

*Parish
Apostles
for
Converts*

*By
Bernard A. Sause, O.S.B.*

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for
Converts*

Discussion Club Outline

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INTRODUCTION

It is said by those who should know what they are talking about that over a billion persons living today have never heard the holy name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. That's quite a crowd! You can get some notion of its size by remembering that there are about a billion minutes in 1900 years. And it was that long ago that the Lord Christ founded His Church as a missionary society by telling His apostles just before the Ascension to go forth and teach all nations.

Thoughtful Christians and smart pagans must sometimes wonder why we have failed to do a better job for the Master.

In fact, Catholics who are serious about their faith and others who are a little thoughtful must sometimes wonder why 65% of Americans do not belong to any church at all. To fulfil the dearest wish and final command of our Lord we have not gone forth as far as our own back yards or the corner drug store.

This book by the Rev. Dr. Bernard Sause, O.S.B., is not an academic examination of the missionary problem. Father Bernard is not presently concerned with the big world outside—the billion who have never heard the name of Christ. He knows that they will inevitably get their chance at salvation, but he does want us Catholics to take care of ourselves and to do what we can to answer the questions of the man next door. The book is, in reality, a blue print in the modern style of making our Catholic people more articulate. It is a plan in the tempo of today for mobilizing the forces of a parish and, at the same time, it is a course of training for Catholic men and women in the tremendously important campaign of winning their friends for Christ.

Any pastor who adopts this book as an outline for the investigations and discussions of his Confraternity of Christian Doctrine will find the people becoming more aware of the anointing as soldiers of Christ which they received in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Such a pastor will find his people becoming more articulate in things pertaining to religion and the Church. They will really want to "get going" on Catholic Action as the Vicar of Christ and their Bishops want them to.

And the lay folk who peruse this book and carry out its suggestions will soon have the feeling that they are very definitely in step with a modern trend. For publishers and booksellers report a considerable decline in the sale of novels and other forms of light literature. Instead, the public is buying books that deal with religion, philosophy and other matters fundamentally important and serious. Whatever the cause for this extraordinary change in the reading habits of our fellow-Americans, we Catholics ought to be glad. When the average man starts to think seriously about religion or philosophy or anything else that is important, he is going to ask questions. The ability to answer such questions and thus to exercise the apostolic vocation of making converts is within the reach of any Catholic who will take the trouble to make room in his head and heart for the contents of this book, *Parish Apostles for Converts*.

+Frank A. Thill
Bishop of Concordia

Concordia, Kansas
Feast of Corpus Christi, 1941

FOREWORD

This booklet is presented with the hope of helping Catholic laymen to speak intelligently with non-Catholics on religious questions. It is impossible within the limits of these pages to foresee and attempt to answer all the questions and objections that may be put to Catholics about the Church. Not only is such a plan impossible: it is undesirable. The ready-made answer to stock difficulties does not draw souls to God, according to the testimony of converts. A rounded out reflection on the Church is necessary. A spirit is to be developed, prayed for, used.

The Catholic Church is by its nature a missionary society founded by Christ. All priests and all laymen have a sacred obligation before God to spread the faith. No Catholic can cease to be an apostle without becoming less a Catholic. Apostleship calls for the spirit of the missionary, founded on charity.

The same spirit which carries young priests and Sisters to foreign lands, to bring the consolation of the Gospel to unprivileged peoples, must find a place in the daily life of the Catholic. Without that spirit, no parish is a truly "living parish"; no Catholic life is complete.

Ready-made answers are helpful. But they cannot fulfill the whole purpose, or even the more important part of it. The Catholic with the correct missionary and catechetical spirit wants more. What he wants is born of a proper appreciation of the Church. It is the expression of a true love of neighbor and a desire to serve Christ. The Catholic with this spirit wants a plan of life which will enable him to live in the Church so that his word and example will furnish the answer to men wishing to know of Christ and His Church.

He wants the proper setting into which reasoned answers will fall. He needs an outline for discussion on the positive side of religion with Catholics and non-Catholics which will enable him to profit by their experience, and in turn, to help his fellow-man.

This booklet is an attempt to meet that need.

B. A. S.

St. Benedict's College,
Atchison, Kansas.
St. Augustine's day, May 26, 1941

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The Religious Discussion Club

"The needs of our times, then, require that the laity, too, procure for themselves a treasure of religious knowledge, not a poor and meager knowledge, but one that will have solidity and richness through the medium of libraries, discussions, and study clubs."

POPE PIUS XII.

Encyclical Letter "To the Church in the United States."

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

1. As outlined by the *Manual of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*,¹ "a religious discussion club is a group of about eight to twelve persons who meet regularly to improve their knowledge of religious questions, intending thereby to make themselves better Catholics. A very important purpose is to develop the power of self-expression on the part of all members. Leadership among the laity is a great need of our day. Through the discussion club latent talent is often discovered and recognized talent is developed.

"The discussion club is not merely for exceptional laymen, experts and college graduates, but for all persons of high school years or over, quite regardless of their degree of formal education. It is for busy men and women, who come together to obtain exact information, a readiness in expressing it, and an opportunity to translate it into action.

2. "In addition to a leader, a secretary should be selected by the members or appointed by the presiding officer of the parish Confraternity unit.

3. "The parish priest or some other member of the clergy appointed by him should be invited to act as spiritual director of the club.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. "Many parish groups conduct a leadership course for four or six weeks before the opening of the regular semester. The weekly preparation of a specific lesson within the regular semester is sometimes more practical.

2. "The leader, who is also a learner, conducts the informal discussion, using the "Discussion Aids" after each paragraph, and the "Added Suggestions for Discussion" given at the end of each chapter. Every member should be given an opportunity to take part in the discussion, and his or her opinion on the subject should be considered and respected. The leader should keep his discussion within the limits of the day's topic. At the close of the session he should give a summary of the points covered in the meeting. The particular topics chosen for discussion with regard to non-Catholics and converts may at times present a problem of charity: discussions should be kept absolutely free from personalities. This can be avoided through the tactful direction of the leader, and by bearing in mind the purpose of the religious discussion club, and by remaining within the scope of the topics suggested for discussion. Leading is a drawing-out, not a filling-in process. A good leader does very little talking.

¹ Issued by the National Center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, N.C.W.C., Washington, D.C., revised edition, 1939, pp. 37-44.

3. "The secretary calls the roll, keeps a brief record of the meetings, and performs any other duties belonging to the office.

4. "The spiritual director or moderator need not attend all the meetings, but he may encourage the members and show his interest by occasional visits. When a question arises which cannot be answered correctly by the members of the club, it should be referred to the spiritual director.

THE MEETINGS

1. "The meetings should be held weekly in the homes of the members, in the parish hall, or in a classroom of the parish school. All members should feel personally responsible to attend each meeting: one gets returns in proportion to his personal effort and participation.

2. "The meetings should begin promptly, close on time, open and close with prayer, and should not continue longer than an hour and a half.

3. "The order of the meeting follows: prayer, roll call, secretary's report, reading and discussion of the text, summary of the meeting by the leader, assignment of the discussion topic for the next meeting, announcement of the home where the next meeting is to be held, adjournment with prayer."

THE TEXTBOOK

1. The material for the present discussion club is outlined in sixteen chapters or discussions. All the topics deal with matters which can have an almost daily application in ordinary parish life. The first eight discussions should be completed in the Autumn session. The remaining eight discussions should be completed in the Spring semester.

2. Every member of the club should be provided with the textbook and should read over the lesson selected for discussion before the meeting.

3. At the end of each paragraph there is a list of "Discussion Aids." They are largely a review and practical application, in discussion form, of the material given in the course of the paragraph. When the member reads over the material before attending the meeting, he will find it helpful if he indicates on the margin of his textbook where the answers to the different questions can be found.

4. At the end of each chapter there is also a list of "Added Suggestions for Discussion." These suggestions do not necessarily correspond to any direct statement in the chapter. Very often they simply take up where the text leaves off. Much of the information under this section is already possessed by the different members of the club. A little added reading will give whatever information is required. A good dictionary will be of great help.

5. Under the heading of "Suggestions for Practical Resolution" will be found some hints to enable one to live a more active part in this work for souls. The purpose of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, after all, is not merely to help Catholics acquire information, but to teach them to live more practical Catholic lives.

6. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, pictures, and other materials which have a bearing on the discussion for the particular meeting, should be brought to the attention of the club by anyone who possesses them. Newspaper clippings and pictures could most helpfully be preserved in a club scrapbook.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. A patron saint should be selected for the club. The practice of placing religious studies under the patronage of the saints is in keeping with Catholic ideals.

2. Occasional lectures or informal talks by members of the clergy or the laity on certain phases of the subjects touched upon or suggested in the textbook will stimulate interest and widen the field of discussion. These activities should not be promoted, however, at the expense of the regular club programs.

3. At the close of the club season, a joint meeting of the discussion groups of the parish or of several parishes may be arranged.

PRAYER BEFORE MEETING

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

(Versicle) Send forth Thy spirit and they shall be created.

(Response) And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let Us Pray

O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Indulgence of five years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual condition, if the prayer has been recited daily for a month. *Preces et Pia Opera*, 265.)

DISCUSSION I

The Attitude Toward the Non-Catholic

1. Getting the Catholic Spirit

Catholics often admit that they do not fully understand questions on religion asked by non-Catholics. They are aware, also, that the non-Catholic does not understand their answers, or at least does not act upon them. The two great bodies of people, Catholics and non-Catholics, do not speak the same language. When talking of religion, they do not think the same thoughts.

The Catholic knows that there must be a truly Catholic answer to every question on religion. He realizes also that he has not found it, or, possessing it, cannot make others understand. He is certain that there must be a convincing reply to every objection raised against the Church. But he must admit that objections are keeping many from joining the Church.

One reason why the answers often fail to satisfy is because Catholics are too much concerned with "Where can I find something about infallibility," when intelligent obedience to an infallible authority is the convincing answer. It is easy to quote a few pat lines memorized from a standard source-book, but the impressive Catholic answer is a life based upon the Divine Master's teaching. The Church takes a solid year to outline His doctrines in her official worship. Bishops, priests, and religious devote a life-time to its study. They die with the task unfulfilled.

We Catholics become too engrossed in what we are going to tell our non-Catholic neighbor. Faithful memory which can reproduce arguments, the use of attractive English, carefully thought out rejoinders, do not win souls. Prayer, zeal, the Spirit of Christ and His apostles, the willingness to be looked down upon, and even to be considered a fool for the sake of Christ, have brought whole nations to the foot of the Cross.

Jesus frequently went up into the mountain to pray (Luke, 21: 37), or took His disciples apart into a desert place, to rest awhile (Luke, 9: 10) in retreat and for our instruction. St. Benedict spent three years in a cave as his preparation for one of the most fruitful spiritual lives in the history of the Church. His followers, who converted Northern Europe, carried no libraries with them, but were zealously trained to a life of prayer and good example. St. Francis of Assisi, who influenced nations and centuries, became one with the poor so that he could say "Our Father" with the fullest meaning. The appeal of the Jesuit missionaries

to our Indians did not rest on learning or arguments. They showed Christ and His Church to the nations, and won whole tribes to God.

What enabled these men to win peoples to the faith must be the answer we search for in dealing with our non-Catholic friends.

It is a mistake to place an exaggerated importance on the value of mere learning. It is wrong to suppose that the task of bringing people into the Church is the exclusive duty of priests and religious. A thorough knowledge of the Church is necessary. But every conscientious Catholic whose training has been on his knees, and whose life is modelled on resolutions formed there, has prepared himself well to be God's instrument when the grace of conversion is to be bestowed upon his neighbor.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. The Church has many mission fields in the United States among the Negroes, Indians, and the Mexicans. It is hard work for the missionaries. What preparation would you consider most necessary for them? How much of the same preparation should the parishioner have in his parish?

2. A non-Catholic friend tells you that he would like to know something about the Church, and asks for some books to explain the faith. He has a high school education. What books would you recommend for him? See page 112.

3. If you saw a promising chance to bring a non-Catholic friend into the Church, what prayers would you daily say for him? What else would you do for him?

2. Getting the Non-Catholic Viewpoint

It is not an easy matter for the Catholic to be perfectly fair in dealing with the non-Catholic. Absolute fairness demands that he weigh many points about which he knows little or nothing. Conscientious Catholics often take for granted that all outsiders have an interest in the Catholic Church. They cannot understand that what is world-wide in scope has failed to claim an important place on the horizon of every man's little world. They mean well, but they simply do not possess all the facts for drawing their rather hazy conclusion.

Most of the persons with whom the American Catholic comes into contact possess few fully Catholic standards. Their whole family training and formal education have lacked any influence of the Church. They have been taught and daily act upon many principles which are directly opposed to the Catholic way of life. More often than not, they are unsuspecting victims of a prejudice which they have never called into question.

If these good people have occasionally "discussed religion" with Catholic friends, it has been on some isolated point which has not been made to fit into any general plan of the teaching

of the Church. They feel no inclination toward Catholicity, and little, if any, affection for it. Put the Salvation Army on a much grander scale, and ask the Catholic what he thinks of the organization. That is about what the non-Catholic thinks of the Catholic Church.

But this is all wrong, you say. Certainly it is. But in all honesty, much of the fault lies with the Catholics themselves. They could have dispelled much of the ignorance and prejudice. Collectively and individually they pass up hundreds of opportunities to make the Church known. In the meantime non-Catholics see no reason to think differently of the Church than they do. And as for joining it, that rarely enters their minds.

Then, too, those non-Catholics who have been reared in the more or less strict observance of their churches often feel strongly attached to the same, and loyal to their home religious ties. The attachment may be the result of generations of a family's faithful service to its form of worship. Change would come as a sacrifice to them. To join the Catholic Church would mean deliberately to turn their backs on what they have held dear, however unwisely, for a lifetime. Being Catholics would not be so hard for them: but the break would be painful.

Every adult convert has had to humble himself and bow to the sweet yoke of Christ. Humility comes hard for all.

For some the price of entrance into the Church is much higher. It calls for courage of an uncommon stamp. To bear the unreasoning ill will of one's family is difficult indeed. Sons and daughters have been disowned for having "gone over to Rome." Instances are common enough where conversions, marriages properly recognized by the Church, and the correction of invalid marriages, are postponed on account of some unreasonable relative.

Such considerations must bring all thinking "born" Catholics to two definite resolves. They must try to appreciate God's infinite goodness to them in having caused them to be born to the faith and in placing them in an environment which protects their great gift. And they must endeavor to appreciate something of the sacrifice made by every convert, and try to show a kindly and sympathetic attitude toward any "hunter after the truth."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Recent converts often complain, justly enough, of the indifference and seeming coldness of their fellow parishioners. No one speaks to them when they attend Mass or services. Despite their good will, they are passed by unseen by committeemen, overlooked in the parish activities. Their natural timidity in their position, and the fear of making some laughable mistake, often combine to make their position very unpleasant.

2. Is something being done at your parish to help the members of the new convert classes to become welcome and active parishioners?

3. What can you suggest that could further this cause?
4. About how many converts have there been in your parish in the past five years?
5. Do you think that a more sympathetic attitude on the part of the Catholics would have increased their number?

3. The Sacred Duty of the Catholic

A tremendously rich harvest of souls is annually lost because Catholics do not respond to a sacred duty. The following considerations make it clear that we are dealing with an obligation. Its very nature makes it sacred.

1. St. Peter sums up our Lord's life in a few words by referring to Him as the One "who went about doing good." (Acts, 10:38) Much of His "good" was accomplished through His teaching. We profess to be followers of Christ, imitators of His life and work. That profession carries weighty obligations with it. It also carries with it the great dignity of sharing in the work of Christ under the direction of one's pastor in the program of the bishop. Sharing in the priesthood through baptism and confirmation means a share in the works of the priesthood, much of which is in drawing souls to God. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [crucified], will draw all things to myself." (John, 12:33)

2. The popes have shown a deep and constant concern for those not of the faith. Through the whole history of the Church, they have sent missionaries to carry the message of the Gospel in their names to pagan lands. Pope Pius XII continues to foster this sacred obligation in the remotest corners of the world. He enlists your prayers, granting indulgences for good works and prayers "according to the intention of the Holy Father." Several of these intentions refer to this work of winning souls for Christ.¹

3. In establishing the department of Christian Doctrine in the Holy See, Pope Pius XI stressed the hope that colleges would train their students to a higher appreciation of the faith,

"so that these students, having been more fully trained, may defend the faith against the attacks so commonly made, and that they may strive to instruct as many others as possible."

On this occasion he also stated as his purpose:

"May the greatest stain of Catholic nations, which is the ignorance of divine religion, be wiped out, and may there be a great increase in souls returning to the inexhaustible sources of truth and grace."²

¹ Unless otherwise expressed, the intentions of the Pope for indulgenced prayers and works are the following: a) the glorious increase and triumph of the Catholic Church; b) the spread of the faith; c) the rooting out of heresy and schism; d) the conversion of sinners; e) peace and concord among Christian rulers; and f) in general, the needs of Christendom. *Authentic Decree*, n. 344, 3.

² Pope Pius XI, *Motu Proprio, Orbem Catholicum*, June 29, 1923, Acta Apostolicae Sedis, 15: 327-329.

4. It is sufficient to glance carefully over the program of the work undertaken by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the United States to see how important a place the apostolate for non-Catholics has received.

5. Any experienced and zealous priest knows that there are thousands who would readily enter the Church. Such people are well disposed. Usually they will not think of approaching the priest or asking for instructions on their own initiative. Their gate to the Church is the zeal of the interested Catholic layman. Catholic indifference closes that gate to many.

6. Reason itself makes the point clear to the thinking person. A treasure which grows richer in being shared with others places an obligation upon the person who possesses it. That treasure, for the Catholic, is his faith.

The answer to all this is simple enough. God's plan enrolls us in the work of winning souls for Him. That is our duty. It is also our great honor to carry on Christ's personal mission to men. There is no question of sitting down to reason one's way through a difficult problem. A spirit is to be prayed for and acted upon. The zealous worker for souls will often let this or some similar thought fervently cross his mind: "O God, give me the grace to help some soul into closer union with Thee."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is the closest imitation of Christ's public ministry that you can think of in your parish?
2. Which of the Pope's intentions refer to drawing souls to God?
3. Which saints stand out in your knowledge for their apostolate to non-Catholics?
4. What is the special obligation of the Catholic college graduate in this work?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

Certain well-defined rules must govern the Catholic in his relations with those outside the Church. The following suggestions present themselves as the most necessary and obvious:

1. Charity, the law of the New Testament, must reign supreme in all contacts with non-Catholics. One motive only must dictate the policy: love of God, whose glory is to be increased in the hope of winning another soul, and love of neighbor which grows out of the love of God. Kindness, a sympathetic and understanding attitude, and a desire to help are to be prayed for and constantly practiced. St. Francis de Sales, himself most successful in a lifetime mission among bitter enemies of the Church, may be chosen patron of this work.

2. Every question asked by a non-Catholic must be considered most seriously. Ordinary courtesy must lead one to assume that the inquirer is perfectly honest. An acknowledgment of his confidence, and gratitude for a chance to share in Christ's own work must appear in the tone of the answer.

3. Every question must receive an absolutely honest answer. If one does not know the answer, he is to say so candidly, and assure the inquirer that he will obtain it for him at the earliest possible opportunity. He must then study the means by which the answer to the specific question will be made to fit into *the Catholic plan of life*, explaining its relation to the rest of Catholic belief.

4. Most Catholics must strive to overcome an inferiority complex. They seem to think that each question is asked with the idea of "putting them on the spot." Non-Catholics sincerely want to know about the Church. Almost anything that the Catholic explains about his faith is a new and welcome thought to them, and can work a great amount of good.

5. When viewed from the standpoint of love of God and charity toward one's neighbor, "arguing about religion" becomes worse than meaningless. Proving one's point or convincing another in argument can always cause harm, and can rarely do good. One must make a simple and sincere effort to instruct: God will do the rest, if it is His will.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Demonstrate how you would proceed in answering the question: "Why do you Catholics abstain from meat on Fridays?"
2. Give a practical instance showing that conscious good example is a powerful means of winning non-Catholics to God.
3. What are some of the central points into which you would try to make individual answers fit into *the Catholic plan of life*?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The Catholic population in the 1941 edition of the *Official Catholic Directory* is listed as 22,293,101. During the same year there were 76,705 converts made to the Church. That is, approximately, one convert to every three hundred Catholics. Do you think that that is a worthy record in God's service, in the light of our absolute freedom in the United States, the means at our disposal, the number of persons actively engaged in convert work?
2. How extensive is street preaching in your diocese? Is it the closest imitation that you know of to the activity of our Lord and His apostles?—Do you know of any magazines or papers published to foster conversions? What is the most effective way of bringing Catholic doctrine to non-Catholics employed in your diocese?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Daily to say some prayer or to perform some work pleasing to God for the increase of the faith.

DISCUSSION II

God Exists

I. The Teaching of the Church

Like most other lessons learned in early childhood, the Catholic's belief in God is acquired for life. Through the graces of baptism and confirmation, ever working in our souls, that belief is kept constantly alive. It is one of the most beautiful and powerful forces in the world.

In the inordinate pursuit of money, fame, pleasure, or simply through immersion in the material things about them, Catholics may close their eyes to God's existence. Deliberate and hardened sinners turn their backs on God. But they know that He will demand an account of them, and live in the dread of that coming final hour. Fallen away Catholics try to act indifferent to His claims, but when they stop to reflect, their consciences give them a bad time of it. Saints and sinners strike their breasts and humbly beg: "Have mercy on me, O God." (Psalm 50, 1) Only "the fool hath said in his heart: There is no God." (Psalm 13, 1)

The universal testimony of the belief of mankind assures us there is a God — savages, unprivileged peoples, students, saints, sinners, of all ages of man's history. The reasoning man finds God in his search for the Cause of all he sees about him. The perfect order in the heavenly planets, the mineral world, plant life, animals, man, demand a personal, living God. Cardinal Newman emphasizes the testimony of the voice of conscience. Above all arguments and human reasoning rises the majestic statement of God Himself, commanding our adoration: "I am the Lord, thy God . . . thou shalt not have strange gods in my sight." (Deuteronomy, 5: 6-7)

The whole Catholic plan of life centers about God. Birth and death, sickness and health, poverty, talent, beauty of soul, are all from Him and lead to Him. A life that the world calls successful, and the life of many disappointments and bitter emptiness come from the same bounteous hand. They are the products of God's will. They are the raw materials given by Him out of which man fashions his praise of God, or refuses to do so. The Catholic teaching is as simple as it is difficult to follow. All that God asks of His intelligent creatures is submission. He wants them to bow their heads and say: "*Thy* will be done." (the Our Father)

From the dawn of reason to the grave, God must be the center of Catholic life.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What argument impresses *you* as the most convincing proof of God's existence?
2. What argument do you think would most readily convince the person who belongs to no church whatever?
3. What is the first commandment of God?
4. What act of religion causes you to think of God most vividly? The Sacrifice of the Mass? Confession? Witnessing the administration of Extreme Unction? Reflection on death and the judgment (Gospel of the Mass for the last Sunday after Pentecost, and the first Sunday of Advent)? God's presence among us at prayer? ("For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew, 18: 20)

2. Catholic Faith and Daily Practice

There are two sides to the life of every Catholic which are hard to reconcile. About his belief in God there can be no doubt. In fact, only the power of God's grace can keep that faith constant and firm, despite the average man's negligence in fostering it. Such is human frailty that conduct is often opposed to belief in sacred matters. Man is too much attached to the things about him, too much a slave to habits by which he seeks his own well-being and comfort to keep his mind often on God.

He believes in the Trinity. He probably can recall passages from the catechism about the three divine Persons. But as one watches him make the sign of the Cross, the sacred ceremony is certainly no indication of deep faith.

Few moments are more inspiring to the Catholic than the consecration of the Mass. All is hushed. Every head is bowed. At the sound of the bell, all eyes are reverently directed to the elevated Host. But when the same Catholics genuflect before their Eucharistic Lord on leaving the Church a few minutes later, their adoration is often quite slovenly and careless.

Catholics have an implicit belief that their prayers are heard and answered. But it is not uncommon to hear complaints of unheard and unanswered prayer. Prayer is often abandoned after a few unsuccessful petitions. Men at times try to make of religion a means to force God to do *their* will in *their* chosen way.

Charity is recognized as the keystone of the entire New Testament. In theory the doctrine is embraced enthusiastically. But Catholic employers show little of the justice or love of fellow man outlined in the Catholic social program. The sin of scandal is rarely thought of as a sin. Pleas from the altar and the Catholic press for the help of the poor of the parish, orphans, and others

in need are unheeded or are accorded only a half-hearted response by many with the means to help.

Catholic America has a serious work on its hands. It has had only an indifferent success to date in its appeal to the non-Catholic. God is not satisfied with indifferent success. Catholics must lay a firm foundation to bring a knowledge of God to the non-Catholic by word and example.

These and hundreds of other weaknesses dot most Catholic lives. But God has His designs, and they fit into a plan. And in his confession, the sincere Catholic casts himself upon his knees and implores God in all humility "not to despise the flesh He made." Whatever his weaknesses, the Catholic believes firmly in God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Can you indicate some present-day instances of the effects of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation showing the strength of faith?
2. Why does the spiritual part of our religion fail to make a deeper impression on our daily lives?
3. What other examples of charity can you mention which would show a greater practical belief in God's existence and presence among us?

3. What the Non-Catholic Cannot Know of God

Delicacy, prudence, and tact are required in handling the following question. Americans professing no religious belief are quite unconcerned about God and His relation to them, or their relation to Him. But they resent any suggestion that they do not believe in God. They will sing *God Bless America* and see no inconsistency in having done nothing to merit God's blessing.

Even greater tact is called for in dealing with non-Catholic church-goers. They have retained all too little of the revealed knowledge of God. They have abandoned traditional forms of worship. Purely material motives inspire their actions, to a large extent. They cannot know of God as He is, nor order their lives on that belief, because only one Church is empowered to teach that doctrine. They have the Bible, or most of it, but the Sacred Text is an authority only when correctly interpreted by the Church.

The Vatican Council, it is true, makes it very clear that man can know God with certainty through the unaided human reason. But the whole history of the human race in the Christian centuries shows conclusively that man can easily fall into the gravest errors about God. That is particularly true since the sixteenth century when men began to insist upon the independence of human reason, and to refuse submission to the teaching authority of

the Church. For that reason the Vatican Council hastens to add that man must be instructed by divine revelation about God and the worship that is to be offered to Him.¹

To illustrate: An hour's reflective fingering through the Missal and its hundreds of collects gives us a most detailed picture of God. He is addressed as "the Restorer and Lover of innocence,"² but the sects eliminate the various means by which God shows His love of innocence and restores it when lost — confession, the Sacrifice, the means of grace. Catholics pray to God as the One "who grantest to the just the reward of their merits and to sinners pardon by means of fasting."³ But the penitential seasons, the spiritual motives and value of fasting and abstaining, and the other forms of penance commanded by our Lord and the Church are commonly neglected outside the Catholic Church. God can be called "the Lover of chastity"⁴ only by a Church that abominates divorce and has no fear to raise a protesting and uncompromising voice against the open immorality of the day.

