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Knights
Let's test
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Let's TEST CATHOLIC LOYALTY



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No. 35

Why the Knights of Columbus Advertise Catholic Faith

The reason is simple. We Catholics want our non-Catholic friends and neighbors to know us as we really are and not as we are some times mistakenly represented.

We are confident that when our religious Faith is better understood by those who do not share it, mutual understanding will promote the good-will which is so necessary in a predominantly Christian country whose government is designed to serve all the people—no matter how much their religious convictions may differ.

American Catholics are convinced that as the teachings of Christ widely and firmly take hold of the hearts and conduct of our people, we shall remain free in the sense that Christ promised (John VIII, 31-38), and in the manner planned by the Founding Fathers of this republic.

Despite the plainly stated will of the Good Shepherd that there be "one fold and one shepherd," the differences in the understanding of Christ's teaching are plainly evident. It has rightfully been called "the scandal of a divided Christianity."

If there is anything which will gather together the scattered flock of Christ, it is the nationwide understanding of the Savior, what He did and how He intended mankind to benefit by the Redemption.

To this end, we wish our fellow-Americans to become acquainted with the teachings of Christ as the Catholic Church has faithfully presented them, since the day the apostles invaded the nations of the world in willing and courageous obedience to Christ's command: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. XXVIII, 19).

**SUPREME COUNCIL
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Sincerely yours,

Anne Kearney

Anne Kearney
Supervisor, Reserve Book Room

This form in the enclosed self-addressed
envelope is for your file.

mission with the following stipulations:

permission.

IT'S AN OLD, OLD STORY

A non-Catholic bishop some time ago likened the the Catholic Church to the Kremlin. He called both of them "totalitarian powers."

Fair-minded and informed non-Catholics, of course, were shocked and ashamed. But a deplorably large number apparently agreed with the bishop.

A recent book accusing the Catholic Church of seeking political power...and questioning the loyalty of Catholic citizens...was recognized by informed non-Catholics as a tissue of falsification and misrepresentation.

Yet enough people bought the book to pay the author a handsome profit, and to bring him numerous invitations for lectures and radio talks.

The basis for this type of bigotry is the contention that Catholics, being obligated to heed the Church in spiritual matters, are therefore incapable of heeding the state in civil obedience. The insinuation is that the Catholic Church is striving to usurp civil powers, and that Catholic citizens would be obligated to join forces



with the Pope in any conflict between the Church and state.

This, to many non-Catholics, undoubtedly sounded like a new and valid reason for speaking out against the Catholic Church. Actually, the accusation is as old as the Church itself, and is one of many anti-

Catholic allegations which repeatedly have been proved false and vicious.

Christ's accusers brought only one charge against him when they presented their case before Pilate. "Whosoever maketh himself a king," they said, "speaketh against Caesar"...and "if thou release this man thou art no friend of Caesar." Yet Pilate, being a judicious man and familiar with the limitations upon the rights of the state, could not agree that Christ was plotting to usurp Caesar's power, for he said he could "find no cause in him."

There is a close similarity between the accusations against Christ and those that are aimed at the Catholic Church today with respect to its relationship to civil states. And the amazing thing is the contradictory reasons behind

these charges, depending on where they are made.

In the United States, for example, the charge is made that the Church is trying to destroy democracy, and is therefore an enemy of the people. In Communist-dominated countries, it pointed out as reactionary and disloyal to "the people's democracy." In these places, the Church is held to be "un-Polish," "un-Hungarian," "un-East German," or "un-Yugoslavian," as the case may be. If the Catholic Church is opposed to genuine democracy, would its priests be slaughtered and imprisoned, its churches and schools closed by governments which are themselves opposed to democracy?

The short-lived Communist governments in Central and Southern Europe after World War I, slaughtered priests, banished religious orders and terrorized Catholics. Mexico, under Communist rule, closed Catholic churches and schools and murdered priests. Spain, under Communist control, killed priests and confiscated the property of religious organizations.

What A Contrast!

Who gives most to the cause of human dignity, right and justice — those who die for their Faith and the principles of genuine democracy, or those who write bigoted speeches?

Anti-Catholic bigotry is not limited, of course, to the United States. But in few places does it attain an equal degree of organized indoctrination, and such an obvious pattern of sheer hypocrisy.

What, for instance, could be more hypocritical than to question the loyalty of Catholic citizens who have repeatedly gone into battle against fellow-Catholics in the armed forces of enemy nations? What could be more hypocritical than to imply a possible lack of loyalty on the part of Catholic citizens who have never once, in all the history of the United States, given a single indication of disloyalty?

"... Good Citizens"

Whose word would you prefer to take in judging your Catholic fellow-citizens — the non-Catholic bishop who likened the Church to the Kremlin, or the former President of the United States, William Howard Taft, who said: "We can be very sure that those who are good Catholics are good citizens?"



Is the anti-Catholic author who makes a living out of bigotry a more credible witness to the truth than the learned historian, professor of government, and champion

of democracy, former President Woodrow Wilson, who said this:

"The only reason why government did not suffer dry rot in the Middle Ages under the aristocratic system which then prevailed was that so many of the men who were efficient instruments of the government were drawn from the Church—from that great religious body which was then the only Church, that body which we now distinguish from other religious bodies as the Roman Catholic Church.

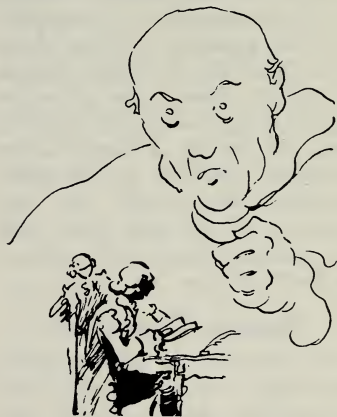
"The Roman Catholic Church was then, as it is now, a great democracy. There was no peasant so humble that he might not become a priest, and no priest so obscure that he might not become Pope of Christendom; and every chancellery in Europe, every court in Europe, was ruled by these learned, trained and accomplished men—the priesthood of that great and dominant body. What kept government alive in the Middle Ages was this constant rise of the sap from the bottom, from the rank and file of the people through the open channels of the priesthood."

Old Slanders

Most of the anti-Catholic slanders circulated today date back to the Reformation, and more particularly to the English Reformation. They were brought to the American continent by the first Protestant settlers. Before their arrival, the only Christians in America were Catholics.

The Protestant settlers brought

with them to America a deep-rooted terror of Catholicism which had been inculcated in them since childhood. Horrible stories of Catholic atrocities, immorality and political intrigue were invented in England in the early years of the Reformation to turn the Catholic population against their Faith. John Foxe's Book of Martyrs was the most popular piece of this type of propaganda, and while it has been long since discredited by scholars of all denominations, it engendered a widespread hatred and fear of Catholics and is responsible for many of the prejudices which exist today.



Foxe's book in those days was read from pulpits, chained in church vestibules and widely sold. It is small wonder that several generations of Englishmen, nurtured in such falsehoods, sincerely believed the Catholic Church to be the terrifying monster he portrayed. Catholics in England who persevered in their Faith were fined, imprisoned and martyred.

As potential enemies of the state, they were denied all civil rights until 1829; and it was not until the 1880's that Catholics were permitted to attend English universities, which had been originally founded by Catholics.

It was this hatred and fear of "Popery" that was imported to America. Founded on ignorance and influenced by a nationalistic hatred of Catholic Spain and Catholic France, the early Americans had no way of knowing the true doctrines and ideals of the Catholic Church. Catholicism, in fact, remained so abhorrent to the majority of the English colonists that they regarded the Quebec Act of 1774, granting religious liberty to the Catholics of French Canada, as one of their major grievances against King George III. Only the heroic patriotism of American and European Catholics in the Revolutionary War, and the wise toleration of our truly great leaders, quieted threatened outbursts by the Protestant population.

Bigotry Dies Hard

The sanity of the colonial fathers fortunately also dominated the conventions which drafted the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. But the flames of bigotry which had burned for more than 150 years were not smothered by these guarantees of religious freedom. Many non-Catholic leaders insisted that the United States must at all costs be a Protestant nation.

In 1829, when the English Parliament passed the Emancipa-

tion Act granting partial civil liberty to Catholics for the first time since the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Protestants in the United States loudly denounced the law. There was a repetition of the lies originally broadcast in John Foxe's book, copies of which were imported from England, and this was the beginning of the first wave of anti-Catholic bigotry to sweep over the only country in the world which was constitutionally founded upon the premise of religious liberty.

At first these attacks were kept on a polite level of argumentation. Catholic priests were invited to answer doctrinal charges, and public debates in New York, Philadelphia, Charleston and Cincinnati attracted huge crowds. But when the critics of Catholic doctrine failed to prove their charges, the debates were abandoned and the controversy changed swiftly to rabble-rousing bigotry.

Acts of Hate

Nothing was too vile to say against the Catholic Church, its sacraments, priests, religious institutions and its alleged policies. So bitter did the conflict grow that, between 1830 and 1850, a convent school near Boston was burned, Catholic churches were fired in Philadelphia and elsewhere, and priests were tarred and feathered in New England.

Anti-Catholic bigotry in the United States today does not reach the mob-violence intensity which brought such shame and ill-feeling

to these earlier generations. But the same charges which once inflamed Protestant opinion against everything Catholic are being repeated today in the polite guise of books, tracts and public lectures which suggest that the Catholic Church and its people are unpatriotic and undemocratic.



Today, fortunately, there is not so much absolute ignorance of things Catholic as there was a century ago. The admirable restraint of the Catholic clergy in the face of recurring bigotry, the spiritual and moral strength of the Church, the loyalty and patriotism of the Catholic people, and the magnificent works of charity which the Church has established have gained for her the respect of all right-thinking non-Catholics.

There still remain, however, substantial numbers of people who do not understand the Catholic Church, and who are therefore gullible victims of anti-Catholic propaganda. There are still some who misunderstand the relation-

ship of the Catholic people to their Church, and who still harbor the belief that there is a vast "papal plot" to rob us of our freedom. This suspicion came quickly to the surface in the public controversy regarding the sending of a United States ambassador to the Vatican, a proposal made by a non-Catholic President and in the debating of which Catholics had little or nothing to say.

False Rumors

The charges made against the Catholic Church today are notable for their exact similarity to the charges made in the 1830's. "Popery in its principles and tendencies" was then condemned as "subversive to civil and religious liberty." Today the word "Popery" has been replaced by the word "Vatican," but we are again warned that it will "undermine the basic principles on which the democratic order rests."

