seldom get a full meal are not bound to fast. All persons exempt or dispensed from fasting are still bound to abstain. If they are unable to do so, they should ask their confessor for a dispensation, and not dispense themselves.

On Sundays and holidays of obligation there is neither fast nor abstinence, and if a vigil that is a fast day fall on a Sunday the fast is not to be anticipated on Saturday, but is dropped altogether that year. The Lenten fast and abstinence cease at twelve o'clock noon on Holy Saturday.

For working people and their families the Bishops of the United States can and usually do allow the use of flesh meat on all days except the Fridays of the year, Ash Wednesday, the Wednesday and Saturday of Holy Week, and the vigil of Christmas.

Men serving in the army or the navy are allowed by Papal indult to eat meat on all days of the year except Ash Wednesday, the vigil of Christmas, Good Friday, and the forenoon of Holy Saturday.

The Third Commandment of the Church is to go to confession at least once a year. Children are bound to go to confession as soon as they have come to the use of reason and are capable of mortal sin. This is generally supposed to be about the age of seven years.

The Fourth Commandment of the Church is to receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter or thereabouts. Christians are bound to receive the Blessed Sacrament as soon as they are capable of being instructed in this sacred mystery.

The Fifth Commandment of the Church is to contribute to the support of our pastors. It is a duty to contribute to the support of religion according to our means, so that God may be duly honored and worshipped, and the kingdom of His Church extended. How unfair some people are to the priest! We hear them complain that they have not this or that in their church—it is cold or draughty, the vestments are shabby, the flowers are artificial, the singing is bad. But they do not offer to repair or renew the vestments or to help in the choir. They do not give to their priest as they ought; nay, for some little grievance, many never give to him at all, never go near him, never speak of him except to injure him in the minds of those he has to help. Yet for their sake he has studied long years, and given up the chance of providing for himself in life; and it is to him they look to bring them the last consolations of the Church when they lie down to die!

The Sixth Commandment of the Church—is not to marry within certain degrees of kindred, nor to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times, that is, from the first Sunday of Advent till after the Epiphany, and from Ash Wednesday till after Low Sunday. A marriage contracted during the forbidden times is valid

and even lawful (provided the local laws of the diocese do not forbid it), but it may not be celebrated with the solemn rites of the Church, as nuptial Mass, bells, etc., nor with special public rejoicings.

THE SACRAMENTS

Our soul, like our body, has a life which begins, grows, meets with injury, needs food and medicine. To supply these needs God has provided the Sacraments, which give us spiritual life, strengthen, feed, and heal our soul, give it the help of the Christian priesthood and of the Christian family, and comfort it in its passage from this world to the next.

All good comes to us from the Precious Blood. Not salvation only, but all we want to save our soul—light to see what we ought to do, strength to overcome temptation, forgiveness of sin, grace to take up our cross daily and follow Christ, courage to bear up against the weariness of well-doing, perseverance to the end. It is by the Sacraments that the merits of the Precious Blood are applied to our souls. They are thus the chief means of our salvation.

There are seven Sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony. In every Sacrament there are three things: the *outward sign*, the *inward grace* and the *institution of Christ*. The outward sign is something which can be perceived by our senses. It consists of (1) matter and (2) form. The matter is the substance used in giving the Sacrament, as the water in Baptism. The form consists of the words used in applying the matter, as “I baptize thee,” etc. The inward grace is the spiritual effect produced. For the Sacraments are not merely *signs* of grace, they *give* the grace they signify. A little water is poured on the body, and the baby’s soul is cleansed from original sin. A few words are said in the confessional, and the chains of sin, which made the soul the slave

of Satan, fall off, and it becomes once more the free and happy child of God. God alone can give to an outward sign the power of giving grace. Hence every Sacrament must be instituted by Christ. Because they are His institution there is nothing uncertain about the effects of the Sacraments. As surely as the sun gives light and life, warmth and color to the earth, so surely do the Sacraments give health and spiritual beauty to those who receive them worthily.