Similar reflections show that only the Catholic Church can sincerely address God as "the glory of Thy priests."⁵ Only a correct appreciation of God built upon Catholic faith can beseech God in the words: "O Lord, Jesus Christ, King of Glory, deliver the souls of the faithful departed."⁶ The spirit of independence will not permit a man to bow his head and utter: "O God, who seest that on no strength of our own can we rely."⁷ God's banquet of love has become the source of dissension among the sects, and only the Catholic can say with full meaning and sincerity: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who pouring out the riches of Thy love toward men, didst institute the Sacrament of the Eucharist."⁸

God's mercy is not manifest to them. They do not glorify His name as He desires. The Church's official prayer presents a complete picture of Christ which cannot be obtained outside the Church. That is the heritage of the Catholic, the gift of faith, a treasure to be shared with others.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Point out the measures of tact and diplomacy you would adopt to win the good will of the non-Catholic in so delicate a matter. What failures have you noticed in this connection?

1. *Acta et Decreta Concilii Vaticani*, Chapter 4, canons 1 and 2 *de Revelatione*, (Rome, 1872), p. 138.
2. Prayer over the people, Wednesday, II week in Lent.
3. Collect, Wednesday, IV week in Lent.
4. Collect, feast of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, May 29.
5. Collect, feast of St. Donatus, August 7.
6. Offertory, Mass of the dead.
7. Collect, feast of St. Martin, November 11.
8. Collect, Mass of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

2. Pick out the point in the above citations which to your mind shows the greatest difference between Catholics and non-Catholics.

3. Many pride themselves today on their ability to think independently when it comes to religious questions. Can you show that an absolute authority is necessary to give them a correct appreciation of God?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

1. Those who manifest an interest in the Catholic Church, its teaching, or way of life, will rarely ask a question directly about God. They assume that they know about God. But the Catholic must bear in mind that no answer to any question on religion is complete unless some reference to Almighty God is made in it. Very many questions dealing with religious topics are like blocks to be fitted into a jig-saw puzzle. Put in their proper places, they can be made to fit into a beautiful picture and most attractive setting. Left standing by themselves, they are more or less meaningless pieces of colored block.

2. Thus, the *world* about us is the work of God's hand. (Psalm 8) *Prayer*, about which many questions are asked, is a raising of the mind and heart to God. It is based on the firm belief that God loves His creatures and hears their humble praise. The *Gospel*, as well as the entire Bible, are the source of many difficulties. The sacred books must be thought of as God's word for our instruction and direction. *Virtue* leads to God, *vice* away from Him. The *Sacrifice of the Mass* must be explained in terms of the offering of Christ to His Heavenly Father, which the faithful present through Christ, with Him, and in Him. Works of *charity* are acts done out of love of our fellow man because we see in him the image of God, whom we love, and because of whom we perform the act. The *Church* is the society instituted by Christ to lead all men to God. The ultimate end of every *human act* must be directed to God to have its full meaning. Reference to God must enter into every explanation given to the non-Catholic. Failure to place the question in its proper relation to the entire picture causes most of the dissatisfaction usually found in answers to religious questions.

3. Logic and argument do not lead to God. The Catholic must awaken the desire for God which dwells within each man. God has given each person a hunger for the divine. Many persons are very unhappy because that hunger has not been satisfied. The Catholic can lead his fellow man to God. "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." (St. Augustine)

4. One very certain test of one's love of God is to examine the sincerity of prayers offered for the conversion of sinners. Prayer that grace and light may be bestowed upon a neighbor or friend is a high form of charity. A daily petition for the success

of the foreign missions is a helpful form of cooperation in one of the Church's most sacred duties.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How would you explain fasting in the light of the above suggestion? Obedience to Church superiors? Almsdeeds? Love of one's country?
2. Complete the following common expressions with reference to God: a) the commandments.....; b) the Pope is the Vicar.....; c) Liturgy is.....worship; d) confession is the sacrament of.....mercy; e) the cemetery was once popularly called.....acre; f) Christ refers to the Church as.....house.

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. A Catholic employer has a "No Cursing" sign in his shop. A young non-Catholic apprentice asks him about it. How would you handle the question?
2. A great deal is written today about marriage, sex morality, and divorce. Very little of the explanation is truly Catholic. Can you outline an explanation showing that the sacrament is God's way of permitting man to honor Him, and all abuse an offense directed against God?
3. What prayer best expresses the ideas here mentioned? The *Veni Sancte Spiritus*? (Come, Holy Spirit), The "Our Father" (Thy kingdom come)? The Church's petitions for non-Catholics on Good Friday in the Mass of the Presanctified?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To cultivate a deep desire to see the goodness which God has bestowed upon the Church shared with others.

DISCUSSION III

Sin and Its Consequences

1. What Sin Is

We are in debt to God for everything that we possess. His hand rests upon us from the first moment of our existence. By an altogether special act He creates the soul of each one of us coming into the world. We are *His* in the fullest sense of the word. He creates us "to show forth His goodness and to share with us His everlasting happiness." When we sift it all down to one point, religion is a debt of justice and gratitude, the sum of all the things we owe to God.

It is a wise practice for every one of us occasionally to make a list of God's gifts to us. The very fact of our existence, over which God holds the constant and exclusive control, the gift of grace in the soul, the gift of faith, our understanding, our will, a good home, health, education, a share in the world's goods, legitimate pleasures, are some of the more common gifts possessed by the majority in varying degrees. They will serve as a beginning. From there each person can continue the list at length.

All through her worship the Church strives to honor God for these gifts. The solemnly sung *Te Deum* is the Church's classic hymn of thanksgiving. Every Mass thanks God for His benefits. Many of the Church's official prayers are expressions of gratitude for God's wondrous goodness to us all. Appreciation and gratitude to God form a most important part of the Catholic religion. By the same reasoning, ingratitude to God is a serious part of every sin we commit, and gratitude forms a part of any perfect contrition.

There are conditions attached to the enjoyment of the gifts with which God has blessed us. God places restrictions upon us. We cannot use His gifts as we desire. Our conduct is ruled by His law, laid down for us in the Ten Commandments and in the whole plan of life made known to us by Christ in the Gospel. That plan of life is interpreted for us officially by the Church, using the teaching power bestowed upon her exclusively by Christ Himself.

The way may be hard and unpleasant. The reward of eternal life must be earned. "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John, 14: 15) And that is where human nature balks. God demands our service in proof of our love. He extends His invitation: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Mark, 8: 34) "He who is

not with me, is against me: and he who does not gather with me scatters." (Matthew, 12: 30) We must follow in His path, or declare ourselves opposed to Him. Be charitable, He says, and just, pure, obedient, sober. You must give alms, He tells us, and fast, and abstain, and say "No" to yourselves when false pleasures present their attraction. We must avoid even the occasion of sin and the possibility of scandal.

And the world smiles upon us with its offer of pleasures opposed to God's law. Sin makes itself attractive, and we are led to believe that the forbidden enjoyment will make us happy. The struggle between our better nature and the attraction of sin makes our life a warfare. (Job, 7: 1) Our inclination is to seize the pleasure of the moment. We heed the voice of passion. We close our mind to reason and forfeit our training in virtue. We choke off the voice of conscience which would save us in the hour of trial. We refuse to allow grace to work in our soul. We turn away from God and guiltily satisfy ourselves in the creature. In defiance of the law of God and the precepts of the Church, we have sinned.

We are the only creatures who can stand before God and say: "I will not obey." And this we do habitually.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Can you repeat the catechism's definition of sin?
2. Why is ingratitude a most important element of sin?
3. In what sense is the struggle against man's lower self called a warfare?
4. How many different prayers and acts of worship can you mention in which God is thanked for His benefits to us?

2. Religion Must Include an Acknowledgment of Sin

No one would be so foolish as to maintain that the difference between Catholics and non-Catholics is that Catholics do not commit sin. They do, just as non-Catholics do. "I have come not to call the just, but sinners to repentance." (Luke, 5: 32) The difference is found in that the sincere Catholic acknowledges his sin. Sometimes non-Catholics do that also, in their own way. But right there is the difference between Catholics and all others. The faithful member of the Church acknowledges his sins in the manner commanded by Christ Himself, and as prescribed in the worship of the Church.

The confession of sin is a fundamental part of the religious life of the Catholic. Take away the humility of confession, expressed in God's chosen way, and an active share in the Sacrifice of the Mass loses all its meaning. The sacraments become an impossibility. The prayer of the Church would contradict itself at almost every other phrase.

Confession made to the priest to obtain absolution is demanded at least once a year. Conscientious Catholics desiring to serve God to the best of their ability confess much more frequently, many of them weekly. Whenever possible this confession must be made on one's knees, in the attitude of the humble suppliant. It is a humble accusation of all one's sins, made after thoughtful preparation and self-examination. It is closed with the statement of sincere sorrow for one's failing, and the firm resolve to amend one's life, as well as to do penance* for one's past sins. The penitent begs the mercy of God through the ministration of His representative, the priest.

Most of the prayers commonly recited out of devotion by the faithful contain an admission of sinfulness. Principal among them are the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," the Apostles' Creed, the acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

Before ascending to the altar to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, the priest publicly acknowledges his sinfulness. The faithful repeat his confession. The reception of Holy Communion is preceded by the same admission of guilt. The Church's most solemn prayer of the day, Lauds, begins with David's psalm of repentance, the *Miserere*. Compline, the night prayer of the Church, repeats a confession of the day's faults, followed by an absolution.

The seasons of penance in the Church, accompanied by fasting and other good works emphasize the whole thought of acknowledging sin. They stress dependence on the Church for the administration of God's mercy.

All this has little or no part in life outside the Church. There is no "forgiveness of sin," for there is no priesthood, no hand divinely empowered to raise itself in absolution. There is no "increase in grace," for which the priest petitions God to enable the newly absolved penitent to fight the warfare against sin more bravely. Man's goal of "life everlasting" — we speak in all charity — becomes gravely doubtful.

The Church offers a life which is spiritually rich in the mercy of God's forgiveness. And it is closed to millions by the poisonous errors of "reformers"! No Catholic who has not tried to share the beauty of that life with others by endeavoring to win converts, has an entirely clear conscience before the judgment throne of God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Let the members of the club recite the following prayers and point out the references to sin in them: the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," the Apostles' Creed, the acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition.
2. Can you mention any other commonly recited prayers which contain an acknowledgment of sin?
3. Which are the principal parts of a worthy confession?

3. Today's Loss of the Sense of Sin

An impartial future historian will look back upon this age and find many things to criticize in our religious standards. If he wants to label the first half of the twentieth century he will search long for a better title than to call it the age in which people lost the sense of sin.

In ages past men committed many and grievous sins. Crimes were not unknown, and grave sacrileges stained the human record. History shows that certain sins affected whole sections of society, as they do today.

But the important point is that sin was not taken lightly. Society did not condone the offenses. In the days of this generation's parents, a divorced and remarried man or woman was an outcast, shunned as openly living in the state of sin. There was no boasting of having violated the law of God, as there is today. It was not considered smart, broad-minded, and sophisticated to discuss freely matters which are sinful. As far as careful investigation shows, Pope Pius XI was the first of the Supreme Pontiffs forced to issue a world-wide denunciation against indecency in dress. Gutter talk remained in the gutter, and had at least the honesty not to masquerade as living room conversation. And so through the whole gamut of human failings.

A few decades ago Catholics took a definite stand against sin. The doors of their homes remained firmly closed to the known sinner. They insisted upon knowing with whom their children associated. A Catholic spirit was fostered in the home. All too frequently today Catholics extend an unhesitating welcome into their homes to violators of God's law. They accompany them in parties to the theatre, think little or nothing of "dating" with divorced persons, and place business advancement, social prestige, and a general norm of "convenience" before the rugged principles of Catholicity.

It is no exaggeration to say that the world in which the Catholic moves has lost the sense of sin, and that the Catholic too often and too unwisely has imitated that world.

America is harvesting the seeds of spiritual destruction, sowed in defiance of God. Fifty years of godless education have robbed God of most of the adoration due to Him. Several decades of indecent "movies" and plays have taken their toll. More than one hundred popular magazines are on the black list, but thousands of copies find their way into Catholic hands. The unashamed lewdness of advertising and a large portion of commercialized amusements in the hands of those who hate God, have fashioned the mentality of the day. Catholics "pray with difficulty." They admit "constant distractions and temptations." They "see

nothing wrong" in certain practices. The average non-Catholic simply does not bother his head about it all.

Is there any remedy for all this? Yes. One Teacher can lead a forgetful race back to the path of truth. And He wishes to do so. He said of Himself: "I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." (Ezechiel, 33: 11) God has endeavored (to speak in human terms) to bring men to their senses. Another gigantic struggle of war has swept the supposedly most enlightened and Christian nations. The words of the "Mass during war" strike a sober religious note: "O God, who hast dominion over all the realms and kings, who by striking healest and by pardoning savest . . ." Famine stalks in many lands. Even America has known serious want in the midst of plenty. Drought, and disheartening crops year after year have failed to win men back to God. Sickness, unemployment, disgrace on families, suffering, have all too often proved of no avail.

Modern man, the product of atheistic influence, raises his head and says, at least by his actions: "I will not serve You." He has lost his sense of sin. And it is the duty of the Catholic to win him back to God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How does today's sinfulness differ from that of past ages?
2. Indicate some points by which you think Catholics should take a definite stand against sinful habits.
3. How has God endeavored to bring us to our senses? Do you think there is a growing sense of religious appreciation as a result of what men have suffered in the past ten years?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

1. Man needs a guide in the warfare against sin and the struggle to win or to keep the grace of God. Like the Good Thief, many non-Catholics do not know the God whom they offend. They are willing enough to adore and confess, if they learn of God, and of the malice of sin. It is the urgent duty of Catholics to do all that is reasonably within their power to bring men to a sense of sin once more.

2. Good Catholics can do this in their own home life. Virtue in the Catholic home will wield its influence of good example far and wide. The pagan world is hungry for standards of purity and honesty and truthfulness, and too frequently the Catholic home disappoints it. The conscious avoidance of anything that might give bad example is a very important, if negative, part in this campaign for those outside the Church. The courage to speak openly, although patiently and with charity, at offensive

conduct, suggestive or immoral speech, is another manner of helping.

3. The sacrament of confirmation is the sacrament of Catholic Action. It makes the confirmed person a soldier, whose spiritual life calls for the protection of others. Spiritual soldiers must be alert to danger. They must guard themselves against attack, and protect those dependent upon them. They must also shield their neighbors.

Taking a truly active part in the works of Catholic Action forms another share of the work. This is particularly true of the various campaigns introduced by the bishops of the whole country, and sponsored by the individual bishops in their respective dioceses, against indecent movies, unclean literature, and other causes of sin. To work with them is to enjoy the Church's blessing and God's favor.

4. No Catholic need ever fear that opportunities will be lacking for influencing non-Catholics religiously and favorably. Upright life in accordance with the law of God and His Church will elicit interest and questions. By training and prayer the Catholic must make himself worthy of rising to the occasion when asked these questions. Fervent prayer must be directed to God often that one may have the blessed privilege of bringing about conversions to God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How would you handle the problem of refusing an invitation by a non-Catholic to attend a "Class C" movie? The person means well, intends no offense, and knows nothing of the Legion of Decency.
2. Why is confirmation called the sacrament of Catholic Action?
3. Mention some ways in which you think that modern Catholic homes are not giving the proper example to the world.

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. After hearing the confession of a parishioner, a young priest visiting the community hospital, was stopped by a very ill person whom he did not know. "Will you pray with me, too, Father?" was the simple request. The priest recited the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition with the man, who repeated each phrase slowly. Upon inquiring about the man's condition the following morning, the priest learned that he had died a few hours after his visit. What do you think of the priest's act? What would you think of the same act performed by a layman? If uninvited to do so, would it be out of place for a Catholic friend to offer to pray with a person known not to belong to any church? With a member of a non-Catholic sect, upon request?
2. What measures should be taken to protect the children of the family from harmful companions? From indecent movies and magazines?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Never retire at night without having fervently recited the acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

DISCUSSION IV

The Redemption of Mankind

1. Why the Redemption was Necessary

God's happiness is infinitely great. He has no need of angels or of men, or of any of the things He created. But His goodness is as infinite as His happiness. And that goodness prompted God to share with men His happiness to a limited degree on this earth. It also moved Him to promise the fullness of man's possible happiness in heaven. But so great a gift was not bestowed without a condition. It would increase God's external glory if man *earned* his happiness. And God made it possible for him to do so.

Man is therefore placed on this earth for a purpose. He is to know God and love and serve Him. That is God's rule in determining the success of a human life.

The whole human race stood before God in the person of Adam, the common father of all. Adam is our common *origin*. He sinned personally, and through him all men became sinners. He was deprived of grace. From him all men inherit *original sin*, that is, from their common origin they are sinners. All men daily experience the evil effects of this common sinful origin, namely darkened intellect and weakness of will.

"Somewhat as all the members of a modern business corporation are to a certain extent answerable and responsible for the official acts of the head of the corporation, so similarly, but to a much greater extent, we as members of the race of which Adam was the head and father, feel for better or worse, for weal or woe, the consequences of his acts. Unfortunately it is the woe we feel."¹

Adam's offense was infinite, because offered to God, something for which man alone could never atone. By every standard man could know, all was lost. There remained only one possibility, God's solution, the solution of divine love. God could have pardoned man's weakness and sin. But His love chose a way more worthy of His glory and better for man — a full atonement.

Wayward, sinning, punished with darkened intellect and weakened will, sinful men are still God's children. He loves them. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (John, 3:16) Christ, the Son of God, was true God. His atonement had an infinite value. He was true man: He could suffer and die.

1. Drummey, Francis, C.S.C., *Our Life of Grace* (Notre Dame, Indiana, Ave Maria Press, 1940), pp. 73-4.

The Jews knew of His coming. But despite their knowledge and His wonderful miracles, despite His teaching and the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Revealed Word, they rejected Him. The most tragic passage in the Bible, or in the history of the universe, is the record of Christ's having been put to death precisely because (they said) He claimed to be God.

On the first Good Friday afternoon, Jesus, the New Adam, was cruelly nailed to the Cross. His body stiffened in death, which for the moment seemed to have triumphed over Life Itself. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John, 14:6) Man's debt was paid. "But where offense has abounded, grace has abounded yet more." (Romans, 5:20)

Through that redemption, all the means for acquiring holiness and salvation are now at hand. Men have a tremendous new motive, life with God Himself. Religion has a new center, the Cross of Calvary.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What thought should come to mind at the words of the divine praises after Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament: "Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man"?
2. How did Adam represent the human race? Why is Christ called the New Adam?
3. Show how God sent His only begotten Son to suffer and die out of love for us.

2. How the Redemption is Applied to Us

The human race, represented by Adam, sinned as a whole. It was redeemed by Christ, the New Adam. Nevertheless, God wished the fruits of the Redemption to be applied to each person individually, by his own cooperation with grace. And He devised a divine means for reaching each person through the society whose Head He chose to be. The purpose of that society, the Church, is to make men holy (sanctification) and to save them (salvation).

Within that Church, God reaches down to man, and man deals with God through the Sacrifice of the Mass, the renewal of the act of Redemption. God accepts the official worship and praise from the Church, pronounced by the body of which Christ is the Head. But men are made holy and saved particularly through the sacraments.

Each of the seven sacraments has its own function. Each gives man a share in the life with God (grace) in its own way. Taken together, the sacraments are God's answer to all the spiritual needs of man.

Baptism, the most necessary sacrament, washes away both original sin and any actual sins that the person may have committed. Through this sacrament the person becomes a member of Christ's Mystical Body, which is the Church. Through it the baptized person enjoys all the rights and privileges of the Church. It binds him to profess faith in Christ and the Church, and to obey the commandments. In this sacrament the root of the divine life of grace is implanted into the soul.

Confirmation bestows a special grace, and an intensifying of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, resulting in a greater maturity in the supernatural life. The confirmed person is strengthened, as the soldier of Christ, to profess and defend the faith by word and deed. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, already possessed through sanctifying grace, and intensified through confirmation, are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts bestow a spiritual character upon the problems of daily life, and if the confirmed person uses them properly, will ever lead him closer to God.

Under the appearances of bread and wine, the eyes of faith perceive Christ's greatest gift to man. Christ dwells, and is offered in Sacrifice, and is received by the faithful as their Spiritual Food, in the Holy Eucharist. Just as food is necessary to support physical life, so the divine nourishment is necessary to sustain man in the life to which baptism elevates him.

In no manner does God show His mercy and the application of Christ's redemption so obviously as in the sacrament of penance, by which sins are forgiven the truly contrite sinner. This sacrament will be considered as a separate discussion, beginning on page 48.

By the last anointing and prayers of the priest in Extreme Unction, man is prepared to die in a holy manner, by granting him spiritual aid in the last struggle, and sometimes benefitting him physically when God so wills. Extreme Unction increases sanctifying grace. It remits venial sins, and even those mortal sins which the sick person can no longer confess. It removes the remains of sins already forgiven, that is, the temporal punishment, the evil inclinations and weakness of the will, which are the consequences of sin and remain after the sins have been forgiven. The application of the merits of Christ's redemption is of the greatest consolation to the dying person. It bestows the graces needed for the hour of greatest trial, and comforts and helps to overcome the temptations of the final struggle.

Holy Orders is the sacrament instituted by Christ for the whole spiritual life of the Church. Through it bishops, priests, and ministers are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of applying the merits of our Lord's

suffering and death to others. In Christ's name they teach, rule, guide, and work for the sanctification of those committed to their charge.

In view of their spiritual responsibilities, and by reason of the merits of Christ, won for them on Calvary, man and woman receive abundant graces in the sacred ceremony of marriage itself, and throughout their married lives. Marriage is later considered in detail in Discussion IX.

The sacraments are the chosen means by which Christ enables His followers to reach their goal. Through them He answers all their spiritual needs. He is ever ready to help them in every spiritual difficulty. Good will on their part is the only condition He demands. From Calvary a sevenfold stream flows forth, enriching all who truly follow Christ. God works His miracles of grace in the souls that cooperate in the worthy reception of the sacraments. Anyone who truly loves Christ will endeavor to see to it that the flow of graces from the sacraments will reach every soul possible.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What means did Christ establish to reach the individual soul to apply the merits of His passion and death?
2. Can you think of any spiritual need that is not provided for by the sacraments?
3. Considering the above, why did Pope Pius X so warmly recommend early and frequent reception of Holy Communion?

3. To Whom Are Christ's Merits Applied?

Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, died for all men. (II Corinthians, 5: 15) Not all men are saved, however, but only those who make use of the means chosen by the Redeemer Himself. The Council of Trent expressly declared that: "Although it is true that He died for all, not all will receive the benefit of His death, but only those to whom the merit of His death is communicated."¹

Such a thought is terrifying. It places religion and its works in an entirely different light. When one realizes that the success or failure of one's whole existence hangs in the balance, the Gospel and the religion established by Christ become extremely important. All attention to detailed points, all bickering and quarrelling and arguing over religion must be cast aside.

Certain elements are absolutely clear. Anyone who is honest with himself can see the question. He may not necessarily be led to the correct answer, but he can understand the reasonableness of the Church's doctrine. Christ redeemed all men. He

1. Session vi, canon 3.

bought them at the price of His own Blood. They are His, to do with as He pleases. And He has pleased to outline a method which they are to follow. By it He tests them.

That is His unquestioned right. He paid the price that fallen men could not pay. He ransomed them and made Himself one with them. He desired to remain with them to the end of time. (Matthew, 28: 20) He promised them a great reward, provided that they act as He commands.

Mere membership in the Church is no guarantee that a person will be saved. Judas was a member of the Church, an apostle, with the unusual privilege of intimate association with our Lord. Many baptized men have died in hatred of the Church, as far as one may judge. Others have been called in death while enjoying their sin.

On the other hand, not all outside the Church will be lost. Some do not know of the Church, and their ignorance is not owing to any fault of their own. The Church considers these people not as wrongdoers, but in error and to be pitied. Others may be in doubt about the claims of the Catholic Church. They are under serious obligation to investigate its claims. They must pray for the grace to see the light. Others, finally, recognize the correctness of the position of the Church, which claims to have the means of salvation. Such persons are bound under pain of eternal damnation to join the Church. The following words of Pope Pius IX should be carefully read and reread:

"Far be it from us to dare to set bounds to the boundless mercy of God. We must hold as of faith that out of the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church there is no salvation: that she is the only ark of safety, and whosoever is not in her perishes in the deluge; but on the other hand, we must also recognize with certainty that those who are in invincible ignorance [that is, ignorance which cannot be overcome] of the true religion are not guilty for this in the eyes of the Lord. And who will presume to mark out the limits of this ignorance according to the character and diversity of peoples, countries, minds, and the rest?"¹

Deeper happiness in this life and eternal salvation are at stake. No Catholic can fail to thank God for the graces that have been given to him through no merit of his own. Nor can he refuse to do all in his reasonable power to help others enjoy the same privileges.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How would you explain the phrase: "Outside the Church there is no salvation," a) referring it to pagan natives in missionary lands? b) to Mr. Jones, who steadfastly maintains that "a person can be a good citizen without going to Church: my religion is to do the right thing by my neighbor"? c) to church members of religions which have no priesthood, no sacraments, none of the means of grace instituted by Christ?

1. Allocution, December 9, 1865, as quoted in Richard Felix, O.S.B., *Church or Churches?* (Conception, Missouri, Altar and Home Press, 1936) p. 16.

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

The zealous Catholic must always approach the problem of a conversion with this thought in mind: I may be instrumental in saving a human soul. It is God's work. I must be a worthy tool in His hand. Our Lord promised that if crucified He would draw all things to Himself. (John, 12:32-33) The power is there to draw this person to life in God. Much depends on me, however, for God makes use of human instruments in His work.

1. Our Lord emphasized the value of the human soul. No one reading the New Testament can fail to understand His plea. He compares the soul to the combined wealth of the world and pronounces it more valuable. "For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Mark 8:36)

2. The non-Catholic must be induced to think in the following manner: I must not consider myself as putting the Catholic Church on trial. The Catholic Church has been "on trial" for nineteen hundred years. Millions have approved of her, joined her ranks, lived by her, have been saved by her. They are a part of her now, the Church triumphant in heaven. This tremendous court, conducting a trial over a period of nineteen centuries, was composed of men of great holiness, men of learning, kings, subjects, wealthy men, paupers, saints, sinners. They made great sacrifices for the Church they loved. Thousands of them were martyred for her. They gained the victory over those who martyred them. Even the world applauds their martyrdom and its effects. Then, too, there are the souls of the faithful departed, who have "fought the good fight" and are assured of their reward. Add to these all the saintly souls on earth at the present time, the Church militant. I walk before this numberless jury. That jury *is* the Church. My soul is at stake. The Church is not being judged by me. I am the one who is being judged. And she is the only Church whose teaching proclaims that she alone has the means of salvation.

3. Each soul must be studied individually. Each has its own particular background. Prejudices may be the result of generations of a family's history in a sect that is bitterly anti-Catholic. To act on the spur of the moment does not do much good. The Catholic must think the matter over and carefully prepare himself to help each soul.

4. Sometimes it is impossible to help the person into the Church. Divorced and remarried persons ordinarily cannot be helped. Neither can members of irreligious and prohibited societies, as a rule. Some nourish a prejudice that no human effort

can overcome. Prayer is the only means of help in such circumstances.

