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The Sacraments of...  
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# THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

## Part II

*Confirmation, Penance,  
Holy Orders, Matrimony*

*by*

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## CONFIRMATION

Our Lord once found Himself in a town of Samaria called Sichar. He entered into a conversation with a Samaritan woman. As a result "Many of the Samaritans believed in Him" and confessed that He was "in truth the Savior of the world" (John 4:39, 42). On another occasion the Divine Physician cured 10 lepers; only 1 returned to thank Him, "he fell on his face at His [Christ's] feet, giving thanks; and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:16).

We are not surprised, therefore, that there were converted Samaritans in the early days of the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles (8:14-17) we read:

"Now when the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John. On their arrival they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet He had not come upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.<sup>37</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit."

The Apostles conferred a sacrament. This was imposition of hands (matter), prayer (form), and as a result the reception of the Holy Spirit.

This ceremony has been called at various times imposition of hands, or anointing. During the lifetime of St. Patrick, a marauder from Britain carried off some of St. Patrick's converts who had been recently confirmed. The saint thus describes the scene, "Dripping with blood, they

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37. This means the Baptism instituted by Christ, in contradistinction to the baptism of John. Our Lord told His Apostles to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

welter in the blood of innocent Christians, whom I have begotten into the number for God, and confirmed in Christ. The day after the newly baptized, anointed with chrism, in white garments (had been slain), the fragrance was still on their foreheads . . .”<sup>38</sup> In our time, the bishop with his thumb, anoints the forehead of the one to be confirmed. He thus equivalently has his hand imposed over the forehead.

*As to the form.* In the Latin Church the words are: “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 Spirit.” The Greeks employ this formula: “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>39</sup>

*The ordinary minister* of this sacrament is a bishop, but the Holy See can, and at times does, employ priests under definite circumstances to confer it. Pope Pius XII granted to all parish priests the faculty of administering this sacrament to all those who are seriously ill when the bishop cannot be had in time or very easily.

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38. ST. PATRICK, “Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus,” *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 17 (The Works of St. Patrick . . .” et al.), p. 41. Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1953. Newly baptized in the early Church generally wore white garments, indicating their sinlessness. St. Patrick confirmed in this case immediately after Baptism. Catechumens were baptized at the Paschal Mass (Holy Thursday), or at the Pentecost vigil. After the ceremony, for some days they wore white garments. Those baptized on Holy Thursday put off the white garments on Low Sunday (*Dominica in Albis*). In England Pentecost was called Whitsunday.

39. This form is used by both the Greek (schismatic) Orthodox Church and the Greek Church in union with Rome. The members of this latter church are sometimes called Uniates. However, they object to this term and refer to themselves as Catholics of the Byzantine Rite. There are in the United States two dioceses which belong to this rite. They are called the Byzantine Rite Apostolic Exarchate of Philadelphia, and the Diocese of Pittsburg, Greek Rite. There are parishes in various parts of the United States, and the adherents number more than 625,000.

Each sacrament produces sanctifying grace in the soul. Now the sanctifying grace conferred by any sacrament is the same *in kind*, not necessarily in degree, as that which flows from any other. But in addition, each of these sacred ceremonies instituted by Christ, gives the recipient the right to the actual graces which he or she will need to fulfill the obligations which arise from his or her new status before God.

Thus in Confirmation, one assumes the duty to protect and defend one's faith. However, as is well known, this sacrament, like Baptism and Holy Orders, cannot be repeated. What would be the case, therefore, of one who deliberately and with full knowledge received it in the state of mortal sin? Is he forever deprived of the benefits which Christ has attached to this sacred ceremony?

By no means. When he makes a good and sincere confession, he not only receives absolution, and full pardon of his sins, but there is conferred upon him the grace and the title of God's help, which he would have received from Confirmation worthily received.

The same is true, if—which God avert—a priest should receive Holy Orders in the state of mortal sin.

There are two other sacraments which cannot be repeated unless the circumstances change. A person cannot remarry while the other party is alive. But he might have contracted Matrimony in the state of mortal sin. The latter is no bar to a valid marriage. Marriage, however, brings duties and responsibilities. God gives actual graces to help one bear these burdens. These graces and God's blessing will come to the person whom we are discussing, once he again is in the state of grace.

Extreme Unction cannot be repeated *during the same sickness*. What if one receives it after a bad or sacrilegious confession?

He should make a good one, and then he will receive all the consolations and benefits which Christ attached to the sacrament of the dying. The sacrament of Penance can be received as often as one wishes.

(For a brief discussion of Confirmation and its effects, see *The Sacrament of Catholic Action*, by Daniel A. Lord, S.J. [St. Louis: The Queen's Work, 1936] 40 pp.)

## QUESTIONS

1. Is Confirmation in the Greek rite valid?
2. Is the reason why Our Lord instituted seven sacraments, that each one confers a different kind of sanctifying grace?
3. What sacraments do not revive?
4. What is the meaning of the reference to white garments in the statement of St. Patrick?

## PENANCE

The Council of Trent says that the acts to be performed by the penitent are contrition, confession, and atonement. We shall consider first the subject of confession.

What sins must we confess? As a matter of obligation, only mortal sins which we are *sure* that we committed and which we are *sure* that we did not previously confess. A scrupulous person often asks himself, did I ever confess this sin which I committed 10 years ago? If the answer is: I cannot remember, he is not obliged to confess it. The obligation extends only to those sins which one is sure he did not disclose in confession.

For a mortal sin, as everyone knows, three things are required: (1) grave matter, (2) serious reflection, and (3) full consent of the will.

### Grave Matter

With full deliberation, one steals 5 cents. That is not mortal sin. It is, however, a venial sin, and will be punished in purgatory, if not on this earth. One's conscience should be kept clear on this point. Small thefts may lead to larger. So one is advised to confess such sins; in fact, it is well to confess all our venial sins as far as we can, but it is not a point of *grave* obligation.