Certain dispositions are necessary, but they do not give the grace, they only take away hindrances to the grace the Sacrament gives. When due dispositions are wanting, the Sacrament of Penance is not really received; the Holy Eucharist gives no grace; Baptism, in the case of adults, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony produce no grace till the hindrances to grace are removed.

The Holy Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper; Penance on the day of Christ's Resurrection; the time of institution of Baptism, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony is not known; probably it was during the forty days after the Resurrection, when our Lord spoke to the Apostles of the "Kingdom of God." Baptism is the most necessary of the Sacraments, because without it we cannot enter heaven. Penance is necessary for those who have committed mortal sin after Baptism. Confirmation we are obliged to receive if we have the opportunity. The Holy Eucharist must be received about Easter; Extreme Unction when we are dangerously ill. Holy Order and Matrimony are necessary for the Church as a body, but not for each individual.

Baptism, Holy Order, Confirmation imprint a character upon the soul, that is, they leave upon it a mark which for all eternity will be for its glory or for its shame. The Sacraments which give a character cannot be repeated.

All the Sacraments give sanctifying grace, which makes the soul pleasing in the sight of God. Baptism

and Penance are called the Sacraments of the Dead because our souls may be dead in sin when we receive them. In this case they give grace where it was not before. The other Sacraments are called Sacraments of the Living, because our souls must be alive by grace to receive them worthily. These Sacraments increase in the soul the grace they find there.

Besides sanctifying grace, each Sacrament gives its own special grace, called Sacramental, and a title to actual graces. An actual grace is a help given in a particular need—at one time strength to profess our faith; at another, sorrow to repent of sin; light to see our way in difficulties, etc.

To receive a Sacrament unworthily, that is, without due dispositions, is a grievous sin, called sacrilege. To receive the Sacraments worthily is the greatest happiness in the world. Hence we should have a great desire to receive them, and prepare ourselves earnestly, for the more fervent our preparation, the greater the grace we shall get, just as a man who takes a large bucket to the well draws more water than another who takes a small one.

Baptism

Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, members of the Church, and heirs of heaven.

Baptism also forgives actual sins, that is the sins which we ourselves commit, and takes away all punishment due to them when it is received in proper dispositions by those who have been guilty of actual sin. Water is the matter of Baptism. The form is: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The ordinary minister of Baptism is a priest, but anyone may baptize in case of necessity when a priest cannot be had. All should know how to baptize, for any one of us may have to administer the sacrament when a priest is not at hand. How

many nurses have opened the gate of heaven to dying infants! And not nurses only. A child in charge of a baby brother suddenly taken with a fit, baptized him. An English soldier out in India used to take his morning walk by the seashore to baptize the numbers of infants left there to be washed away by the tide. He could not save their earthly life, but he could bring them to live everlasting.

Baptism is given by pouring water on the head of the child, saying at the same time these words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Notice, the water must touch and flow upon the body; the same person must pour the water and say the words; the words must be said at the same time that the water is poured, not before or after. We must have the intention of doing what the Church does and Christ ordained. To receive Baptism worthily, adults must have the beginnings of faith, sorrow for sin, and the intention of receiving the Sacrament.

There must be a godfather and godmother, or at least one godparent of the same sex as the child, who must be a Catholic, appointed by the parents, and must touch the child at the font. Sponsors undertake to see that the child is brought up in the Catholic faith and in the practice of its religion in case the parents die or neglect this duty. The minister of Baptism and the sponsors contract relationship with the child and its parents, making marriage with any of these unlawful.