When Catholic schools were first organized, it was immediately charged that "the hierarchy seeks power dominance through schools." Today, in almost the same words, the book of a popular bigot warns that "the hierarchy seeks power extension through schools."

In 1842, the American Protestant Society pledged itself "to awaken the attention of the community to the dangers which... threaten these United States from the assaults of Romanism." In the 110 years that have elapsed, none of these "dangers" has materialized, yet the author of a popular anti-Catholic book declares in its

prologue that it is his "duty" to arouse his fellow-countrymen to the dangers of "the Catholic question," because, he says, "the issues involved go to the heart of our culture and our citizenship."

One of the greatest hypocrisies of anti-Catholic propaganda has been the insinuation concerning Catholic morality. Earlier generations were told that celibacy on the part of Catholic priests was only a license for immorality. The vilest suggestions were circulated concerning the lives of nuns.

Today the Catholic Church is criticized on the grounds that its code trespasses on "democratic freedom"—this astonishing argument being based upon the Church's insistence upon the Ten Commandments, and its condemnation of such "democratic freedoms" as birth control, abortion, divorce and euthanasia. Many sincere non-Catholics agree with the Catholic Church on these moral questions, but anti-Catholic propa-

gandists try to make these moral standards an evidence of "undemocratic" teaching by the Catholic Church.

Many Are Fair

It would be neither truthful nor fair to suggest that all non-Catholics are anti-Catholic. It was not true in the earlier eras of bigotry, nor is it today. But those who would spread religious hatred often find willing ears among the uninformed. It is for this reason that the Knights of Columbus publish pamphlets like this, and advertisements in national magazines and newspapers in the United States and Canada, explaining what the Catholic Church actually teaches and what Catholics actually believe.

Today the Catholic Church, standing before its accusers, humbly asks as Christ did:

"If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?"

Charles Carroll, statesman, was born of Catholic parents at Annapolis, Maryland, on September 19, 1737. Educated in France, he took over his father's estate at Carrollton in Frederick County, in 1756. He married Mary Darnall in 1768. Carroll aggressively defended the rights of the colonies, and was a member of the Maryland Convention of 1775. He was one of a Commission sent to Canada by the Continental Congress, became a member of the Continental Congress, and was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He aided in drawing up Maryland's Constitution and was a member of the Maryland Congress. In 1789 he became a member of the first United States Senate. Carroll retired from politics in 1800 and died on November 14, 1832, at Baltimore. The State of Maryland placed his statue in National Statuary Hall in 1901.

— From National Catholic Almanac, 1952, page 204

Who Says Catholics Are "Unpatriotic"?

The Catholic Church is the largest single church in the United States. It numbers approximately 29,000,000 members, and all of them — the laity, the priests, and the bishops — possess full and unqualified American citizenship by right of birth or legitimate acquisition. Their religion is that established by Christ. These 29,000,000 Catholic citizens constitute the Catholic Church in America. To accuse the Catholic Church of being "un-American," as is frequently done today, is to accuse Christ, who founded the Catholic Church, of being "un-American," and to defame the national loyalty of one-fifth of the population of our country. There is neither historical foundation nor religious truth behind the accusation.

The first religious faith ever practiced in America was the Catholic faith. America was discovered by a Catholic, Christopher Columbus. The English claim to the North American coast was based on the discoveries of John Cabot, a Catholic, for a Catholic king, Henry VII of England. The Catholic faith was practiced and



many native Indians were converted in North America for over a century before the landing of the Pilgrims. The greater part of our country — all the territory west of the Alleghenies — was discovered and opened up by Catholics. Irrefutable evidence of this is seen in the place names of our country from St. Augustine, Florida, to San Francisco, California; from St. Croix, Maine, to Corpus Christi, Texas.

Catholicism was first brought to these shores from Europe when America was discovered. It was more than a century later that any Protestant denomination so much as put in an appearance. With the exception of a few comparatively new minor sects, every Christian faith practiced in America was brought here from Europe and not one of them can be called distinctively American. Nor is there any reason why it should be. All claim to be Christian and hence from Christ, and Christ lived 2000 years ago in Palestine — never in the United States.

The Catholic Church is a universal, world-wide church. Its doctrine

is the same everywhere. Its sacraments are the same everywhere. Its form of worship — the Mass — is not essentially different when performed by a Chinese priest in Formosa, an American bishop in Detroit, a missionary in the Congo, or a parish priest in any one of the major cities of the world. The Catholic Church is everywhere; it is always essentially the same. A religious body whose membership is made up of peoples of every possible nationality, can maintain its spiritual integrity and universal appeal only if its central governing body is independent of every national tie or national allegiance. It cannot be subject to any shadow of national domination.

Our own federal government, acting on the same principle of independence, could not preserve its national integrity if it were subject in any way to any one of the forty-eight states which make up our nation. Therefore, the seat of our federal government has been located in the District of Columbia, a small national territory administered by our national government and having no dependence whatever on any of the individual state governments. The unique position of Washington, D. C. as the seat of our federal government, is so obvious as to be overlooked. Yet in the early days of our republic it was a problem of prime importance. After several unsatisfactory shifts of locality, it was solved only by the happy compromise of the independent District of Columbia.

The central governing body of the Catholic Church, since the days

of St. Peter has been located in Rome. Rome was the unifying center of the Empire, the center of the known civilized world and therefore it also had to be the unifying center of the Christian world. Christians everywhere in the world looked to the See of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, for settlement of doctrinal and disciplinary disputes.

When the political empire of Rome succumbed to the repeated barbarian invasions from the north, it was the Pope of Rome,



the head of the spiritual government, who subdued and civilized the barbarians and transmitted to them the faith and culture which the Church had preserved. But the Church is not today, nor was it then, "Roman" or "Italian" because the Vatican is geographically located in Rome, Italy. The Church, then as now, despite the vast historical and structural changes in the governments and nations of the world, is supra-national and above and apart from the civil adminis-

tration of temporal affairs outside Vatican City.

The Catholic Church is one faith for many nations, whereas the United States is one nation for many faiths. Citizens of every nation are spiritually united in their religious beliefs under the Vicar of Christ, who is also the Bishop of Rome. The citizens of the United States, of almost every religious and even atheistic belief, are united in their national loyalty under the flag of the United States. The national motto, *E pluribus unum* — means "from many one" and Catholics are a part of that "many." Loyalty to Christ's doctrines as preserved and taught by the Catholic Church has never diminished loyalty to the nation. Neither the Catholic Church nor the government of the United States has ever infringed upon each other's rights.

The government, both federal and state, has never assumed to legislate in the field of church affairs. The Catholic Church has never advanced political policies or ambitions. In the almost 200 years since the United States Constitution has been the law of the land, the Catholic Church has never voiced any political aims, formed a political party, or tried to "engineer an election." In all affairs relating rightly and solely to the domain of secular government, the Catholic Church is neutral. Indeed, priests are forbidden to "talk politics" from the pulpit. Catholics, like all other citizens, are free to belong to any political party of their own choosing or to form

their own party. Because of the unique nature of the two-party system in the United States, Catholics have never shown any inclination to form a political bloc, nor is there the remotest possibility that they will. Their votes, as far as can be statistically determined, are rather evenly divided between the Democrats and the Republicans, regardless of the religious affiliations of the candidates.



The Catholic Church always has claimed the right to teach and the right to protect its members in the practice of their faith. The Church bases these rights on Christ's command to "teach all nations whatsoever I have commanded." Christ established a visible Church which was to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." The Church has no quarrel with any nation unless it usurps the "things that are God's." There is nothing of

"foreign domination" or "un-Americanism" in these Christ-given rights of the Church. The ultimate interpretation of morals and religious beliefs is not the business of civil government. The Church always has upheld the same beliefs and code of morality entrusted to her by Christ.

This Is The "Rock"

The entire structure of Western civilization was erected on the foundation stones of the Catholic Church. Until nearly half a century after the discovery of America, there was no religious disunity among the peoples that made up the nations of Western Europe. The spiritual and supra-national character of the Church did not prevent Frenchmen from being loyal to their country and to their Church, or Catholics from being good Englishmen, good Germans, and good Spaniards.

Religious disunity was introduced into Western civilization by the reformation — which gave rise to Protestantism. But the Protestant kings and princes did not grant religious toleration to subjects of dissenting denominations. Not even the Puritans did that. The Constitution of the United States was the first political document which unequivocally and permanently established religious freedom for a nation. The Constitution, in giving freedom to every church and sect to worship within the bounds of good behavior, guaranteed that the United States would not establish a national church and that each church would be accorded

equal civil protection.

The Catholic Church gave its support and blessing to the new-born, struggling nation. The Church recognized that the new state was founded on Christian principles. It also recognized the Government of the United States as the power ordained by God to maintain the social order. The first Catholic bishop in the United States, Bishop John Carroll, native American, close friend of George Washington, and the uncle of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, exerted all his influence to further the true principles and traditions of democracy and freedom which are incorporated in the United States Constitution. And the Catholic bishops who have succeeded him have followed in his footsteps. They have constantly enjoined upon all citizens the duties of patriotism and obedience to the civil government.

True Citizens

Catholics in the United States are truly Americans. Their religious affiliations with the head of the Catholic Church, the Vicar of Christ, do not make them un-American. The spiritual obedience of the Catholic Church in the United States to the Pope in Rome is not an un-American connection with a foreign power-seeking tyrant, as some anti-Catholic agitators would have us believe. Catholics, whether they are members of the hierarchy, parish priests, or laymen, have never demanded more than the free exercise of their faith and citizen-

ship as guaranteed to all individuals by the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the forty-eight states. Yet, today, some critics libel the Catholic Church with the traitorous label of "un-American" and "foreign dominated." They cannot deny the constitutionally guaranteed rights and they cannot prove from fact that the sincere practice of Catholicism has undermined the loyalty of any Catholic to his country. The very obvious loyalty, bravery, and patriotism of American Catholic soldiers and their chaplains expose the lie behind this libel. Therefore these same critics insist that their charges—their smears—apply to "the Church" or "the hierarchy."