Would *deliberate* eating of one hamburger on Friday be grave? Yes. What makes that small amount grave? The Catholic Church, which has authority in this matter. The eating of forbidden fruit by Adam was grave. Every disaster and death that have occurred since that fatal act are penalties of this sin.

But what if we eat meat on Friday, and do not realize it is Friday? That is no sin. For sin, we need advertence

to the fact that we are committing a sin. On occasions it is allowable for a Catholic to eat meat on Friday. I shall explain. The prohibition does not come directly from God, as do the Ten Commandments, but from the Catholic Church. Therefore the Church can grant a dispensation when it sees fit. The Holy Father, for instance, grants such a dispensation to all the faithful when a holyday of obligation falls on Friday. A bishop may dispense his subjects for whatever he considers a suitable reason.

Sometimes a priest hears in confession, "Father, I did not go to Mass for two Sundays." "Why not?" he asks. "I had pneumonia." The penitent does not understand the Church's law. The Catholic Church commands its faithful to attend Mass on Sunday, if there is not a grave impediment. Pneumonia certainly is a grave impediment.

### **Serious Reflection and Full Consent of the Will**

Some people are disturbed by what they term "bad dreams." Now if they were really asleep, there is no sin at all. If they were not fully awake, at least they did not commit a mortal sin. Therefore there is no obligation to disclose this in confession. However, if one thinks that it would be for the peace of his soul, he may reveal that he had bad thoughts, but that he does not know if he gave full consent. He may say: "If to any extent I am guilty in the sight of God, I confess this."

### **Temptations Are Not Sins**

This point is very important. We all have temptations; we do not sin every time we are tempted. We need confess only sins.

Often one hears in confession, "Father, I had bad thoughts." That is no sin. Did you take deliberate pleasure in them? Notice that I say "deliberate." Did

you consent to these thoughts? If not, there was no mortal sin at least.

We can illustrate the difference between temptation and sin in this way. Jones is very absent minded. He visits Brown and leaves his umbrella. Brown doesn't want the umbrella. He never asked for it, he wishes the owner would call for it. The umbrella is in his hallway, but *without his consent*. That is temptation.

What is sin? Jim leaves his umbrella in Pete's house. Pete wants an umbrella, and hopes that Jim will forget where he left it. He does. Pete takes the umbrella. Sin means this. You want this bad thought. You deliberately encourage it. You deliberately hold on to it.

Or we might illustrate this point by another example. Mrs. Jones is looking out of her parlor window and sees Mrs. Brown on the street. This person Mrs. Jones detests. She hopes that the lady is not going to visit her. Her hope proves vain. Now you can imagine what an unpleasant time Mrs. Jones has while her visitor is in the house. She breathes a sigh of relief when the latter departs. Mrs. Brown represents *temptation*. If we do not wish bad thoughts, if we sincerely would like to be rid of them if we only could, there is no sin.

But let us take another case. Mrs. A. sees Mrs. B. passing her house. She calls her in. She chats, she rings and asks the maid to bring tea for two. She really wishes her guest to remain. So, if we willingly and deliberately arouse bad thoughts, if we try to hold on to them, that is *sin*.

Only sin need be confessed. However, if you think that you were a bit negligent in rejecting, or at least in trying to reject, bad thoughts, you may state to the priest, "If I am in any way guilty in this matter, I confess it as it is before God." Some people find peace of soul in this way.

## How Can One Get Rid of These Thoughts?

There is no rule that will guarantee 100% results. But there are helps. Pictures in the imagination are removed by inserting others, as slides in a projector.

An English girl saw English prisoners returning after World War I. Some had spent years in captivity. There was no gleam in their eye nor sprightliness in their step. Right then she determined that if there should be another war, she would send books and games to the prisoners. Came World War II and the girl, now a woman, was faithful to her decision. She sent books. And what kind of books do you suppose these abandoned creatures wanted? Books on travel and on fishing. Enclosed behind barbed wire, the prisoners wished to roam about in a world of imagination.

So when bothered by bad thoughts, it is sometimes helpful to conjure up a pleasant incident in one's past life or to compare the respective merits of two ball players.

### Confession of Sins

This, strange to say, is not the most important part of the sacrament. Absolution, at times, may be had without it. For example, soldiers are about to go into battle. Because of the large number of men and the lack of time, the chaplain cannot hear their individual confessions. The chaplain says, "Make an act of contrition and I shall give you absolution." The obligation to confess is this: one must confess all the sins which he can and which have not previously been disclosed to the (or a) priest. The soldiers on this occasion confess all the sins they can, i.e., none. If a man dies in battle after the general absolution, he will go to heaven.

What if he survives? The sins have been forgiven. They *never return* to his soul. But he still has the obliga-

tion later to confess these sins. One must confess all the sins which he can and which he is sure have not previously been confessed.

Or a man had been seriously injured in an accident. He is very weak from loss of blood. A priest rushes up, "Are you sorry for your sins?" "Yes, Father," the poor man says weakly. "*Ego te absolvo ab omnibus censuris et peccatis, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*"

### Contrition

Contrition is not a matter of feeling. Often we do not *feel* sorry; sorrow for sins is in the will. For the sake of simplicity we shall confine our remarks to that attrition which is based on fear of hell.

A Catholic has been away from the sacraments for years. He attends a mission. He is scared stiff to enter the confession box. This fear he *feels*. But he says to himself, "If I die as I am, I shall go to hell." If he has enough fear of hell to take the plunge, he has attrition.

Now many people go to confession and often confess the same sins, which may be no more than venial. But they must have sorrow for them. Of course they do not need to be as sorry as if they had been guilty of mortal sin, but sorrow for even venial sin must be efficacious.

How can they obtain this sorrow? Here is a method suggested. Pick out some sin of your past life for which you have real sorrow. At the end of each confession say, "For these sins and all the sins of my past life, and especially for (here say a sin against the first, second, or whatever commandment it is), I am sincerely sorry, beg penance and absolution."