Confirmation

Confirmation is a Sacrament by which we receive the Holy Ghost in order to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

All Catholics who have come to the use of reason and have the opportunity are bound to receive this Sacrament, for without it few would avoid mortal sin. They must be in a state of grace, and sufficiently in-

structed in the truths necessary for salvation, and as to the nature of the Sacrament they are going to receive. If possible, they should have a good knowledge of the Catechism.¹

The matter of the Sacrament consist of the imposition of the Bishop's hands and the anointing with holy chrism, a substance composed of olive oil and balsam, a fragrant plant of Eastern lands. The form is: "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." As the Bishop says these words he makes the sign of the Cross with chrism on our forehead. Then he gives a little blow on the cheek, saying, "Peace be with thee." This is to signify the trials which, as soldiers of Christ, we must expect, and the peace of God, which will enable us to bear them all with patience. No one must leave the altar till the chrism has been wiped from his forehead.

The special effect of this Sacrament is strength to profess our faith steadfastly, to lead a life worthy of our faith, and to suffer for it if needful. A Patron Saint is chosen at Confirmation. We should often invoke his help, and try to imitate his virtues. One sponsor only is required—a godfather for boys, a godmother for girls. The obligations, spiritual relationship, and impediments to marriage are the same as those of sponsors at Baptism.

Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament — The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, together with His Soul and Divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine.

The matter of this Sacrament is wheaten bread and wine of the grape. The form is: "This is My Body," said over the bread, and "This is My Blood

¹ See *A Simple Confirmation Book*.

of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins," said over the wine. The change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ takes place by the power of God when the words of consecration, ordained by Christ at the Last Supper, are pronounced by the priest in the Holy Mass. This change is called Transubstantiation, that is, a change—not in figure or appearance, but in reality. Our Lord at the Last Supper said: "*This* is My Body. *This* is My Blood." What looked like bread and wine were by His word no longer what they appeared to be, but were His Precious Body and Blood. After the consecration the bread and wine are gone, and on the altar in their stead is He Himself, Body and Blood, and Soul and Divinity, not perceived by our senses, but hidden under the appearances of the bread and wine which remain after the substance has been taken away. Though there are two appearances, or species, there is only one Sacrament, and under each species Christ is received whole and entire.

This Sacrament exceeds all the other Sacraments in dignity. It was instituted by our Lord to be a memorial of His love for us, especially in His sufferings and death; and to give us, not one grace, but every grace we need. He gives Himself to us to be the food and the life of our souls, our Companion and Comforter in the troubles of this world, and that the very body by its union with His may be raised to a glorious life at the Last Day. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day."

It is a great sin to receive Holy Communion unworthily, that is, in mortal sin. St. Paul says: "He that eateth or drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi.). To receive Holy Communion worthily we must be in a state of grace. If grace has been lost by mortal sin, this must be forgiven by

a good confession. We must also be fasting from midnight. This means that from twelve o'clock the night before our Communion we must not eat or drink anything whatsoever by way of food or medicine.

This Sacrament, which is by excellence the Blessed Sacrament, increases sanctifying grace in our souls, forgives venial sin, and preserves us from mortal sin. It weakens our evil inclinations, and is the most powerful means of resisting temptation. The more fervent the dispositions we bring to Holy Communion, the more grace we shall receive from the visit of our Divine Guest.¹

The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice— Sacrifice is the offering to God by a lawful minister of some object falling under the senses, to acknowledge by its destruction or change God's supreme excellence and power over life and death, and our absolute dependence on Him. Hence sacrifice is the highest act of religion, and can be offered to God alone. In all ages of the world God has commanded men to worship Him by sacrifice and to pay in this way their fourfold duty and debt to Him.

As His creatures we are bound (1) to adore Him, (2) to thank Him for all His benefits, (3) to beg pardon for our sins, (4) to ask Him for all we need for soul and body. In the Old Law there were different sacrifices for these different ends. In the New Law there is only one Sacrifice, but one of infinite value, for it is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, really present on the altar, and offered to God for the living and the dead. This sacrifice is called the Mass. It is not a different sacrifice from that of the Cross, but the same sacrifice continued or renewed in a different and unbloody manner. This sacrifice was foretold by the prophets. It is the "clean oblation" offered to God by "the Gentiles from the rising to the setting of the sun" (Malach. i.). On the altar, as on the Cross, our Lord is both

¹ See *A Simple Communion Book*.