5. Catholics sometimes try to excuse themselves that they have no opportunity to bring people into the Church. If they can do nothing themselves, they are at least in a position to help those who are specially trained in this work, namely the home and foreign missionaries. To deny oneself a package of cigarettes a week (or its equivalent) during the course of the year, bestowing the proceeds to the missions, would dwarf last year's offering on Mission Sunday. And it is the very type of offering that God rewards abundantly. The welfare of a human soul may depend on it.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Non-Catholics do not usually think of going to a Catholic church alone. Have you ever invited and accompanied a non-Catholic friend to church? Have you prepared him in advance, so that he would know something of what was taking place? Did you continue to invite the person? What was the result? To what do you attribute the results, successful or unsuccessful?
2. What is the most discouraging type of non-Catholic to deal with in presenting the truths of the Catholic Church? What type of person do you find accepts most readily the Catholic plan of life?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What would be your method of approach and line of argument in appealing to someone over whom you had considerable influence, a son, a daughter, a very close friend, who had drifted away from the sacraments, and had not been to church for more than a year?
2. What was our Lord's attitude toward St. Peter after his denial? Toward Mary Magdalen? Toward the Good Thief? Toward the Pharisees?
3. How should those who are not really interested in the Catholic Church, and give no signs of ever becoming interested, but who want to "argue" religion, be treated?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

When making your morning offering tomorrow, select some person of your personal acquaintance for whom you will offer some act of self-denial that God may give him the graces of which he stands in need. With a little effort the habit can easily be acquired. It is most pleasing in God's sight, for it is His own work. It need never be known: in fact, it should not become known. It is the perfect test of true friendship, and if practiced frequently will make a great difference in your own life.

DISCUSSION V

The One True Church

I. Why the *Catholic Church*?

The most common objection to the Catholic Church voiced by those who belong to other religions may be worded something like this: "What right have you to dictate to us? We are living our own religion. We have our own way of serving God. One church is just as good as another."

They may listen carefully as the Catholic speaks of God, sin, redemption, the sacraments, Purgatory, the divorce evil, and so on. They admit that their churches do not teach the same doctrines on these matters as does the Catholic Church. In fact, it is difficult to get them to agree exactly on what their churches do teach on any given matter. Politeness may prevent them from stating their views bluntly, but members of other churches may consider the position of Catholics as quite "smug," and the Catholic Church as intolerant of the views of others.

"We non-Catholics are doing the same work that you are doing," they say, "without assuming that we are the only correct ones. Let us be practical: instead of continuing to wrangle over who belongs to the correct Church, let us try to get the pagan fifty per cent of America to church."

Such a clash of attitudes can easily lead to arguments about religion, which never effect any good. It may lead to bitterness and make conversions impossible. The Catholic must be mindful of Him whose work he is doing. When tempted by His enemies, Christ never argued, but He always explained. That is the trained approach of groups in the Church who are doing excellent work among non-Catholics today; the catechists, the street preachers, the priests who have many conversions to their credit, our better Catholic writers.

The above outlined viewpoint of the non-Catholic places the zealous Catholic in a difficult position. Before talking to the non-Catholic he must be a) convinced that the Catholic Church is the only true Church. b) He must also hold as certain that the Catholic Church has a legitimate claim in appealing to those outside her fold. c) He must know that this claim can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of any open-minded person. d) And he must equip himself to give this proof.

Catholics must learn to sympathize with the attitude above described. Patience is at a high premium in dealing with immortal souls. God has His own purposes. The Holy Spirit

breathes where He will. The graces of baptism enable Catholics to accept unhesitatingly many things which they cannot understand. The same graces have produced the most marvelous signs of submission in converts.

One convert recently stated: "I have often found difficulty in accepting the Church's attitude with regard to the veneration of the Blessed Mother. The difficulty continued throughout my course of instructions. Despite it, I was convinced that I had found the only true Church. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception almost a year after my baptism, all my doubts vanished. I entered into the prayers of the Church with a gratitude I am certain no 'born' Catholic could ever feel." The same reaction has often been felt after conversion.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is the trained method of approach of successful convert-makers today? How much do you know of their work? Can their plan have a definite part in your life?
2. What must be the attitude and conviction of the Catholic in approaching the non-Catholic?
3. What practical effect does the grace of baptism produce in our souls? What may we reasonably predict it will produce in the soul of a convert?

2. The Marks of the Church

Christ founded His Church in the Holy Land. That is clear from the New Testament. But He foresaw that false prophets would arise to establish religious societies in imitation of His own. To keep us from falling into error, and to give us assurance in the possession of Truth, He adorned the Church with certain marks by which any person can recognize His institution. Every Sunday the solemn words are chanted in the Creed at Mass: "I believe in the one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

Unity must characterize the true Church. In the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, all members are one in Christ. The whole body of the Church militant numbers about 350,000,000 souls. In that immense throng there is oneness. Wherever the Catholic may go, to Maine or California, to South America, Europe, China or Africa, one perfectly uniform doctrine is taught in its entirety. One form of worship unites all the souls into one tremendously large choir praising God. One morality based on Christ's teaching, governs all.

More than that: the Catholic missal, or book of the Mass, has remained basically unchanged down through the centuries, giving today's worshippers the world over unity with all Catholics back to the time of Christ. When he looks at a Murillo painting, or reads a canto of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or visits a great Gothic cathedral, the true Catholic needs no explanations.

He is one with the minds that conceived these things. If he lives truly as a Catholic, he lives what they express.

The true Church must be *holy*. The Catholic Church is holy in her Founder, our Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the great body of the Church. He offers the Church's Sacrifice, which is His own. As Head of those united in prayer, He presents their adoration and petitions to His Father. He gives Himself in the sacraments. The Church is holy in Christ's Blessed Mother, through whose intercession the faithful obtain so many mercies and graces. It is holy in the heroic sanctity of the great saints, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins. It is truly holy in today's many souls on the borderline of heroic holiness, among them bishops, priests, nuns, and laymen outstanding in charity and zeal. It is holy in its purpose of making all men holy and ultimately saving them. The Church is holy in having preserved intact all the means of holiness which have produced these effects, not just *some* of the doctrines, or counsels, or commandments which have been found agreeable or "in keeping with the times," but the whole of Christ's teaching.

Catholicity means that the Church must be a society whose doctrine, worship, and morality are universal: for all men, at all times, in all places. Christ sent forth His apostles with the mission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe *all* that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you *all days*, even unto the consummation of the world." (Matthew, 28: 19-20)

The Church is for all men, the innocent child, man in his full power, old age, for the healthy or the sick, the wealthy and the poor, the learned, the unlettered. The missionary work goes on from the days of Christ until the end of time. The Catholic Church teaches the *whole* doctrine of Christ, with no regard for convenience or good pleasure, or the widely accepted immoral standards of the day.

The Catholic has the assurance, on divine authority, that his Church will last forever. Christ is its Head: the body will not perish. To any student of history, a most convincing argument of the Church's divinity is found in studying the devilish attacks she has withstood. Persecutions by her haters have been numerous. Schisms and heresies have torn her from within, carrying away millions from her embrace. But she grows stronger with the passing of decades, and after nineteen centuries she is ever more loved by those who really know her. The more the Catholic studies the history of his Church, the more profound grows his love for this holy body of which Christ is the Head.

The Church is *apostolic* because she alone traces her origin to the days of the twelve apostles. From Christ directly through

them, she receives in an unbroken line her mission, her power of orders, and her doctrine. Christ established a society grouped under the leadership of the twelve, placing Peter at its head. In the most solemn terms He commanded them to preach in His name. (Matthew, 28: 19)

All lines of historical study go back to one starting point: Christ and His apostles. If one studies the hierarchy, he begins with Pope Pius XII, now gloriously reigning, and goes back in an unbroken line to St. Peter. He recognizes the body of the bishops throughout the world, carrying on their mission under the authority of the pope, as the successors of the group of the apostles. If he examines today's worship, he finds that Catholics the world over are offering essentially the same Sacrifice, chanting the same prayer, administering and receiving the same sacraments as did the apostles. The doctrine taught today in the Church is identical with that of the apostolic age. Catholics read the epistles of Peter and Paul and James, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and hear them explained in terms of today, see them actually lived in the Church.

And the Catholic heart pulsates strongly with gratitude and love as the words of the Creed are chanted during the Sacrifice of the Mass: "I believe in the one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why did Christ bestow certain recognizable marks on His Church?
2. Considering the great number of sects today, which mark of the Church should be most appreciated by Catholics? Or must all four of them necessarily be considered together?
3. Which mark of the Church do you think will usually impress non Catholics most? Why do you think so?

3. No Other Church Possesses These Marks

The Catholic must guard against any offense in so bold a statement. Any apparent bluntness must be attributed to one cause: it is impossible to do Christ's work without speaking plainly, as He did.

Among the hundreds of non-Catholic churches, there is none of the *unity* upon which Christ Himself, His sacred writers, and the early Fathers of the Church insist as the distinguishing mark of the true Church. (John, 17: 20-21) The sects wrangle among themselves. Their members are agreed on only the broadest outlines of Jesus' doctrine, which points of agreement are usually so de-spiritualized that even unbaptized persons often readily adopt them. There is no unity of worship as by a society conscious of adoring God in God's chosen way. The Sacrifice

without which Christ's coming is deprived of meaning, is lacking in their churches. The same is true of the sacraments and the prayer of the Church. There is no uniformity of discipline. No supreme head is vested with any authority other than his own, or that given to him by men like himself. No one, certainly, dares speak with the authority of Christ's Vicar.

The non-Catholic churches are not *holy* in their founders in any sense in which Christ is the fountain of holiness in His Church. Luther cast disgrace on his religious order and the priesthood by his immoral life and apostacy. Zwingli and Knox were fallen priests. Calvin studied for the priesthood but was not ordained. The moral life of Henry VIII hardly warranted his role of a religious reformer. Mrs. Baker-Eddy was a divorcee. In more than three hundred years no new names have been added to the calendar of saints in these churches. Not one life could be brought up for consideration which could stand the rigorous process for testing heroic sanctity in the Catholic Church. Small wonder, for the means of grace, established by Christ Himself, and instituted by the Church, have been cast aside, wholly or in part. Nevertheless, the Protestant churches number many morally good persons, members who are upright, honest, truthful, charitable according to their own lights, sincere. At times they put sinful Catholics to shame. Such is the mystery of the will of man: some men whose churches have abandoned the means of grace, remain commendably good; others with the grace of God ever available, choose lives of sin! But only the Catholic Church remains holy in her Founder, in the means of grace and holiness extended to her members, in the lives of heroic sanctity.

Non-Catholic sects are what the term implies, *not catholic*. They lack spiritual universality. They are not founded for all men, or for all times, or for all places. Nor does any one of them teach the entire doctrine of Christ. The staggering number of souls that lived on this earth for the fifteen centuries of the Christian era are unaccounted for by them. No one of them in the United States numbers more than three per cent of our present American population. About fifty sects count fewer than 1,000 souls apiece! Nor are they for all times. None of them were heard of until four centuries ago. Some of them have disappeared since that time. Others are sprouting. They have averaged about one new religion a year for over four hundred years. They are not for all places, but have only a restricted appeal to certain groups and classes of one or the other country. They do not teach the full doctrine of Christ, having no priesthood, no Sacrifice, no unity in teaching on which Christ insisted so emphatically.

The *apostolic* character of the Church makes two claims. It has an unbroken succession from the Church built upon the

apostles (see Ephesians, 2: 20), and presents identity of teaching and practice with the apostolic Church. By the admission of their own non-Catholic historians, none of today's sects claims to be more than 420 years old.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Point out some of the means you would adopt to avoid antagonizing the non-Catholic in presenting these arguments.
2. Is the admission that there are many sincere and morally good non-Catholics contrary to the one true Church?
3. Which of the four arguments given above do you think will impress the non-Catholic most? The church-going non-Catholic? The person who belongs to no church?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

Pope Pius X set the norm for all Catholics to follow. He chose as his motto on becoming pope: *to restore all things in Christ*. This should be the Catholic's goal. All means to make Christ known and loved!

1. The most necessary means to help the non-Catholic is for the Catholic himself to possess the correct appreciation of the Church. Frequently Catholics do not think correctly of the Church. They picture it to themselves as an organization established by Jesus, but now "run pretty much on human lines." They think of it as a society which "takes a lot of money to run," and which makes a number of unpleasant laws.

The Catholic must learn to think of his Church as something living, like the human body. The Church is the body, and Christ is its Head. We, the members of that body, draw our whole life from that Head. Christ directs all our actions. If we suffer persecution, He, and all the followers of Christ, suffer with us. If all Christians were united as a body and if all cooperated in the work of Christ, as their unity in Him dictates, it would remove not only religious difficulties, but other world problems as well. There would be no intense nationalism, no race hatreds, no diabolic pride tearing the body of Christ to pieces.

2. Even zealous Catholics may lose the required sense of proportion. There are organizations, societies, religious orders, bands and groups within the Church. Financial problems abound. Difficulties arise from the ever-present human element in the Church. Brick and mortar, candles and incense, schools and hospitals, a plea for this, and the prohibition of that! But these things are not the Church. They are the more or less necessary means to preserve the body which is Christ. He became one with us, united Himself with us, and the union constitutes the Church.

3. Non-Catholics today frequently read news stories about the Church. As written, the articles usually have only a journalistic

interest. But the alert Catholic can interpret these accounts, and accomplish much good. Millions of words were written about the death of Pope Pius XI, and the election of Pope Pius XII. Having read the Catholic newspapers and magazines at the time, the Catholic would be able to explain much about the Vicar of Christ, his office, his power, the meaning of the ceremonies of election and coronation, the size of the Church over which the pope wields jurisdiction, and so on. Similar occasions are presented by the news stories of the consecration of a new bishop, the dedication of a local school or church, a Corpus Christi procession, a Eucharistic Congress.

4. Non-Catholics are today showing a vivid interest in the encyclicals on labor and economics in general. They want to know the Church's stand on war, mercy killing, and hundreds of other questions. In their own way they are sincerely eager to know of Christ and His Church. The Catholic must guard against disappointing them with an attitude of indifference.

The all important point is this: Know your Church. Love it and obey its commands. If you love it properly, you cannot help possessing a desire to see it known and loved by others. God will furnish you the opportunity of making that love felt by others.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Give in brief the best descriptive appreciation you can of the Church.
2. Have you ever interested friends in the Catholic radio hour? Invited non-Catholics to a mission in your parish church? Distributed Catholic literature? Asked a non-Catholic to attend the funeral Mass of a mutual friend?
3. Is it true that if a Catholic truly loves his Church, his love will seek to make itself shared with others?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think of the plan of running a short column of explanation of basic Catholic teachings in the daily secular newspaper of your town? Students of high schools and academies in some of the larger cities have begun the work (which is not new), under the vigilant eye of the local pastor. What do you think of the plan, calling attention of many thousands of readers to Catholic doctrine?
2. Catholics invite non-Catholics to their churches, and make a great deal of the welcome extended. But the Catholic Church refuses to allow her subjects to have any active part in non-Catholic services, or even to attend them except for a serious cause. The Church's reason is that there can be only one correct way of worshipping God — that established by Christ. How would you make this clear, in a polite way, to a non-Catholic, using the thought outlined in this discussion?
3. What book or pamphlet have you read, explaining the one true Church, which you would put into the hand of an inquiring non-Catholic? See page 112.

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Daily to say at least some short prayer that you may ever grow in the love of Jesus Christ, and of His Church.

DISCUSSION VI

The Sacrament of Baptism

1. Christ's Gifts to Us in Baptism

As the child learns in catechism class, baptism is the sacrament instituted by Christ which cleanses the soul of original sin, or any personal sins which the person may have committed before baptism, makes him a Christian, a child of God, an heir of heaven. Three things are absolutely required for it to be a valid sacrament. It must be administered by pouring water over the head or the body of the person who is baptized. At the same time the person baptizing must pronounce these words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The person who performs the baptism must have the proper intention, that is, he must mean to do what the Church does through baptism. Baptism is called the "necessary sacrament" because without it one cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord said explicitly: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John, 3: 5)

Through baptism, original sin, which was contracted through the representative of the human race, Adam, is forgiven the person baptized. Actual sins, those which he may have personally committed before baptism, are also forgiven, as well as the punishment due to them.

But there is another effect produced by the sacrament which is most important in daily life. Through baptism men are made members of the Church, with all the rights and duties corresponding to their state. Thus, a married person has rights and privileges and duties within the Church because he is baptized. A priest has his standing in the Church, with his priestly rights and duties, because of his membership in the Church, that is, through baptism. And so with every person in the entire Church.

It is particularly important here to think of the Church not merely as a well regulated *organization*. It is not merely a society with religious superiors and inferiors, regulated by laws which superiors must enforce and inferiors must obey. The Church must be thought of rather as an *organism*. That means it is a living thing, like the human body, whose Head is Christ and whose members are all the baptized in heaven, in purgatory, and on earth. Man is incorporated into Christ through baptism. By being baptized each person receives through the Church a share in the divine life with Christ. This life is a strong spiritual force, constantly pulsating, reaching from the Head to the least important member of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

By this relation to Christ through the Church, the baptized person has relations to all the other members who go to make up the Church, or the Mystical Body of Christ. And he has this relationship to others *because* of his relationship to Christ Himself. Thus, when the parish church is filled with worshippers on Sunday morning, it is not their common physical presence within the four walls which unites them in offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is their union in Christ through their common baptism. An unbaptized person may be *present* at the Sacrifice. He may understand every word that the priest, the deacon, the subdeacon, the acolytes, the choir, and the faithful utter. But he is not an offerer. He is not offered with Christ in the Sacrifice. He is not one with Christ, nor with the persons united in Christ. He is as yet only an onlooker. Baptism is needed to make him a sharer in the Mystery of Faith. Baptism alone can make it possible for him to perform acts of religion within the Church.

Baptism, then, is the sacrament which makes the baptized person a citizen in the kingdom of God. It places an indelible mark on the soul. This mark identifies the person before God, in a sense, as the uniform of a soldier marks him for us. But this sign also pertains to the person's ability to perform acts of worship. That mark will last through eternity. It will be a sign of glory for those who, having used the means of salvation given by the Church, are numbered among the blessed. It will be a source of confusion for the souls of the damned for all eternity.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. The obligations assumed by a sponsor in baptism are very serious, and never lightly to be accepted. The sponsor really vouches to the Church for the person about to be baptized. Do you recall from the catechism the duties of the sponsor?
2. How would you explain the principal effects of baptism to one who belongs to no church?
3. What is the indelible mark of baptism? What effects does it produce?
4. What three things are absolutely necessary for a valid baptism?

2. Baptism in the Life of the Catholic

Catholics must guard against forming wrong impressions about the sacrament of baptism. It must never be thought of as something which is past in one's life. It is not like an initiation into a society, or a school club, which is a thing of the past, a memory, almost as soon as it is completed.

Baptism is a sacred action which produces grace throughout the life of the baptized person. Through its operation we *now* believe. When we assist at Mass, we render glory to God with our fellow worshippers in virtue of baptism. Baptism unites all

the baptized and makes of them a collective offering to God. Through it we are *now*, right at this moment, enabled to share in the Masses which are being offered in other parts of the world. We are one in Christ with the missionary priest and his congregation offering Mass in some remote village in China, and we share in their Sacrifice and all their good works through baptism. Through it we are *at all times* one in Christ with our employers and fellow employees, with our neighbor in shop, school, office. It unites the family on a supernatural plane in the home. Baptism, properly understood, takes the non-Catholic ring out of the much abused phrases "the fatherhood of God" and "the brotherhood of man." All men *are* brothers, but in Christ, through baptism. And God is their common Father, as He is the Father of Christ, His only begotten Son.

Even a brief sketch of the principal positive effects produced by the sacrament of baptism will be an excellent review of the catechism. It should be an invaluable help to the Catholic in aiding the non-Catholic. No better explanation has been given than that presented by Dom Godfrey Diekmann at the first national Liturgical Week held in Chicago in 1940.¹

1. Baptism is a rebirth. It is a new creation: "a new creature in Christ" comes into being. As St. Paul words it, "We have been baptized [that is, *plunged*] into Christ Jesus." (Romans, 6: 3) The English word "christened," generally used so carelessly, expresses the idea perfectly. It means that through baptism we become "Christed," become one with Christ. We no longer are mere human beings with merely the added obligation of now imitating Christ, and certain of the graces of Christ to fulfill our function. No. We are christened, we have become something completely new, a new creation. Christ's life has become our life; we live, now not we, but Christ in us.

2. Baptism has not merely the effect of cleansing us from sin, and of giving us the grace of adoption, but it is first of all a plunging of our entire being into Christ. His redemptive death and resurrection become *ours*. St. Paul continues the thought: "For we were buried with him by means of baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has risen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." (Romans, 6: 4)

3. Baptism is usually thought of as the perfection of the individual. It is. But it is also the eminently social sacrament. The present generation of the Church, through the Liturgical Revival, is rapidly growing aware once more of the social character of the sacraments. Nothing can help the Catholic to make

1. Diekmann, Godfrey, O.S.B., "Christian Life and Worship through Baptism," *National Liturgical Week*, 1940, pp. 54 ff.

a more positive or impressive appeal to the non-Catholic than stress on this character. It is that which is opposed to the unsatisfying individualism of their churches. It has a still more vital appeal to those who belong to no church at all. Through baptism man acquires not so much a union with Christ directly, as through the medium of the Church. The administration of the sacrament of baptism is a parish event, and should be participated in by the parish. It is second in importance only to the community Sacrifice of the Mass.

4. The sacrament should often be spiritually renewed. The baptismal vows can be renewed even daily in a few seconds. The Church renews the thought for the faithful every Sunday in the "little baptism," as the *Vidi Aquam* or the *Asperges* before Mass is called.

It is easy for the Catholic to grow slipshod in his appreciation of the sacrament of baptism. In so doing he fails to see its importance in his own life. And it is certain that he will fail to see its importance in the lives of others. But a matter of spiritual life and death is at stake. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John, 3:5) Charity in Christ, in whom the baptized are immersed, demands that the Catholic try to increase and perfect the Mystical Body of Christ. That means an appeal in favor of those who do not enjoy this new creation.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What do you think of the growing practice in many localities of administering baptism publicly on Sunday afternoon, with an explanation of the ceremonies while the sacrament is conferred? In these places the congregation recites the "Our Father" with the sponsor or the newly baptized person. A new member addresses his Father in heaven with his fellow members in Christ. "Our Father" takes on a new meaning. They also recite the Creed as a body.

2. What can the altar society, or some other society in the parish, do to decorate the baptismal font properly? It is the second most important place in the church, second only to the altar.

3. Baptism and the Life of the Non-Catholic

Many persons to whom Catholics will direct their missionary zeal have already been baptized in other churches. "I was baptized at a revival when I was fourteen years old," is a statement that most priests have heard repeatedly. Often enough the person has "changed religions," or discontinued going to church altogether. God's ways in bringing their attention to the Catholic Church are innumerable. Whatever His method, there is always a design to be discovered and acted upon. It is from God.

More often than not such baptisms in the different sects are invalid. Judged by the standards of Christ, few of them can

be valid. Three things are absolutely necessary for a baptism to be what Christ intended it to be. The person must be baptized, that is, actually washed. At the same time the sacred words of the formula must be pronounced. These are from our Divine Savior's lips and cannot be changed in the slightest. And the intention of the minister must be to perform what the Church of Jesus Christ performs. If these conditions are fulfilled, the baptized persons are members of the Church of God. They are not Protestants, nor members of any of the hundreds of religious sects, but Catholics. And their duty is to belong to the Church. There is only one baptism. (Ephesians, 4:5)

Each baptism is to be investigated by the Church (the parish priest) individually. When it is found after diligent examination that the sacrament was not conferred at all, or that it was administered improperly, the person must be baptized. If there remains a reasonable doubt about the validity of the former baptism, the convert must be baptized conditionally. The priest then baptizes by saying: "If thou art not baptized, I baptize thee in the name of the Father . . ." This is of very frequent occurrence. If the former baptism is declared valid, they are not to be baptized again, for there is only one baptism, only one indelible mark. (Ephesians, 4:5)

These considerations centering about baptism in the sects are terrifying. The eternal welfare of the individual hangs in the balance. Well meaning people are led to believe they they are fulfilling the law of Christ, and they are robbed of their rightful Christian inheritance. The principal points to be borne in mind are:

1. Some of the sects "do not have" baptism. Others do not believe in the baptism of children. By the time that the children reach the age when baptism would normally be conferred, any one of many circumstances may prevent its administration. Priests discover this condition frequently while investigating the lack of baptism in a prospective convert. The explanation usually offered is that: "Baptism is not absolutely necessary because we are justified by faith alone."

If we are "justified by faith alone," the command of Jesus to baptize, to forgive sins, to commemorate the death of Christ, and to do penance, would all be useless. When St. Paul said: "By faith you are justified," he meant a faith in Jesus Christ and in *all* the works that Christ commanded us to do.

2. Often the sacrament is invalidly conferred and received. The conditions which our Divine Savior laid down as essential for eternal life are not fulfilled. There is no remission of sins, no life in Christ through the Church. There is no reward of eternal life. "Unless a man be born again . . ."

3. Baptism outside the Church, even though valid, does not grant the fullness of one's share in the life of Christ. Life in Christ through the Church is the enjoyment of all that Christ established for our sanctification and salvation. It is the daily use of *all* the means He outlined for us by which we are to praise His Father in union with Him, and through Him. Most of these are denied those baptized outside the Church.

These considerations bring the whole problem to the rock bottom of missionary zeal. By good example and prudent appeal the Catholic must endeavor to help in the work of our Lord Himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [crucified], will draw all things to myself." (John, 12: 32) Sharing the work of the Crucified Savior by drawing others to Him is one of the choicest flowers of life in Him.

Thousands of prayers for conversions ascend daily to God. A broken hearted modern Monica never allows a day to pass over her head without praying for a "fallen away son." Girls pray to convert their boy friends, boys for their girls. A partner in marriage wedded to a bigot will pray for the grace that will lead to faith. All these prayers could be worded: "O Lord, grant me the conversion *I* want." When America's prayers have this intense zeal for *all* outside the Church, the number of conversions will be increased many times.¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Persons are sometimes won to the Church through marriage to a Catholic. What other commonly occurring causes of conversion can you mention?
2. How does the Church judge whether a baptism is valid or not?
3. By what right does the Church judge whether a baptism conferred outside her jurisdiction is valid or not?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

A zealous Catholic layman recently wrote that:

"What presumably dampens our ardor and retards the apostolate of the laity is this: to the average Catholic layman it does not appear that there is a very fertile field for it in this country. He looks out upon what is in theory a Christian country; and he sees, or so it seems to him, that the small portion of the country that is not Christian at least in name is ground that is unbroken, that must be plowed and sown and cultivated before it can be reaped. But he is wrong on both counts. Christ shows us one truth: 'Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries; for they are white already to the harvest.' (John, 4: 35) And contemporary statistics show us the other; for there are roughly seventy million people in this land who profess no religious

1. Cf. McGinnis, John J., C.S.P., "Try to Make Converts," in *The Epistle*, vol. 7, Spring, 1941, p. 138.

affiliation at all. 'More than half of all the people of America,' says Father John A. O'Brien, 'are starving for the bread of religious truth.'¹

The following suggestions are offered in approaching the non-Catholic:

1. The principal emphasis should be placed on the *positive* side of baptism. The prospective convert should be made more keenly aware of the enduring life of sanctifying grace which the baptized person receives, rather than the merely negative approach in considering the sacrament as the forgiveness of original and actual sins. The positive considerations are life-long. In fact, they endure throughout eternity.