### Purpose of Amendment

A firm purpose of amendment is also essential for a good confession. If a person intends to go right on sinning, he certainly is not sorry for his sins.

Does this mean that I must feel certain that I shall not commit these sins again? No; a firm purpose of amendment means that I am so sorry for my sins that, with the help of God's grace (which is not only helpful but necessary) and as far as I can, I shall not commit these sins or any other sins again. This purpose can be firm even though we know from past experience that we shall be tempted again. Yet we are sorry and are determined to try to overcome any future temptations in this line. It means, too, a determination not to run into temptation, a determination to avoid the occasions of sin: those persons, places, or things which may easily lead us into sin.

The occasions of sin are different for each person. Those things that are occasions of sin for me, I must avoid. What causes me to sin, what has caused me to sin in the past—these I must give up. If I do not mean to or do not try very hard to give them up, I am not really sorry for my sins; I have no firm purpose of amendment.

If, in spite of your determination, you do fall in the future, do not be discouraged. A fall should make us realize our weakness and induce us to call upon God to assist us. If you sin again, once more enter the confessional. Our Lord instituted the sacrament of Penance for the forgiveness of sins.

(For two brief discussions of the sacrament of Penance, see the two pamphlets by Daniel A. Lord, S.J.: *When We Go to Confession* [St. Louis: The Queen's Work, 1941] 40 pp.; and *Confession Is a Joy?* [St. Louis: The Queen's Work, 1933] 40 pp.)

## QUESTIONS

1. Why is it a mortal sin if one deliberately eats one hamburger on Friday, but not if one deliberately steals five cents?

2. Is it ever allowed to eat meat on Friday?
3. Is it always a mortal sin not to be present at Mass on Sunday?
4. Is it a sin to have bad thoughts?
5. Is it a mortal sin if we do not banish these thoughts immediately?
6. Why is the absolution given by a priest to a dying man who cannot talk, effective? The man has not confessed his sins.
7. What method is suggested to get rid of bad thoughts?

## HOLY ORDERS OR ORDINATION

The ceremony by which one is constituted a bishop, ordained a priest, or made a deacon is a sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.

A bishop has all the powers which a deacon or priest possesses, and in addition he can ordain priests and consecrate other bishops. For this reason, the episcopate is sometimes termed the fullness of the priesthood.

To a Catholic there is probably no more moving experience than to see a newly ordained priest at the end of an ordination ceremony turn and give his first priestly blessing to the mother who brought him into the world and later gave him up to God.

Ordination to the priesthood takes place at a Mass celebrated by a bishop. Each candidate is vested as a deacon with amice, alb, cincture, stole, and maniple. He carries a folded chasuble on his left arm, and holds a candle in his right hand. He is furnished with a white cloth for the binding of his hands. With his classmates he goes before the bishop and kneels.

The bishop delivers a short address to the clergy and the laity, and one to those to be ordained.<sup>40</sup> Litanies of the saints are sung. In the midst of this the bishop wearing a mitre and holding the pastoral staff in his right hand,<sup>41</sup> prays:

“That you may deign to bless these elect;  
That you may deign to bless and sanctify these elect;  
That you may deign to bless, sanctify, and consecrate these elect.”

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40. Ecclesiastically they are called ordinands.

41. This signifies that he is now acting fully in his capacity of bishop.

The litanies are then concluded.

*There follows the ordination ceremony.* The ordinands kneel successively in pairs before the bishop. In silence he lays both hands on the head of each ordinand. The priests do likewise.<sup>42</sup> The bishop and the priests keep their right hand upraised. The imposition of the hand of the bishop over each ordinand is the *matter* of the sacrament.

The *form* consists of words in the first Preface<sup>43</sup> which the bishop sings soon after: "Grant we implore thee, almighty Father, to thy servants, the dignity of the priesthood, renew in their hearts the spirit of sanctity, that they may obtain the office of the second merit<sup>44</sup> which they have received from thee, and by their conduct may afford a pattern of holy living."

Soon after, each ordinand kneels before the bishop, who with the Oil of Catechumens anoints his opened hands in the form of a cross. The bishop pronounces this prayer, "Be pleased, O Lord, to consecrate and hallow these hands by this anointing, and our blessing. Amen."

Then follows a scene which is deeply affecting both to the ordinands and to all present.

The bishop brings together the hands of each in succession so that their palms meet. One of the attendants binds them together with a white cloth. The bishop thereupon delivers to each ordinand the chalice containing wine and water, with a paten upon it. Each ordinand takes the chalice between the fore and middle fingers, so as to touch

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42. This merely adds to the solemnity of the occasion. The bishop is the minister of the sacrament.

43. There are two Prefaces in the Mass in which a priest is ordained. The second varies with the feast and the ecclesiastical year.

44. The Latin word *meriti* could be translated *importance*.

both the paten and the cup of the chalice. To each the bishop says:

“Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Mass, both for the living and the dead, in the name of the Lord.”

The Mass is resumed. There is a second Preface. Beginning with the prayers of the Offertory, each priest (they are now priests) says the rest of the prayers with the bishop.

At the Communion they go to the altar and each receives from the hand of the bishop one of the particles which he has consecrated with the bishop during the Mass.

The newly ordained priests say the Apostles' Creed, their first profession of faith since ordination. Thereupon the bishop lays both hands on the head of each of the newly ordained priests, saying:

“Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou shalt forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins thou shalt retain, they are retained.”

### The Power to Forgive Sins

The priesthood is essentially an office instituted by Christ to offer up the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. The priest receives power over the *physical* body of Christ. At Mass, the faithful assist. But to assist most worthily, to share as fully as possible in the fruits of the Mass, they should communicate. To do so, they must be in the state of sanctifying grace. Therefore the priest is given the power to forgive sins.