Priest and Victim. But in the Mass our Lord does not really die. He is the "Lamb standing as it were slain" (Apoc. v.). He offers Himself under the appearances of bread and wine, "a high-priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. cix.). He offers Himself by the hands of His priests. "Do this in commemoration of Me," He said to His apostles at the Last Supper. He gave them power to do what He had done, and to pass on this power of consecrating bread and wine to their successors, so to "show forth the death of the Lord until He come" (1 Cor. xi.).

The Mass, therefore, is not simply a prayer in common, like other public forms of worship. It is an act of awful solemnity—God offering Himself to God, to adore and thank for us, to beg pardon for our sins, and to obtain for us all graces and blessings. Our Blessed Lord does all this in our name. He does perfectly for us what we do so imperfectly ourselves. What matter then, if we do not understand all the priest is *saying* at the altar. We know what the invisible High-Priest, Jesus Christ, is *doing*, and we offer ourselves, with all our needs and desires, to God, through Him. If we remember what is going on at the altar—that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, is really there, renewing for us the great Sacrifice of the Cross, and applying to our souls the merit of that Sacrifice; if we remember what we can do by offering this Sacrifice with Him—how we can worship God perfectly, and easily obtain from Him the pardon of our sins, and all we need for ourselves and for those dear to us—we can hardly help hearing Mass well, and drawing down great blessings on ourselves and those we love.¹

¹ See *A Simple Prayer Book*.

Penance

Penance is a Sacrament whereby the sins whether mortal or venial, which we have committed after Baptism are forgiven. Besides forgiving sin, it also increases the grace of God in the soul. Our Lord instituted this Sacrament when He breathed on His Apostles, saying: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven" (John xx.).

Of all God's mercies to us the greatest is His ready forgiveness of sin. Whilst our Blessed Lord was on earth He was called "the Friend of sinners." He tenderly received those who came to Him for pardon, and He has left in His Church an easy means by which all may obtain forgiveness of sin. However many, however great they may be, the Precious Blood of Jesus will wash them away if only we are truly sorry for them.

The matter of the Sacrament of Penance consists of the acts of the penitent—contrition, confession, and satisfaction. The form is the absolution pronounced by the priest: "I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The effects are to remove all guilt, both mortal and venial; to remit punishment, more or less, according to our dispositions; to restore or increase sanctifying grace; to give us back our right to heaven and all past merits, which are lost by one mortal sin. The minister is a priest who has received faculties from the Bishop of the diocese. He forgives sin by the power of God in pronouncing the words of absolution. He is bound, under the most solemn obligation, never to reveal in any way what he has been told in confession.

We have four things to do when we are preparing for confession: (1) We must heartily pray to God for His grace to help us; (2) We must carefully examine our conscience; (3) We must take time and care to make a good act of contrition; and (4) We

must resolve to renounce our sins and to begin a new life for the future.

(1) We ask the help of God to know our sins, to be truly sorry for them, to confess them as we ought, and to have a firm purpose of avoiding them for the future.

(2) We examine our conscience on the Ten Commandments, on the Six Precepts of the Church, on the Seven Deadly Sins, and on the duties of our state of life. We are bound to confess every mortal sin, which after a careful examination of conscience, we remember. If we leave one out wilfully, or through a careless examination of conscience, we make a bad confession; but if, after trying with reasonable care to examine our conscience, we still forget some mortal sin, it is forgiven, only it must be told in the first confession after it is remembered, because every mortal sin must be confessed once. We are also bound to mention any circumstance that changes a venial sin into a mortal one. Though we are only bound to confess mortal sins, it would not be safe to mention those sins only which we know for certain were mortal, because we are so apt to deceive ourselves. The only safe practice is to confess whatever is on our conscience and gives us trouble—certain things as certain, doubtful things as doubtful.