They are attempting the same tactics used by the Communists against the Catholic populations east of the Iron Curtain—to separate the faithful from their shepherds, the bishops. The "Vatican line," they claim, is a sinister world power-seeking totalitarianism. It is attempting to undermine progress and liberty by using the coercive weapon of excommunication to enforce unscientific medieval morality; it fosters superstitious practices for the enrichment of the Pope and clergy. In truth, however, the only "Vatican line" known to Catholics everywhere is the channel of grace which comes to us through the sacraments. The other so-called "sinister Vatican line" is as familiar to Catholics as Moscow-inspired propaganda. It is also the same false propaganda that always has been hurled against the Catholic Church.

Yet, this world-wide spiritual organization which is the Catholic Church cannot be destroyed by these attacks. It preaches "Christ crucified." It triumphs not because it destroys nations but because it raises the hearts of their citizens to the true values of life. These permanent values were incorporated into the United States Constitution. Every attack against the Catholic Church in America therefore, naturally reverberates as an attack against the government.



Days of Oppression

Because of the persistence of these charges of "un-Americanism," it might be well to look at the history behind them. The early Protestant colonists, living in an age of intense religious rivalry, brought with them to America a great fear and hatred of Catholicism which had been inculcated into them by the untrue propaganda of the first reformers. Catholics were forbidden to settle in many of the thirteen colonies.

The providential assistance during the Revolution of Catholic France and Catholic Poland, coupled with the Christian charity and good sense of George Washington, effected a change in this attitude. Out of deference to Catholic allies, the Pope was no longer burned in effigy. The loyalty and valor of the Irish Catholics, who comprised one-third of the Revolutionary army, won the special commendation of the commander-in-chief. This new spirit of toleration was incorporated into the national Constitution in 1789, although many of the original states continued their constitutional restrictions against Catholics long after the adoption of the federal Constitution. New Hampshire, for example, refused public office to Catholics until 1876.

Repeated waves of anti-Catholic bigotry followed the lull of these first years of the national history. Each new wave stirred up hatred against the papacy and reiterated the false theme that Catholicism was inconsistent with the liberalism of the United States, whereas it always has been the agitators who were inconsistent with the Constitution. Yet Catholics continued to swell the ranks of the citizenry, to fight in all wars, and to uphold American traditions and liberties. Catholics will continue in their loyalty despite the clamor of the agitators who would make of the country a test-tube for every new social and political shibboleth regardless of the consequences and the muddle and confusion which will result.

The charges and allegations of

"un-Americanism" against the Catholic Church are utterly unfounded, and even unimaginable, when we stop to consider the important role that the Church has taken throughout the history of this country. It was an ardent Catholic, Christopher Columbus, who, financed by Catholic funds, discovered the New World. On his second voyage of exploration, he brought with him twelve priests,



the first of a long line of missionaries for the conversion and civilizing of the pagan natives. The very name, *America*, which was inscribed on one of the first maps of the New World after Amerigo Vespuccio, an early Catholic explorer, is a variation of St. Emeric, a Hungarian saint, whose name, incidentally, means self-government or liberty. Who has not thrilled to the stirring accounts of bravery and courage of those early explorers and missionaries like the Jesuit St. Isaac Jogues, Pere Marquette, Joliet, the Franciscan Fathers Louis

Hennepin and Junipero Serra — to mention only a few? Indeed, as the Protestant historian Bancroft wrote, "Not a cape was turned or a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way." The first thought of these Catholic explorers was of God and His Church. The map of the United States is dotted with the place names that remain as mute testimony of their courage and the Catholic heritage. We have, for example, Los Angeles (The Angels), Santa Fe (Holy Faith), Corpus Christi (Body of Christ), Vera Cruz (True Cross), Santa Cruz (Holy Cross), Notre Dame, Loretto, St. Louis, St. Paul, St. Albans, San Antonio, San Diego (St. James), St. Joseph, Sacramento, and Sault Ste. Marie.

Religious Toleration

It was the Catholic Lord Calvert who first granted religious toleration by law in Maryland at a time when non-conformists were being persecuted and banished in the other British colonies. It was largely through the support of Catholic France and Spain that the Colonies were able to win their independence; and it was through the efforts of the Catholic Archbishop of New York, Archbishop John Hughes, that France did not recognize the Confederacy in 1861.

The Jesuit missionary, Father De

Smet, who labored unselfishly and devotedly among the Indian tribes of the West for almost forty years, was one of the few white men whom the Indians respected and loved. This "Black Robe" alone prevented innumerable uprisings and it was he who, in 1868, was able to make peace for the Government with the hostile Sioux. In the fields of education and charity, it was the Catholics who opened the first schools and hospitals in America. Catholic nuns were the first nurses to minister to the wounded and dying on American battlefields. And finally, it was Catholic political doctrine which was revived to offset the tyranny of autocratic kings, that was incorporated into the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

These basic principles of political and civil liberty and self-government ante-date by centuries the rise of Protestantism. It is not the Catholic Church and Catholic citizens who are "un-American" but those who make the accusation in violation of the Constitution and the American principles of democracy. Catholics know that by being loyal to their Church they are also loyal to their country — the United States, Canada, or whatever nation in which they hold citizenship.

What Is "Undemocratic" About The CATHOLIC CHURCH?

To hear some people tell it, the Catholic Church is an enemy of government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

This is especially true among some groups in the United States, who attempt to prove that the Catholic Church is "un-democratic" ... that the hierarchy makes all the rules and laws in a foreign land and United States Catholics must obey them without argument or dissent.

As a matter of fact, every American democratic principle and tradition is but an application and development of the principles and traditions of political theory advocated and practiced by the Catholic Church since its foundation.

The foundation stone of democracy is the inherent dignity of man — of all men. The practical expression of this principle is equality before the law and equality of opportunity. Without these qualities, there could be no democratic form of government — no basis for free discussions and free elections.

The 20 centuries of the history of the Catholic Church are a



stirring drama of the struggle for the freedom and equality of man against the tyranny of rulers and states. It is the story behind the martyrs in the Colosseum, behind Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII, behind the Magna Charta and King John. This is the background of representa-

tive government and the rise of parliaments. These are Catholic victories over despotism that were won centuries before the Protestant Reformation. The right of the people to overthrow the rule of a tyrant — a right later incorporated into the United States Declaration of Independence — was declared by the Catholic Church as a principle for men everywhere many centuries before July 4, 1776.

In view of these historic facts, it is ridiculous for anyone to suggest that the Catholic Church is opposed to democracy or the rights of the people to self-government. The critics of the Church in this respect, in fact, are not actually talking about a genuine kind of democracy at all. And they loosely apply the term "democracy" in a way that renders it meaningless.

The principles of self-government and democracy do not necessarily apply outside the social order. How, for example, can the democratic principle of free discussion be applied in the fields of knowledge? The laws of physics are not subjects for debate and a vote based on democratic opinion. We cannot discuss all the evidence on nuclear fission and let each person decided for himself which evidence to accept or reject. A child accepts the fact that 2×2 equals 4 because there is exact knowledge on the subject — a voice of authority in the matter.



The Christian religion must also be accepted on authority. We can all learn a little about it by using our powers of reasoning, but still we must finally depend on an authority if we are rightly to understand it and be able to choose the true from the false. Like the sensible person traveling into an unknown area, we need a map. When we are sick, we don't consult

the medical books and try to cure ourselves — we call in a doctor, an authority.

Catholics believe that God revealed the true way to eternal happiness through Christ. Christ spoke as one having authority. He taught "with authority." He did not invite His followers to hold forums and discuss His teachings. He did not say that they might accept some of His teachings because they were pleasing, and reject others which were not.

Those who found Christ's teachings "hard," we are told, "walked with Him no more." Christ rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for their disbelief. He did not seek their confirmation by a majority vote. He made it clear that He was the Son of God, and we the "children" and "servants." He is the "Shepherd," we the "sheep." What He came to tell us was the Law — not a theory which we had the privilege of discussing, changing, or voting upon.

Voice of Authority

Knowing the fickleness of the majority, Christ made sure in establishing His Church that it would be able to speak "with authority." There would have been no point in doing otherwise. And He said to the apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" . . . "Teach them all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." He did not say: "Teach them what the majority think." He did not say: "Change My teaching to fit changing social and political conditions." Nor did He say: "If a majority of the

people, by the democratic process of discussion, reject what I have told you, then teach them whatever will agree with their opinions."

Christ knew that His doctrines would be questioned. Many of His contemporaries refused to believe them. They rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, finding it impossible to believe the words: "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood you shall not have life in you." Christ's teaching on divorce was not accepted by many who first heard it, yet Our Lord did not mitigate His teaching to suit them.

The Full Truth

Truth is not subject to popular discussion and a vote. It is fixed, permanent, unchanging. It is something we believe in as right — not merely because it happens to suit our own opinions. And Christ is our trustworthy source for the truths of religion.

The Catholic Church alone can claim that it possesses and teaches the entire Truth taught by Christ. The Catholic Church alone claims that it cannot err in matters of doctrine and morals because it alone was established by Christ. The Catholic Church, like its Founder, cannot alter or mitigate its teachings. It cannot submit its doctrines for a majority' vote. As the teachings of the Church are the teachings of Christ, we cannot revise them — any more than the world of science could repeal or change the law of gravity.

Christ unfolded to us the entire body of religious truth and estab-

lished His Church to teach this truth to the nations of the world. If we wish to accept His truth, we must accept His Church.

Our Lord did not institute His Church as a self-governing body of men with power to revise and amend His teaching. He selected a group of apostles with St. Peter as their head to uphold and teach the traditions and doctrine of Christ. The bishops of the Catholic Church are the successors to the apostles; the Pope is the successor to the first Pope, St. Peter.



The apostles and disciples in apostolic times did not vote on what they were to believe. On the contrary, they took pains to write down and to preserve Our Lord's Word and to make sure that words and traditions not so written would be faithfully communicated not only to the body of the faithful, but to the teaching successors who were to follow them.

When conflict arose among the apostles, it was St. Peter who

enunciated the truth and rejected the false. Doctrine was never a matter of "private judgment" or majority vote after Peter had spoken. Nor is there any doubt among Catholics when the Pope, acting as the successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ, speaks on any matter of faith and morals.

The penalty of "private judgment" is clearly demonstrated in our times by the fact that those who advocate it are poles apart on the meaning of Christ's word. Catholics, on the other hand, are united in their beliefs the world over for they believe that Christ empowered the Church to speak for Him and that the pronouncements of the Church are the pronouncements of Our Lord.