The priest sits in the confessional and acts as judge. But there is a wide difference between a civil judge and the priest. The former can only declare that so far as the evidence shows, the accused is innocent. He cannot *make* a guilty man really innocent. But a priest can.

By the authority conferred upon him by Christ, he forgives sin and bestows sanctifying grace. Those who are thus pardoned have become, to quote the Council of Trent, "Innocent, spotless, pure, guiltless and sons beloved to God, heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs of Christ, so that absolutely nothing holds them back from entrance into heaven."<sup>45</sup>

The granting or withholding of absolution is a true judicial act. In the confessional the priest sits as judge. Now a judge cannot function unless he has subjects.

Ordination gives the priest the power to forgive sins, but it does not designate his subjects. To exercise his power, he needs *faculties* granted him, by either general Church canon law or a bishop. Thus by canon law a pastor has faculties to hear the confessions of his parishioners. In this country, bishops give faculties to priests to hear confessions of anyone in their dioceses. Special faculties are needed to administer the sacrament of Penance to members of religious orders or congregations of women.

A Catholic might be taking an ocean voyage and might wish to go to confession. The Church has provided for this contingency. If there is a priest on board, providing that he has faculties from his own ordinary (bishop) or the ordinary of the port where he embarked, or the ordinary of any port which the ship touches on the route, he has faculties. This is for the whole trip. The priest may hear the confessions of his fellow travelers. If the ship stops at a port, he may absolve all those who come aboard

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45. The words quoted deal with the effects of the sacrament of Baptism received by an adult, but they are also applicable to the state of the soul of one who has received the sacrament of Penance. But St. Paul advises us, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12); and the injunction of Our Lord to His three Apostles, "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41) is applicable to all of us.

and approach him in the tribunal of penance. The same faculties, under similar conditions, are bestowed by the Church to all priests traveling by plane. However, at the destination, their faculties cease. Military chaplains have faculties over all members of the armed forces anywhere in the world.

Our Holy Mother, the Church, wishes to give every chance of salvation to those dying in the state of mortal sin. Therefore it gives to any priest, schismatic, heretic or even excommunicated, faculties to absolve one who is dying.

### The Matter and Form of the Sacrament

We have seen that at one point in the Mass, the ordinand touches the paten and the cup of the chalice. This is called *traditio instrumentorum*,<sup>46</sup> the handing over the sacred vessel to be used in the holy sacrifice. Appropriate words are read by the bishop. At one time, some theologians considered this ceremony to be the matter and form of the sacrament.

Others maintained that these consisted in the imposition of hands by the bishop and a prayer or formula. This was, as we might say, only a theoretical argument. For theologians of both schools held that it was one or the other, therefore there was no doubt that the priest was ordained *during* the ordination Mass.

Those who held the second opinion argued that in the Latin church the *traditio instrumentorum* was unknown for at least seven centuries. Moreover it is not found in the Eastern churches, the validity of whose sacraments the Catholic Church has never questioned.

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46. The Latin word *instrumentum* means a utensil or instrument. In the ordination ceremony, the priest is presented with a chalice to touch, for the function of the priest is to offer up the sacrifice of the Mass.

This opinion is now certain. In an Apostolic Constitution on the Sacred Orders of Diaconate, Priesthood and Episcopate, Pope Pius XII decrees:

“In the priestly ordination the matter is the first imposition of hands of the bishop which takes place in silence, but not the continuation of the imposition through extending of the right hand . . . The form consists of words of the Preface, of which these are essential and therefore required for validity: *Da quaesumus, Omnipotens Pater, in hunc famulum tuum presbyterii dignitatem; innova in visceribus eius spiritum sanctitatis, ut acceptum a Te, Deus, secundi meriti munus obtineat censuramque morum exemplo suae conversationis insinuet.*”<sup>47</sup>

### Proof From Holy Scripture That Holy Orders Is a Sacrament

St. Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy: “Do not neglect the grace that is in thee, granted to thee by reason of prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbyterate” (1 Tim. 4:14); “I admonish thee to stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the laying on of my hands” (2 Tim. 1:6).

The word *presbyter* in the New Testament sometimes means bishop. Thus St. Peter calls himself *sumpresbuteros* (1 Peter 5:1). Now St. Peter was certainly a bishop. But *presbyter* at other times signifies priest. Therefore we do not argue from the first quotation, since the meaning of the term *presbyterate* is not clear and definite. A bishop, however, St. Paul certainly was.

He tells Timothy that grace is in Timothy’s soul by the imposition of his (St. Paul’s) hands. *Is*, that means, still

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47. A translation of the Apostolic Constitution and a commentary on it is found in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 48 (1948), pp. 691-694. A translation of the words of the form may be seen above, in the description of the ceremonies of the ordination Mass.

remains. Therefore he is not referring to actual grace. For that is identified with an act of the intellect or will, and is, consequently, by its nature, transitory. Sanctifying grace, on the other hand, remains in the soul unless expelled by mortal sin. Hence the grace conferred on Timothy was sanctifying grace.

St. Paul tells us the *matter* of this religious rite. It was the laying on of hands by a bishop. He does not mention the form; he did not need to, as his purpose was to stir up St. Timothy's zeal. What more suitable for this purpose than to recall to his disciple's mind the remembrance of a deeply moving ceremony?

(For a discussion of the invalidity of Anglican ordinations, see Appendix I, page 31.)

## QUESTIONS

1. Are Holy Orders one sacrament or three?
2. Since the bishop confers on the newly ordained priest the power to forgive sins, can the latter start hearing confessions immediately?
3. If a priest is on shipboard, may he hear the confession of a fellow passenger if the latter is not in danger of death?
4. What is the essential part of the ordination ceremony?
5. What is meant by *traditio instrumentorum*?
6. How do you prove that Holy Orders or Ordination is a sacrament?
7. Why is the episcopate sometimes called the fullness of the priesthood?
8. What intention must a bishop have in order validly to ordain a priest?