(3) By far the most important part of our preparation is contrition. Sin, even mortal, may be forgiven without confession, *e. g.*, if we forget it or are unable to make our confession, but no sin can be forgiven unless we are sorry for it. We must have true sorrow for every mortal sin we have committed. If we confess venial sins only, we must be sorry for at least one of them. And this sorrow must be supernatural, not from any temporal loss or disgrace that sin has brought upon us, but from some motive suggested by faith. There are two kinds of supernatural sorrow or contrition—imperfect and perfect.

Imperfect contrition is sorrow for sin chiefly for our own sake, because we have lost heaven, or deserved hell or purgatory. This sorrow will forgive venial sin, and, when joined with confession and absolution, is sufficient for the forgiveness of mortal sin.

Perfect contrition is sorrow because by sin we have offended so good a God. This is the best of all motives, and is so pleasing to God that by it our sins are forgiven immediately, even before we confess them; but nevertheless, if they are mortal, we are strictly bound to confess them afterwards. We should often make acts of perfect contrition: "O my God, because Thou art so good, I am sorry for having offended Thee." Many a man struck down by an accident has been saved by an act such as this. No one, then, need despair because he is dying without a priest. Let him turn to God with all his heart by an act of perfect contrition and a desire of confession, and his sins will be forgiven.

Both perfect and imperfect contrition remit some of the punishment our sins deserve, more or less according to our dispositions.

We must earnestly ask God to give us a hearty sorrow for our sins, and we must make use of such considerations as may lead us to it, such as the loss of heaven and the eternal punishment of hell, which mortal sin deserves; our Saviour's bitter sufferings for our sins in the Garden or on the Cross; the infinite goodness of God in Himself, etc.¹

(4) Lastly, we must have a firm purpose of amendment; that is, we must determine, with the help of God, to avoid all mortal sin, and the dangerous occasions of mortal sin—the person, place or thing that usually leads us wrong. If we confess mortal sins, we must have a firm purpose to avoid every one of them for the future. If we confess venial sins only, we must have a firm purpose to avoid at least one of them. If we have any restitution to make to our neighbor,

¹ See *A Simple Confession Book*.

whether of goods or of good name, we must see how this can best be done. It is a useful practice always to accuse ourselves, and to renew our sorrow for some greater sin of our past life already confessed, in order thus to make sure of our contrition and purpose of amendment.

Confession is to accuse ourselves of our sins to a priest approved by the Bishop. A person who wilfully conceals a mortal sin in confession is guilty of a great sacrilege, by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost in making a bad confession.

Satisfaction is doing the penance given us by the priest. It is well to perform our penance if possible before leaving the Church. This penance helps in a special manner to lessen the temporal punishment our sins have deserved. But as it does not generally make full satisfaction for our sins, we should add to it other good works and try to gain indulgences.

Indulgences— Sin has two effects upon the soul—the guilt or stain which it leaves upon it, and the debt of punishment to be paid in this life or in the next. The guilt of mortal sin is remitted by the Sacrament of Penance or by perfect contrition. The eternal punishment is remitted when the guilt is remitted and part of the temporal punishment into which the eternal has been changed. More or less is remitted according to the dispositions of the penitent. The rest of the punishment must be removed either by works of penance, such as prayers, fasting, and alms-deeds; by the sufferings of this life, borne with patience; by the extreme sufferings of Purgatory; or by Indulgences.

Good works also have two effects: they produce merit, which is a title to reward, and they make satisfaction for sin. The good works Christ our Lord did on earth and the satisfaction He thereby made for all human sin were of infinite value. These merits belong to the Church, and she has power to apply them to our soul for the remission of punishment no less than for the remission of guilt. And because all the mem-

bers of Christ are bound together in the Communion of Saints, the good works of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints, and their superabundant satisfactions, are also applied as satisfaction for the debts of each one of us.

