

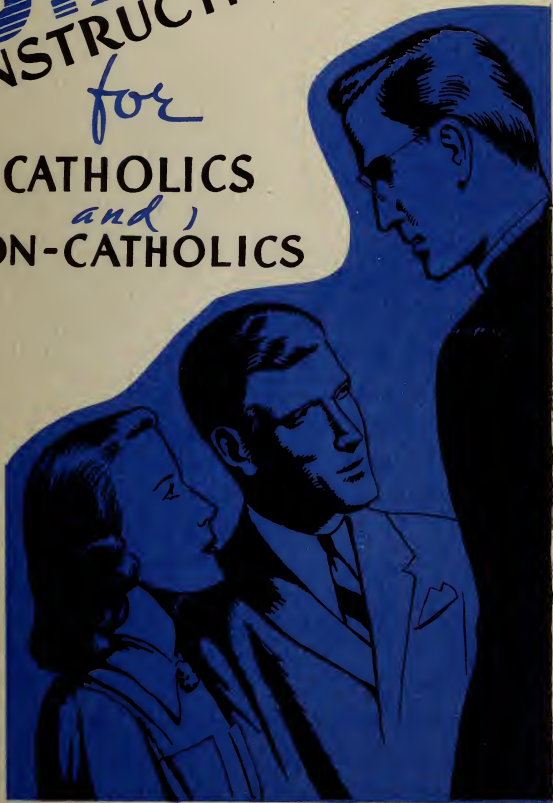
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INSTRUCTION ONE

The True Church

1. THE PATH TO THE TRUTH

Approach towards the truth means progressive exclusion of the false.

Proof that there is a God excludes the position of atheists. To establish the necessity of religion is to rule out of order those who profess to have no religion. Admit that Christ is God, and all non-Christian religions must be rejected.

So, too, if the Catholic Church be the one true Church, all non-Catholic Churches forfeit any claim to our allegiance.

Thus, under pressure of truth, the case narrows down to an ever more definite conviction, until we find ourselves compelled to say, "I believe in God, in religion, in Christ, in Catholicism."

But is the Catholic Church the one true Church? It is.

2. DOES THE CHURCH MATTER?

For Catholics the Church is part of their Faith. Just as they say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost," so also they say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

But non-Catholics make no such act of divine faith in their own Churches. Most of them are indifferent to the idea of a Church at all, saying that one can be as good a Christian without the Church as with it.

Many, whilst admitting that a Church organization may be useful from a practical point of view, deny altogether that it is a necessary part of the religion of Christ.

Yet Christ put the whole of His religion into His Church which He identifies with Himself.

Both Old and New Testaments show that God promised Abraham that he would be the "father of many nations" through Christ, of whom Moses and the prophets spoke.

Those Gentiles who succeed to the faith of Abraham by their acceptance of the promised Redeemer, Christ, are the true children of Israel today, forming the one chosen people of God.

And as they are the one chosen people, so they form the one true Church Christ intended and established.

That one true Church is the Catholic Church.

3. THE WILL OF CHRIST

We say that Christ intended and established the Catholic Church. He Himself described His mission in the words, "I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent." Lk. IV, 43.

That kingdom He identifies with His Church. For when He said, "I will build My Church" (Matt. XVI, 18), He at once told St. Peter that He would give to him the "keys of the kingdom."

So Christ specifically came to establish a kingdom called the Church in this world.

It will be a visible organization. "A city set on a mountain cannot be hid." Matt. V, 14.

He establishes a constitutional hierarchy, choosing the twelve Apostles, Lk. VI, 13; and sending them with His own mission (Jn. XX, 21) to teach (Matt. XXVIII, 20) to sanctify (Jn. XV, 16) and to rule the faithful (Matt. XVIII, 17-18).

As the head of this Church on earth He appoints St. Peter. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." Matt. XVI, 18.

He declares that He Himself will protect His Church "all days till the end of the world." Matt. XXVIII, 20.

And He makes that Church His infallible representative saying, "He who hears you, hears Me." Lk. X, 16.

4. SIGNS OF THE TRUE CHURCH

Christ not only took great care in the establishing of His Church. He made sure that it would have certain signs, marks, or notes, by which it could easily be recognized as true to the exclusion of all others.

Those outstanding signs are four. The true Church will be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

1. ONE CHURCH. Christ said, "I will build My Church," not "Churches." He said that there would be "one fold and one shepherd." Jn. X, 16. And the Catholic Church alone is one in faith, and worship, and organization or discipline throughout the world.

2. A HOLY CHURCH. Christ came to sanctify men. "For them do I sanctify Myself," He said, "that they also may be sanctified in truth." Jn. XVII, 19. And for that same work He sent His Church.

Yet is not holiness an outstanding characteristic of the Catholic Church? She is holy in her Founder, Jesus Christ; in her teachings, in her worship; in her Saints, in her ideals of the priesthood, her inspiration of Convent Life, her devotion to works of charity for the poor, the orphan, the sick, and the aged.

No one leaves the Catholic Church for higher standards of virtue. All converts who come to her seek only to love God more fervently, and to live better lives than before.

3. A CATHOLIC CHURCH. Christ established His Church for "all nations," not for any particular nations only. Remaining one and the same Church, it will be adapted to all times, all places, all types of people. There is one

Church only which complies with the requirements, the Catholic Church.

4. AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH. Christ promised that He would protect His Church "all days" from its commencement till the end of the world. The true Church, therefore, will reach right back through history to the Apostles.

It must have been in this world all days since then, be here now, and show prospects of lasting till the end of time.

But the Catholic Church alone has been in the world all days since the beginning of the Christian era.

Methodism, founded by John Wesley, is 1,738 years too late on the scene to be the Church personally founded by Christ.