## MATRIMONY

“Christ Our Lord raised the matrimonial contract between baptized persons to the dignity of a sacrament. Hence there can be no valid matrimonial contract between baptized persons that is not *eo ipso* a sacrament.”<sup>48</sup>

It was God Himself who instituted Matrimony. The matrimonial state was held sacred by the Jews. Tobias prayed: “Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. And now, Lord, thou knowest, that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister<sup>49</sup> to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name will be blessed forever and ever” (Tob. 8:8-9). St. Paul tells us that every matrimonial union is a type of that which exists between Christ and the Church. The Church is the bride of Christ.<sup>50</sup>

The union is entered into by the marriage ceremony or contract. It is the *ceremony* which is the sacrament. This ceremony, which had existed from the beginning, Christ “raised to the dignity of a sacrament” when it is between two baptized persons. Baptized Protestants, if there is no impediment invalidating their marriage, receive this sacrament. If baptized married Protestants are received into the Catholic Church, the Church does not remarry them. They are already married.

The ministers of this sacrament are the contracting parties. The husband bestows the sacrament on the wife who receives it; the wife confers it on the husband who receives it.

Why then does the Church require that a priest assist at, or as some people think, perform the marriage cere-

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48. Code of Canon Law, Canon 1012.

49. Sara was not the sister of the younger Tobias as we understand the term. She was the daughter of Raguel, while Tobias was the son of a man of the same name.

50. Ephesians 5:21-24.

mony? First, because the Church has the right to prescribe under what circumstances the sacraments may be validly administered and received. Secondly, that the sacred and religious element in the ceremony may be made evident.

In many countries the religious ceremony is considered invalid, and so the husband and wife must also go through a civil ceremony of marriage. This is not true in this country. Marriage before a priest is recognized as having all the civil effects of a valid marriage. Of course no priest automatically has the license to perform a marriage everywhere in the United States, but for any marriage he may obtain civil authorization if he does not already possess it.<sup>51</sup>

In some cases, Catholics are allowed by the Church to marry without the assistance of a priest. "If without serious inconvenience the pastor, ordinary, or delegated priest cannot be had or approached to assist at the marriage . . . in danger of death, marriage contracted before witnesses alone is valid and licit; and even outside of danger of death, provided that it is prudently foreseen that this condition of affairs will last a month."<sup>52</sup> Very

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51. This very definitely is a religious country. The Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." There are chaplains in our armed forces, and each day's session of Congress is opened with prayer. The words "In God We Trust" are found on our coins and some of our postage stamps, and the name of God has been inserted in our Pledge of Allegiance. Catholics enjoy full rights. In the Oregon decision the Supreme Court ruled that the right of education rests primarily with parents. Parents, therefore, may send their children to Catholic schools. Catholic publications receive mailing privileges. Catholic radio and television programs come freely into our homes. Catholic colleges have Army, Navy, and Air Force training corps. We Catholics are deeply grateful for the privilege of living in this wonderful country. There are no Communists in our ranks.

52. Code of Canon Law, Canon 1098.

likely some Catholics living behind the Iron Curtain have availed themselves of this privilege.

## Divorce

As will be readily admitted, Protestants allow divorce and on many grounds.

Our Lord's teaching on this subject is found in many passages of the New Testament.

“And some Pharisees coming up asked Him, testing Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?’ But He answered and said to them, ‘What did Moses command you?’ They said, ‘Moses permitted us to write a notice of dismissal, and to put her away.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘By reason of the hardness of your heart he wrote you that commandment. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’ . . . ‘What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.’

“And in the house, His disciples again asked Him concerning this. And He said to them, ‘Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if a wife puts away her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery’ ” (Mark 10:2-12).

Our Lord admits of no exceptional cases, even in His answer to His disciples questioning Him on this subject. His words also give the response to the often-heard argument that as marriage is a contract freely entered into by the contracting parties, they may freely break the contract; for the fact is that the nature of the contract has been established by God. The union is indissoluble, certainly in the sense that the contracting parties may not break it. If there is any authority which can dissolve the union, that authority must come from God Himself.

St. Luke is equally clear and decisive: "Everyone who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries a woman who has been put away from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18).

To the Corinthians, St. Paul wrote: "To those who are married, not I, but the Lord commands that a wife is not to depart from her husband, and if she departs, that she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband" (1 Cor. 7:10-11). Note that this is a command from Christ Himself.<sup>53</sup> If the wife is to remain unmarried, that is evidence that the marriage bond still holds, for the Apostle permits second marriages after the death of a partner. In the same letter he states: "I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they so remain, even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn"<sup>54</sup> (1 Cor. 7:8-9). In this same seventh chapter the Apostle states: "A woman is bound as long as her husband is alive, but if her husband dies, she is free. Let her marry whom she pleases, only let it be in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39).

St. Matthew quotes Our Lord as teaching: "I say to you that everyone who puts away his wife, save on account of immorality, causes her to commit adultery; and he who marries a woman who has been put away commits adultery" (Matt. 5:32). But one can commit adultery only with one who is married. Hence a wife who is put away for any cause except for immorality is still united by the bonds of matrimony to her first and only husband. The impression may be left with the reader that Our Lord grants complete divorce and the privilege of remarrying,

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53. Here we may quote two prominent non-Catholic writers. "Divorce Paul did not permit at all. It is to be noted on this point that he diverges both from Roman and from Jewish Law, but follows and possibly quotes Jesus as the basis of his position"—KIRSOPP LAKE and SYLVA LAKE, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 112. New York: Harper, 1937.

54. To burn with the fire of concupiscence, with danger of incontinence.

to one whose wife was guilty of immorality. The same impression might be gathered from Matthew 19:3-12. But that interpretation contradicts the teaching of Christ as found in St. Mark and in St. Luke, also the doctrine which St. Paul testified that he had received from the Lord.