"A Great Democracy"

The late President Woodrow Wilson, a non-Catholic, described the Catholic Church as "a great democracy," in which there is "no peasant so humble that he might not become a priest, and no priest so obscure that he might not become Pope of Christendom." How closely this resembles the tradi-

tional belief of citizens of the United States that every boy has the right to aspire to be President.

You might imagine, from listening to some U. S. citizens, that the philosophy of democracy was totally unheard of until invented by Americans. And while the world certainly admires, and often envies, the political freedom Americans enjoy, the plain truth is that the principles of democracy are but the outgrowth of the basic truths taught by Christ and held inviolate by the Catholic Church for nearly 20 centuries.

The belief that "all men are created equal" is but a part of the Catholic creed that "God is no respecter of persons." The "self-evident" truths contained in the Declaration of Independence are Catholic political principles which had flourished in Catholic Europe for many centuries before the revolt against the Church of Luther and Henry VIII.

In the light of such historic evidence, who can still honestly maintain that there is anything undemocratic about the Catholic Church?

A survey completed Jan. 1948, showed that approximately twenty-four percent of all the members of the armed services in World War II were Catholics. It was reported on Aug. 31, 1943, that religious preference of American soldiers was thirty-one percent Catholic.

The chief of army chaplains during the war was Brig. General William R. Arnold, who was consecrated Titular Bishop of Phocaea and Military Delegate in 1935. Catholic chaplains serving the armed forces between Pearl Harbor and V-J day numbered 3,036; 83 of these died during the war, 32 were battle deaths and 2 are listed as missing in action. — From National Catholic Almanac, 1952, page 203

Is The Catholic Church A Totalitarian State?

The Catholic Church is not, as some of its critics allege, a totalitarian dictatorship seeking world empire under the Pope.

The Church seeks no temporal or economic domination. It has no military force, no atomic stockpile, with which to compel the submission of its enemies or its own members. The Pope does not rule by fear. He did not become Pope by political maneuvering. He did not seize power and then make laws to keep him in office. These are the tactics of dictators—not practices of the Catholic Church.

The Pope is the duly elected Vicar of Christ—the lawful successor to St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and the head of Christendom. He is also the ruler of Vatican City, a small, independent sovereign state in Rome, Italy. As the Vicar of Christ, the Pope speaks and teaches with the authority of Christ. But he speaks and teaches only in those domains of human life which concern the relationship between God and man.

The Pope's position is essentially that of a teacher, just as Christ was



a teacher. Like all teachers, he must speak with authority and truth. This does not make him a dictator, however, for in his teaching he is not expressing a personal whim or asking people to believe in some fancy of his own imagination. The infallible pronouncements of the Pope on dogma and

morality are not the dictation of new edicts previously unknown to the Catholic world. They are definitions of unchanging and believed truths which always have been a part of the religion established by Christ. In almost every instance, such infallible pronouncements of a dogma or elucidation of a moral law, have been made to clarify a doctrine which had become subject to misrepresentation or attack.

The *ex cathedra* proclamations of the Pope are binding in conscience on all Catholics who wish to remain members of the Church. But the Pope has no means of forcing belief or obedience. He cannot jail Catholics who dissent, nor send them to concentration camps. He has no secret police to ferret out unbelievers. Those who do not believe are free to leave the

Church. There is no force, save their own conscience, to bring them back. How, then, can the Pope be called a dictator?

But, it has been argued, the Pope holds the power of excommunication over those who dare to differ with his opinions on doctrine and morals. He "refuses the sacraments" to the impenitent and, as God's Vicar, he "ruthlessly condemns wilfull unbelievers to eternal perdition."

In reply to these allegations, the actual teaching of the Catholic Church is that all who are morally convinced that the Catholic Church is the true Church established by Christ and yet refuse to join and obey the Church, are acting against conscience and therefore are in danger of eternal damnation.

It is a gross misrepresentation to say that the Pope condemns anyone to "eternal perdition." The Pope has no authority over individual conscience. He merely reiterates Christ's teaching: "Do this and you will be saved," or "This is against the commandments of God." But no Pope has ever pronounced on the damnation of any individual soul. Not even the Vicar of Christ would presume to judge the conscience of one who is seemingly impenitent. That only God can do.

Excommunication

The so-called "threat of excommunication" is not, as alleged, a club held over the heads of Catholics. It merely gives notice that those who refuse to abide by the rules of the Church cannot remain

members of the Church. Being familiar with the laws of the Church, the excommunicated individual knows by what acts or failures to act he removes himself from the communion of the Catholic Church. He also knows the conditions under which he may return.

The Church has the duty of preserving intact the entire body of truth entrusted to it by Christ. Any individual opinion conflicting with this body of truth must be rejected and the individual holding such false opinion is not entitled to do so and still remain a member of the Church. It is much the same as with a man who belongs to a political party but speaks against the party platform. He is, and properly so, "read out" of the party because he himself has forfeited his right to membership.

Refuting A Bigot

The author of the latest popular anti-Catholic book tries to make it appear that this "power of excommunication" is a sinister means of control used by the Church to hold its people "in line." Would it not be ridiculous for any organization, or government, to have laws and regulations which a member might defy or ignore at will? Could the United States be called a dictatorship because the rights of a citizen to vote and hold office are withdrawn if he is convicted of certain violations of the law?

The "refusal of the sacraments," to which this author refers, is not in fact a refusal at all. It is a forfeiture by the individual of his

right to the sacraments. Either one believes and belongs to the Church, or he is not a Catholic. Under a dictatorship, either one conforms or he lays himself open to the prospect of punishment, including imprisonment, or death in some cases.

Some critics bluntly assert that the Church "exercises absolute imperial power" in faith, morals, education, marriage, and the censorship of reading matter. Catholics, it is alleged, must believe everything the hierarchy tells them, do everything the bishops command, marry according to the dictates of their priests, send their children to parochial schools, and not read anything that is critical of the Catholic Church.

Catholics are Catholic for just one reason. They believe that the Catholic Church was established by Christ and teaches Christ's truth in its entirety. They believe, therefore, what their bishops under the Pope teach on questions of faith and morals because the Pope and the bishops are the successors of the Apostles, the first bishops, to whom Christ said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me."

Marriage A Sacrament

But, remember, it is only in the fields of faith and morals that the Church exercises its teaching authority. Marriage, for example, is a sacrament instituted by Christ for the sanctification of the married couple. It is not a civil contract for the convenience of society, but a holy obligation entered into under clearly defined conditions, and

when these conditions are met, the sacrament is indissoluble. Therefore, marriage comes under the jurisdiction of the Church, and governments recognize this jurisdiction by giving ministers of religion the right to officiate at marriages.

The author whose book questions the patriotism and loyalty of Catholics apparently predicates his theories on an imagined subservience of the Catholic people to the hierarchy. He decries the influence of the hierarchy, for example, in such matters as education and censorship of reading matter.

Misrepresentation

With respect to education, the theory he expounds is readily exposed as false both to fact and effect. The only reason that Catholics maintain parochial schools is that they regard their Faith as their greatest heritage, and they want their children to share it. This is possible only if the children are instructed in the faith as a basis for all their thinking and living, which is not possible in a public school or Sunday school.

As to censorship of reading matter, this is an advisory and protective aspect of their Church for which sensible Catholics are grateful. The Church says to them, in effect: "You possess 'the pearl of great price'—your faith. Keep it pure and undimmed. Do not blur and foul your mind and feed your imagination with falsehood and immorality, any more than you would knowingly feed your body

with poisons that would damage and destroy it."

In matters not relating to faith and morals, Catholics are no more obliged to follow the opinions of bishops and priests than are non-Catholics. There is a wide diversity of opinion among Catholics as among the members of any other religious bodies on social, economic and political questions. The only difference is that Catholics are urged to base their judgments on the standards of Christ.

Laws For Religion

If Catholics did not believe that their Church had the right to exercise ecclesiastical authority in the fields of faith and morals, there would be no Catholic Church today. If they did not believe that the Church holds aloft the standards of Christ in a dark world, they would not believe in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

There always have been people who refuse to admit any standards outside their own ideas. They are intolerant of objective truth and of a moral code laid down by God. If everyone followed their line of reasoning, there would be no authoritative basis for religious certitude — indeed, religion would follow the trend of the times instead of remaining a rock of eternal truth.

Catholics are charged by this critical author with putting the Church above the state. What he should have said is that Catholics put God above the state, and that they do. And he might have added that any person who truly believes

in God — whether he be Catholic, Protestant or Jew — does exactly the same thing.

The primary function of the Catholic Church is to serve and worship God. Christ said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice." With St. Peter, the Church proclaims: "We ought to obey God, rather than men."

Christ's law is not a commandment based on coercion. It is not a sentence to penal servitude, but the call of Infinite Mercy. Christ's call is, "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you and learn of Me... For My yoke is sweet and My burden light." This is the dictatorship established by Christ and continued since the death of Christ by His Church. It is the coercion of love. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Christ Himself laid down the yardstick of our love: the measure in which we are faithful to His Commandments. He spoke very definitely about His Commandments.

"One Shepherd, One Flock"

Nor did He quibble about the punishment that would be meted out to them who wilfully ignored His teaching. Yet, withal, He preferred not to act as the stern judge, but as a shepherd leading His flock and seeking out the lost sheep.

In His infinite wisdom, He knew that there could be only "one fold and one shepherd," "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." And He established His Church — the Catholic Church — to maintain that oneness,

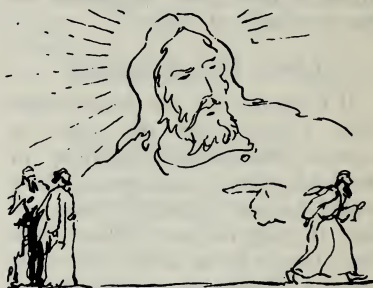
that unity which only God can maintain.

For this reason the Catholic Church was founded on a hierarchical pattern, duplicating Christ and His apostles. One shepherd, the Pope; one faith, the body of revelation and tradition preserved by the Catholic Church as taught by Christ; one baptism, the sacrament which incorporates us into the Church and makes us a part of the "one fold." This is not dictatorship or totalitarianism unless Christianity in its entirety be totalitarianism.