No punishment can be remitted till the guilt has been repented of and forgiven. Then, by fulfilling certain conditions, as prayer, works of charity, visits to churches, we can gain a remission of the temporal punishment due to our sins. This remission is called an Indulgence. Hence we see the ignorance and injustice of those who say that an Indulgence is leave to commit sin. An indulgence has nothing to do with the guilt of sin, but only with its punishment; and no punishment can be remitted by an Indulgence till the sin is forgiven. How much is remitted we cannot tell. The judgments of God are an abyss which we must adore rather than seek to comprehend. We know that indulgences are a means of lessening the rigor of those judgments. This should make us try to gain them. The result of our trying we must leave to God; we cannot know it in this life.

A Plenary Indulgence, if fully gained, remits all the punishment till then due. It remits more or less according to the dispositions of the person gaining the Indulgence. A Partial Indulgence remits a part of the punishment. A Partial Indulgence of a hundred or of forty days remits as much as would have been remitted by the severe canonical penances of former days, but how much this is no one knows.

To gain any Indulgence there is required (1) a state of grace; (2) at least a general intention to gain it; (3) performance of the works prescribed. Most Indulgences may be applied by way of suffrage to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, that is, they may be offered to God for the souls we pray for, to pay their debt and procure them release from their sufferings.

Extreme Unction

Extreme Unction is the anointing of the sick with holy oil, accompanied with prayer. The matter of this Sacrament is oil of olives, blessed by the Bishop, and the anointing by a priest of the eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands, and feet. The form is, "By this holy anointing and of His own most tender mercy, may the Lord forgive thee whatever sins thou has committed by the sight . . . by the hearing," etc.

The effects of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction are to comfort and strengthen the soul, to remit sin, and even to restore health when God sees it to be expedient.

A person in danger of death by sickness who refused to receive Extreme Unction would be guilty of grave temerity.

Holy Order

Holy Order is the Sacrament by which Bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained, and receive power and grace to perform their sacred duties. The matter of the Sacrament is the imposition of the hands of the Bishop. The form consists of the words said by the Bishop in administering the Sacrament. This Sacrament impresses a character, and therefore cannot be repeated.

Matrimony

Matrimony is the Sacrament which sanctifies the contract of a Christian marriage, and gives a special grace to those who receive it worthily. No human power can dissolve the bond of marriage, and under no circumstances is it ever lawful for either party to marry again during the lifetime of the other.

The matter of the Sacrament consists of the persons of the contracting parties, and the mutual consent by which they take each other for man and wife. The form consists of the words by which they ex-

press this contract. They are bound to be in a state of grace to receive this Sacrament, and should prepare for it by a good confession. The effect is a special grace to enable them to bear the difficulties of their state, to love and be faithful to one another, and to bring up their children in the fear of God.

Those who enter into the contract of marriage are both the ministers and the subjects of the Sacrament. They marry each other. The priest witnesses, ratifies, and blesses the contract.

Betrothal— Since Easter, 1908, no engagement to marry is canonically valid and binding, unless it has been contracted in writing and signed by both the parties to it, and by a qualified priest, or the Bishop, or at least by two witnesses. None the less, a man not keeping a promise to marry a woman is, of course, bound in conscience to make compensation for any wrong he may thereby have done her.

Marriage— To receive the Sacrament validly both parties must be baptized, and free from any of the impediments called *diriment*, which by the law of the Church render marriage invalid and null. These are (1) Holy Orders; (2) Solemn Religious vows; (3) Marriage between baptized and unbaptized, *e. g.*, Pagans, Jews, Quakers; (4) Consanguinity, *i. e.*, relationship by blood to the fourth degree, that is, to third cousins inclusively (unless with dispensation); (5) Affinity, *i. e.*, relationship by marriage to the fourth degree, so that after the death of husband or wife the survivor cannot (unless with dispensation) marry a relation of the deceased to third cousins inclusively; (6) Spiritual relationship, contracted at Baptism by the minister and the sponsors with the child and its parents; and at Confirmation, by sponsors with the child and its parents.