Moreover Our Lord, in Matthew 19:8, said that Moses had permitted husbands, because of hardness of heart, to put away their wives. He had already asserted, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

The disciples understood Him to teach a strong doctrine. "If the case of a man with his wife is so, it is not expedient to marry" (Matt. 19:10). Our Lord admitted that His doctrine was hard on human nature. "Not all can accept this teaching; but those to whom it has been given" (Matt. 19:11).<sup>55</sup>

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55. A more detailed study of Matthew 5 and 19 must be left to specialists in Holy Scripture. J. P. Haran in *Theological Studies* 2 (1941), pp. 198-220, holds that the limiting clause should read "except in the case of adultery." The Jews distinguished between mere separation of husband and wife, and a bill of divorce which broke the marriage bond. Our Lord establishes a principle that a husband whose wife committed adultery could dismiss her "from his bed and board." A similar view is defended by C. Lattey, S.J., in *Clergy Review* 35 (1951), pp. 243-253.

R. Dyson and B. Leeming in *Clergy Review* 20 (1941), pp. 283-294 give a different interpretation. The word "immorality" in our Confraternity edition, or *fornicatio* in the Vulgate, in the Greek is *porneia*. The Hebrew word corresponding became among the rabbis almost a technical term for illegitimate unions, that is marriages which were invalid because contracted within the degrees forbidden by Mosaic Law. In such cases, a husband can divorce his wife (actually she is not his wife) and marry. This view has been defended also by the celebrated Pauline scholar, F. Prat, S.J.

The permission of divorce permitted by Moses is found in Deuteronomy (24:1): "If a man takes a wife, and have her, and she shall not find favor in his eyes, for some uncleanness [*porneia*], he shall write a bill of divorce" etc. Complete and full separation of the marriage bond is allowed in this case. B. Vawter in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 16 (1954), pp. 155-157, has another interpretation of Our Lord's words. Equivalently they were "I say to you, whoever dismisses his wife, Deut. 24:1 notwithstanding, and marries another, commits adultery."

The best interpretation of Christ's doctrine, of course, is the teaching of the early Church. One of the most highly esteemed writers of the second century was Hermas, brother of Pope Pius II. His work *Pastor* ("Shepherd") was held in great esteem, especially in the East. Written 140-154, it dealt especially with penance and forgiveness of sins. I quote a dialogue:

" 'Sir,' I said, 'if a man has a wife who believes in the Lord, and surprises her in adultery, does he commit a sin if he lives with her?' 'Before he finds out,' he said, 'he does not. But if her husband knows the sin and she does not repent, but persists in her fornication, he becomes guilty of her sin.' 'Sir,' I said, 'what is he to do, if the wife continues in this passion?' 'Let him divorce her,' he said, 'and remain single. But, if he divorces her and marries another, *he himself commits adultery*.'"<sup>56</sup> [*Italics mine.*]

(For a discussion of the Pauline Privilege, see Appendix II, page 35. For a discussion of annulment, see Appendix III, page 38.)

## QUESTIONS

1. The ceremony of Extreme Unction and the ceremony of Baptism, at least with the words prescribed by Our Lord, did not exist before His time, but the marriage ceremony did. How then can we say that Christ instituted the sacrament of Matrimony?

2. Since the contracting parties entered the matrimonial union by mutual consent, why can they not dissolve the union by mutual consent?

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56. HERMAS, "Shepherd," Mandate 4; *Apostolic Fathers* (The Fathers of the Church Series), p. 262. New York: CIMA Publishing Co., 1947.

3. What was the Oregon decision and in what connection was it mentioned in this chapter?
4. What is meant by "defect of form"?
5. May Catholics ever marry without the presence of a priest?

## SEVEN SACRAMENTS

The Council of Trent decreed: "If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ Our Lord, or that they are more or fewer than seven, namely: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders and Matrimony; or that any one of these is not truly and properly a sacrament; let him be anathema."<sup>57</sup>

The Council employs the word "sacrament" according to the signification which had been attached to it in Catholic theological circles, i.e., a sacred rite or ceremony instituted by Christ which confers sanctifying grace *ex opere operato*. This means that the ceremony itself is a subordinate, though very real cause of grace.<sup>58</sup> If a sacred rite can produce such an effect, Christ Himself gave it that power. He it was, therefore, who instituted the sacraments.

The word "sacrament" had been used in a fixed sense for at least three centuries. Before that, it had been employed to designate a mystery, the external sign of a mystery, or what we now term a sacramental. Thus St. Bernard refers to the washing of the feet as a sacrament.<sup>59</sup>

Though it was only after a long lapse of time that Catholic theologians began to use the term "sacrament" in the sense now universally accepted in the Catholic Church, the *doctrine* contained in the decree of the Council

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57. The Council of Trent, Session 7, Canon 1. The expression "Let him be anathema" is equivalent to "this is an heretical view."

58. God, of course, is the principal (efficient) cause of sanctifying grace.

59. Fourth Sermon on the Lord's Supper.

of Trent, cited above, had always been taught by the Catholic Church. We may mention the decrees and statements of the Councils of Florence (1438-1445), Constance (1414-1418),<sup>60</sup> and Lyons (1274).

Ecumenical<sup>61</sup> councils are generally held to condemn errors prevalent at the time. The Council of Trent in the canon mentioned above, had in mind Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, who taught that there are only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Most Protestants agree with this view.<sup>62</sup>

The scope of the Councils of Florence and Lyons, however, was not precisely to condemn errors. It was rather to bring about, if possible, reunion with the Orthodox (schismatic) Greeks. The former council also attempted to bring about the submission of the Monophysite Armenians and Jacobites.<sup>63</sup>

In the discussions it became clear that there was no fundamental difference between the Catholic and the other churches on the number and nature of the sacraments. Differences were only *on minor points*, e.g., the Greeks insisted on leavened bread for the celebration of the Eucharist.