Today there are over 375,000,000 persons in the world who make up the "one fold" of Christ under "one shepherd," the Pope. This extraordinary unity is a mystery to the non-Catholic. In his amazement he either analyzes it honestly and becomes a part of it, or he condemns it on sight. The fact that 375,000,000 individuals share a common faith and a uniform sacramental system and form of worship, that they uphold the identical standards of morality and acknowledge a man in a distant country as their supreme pontiff, is explicable to them only in terms of coercion. If these hundreds of millions of people were free to think for themselves, these harsh judges rationalize, there would be no Catholic Church. For them such unity is possible only by the use of compulsion. They refuse to see that such unity is possible only with God.

To insure the unity of His Church, Christ founded a visible, organic body with St. Peter and

his successors as the center of its authority and jurisdiction. To St. Peter and the apostles Christ entrusted the one faith and the sacraments which are the bond of unity found only in the Catholic Church. Attempts were made from the beginning to break these bonds and to deny the authority of Peter, just as some of the contemporary followers of Christ would not accept His teaching.



Neither Christ nor His immediate successors, as related in the *Acts of the Apostles*, divided and subdivided His Church to accommodate the doubters. The doubters were free to walk their own way. Christ did not water down his doctrine to win them back. Just so the Catholic Church has never watered down Christ's revealed truth to keep the dissenters. The unity is inherent in the doctrine — one body of truth. We can either become a part of that unity by professing our faith and acknowledging the visible Vicar of Christ, or we can, like some of the disciples of old, walk away. Christ used no coercion to win and hold His followers. Neither does the Catholic Church.

IS THIS A THREAT TO AMERICAN "FREEDOM"?

The only Church today — almost 2000 years after the death of Christ — which makes the exclusive claim to be the one visible Church founded by Christ is the Catholic Church. It is the only Church that insists on *unity* — unity in its doctrine, unity in its commandments, unity in its government and administration. It is the only Church in existence today that positively asserts that it is informed by the Holy Ghost and "sanctified in truth." It is the only Church that dares to refer to itself as the "Mystical Body of Christ" of which we are called to be members. Christ referred to His Church as "one fold." St. Paul called it "the Body of Christ."

It is the great mission of the Catholic Church to unite the nations of the world in the oneness of Christ. In order to fulfill this mission, the Catholic Church demands the right to "teach all nations" whatsoever Christ has "commanded." The Church has the obligation to preserve these teachings of Christ free from error so that they shall be transmitted in their entirety to each new genera-



tion. The Church also has the obligation of protecting her children from error or from impairment of their faith, for "what doth it profit a man, if he gain the world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

It is also the primary duty of the Catholic Church to worship and reverence and love God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, daily, throughout the world, Catholic priests offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, the mystical and symbolical reenactment of Christ's supreme sacrifice on Calvary. Christ is revered in the worship and honor that is bestowed upon Him in the Blessed Sacrament. This Holy Eucharist, this Divine Presence, this Holy of Holies, this Body and Blood of Christ, is always present in Catholic churches. Christ who said, "I will not leave you orphans," remains with us. Catholics, believing in His true presence among us, bestow upon Him more than regal honors. No church edifice can be too stately to house the King of Kings, no decorations are too rich for the Risen Lord "of whose Kingdom there shall be no end." No

art, no music, no liturgy is too splendid to honor Him who became poor and obedient for our salvation. Similarly, no pomp and splendor can be too extravagant to pay tribute to Him in the person of His Vicar, the Pope, and His delegates, the bishops.

Like Civil Order

Even the priests who offer Mass and administer the sacraments as "other Christs," receive the honor that belongs to Christ, just as diplomats receive the honor that is due to the ruler of the country which they represent. Christ is the center and the essence of the Catholic Church. Without Him and His abiding presence there would be no Catholic Church. Like all other human institutions it would long since have dissolved into a mere page of history. Without Christ there would be no Western civilization and the ideals which it nurtured. Without Christ there would be no true democracy and no freedom. Both our cultural and political heritage would have been impossible without Christ and His Church.

This Church traces its origin in an unbroken succession of popes to the apostles and to Christ. Despite persecution and suppression at one time or another in almost every country in the world, and despite even the treachery of some of its members, the Catholic Church has outlived every political and social upheaval of the last twenty centuries. Today in the United States the Church is accused of being un-American and

a threat to the American way of life. Why? Because, they tell us, Catholic practices dictated by the Vatican, clash with American freedom. Catholic ceremonial, elaborate liturgy, monastic regulations and dress, abstinences and fasts, Index of Forbidden Books, all are contrary, they say, to American traditions of freedom and equality.



These same critics do not tell us that the Catholic Church also forbids such crimes as murder, embezzlement, perjury, robbery, oppression of the poor, libel and slander, and every other social and personal crime and wrong against our neighbor. The Catholic Church insists upon teaching all of God's laws in their full letter and spirit; and the Church backs its teaching with the full weight of God's authority. Morality has force only insofar as it is related to God. Without God there can be no universal standard of right and wrong.

If every individual were to become the measure of his own conduct, moral chaos would result. The

increasing divorce rate with the hardships and confusion resulting from broken homes and the unprecedented rise in juvenile delinquency already indicate the disorder which follows any relaxation of God's laws. The Church well knows that it is not always easy to keep God's commandments, but it also knows that Christ has compassion on the burdened and that help is never withheld from those who ask.



The critics of the Church today complain only against Catholic insistence on those commandments which they themselves have discarded for economic and personal reasons. Easy divorce is a case in point. The Catholic Church believes that marriage is a sacrament instituted by Christ. As such, it is holy, and a source of grace to the married couple. Marriage is, therefore, surrounded by certain safeguards and is indissoluble. It is the solid foundation on which society rests.

When the family is destroyed by easy divorce, society and the state suffer, not to mention the personal sufferings of the individuals involved. A half century ago, Americans universally considered a divorce a scandalous affair. The present position of the Catholic Church was quite in accord with American tradition. Today's advocates of "personal freedom" cannot justly condemn the Church on the grounds of American tradition. They condemn the Church behind the smokescreen of "un-Americanism," because the Catholic Church alone challenges their propaganda and their insistence on breaking, and leading others to break, God's commandments.

God's Law

Catholic constraints against birth control and abortion and euthanasia are not Vatican-inspired restrictions of individual freedom. They are not undemocratic. They are the Church's insistence on God's law and on man's basic freedom and right to live and to attain everlasting happiness with God. To those who have not the joyous hope of heaven which Christ has promised us, the freedom and right to live might be considered small gain when weighed against the difficulties of this life. It is perhaps only because this resurging hope in Christ's promise is being extinguished that we have such pessimistic associations as the Planned Parenthood Federation and the Euthanasia Society of America. Fifty years ago no organization sponsoring these aims would have

dared to solicit public support. Neither birth control nor "induced death" are a part of our American heritage. Our grandparents, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, would have vehemently denounced them as immoral practices which would weaken the moral fiber of our country. Today, the Catholic Church still upholds these former moral traditions of America. It upholds them, not because they once were universally accepted American principles, but because they always were the law of God.

Forbidden Books



Two favorite targets of anti-Catholic criticism are the "Index of Forbidden Books" and the Legion of Decency rating of current films. Catholics, it is concluded, are not allowed to think for themselves. They must subject their minds to "Vatican thought-control"; they are forbidden to read or view anything contrary to Catho-

lic religious and moral teaching. These restrictions, it is claimed, are directly contrary to the American democratic tradition of hearing all sides of an issue before making a choice. The argument sounds very formidable until it is analyzed. Catholics believe that they have, by the very fact of their being Catholics, chosen the truth in matters pertaining to religion and morals and, having accepted the truth, they prefer to stick to it. It is a matter of life and death. The wise driver obeys traffic laws and submits to this trespass on his personal liberty because he knows these laws protect himself and his fellowmen from serious accident. He does not quibble about "restrictions" and "thought-control" by city-ordinance. On the contrary, he demands those "wise constraints of the law" which exist for the good of society and for himself. Just so, the wise Catholic demands and accepts those "wise constraints" of the Catholic Church which he knows will help him and his fellow Catholics to attain eternal salvation.

The Catholic Church is the custodian of the religion taught by Christ. Therefore, the Church, like a faithful steward, must preserve intact the truths and teachings which Christ revealed and entrusted to it. It must distinguish between the true and the false. The Church tells us, in fact, whether or not certain ideas, philosophies, and tendencies are in accordance with Catholic faith and morals and classifies them.

It is quite the same as our government's insistence that all poisons be clearly labelled and all medicines and foods be carefully analyzed to insure their purity. Poison and pollution and misrepresentation are forbidden by law because they would harm the nation's health. Similarly the poison and pollution of false philosophies and immorality and misrepresentation of the real beliefs of the Catholic Church would harm the faith of the members of the Church. Catholics believe that their faith is their most precious possession. The attitude of the Church is purely protective and precautionary.

False Doctrines

It merely warns its members that if they wish to preserve their gift of faith in the true and complete revelation of Christ, they must not poison their minds with false interpretations of Christ's teachings, and with irreverent and irreligious and immoral reading matter.

This is not "thought-control" or prudery; it is Christian common sense. We cannot live and act like Christians if we fill our minds with thoughts that are contrary to Christ's teachings. If we are to know Christ's teachings we must go to the best available source, the Catholic Church, which has preserved these teachings from the beginning and which has also given us the Bible in which they are recorded.

The Catholic Church makes no claim to authority on any other subject except religion — the relation between God and man and

the duties of man towards his Creator. On all subjects other than religion, we insist on having the best authority, the experts who have made the subject-matter their life work. We demand the right to obtain the right answers. In science, economics, history, the arts, even in politics, we seek the opinion of the experts. We accept their appraisal of the literature in their respective fields.



How much more important is it in matters relating to our eternal welfare to obtain the opinion of the expert on Christianity and the way to God, to have the Catholic Church tell us which books and ideas are in conformity with Christ and which are not? The *Index of Forbidden Books* is a list of books which the experts of the Catholic Church tell us are not in conformity with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The lists constitute no un-American constraint. Our own government — national, state, and local — has laws restricting the sale and distribution

of immoral books, pictures, and performances because of the evil that they would instill in the minds of our citizens. Wise censorship is protective and no infringement on freedom of thought. Libertinism and license are not to be confused with true freedom and real liberty. There is no such thing as the "freedom" to do what is morally wrong. Error masquerading in the disguise of freedom can lead only to uncertainty and enslavement.