2. Baptism in the Church is an opportunity to cast off years of spiritual chaos and half truths. Only the Catholic Church can give the assurance of faith. No other church dares speak with the authority of Christ. Non-Catholic churches quarrel with one another. There is no unity among them. Some of them adopt one method of baptism. Others have other ways. The individual minister places his own interpretation upon the act. Some deny the sacrament altogether. In the Catholic Church all is unity. Whether baptized in Kansas City or in the mission fields of China, there is only one baptism, one interpretation of the sacred act, one result produced. Doubts and difficulties vanish. Security and peace take their place. Advise the person to speak with any serious minded convert on this score.

3. Know your religion, and explain it. Do not allow any opportunities to pass unused. The following paragraph was written by a non-Catholic (who is married to a Catholic). It is a sorry accusation of our lack of missionary spirit.

"Let me call your attention to the baptism of my child as a perfect example of what I am trying to express. My Protestant family were present, some out of curiosity and others from a desire to participate in every part of the life which was intimately connected with their own. It never occurred to the officiating priest to explain the nature of this Sacrament to the unbelievers; and as far as they were concerned the ceremony might as well have been a voodoo rite. Now it so happens that a Catholic Baptism, aside from all question of religion, is a moving and beautiful ritual; but can you blame non-Catholics for misunderstanding what has never been explained to them; a thing which is beyond their range of experience?"²

Someone fell down on the job rather seriously on this occasion.

4. The appeal to the non-Catholic party of a mixed marriage offers special inducement to the convert-conscious Catholic. The ideas of greater spiritual unity in our Lord, the fuller con-

1. McLaughlin, Martin M., "Lay Convert Work," in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, XLI, (1941), 382.

2. Frame, Walter C., "A Plain Talk to You Catholics," in *America*, quoted in *The Epistle*, VII, (1940), p. 58.

secration of the home to God, the complete Catholic education of the children by father *and* mother should be stressed.

5. The conversion must be credited to God alone. All that leads to conversion is nothing but a series of graces. God's grace has directed the steps throughout. We are merely instruments in His hand. It would be presumptuous for anyone to lay claim to the conversion of a non-Catholic to the Church. The work of conversion belongs to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Love. It is He who does the inspiring, the moving, the alluring, the capture of the soul. Without His graces, there would not be a single conversion. But because God uses human instruments, they play an important part in winning souls for Him. Everyone can and must share in this necessary labor for the salvation of souls. It is a great mistake to imagine that the laity has nothing to do with this phase of spiritual life. To increase the citizenry of the Church should be the ambition of every follower of Christ. We should never be content until we have done all possible to be an instrument, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, of missionary endeavor.¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Can you think of any opportunities for making the sacrament of baptism better known which are now being passed up?
2. Why is it so necessary in Catholic education that *both* parents be Catholic?
3. Is it correct to feel that convert-making should be left to the priests?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the meaning of the patron saint's name bestowed in baptism?
2. How would you perform an emergency baptism as explained in the catechism?
3. How many of the ceremonies of baptism can you recall from having seen the sacrament administered? Do you know their significance?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To renew one's baptismal vows, at least every Sunday morning before Mass during the *Asperges* or the *Vidi Aquam*. If one does not attend the principal parish Mass, this can be done in a brief reflection after taking holy water at the entrance to the church.

1. See *The Epistle*, VII, (1940), 4.

DISCUSSION VII

The Sacrifice of the Mass

1. What the Mass Is

There is no better manner in which to understand the meaning of the holy Sacrifice than to examine the description given by the Church herself. The following are the most frequently used terms to describe the Mass.

1. THE MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST. This is the Sacrifice of the Church, and the greatest of the sacraments. It sums up the whole life of the Savior. It gives infinite glory to God and applies to souls throughout the ages the merits of the Passion. What takes place at the altar is a renewal of what took place on Calvary. In both the Sacrifice is offered to God the Father. In both Christ is the Victim. On the Cross He offered Himself alone, because He had not yet redeemed man: in the Mass, His Mystical Body is offered with Him. Both the merits of Calvary and of the altar are applied to the faithful through the same act.

2. THE MYSTERY OF FAITH. The human mind can never understand how bread and wine, by the power of the words of consecration pronounced by the priest, become the Body and Blood of Christ. Why God accepts unflinchingly this Sacrifice, offered by unworthy men, must also remain a mystery. The Mass is Christ's offering of Himself to His Father, and the offering of the entire body of the faithful united with Christ.

3. THE SACRIFICE OF THE ALTAR. This renewal of the Sacrifice of the first Good Friday afternoon is the highest act of religion. Other acts by which the Church worships God may be performed, in a limited sense, in honoring angels, saints, even living men. Sacrifice can be offered to God alone. Its whole purpose is to acknowledge God's complete dominion over life and death.

4. The Mass is the MOST SOLEMN ACT OF ADORATION. The words of Jesus are solemnly chanted. The Church's greatest saints and scholars have composed the prayers which the faithful recite. The best of Christian thought for nineteen centuries has been directed to God in humble adoration.

5. The Mass is an OFFERING OF THANKS. The Church speaks of the *Eucharist*, which is a Greek word meaning thanksgiving, adopted into the language of the liturgy. Every Mass is a solemn act of thanksgiving by the entire Church. "It is truly

meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, everlasting God . . ."¹

6. The Mass is a solemn ACT OF ATONEMENT. The share in the offering of the Sacrifice, particularly when completed with the reception of Holy Communion, is referred to in the after-communion prayers. The following phrases are selected at random:

"... purifying us from the old life . . ."²

"... pledge of the effect of salvation . . ."³

"... vices destroyed . . ."⁴

"... being purified from our old habits . . . transform us into new creatures . . ."⁵

"... may the holy things we have received . . . atone for our sins . . ."⁶

7. The Mass is the most solemn form of PETITION TO GOD. The Lord's Prayer, taught to the apostles by His own lips, is the first part of the immediate preparation for the reception of Holy Communion. Immediately after the Our Father, the priest says the prayer:

"Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come. . . mercifully grant peace in our days: that through the bounteous help of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord . . ."

All other petitions of the Church are an enlargement on this prayer and on the Our Father. Some of them are:

"... that we may be partakers of Thy redemption . . ."⁷

"... relish what is right . . ."⁸

"... gifts of unity and peace . . ."⁹

"... vigor of purity and the freshness of chastity . . ."¹⁰

"... that we may learn to love even our enemies . . ."¹¹

Examination shows that the following words and phrases, or their equivalents, recur most frequently: "deliverance," "protection," "Thy favor," "patronage," "intercession of the saints," "peace," "good conscience."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Explain how the Sacrifice of the Mass is a renewal of the Passion of Christ on the first Good Friday.

2. How does the Sacrifice differ from all other forms of worship?

3. Do the petitions above indicated (n.7), which are typical of all the petitions of the Mass, differ from your ordinary private prayers? Why do you think this is so?

1. Introductory words to the preface of the Mass.
2. First Sunday of Lent; 3. Tuesday of first week in Lent;
4. Palm Sunday; 5. Easter Wednesday; 6. Third Sunday after Pentecost.
7. Mass for the Poor Souls.
8. Collect of the Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit.
9. Secret Prayer, Mass in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.
10. Postcommunion, special prayers for continence.
11. Collect of the Mass of the feast of St. Stephen.

2. The Eucharist in the Life of the Catholic

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the center of the Catholic's spiritual life. Today's comfort-loving generation has preserved the spirit of America's pioneer generations quite well. Men still love the Mass, and make sacrifices to have their share in offering it. No attempt is here being made to create the impression that there is no laxity. Regrettably, there is altogether too much of it. Many failures mar the record of Catholic America. Fallen away Catholics are numerous. Catholics who adopt the norm of convenience, frequently absenting themselves from Mass when they could easily attend, realize that they are tampering with their precious gift of faith.

The Mass is the strongest bond of union for all Catholics. All members of Christ's Mystical Body unite in presenting the Perfect Gift to God. Together they make their offerings to the Church. As one they bow profoundly at the words of consecration. As a body they present the Divine Victim to His heavenly Father through the ministry of the priest. Kneeling side by side at the Communion rail they are nourished with the same Food of Angels. All prayers are recited in common. None of this is restricted to the parish, or the diocese, or the country. In all parts of the world, Catholics are one in Him who is their Head, and in the Victim whom they offer. The same Head unites them with the saints in heaven and the souls in Purgatory.

The Mass is the Church's greatest teaching medium. Each year the Gospels are read practically in their entirety. The epistles are distributed over the Sundays and feasts of the year. Many parts of the Mass are taken from the Old Testament. Great saints, popes, scholars, have composed the prayers which the Church has adopted as official. Pope Pius XI did not hesitate to say that:

"The people are better instructed in the truths of faith and brought to appreciate the interior joys of religion far more effectively by the annual celebration of the sacred mysteries than by the weightiest pronouncements of the teaching Church."¹

In their share in the Mass, Catholics see realized in themselves the desires of men of all ages. They know that God will accept their offerings and be merciful to them. Answering the prayer of the priest, that the offering may be acceptable in the sight of God, the Catholic prays with the fullest confidence.

"May the Lord receive the Sacrifice at thy hands, to the praise and glory of His name, to our own benefit, and that of all His holy Church. Amen."

Whatever the needs of men, the solemn offering of the Sacrifice guarantees a hearing before the throne of God with that assurance

1. Encyclical Letter *Quas Primas*, instituting the feast of Christ the King, December 11, 1925.

that faith alone can give. It bestows upon all a share in the infinite fruits of the Mass. The spiritual gifts to make lives more pleasing in God's sight, comfort in trials, strength in temptation, renewed health, love of enemies, repentance even unto the gift of tears, all are humbly petitioned at the altar. They are heard without fail. And if God so pleases (*Thy* will be done), they are granted.

Being a Catholic is a tremendous privilege granted to us by God through no merit of our own. It carries with it a dignity unlike anything in the world. Its obligations are measured by that dignity. Part of that obligation is to share our treasure with those to whom we can appeal. That is what Pope Pius XII means when he speaks of the progress of the American Catholic Church. He speaks of the zeal of the apostle, nourished with faith and charity, burning in the breasts of valiant men.¹ To be true to their God, all Catholics must be apostles in that sense.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Does the attendance of Catholics at Mass make a deep impression on non-Catholics? Is the sin of scandal to be considered in repeated failure to go to church on Sunday?
2. How is the Sacrifice of the Mass the strongest bond of union for Catholics?
3. Does the use of the missal in English help much to give the Catholic the proper appreciation of the Church's annual teaching? What is your experience in its use? Could you help the non-Catholic to use a missal?

3. What the Non-Catholic Searches for in Vain

Upon entrance into the Church, many converts state that the Mass has completely satisfied their spiritual longing. They are no longer troubled with the feeling of inability to praise God adequately. Non-Catholics who think deeply about the relation of God to man are faced with a problem which they cannot solve. As serious converts relate their past experiences, they grope for the answer, they search, they are dissatisfied and ill at ease.

Non-Catholics often comment openly on the "hold" the Church has on its members. The "hold" is a bond of love. Other churches have no central act of worship for which men will endure great hardships; the Mass stands absolutely alone. Putting aside the history books, and accounts of martyrdom for the Eucharist, attention can be directed with profit to the daily life of the average American parish. Other churches have nothing which will draw their members for miles in forbidding weather to an early Sunday morning obligation, which in some cases has ceased to be an

1. Encyclical Epistle *Sertum Laetitiae*, November 1, 1939, official English translation, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 31: (1939), 646.

obligation. Long before the rising of the sun, many men and women daily walk to church to share in the Mass, to receive Holy Communion, and return home for a hurried breakfast before setting out for the day's work. During Lent many city parishes have noon-day Mass, and Catholics cheerfully give up their noon hour to share in it.

The thinking man has a most powerful longing to be united with God by praising Him. God is man's last end; He made the world on that plan. Everything ultimately leads to Him. He also made the Sacrifice of the Mass the most pleasing to Him of all things in man's life. If all men of all ages, accompanied by the angels and headed by the Blessed Virgin herself, were to form a gigantic procession singing the praises of God, the result could never be so pleasing in God's sight as the Mass offered in the humblest neighborhood church this morning. And in all that, the non-Catholic has no share.

Again, these poor people have no means by which to thank God properly. Without the Mass, Catholics could never properly express their thanks to God. When they share in the Sacrifice offered by the Church, the Divine Victim, possessing infinite merits, offers Himself to His heavenly Father, and becomes their very own. Through the action of the priest, representing and acting in Christ's name, they can offer the Perfect Victim to the Father, for they were commanded: "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke, 22: 19)

The Mass serves to atone for secret, forgotten sins. It produces the desire for true contrition for all mortal sins. It blots out venial sins directly. And like Catholics, non-Catholics are conscious of these sins "which we daily commit," and reflection on them can become a torture to them.

The same is true with regard to the blessings of which the non-Catholic stands in need. He feels the need of grace and strength to perform works pleasing to God. He seeks blessings on his home. The conscientious non-Catholic searches for a way to offer his daily work to God. He begs help in times of trial, in difficulties and temptations. He seeks a bond with God, something that will please God without fail, and enable him to ask these graces confidently. The answer is found in the Sacrifice of the Mass. And he has no part in that. Only the Catholic Church has.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Can you recall any statement spoken or written by a non-Catholic which indicates that he is seeking what only the Mass can bestow?
2. It is stated above that the hold that the Church has on its members is love for Christ in the Eucharist. In general, that is certainly true. Do you think some go to Mass out of habit, or out of fear of committing mortal sin?

3. Is the Mass more perfect than all the other combined acts of religion? Why?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

With the aid of the small Sunday Missal, which can be procured for a few cents, the Catholic who truly loves his religion need never feel at a loss in explaining the Mass. Care must be taken, however, that the appeal to the non-Catholic lead him to desire what he does not have. The inquirer should rather be drawn to share the Catholic's love of the Sacrifice than to have his curiosity satisfied.

1. Catholics are all one in Christ. They share one another's good works. With the right intention, each has shared in all the Masses offered by the Pope, the bishops, and all the priests throughout the world today. On Sundays and holydays pastors are bound to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass for their congregations, bishops for their flocks. From early morning tomorrow on the Atlantic coast until noon on the Pacific coast, the Sacrifice will be offered by more than 30,000 priests in the United States. There are about 200,000 priests throughout the world. During our night, Mass will be offered on the altars of Western Asia and war-torn Europe. "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachias, 1: 11) By the right intention the Catholic shares constantly in this uninterrupted Sacrifice.

2. The Eucharist is full of divine power and able to bring joy to the hearts of all who believe. On it depends the whole spiritual life. In it Catholics find their true love of God and fellow man. A thoughtfully chosen occasion, like midnight Mass at Christmas, or Easter morning, or during a mission, will give the best opportunity for taking the prospective convert to Mass. But the Sacrifice must be explained in terms of answering *all* the needs of man, not merely the religious sentiment of great feasts. During the Mass priests are ordained, bishops consecrated, marriages solemnly blessed in the sacramental presence of Christ who becomes the principal Witness to the marriage vows, consolations obtained in trouble, strength derived for one's daily trials, the courage and the desire to live as God wants us to live, the Church's final petitions for the deceased implored, and so on.

3. Explain the principal ideas of the Mass in advance. During the actual Sacrifice there will be no irreverence in brief whispered explanations like: "This is the consecration," "This is the final blessing I spoke about." Then be prepared to answer questions about the collection, genuflections, the use of incense, candles,

the singing of the Gospel, after the non-Catholic has assisted at the Sacrifice.

4. Taking part in the Sacrifice means for the Catholic to bring an offering to the Mass. Jesus gives Himself in return for our offering of ourselves. The non-Catholic should be instructed to make an offering of his mind and will, humbly disposing himself to receive willingly and to cooperate gratefully with whatever grace God may bestow upon him.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What thoughts would you put before the non-Catholic to arouse his *desire* to share in the Mass?
2. Please give, in bold outline, the steps you would take, and the points you would emphasize, in instructing a non-Catholic friend who has arranged to accompany you to Mass.
3. How would you present the idea of the non-Catholic offering something to God at Mass like the submission of his mind and will, as indicated in n.4?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. While kneeling in church before Mass begins, the good Catholic tries to dispose himself with the proper intention. Mr. Murphy lines up his intentions in the following order of importance: a) to overcome my habitual cursing; b) to be truly sorry for my sins; c) for a peaceful settlement of the war; d) for the spiritual and temporal needs of my family; e) thanksgiving for my job; f) and "Help me, O God, to assist at this Mass for your greater honor and glory." His motives in what he is doing are excellent. Can you arrange them in a more proper order?

2. Outline the most ideal circumstances under which you would care to take a non-Catholic to Mass for the first time: a) on what Sunday would you take him? b) To what Mass: low Mass, sung Mass, solemn Mass? c) For what motive would you take him? d) What motive would you try to inspire in him?

3. Can you give, in brief outline, the manner in which our Divine Savior prepared His apostles for the first Mass?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To take the most active part possible in every Mass at which we assist so that we may constantly grow in the love of God and of our fellow men.

DISCUSSION VIII

The Sacrament of Penance

1. Why so Necessary

The goodness of God and the Sacrifice of Jesus delivered man from the state of sin into which Adam's disobedience had plunged the human race. Christ's life and teaching among men became the rule of spiritual conduct designed to lead men to happiness in His service. He gave all the means by which man could realize this plan: the Sacrifice, the sacraments, divine grace, the example of heroic souls who through His help triumphed in struggles very like those of the modern man.

But a virtuous life was to remain a struggle for every man. However high man may direct his gaze, and even the sinner can look to God, he remains attached to things about him. There is a sordid side to the history of mankind. The conscience of each man tells him that he often loses the battle. Whatever resolves men may make for themselves, however lofty their motives, they sin, frequently, and most seriously

And the Savior, who had provided for all of man's other needs, gave him the means by which he might arise from his falls and acquire new spiritual strength. The battle over lower nature must be won! That victory is the only success which counts in the final evaluation of a life. Naturally enough, the means chosen are not pleasant ones. Humility is never an easy virtue. The embarrassment of acknowledging sins does violence to pride. Striking the breast and begging God's pardon in the presence of the priest, who alone holds the power of forgiveness, hurts deeply. Sincere contrition and humble confession are harsh to man. The very word "penance" has an unpleasant sound.

Such, however, were the means chosen by Christ. He *could* have chosen any one of a hundred other solutions which suggest themselves to the human mind. He *could* have accepted the feeling of sorrow expressed (vaguely enough) within the sinful heart. But He did not do so. On the first Easter Sunday evening, He stood among His apostles, breathed on them, and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John, 20: 22-23) There it is in two short sentences. A tribunal, a court of conscience is set up, complete in every detail. A judge, an accused person, sins to be tried, a sentence, a power that is of God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why did our Lord institute "confession," as we call it? What caused our lower nature and inclination toward sin?
2. When did our Lord institute the sacrament of penance? Does any reason suggest itself to you why He waited until after the Crucifixion?
3. Why is confession so hard?

2. Confession in the Life of the Catholic

The Church demands that all Catholics confess their sins and receive absolution at least once a year. Failure to comply with this rule is interpreted as a lack of appreciation of the great grace Christ made possible for sinners. It is a sin in itself. Priests and religious must confess every week when possible.

Laymen are encouraged to go to confession much more frequently than the minimum law demands. Preachers often make the statement that one cannot lead a truly Catholic life today without the frequent aid of the sacraments. This is certainly true of the *ideal* Catholic life, held before the layman by Christ in His appeals, and insisted upon so much by the last few popes. The layman has the duty of striving constantly for perfection. That is not something piously recommended to the few. It is a duty before God for all.

Numerous important spiritual benefits are derived from frequent confession. The most noteworthy are:

1. *The deep consolation of the forgiveness of sin:* To realize that the soul has been stained with sin, and that it is now cleansed through the power bestowed upon priests by Christ is one of the greatest consolations to the Catholic. It is one of the most obvious applications of the merits of Christ's Precious Blood to His worthy followers. God's mercy is infinite, and His acceptance of the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart is unfailing. (Psalm 50: 18)

2. *The constant increase of grace:* Failure to correspond to grace in the hour of temptation is the cause of every sin. After the actual remission of sins, the confessor prays that his penitent may receive "the increase of grace" to enable him to withstand future temptations. The struggle against the inclination to evil is continuous and difficult. And Jesus comes to the sinner's aid, through this life-giving sacrament, to help him in the battle.

3. *Holiness:* Frequent confession rewards the penitent with a spirit of true contrition, and with a delicacy of conscience which is pleasing to God and man.

4. *Intimate union with Christ:* Regular confession guarantees a more intimate union with Christ. Those who confess their sins often, fall into grievous sin less frequently. Until they have

confessed their sins, their conscience allows them no rest. They rise from their mistakes more promptly and resolutely. In an uncommon sense they realize the meaning of St. Paul's words: "I will glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me." (II Corinthians, 12:9)

5. *Good example:* Those who confess regularly have the deep personal satisfaction of giving a good example in the parish, to their families, and to those who need such example. While this does not in itself form a motive for going to confession, the result is helpful. The sacrament enables the layman to fulfill a serious duty in a way whose simplicity and attractiveness cannot fail to impress. The Catholic father and mother who go to confession with their children, and who kneel at the Communion table with them as a family, fulfill in large part one of the Church's most serious demands upon them as parents — true Catholic education.

6. *Parish mindedness:* Frequent confession and reception of Holy Communion give the surest guarantee of a full share in the spiritual life of the parish.¹

7. *Pledge of eternal life:* The last of the graces for which the confessor prays as the penitent kneels before him is "the reward of life everlasting." More than anything else in this life, regular and frequent confession and reception of Holy Communion give the assurance of final perseverance.

And to all these graces, so easily procured, so commonly enjoyed in the life of the conscientious Catholic, the non-Catholic remains a complete stranger. He needs help. Often enough, he wants it. It is up to the Catholic layman to show him the way. That is charity.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Which of the above seven considerations to you think appeals to the daily communicant most strongly? Which is experienced by the persons who go to Holy Communion with their "societies" in the parish each month? Which would draw the fallen away Catholic?

2. Which motive should a person strive for in going to confession? Or should he try to acquire all of them as far as they fit into his life?

3. Is the ideal Catholic life, or striving to be perfect, a duty of every member of the Church?

3. The Non-Catholic and Confession

All the commonly made objections to the sacrament of penance have been answered repeatedly. But Catholic information and explanation do not come into the possession of the ordinary well

1. Cf. Sause, Bernard, O.S.B., *The Dignity of the Parishioner*, (Atchison, Kansas, Abbey Student Press, 1940), pp. 92 ff. Companion booklet to the present Discussion Club Outline.

disposed non-Catholic except through Catholic laymen. Brief explanation here may be of help, as it will enable one to group the principal objections and be of spiritual service to his fellow man.

Most of the reasons why confession is so pronounced a difficulty to the man outside the Church can be reduced to the following:

1. Why believe that a mere man has the power to forgive sins? — It is in a sense remarkable, and to the priest it is most thrilling, that the same objection is offered to the followers of Christ in the twentieth century as was made to our Lord Himself in Palestine. When Jesus forgave "a woman in the town who was a sinner" (Luke, 7: 33 ff), His fellow dinner guests "began to say within themselves: Who is this man who even forgives sins?" (verse 49) But our Lord spoke only to the woman: "Thy faith has saved thee; go in peace." The same words apply equally well today. Faith is the answer. It is that for which the seeker must pray. And it will make him safe. But that faith must lead him to believe that Jesus meant literally what He said to His apostles on the evening of the Resurrection:

"Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you . . . When he had said this, he breathed upon them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'" (John, 20: 19-23)

2. I know that Christ granted some such power to the *apostles*. That is mentioned in the Bible. But how does that give the same power to your pastor? — When Jesus gave this power to the apostles, He was preparing to leave them. In fact, He gave it to them *because* He was leaving them. Some of them were put to death within a few years. By the year 67 when Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome, the Church had been established in a number of localities with new bishops at the heads of dioceses. By the end of the century all the men upon whom Jesus bestowed that power on the first Easter evening were dead. Christ gave this power as a means to apply the merits of His passion and death to *all* sinners. There was no limiting it to the small numbers the apostles would personally absolve. Like baptism itself, and the Holy Eucharist, and all the other sacraments whose administration was personally bestowed upon the twelve by our Lord, the sacrament of penance is to make *all* men holy and to save them. This divine plan is carried through the sacramental system given to the Church by Jesus.

3. Why confess one's sins before the priest at all? Why not simply acknowledge sins directly to God, and ask *His* forgiveness? Such is the common teaching of the vast majority of non-Catholics. — Private prayer and the secret acknowledgment of sin are excellent practices and highly to be recommended. The Church

insists upon them. In fact, they are demanded by the law of nature when one is conscious of mortal sin. But they are not sufficient. They are not the sacrament which Christ instituted precisely to grant forgiveness of sins and the increase of grace to His followers. Moreover, "forgiveness obtained directly" from God would be a most uncertain matter. It would leave the person constantly in doubt. Religion, man's relation to God, could become a state of anxiety and mental torture. Penance as a sacrament may be unpleasant. But it is always consoling. It may be embarrassing. In fact, it is. But it *is* definite. "I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father . . ." leaves no room for doubt or worry to the person who has faith. At these words, people take courage for their battle in life. As he leaves the confessional, the sincere Catholic is strong in his resolve to avoid sin and keep his conscience clear. The tranquility with which dying persons hear the words of absolution, and their conduct after having gone to confession, is the best lesson that can be produced.

4. The priest becomes an "absolving machine." — Confession is not only a matter of absolution. The priest is not only a judge. He is a counsellor, an advisor, a spiritual father whose advice is to be accepted and acted upon obediently, a spiritual physician whose remedies are to be welcomed. He steers the willing soul clear of the occasions of sin. He guides those who petition his direction. He encourages in failure, rebukes when necessary. In his very human, and sometimes unpleasant way, and ever humbly conscious of his own shortcomings, he takes the place of Christ in order to help his fellow man in this great sacrament of mercy.

5. But there are so many bad Catholics! Confession does not seem to help. — At times non-Catholics speak of the sacrament of penance as though it were an encouragement to sin. Jesus came to destroy sin, not to foster it or make it easy. But His grace works slowly at times. He does not force the will of the sinner. Men are weak. They contract sinful habits easily. But even with God's help they overcome them only with violence to themselves. And often they lack the moral courage to do this violence. One might, at times, presume on God's mercy, and commit sin *because* it is so easily forgiven. That would be a very great fault in itself, and in order to speak of confession, one would have to correct such an attitude. With the proper dispositions confession keeps man with a clean conscience before God. It is blasphemous to say that it encourages sin.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Should the confessor be thought of only as a person with the power to absolve?

2. Why must the sacrament of penance be as permanent as the other sacraments?

3. Do Catholics insist as much, or more, than non-Catholics on confession made "directly to God"? How do you know that it is insufficient?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

The sacrament of penance is one part of the Catholic religion about which there is the greatest misinformation. About it center the most unreasonable prejudices. Nevertheless, it is one of the easiest sacraments to explain because it answers a spiritual need which is felt deeply within the heart of every thinking man. The worthy Catholic has derived so much consolation from it himself that a simple and sincere outline of the catechism, with added comments, presents a most convincing argument.