From this we can draw a striking conclusion. The *doctrine* of the seven sacraments (not of course necessarily the name) was universally taught and believed before any

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60. In its condemnation of Wyclif and Hus.

61. The term "ecumenical" is from a Greek word and means world-wide or universal.

62. In a preceding chapter we have referred to the Thirty-Nine Articles. Baptists, Congregationalists, and Disciples of Christ hold two sacraments. R. A. Ashworth in *Christendom* 5 (1940), p. 487. Quakers do not admit any sacraments.

63. The word Monophysite is from the Greek and means *one nature*. Monophysites hold that there is only one nature in Christ. Their members are Armenians, Copts in Egypt, and Syrians. There are also Catholic Armenians, Copts, and Syrians.

of the other churches broke from Rome.<sup>64</sup> For these sects have ever held tenaciously to the points on which they differ from the Catholic Church. They neither are, nor have been in the past, prone to accept dogmas from the Catholic Church. But from the liturgical books of these sects at this very day, we can deduce the doctrine of the seven sacraments.<sup>65</sup>

## QUESTIONS

1. Does it not seem strange to prove the truth of a Catholic doctrine by asserting that it is also held by heretics?

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64. The Monophysites were condemned in the (ecumenical) Council of Chalcedon, 451.

65. An excellent work on the subject of the separated churches is D. Attwater, *The Dissident Eastern Churches*. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1937. It has a good index. In 1930, Mar Ivanios, a Jacobite Bishop in Malabar, southern India, was received into the Catholic Church, and was followed by thousands of his subjects. The Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, sent him the pallium, and thus attested to the validity of his orders. On Mar Ivanios see *The Catholic World*, 142 (1936), pp. 604-609.

# Appendix I

## ANGLICAN ORDINATIONS

*Anglican ordinations are invalid.*

Such is the authoritative decision promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in his brief *Apostolicae Curae* issued on September 13, 1896. This pronouncement was issued only after a thorough and impartial investigation by a specially appointed committee.

Of the members of the committee, the Abbe Duchesne and Father DeAugustinis, S.J., held at the beginning that Anglican ordinations are *certainly valid*. Monsignor (later Cardinal) Gasparri was inclined to maintain that they are *probably valid*. There was one American citizen on the board, Cardinal Mazzella, formerly Father Mazzella, S.J., for many years professor of dogmatic theology at Woodstock College. He differed sharply in view with his Jesuit fellow member. Of the five remaining members two may be mentioned, Monsignor Merry del Val, later Cardinal and Secretary of State to St. Pius X; and the celebrated authority on the Protestant Reformation in England, Abbot Gasquet, O.S.B., who was afterward created a Cardinal. As can be readily seen, the committee was composed of men of profound scholarship. They searched the Vatican archives and held 12 sessions.

The minutes of all their meetings and all the papers were laid before the *Suprema*, or highest committee of Cardinals, over which the Pope presides in person.

The *Suprema* voted *unanimously* against the validity of Anglican orders. After long hours of prayer the Holy Father confirmed their decision.

As a matter of fact, ever since 1550, the Catholic Church had *ordained* (not reordained) Anglican clergymen who were converted to it, and wished to become priests. The Roman archives have the complete story of many of these cases.

Anglican orders have been and are invalid for two reasons: defect of form and defect of intention.

*Defect of form.* In every sacrament, the form must express the effect produced, e.g., I baptize thee; I confirm thee; I absolve the; this is my body; by this holy unction . . . may the Lord pardon you; I take thee as my wife; I take thee as my husband.

A study of all the ordinations admitted as valid by Rome shows that the form must express the effect; that is, *either* the order (diaconate, priesthood, or episcopate) *or* its main power. If the main power is not only left out but positively and *designedly* left out, the ordination is invalid.

In 1550 under Edward VI the Roman Missal was set aside for the new Communion Service, and also the Ordinal of Edward VI was substituted for the Roman Pontifical.

The main power of a true priest is to offer a true sacrifice; and one of the main powers of a bishop is to ordain priests, which he cannot do if he is not a true priest himself. An ordinal, we repeat, that *positively* excludes the true sacrifice cannot ordain a true priest or bishop.

In the Edwardine Ordinal the form does not express the grace produced. In it the words of the form are: "Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." Now the power to forgive sins is *not* the main power of the priest. The main power is to offer sacrifice. If one

has not this power, he is a layman; he cannot forgive sins.

The form for consecrating a bishop in the Edwardine Ordinal is: "Receive the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given to thee by the imposition of our hands; for God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and love and soberness."

These words, as may be well seen, might be used in Confirmation, or in ordination of a deacon or a priest. They do not definitely state that as a result of this ceremony, the one consecrated may now ordain priests.

The Edwardine Ordinal was drawn up, as we have seen, in 1550. In 1662, the forms were changed. After the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," there were added, respectively "For the office and work of a priest" and "For the office and work of a bishop."

This addition may be said to have corrected the defect in the form. But it came one hundred years too late. Those who recited the words while imposing hands, had never been bishops, or even priests.

*Defect of intention.* From what has been said above, there is not even the slightest probability that Anglican orders are valid. But the commission also ruled that there was lacking in Anglican ordination ceremonies a defect of intention.

It is sufficient and necessary that the minister of a sacrament have the serious intention of doing what the Church does. As has been pointed out, a pagan baptizing might have an intention which would fulfill the requisite that the effect be produced. However, as Pope Leo XIII says, "If the rite is changed for the express purpose of bringing in another not received by the Church, and of changing what the Church does and what belongs to the

nature of the sacrament by the institution of Christ, then manifestly not only is the intention requisite for a sacrament absent, but a contrary and repugnant intention is present.”