The Catholic Mass

Those who have not investigated the full spiritual life which the Catholic Church offers to its members, look with the astonishment born of ignorance and misinformation at Catholic worship and practices of devotion. What they do not understand they often brand as "superstitious practices," "medieval," and "un-American." The Mass with its beautiful liturgy and solemn ritual, and the sacraments of the Catholic Church have been crudely described as "devices of priestly control" and as "the survivals of magic in the Catholic system." Americans, these agitators insist, should not be "threatened" to go to church on Sundays; they should not be required to subject their private lives to "priestly control"; as free citizens American Catholics should abolish such "superstition" and "magic."

If in the name of religion American citizens want to practice voodooism, there is nothing in the law of the United States that classifies them as second-class citizens because of their peculiar religious

practices. Constitutionally Catholics are guaranteed freedom to practice their religion. Their religious beliefs and practices have nothing to do with their status as citizens. Why, therefore, should Catholics be singled out as un-American? Why must they constantly be called upon to defend their religion against false attacks by bigots? Why should the Mass, the only form of Christian worship which was instituted by Christ Himself, be attacked as a form of "un-American superstition"?



The Mass is not "magic," but "divine worship." It is the very core of the Catholic religion. If there were no Mass, there would be no Catholic Church. The first Mass was offered by Christ at the Last Supper and ratified on Calvary on Good Friday. The tradition has been unbroken since that first Holy Thursday when Christ said, "Do this in commemoration of Me." The simple ceremony in the Supper Room has been enhanced and en-

riched and surrounded by prayers and all the beauty of symbolic liturgy. Aside from the divine act of sacrifice which it is, the Mass has been called the "only real immortal work of art that Western civilization has ever produced."

Every word and each motion has a deep symbolic meaning as the Mass unfolds the mystical re-enactment of the supreme sacrifice of Christ in atonement for our sins and in adoration of the Godhead. This is not magic but divine mystery. To those who understand it, participation is not a painful duty, but a cherished privilege. Sunday Mass is also an opportunity to "remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" by offering worship and sacrifice worthy of God. Catholics are not "forced" to go to Mass on Sundays. The Church does not fine or penalize or attach the property of those who do not attend. These were the tactics of Queen Elizabeth and the English Reformers to "force" the Catholic population to attend Anglican church services. The Catholic Church pronounces the teachings of Christ and leaves it up to the individual to abide by this teaching. Priests and hierarchy are powerless to "force" anyone to go to Mass or to remain a Catholic against his will.

Symbolic Vestments

The clerical and ceremonial clothes worn by Catholic priests and bishops at religious functions and the vestments worn at Mass have been scorned as "medieval pageantry" to attract and hold the attention of the unwary. Clerical

dress and vestments which today distinguish the Catholic clergy and religious from the laity, are another strand in the continuity of the Catholic Church and its traditions which link it to the primitive Church. The vestments, symbolic of priestly virtues, represent the ordinary clothes worn by the poor in the days of the Roman Empire. When the Church came up from the catacombs and could worship God with proper splendor and pomp, the clothes used as vestments were made of richer and more suitable materials.



During the course of centuries they became more stylized in patterns and were embellished with embroidery and lace. The habits of monks and nuns, likewise, are, for the most part, the traditional garments representative of the clothes worn at the time in which each particular order was founded. The more recently established congregations of nuns usually wear habits more closely resembling modern dress.

With Christ, the Catholic Church says, "Do this and you shall be saved." And the Church also adds, as did Christ, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast . . . and come follow Me." This precept is the foundation stone of Catholic religious communities of men and women. They live "in community," sharing a common mode of life according to defined rule, and serving a common purpose.

Convents Not Secret

There is nothing mysterious or secret about convents and monasteries. Men and women become monks and nuns because they wish to dedicate themselves wholly to the service of God in lives of prayer and good works. Their vows of personal poverty, chastity, and obedience to their religious superiors, and their religious habits set them apart as souls who have joyfully and eagerly left all to follow Christ. They have left the world and cut off its intrusions.

They are all living a life of their own choosing dedicated to a holy ideal. Each one is as free to abandon the religious life as he was free to accept it. The doors of convents are never barred against those who wish to leave because they find themselves unsuited to the religious discipline. All the stories of "escaped nuns" and "ex-monks" that abound in lurid accounts of convent life and breath-taking escapes over convent walls are merely so much imaginary fiction spread abroad to arouse anti-Catholic bigotry which feeds on falsehoods and tall tales.

Catholic religious institutions all serve a single purpose: to bring their members in closer union with Christ by imitating His life of prayer and love of neighbor. There is nothing un-American about such institutions. No American is less a citizen because he chooses for himself a life of stricter discipline for spiritual reasons, than is an athlete who follows a strict regimen to make himself physically fit for a sports event. Catholic religious are not an un-American imposition by a foreign tyrant. Catholic religious have written some of the most brilliant and courageous chapters of American history.



The Franciscans came to America with Columbus. Dominicans and Jesuits and Franciscans were converting and civilizing the Indians and exploring the new continent of America before the dawn of Protestantism. Religious communities of nuns and sisters have served the poor, the sick, the chil-

dren, and the aged of the United States since the Constitution became the law of the land. In the United States today, approximately 200,000 men and women are priests, nuns, monks, and brothers. Their loyalty to our country cannot be questioned simply because they have left all to follow Christ in the service of their neighbor. Without them and bereft of their idealism, the nation would be the poorer both spiritually and materially. They serve us well and faithfully in holding aloft a high moral and spiritual standard without which no nation can long exist.

Sacrifices and mortifications are said to be un-American constraints if they are among the laws of the Catholic Church. Friday abstinence and Lenten fasts are Catholic practices which are scorned as monstrous impositions on a free people. Actually, the Lenten regulations of the Church have nothing to do with the Americanism of any Catholic citizen, and they are, of course, not binding on non-Catholics.

Catholics make the sacrifice of fasting during Lent in honor of Christ and in commemoration of Christ's forty-day fast in the desert before He started His public life. If Christ, who became man to be our Model and Savior, considered fasting the best preparation for His mission, the curbing of our appetites must possess great spiritual value. Through the annual Lenten fast, the Catholic Church emphasizes the necessity of self-discipline as it was first emphasized by Christ. Self-discipline is

a mark of adulthood. It is indispensable to society. It is even more essential to a full Christian and spiritual life. If we wish to be Christians we must follow in the steps of Christ—we must "deny ourselves" and "take up our cross." The Lenten fast in preparation for the glorious feast of Easter helps us to fulfill these precepts. Abstinence from meat on Fridays is a reverential sacrifice offered to God by Catholics out of respect for Christ who made the supreme sacrifice for us on the



first Good Friday. Our Western civilization is rooted in Christ. Our heritage is Christian, and without Christ it would be unthinkable. His life and death were the greatest single factor in history. Is it not fitting that we, as Christians, make a small sacrifice in His honor and in gratitude for His immeasurable sacrifice for us?

All of these Catholic practices when properly understood have a deep religious meaning and bring us into closer contact with God.

They are not just so many arbitrary restrictions and fetters binding an ignorant and unsuspecting group of people, by threat of the eternal flames of hell, into submission to a man ruling a small state in Rome. Without constraints there would be no civilization—the law of the jungle would prevail. Uninhibited freedom for each, means freedom for none. It is only because men acknowledge a higher law above the state, and binding in conscience, that civil law is acceptable to the citizenry. The laws of the Catholic Church—the teachings of Christ and the administrative and juridical regulations of the Church—are not in opposition or in conflict with basic American traditions and principles.

Freedom of conscience, the freedom to do what we know to be right, has been translated by some enthusiasts into freedom to do as they please without reference to moral right or wrong. God has been outlawed by a small, noisy crowd of secularists who are attempting to interpret Americanism without the Christian tradition which is at its roots. Today the Catholic Church is attacked and vilified because it alone will not whittle down the teachings of Christ to conform to the modern pagan ideal that man is an end in himself. The Catholic Church is condemned because it still holds God above man and God's law as the supreme law for all mankind.

THE CHURCH AND TOTALITARIANISM

God established the Church and the State as distinct societies, each with a definite function in regard to the individual. He entrusted the spiritual direction of men to the Church; their temporal welfare He placed in the hands of civil authority. Throughout history attempts have been made to disturb the divinely ordained harmony between the two by subjecting one to the other. But never, until modern times, have the two been identified as one. The modern totalitarian State has attempted to merge the Church with the State.

Politically, the aim of the totalitarian State is a strong central government with complete control of all the social and private activities of the individual; religion, education, marriage, labor and finance. This political framework of totalitarianism is derived from a philosophy of society that is fundamentally anti-Catholic and irreligious. It regards the State as a divine entity possessing the divine attributes of absolute autonomy and independence; it holds that from the State, his creator, man receives his life, his rights, his destiny.

— From National Catholic Almanac, 1952

What About Separation of Church and State?

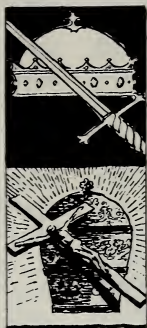
The Catholic Church is accused in the United States of trying to set aside what has been called the principle of "separation of church and state."

This charge is amazing not only for its untruth, but for the historic evidence against those who make it.

Church and state were never united in one government until the rise of Protestantism. For the first time in the history of Europe since the emperors of pagan Rome had proclaimed themselves objects of worship, church and state were united in the person of Henry VIII. Protestant rulers of northern Europe were quick to follow his lead.

The Church of England was established not by Catholics, but by Protestants and then, as now, it united the church and the state. The majority of the citizens of the United States in 1790 were Anglicans or Protestants of other denominations, and when they clamored for separation of church and state it was a separation from Protestant, not Catholic, leaders which they sought.

Until the Reformation, Catholic-



ism was the only religious faith practiced in Europe. And Church and state — except within the borders of the Papal States in Central Italy — were separate and distinct. The king was the head of civil affairs; the Pope the head of religious affairs. Each was independent and supreme in his own

sphere.

The ideal balance was not always maintained, as the temporal sovereigns all too often sought to usurp the powers of jurisdiction over purely church affairs. The absolute power of kings was held in check by the insistence of the Church on the priority of the moral law. If a monarch overstepped his power, he could be declared a tyrant and his subjects no longer owed him allegiance.

An example of how this worked is to be found in the case of King John of England. It was because of the refusal of the Catholic Church to sanction his abuses of power, that the Catholic Barons of England were able to force John in 1215 to sign the *Magna Charta*, one of the greatest political documents.

The unity of Church and state which existed prior to the Reformation was a unity of belief in the supreme authority of Christ and His commandments as taught by the Catholic Church. Heresy was as much a threat to the states of Europe in those times as is Communism today, and rebellion and anarchy were the invariable results of heresy.