1. Unlike the Sacrifice of the Mass, to which the non-Catholic can be invited, and in which he can have at least some share, and unlike the sacraments whose administration can be witnessed, there can be no "trial runs" for confession. It will help, however, for the Catholic to take the interested and prospective convert to the church at a suitable time, and show him the confessional. He should indicate the kneeling bench at which the penitent makes known his sins. The crucifix should be pointed out. The screen, cloth, grill, confessional slide, and the like should be explained.

2. Many homely illustrations can serve to bring the non-Catholic gradually to an appreciation of Christ's great sacrament of mercy. The experience of "feeling better after getting a tormenting problem off one's chest" to a trusted friend in whom absolute confidence can be placed, may be appealed to and made spiritual. The priest has an education and a spiritual training which qualify him as no other person in the world is qualified to help in the matters of the human soul. His only interest in the confessional is the work of Christ. He is a spiritual father, a doctor of souls.

3. Emphasis on the seal of confession impresses non-Catholics. In describing, or more advisedly in showing them the confessional, indicate how dark it is on the penitent's side of the grill. Have the non-Catholic examine the screening cloth which is now so widely used. Point out the general principle that the Church intends to give the greatest possible privacy to both priest and penitent. But even though the penitent were known beyond doubt to the confessor, the priest's lips are permanently sealed. He cannot speak or act, or in any way make known, or use the knowledge gained as a confessor. Ask the non-Catholic to speak with any Catholic of his choice on this point, and he will soon discover that no matter how many times the Catholic has confessed,

or to how many priests, nothing could be more sacred than the secrecy which conceals for all time the sins made known to the one who holds Christ's power of forgiveness, and acts in His name.

4. Our Lord's parable of the father's forgiveness of the prodigal son, His appeal as the Good Shepherd, ever solicitous for straying sheep, His own unbounded kindness to those who had fallen — Peter, the woman in the city, the adultress, the Good Thief, and hundreds of others, must all have their place in our lives if the purpose of His Church is to be realized. "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." (John, 10: 10)

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Step for step, outline as you would to a non-Catholic the various stages of making a good confession: a) prayer to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment and appreciation of the malice of your sins; b) preparation (in what does it consist?); c) examination of conscience, and so on.
2. What comparison would you make between the seal of confession and the professional secrecy of doctors, lawyers, and other persons to whom the confidences of their clients are entrusted?
3. Is it possible to picture the Church to yourself *without* the sacrament of penance?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is confession disagreeable for everybody? If a person goes to confession regularly and does not feel any repugnance, should he examine himself on the score of routine and habit? Would you consider unpleasantness and shame a reasonable sign of a good confession?
2. Why do retreat masters and missionaries emphasize the sacrament of penance so much?
3. Name the principal effects which result from a really good confession.

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To strive to grow in appreciation of the sacrament of mercy. Reflection on the final words pronounced in the absolution formula will help much in this regard:

"May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the merits of all the saints, whatever good you have done and whatever evils you have suffered, be for you unto the remission of sins, the increase of grace, and life everlasting. Amen."

DISCUSSION IX

The Sacrament of Marriage

I. Christ's Wedding Gift

In listening to the Gospel story of the marriage feast at Cana on the Second Sunday after Epiphany, the thought has probably come to many Catholics: If only our Lord had been present at *our* wedding like that! What an honor it would have been for us! How happy we would have been!

But Jesus *is* present at every Catholic marriage worthy of that name. Catholics contract marriage at the altar, before the tabernacle. They are blessed during the Sacrifice of the Mass, in the sacramental presence of our Lord lying upon the altar. He witnesses the contract. He bestows the graces that make Catholic marriage different from the contracts of all others.

As instituted by God, marriage existed from the beginning of the human race. It is a natural office. Left to themselves, and relying on their own powers, men have degraded it in the past. By refusing to obey God's laws, many of them are doing so today. When our Lord came upon this earth, He found marriage fallen to a pitifully low state. He raised it to a high level, to the dignity of one of His sacraments. He made it one more of the means by which men might share in His life.

He destroyed none of the natural good of marriage. He elevated the natural goods to a supernatural plane. The natural desires remain in their full force, but they are made a means for man to cooperate with God in man's noblest work — begetting new heirs for the kingdom of heaven. The love of the parties for each other and for their children is stronger than ever, but it is made spiritual and placed on a higher level. The parental duties and cares, the consolations and happiness, the difficulties and dark hours have been left as the normal life of man. But they are now, thanks to the institution of the sacrament, a share in man's restoration in Christ. The union of husband and wife has been made a sacrament. It is a channel through which the Author of grace confers His benefits upon those who cooperate with the means which He has created for them.

The graces conferred at the wedding are numerous indeed. But they must not be thought of as something *passing*. They are as permanent during the marriage as the graces of baptism, or confirmation, or holy orders. Throughout his life the Catholic can ever draw on that help in the hour of spiritual need.

Father Tanquerey mentions three graces in particular: "The grace of an absolute and abiding fidelity, so difficult to the human heart; the grace of reverence for the sanctity of the marriage-bed; the grace of devoted and steadfast consecration to the Christian education of their children."¹ The devotion to these sacred obligations, and the cooperation with the graces which Christ bestows in Christian marriage, make the life of the Catholic different from the lives of all others about him.

As the Catholic views the world today, he sees much that is to be deplored. Forgetfulness of God and His part in the marriage produces the sorriest results. Divorce is rampant in the nation. Abuses against even the natural order are wholesale. Whatever their attempts at gaiety, the people guilty of such violations are deeply unhappy. One thing only can restore them to the Christian heritage they have abandoned. Their help must come from on high. But to direct their lives according to the grace of God calls for a spirit of sacrifice. Winning them to the spirit of willingness is the duty of the Catholic layman and laywoman. The principal tools to be employed are prayer, the prudent word, a truly Christian example.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Much of the sacredness of Catholic marriage lies in its intimate connection with the Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacramental presence of our Lord, the solemn blessing of the Church. Develop this thought in your own words as you would explain it to the non-Catholic.
2. "Indissolubility" is a big word used to express the idea that the marriage union cannot be broken. How would you make that clear to a person not of our faith, using the words or ideas of the catechism?
3. What is the Catholic's obligation toward relatives and friends who are disregarding the sanctity of marriage?

2. Marriage in the Life of the Catholic

The public character of marriage makes it a powerful factor for good or evil. The good example of a thoroughly Catholic family far outweighs the exemplary conduct of individuals. Such example is a duty in the sight of God. More than that, it is a positive need of the Church. Her fullest life in Christ depends upon it to a large extent. The family is not only the basis of civil society. It is the foundation upon which the Church builds. Catholic life is lived largely in the home, not merely "exercised" in the church for a few minutes of a Sunday morning.

On the other hand, Catholics can do untold harm by disregarding the teaching of the Church on this sacrament. Any scandal about the sacrament of marriage, whether in its contract

1. *The Spiritual Life* (Philadelphia, Peter Reilly Co., 1930), n.257, p. 132.

or in the state of life it produces, has a far-reaching power and deadly effect. Non-Catholics, unwilling or unable to distinguish between the Church and its wayward members, often point the finger of scorn at Christ's institution. They say that they cannot see much difference, if any, between their lives and those of Catholics who are supposed to be so much better. Often they are correct. Abuse of a sacrament is much worse than ignorance of a sacrament.

While not in itself a sufficient motive for virtuous life, the Catholic family must strive at all times to wield its power to influence others. Sincere effort in the following few points cannot fail to make a deep impression on all, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It will make the family a missionary unit in a most important cause.

1. *Love of the home:* A few years ago a popular writer stated that "It takes a lot of living in a house to make it a home." It is even more true that to make a house a Catholic home will call for a deep appreciation of the principles of Christ. The spirit of Jesus must dwell in the home. It will show itself in the decorations about the house. It will reveal itself in the conversations at table, in the living room, and elsewhere. It can be detected in the relations of the children to their parents, and that of the parents to the children. With much less money than is spent on questionable commercialized entertainments and in seeking pleasures away from the family circle, a home can be made so attractive that its members will be drawn within its circle.

2. *The reception of the sacraments as a family:* The father and mother who, as far as possible, share in the Sacrifice of the Mass, attend devotions in church, go to confession, kneel at the Communion table with their children, have already fulfilled much of their obligation to give a solidly Catholic education.

3. *Prayer in the home:* Where the members are united as a family, especially at morning and at night, and in thanksgiving at the table, there is a constant good example.

4. *Catholic home training:* This duty cannot be substituted by mere attendance at the parish school or a Catholic college. It means a love of things Catholic which the father and mother can impart as no others. If one does not learn to know and imitate Christ in the home, the sad probability is that one will never love Him in a truly Catholic manner. Catholic school education deepens and perfects that love, but its seeds must be sowed within the family circle.

5. *Obedience:* On the part of the children, sincere obedience, because they see in their parents the representatives of God, acting with His authority, is a lesson of which the world is badly in need.

6. *The sacredness of the home:* Without being prudish, the Catholic parent must tolerate no off-color references to marriage, which is a sacrament instituted by Christ. He must guard against tacitly condoning any violations of Christ's holy law by giving friendly and encouraged entrance to his home to those whom the Church is forced to refuse full welcome.

The world at large considers the Church severe in her marriage laws. The probable convert respects the Church for her stand on matrimony. Experience proves that very little explanation is needed to bring them to love what they admire. The sympathetic Catholic is often enabled to bring about that change. Many of the conversions which annually gladden the heart of the Church have begun with an appreciation of Catholic marriage. Strangely enough, most of the Church's losses each year are to be accounted for through failure to esteem Christ's gift to the Church in this sacrament.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Of the six points mentioned above, which do you consider of the greatest practical value and importance as an example? Or must they exist together? Are any of them *impossible* in our modern way of life? The list is very incomplete. Can you suggest other practices which would be a source of good example?

2. St. Paul explains the bond between Christ and His Church in terms of the unity of the family (Ephesians, 5: 25-33) But a family is never more united than when at prayer together. Has the present generation abandoned something essentially Catholic?

3. Have you ever heard a non-Catholic express admiration for the Church's insistence on the sanctity of marriage? Can you repeat the statement?

3. Marriage and the Non-Catholic

The marriages of non-Catholics are usually valid. Catholics must bear in mind that the lawfully contracted marriages of baptized non-Catholics, whether entered into in their churches or in the court house, are also sacramental. It cannot be otherwise. The unions of persons subjected to Christ through baptism must be contracted according to His law. And that makes them sacramental.

It is true, also, that many non-Catholics show serious appreciation of the nature of Christian marriage. Their homes are sanctuaries of virtue. Their children receive a proper moral training. They are faithful in the service of their churches. They give every evidence of trying sincerely to serve God according to their beliefs.

But in the main it can be truthfully said that ours is an unbelieving age. Its conduct is godless. The masses of the people have been profoundly influenced by men who make a business of denying the supernatural. Making light of the real character

of the marriage bond is common enough. Recreational reading, so called, is disdainful of fidelity to the marriage vows. A shameful "control" of God's institution is openly advocated. Even graver disorders have become commonplace.

The weakness of unaided fallen nature has not withstood these attacks well. An educational system that refuses to know God has not corrected a lust-fed mentality. It has even caused it in many instances. The appeal made to the masses is insidious. In his *Encyclical Letter on Marriage* Pope Pius XI calls the people who propagate such errors "the emissaries of the great enemy who is ever seeking to sow cockle among the wheat."¹

Strength which comes from the grace of God is the only salvation against such errors. Only one hope is to be found to lift marriage once more to the plane from which it has fallen. That only hope is the principle and courage which find their strength in sacramental grace.

The Catholic must bear in mind, in meeting these people, however, that they are, in a sense, more sinned against than sinning. They are the products of a system which is only partly of their making. Their homes and environment have not trained them to live for Christ. Their education has little prepared them for the sacrifices of married life. The Catholic can say to himself in all sincerity: But for God's grace, I would probably be in the same position. If Christ is not known and loved, divorce can easily be twisted to have its appeal. If there has been no serious home training, if corrupt reading is substituted for the catechism and the Church's instruction, if the means of grace and the guidance of the Church are cut off, if would be a supreme test for the Catholic to shape his life according to the vows pronounced at his wedding. When Christ and His priestly representative in the Church are replaced by a state official, much of the holiness of the contract is forfeited.

A Catholic mind illumined by Christ's teaching and a Catholic heart strengthened by His grace are the surest guarantees of happiness. Those outside the Church enjoy few of the privileges bestowed upon mankind. Without knowing the reason, many of them are not happy because they do not possess Christ's gifts. True charity will search for ways and means to share the blessings of Christ with such people. Love, home, children, are the heart-words of our language. And they must remain so, or civilization will perish. But love must be spiritual. The home must reserve an important place for Christ. Children are entrusted by God to their parents.

So many have so few of life's choicest blessings. The worthy Catholic must not in charity fail to try to help them.

1. *Casti Connubii*, 1930.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Are non-Catholic marriages usually valid? Are they sacramental?
2. What do you think are the principal causes of the present condition of marriage?
3. An intelligent and sympathetic attitude, which is nevertheless firm and unyielding in principle, is necessary in speaking with anyone about a matter as intimate as marriage. What reasons are here assigned to produce this intelligent sympathy?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

Many thousands of mixed marriages are contracted each year. The Catholic party to every mixed marriage is in conscience bound to work for the conversion of his partner. Formerly the Church demanded a promise to this effect before she would grant a dispensation to marry a non-Catholic. Although not mentioned today in the formal promises, the obligation to work for the conversion of husband or wife is as binding as ever, and is given explicit mention in the law of the Church. (Canon 1062) The duty is based on the divine law of charity, and is fulfilled particularly by sincere prayer, the constant good example of a thoroughly Catholic life, and sincere religious observance. Prudence will suggest in individual cases what other measures can be adopted.

Catholics who have not this obligation will also be spurred on to exercise their charity toward their fellow man when they consider the far-reaching good effects their efforts may produce. Charity, prudence, discretion, and patience are required. It may take years to win a soul. God's designs have no time limits to them. The following suggestions may be found helpful.

1. "The love of which we are speaking is not that based on the passing lust of the moment nor does it consist in pleasing words only, but in the deep attachment of the heart which is expressed in action, since love is proved by deeds. This outward expression of love in the home demands not only mutual help but must go further; it must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day in forming and perfecting themselves in the interior life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue, and above all that they may grow in true love toward God and their neighbor, on which indeed 'dependeth the whole Law of the Prophets'."¹

The Catholic argument is that if the very bond of oneness in religious observance which makes this plan a possibility, is lacking, little can be done.

2. The non-Catholic has made a solemn promise to the Church to educate his future children as Catholics. Sending the children to Catholic schools fulfills the letter of the promise, it is true, and shows good will. Common sense tells us, however, that no-body can give to another what he himself does not possess. The

1. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Casti Connubii*, 1930. (Encyclical on Marriage)

child who has never recited his catechism to his parents, or knelt beside them (not father or mother) in receiving Holy Communion, is not getting a *thorough* Catholic training.

3. In a more general appeal the Catholic should point out that:

"...as history testifies, the prosperity of the State and the temporal happiness of its citizens cannot remain safe and sound where the foundation on which they are established, which is the moral order, is weakened, and where the very foundation from which the State draws its life, namely wedlock and the family, is obstructed by the vices of its citizens."¹

4. Numerous invalid marriages could be remedied. The Catholic party is living in the state of sin. He cannot receive the sacraments. Because of indifference, or fear of antagonizing the non-Catholic, or for any one of hundreds of possible reasons or excuses, the Catholic husband or wife may not broach the subject. Prudent Catholic friends can frequently be of help, and can explain matters more successfully than the partner in marriage. The goal of making it possible for the Catholic to return to the sacraments, and to have the obligations toward the children fulfilled is a rich one for the missionary zeal of any Catholic. Such work must be undertaken carefully, prayerfully, and with great tact. Its rewards are great, but the effort and zeal are necessarily proportionate.

5. Always keep the appeal to the non-Catholic on the positive and beautiful side of the sacrament.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. When should the layman "take up the matter" with the pastor when there is hope of correcting an invalid marriage?

2. What suggestions can you make to foster a more intense Catholic spirit in the home?

3. Who should approach the Catholic who has contracted an invalid marriage outside the Church? Or should one adopt a "Hands off" policy, and wait until the Catholic, touched by grace and repentance, approaches the pastor? Who should approach the non-Catholic?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the nuptial blessing at Mass? To whom may it be granted? Who cannot receive it?

2. Why does the priest usually mention the number of *families* when asked how large his parish is? (The answer is mentioned in several different ways in the discussion.)

3. Please complete as far as possible the list of sacred objects in the home which give it a Catholic atmosphere: blessed Crucifix, holy water (to be used daily), picture of the Holy Family, or a similar picture, etc.

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To recite some form of prayer together as a family, even if it is only for a few minutes after grace at meals.

1. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Casti Connubii*, 1930.

DISCUSSION X

Mary, the Mother of God

1. All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed (Luke, 1: 48)

The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and said to her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women . . . Behold thou shalt conceive . . . and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." (Luke, 1: 27-31) God chose this way to make known to Mary her unique privilege of becoming the Mother of His Son. The feast of the Annunciation (March 25) recalls these facts for the faithful each year. It is the oldest of the feasts of Mary, and by many the most loved. It expresses Mary's crowning glory.

Since the times of the first heresies referring to Mary and her Divine Son, the Blessed Virgin's faithful clients have constantly sought her praise. Pope Pius XI, with keen appreciation of modern man's needs, recently re-established the ancient feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin (October 11). Mary's supreme dignity as having been chosen the Mother of God forms the central theme of the feast.

The same thought courses through many of the Church's official prayers during Advent (the four weeks before Christmas). This sacred season, which commemorates the human race's patient waiting during thousands of years for the coming of the Redeemer, makes many references to His Mother. It was only natural that Pope Pius IX, when instituting the universal feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, should have inserted it in the Advent season (December 8). He emphasized the fact that the fervent pleas of Catholics throughout the world prompted him to establish the feast.

All men owe a debt of praise and veneration to Mary, through whom Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became one with them in the cave at Bethlehem. This realization holds an important place in their prayers, particularly at Christmas. Like a beautiful refrain the acknowledgment is taken up again in the feasts of the Circumcision, the Epiphany, the Presentation, the feast of the Holy Family, and the Purification. The Psalmist, the evangelists, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, have all been searched for words in honor of the Blessed Mother. And these praises form a large part of the Church's official worship in this sacred season.

Mary's dignity as the Mother of God has occasioned constant prayerful effort throughout the centuries to fashion new terms

and modes of praise. Hymns, poetry, petitions, novenas, sculpture, and painting vie with one another in paying tribute to the Mother of Jesus. Many of these efforts find their inspiration in the official worship of the Church. These usually grow in popularity.

Others are at times less happily chosen. They are not true expressions of the Church's teaching. Occasionally they have to be condemned by the ever watchful scrutiny of Rome's Holy Office. Those which have stood the test of centuries of devotion, and which enjoy the Church's approval, merit the most careful examination. They are devotionally solid and dogmatically most sound. Such is the Litany of Loreto, or the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, as it is popularly called. Its invocations have daily ascended to heaven from millions of lips since its approval by Pope Sixtus V in 1587:

Mother most pure, pray for us . . .
 Mother of our Savior, pray for us . . .
 Virgin most powerful, pray for us . . .
 Refuge of sinners, pray for us . . .
 Queen of angels, pray for us . . .
 Queen of peace, pray for us . . .

Modern piety has revived the great devotion to the "Mother of Sorrows." Simeon foretold that a sword of sorrow was to pierce the heart of the Mother of the Man of Sorrows. (Luke, 2: 25-35) Mary is the Mother of God, and she received this greatest of honors in a mystery full of joy. But she was likewise to become the Mother of all men on Calvary, at the most tragic of the sorrowful mysteries.

There is one Savior for Mary and for me.
 There is one Mother for Jesus and for me.
 There is only one Cross for Jesus and for Mary and for me.

Much of the dignity of being a Catholic is bound up in these few words. But reflection upon them receives very little consideration among non-Catholics. Any efforts which are made to share them with those outside the Church will be looked upon favorably by Mary and her Son.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. You have recited the Litany of the Blessed Virgin many times. How many of its invocations refer to her motherhood, directly or indirectly?
2. How many devotions in honor of Mary can you mention which are not a part of the official worship of the Church (that is, not the Mass, or the Sacraments, or the official prayer of the Church)?
3. Which is your favorite feast in honor of the Blessed Virgin?

2. Mary in the Life of the Catholic

Filial devotion to the Mother of God has claimed an important part in the religious life of the American Catholic from the founda-

tion of the country. This love of Mary has been particularly marked since Pope Pius IX placed the United States under the patronage and protection of the Immaculate Conception. Gratitude for the great favors her protection has showered upon the Church in this land has received external expression in the national shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. It is a fire that burns deeply in every truly Catholic heart.

The Official Catholic Directory lists 4,660 parish churches, missions, and other Church institutions in the United States dedicated to the honor of the Mother of God.¹ The list of parish churches in some of the larger dioceses and cities forms a most extensive Litany of Mary in itself. In the comparatively small Leavenworth diocese, for instance, twenty-one of the 120 parish churches and missions bear Mary's title under some form or other. To this number should be added St. Mary's Jesuit House of Studies at St. Marys, Kansas, the large motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity and St. Mary's College and Academy for women at Leavenworth, the convent of the Sisters Servants of Mary in Kansas City, Kansas, and St. Mary's Hospital at Emporia, Kansas. Three towns within the small territory of the diocese bear the name of the Virgin: St. Marys, Marysville, and Mount Carmel.

In the personal and spiritual life of Catholics there are endless proofs of devotion. The majority of religious Sisters pride themselves on being privileged to adopt Mary's name. Mothers prayerfully invoke the Blessed Virgin's special protection in having their children baptized, as the frequently used names of Mary, Maureen, and their variants testify. Catholic piety instinctively turns to Mary's intercession with her Divine Son for purity, modesty, humility, and the other virtues which make life beautiful and pleasing in God's sight. Truly Catholic homes select a place of prominence for her image, whether a costly statue or a cheap, gaudily colored print.

Popular devotion has dedicated May, the loveliest month of the year to her. The popes have answered the requests of the faithful throughout the world in assigning October to the month of the Rosary. Advent, with its added feast of the Immaculate Conception, necessarily devotes much attention to the Mother of the coming Redeemer. Her major feasts, of which eighteen are listed in the daily missal, dot other portions of the Church's calendar. In recent years novenas have caught the popular fancy, and weekly attract hundreds of thousands, among them many non-Catholics.

Deep consolation is found in the shining example of great numbers of the Catholic youth of the land who are united into sodali-

1. This rapid count might be found slightly inaccurate, although it was carefully made.

ties, and other groups under the protection of the Mother of God. From her patronage they gain inspiration, protection, guidance, wholesome recreation. They give the world about them a sadly needed example.

The personal experience in the private prayer of each individual, allowed and encouraged to grow from the Church's official worship, is the best testimony of all. It manifests the deep love and veneration of all Catholics for their Mother, who is also Christ's Mother. It bears witness to the confidence in prayer directed to God through Mary's intercession.

This filial devotion has expressed itself in many of the world's choicest treasures of literature, sculpture, painting, music, and the spoken word. Wherever the Church thrives, it pulsates with constant devotion to the Mother of the Savior.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How many churches can you mention in your locality which are dedicated to Mary? Schools? Orphanages? Hospitals? Societies?
2. Are you acquainted with any paintings of Mary by the great masters? Famous statues? Passages in literature? Other works of art?
3. How many of the feasts during the course of the year can you mention? Compare your answer with the index of the daily missal, if you have it handy.

3. Mary in the Life of the Non-Catholic

The "born" Catholic who has a serious appreciation of his religion is often baffled by what he sees in the religious life of others. But on no one point, probably, will he be so astounded as in observing the non-Catholic's attitude toward Mary, the Mother of God. In high school and college literature classes, and in general Catholic reading, he will discover some beautiful tributes to the Virgin from the ablest non-Catholic authors of the language.

A note of wistfulness and longing seems to course through their pages. Although by far not the most beautiful of the non-Catholic tributes to Mary, Nathaniel Hawthorne's often quoted lines may best serve to express this particular thought:

"I have always envied the Catholics their faith in that sweet, sacred Virgin Mother, who stands between them and the Deity, intercepting somewhat of His awful splendor, but permitting His love to stream upon the worshiper more intelligently to human comprehension through the medium of a woman's tenderness."¹

Non-Catholics can be thought of as persons deprived of the love of a very dear Mother. Mary is bereft of a large portion of her children, bestowed upon her as Christ's most tender gift in His dying moments. This is evident in the uniform new-found

1. Old Manse Edition, vol. 8, p. 173.

joy and tranquility of converts to the faith. One of the less known recent converts, a former Baptist minister, words the thought impressively:

“O lovely Lady, would that others might know the joy of knowing thee! How often we have raised our voices with St. Augustine: ‘Too late have we known thee, too late have we loved thee,’ and the more we know of her, the more radiant her charms shine forth, and the more strongly we are drawn toward her.”¹

The overwhelming majority of conversions are lacking in the spectacular. They are made quietly and attract little attention, usually none at all outside one’s immediate neighborhood and acquaintanceship. Few write books to tell of their conversions. The baptismal register and other official entries are the only records preserved, except the undying sense of gratitude which fills the heart of every sincere convert. But it is interesting to note how eagerly newcomers adopt the Church’s fullest devotion to Mary. Although they are often probably not aware of it themselves, converts seem to be bent on outdoing the Church herself in the veneration of Mary. And the Mother of God and of mankind understands her children. . .

Much of the spiritual emptiness of life outside the fold can be realized in considering these few benefits which Mary bestows upon men:

1. She is the Co-Redeemer of mankind, whose share in the passion of her Son makes her the Queen of Martyrs, the Mother of Sorrows, the one to whom the faithful can apply for aid in all their sorrows and distress and trials and temptations, with the assurance that they will be heard and helped.

2. After those of her Son, her merits make up a cherished part of the spiritual treasury of the Church. This treasury is the rich storehouse from which the spiritual helps so necessary for man are drawn.

3. Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces.

“The graces which the Holy Ghost pours down upon us are due to the merits of Christ on Calvary; but in order that God may bestow them upon the world, it is necessary that Mary should intervene. Having cooperated by her divine Maternity and sufferings at the foot of the Cross in the Incarnation and Redemption, she has deserved to cooperate when they are constantly applied to creatures by the Most High. ‘By the communion of sorrows and of will between Christ and Mary,’ says Pius X, ‘she has deserved to become the dispenser of all the blessings which Jesus acquired for us by His Blood.’ (Encyclical Letter, February 2, 1904).”²

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1. Roth, Augustine Joseph, *Out of the Wilderness*, (4th ed.; Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press), p. 22.
 2. Lefebvre, Dom Gaspar, O.S.B., *Daily Missal*, (St. Paul: E. H. Lohmann, distributors for U.S.), p. 1796.