The authors of the Edwardine Ordinal did not believe that Holy Orders is a sacrament. The twenty-fifth of the Thirty-Nine Articles<sup>66</sup> states: “There are two sacraments of Christ Our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and Supper of the Lord. The five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, *Orders* [*italics mine*], Matrimony and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly from the corrupt following of the apostles, partly as states allowed in the Scripture, but *yet have not like nature of sacraments* with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper *for they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.*” [*Italics mine.*]

Moreover, the Anglicans did not hold the Mass to be a sacrifice. Far from it. The thirty-first of the Thirty-Nine Articles states: “The sacrifice of Masses, in which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, for the remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.”<sup>67</sup>

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66. The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church were drawn up in 1562 and became the norm of the religious creed of the church. The Roman Catholic Missal and the Pontifical which were abandoned mentioned the sacrificing priest or the sacrifice by the priest in 50 places. Not once is reference made to either in the Ordinal or Communion Service.

67. On Anglican orders, see H. Semple, *Anglican Ordinations*, New York, 1906; and B. Grimley, *Six Sacraments*, pp. 204-224, London, 1930. In England before the Reformation there were the following liturgies: Sarum, York, Hereford, Bangor, and Roman. In each of these during the celebration of Mass, the words “sacrifice” and “oblation” occurred frequently. See F. J. Zwierlein, *Reformation Studies* pp. 153-159. Rochester (N. Y.): Art Print Shop, 1938.

## Appendix II

### THE PAULINE PRIVILEGE

“A legitimate marriage between non-baptized persons, even though consummated, is dissolved in favor of the faith by the Pauline privilege. This privilege does not obtain in a marriage between a baptized party and a non-baptized party entered into with a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of worship.”<sup>68</sup>

“Before the converted and baptized spouse may validly contract a new marriage, he (or she) ought . . . to ask the non-baptized party,

“Whether she (or he) wishes to be converted and to receive baptism,

“Or at least wishes to live together peacefully without contumely of the Creator.

“These questions [*interpellationes*] ought always to be had, unless (in a particular case) the Holy See declares otherwise.”<sup>69</sup>

This is the Pauline Privilege, based on a passage of St. Paul. In regard to the terminology above, a valid marriage entered into by non-baptized persons is called *legitimate*. *Consummated* means that there has been sexual intercourse between the husband and wife.

To avoid confusion we shall not explain *disparity of cult* or the *impediment* derived therefrom. The Pauline Privilege applies only to the case of *two non-baptized persons* who were married, of whom *one is converted* to the Catholic faith.

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68 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1120.

69. *Ibid.*, Canon 1121.

Let us now examine a passage in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 7: "But I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they so remain, even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn. But to those who are married, not I, but the Lord commands that a wife is not to depart from her husband. And if she departs, that she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And let not a husband put away his wife" (1 Cor. 7:8-11).

So far the Apostle speaks of marriage among Christians. No divorce is possible. But he continues: "To the others I say, not the Lord: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she consents to live with him, let him not put her away. And if any woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not put away her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but, as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For how dost thou know, O wife, whether thou wilt save thy husband? Or how dost thou know, O husband, whether thou wilt save thy wife?" (1 Cor. 7:12-16).

It must be borne in mind that all the Christians in Corinth (except infants) were converts, and most of these from paganism. *Brother* is a term which the apostle uses to designate a Christian.

*The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, etc.* That is, he receives external sanctification; in other words, is united to one who by prayer and example can influence him for the good, and even perhaps bring

about his conversion. These parties should not separate, but should live together.

*If the unbeliever departs, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.*

*Bondage.* Marriage is a bondage. Generally it can be broken only by the death of one of the contracting parties. "For the married woman is bound by the Law while her husband is alive; but if her husband die, she is set free from the law of the husband" (Rom. 7:2). The case is different here. The Christian party, the Apostle declares, is now free. He or she is entitled to peace. He or she does not have to remain unmarried in the vain hope of once more being united to the pagan spouse, and converting her or him.

This is the Pauline Privilege, but the Catholic Church does not allow anyone to make use of it, until she has gone through an intensive and detailed study of the case.<sup>70</sup>

The Pauline Privilege is handled first on the diocesan level, then reviewed by the Congregation of the Rota in Rome. The Holy Father then grants the divorce personally on the advice of the Congregation.

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70. On 1 Cor. 7:8-16 see F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul* (translated by John L. Stoddard), Vol. I, pp. 112-115. New York, 1926.

## Appendix III

### ANNULMENT

It is sometimes said by non-Catholics, "The Catholic Church does not grant divorces, but it grants annulments, which are the same thing, to people who are sufficiently rich or powerful."

Annulment is *not* the same thing as divorce. Divorce is had between married persons. The decree of annulment means an authoritative decision that the two parties never really have been married.

The Catholic Church has the right to declare what conditions must be fulfilled in order for her subjects validly to receive the sacraments. With the exception noted above, where a priest with authority to marry is not available and as far as can be foreseen will not be available for a month, Catholics must marry in the presence of a priest.

Catholics know that. They realize that if they go through a marriage ceremony before a Protestant minister or a justice of the peace, they are not married in the eyes of God. Some of these seek an annulment. Marriages not before a priest, to use ecclesiastical terminology, suffers from "defect of form." Cases of annulment on grounds of defect of form do not require a court trial, and are handled by diocesan courts. Many of these are granted without fee.

Cases on other grounds are first discussed by diocesan matrimonial courts and the decisions are sent to Rome for approval or rejection. In 1951, Rota cases concerning topics other than defect of form totaled 180. In these the final decisions were, 123 *non constat de nullitate*, no annulment; 57 *constat de nullitate*.

In the case of those who can afford it, a fee is charged. This is to cover costs, i.e., collecting evidence, typing copies of statements of witnesses, services of technical experts such as doctors, psychiatrists, etc. In Rota cases where the parties may (if they wish) engage canon lawyers to handle their interests, they have to pay these lawyers.

Two persons who were never able to secure a decree of annulment from the Catholic Church were Henry VIII and Napoleon.