Religious Wars

And anarchy was the first result of Luther's apostasy — the bloody Peasants' Revolt in Germany. Similar revolts followed Henry VIII's break with the Papacy, and there followed more than a century of religious wars which were not solved by the rulers' assumption of the right to decide the religion of their people.

The King of England was the head of the Church of England and every subject of the crown was obliged to be a member of the Anglican Church. Lutheranism was the established religion of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and the king of each country was the absolute ruler of the church. The King of Holland was head of the state church, the Dutch Reformed. Germany, then still a disunited country composed of many independent principalities, was a patchwork of religious affiliations according to the beliefs of local princes. With the rise of Prussia in the 18th century, the national church became a blending of Lutheranism and Calvinism under the King of Prussia. These were state controlled and state financed

in much the same manner as the national churches in the other Protestant countries of Europe.

The body of religious belief held by the Anglican Church was decreed by the king and "by law established." Attendance at service was enforced by threats of fines, confiscation of property, imprisonment and even death. Self-imposed exile was the only way out for those seeking religious freedom, and the Puritans, Quakers and others fleeing from Protestant church-state tyranny fled Europe for America.



But although each group found freedom in America to practice its own form of worship, it did not grant the same freedom to others. Only in the colony of Maryland, founded by the Catholic Lord Baltimore, was religious toleration granted unconditionally to all Christians. Later, when the Protestant non-conformists were banished from Anglican-controlled Virginia, they moved to Maryland and gained

political dominance. One of their first acts was to impose political restrictions on Catholics and to establish their own denomination as the state religion of Maryland.

Colonial Disunity

It will be seen from this that governmental "establishment of religion" in the United States was a political practice introduced not by Catholics, but by the English Protestant colonists.

When the 13 original colonies sought to unite into a single national unity, they were faced with a confusion of numerous state religions. The exigencies of the Revolutionary War with a Continental army and Catholic allies had created an improved spirit of religious toleration, but each of the colonies had suffered greatly for religious freedom and had no intention of surrendering this freedom to a Federal religious establishment. The only solution was to deny the Federal government the right to establish a national church, or to interfere with the free exercise of religion.

Church and State

It was not fear of the Catholic Church which gave birth to the principle of separation of church and state as implied in the Constitution of the United States. On the contrary, it was the distrust of Protestants toward the English pattern of church establishment which brought about the constitutional provision with respect to the freedom of religion.

This constitutional provision

does not mean, as is often implied, that the government of the United States must be indifferent to religion. The principle of separation of church and state was provided to prevent the establishment of a national, tax-supported church to which at least a majority of the citizens would owe membership. It never was intended to divorce the national government from religion to the extent that is sometimes maintained.

As a matter of fact, since the very first Congress, the United States Government has been voting funds to support religion... for chaplains in both houses of the Congress, for missionary societies to "Christianize" the Indians; for chapels and religious services at the military and naval academies, and for chaplains in the armed services in every war.

All religious institutions are tax-exempt and religious periodicals receive postal benefits, which are concessions that could not be allowed if the United States government were to be completely indifferent to religion. There has never been, however, a complete separation of church and state in the strict letter of the phrase.

The United States government has been benevolent in its relations with all denominations, but partial to none. It has never attempted to interfere with the beliefs of any religious groups, excepting the early Mormon practice of polygamy. Absolute toleration and neutrality on religious issues was the only formula for preventing religious feuds, disunity and big-

otry. It was a separation of church and state born of the need of tolerance of the multiple Christian sects.

This religious neutrality had the full endorsement and support of the first Catholic bishop in the United States and of every bishop who has succeeded him. The bishops always have upheld the principle of separation of church and state as the only possible functional principle for a nation of so many faiths.

OK With Catholics

The basic political documents on which the United States system of government rests, however, recognize human dependence on God and also the Catholic political theory that authority is delegated to the state by the people and is not an absolute authority. Beyond this, the Catholic Church and the Catholic bishops have never sought to go. Never in the history of the nation has any Catholic bishop ever so much as implied that special privileges be granted to Catholics, or that the Catholic Church be established as the religion of the United States.

Despite these facts, all the talk we hear nowadays is directed against the Catholic Church, as if Catholics are trying to destroy the principle of church and state separation; and as if the First Amendment had been enacted to prevent such very action by the Catholic Church. On the contrary, the First Amendment was approved to prevent the predominance of any one of the Protestant denomi-

nations. The Catholic Church never even entered into the picture. What the founding fathers feared — and legislated against — was an established church like the Church of England, with which they all were familiar and because of which many had fled their native land to come to America.

No Conflict

The state and the religious bodies of the United States exist on friendly terms, each assisting the other and neither trespassing on the other's rights. It is this traditional custom of mutual respect which has made the principle of separation of church and state feasible, and a bond of unity in the nation. It is a principle which the Catholic Church always has staunchly upheld.

Despite the often reiterated declarations of the United States bishops to this effect, and despite the evidence of Catholic history in the United States, critics of the Church continually strive to create suspicion as to Catholic "motives" with respect to separation of church and state. To support their false assertions, they even seek evidence outside the United States, one of their favorite citations being the Syllabus of Pope Pius IX, in 1884.

The Syllabus

The Syllabus was a listing for the guidance of the clergy, of 80 points of belief advocated by atheistic free-thinkers in Europe which were in conflict with Catholic teaching. One of these errors was the assertion that "The Church

must be separated from the State, and the State from the Church." The error was in the declaration that Church and State must always, and in all things, be separated. This error was advocated by anti-clerical forces hostile to all matters religious and spiritual, and was not the same principle of Church and State separation as that prevailing in the United States. Any religious body which acknowledges the supremacy of God would feel compelled to condemn, as the Catholic Church did, the atheism and hostility in the proposition of separation as advanced by these 19th century Continental free-thinkers. The proposition declared the absolute supremacy of the State, and it was this principle which was condemned in the Syllabus.

The Syllabus by itself would have been meaningless, even to the Catholic clergy of the time, if the condemnation it contained were not fully elucidated elsewhere. The Syllabus, as already mentioned, was only a listing of errors—not a full explanation. Despite this, critics of the Church seek to use it as evidence of Catholic opposition to the principle of Church and State separation in the United States, to which it had utterly no relation.

Phoney Charges

Critics also point to the position of the Catholic Church in Spain as an evidence of opposition to the separation principle. This "evidence," like that of the Syllabus, is actually no evidence at all and

to use it as such is equally dishonest.

Because the majority of its citizens are Catholic, and want it that way, Spain supports religious schools and conforms many of its laws to the moral teachings of the Church. It does not follow, however, that the Catholic Church gives blanket approval to everything Spain does.

The Church in Spain has no authority to limit or restrict the government, and the government has no more authority over the Church than has the President of the United States. The Spanish hierarchy exercises no political power or authority, and whatever predominant privileges the Catholic Church enjoys in Spain are due to the fact that Spain is traditionally Catholic and the choice of their Faith is a matter of the free will of the Spanish people.

In all honesty, the position of the Catholic Church in Spain has no bearing whatever on the position of the Church in America. While the Church is inflexible in all matters of faith and morals, it has no dogmatic principles as to the relationship of Church and State. The governmental traditions and religious affiliations of each country must be its own guide. The Church regards the principle of separation of Church and State in the United States to be best for the United States, where the people of many faiths must live in social harmony. But in Catholic countries such as Spain, where the great majority of the people are Catholic by tradition and choice,

the situation is altogether different and not at all comparable to the situation in the United States.

The state which the Catholic Church might consider ideal would be one in which the laws of government are in complete conformity with Catholic teaching and Catholic moral law, with all citizens members of the Catholic Church and all rulers of the State, Catholics of the highest moral and civil integrity. The actual form of government in such case, wouldn't make much difference, whether republican or monarchical, so long as the people had a voice in public policies affecting their welfare.

Respect For Law

But the Church is realistic and, in its mission of saving souls, must deal with actual conditions and not with a utopian or ideal state. It must, therefore, respect and uphold governmental customs, laws, and traditions of each nation. The relations between the Church and the State, therefore, vary according to the traditions and religious affiliation of the population. The Church has no more right to say to Spain: "You must adopt a republican form of government," or "You must adopt America's democratic principles," than it has to say to America: "You must have a totalitarian government."

In only one respect will the Catholic Church ever come into conflict with government. That is

in case a government should seek to usurp the right, and obstruct the holy purpose of the Church to teach the Gospel of Christ. The Church will not relinquish its position as the true Church founded by Our Lord, nor will it ever surrender to any State its conviction in the preeminence of God over the State. It takes this position in every State, and the nature of the government makes no difference. The Church seeks no political aggrandizement — only the right to teach and to protect its children from error.

The Catholic Church is not, as some of its critics say, a political institution. It is a corporate religious body founded by Christ Himself, which has been vigorous and strong in its work for nearly 2,000 years, during which governments of many types have changed and empires have fallen into decay. Its mission is purely spiritual. It does not seek special privileges, in the United States or elsewhere. Instead, the Church uses its spiritual influence only for the recognition of moral principles and the advancement of the common welfare. This is in accordance with the American principle of respect for religion, which is the cornerstone of the principle of separation of Church and State.

To say otherwise is to deny the plain evidence of Catholic history in America.

Does The Catholic Church "Meddle" in Politics?

There is a growing secular trend in America and elsewhere to consider Democracy not as a *system of government* but as a *religion*. Democracy, with the slogan of "Freedom," is substituted as the ultimate goal of right living and as the only "way of life." For some, Democracy has become a complete religious faith. Every question, we are told, should be solved "the democratic way." It matters not whether the question be religious, moral, social, or purely political. Let the majority decide, these advocates of the religion of Democracy insist, and the issue will be settled.

Masquerading in democratic dress, this religion of Democracy preaches freedom for the individual. It abhors authority. It denies all absolutes except in the fields of science and technology. For its exponents, the worship of God has become subordinate to government, and true religion is superseded by humanitarianism as a sort of social agency of the government. The moral principles which are the basis of all true government and law, are ridiculed as



medieval twaddle. These heralds of the religion of Democracy are merely propagandizing another form of statism, a variation of Fascism and Communism in which the state replaces God, and man is urged to look upon the state as the supreme good.