4. Mary's beautiful example is so necessary today. Commenting on the text: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven . . ." Father Stedman says:

"This is really a magnificent tribute to Mary! For Mary is Christ's Mother not only according to the flesh, by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit; but she is related to Him also and even more profoundly by her absolute utter submission to the Heavenly Father's Will. She styles herself indeed simply, 'the handmaid of the Lord.' (Luke, 1:38) No mere creature was ever dearer to God than Mary, for no one ever obeyed His Law with her matchless fidelity."¹

The forces of evil, bitter prejudice, and ignorance keep those outside the Church at a distance from Mary their Mother. These forces prevent the non-Catholic from enjoying and being benefited by these great spiritual helps. Most of these people are well disposed. When grace does touch their souls, when faith has opened their eyes, they often become Mary's most faithful clients. The Catholic can be God's instrument in bringing about their conversion. When once he has undertaken this work (and it is work, not a spiritual hobby), he has become an apostle, whose efforts are most pleasing to the Mother of all men, and to her Divine Son.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Re-read Father Stedman's explanation above. Have you ever thought of the matter in that light before? Now explain the matter in your own terms.
2. What reward did our Lord make to His Mother when He was dying on the Cross?
3. How would you explain the above citation of Nathaniel Hawthorne to a non-Catholic in the light of Catholic life?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

The most positive way of helping non-Catholics when given the occasion, is to put before them the extremely consoling character of the teaching of the Church. The following points come readily to mind:

1. Mary's prophecy with regard to herself that "All generations shall call me blessed" (Luke, 1:48) has been most convincingly fulfilled. More than 350,000,000 Catholics observe her feasts. They have done so since earliest Christian times. Churches by the thousands are dedicated to her honor. Her name is daily invoked by every worthy Catholic, repeating the salutation of the angel Gabriel in the "Hail Mary." Men instinctively turn to her in their trials, thus honoring her power of intercession at her Son's throne.

1. Stedman, Joseph F., *Book of Answers to the Daily Mass Questions in My Lenten Missal*, (Brooklyn: Confraternity of the Precious Blood, 1941), pp. 21-2.

2. Her Son, who is God Himself, honored her. She was dearly loved by Him. She was obeyed by Him. "And he went down with them [Mary and Joseph] and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them; and his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart." (Luke, 2: 51) She is still His mother in heaven.

3. She glories in her title, Refuge of sinners.

4. She wins for worthy souls the grace of a happy death. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." She stood beside our Lord at His cruel death. The Catholic prays with confidence that she will also be present in his final hour of trial. The answer to that prayer is to be seen in the calm of the Catholic deathbed.

5. The false teaching, often born of prejudice and retained by non-Catholics through ignorance of the Church's teaching, that Mary is worshipped or adored by Catholics in the sense that they adore her Divine Son, is entirely unfounded. Because she is Immaculate, in view of her having been chosen by God's unsearchable designs to be His Mother, she is venerated by an altogether distinct kind of praise — far above that given to the angels and saints. But that veneration is infinitely below that rendered to her Son. He is God: she is a creature. And Catholic worship recognizes the distinction far more logically than do other forms of religious worship.

6. Profound truth lies in the title by which she is lovingly known in the Church: "Our Blessed Mother."

7. Mary's absolutely sinless life is a shining example held before men to draw them to better lives. This is true of the saints in general, but particularly true of the Queen of Angels and of Saints, who is the Mother of all men.

8. "He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord." (Proverbs, 8: 35) The words are always applied by the Church to refer to Mary, as in the Epistle of the feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8).

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Besides the examples given above in n.1., what other ways can you mention in which Mary's prophecy has been fulfilled? There are dozens of them.

2. Would it be just if the Blessed Virgin were honored merely as the other saints? By such action would her Son be more praised than He is now in Catholic worship? Is He more worshipped by non-Catholics, who deny Mary her rightful place?

3. What examples of virtue are presented to us by the Church from the life of Mary? Give at least several examples.

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Forty-one of our 119 Cathedral churches in the United States are dedicated in honor of Mary. Why do you think the per cent is so high? Is there any significance in the fact that seventeen of our Cathedrals are dedicated to the Immaculate Conception?
2. Who is the patron of your Cathedral Church?
3. Explain what you know of the Rosary, as you would to a non-Catholic.

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To form the habit of saying the *Memorare* daily:

"Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother. To thee I come, before thee I stand sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen." (Indulgence, three years. Plenary indulgence under the usual conditions for daily recitation throughout month. *Preces et Pia Opera*, n. 309).

DISCUSSION XI

The Veneration of the Saints

1. "I Believe . . . in the Communion of Saints"

When the solemn Mass begins on November 1, the feast of All Saints, the choir chants one of the most stirring melodies ever composed by man. The introit of the Mass gives in brief the Church's teaching on the *veneration* of the saints.

"Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festival day in honor of all the saints: at whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and give praise to the Son of God. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just: praise becometh the upright (Psalm 32: 1). Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost . . ."

There one has much of the doctrine in one short sentence. For His own greater external glory, God has wrought wonders through men and women who were very much like the men and women in the Church today. The Church militant rejoices that they have obtained the crown of glory which is their reward. The angels also rejoice, and give praise to God. But all the glory is directed to God alone: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost . . ."

The Church's doctrine with regard to the *invocation* of the saints is put into very brief form by the Council of Trent, answering Protestant objections of the sixteenth century which still persist to this day:

"The saints, who reign together with Christ, offer up their own prayers to God for men. It is good and profitable to invoke them suppliantly, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and help for obtaining benefits from God, through His Son Jesus Christ, who alone is our Redeemer and Savior. Those persons think impiously who deny that the saints, who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, are to be invoked; who assert that they do not pray for men; who declare that asking them to pray for each of us in particular is idolatry, repugnant to the word of God, and opposed to the honor of the One Mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ."¹

Nothing could be clearer than this statement. Nothing could be more logical than this development of the whole teaching of Christ. He founded His Church, and became the Head of it. United with Him through it, and cooperating with His graces, men and women have gained the great victory of heaven. The Church militant is one with Him, and with them. For nothing in their glorious death has the power to separate those united in charity. (Romans, 8: 35) By their prayers the faithful intensify

1. Session xxv.

this union. They beg the saints to intercede for them and to obtain for them the graces whereby they may imitate their heroic lives.

Three important elements form the Church year. Most important are the sacred seasons, introducing or centering about the major feasts of the Savior: Advent, the Christmas season, Lent and its preparation for Easter, the Easter season itself, Pentecost and its long period of twenty-four weeks. The other feasts of our Lord are scattered over the Church year: the Circumcision, the Epiphany, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, the feast of the Sacred Heart, the Transfiguration, the Kingship of Christ, and others.

In a minor role, but of great importance in Catholic life are the feasts of the Mother of God: the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption, Nativity, Holy Name, Rosary, Maternity, and others.

In a still lesser role the saints' feasts dot the calendar of the Church year. Apostles and martyrs, confessors, popes, bishops, saintly priests and laymen, virgins, are all presented to the faithful by the Church for veneration and invocation. Their heroic practice of virtues is offered for imitation. The faithful are taught to rely on their intercession.

But all this, as St. Augustine pointed out in the early fifth century, is directed to God. We erect altars to God alone, he says, to the God of martyrs, never to the martyrs themselves, although in their honor. We do not offer the Sacrifice to Peter or to Paul, or to any other saint. The Sacrifice, and all the official prayers of the Church are offered to God the Father alone. But they are offered over the tombs of those whom the living can imitate. The Church on earth honors the saints with a veneration of love and brotherhood, similar to but higher than the sentiments experienced in this life for men of God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. If you were about to undergo a serious operation, or were faced with some important decision, or hoped to get a good position, would you not ask the prayers of a pious and morally good friend who visited you? Is it not far more logical to ask the help of the saints who are intimate friends of God, knowing that they are desirous of helping you?
2. Could you give an explanation of the Church's liturgical calendar to a non-Catholic layman, using the outline above indicated? Is there a calendar published in your diocesan paper, or in the parish bulletin, or placed in the church vestibule, to enable the parishioners to know what Mass is being offered? Should this be the work of the altar society?
3. What popular devotion have you to some saint in your parish? Can you point out in it: Veneration? Plea for intercession? Example for imitation?

2. Veneration and Intercession of the Saints in Catholic Life

Devotion to the saints claims an important place in the Catholic order of things. The child is usually baptized within two weeks after birth, and at least one patron saint is chosen for him, whose name he bears for life. He chooses another patron when he is confirmed. The many religious professed in the United States select another patron to aid them in the observance of their vows. The catechism teaches that these saints are special intercessors before God, and offer an example for imitation. Deeper Catholic appreciation strongly recommends that the name day and the anniversaries of baptism and confirmation be observed in the home rather than the birthday.

The parish churches in which the faithful worship God are usually dedicated to the honor of some saint. Cities, towns, provinces, religious orders, hospitals, orphanages, schools, and other institutions in the Church bear the names of God's heroes. The various works undertaken by the Church are placed under the patronage of some saint by the Holy See. Thus, St. Gregory the Great is the patron of the Church's worship and sacred music, St. Thomas of schools, St. Francis Xavier of foreign missions, St. Camillus of Lellis of hospital work, and so on.

This practice is built upon the firm conviction a) that the saints in heaven hear us, b) that they enjoy the power of intercession before the throne of God, and c) that they desire to assist us. This faith is an important part in the answer to any petition directed heavenward. Our Lord demanded it of those who asked favors of Him while He was on this earth. When He discovered it, the evangelists state that He "marvelled," as in the case of the centurion (Matthew, 8: 10), and the insistent woman who asked Jesus to free her possessed daughter. (Matthew, 15: 28)

This faith in the intercession of the saints to obtain favors for worthy petitioners is still alive today. It is not necessary to go to Lourdes, or to the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré in Canada to witness it. Masses of sincere thanksgiving are frequently offered in every parish church for favors obtained through the intercession of the saints. Beautiful confidence marks the prayers which daily ascend to heaven from thousands of troubled hearts.

In the public and official worship of the Church, no priest's prayer is ever directed to a saint. Although the saints are at times addressed directly, no prayer is ever pronounced *at the altar* or in the divine office to them personally. God is always invoked, and through Him the faithful petition the intercession of the saints. To select a few examples of the more common patrons:

On December 21 the feast of St. Thomas (who at first doubted the Resurrection) is celebrated. The priest prays over the people:

"Grant, O Lord, that it may be our glory to keep the feast-day of Thy blessed apostle Thomas; may his patronage ever help us, and may we at all times, with fitting fervor, imitate his faith. Through our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

Thomas's faith forced him to his knees and made him cry out: "My Lord and my God." Those offering the Mass with the priest ask to be permitted to imitate that faith. That is the principal lesson of the feast. On the Conversion of St. Paul (January 25), the Church asks:

" . . . vouchsafe that we, who this day celebrate his conversion, may be drawn to Thee by the example he has left us . . ."

On St. Gregory's day (March 12) the petition presents a deep thought:

" . . . mercifully grant that we who are oppressed by the weight of sin, may be relieved by his intercession with Thee . . ."

On the feast of the popular "Little Flower," the Church prays:

" . . . grant us, we beseech Thee, so to follow, in humility and simplicity of heart, the footsteps of the Virgin, St. Theresa, that we may obtain everlasting rewards."

Popular devotion and private prayer sometimes disregard the strict liturgical character of the veneration, and particularly the invocation of the saints. Nevertheless, they grow out of the same to a certain extent. Faith is alive and the people turn in confidence to their heroes and implore their intercession to obtain the favors they need. St. Paul told his Corinthian converts: "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ." (I Corinthians, 11: 1) Catholic faith and worship "imitate" Paul and the other saints, for "it is good and profitable to invoke the intercession of the saints."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you consider it more Catholic to celebrate the name day and the anniversaries of the first reception of the sacraments, rather than the birthday? What do you think of the practice? What is to keep it from being introduced?

2. Do you think that many prayers remain unanswered because they are not asked with the proper confidence and deep faith which our Lord demands of us?

3. Can you mention any other patron saints besides those mentioned above? Who is generally represented as the patron of holy purity? of music? of law? of safety in travel? of missions and retreats?

3. Intercession of the Saints Outside the Church

Non-Catholic churches usually admit that those saints whom they acknowledge are of help to the people as examples of imitation. But they do not admit of any intercession and invocation. Their principal reasons are the following:

1. They maintain, first of all, that the doctrines and practices of the Church are opposed to the faith and trust which men should have in God alone. — The Catholic practice of invoking the saints destroys nothing of the faith and confidence which we should have in God alone. Everything that is asked for in the prayers of the Church is petitioned through the merits of Christ alone, as shown above. The very source from which the Protestants take their objection (I Timothy, 2: 5) also commands the faithful to pray for one another. (I Timothy, 2: 1) Experience proves that men are led through the saints to a much more intimate union with God, as the worthy celebration of each feast demonstrates. If saints were adored as gods, the objection of the Protestants would be true. But every Catholic, and every unprejudiced non-Catholic, knows that this is not the case.

2. Non-Catholics also maintain that the invocation of the saints is opposed to the all-sufficient merits of Christ. — Veneration and invocation cannot be opposed to the merits of Jesus in any sense of the word. Catholics realize that what they ask for comes from Christ, and through the merits of Christ alone. They call upon the saints, His friends, to help them obtain the favors they seek. Any comparison in this connection seems far fetched and objectionable. But certainly to ask a favor of a politician through a mutual friend, who has influence precisely because he is close to the man in office, is no denial of the power of the politician to grant or withhold the favor.

3. Those outside the Church sometimes maintain that there is no proof for the Catholic practice in the Scriptures or the Fathers of the Church. — Several citations from Scripture have already been used in this discussion. "There will be joy among the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke, 15: 10) In verse 7 Luke simply says: "There will be joy in heaven." (Matthew, 18: 10; Hebrews, 1: 14) And as for the Fathers, anyone acquainted with the liturgy of the Church knows that their writings about the intercession of the saints are constant. Origen, Cyprian, Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, Augustine and Leo come most readily to mind. Such objections simply are not made in intellectual honesty.

4. Others maintain that the saints know nothing of us, and have no concern as to what happens on the earth. — The history and belief of Christian men, based upon the Scriptures and the teachings of the Fathers, and the uninterrupted practice of the Church form the best argument against such a statement.

It is easy to see that the Catholic may encounter difficulties on this score with possible converts. Zeal for their welfare will outweigh any attempt at argument. The most convincing proof that the Catholic has is the practice of the Church. Let the per-

son read this in the missal. Let him see it lived in the Church. Interpret it for him. So many of the beautiful and appealing features of the relation of God to man are denied to him! A powerful aid is taken from his life. It is difficult to imagine what the Catholic Church would be like without this devotion to the saints. But the effort will prompt one's charity if one can place himself in the position of his fellow man.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Does your missal or prayerbook have the Litany of the Saints in it? How often is the Litany publicly recited in your parish? Explain it briefly as you would to a non-Catholic.

2. If you pray to St. Aloysius for the grace of purity, do you deny something that is due to the Divine Savior?

3. Has your car a St. Christopher medal in it?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ emphasized the peril in which all men live owing to the deceptions of a spiritual tempter, the devil, who out of hatred of God, endeavors to destroy His work in men. St. Peter warns us: "Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour." (I Peter, 5: 8) If hatred of God is permitted to manifest itself in this manner, the saints are vastly more interested in the glory of God and in our welfare. They are our brethren in a common human nature and in the supernatural union in Christ Jesus.

2. There is much misunderstanding about the Catholic relationship to the saints. It must be made quite clear that Catholics do not *adore* the saints. The Church does not worship them in the sense that the word is applied to the worship of God. Every official prayer of the Church in which any petition is requested, closes with the words: "Grant . . . (the petition) . . . Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son . . ." The Catholic believes, with the Church, that Christ alone redeemed man by His death upon the Cross. No divine gift can reach man except through the merits of the sacred Passion of Christ. The saints simply add their prayers to those of the faithful, and although specially pleasing to God because of their great holiness, they aid their clients only through the merits of the One Mediator.

3. The occasional charge that Catholics venerate pictures and statues is entirely unfounded. The pictures and statues in the church, home, school, or which are carried about on one's person, simply remind the beholder to turn his thoughts toward heaven. Statues and busts of George Washington are found throughout the land. They keep alive the memory of the Father of His

Country in the minds of the people. Paintings and statues keep alive the Catholic's memories of the heroes of his Church.

4. The saints are the Church's heroes. They are men and women who have fought the good fight under Christ, with His grace. They are now close to God, deeply enjoying forever the reward of His closest friendship. The members of the Church militant are one with them through a common baptism, through the communion of saints. In praising their lives, and petitioning their intercession, the faithful give glory to God who works His wonders in weak men. And that is the first purpose of religion. St. Ambrose's sentence is classical: "He honors Christ who honors the martyrs." The appeal of the Catholic must be to make others love Christ through His friends. They must be made to feel that the Catholic Church offers something that cannot be found elsewhere.

An elderly lady manifested the real spirit of faith in calling at the parish rectory recently. She wanted the pastor to order her a copy of the lives of the saints. "I say my prayers, all right," she stated, "but I want to know whom I can best ask for the things I need. I want them (the saints) to be my friends now, and I don't want to be a stranger to them when I get up to heaven."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Passing through the United States a couple of years ago, a Chinese bishop stated that the martyrology, which is read only in monasteries and convents, should be read in every home. It is the record of our heroes, the saints, and from it we should learn their spirit, he said. What do you think of his statement, which is really a criticism?
2. What is the purpose of the paintings which adorn the home? The church?
3. In what did the saints differ from ourselves?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are there any cities or towns in your state named for saints? How many can you mention?
2. You read occasionally in the Catholic press of beatification and canonization ceremonies at St. Peter's in Rome. Do you know anything about the Church's entire process leading up to the declaration of holiness?
3. How many canonized saints has America produced?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Try to read the short life of the saint of the day as given in the daily missal, and select some one point for imitation.

DISCUSSION XII

The Catholic Church and the Bible

I. The Word of God

All followers of Christ have a deep reverence for the Bible. They recognize in it the Word of God made known to man. The Bible is really not a book, in the sense that the word is ordinarily understood, but a collection of seventy-two books, each quite distinct and serving a purpose all its own. It was written over a period of about 1600 years, beginning with Genesis, written by Moses, and ending with St. John's writings at the end of the first century after Christ. Fifty different sacred writers contributed to its composition.

Considered from another angle, however, there is really but one Book. There is only one principal Author, the Holy Spirit, who inspired the different historians, prophets, and evangelists at different ages of human history to bring one main message to men. That message is the Coming of the Redeemer. It centers about the praise offered to God the Father through Him and those who unite themselves with Him. When the Jews questioned His authority, and endeavored to put Him to death, Jesus pointed out to them: "You search the Scriptures, because in them you think that you have life everlasting. And it is they that bear witness to me." (John, 5: 39)

To modern man, the beginnings of Christianity are very strange indeed. In fact, they are miraculous to all ages. If a man of the twentieth century desired to found an organization, and to guarantee its perpetuation, he would in all probability write a book, or draw up a carefully prepared document. He would do all in his power to see to it that every idea was so plainly stated that it could not be misunderstood. As far as human prudence guided him, nothing would be left to chance. Author, scope, means to be employed, hopes, rewards, and punishments would be carefully outlined.

Our Lord Jesus Christ used none of these means, precisely because He was God. He "went about doing good." (Acts, 10: 38) He preached. He healed the sick. He said of Himself: "Go and relate to John what you have seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matthew, 11: 4-5) Not one word is mentioned about a book He has written, or is to write. As far as is recorded, He wrote only once, and no one knows what He wrote with His finger upon the ground. (John,

8:6-8) He repeatedly humbled the Pharisees, learned in the law, for their failure to understand the Old Testament references to Him. He did not instruct His apostles to write of Him, but to preach. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew, 28:19) The infant Church was a well established and growing society by the time the New Testament was written.

The various parts of the New Testament were written quite independently of the growth of the early Church. Not upon any command of their Master, but simply when the occasion presented itself, the apostles and evangelists composed their writings which have been declared the inspired word of God.

Thus St. Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews of Palestine. St. Mark wrote Peter's teaching at the request of the converts of the Prince of the Apostles in Rome. St. Luke, who had also written the Gospel of Jesus, from His birth to the Ascension, wrote the Acts of the Apostles, which is the history of the spread of the Church under the leadership of St. Peter and the missionary zeal of St. Paul. St. Paul himself, whose untiring efforts took him from city to city in the establishment of dioceses, never permitted his interest in his converts to flag, but wrote his fourteen rather long letters to them, which were read publicly in the churches. These letters have always formed a part of the Mass for the Catechumens. While in exile on the Island of Patmos, St. John wrote the Apocalypse, considered the sublimest and most profound book of the Bible. As the days of his long life drew to a close, he penned his Gospel to preserve the purity of faith against threatening heresies.

Upon all the books forming the Old and New Testaments the Church placed her hand of solemn approval hundreds of years before the Reformers appeared on the scene. She determined which books were inspired and which were not. The Bible is really *hers*.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. You hear the epistle and Gospel of the Mass read each Sunday morning. Can you recall the sacred authors of those parts of the Sacrifice of last Sunday's Mass?
2. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament. Can you tell what parts the following sacred authors wrote? Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, Jude?
3. What is the new revision of the New Testament sponsored by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, under the Bishops' Committee?

2. The Bible's Place in Catholic Life

The majority of Catholics do not read the Bible as the Church desires they should. This is through no lack of appreciation of

the Bible itself. Americans simply are not readers. They do not intend to disregard the wishes of the Church through any spirit of disobedience. They fail to adopt the idea of the Church in this matter, just as they do not fulfill many other recommendations made to them. The Church's ideal fosters daily reading of the Sacred Word.

Two indulgences granted by Pope Leo XIII appear in the beginning of every popular edition of the Bible. An indulgence of 300 days is bestowed upon the faithful who read for at least a quarter of an hour the books of the Sacred Scripture with the reverence due to the Divine Word and as spiritual reading. A plenary indulgence under the usual conditions is granted for those who have read the Bible in this spirit daily for a month.¹

The popes have repeatedly stressed the importance to be accorded the Bible in the Catholic home. They have pleaded for the renewal of family reading of the Bible. The Bishops of the United States have added the weight of their authority in the recent publication of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine revision of the New Testament, whose first printing, released on the recently established Biblical Sunday, May 18, 1941, totalled one million copies. Thus Bishop Schulte, in a pastoral letter dated May 14, 1941, urged all the faithful of the Leavenworth diocese to procure the new edition. He mentions that:

"The arrangement of the new edition makes for an easier and more intelligent reading, which fact, together with the sacred and important character of its contents, should make it the most popular and most read book in the library of the home."

Today's Liturgical Revival in the Church has for its purpose to unite all the faithful, priests and laity, in the solemn celebration of the worship of the Church. To accomplish this purpose, the leaders of the Revival desire to place the Missal, or book of the prayers of the Mass, into the hands of all Catholics. More than four million missals have already been printed and distributed in the United States. Other countries which have pioneered in the work have a still more glowing record. Similar effort is being made to have the laity pray parts of the divine office, and to assist at the administration of the sacraments with full understanding of the words of the officiating priest. But the sacred worship of the Church is really a magnificent drama built on the Gospel. Most of the prayers are taken directly from the Bible. The Gospel of the Mass gives the faithful the words spoken by Jesus for their instruction. The epistle is an instruction generally taken from the writings of the apostles. Both epistle and Gospel are explained by the priest in the sermon. The divine office is taken almost entirely from the Bible. The greater part of many

1. *Preces et Pia Opera*, 645 (December 13, 1898).

books, and at least some part of every book in the Bible are read during the course of the Church year.

In this way the Church unfolds in her worship the story of Jesus and all that He came to do and teach. It is not merely "a reading of the Bible." It is a living reality. The secret in understanding the worship of the Church is to realize Christ's presence among those assembled in His name. He is not to be thought of as a mere historical person, like Caesar or Napoleon, or other men who influenced their times and even subsequent ages. Those men died, and have been forgotten, except in history books. But the Savior dwells among His flock today. He continues to speak and to guide. "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Catholics love His word, as they love Him.

Every agency within the Church is made to foster that love. Schools are erected and conducted at great sacrifice to preserve that love. Catechism classes are held in parishes that cannot have parish schools. Discussion clubs are growing in number and remarkable success. The missionary activity is progressing by leaps and bounds. And all the activity centers about Him who came to redeem men, and whose story is revealed in the sacred books of the Bible.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Altogether too few Catholics read the Bible regularly. But they know it quite well. When they hear a passage from it, they recognize the story. Sometimes they can repeat whole phrases by heart. When the new revision was first read in parishes, they noticed the differences immediately and commented on them. How do you account for these facts?

2. Why don't Catholics read the Bible more?

3. What is the desired place of the Bible in the Catholic home? What measures would you suggest to make it such?

3. The Non-Catholic and the Bible

People outside the Catholic Church place a wrong emphasis on the Bible. They hold it as the sole "rule of faith." They do so because they want to throw out Tradition. And they want to throw out Tradition because it shows the full power of the Church. It is not enough to believe only those doctrines contained in Holy Scripture. It is also necessary to believe those revealed truths which the apostles preached, but did not commit to writing. St. Paul drew a sharp distinction between what the Thessalonians learned by word and what they learned through his epistles. (II Thessalonians, 2: 14) St. John closes his Gospel by stating that Jesus wrought many other signs which are not recorded in his account of the life of Christ. (John, 20: 30)

Thus, the Bible itself does not act as its own authority. It does not even mention how many books compose it. It could not do so, considering that they were written over so extended a period of time. If it were not for Tradition, there would not even be a Bible. The Bible rarely interprets itself, and without the authority of the Church, acting in Christ's name, and without the authority of Tradition, doubtful meanings would divide Christ's body, the Church, into hundreds of sects. From the Tradition of the Church many universal practices have been adopted. Sunday, for instance, is nowhere mentioned in the Bible as the Lord's day, but if we were to accept the word of the Bible alone, it would be necessary to observe the Sabbath of the Jews.

The often made charge that the Church keeps the Bible away from the faithful is absolutely without foundation. This should be clear from what is stated under n. 2.

Whatever their love of the Bible, and in many instances it is great indeed, non-Catholics cannot have a full appreciation of Sacred Scripture. Separated from the Sacrifice of the Mass, it loses its power of love. When it ceases to be the principal part of the official prayer of those united with Christ in the worship of the Church, much of its meaning is sacrificed.

Then, too, the Protestant versions are incomplete, omitting several important books of the Bible. In many points they are inaccurate. It is historically false to hold that Luther "discovered the Bible," for it has been conclusively proved that there were thirty editions of the entire Scriptures before Luther's first edition in 1534. "An infallible book is of no use without an infallible interpreter, as the history of Protestantism clearly demonstrates."¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is Tradition? Why is it so important in religion?
2. What is the basis for the contention that the Church withholds the Bible from the faithful?
3. Why cannot non-Catholics have a full appreciation of the Bible?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

1. The possession of the same written word of God is not the important thing to be sought in religion, which is man's relation to Almighty God. A life of prayer, and faith and worship according to the teaching of the Gospel is the standard by which men will be judged. (Matthew, 25:34 ff) It is possible to fail in loyalty and love of God while possessing the revealed word. Love of God is proved in action, properly interpreted and directed

1. Gibbons, James, Cardinal, *Faith of Our Fathers*, chapter 7.

by God's representatives. A brilliant biblical student, knowing the original languages of the Bible, its text, its history, and thoroughly acquainted with critical methods, may have much less love for the word of Jesus than an unschooled factory worker.