There are other impediments called *impedient*, or forbidding, which render marriage unlawful though the marriage is a real one. These are: (1) Mixed

marriages (unless with dispensation); (2) Solemnization of marriage at the forbidden times; (3) Espousals to another person (unless annulled by mutual consent).

Marriage between Catholics, or between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, to be valid, must be contracted before a duly qualified priest, or the Bishop of the place, and two witnesses. When the parties are not able to write, another witness must be added. A qualified priest is (1) the parish priest of the place where the marriage takes place, or (2) any of the priests placed by the Bishop with cure of souls in a mission, or (3) any approved priest whom the parish priest, or priest having cure of souls, or the Bishop of the diocese, may delegate. Therefore marriage before the Registrar, or in non-Catholic places of worship, or without the presence of a qualified priest, is not only unlawful and sinful, but null and void. However, in case of death, a marriage is valid if celebrated in the presence of two witnesses and of any priest; and when a district has been without a qualified priest for a month, and it has been impossible for the same period to secure the presence of one, all that is necessary for the validity of a marriage between Catholics is the presence of two witnesses.

For a qualified priest to assist lawfully at a marriage within his own district, one of the contracting parties must have lived in this district for a month, or must be exempted from so doing by his or her Bishop or parish priest. The banns must be published at the principal Mass on three Sundays or Holy-days of Obligation. If the parties belong to different churches, the banns must be published in both. The marriage should be celebrated by the priest in whose mission the bride lives, unless there is some good reason to the contrary. The provisions regarding the registration of marriages have to be complied with at once by the priest assisting at them.

Catholics ought to know clearly what they have to do in order to receive validly and lawfully the Sacrament of Matrimony, and should understand that their marriage must be a Catholic marriage, celebrated by a Catholic priest before witnesses, or it is no marriage at all.

Mixed Marriages are marriages between a Catholic and one who, though baptized, does not profess the Catholic faith. The Church has always forbidden mixed marriages and considered them in principle unlawful and pernicious. When the Church permits a mixed marriage by granting a dispensation for very grave reasons and under special conditions, there is to be no nuptial Mass, no Blessing. Her priest stands sadly by to witness, not to bless. The conditions are: (a) That *all* the children that may be born of the marriage shall be baptized, and brought up in the Catholic Faith. (b) That the Catholic party shall have full liberty for the practice of the Catholic religion. (c) That the Catholic party shall endeavor to convert the other to the Catholic Faith. (d) That no religious marriage shall take place elsewhere than in the Catholic Church.

It is a sacrilege to contract marriage in mortal sin, or in disobedience to the laws of the Church; and, instead of a blessing, the guilty parties draw down upon themselves the anger of God.

Sacramentals—These are sacred objects, words, and actions, by the devout use of which the faithful obtain grace. They are called Sacramentals from a certain resemblance which they bear to the Sacraments. But there is a great difference between the two. The Sacraments were instituted by our Lord, and in virtue of His institution give grace by their own power if no obstacle is put in the way. The Sacramentals are instituted by the Church, and for their efficacy depend chiefly on the dispositions of those who use them. Whatever the Church blesses has a salutary effect on

those who use it with faith and piety. The Sacraments are necessary for us; the Sacramentals, though powerful means of grace, are not absolutely necessary. The principal Sacramentals are holy water, palms, ashes, crucifixes, rosaries, medals, and scapulars.

Prayer and the Sacraments are the chief means for obtaining the grace of God, without which we can do no good work towards our salvation. Hence our use of these means should be frequent and fervent. By their help we shall be enabled to keep the Commandments, and so enter into life everlasting.