This religion of Democracy is a perversion of true Democracy and especially of American Democracy. Democracy is not a "way of life." It is not a religion. It is a system of elective representative government for the welfare of the people. American Democracy is an excellent system of government. It is a system of government that has been devised to harmonize man's individual freedom with social order. This system of government rests its powers firmly on the natural dignity and rights of man. This natural dignity and these rights are contingent on the moral law which is binding on all men everywhere. The American Declaration of Independence clearly expresses this dependence on the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." It also definitely states that the purpose of government is to

secure the temporal welfare of man. And the Constitution of the United States reaffirms this basic purpose of good government.

Those who have elevated the democratic system of government to the status of a religion demand that the worship of God and morality (the relation of man to God) be made subservient to the state. Religion, they insist, must be rigorously confined within the four walls of a church. Religion, they tell us, has nothing to do with morality.

Majority Vote

Every issue on which there is more than one opinion must be decided by the vote of the majority. Any church which dares to protest against their views on proposed legislation is promptly denounced as interfering with politics and breaking down the mythical wall of separation between Church and State which they, and not the Constitution, have erected. It is these self-appointed protagonists of the new religion of Democracy who, disregarding the long respectful and mutual interplay of religion and government which always has been a part of the American system of democracy, are today denouncing the Catholic Church as a political power bent on seeking its own ends at the expense of "Democracy" and "Freedom."

The outcry against ecclesiastical interference is directed solely at the Catholic Church. There is no protest against the Baptist and

Methodist ministers who urge their congregations to vote against race tracks because these ministers believe that betting is immoral. There is no protest against those Protestant Temperance organizations whose members, believing that the consumption of alcoholic beverages is immoral, seek again to impose their code of morality upon the nation. Yet, when Catholics raise their voice against proposed state legislation which the entire Christian world always has condemned as immoral, sinister political motives are immediately imputed to the Catholic hierarchy and the unfounded rumor is quickly circulated that Catholic priests are directing the vote from the secrecy of the confessional.

Slanders and Libels

The Catholic Church is denounced as a subversive power-seeking force that is plotting behind closed doors to undermine "American Freedom." Why are these slanders and libels circulated? Because the Catholic Church is the only church which fearlessly upholds the moral law as laid down by God in the Ten Commandments and as reiterated and taught by Christ. The Catholic Church is the only church which insists that there is a law above the State which is binding on all men everywhere and which is binding also on the State.

When, therefore, Catholics use their influence as citizens to argue and vote against proposed legislation on divorce and on birth control, they are acting as every

conscientious citizen should act who believes that the laws of God should govern his life. When Catholics publicly express their disapproval and withdraw their patronage from dramatic entertainment which makes light of moral concepts, they are not imposing the teachings of their Church on the non-Catholic population of America.

Not Political

They are not acting as a political entity to force their views on others. They are acting primarily for their own moral protection.

When a Catholic clergyman or a Catholic organization protests to a newspaper or a periodical against some gross misrepresentation of the Catholic Church or against a wrong interpretation of the Catholic point of view, there is immediate protests that the Catholic hierarchy is trying to "gain control of the press" in order to gain control of the country. Actually, Catholics, like everyone else, insist only that their views and their teachings be reported accurately and without distortion.

The Catholic Church is not concerned with purely political issues. The administration of civil affairs is the business of government, and the Catholic Church has no desire to dictate party policies or to interfere in any way. On all such questions the Catholic Church is neutral and silent. The Vatican is aloof concerning the internal political affairs of the United States. And so is the Catholic hierarchy. This has been stated time and again

by officials at the Vatican and by American bishops. The Pope seeks no political power in the United States. He sponsors no political party, supports no political candidate. Neither do the Catholic bishops or priests. All Catholic priests are forbidden to speak about politics from the pulpit. There never has been any Catholic political party in the United States, nor any attempt to form one on either the state or national level, although more than one political party has been cemented together with the mortar of anti-Catholic bigotry.

Nothing Compulsory

Nevertheless, we are told that the Catholic Church seeks to impose its code of morality and its beliefs upon the people of the United States. If by this the anti-Catholic critics accuse the Catholic Church of desiring all men to partake of the spiritual and sacramental riches of the one true Church founded by Christ, the charge would be true. Christ called all men to become members of His Mystical Body, the Catholic Church; and He commanded His apostles to "teach all nations." But neither Christ, nor the Catholic Church, has "sought to impose" Christ's teachings on those who would not accept them freely. The critics of the Catholic Church seem unable to understand the spiritual motivation of the Church. For them even the moral law has become the business of politics. And so they tell us that the Catholic hierarchy dictate to the faithful

as to how they should vote. In illustration, they point to the referendum on birth control which was held in the state of Massachusetts in 1948. The Bishops of Massachusetts declared themselves against the proposed legislation calling for a repeal of a state law which prohibited the dissemination of birth-control information, and they urged all right-thinking people to vote for the defeat of the measure.

A Moral Question

The issue was to be decided by majority vote and was not a purely political measure, but a moral question. Catholics are not alone in believing that birth control is contrary to God's law. Therefore, they are in conscience bound to condemn the practice and when the question is forced upon them in the polls, Catholics and others vote according to conscience. They are merely doing what every honest citizen should do. It was not the Catholic hierarchy of Massachusetts who placed the birth-control referendum on the 1948 ballot sheets. It was introduced by those who sought to change the existing law. The Catholics of Massachusetts, bishops, priests, and laity, did not impose their "code of morality" on the population of Massachusetts. They used their rights as citizens to present their views and to vote according to the dictates of their conscience.

If moral questions are dragged into the political arena and are made subject to the decision of the

majority, these questions, like purely political matters, must be open to public discussion. Why, then, are Catholics accused of meddling in politics if they publicly present their views and cast their ballots in a free election concerning a moral issue? If, as in Massachusetts in 1948, the majority decision coincides with the teachings of the Catholic Church (teachings which throughout America were universally held to be right until about fifty years ago), it cannot truthfully be said that the Catholic Church is imposing its doctrines on the nation.

Against Easy Divorce

The divorce issue is similar to the birth-control question. Catholics have never initiated divorce laws nor proposed any changes in the existing state laws. But this does not mean that Catholics, as citizens, are indifferent to the question of divorce when it is thrust upon them in state elections. If divorce were not an evil, Christ would not have condemned it in such uncompromising terms. The inherent evil of divorce has wide repercussions in community life, as has any other moral breakdown. Catholics, therefore, view the whole question of divorce from Christ's point of view. In conscience, they protest and vote against "easy divorce laws" that would ultimately bring hardship to every community. As citizens of a democracy it is their duty to vote for what they believe to be the best interests of their country.

The sweeping accusation has been propagated that every Catholic organization and the entire Catholic educational system have only one purpose, namely, the subverting of American Democracy. The accusers point at the Catholic War Veterans, Catholic Trade Union groups, the Legion of Decency, Catholic Firemens' Associations, Holy Name Societies, Catholic Boy Scouts, etc. These are cited as political pressure groups whose sole purpose is to pave the way for the domination of the United States by the Catholic Church. The sole purpose of every Catholic organization in the world is to bring its members into closer unity with God and to study and practice the Christian principles which should guide every aspect of our lives.

"The Way . . ."

For Catholics—and for all sincere Christians—Christ's teachings are vital and meaningful. They penetrate all of men's activities. Christ's words were not spoken merely to re-echo behind the walls of a church on Sundays and to be forgotten when the services were ended. Christ's principles are applicable to every problem that arises, to every issue that faces us. These principles apply as aptly to the standards that should govern social and industrial relations and good government, as they do to individual conduct. It is by going to Christ that we shall find "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" that should guide all our motives

and all our dealings with our fellowmen.

It is, therefore, with Christ and in defense of Christian principles that Catholic organizations will voice their censure of proposals, trends, pending legislation, movies, etc., which disregard the moral law and the principles of social, political, and individual justice on which society and the nation rests. These Catholic organizations are acting as do thousands of non-Catholic groups which pass resolutions, sign petitions, and register protest against measures which they consider to be harmful to society. Group protest is a thoroughly American tradition. It is basic to a democracy. It is the only way that public opinion can be expressed and that, as befits a democracy, all sides of a political question can be heard.

Oppose Immorality

All sincere people agree that the State has no inherent right to legislate in opposition to the moral law. No act of Congress or of state legislatures has the right to legalize murder or theft or dishonesty under any disguise. Legislation is not necessarily law because it has received the greatest number of votes, but because it conforms to objective standards higher than the State and higher than man. Laws will not be respected unless they conform to these standards. This is a political axiom basic to the American system of democracy that has been reiterated again and again ever since the Founders of

the Republic met in convention to draft the Constitution. More recently this political axiom has been best expressed by President Calvin Coolidge: "Men do not make laws. They do but discover them. Laws must be justified by something more than the will of the majority. They must rest on the eternal foundation of righteousness." Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes enunciated the same principle from the Supreme Court bench: "In the forum of conscience, duty to a higher moral power than the State has always been maintained."

This is, in substance, the teaching of the Catholic Church bearing upon the body politic: Both the State and the individual should recognize the abiding objective law from which proceed our rights and dignity as individuals.

God's Moral Law

It is the duty of religion to teach and uphold God's moral law. The Catholic Church is not imposing its beliefs upon the nation because Catholic citizens consider the moral implications of political affairs. Morality must be associated with religion. George Washington aptly phrased this truth in his *Farewell Address*: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports." "... Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." In another address, he reiterated the same thought. "... Religion

and morality," he said, "are the essential pillars of society." Divorce ethics from God, and morality rapidly deteriorates into the expression of individual whim or demagogic-controlled opinion. When the higher law is disregarded and every human problem becomes the business of politics, then we shall no longer be a nation of free and responsible citizens. If the new religion of Democracy is permitted to supersede the American system of democratic government, there will be no check upon the power of the State or the will of the majority. We will become a chaotic mass of individuals each seeking his own liberty, each following his impulses in a society which countenances no authority except majority rule.

Uphold Constitution

This dictatorship by the masses, as the French Revolution illustrated, merely opens the doors to dictatorship by the most able exploiter of the masses. This is what every patriotic and loyal American should fear. It is only by insisting upon a higher law which binds in conscience that we can avoid the danger of succumbing to state absolutism. This is the political role assumed by the Catholic Church. It is not self-seeking. It is advisory. Far from trying to subvert the American system of democratic government, the Catholic vote, guided by moral principles, is a bulwark against state absolutism and against individual anarchy. When United States Catholics vote, they always vote in favor of the Constitution of the United States.

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