2. The Bible is an authority only in Catholic hands. The Church gave us the Bible in the fourth century. The Protestants accepted it from the Church. They have no other source for accepting it as the word of God than the infallible authority of the Church itself. And the same infallible authority must interpret the Bible today, just as Jesus had to interpret it for Cleophas and his companion on the road to Emmaus. (Luke, 24: 25 ff) Peter interpreted the Bible for the Jews on the day after Pentecost. (See Acts of the Apostles, chapters 3, 10, 11.) He warns us that "in these epistles are certain things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and the unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures also, to their own destruction." (II Peter, 3: 16) St. Paul assures us that "Faith then depends on hearing, and hearing on the word of Christ." (Romans, 10, 17)

We see this constantly in practice today. The popes with their encyclicals, the General Councils, the pronouncements of the Congregations in Rome, and the general and perfectly uniform teaching of the Church are the spiritual rules by which the Bible's teachings are put into practice in the twentieth century's complicated problems. Others have chosen and interpreted as they have pleased. They have insisted on the independence of human reason. They have split into hundreds of sects. In so doing they have forgotten Christ — while holding their copy of His Word in their hands.

3. No greater signs of love and reverence could be shown the Sacred Word than at the singing of the Gospel during the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Gospel Book is usually the most precious and elaborately decorated book the parish church possesses. The deacon carries the book in solemn procession. The book itself is marked with the sign of the Cross. Incense is offered to it, as to God Himself. All stand in reverence when the text is announced. From pole to pole there is one solemn chant which the Catholic recognizes wherever he may be as the chant of the Gospel. The organ is silenced. All attention is focused on the word of God. The book is kissed. After the sacred Host Itself, and the Altar, which is Christ, the word of God is the Church's most cherished possession. But the Catholic knows that unless these signs of worship correspond to a practical love and observance of Christ's teachings in daily life, his Sunday Mass is but an empty externalism. This lesson of complete obedience and submission to the authority of Christ must be his appeal to those who might enter the Church.

4. The Bible is a rule of life. It must be made to fit modern man's needs and conditions. It needs a guiding hand as unerring as the Author's own. By His authority the Church is that guiding hand. That is one of the principal reasons why we love the Church. The non-Catholic seeking to serve God is in a much more difficult position. He must strive to settle each problem for himself. He must ask himself: Did Christ really establish a Church? Did He institute this sacrament and that? What did He mean when He said this? Try to show the non-Catholic that Christ gave us a much easier, infinitely more secure way, which has His promise of never erring. Try to instill the desire and love for what Christ gave us through the Church.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. The Gospel of the eight Beatitudes (All Saints' feast, November 1) has few words which a child in the lower grades of the grammar school could not understand. But would you attempt to apply its lessons to the complicated moral questions of the day, or do you feel the need of unerring guidance which the Church gives?

2. How many ceremonies can you repeat which show the Church's veneration of the word of God at the singing of the Gospel?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do people keep their family records, birth, baptism, marriage records and other family matters in their Bibles?

2. What edition of the Bible have you in your home? Has it come down from a previous generation?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To try to set aside a few minutes each day for reading the Bible. Read slowly, and with reflection, attention and devotion, as though what you read were written especially for you.

DISCUSSION XIII

The Authority of the Pope

I. "Feed My Lambs . . . Feed My Sheep" (John, 21: 16-17)

In Vatican City at Rome there dwells a tall, ascetical man who upon his election to the papacy in March, 1939, assumed the name of Pius XII. He is overwhelmed with grief at the renewed world strife which separates whole nations of faithful subjects. As Vicar of Christ he seeks to quell the battling peoples and to restore the peace of Christ. But for the time being the powers of evil have cast a terrible hatred upon the face of the earth. And the Pope finds his principal solace in the united prayers of those who see in today's terrors the hand of God.

Pius XII is the personal Vicar (representative) of Jesus Christ on earth. He is the visible head of the Church, acting with the authority of the Invisible Head, who ascended into heaven. In the Council of Florence, held in the year 1439, the teaching of the Church was outlined in words which should be impressed on the memory of every Catholic:

"We define that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of the Blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, and true Vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the father and doctor [teacher] of all Christians, and we declare that to him in the person of Blessed Peter was given, by Jesus Christ our Savior, the power to feed, rule, and govern the universal Church."

The Pope is the infallible teacher of the Church in matters of faith and morals. That means that he cannot make a mistake when teaching as the supreme pastor and head of the Church. On the night before He died, Jesus addressed St. Peter in the presence of the other apostles: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith may not fail; and do *thou*, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke, 22: 32)

The Church is one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic. Teaching the same doctrine everywhere and at all times, leading men to holiness, and defending the truth, she has retained perfectly what is infallibly true and what came from the lips of Jesus. But retaining what is infallibly true is not possible without a head who cannot make a mistake when acting as the leader of all the faithful. This is abundantly clear in the history of Protestantism, in which almost every article of faith has been denied or called into question.

The Pope is infallible only in matters of faith and morals, and only when he teaches as the head of the Church. He pronounces in an unerring manner only in questions of truth revealed

in Holy Scripture, and in problems of the morality of conduct. In matters of doubt he decides what the original deposit of faith is, namely what Christ gave the Church. This is called "speaking *ex cathedra*." That means that he is speaking as from the chair of Peter, as the supreme head of the Church. He is not infallible, for instance, in science. Nor is he infallible when speaking as a private teacher. Christ prayed for Peter (Luke, 22:32) that his *faith* fail not, and that he might confirm his brethren in the faith.

This divine guidance is what has preserved the Church. If the Pope is not infallible, Christ's prayer for Peter and his successors was not granted. The Church would have no guarantee from error. The gates of hell would prevail against her. (Matthew, 16:18)

The false charge is often made that Catholics maintain that the Pope cannot sin. This is untrue. No such doctrine exists or has ever existed. The popes have been holy men, many of them were saints. But infallibility has nothing to do with their personal, private lives. God never interferences with the free will of man. Infallibility belongs to the papal office which is from God. The popes are human. They can sin. They go to confession regularly, much more regularly and frequently than priests and religious.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. A century and a half ago the framers of the Constitution of the United States outlined the democracy upon which this country is founded. A Supreme Court protects its meaning, interprets it in the light of the present day. Its judges add nothing to the content of the Constitution. — Christ placed at the head of His Church an authority to protect what He had bestowed upon the Church, not in a mere human and erring manner, but with His own assurance that Peter's faith would fail not, and that he would confirm his brethren. Could you enlarge on the similarity to the Constitution in explaining infallibility?

2. How many popes can you mention who have been canonized saints?
3. Name an instance in which the pope has spoken "*ex cathedra*."

2. The Pope and Catholic Daily Life

Catholics too easily drift into a lack of appreciation of their relationship to the Holy Father. They think of him as remote, high above them, with little concern about their welfare. A brief reflection will show how incorrect such thoughts really are.

It is principally in the spiritual realm that the Supreme Pontiff glories in his title, "The Common Father of All." As bishop he offers the Sacrifice of the Mass for the faithful scattered throughout the world.

The faithful cherish the prayers he daily offers for them. As the one closest to the Good Shepherd, his prayers have a deep

meaning in their lives. In turn he solicits the prayers of Christians throughout the world, issuing frequent pleas, as during the present world crisis.

He grants rich indulgences for those who perform good works according to his intention. The good Catholic finds great consolation in being invited to a personal cooperation in the work of the pope. No work that the Church undertakes is too lofty to exclude the humble efforts of the least member.

The Holy Father canonizes the saints for the veneration and imitation of the faithful throughout the world. He personally invokes their intercession and fosters the practice among the laity.

He bestows his blessing as the representative of Christ *Urbi et Orbi*, that is, to the city before him (Rome) and to the world at large. He has made it possible for the persons hearing his voice over the radio to receive his blessing as though they were physically present in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

He is the supreme law-giver of the Church, controlling Catholic life in its minutest religious details. He appoints all the bishops throughout Christendom. He personally studies the reports of the bishops on the state of their dioceses. He encourages greater zeal. He praises worthy effort. Where necessary he corrects abuses. He never fails to send his special blessing to all the people of the diocese through their bishop.

All are subject to him, cardinals, bishops, kings, rulers, as well as the humblest of the laity. Religious are solemnly bound to obey him as their superior in virtue of their vow of obedience. With fatherly kindness he receives visitors to the Eternal City as pilgrims to the center of Christendom. In recent years some of his most solemn utterances have been voiced to those who could never have obtained an audience with state rulers, but who were warmly received by "The Common Father of All."

He speaks to all nations united in Christ in his encyclical letters, interpreting the Gospel in the light of modern man's problems and spiritual needs.

And with it all, like the father that he is, he signs himself in all humility, "Pius, the Servant of the Servants of God." No Catholic should ever feel at a distance from him. Like the Good Shepherd Himself, he wants a share in the life of every soul.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How many ways can you mention in which the Pope's teaching reaches the people? Through letters to the bishops? Through newspapers? By means of the radio? What other channels does he use?
2. What are the "intentions of the Holy Father" according to which one must pray in order to gain certain indulgences? (See page 4)
3. Can you mention other ways than those just indicated by which the Holy Father affects the daily life of the Catholic?

3. Non-Catholics and the Papacy

The papacy is one of the most important doctrines of the Church, both in theory and in the practical results it produces. The pope is the visible head of the Church. He holds the place of Christ, the Invisible Head. Union with the pope means union with Christ. Denial of Peter places one outside the Church.

All outside the Catholic Church simply refuse to acknowledge the pope. The various sects have their own leaders who hopelessly try to maintain a semblance of unity. The seventy millions in the United States who have no Church affiliation at all are without any kind of spiritual head, just as they form no religious body.

Schism is a rebellion against the pope, or a failure to acknowledge him. Usually its perversity is chiefly due to the heresy which forms part of it. Luther and Calvin had broken away from the Church before the anathema was pronounced against them at the Council of Trent. Every reader of history is acquainted with the shameful beginnings of the schism of Henry VIII which introduced Protestantism into England. In 1531 the general assembly of the clergy and Parliament proclaimed him the head of the national church.

From that day until now new heads of new churches have constantly arisen. But common sense tells one that Christ left only one representative, one leader, one visible head.

The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus appointed St. Peter to be all that the Church today understands by the word "Pope." Protestants simply say that St. Peter was none of these things. Naturally enough they recognize no successor to Peter as the head of the Church.

The Catholic Church says that in speaking *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals (as explained above), the pope's pronouncements are of equal authority with the Bible itself. All non-Catholic churches rule this out entirely.

To the man who belongs to no church, the name of Pius XII is simply that of the "chief spokesman" of the Catholic Church, in whom he has no particular interest. To non-Catholic churchgoers he is thought of as like their own bishops, but surrounded with a great deal more ceremony and pomp, and given an importance which he does not deserve. They grudgingly acknowledge him a world leader in the eyes of unprejudiced people. Their jealous resentment at the appointment of Myron C. Taylor to the Vatican as the personal representative of Mr. Roosevelt is indicative of their attitude. To the Catholic the Pope is the direct descendant of the Prince of the Apostles, with all his rights and powers of office. Belief in this doctrine alone can again

unite Christians and bring happiness and religious security where chaos now divides the body of Christ. No Catholic worthy of the name can cease to work and pray for this reunion under the guidance of Peter.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Can you recall some news stories about Pope Pius XII in the past year? What kind of treatment did the stories receive from the daily press? How did the account compare with your diocesan paper?
2. What is a schism?
3. What is the Vatican State, or "Vatican City," as it is properly called?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

1. Emphasis must be placed on the divine foresight and prudence of Christ in having given the Church an infallible guide in matters of faith and morals. This papal guidance has ever been of supreme importance in all the crises, and even in the ordinary life, of the Church's history. It is extremely valuable today when the powers of evil are more actively engaged in spreading false doctrines than ever before. Outside the Catholic Church men are torn by strife and doubt and uncertainty. The Catholic must be deeply grateful for the divine assurance of truth and certainty. At times that assurance requires submission in unpleasant matters. Difficult things are commanded. But that is only in keeping with the nature of the society which our Lord established. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross . . ." (Matthew, 16:24) The supreme pastor of the faithful could not be false to the Good Shepherd.

2. The unity of God's Church depends upon an absolute authority. Proof of this is to be found in what happened when individual and private interpretation of the Bible and all consequent insistence on individualism marked the beginnings of Protestantism. The Church became disunited. Chaos followed. The twentieth century is reaping the harvest of the seeds of error. From Luther's first claim of "Faith without good works," the Catholic Church has witnessed an about face among those separated from her. Today the creed is "Good works without faith." Outside the Catholic Church today men do not care what is believed, if anything. What Christ taught is unimportant. There is one standard: "Act respectably. Do not offend against convention."

But Christ's body must not be separated. "Has Christ been divided up?" (I Corinthians, 1:13) Christ's body, the Church, must have a head. It must have someone to speak with Christ's authority and in His name. That is Peter and his successors in the Vatican.

3. Explain to the interested person the unbroken line of popes from Pius XII to St. Peter. This argument is fully developed in most of the pamphlets and books indicated at the end of this booklet. Eighty-two of the 262 popes are canonized saints. Twenty-nine of the first thirty were martyred for the faith. With few exceptions all have been holy men. Not one of them has ever written or taught a single doctrine that conflicted with that of another pope, or a general council. No merely human power could account for such absolute unity over a period of 1900 years.

4. All the arguments against the papacy, and particularly against papal infallibility used by non-Catholics are taken from non-Catholic writings. In most points the non-Catholic is misinformed. He does not even understand the question. He must be asked in fairness to read the Church's explanation with the Catholic. The Catholic should go over with him, point for point, as outlined, for instance, in the *Faith of Our Fathers*, *The Fairest Argument*, *Plain Facts for Fair Minds*, or any similar books available. It is worse than useless to discuss the point unless both Catholic and non-Catholic understand the Church's doctrine. So very often it will be discovered that the non-Catholic is not opposed to the Church at all. He is opposed to what he has been *led to think* the Church teaches.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. "Where Peter is, there is the Church." This has been the rule through the Christian ages. It means that where there is humble submission and obedience to the Holy Father, there is true Catholicity. Can you mention two or three things in daily life by which we show our obedience and submission to the Supreme Pontiff?

2. Why must the Church depend on an absolute authority?

3. What book do you possess, or have you read, which would explain the papacy to the non-Catholic?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. From Catholic newspaper reading, and other sources of information, how many marks of honor given to the Pope can you enumerate? He is always represented as dressed in white. At solemn functions he wears the tiara. People kneel in his presence. Can you continue the list?

2. How are parishes, religious orders, dioceses, united under the papacy?

3. What prayers does the Church say for the Holy Father?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To overcome the tendency to be so impersonal about our religion. Translate belief into action! When asked a question, do not say "The Church teaches that . . . indecency in dress is wrong." Rather state it this way: "The Pope has objected strenuously to immodest and indecent dress. The Catholic woman dresses decently, or she knows that she is being disobedient to the highest authority of the Catholic Church." We owe the Pope the love and veneration we pay the Invisible Head of the Church. We must obey him as we would obey Christ Himself, whom he represents.

DISCUSSION XIV

The Doctrine of Purgatory

I. The Church's Doctrine

Heaven is the unending *state* of happiness of the blessed. When man has successfully run the course of his life, and has been judged favorably on his love and service of God during the years of his trial on this earth, he receives the reward of the blessed in heaven. (Matthew, 25: 34 ff) Heaven is also the *eternal dwelling place* of those who enjoy this reward.

The descriptive phrases chosen by the inspired writers bring out these ideas more clearly than the word "heaven" which is ordinarily used. Thus, it is called the "kingdom of heaven," (Matthew, 5: 3); "the kingdom of God," (Mark, 9: 46); "eternal life," (Matthew, 19: 16); "the crown of justice," (II Timothy, 4: 8); "the promised eternal inheritance," (Hebrews, 9: 15); "the unfading crown of glory," (I Peter, 5: 4). Sacred theology uses such terms as "the beatific vision," "eternal reward."

Nothing defiled can stand before God. Nothing in which there is the slightest stain of sin or offense can have a share in the great reward which He has promised to those who love and serve Him. Earthly man cannot understand the intimate union of the soul with God which constitutes "life everlasting." The fullness of the reward that God has in store for those who have proved their love of Him during the warfare of this life against temptations, cannot be grasped by any man. "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those who love Him." (I Corinthians, 2: 9) But this much man does know with absolute certainty: God will not tolerate sin or unpunished offenses to enter this dwelling place of the just. (Apocalypse, 21: 27)

The Catholic teaching on Purgatory is consistent and uniform throughout its history. It rests upon the teaching of the Old Testament. "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (Machabees, 12: 43-46)¹ Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself refers to the forgiveness of sins in the world to come (Matthew, 12: 32), which words the Church has always referred to the doctrine of Purgatory. In fact, the whole doctrine of Christ in His public

1. Protestants do not accept the books of the Machabees. But these two books of Sacred Scripture rest upon the same authority as any other books in the entire Bible, namely the divine infallible witness of the Catholic Church. See Discussion XII.

speaking absolutely demands the doctrine of Purgatory. St. Paul speaks of slight sins to be burned away, and the "souls to be saved by fire." (I Corinthians, 3: 11-15) The Fathers and Doctors of the Church mention the apostolic custom of praying for the dead. The worship of the Church from its earliest beginnings has included the deceased among the prayers for the faithful.

Reason and common sense demand an acknowledgment of the Catholic teaching. All men commit venial sins, that is, those offenses which do not completely cut man off from the love of God. Some crimes offend God most seriously. Blasphemy, murder, gross injustice, and sins of sex destroy the bond of love that unites men to God. But there are hundreds of smaller failings, which even faithful souls daily commit: less grievous instances of uncharitable speech, vulgarities, bad example given to one's neighbor, less grievous acts of disobedience, deeds of little malice, committed with neither full deliberation nor the full consent necessary for a mortal sin. Most men do not regularly beg God's pardon for these lighter offenses.

Then, too, there are the many offenses forgiven through the sacraments, but for which the temporal punishment has not been removed. The majority of men go into eternity with some of these unaccounted for offenses on their souls.

Briefly the Catholic doctrine resolves itself to this: God is all good. He is all just. Heaven, the reward of those who have loved Him in this life, is a union with God whose intimacy is so great that man cannot even think of it. But this union with God excludes of necessity anything that is defiled. Man leaves this life with lighter, unatoned sins on his soul. He also has, or can have, upon his soul, the unpaid temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. There must be a place where the soul is made clean and perfect, worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

This place is called Purgatory, a place of cleansing. And because we are all one in Christ, and one with all the souls united in the Church with Christ, we can help these souls whose union with Christ is only intensified by death. This accounts for the devotion of Catholics for the "Poor Souls" and the prayers and good works performed to relieve their sufferings, and hasten them to their goal of everlasting glorified union with God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why does the priest always recite the five sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary at wakes? Are there any changes from the usual form of saying the Rosary? Why are they introduced?
2. The catechism asks the question: Will there still be a Purgatory after the General Judgment? Can you give a good reason for your answer?
3. What do you think of a person who, although comfortably fixed and financially able to do so, would fail to have at least an anniversary Mass said each year for his deceased father or mother, or other close relative?

2. The Souls of Purgatory in Catholic Daily Life

Good Catholics frequently have Masses said for the souls in Purgatory. It is safe to say that the majority of Masses offered by priests throughout the world are for the repose of souls of relatives or friends of the persons requesting the Masses. The charity takes on a broader character when the priest is asked simply "to offer the Sacrifice for the Poor Souls," leaving the application of the merits to God.

Although not a part of the Church year, strictly speaking, Catholic piety has dedicated the month of November to the special remembrance of the faithful departed. On the traditionally observed days, Catholic families visit the cemeteries where their loved ones are buried, and busy themselves more with prayer for the deceased than with flowers and decorations. To encourage this piety Pope Pius XI granted a plenary indulgence to anyone who visits a cemetery during the octave of All Souls' day (November 2) and prays for the Poor Souls. An indulgence of seven years, applicable only to the souls in Purgatory, is granted for the same pious work on any other day of the year.¹

Little acts of self-denial offered for the same intention are a frequent and praiseworthy custom within the Church. Prayerful daily remembrance of the faithful departed, based upon the firm faith that the prayers will benefit those so remembered, is a common practice among Catholics. More than that, it is a duty.

All this is Catholic in the best sense. It flows from the official worship of the Church. The Church is much concerned with its suffering members. No priest ever ascends the altar to offer the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass without earnest petition for those who have died in the Lord. In the fourth prayer after the consecration of the chalice, the celebrant solemnly folds his hands, and gazing at the sacred Host, recites the following petition:

"Be mindful, also, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids N. and N., who are gone before us with the sign of faith and sleep in the sleep of peace. [The priest pauses and includes those persons whom he wishes to remember especially. He then continues:] "To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

Kneeling at their places while accompanying the action of the priest, the parishioners mention the persons whom *they* wish to remember, and also follow the words of the priest which apply to all the souls in Purgatory.

The Divine Office, the official prayer of the Church, which is a duty with the clergy, but which is being daily recited, at least in part, by more and more of the laity, closes each hour with the

1. Sacred Penitentiary, October 31, 1934. *Preces et Pia Opera Indulgentiis Dilata*, n. 546, p. 438.

remembrance: "May the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen." The private and individual devotion of the faithful has imitated this official act of worship. Good Catholics simply do not go to church or pray to God without including, at least in a general way, those who have so strong a claim upon their charity.

All Catholic teaching fosters a love of the dead. They are one with us in Christ. Death has nothing in it to break this union: rather, the union with Jesus, and hence with the faithful on earth, is intensified.

In answer to the question: "May we believe that the souls in Purgatory can and do intervene on our behalf in mundane affairs"? Father Arendzen pointed out that Catholic piety firmly believes that the souls in Purgatory can and do help us. It is true that ordinarily the Church speaks of prayers and good works *for* the souls in Purgatory, and not of petitions directed *to* them. Part of Father Arendzen's answer shows the deep faith of the Catholic. He says:

"The objection that the souls in Purgatory, not possessing the Beatific Vision, cannot see this world mirrored in God, and have therefore no natural means of knowing what goes on in this world, we may grant; but they have supernatural means, since they are in the supernatural order and are friends of God, and also of God's angels who may convey information to them. It is therefore certainly not wrong to ask for the intercession immediately after death of persons who have led saintly Christian lives, and to include in the Litany of Saints under the invocation of 'All ye men and women, Saints of God, intercede for us,' the souls in Purgatory."¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Our devotion for the suffering souls expresses itself first and foremost in the Mass. There are also the Office of the Dead, obtainable at Catholic bookstores for a few cents, the Rosary, and other prayers commonly recited at wakes and funerals. How many other forms of devotion toward the souls in Purgatory can you mention?

2. Passing along the highway, what are the principal differences you have noticed between Catholic cemeteries and those of religious sects, or the municipal cemetery?

3. In writing a letter of condolence to a Catholic friend on the loss of his mother, what is the greatest proof of your friendship and Catholicity that you can offer?

3. The Doctrine of Purgatory and the Non-Catholic

Most non-Catholics recognize the word Purgatory. They have heard it repeatedly, because the denial of the Catholic doctrine is common among those outside the Church. Few have an accurate understanding, however, of the Catholic meaning of the word.

1. Arendzen, J. P., "The Question Box," *The Catholic Gazette*, (London, February, 1941), p. 36.

The denial of the doctrine of Purgatory can be traced largely to Luther's false theory of justification by faith alone. His teaching that man is essentially depraved and corrupt (through original sin), led him to deny the difference between mortal and venial sins. It also followed that he was forced to exclude temporal punishment from his teaching. This led in turn to casting aside the doctrine of the Church on indulgences and their power to help man. It destroyed for his followers the consoling doctrine of the usefulness of prayers and good works for the dead, which had been held even in the Old Testament. It necessarily wiped out all belief in Purgatory.

Logically it carried with it the fearful thought that the greater number of even devout souls were lost. As often happens, the reaction to this kind of radical doctrine led many persons to the opposite extreme. That is what has happened outside the Church. Today men calmly deny any form of eternal punishment. They find complete belief in the simple assertion that God's mercy would not permit Him to condemn eternally the souls He created.

There is another result that has been produced by such wholesale denial of Christian doctrine on so essential a point. It is widespread today. It has been the cause of much of the modern refusal to think in terms of life beyond the grave at all. The Catholic teaching produces just the opposite effect. As the Catholic exercises his charity toward the souls detained in Purgatory, he learns to place a value on his own actions which is an entirely different rule of life from the material attitude of men today. Cardinal Gibbons mentions the point in passing in his *The Faith of Our Fathers*: "It familiarizes us with the existence of a life beyond the grave, and with the hope of being reunited with those whom we cherish on earth, and of dwelling with them in that home where there is no separation, or sorrow, or death, but eternal joy and peace and rest."

For the great majority of those outside the Catholic Church, particularly those of no religious belief, chaos reigns in all thought of a future life. Few believe in hell as a place of eternal punishment. Fewer still believe in Purgatory. Their lack of faith makes life so meaningless! They are groping in the dark. Many of them would welcome so sound and consoling a doctrine as that of the Church. True Catholics will not permit themselves to stand idly by and see this need, without any efforts made in Christ's cause.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. If you were to receive notice of the death of Mrs. Wilson, Protestant mother of a very upright family, who had been a friend of your own mother for many years, how would you express your sympathy?

2. What prayers do you think would appeal to a non-Catholic at a Catholic funeral? What kind of sermon would you hope the priest would preach if a non-Catholic friend accompanied you to a Catholic funeral?
3. What are the principal effects of the denial of Purgatory?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

Far from being a stumbling block for those who seek the truth in the Catholic Church, the doctrine of Purgatory should be welcomed by the convert-maker as a positive means to draw forth their best dispositions. It answers a need that they feel naturally. The Church is not on the defensive. It has something most positive to offer.

1. The first idea that will appeal to the non-Catholic is the consoling nature of the doctrine. When loved ones answer God's call in death, relatives and friends frequently experience a void in their lives. Many human relationships seem broken off so abruptly and hopelessly: the unreturned acts of kindness and love; the hastily spoken words, repented too late; the generosity of the deceased, often understood or appreciated only after death; the inability to repay during life. Is there nothing that can now take away this feeling of utter helplessness? To restrict memories to pictures, monuments, and kind words, seems so unsatisfactory. The Catholic doctrine is so natural and consoling that many non-Catholics adopt it despite the teaching of their ministers. They pray for their deceased, and beg God to have mercy on their souls. It is so useless to say: "If only I could do something!" One can do much — within the Catholic Church.

2. Importance is to be attached to the fact that just as the Catholic is under obligation to pray and offer good works for the souls in Purgatory, so he has the comforting assurance that he will be repaid in kind. After his own death the members of the parish will pray for him. He will share in all the Masses offered for the Poor Souls. Masses will be specially offered for the repose of his own soul. In fact, after baptism and inclusion in the Mystical Body of Christ, Mass will never be offered without beneficial petition for the faithful departed.

3. Go over the English translation of the missal with the non-Catholic friend. Read the different parts of the Mass composed for the repose of the faithful departed. The Mass of All Souls' day (November 2), or the funeral Mass, or the ordinary Mass for the Poor Souls may be selected. They form a beautiful appeal to God, and cannot fail to impress the well disposed seeker for the truth.

4. If an opportunity arises, accompany the prospective convert to a Catholic funeral, and explain the different rites of the Church.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Which of the ideas above mentioned would appeal most to the person well disposed toward the Catholic Church? Which would appeal most to the Catholic?
2. What prayers appeal to you most when praying for the Faithful Departed?
3. How does the Mass for the Poor Souls differ from other Masses?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you know of the series of thirty Masses offered for a deceased person and commonly called the "Gregorian Mass"?
2. What is to be thought of having a Mass offered, and presenting the card to the family of the deceased in preference to floral designs? What do you think of having Masses said for all the deceased members of the parish during the month of November?
3. An indulgence can be gained as often as a person visits the church from noon of November 1 until midnight between November 2-3, and saying prayers according to the intention of the Holy Father. What are the conditions for gaining this indulgence for the Poor Souls? They are announced in your parish each year. Do you recall them?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To get into the habit of saying occasional ejaculatory prayers for the Faithful Departed. It takes about five seconds of one's time to say "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let Thy perpetual light shine upon them."

DISCUSSION XV

"The Catholic Church Is So Backward"

1. The "Charges"

One of the most specious of the arguments against the Church employed by those outside her fold is the "backwardness of Catholics." It is more subtly employed than most other arguments, even to the point of unconscious conviction at times. As such, it wields an influence entirely out of proportion to anything that the sponsors of the arguments might reasonably expect. Border-line Catholics succumb to it in large numbers, and aid the cause of those working against the Church.

Worst of all, it presents at times an unrecognized stumbling block for those who really should become members of the Catholic Church. It sometimes prevents the best appeal from being made to them. It is all the more difficult for the convert-maker to deal with precisely because it is subtly employed, and hard to put one's hands on. It is for this reason alone that the matter is here considered.

Some of the principal causes why those outside the Church look down their collective noses at things Catholic may be listed briefly:

1. Catholic countries are educationally, commercially, and socially backward. Italy, Spain, and Mexico are mentioned as specifically Catholic countries, although the charge is generally understood to be equally applicable to Catholic sections of other countries, as Bavaria and what formerly was Austria.

2. Non-Catholic countries ushered in the era of scientific development and gave the modern world its really great discoveries. In the meantime, it is stated, Catholic countries have remained placidly in the backwater, off the main stream of scientific progress. By implication, rarely by direct statement, it is inferred that members of the Church are quite as unprogressive in forward-looking countries as are their fellow churchmen in Catholic countries.

3. Catholic churches and parochial school buildings quite frequently present a down-at-the-heels appearance, quite offensive to those who associate costly buildings and equipment with educational advancement.

4. Many of the Catholic churches in the larger cities (the church's membership in the United States is predominantly city-dwelling) are located in the "less desirable sections" of the city, and are frequented by the "foreign element." Driving hurried-

ly through the city the critics of the Church make bold to formulate their own judgments of the Church.

5. Superstition is the word sometimes used to describe many Catholic practices with which non-Catholics come publicly into contact.

6. Catholics hold comparatively few important places in government, politics, art, sciences, letters.

So much for the bare outline. The picture is very incomplete, but that merely adds to the variety of the case made out against the Church. The idea is not new. Jesus was questioned because His disciples ate bread with unwashed hands (See Matthew, 15:2 ff, Mark, 7:5 ff). His associates were social outcasts, sinners, poor people, those who did not rate the first century's equivalent of blue bloods. He won for Himself the name of "Friend of Sinners." He was the "carpenter's Son." His life on earth held few of the distinguishing marks by which unspiritual men measure success and acceptability. The studied ignominy of the Cross closed His earthly career. And He promised very definitely that His own lot would be that of His followers, a prophecy which has been generously fulfilled.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Does the fact that Catholics are looked down upon keep converts from the Church?
2. Do the above six points, as indicated, outline the principal reasons why the Church is looked down upon in this and other countries? Can you mention others?
3. Does being a Christian, which means imitating Christ, necessarily demand of us the willingness to be looked down upon and even despised?

2. The Catholic's Reaction

Catholics often allow themselves to be influenced too strongly by such criticism of outsiders. They place too high a value upon public opinion, and undervalue a truly Catholic attitude. Frequently their conduct is provokingly apologetic where serious non-Catholic men would respect a more independent stand and practice on Catholic questions.

Some Catholic parents, influenced by the mentality about them, and heedless of Christ's warnings and the Church's commands, send their children to public schools, despite the opportunity of Catholic education. They seek to calm their consciences by talking of "social advantages" and other such phrases which are quite meaningless to the sincere Catholic.

Many Catholics have become quite openly ashamed of "large families" (meaning anything above two children!) and fear the taunting criticism of persons entirely devoid of a Christian appre-

ciation of a sacrament. The Catholic press is not helping the faith by catering to firms whose advertisements consistently depict "families" of two children. It smacks too strongly of "keeping down to the level of the Joneses."

Laicism has driven religion indoors and confined it to a hurried hour on Sunday morning. It banished all acts of religion from society, from political gatherings, from the schools of the land, from public places, from the streets and highways, even to a large extent from the cemeteries. Processions are "discreetly" held within the churches. No crucifix or shrine adorns the highway. The clergy is looked up to — in a quite irreligious way, devoid of offense, but also largely devoid of spiritual power. Religion exiled from the heart of society, and confined to the four walls of the church, is despoiled of its pomp and glory, is robbed of much of its power to attract and appeal. What America needs is a *public* profession of faith. It needs Eucharistic congresses, Corpus Christi and other processions, public manifestations that are deeply Catholic. While the Church in America has the freedom of which other countries have been despoiled, it needs to take religion out of doors. It needs to let the world see Christ as He is adored by the Church, for "where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew, 18:20)

Catholics are too inactive as a body, and sit calmly by and permit unclean "movies," stage productions, and filthy magazines to furnish recreation for their homes and families. The Catholic Action called for in cooperating with the Bishops of the country has found many slackers. The Catholic must choose: either the Catholic mentality instilled by their religious principles and fostered by the hierarchy, or the mentality created by those who do not love God because they refuse to know Him or to accord Him a place in daily life.

Catholic America must take the lead. It must come forth from its catacombs and use all means to make Christ known and loved: the radio, in which some excellent work is already being done, the press, schools second to none, with the nation's Catholic University giving the powerful stimulus in Catholic thought and leadership, the stage, with its Catholic guild. All this calls for sacrifice, but twenty million Catholics can work a modern miracle like nothing so much as the early spread of Christianity. When the present turmoil has ceased, the tables will be turned, and Europe will look to America for the rebirth of Christian principles.

The Church in America has made much progress. But much remains to be done. A Catholic mindedness, which does not hesitate to appear boldly before the world in its true character must be reacquired. Catholics must gain a new appreciation of

the sacrament of confirmation and its effects in daily life. Then and then only can a mass appeal be made to bring converts into the Church. The Catholic must let the world see Christ in his life.

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy divine love. Send forth Thy spirit and they shall be created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth . . .”

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is the meaning, according to the catechism, of “being a soldier of Jesus Christ” through the sacrament of confirmation?
2. What is laicism?
3. What can your parish societies do, that they are not now doing, that would make Christ more known to the world at large?

3. The Non-Catholic’s Reaction

Sincere non-Catholics who desire to enter the Church may at times be deterred by the criticism levelled against the Church. They may find it hard to make the sacrifices almost certainly to be entailed in their conversion. It may mean a loss of love of one’s family. Financial loss has been sustained by many ministers converting to the Church in recent years. Becoming a sort of social outcast from the circles formerly frequented has been the price some converts have had to pay. Unpleasantness in some form or other based on the general lines mentioned in the preceding parts of this discussion is almost certain to manifest itself.

The principal assurance that can be offered such persons by the convert-maker is the power of God’s grace. Baptism incorporates the convert into a supernatural society. The person becomes united to Christ through the Church. His gain far outweighs any loss he may sustain. And if properly prayed for, God will give the grace which will enable the person to evaluate his newly acquired spiritual advantages properly. Baptism is the sacrament of light enabling the recipient to understand the gifts of the Church at their proper value.

The graces of the sacrament of confirmation will bestow the strength to love the Church in a truly Christ-like manner. It will help one to face trials and difficulties with fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. God will not be outdone in generosity, and the greater the sacrifice made in entering the Church, the greater the peace and tranquility found within its shelter.

For those who have no desire to enter the Church, Catholics make a simple request. It should appeal to the basic American sense of fair play. Ignorance manifested in repeating calumnies,

and in casting discredit upon the Church has a far-reaching effect. It may prevent the spread of Christ's Church. In individual cases it may be the added weight upon the scales which will cause the interested party to abandon the idea of becoming a Catholic. In such connections, it is well to reflect on the words of Christ: "... because you have done it to one of these my least brethren, you have done it to me."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What are the principal difficulties of the prospective convert?
2. Through what channels does the convert experience peace and tranquility upon entering the Church?
3. What would be your argument in addressing a person whom you heard repeating a calumny against the Church?

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

Care must be taken never to misrepresent the Church to the prospective convert. The Catholic must strive to show the Church for what she is — the Bride of Christ. Membership in the Mystical Body of Christ is not to be sought lightly. It presents many hardships and inconveniences, not the least of which can be the attitude of a world that refuses to understand the plea of the Savior to have all follow in His footsteps. Popularity and general acceptance of religion is an almost certain sign that the religion in question is not the relationship to God that Christ taught.

1. Material prosperity in non-Catholic countries is no indication whatever of "superiority" of religion. Religion seeks first and foremost the spiritual welfare of the soul. It is only indirectly that it considers temporal welfare, in as far as it is compatible with the spiritual good of man. Hence it is quite possible for a nation given to false worship of God to enjoy a greater material prosperity, since this material well-being depends largely on merely natural causes. This is evident from the doctrine of the Gospel, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, which Protestants hold in such high veneration. In the words of Jesus on that occasion, the *blessed* are called not the rich and powerful, nor those who enjoy worldly pleasures, but the "poor in spirit, the meek, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peace makers, those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice." (Matthew, 5: 3)¹

2. Catholicity strives for and effects a more equitable distribution of wealth than that obtaining in Protestant countries,

1. Tanquerey, *Synopsis Theologiae Domasticae*, (22nd ed., Tournay, Belgium: Desclée et Socii, 1927), I, n. 795, p. 532.

where the evils of pauperism are most manifest. Even non-Catholics are forced to see the wisdom and justice and are growing to a spirit of admiration for the principles laid down by the popes on this problem in their encyclical letters during the last half century. Material wealth at the sacrifice of others is only an indication of the absence of Christianity.

3. The Catholic Church is just what its title indicates, the universal Church. Christ's appeal goes out in the twentieth century, as it did in the first, to the ignorant and the learned. The Catholic Church is the Church for every man, no matter what color, race, social status, material possessions, or type of mind. Truth cannot be possessed by one group. It is universal. All can possess it according to their need. The Catholic who is ashamed of his brethren in national parishes, or Negro districts, or apologetic to non-Catholic critics for other underprivileged groups, or whose false pride impels him to keep apace with those who look down upon the Church, has not learned to think with Christ.

4. "That the Catholic Church fits in well with progress is manifest from her greater growth and influence in precisely those countries which have progressed most during the last three hundred years. Her greatest conquests have been in the so-called Protestant countries, and particularly in those which today are regarded as the most enlightened and progressive nations. If the Catholic is the dominant religion in countries whose rate of illiteracy is high, it is because the state itself has not made education compulsory and by its laws prevents the Church from conducting any but private boarding schools, whose patronage must necessarily be small. Ignorance has always been the greatest hindrance to the growth and development of the Catholic Church in any country. She has made these strides, even though wealth is not usually on her side. Other religions must constantly change their doctrines and their principles, even to hold their own, while the Catholic Church has never altered her Constitution nor readjusted her teachings. She still teaches, in the most progressive countries, doctrines nineteen hundred years old, no matter what the attitude of New Thought might be toward them."¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. In what sense is the Catholic Church the universal Church?
2. What does religion seek? Is material prosperity a part of the Church's goal?
3. Should Catholics strive to win converts by painting a rosy picture of the Catholic Church?
4. What is pauperism? Where is it most generally found?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the sensible middle course between "wearing one's religion on one's sleeve," which can become quite offensive to all, and "locking religion up in the churches"?

1. Noll, Rev. John F., *The Fairest Argument*; for our Non-Catholic Friends, 3rd ed., Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1917), p. 310.

2. What is the Catholic answer to objections and criticisms of Catholic education, school buildings, equipment, and so on? You have heard it repeatedly from the altar.

3. What do you think of the criticism, offered by a non-Catholic, who maintains that the principal objection to Catholic education today is that it has forfeited its own birthright and has attempted to imitate the standards of the public schools?

4. What are the best ways in which the Church can be intelligently made known and loved in America today?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To concentrate on some one means of acquiring Catholic knowledge, whether over the radio, or by reading Catholic books, or through participation in clubs or societies established for the purpose, and to use the knowledge thus obtained.

DISCUSSION XVI

"The Catholic Church Is So Intolerant"

Christ's Intolerance

One of the commonest charges hurled against the Church by those outside her fold is that she is intolerant. Persons who ordinarily do not use four syllable words seem to get the point here. And they are reasonably agreed on the matter. Webster defines intolerance as "the refusal to allow to others the enjoyment of their opinions, chosen modes of worship, and the like."

The Catholic Church rejects the terminology employed. The Church is *not* intolerant in the true sense of the word. And in general, intolerance is not what the good people want to say. They wish to state that the Church is "out of step" with the world about it. They find the teaching of the Church outmoded. They consider the Church's demands on her followers unreasonable according to their own standards.

The Church certainly is, and always has been at odds with the mood and thought of the world at large. And if human nature continues to be human, the Church will always teach a doctrine and outline a course of life's action which will not be adopted by the majority. It simply is the nature of things that the society which tries to live by the rules given by the God-man must be in opposition to the men and societies that insist on living according to rules of their own making.

If that is the "charge" against the Church, about the only way to meet the objection is to agree with it. And one can very safely agree to it by shifting the charge to the Founder of the Catholic Church, our Lord Jesus Christ. What is ordinarily understood by the word "intolerance" as applied to the Church was certainly most true in His life. His public career was spent in opposition to, and in being opposed by, the majority about Him. The struggle ended, His opponents thought, on Calvary's hill outside the city of Jerusalem when the Son of Man was fastened to the Cross. But the opposition goes on. Scenes shift. New players come on the stage. Their language is somewhat different. But the main theme remains identical. So do the principal characters: Christ (His Church), and those who oppose Him.

A share in His work necessarily means opposition to the world. It means to refuse to compromise. To be a Catholic means that one is going to stand very definitely on one side of the fence. Today the greater number are going to be on the other side.

“And he said to all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.’” (Luke, 9: 23) This is not an invitation to guarantee popularity.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Are Christ-like charity and intolerance as Webster defines it, necessarily opposed to each other? Are following Christ’s path, as a member of the minority, with unshakable belief in the correctness of one’s position, and “intolerance” the same thing?

2. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy. He drove the money changers from the Temple. He insisted on the love of enemies and the forgiveness of injuries. How many other instances can you mention from the Gospel in which He opposed the teachings and customs of His time?

2. The Church’s Intolerance

The Church *is* opposed to much of the twentieth century’s thinking and acting. It was just as opposed to what it saw in the eighteenth century, and in the twelfth, the sixth, and second, and the first. That is what makes faith faith.

One man, who externally resembled the Jews of His day so closely that He had to be pointed out, who spoke, talked, grew tired like other men, said: “I am the Son of God.” (Matthew, 26: 63-64) For that statement He was put to death. My Church, He said, (not churches) shall be absolute in authority. (see Matthew, 18: 17) My Church’s doctrine, and all the connected teachings and the practices based on it, come from Me. “He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you, rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me.” (Luke, 10: 16) Like the Jews of His own day, some draw very close to Jesus in the Church, and Jesus marvels at their faith. (Matthew, 8: 10) Others reject Him absolutely. The majority remain indifferent.

The Church condemns divorce, as did Christ Himself. “What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” (Matthew, 19: 6) — Men and women are legally separated in the United States on the flimsiest of excuses. Other churches will grant a member good standing after having obtained a divorce and remarried. The Catholic Church is practically the only bulwark in opposition to the world about her.

To protect the faith of the Catholic party, the Church refuses to place her sanction upon mixed and disparate marriages¹ without grave reasons. She never does so unless a solemn guarantee has been given that the danger to faith has ceased. Centuries

1. Mixed marriages are those contracted between Catholics and validly baptized non-Catholics. Disparate marriages are those contracted between Catholics and unbaptized persons.

of experience, which has nowhere been more bitter than in the United States, should convince all of the Church's prudence in the matter. But non-Catholics often find her position "unreasonable and intolerant." And among Catholics — some dioceses have annually almost as many mixed marriages as Catholic marriages. Faith *is* placed in danger. The faith of the married Catholic person is sometimes lost, more often weakened. Many children of parents who have apostatized through mixed marriage ("fallen aways") never receive the saving waters of baptism. This is a part of the sacrifice Catholics are offering to the pagan god of tolerance.

Catholics are prohibited ever to take any active part in non-Catholic religious services. Only for serious reasons may they even *attend* such services, as for the funeral of a relative, or when a public reason demands one's presence. This puts the Catholic Church in a bad light for those who do not fully understand the question. Non-Catholics have usually been reared in the teaching that "one church is as good as another." The Catholic knows that there is only one true Church. He knows that there is only one way of praising God (God's way), and that it would be grievously wrong to take part in any other way. But the world refuses to see the logic of the Catholic viewpoint. Sometimes unpleasant words are used to describe the situation. And Catholics are not always strong enough in their faith to act as that faith dictates.

The Catholic Church boldly takes its stand, in God's name, against the disgusting vice of birth prevention. A pleasure-loving generation refuses to submit to the voice of authority when the price is to forfeit pleasure or comfort. Non-Catholics call the Church intolerant on this score. Many Catholics echo: "Impossible, unreasonable, too heavy a burden." They pick up popular phrases in a feeble effort to justify their conduct. But the echo is weak: they know that by God's standard they are wrong.

The public press often assumes the role of authority in matters of morality. Among its recent statements are some that can only be interpreted as fostering or condoning mercy-killing. The medical and legal professions remain strangely silent and non-committal. The Church raises her voice in solemn protest at what can only be declared murder. And the chant goes up once more: intolerant.

To protect the faith and morals of her children, the Church uses her doctrinal and disciplinary authority to forbid evil books. Most of them are prohibited by the general law of the Church. Where more subtle examination is required, the objectionable books are listed in the *Index of Prohibited Books*. From the time

of St. Paul's preaching at Ephesus when his converts burned their books (Acts, 19: 19), down to the present day, one thought has been uppermost in the discipline of the Church: to prevent souls from being exposed to spiritual danger. Non-Catholics speak of obscurantism, which in Main Street language means the hindrance of the spread of knowledge. They deride the protective measures of the Church, although they see the logic in the same measures adopted by the civil power. They glory in the independence which is the basis of Protestant thought and belief. — And "passport Catholics" who are not content to choose the humble way, whose faith is not strong, and who smart under direction, endeavor to find ways and means of constantly "getting round the law." They are also quite independent and confident in their judgment. And among them the spirit of faith grows weaker.

The list is very incomplete. One could go on indefinitely, telling of the things that the Catholic Church has forbidden through history. Cremation, for example, is prohibited under pain of refusal of Christian burial. The Church's severe laws on Modernism took many thousands from her fold. Pius XI's bold stand against the *isms* cost the allegiance of great numbers. The Church levelled her authority and power in a nation-wide campaign against immorality in "movie" entertainment. Now she is doing the same with indecent magazines and other forms of printed matter.

The Church seems never to want to appeal to the pleasanter side of life. She does things the hard way. Pain and sacrifice, self-denial and the Cross are her standards. They are her very life. That is what makes her what she is — the Bride of Christ.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Omitting names and unpleasant references, mention some of the things you have personally heard or read in which the Catholic Church is called "unreasonable" by non-Catholics.

2. Why are Catholics not allowed to take part in non-Catholic religious services?

3. Are obedience to the Church's authority in difficult things, and submission in unpleasant matters, necessarily a part of being a Catholic?

3. The Non-Catholic and the Church's Intolerance

Unless a person studies Catholicity seriously, it is very easy to form wrong impressions of the Church. This is not only possible: it happens often, to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Practicing Catholics know a great deal about their religion and its practices, whatever their haziness about some of the more difficult doctrines. But the non-Catholic knows much more about the

prohibitions and "intolerance" of the Church than he knows of the positive side of her teaching. The Church *does* forbid mixed marriages, attendance at non-Catholic religious services, evil books, divorce, and the like. But non-Catholics know little or nothing of the causes of these prohibitions. They are rarely accurate as to *what* is prohibited. They know practically nothing of *why* the thing is forbidden.

Generally the non-Catholic is acquainted only with the negative side of the picture. There is a serious, positive reason for the Church's every action and doctrine. Justice demands that if the outsider is going to form an opinion about the question at all, he must acquaint himself with the reasons for the Church's action. Draw up a list of the things that you can think of that the Church has forbidden. The list is purely negative. After each prohibition, write the question: "Why"? Then try to write down the answer as fully as possible. If one has enough answers, he has a short study of the moral doctrine of the Church, and a very positive presentation of it at that.

On this point the Catholic Church is most reasonable and fair-minded. She asks only that those who wish to speak of her history, or her law, or her present discipline, do so honestly. She wants to be known by her own doctrine, not by the prejudiced versions of those who are opposed to her.

Perhaps it is best to allow the non-Catholics to strike their own breasts on this point. The following passage shows why the non-Catholic so often considers the Catholic Church intolerant.

"It is a strange and lamentable fact that not one Protestant in ten thousand knows the truth about the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. Many do not know that there was any other Christian Church from the first or second century until the 'Reformation,' or for about one thousand four hundred years. And they believe that there was then, virtually, a new Revelation.

When a person of common sense wishes to obtain information about anything, whether political, religious, scientific, or it matters not what it may be, he goes to headquarters for authentic information — never to those who seek to destroy, or who are the enemies of that which he wishes to study. Not one Protestant in thousands ever seeks information concerning the Catholic Church from Catholic sources. The history from the Apostles to the fifteenth century is not taught in any Protestant seminary, nor anywhere else amongst Protestants, as far as I know . . . When I awoke to my dense ignorance, I felt resentment: and I confess I do to this day."¹

The Catholic Church in the United States, representing more than 20,000,000 fellow citizens of the usually broad-minded American, makes a plain and simple request. It does not plead

1. Hemmeon, the Reverend J. B., Methodist minister, as quoted in A. J. Roth, *Out of the Wilderness*, (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press), pp. 32-33.

for the right to worship God as conscience dictates. The Church has that right, thanks to a most intelligent Constitution. She does not ask that non-Catholics enroll themselves wholesale in instruction classes, although she is happy to see any intelligent interest in the faith.

The Church simply asks that unjust and bigoted stories about Catholicity be done away with. The Catholic Church asks only elementary justice in this matter. She wants truth and decency. And the way in which these hopes can be realized is through an honest study of the Church at the proper sources. They are easily to be found.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What would you, as an American, think of those who accepted the criticisms of democracy made by the dictators of other countries, as their only source of knowledge about our form of government?
2. Besides the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Faith of Our Fathers, etc., what books would you suggest to the non-Catholic who asked you about mixed marriages, divorce, Catholic schools, or the Church's stand on mercy-killing?
3. Put the above citation from Dr. Hemmeon in your own words, as you would use the idea in talking with one not of our faith.

4. How to Help the Non-Catholic

Unless properly directed by capable hands, the type of logic suggested in this discussion leads to arguments. Arguments never accomplish any good in the cause of religion. The approach must be absolutely correct. The first thing necessary is to win the person to the proper mental attitude. The following suggestions may be found of service.

1. Start with that which the non-Catholic loves in common with the Catholic. For instance, they love their country and its practices. Comparisons drawn from mutual appreciation and love of country will be found most helpful:

Communists, foreign labor disturbers, agitators, are deported or imprisoned, or they should be.

A rigorous control is exercised over publications, and use of the mails.

The Supreme Court of the United States, in the famous Oregon School case, definitely stated the standards of American education, and the Catholic schools were found to observe these in the minutest details.

The program of the "birth controllers" can certainly not be said to have met with Uncle Sam's favor. Their printed matter is barred from the mails, whereas no Catholic publication has ever been so barred.

However wholesale abortion may be, and however threatening mercy-killing may become, they *are* criminal acts in the sight of the government.

Very serious and competent lawyers, not of the faith, admit that the divorce problem has gotten out of hand. Schools have been encouraged to introduce courses with the ultimate plan of bringing about a decrease in divorce. States

are using their powers to overcome hasty marriages, which are too often repented at leisure. Various means are being introduced.

They are searching for the right answer. They just have not found it yet. The Catholic Church is in possession of it, and it is seen really to work. Common sense demands that it is worthy of an *honest* investigation.

2. Religion is the relation of man to his God, if it is anything at all. As such it must touch man's daily life, and his entire life. The Creator is the Guardian over man. Man depends on His providence. Man's actions make him answerable to God. And that means unpleasant restrictions. Intolerance is too handy a word to explain away the situation. One may not be able to win a convert to Catholicity. That is not always possible. But one should always strive to make the Catholic Church understood and admired.

3. What would you do if someone were to attack democracy, and make it his business to insist on all the unpleasant and negative elements of our form of government? You would strive to assign two or more *positive* ideas for every negative statement he made. You would insist on showing how the *whole* doctrine of democracy meets the needs of our people. If the Catholic has studied only his catechism thoroughly, he is in a position to do the same thing with regard to religion. And no one can say that he has not the right to present the *whole* doctrine of the Church in outline.

4. Always be certain to point out that Catholicity may *necessarily* be opposed to certain ideas and practices. But it is equally true that the Catholic Church is *necessarily never opposed* to the persons who hold those ideas. The Church hates error, but loves the men who err. True Catholicity distinguishes, as Christ did, who loved all men, between abuses and the persons who abuse, between heresy and heretics, between false ideas and the men who hold them. It is regrettable, but really unimportant to our main theme, that some Catholics do not possess this true charity of Catholicity.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Would natural love of parents, who must at times command unpleasant things, be a useful comparison to make under n. 1 above? Love of one's school?
2. Why does our relationship to God make us say "No" to ourselves at times?
3. Must the Catholic love those who hate the Church and persecute her? How?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The Church has bestowed countless benefits on mankind in her 1900 years of existence. Why is it that she is not loved more by outsiders?

2. St. Paul hated the Church and persecuted it before his conversion. Through love he became its greatest missionary. Can you mention other similar conversions?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Occasionally to reflect upon Christ's Passion, with this thought in mind: Only in following Jesus and in learning to bear my cross can I become a good Catholic. Only in that way can I influence others to become good Catholics. The Church is merely leading men to Jesus in His chosen way. By the way of the Cross she strives to lead all men to God.

SUGGESTED READINGS

for those who wish to work for converts

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- Ostheimer, Anthony L., *Instructions for Non-Catholics before Marriage*, (7th ed. Philadelphia: Dolphin Press, 1939), pp. 232. 0.50.
- Roth, Augustine Joseph, *Out of the Wilderness*, (4th ed. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press), pp. 48. 0.25.
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- Scott, Martin J., S.J., *Credentials of Christianity*, (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1920), 0.25 paper binding.
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For More Advanced Readers

- Lunn, Arnold, *Now I See*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933), pp. viii-275. 0.50 paper.
- Maynard, Theodore, *The World I Saw*, (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1938), pp. xiv-313. \$3.00.
- Newman, John Henry Cardinal, *Present Condition of Catholics in England*, (2nd ed. Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1925), pp. xxvii-395. \$1.30.
- Orchard, William Edwin, *From Faith to Faith*, An Autobiography of Religious Development, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933), pp. 310 \$2.00.

Name of Club.....

Leader's name.....

Names, addresses, telephone numbers of club members:

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Date and places of meetings already held:

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Special meetings:.....

114

NOTES
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