Presbyterianism, founded by John Knox, is 1,560 years too late.

Anglicanism, founded by Henry VIII, is 1,534 years too late.

Lutheranism, founded by Martin Luther, is 1,517 years too late.

The Greek Orthodox Church, commenced by Photius of Constantinople, is 900 years too late.

So, as we go back through history, looking for the Church Christ personally established, we find that all disappear at various times subsequent to Christ except the Catholic Church.

She alone, therefore, is the true Church.

5. OBEDIENCE TO THE CHURCH

We Catholics acknowledge a divine authority in the Catholic Church. We live under a single government spiritually, that of Christ, represented by the Pope who, as successor of St. Peter, is supreme head of the Church on earth and infallible in his official capacity; and by the bishops in union with the Pope.

United thus with Christ, we are united

amongst ourselves. And, of course, we obey the hierarchy appointed by Christ.

After all, the very essence of religion must be obedience. We went from God by disobedience, and the road back must be by obedience.

But authority in the Church has no other purpose than the good of souls, every law being directed towards the promotion of charity under its double aspect—the love of God and one's neighbor.

6. THE ONLY CHOICE

Whether from the viewpoint of the Bible, history, or reason, one has no choice except to submit to the Catholic Church.

Christ founded His own Church, sent it to teach all nations, promising to preserve it through all the ages

That Church is still in this world, and it is the Catholic Church.

Bewildered by the religious confusion about him, a man hears this greatest of all Churches telling him that she is the solution of all his problems, and that she alone can tell him with certainty what Christ wants him to know and to do.

And when he becomes a Catholic he finds:

Certainty for his mind,
 Guidance for his will,
 Consolation for his heart,
 New graces for his whole soul,
 An access to Christ, immediate
 and personal, not to be found
 elsewhere,
 A joy in life and in death,
 And a gratitude which will go
 with him throughout time
 and eternity.

INSTRUCTION TWO

The Commandments of the Church

THE CHURCH has made many laws to preserve, directly or indirectly, the spiritual welfare of Catholics.

We know that she has laws forbidding the reading of books which could poison the mind against Christian standards of belief and moral conduct. Her laws forbid cremation, membership of Secret Societies; and they demand the education of Catholic children in Catholic schools.

But there are six outstanding laws dealing with our positive religious duties, laws commonly known as the Six Precepts of the Church. And these are as follows:—

1. To hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
3. To confess our sins at least once a year.
4. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter period.
5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.
6. To observe the laws of the Church regarding marriage.

Let us, then, study briefly each of these main precepts in turn.

FIRST PRECEPT

God Himself says, in the Third Commandment, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day."

But we know that people do not always remember without someone to remind them. And Our Lord left His Church to help us to keep our duties in mind.

Now the Church tells us that we Christians must observe Sunday, and also how we must do so.

Our main religious duty is to assist at Mass; and it is a mortal sin to miss Mass unless we are excused for serious reasons. We sanctify the rest of the day by refraining from manual labor and giving ourselves to prayer and works of mercy.

To arrive late for Mass through our own fault is a venial sin; and if we arrive so late that we are not in time for the beginning of the Offertory which immediately follows the Gospel (or Creed, if it be said), then that Mass will not enable us to fulfill our obligation. Under such circumstances we would be obliged to hear another Mass under pain of mortal sin.

In addition to the observance of Sundays, the Church has appointed certain Holy Days to recall to our minds the greater mysteries of our religion, and the virtues of Our Lady and the Saints.

And on these days also we are obliged under pain of grave sin to attend Mass, and as far as possible they must be observed throughout the day as if they were Sundays.

SECOND PRECEPT

Fasting regulates the quantity of food we may take; abstinence its quality.

People between the ages of 21 and 60 are bound by the law of fasting; all over the age of 7 are bound by the law of abstinence.

The Second Precept of the Church is concerned with days:—

1. Of fast only.
2. Of abstinence only.
3. Of both fast and abstinence.

On days of fast only one may have a breakfast of about two ounces of solid food; one full meal at which meat is allowed either at noon or in the evening. The collation and the full meal may be interchanged at will.

On days of abstinence only we are forbidden flesh-meat. But we may have full ordinary meals of any other foods.

On days of both fast and abstinence, both the quantity of food is restricted, and we must abstain from meat.

Days of both fast and abstinence are Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, the Ember Days (4 times yearly), and Vigil Days before certain Feasts.

Days of fast only are all week days in Lent not included above.

Days of abstinence only are all Fridays of the year not included in Lent or in the Ember Days and Vigils, which require both fast and abstinence.

NOTE—If fasting injures one's health or hinders fulfillment of laborious duties a dispensation may be obtained from one's confessor.

THIRD PRECEPT

Under pain of grave sin Catholics are obliged to go to confession at least once a year.

This law, however, strictly obliges only those who have fallen into mortal sin. To go longer than a year without recovering God's grace by a good confession violates this grave law of the Catholic Church, and results in an additional mortal sin.

The reception of other Sacraments, of course, could demand previous confession at any time, should one be in mortal sin.

Good Catholics, however, go to confession regularly, some monthly, some even weekly, although they have only venial sins to tell.

FOURTH PRECEPT

Catholics are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, during the Easter Period; i. e., between the first Sunday of Lent

and Trinity Sunday.

It is a mortal sin to omit one's Easter Communion.

To receive Holy Communion at any time one must be in a state of grace; and, unless dying, or dispensed through serious illness of a month's duration, one must be fasting from food and drink from the preceding midnight.

FIFTH PRECEPT

Catholics are obliged in conscience to contribute according to their means towards the support of their religion.

Our religion demands the building of churches for the fitting worship of God; the support of priests to care for the spiritual welfare of souls; schools and teachers for the education of children, works of charity for orphans, invalids, and the aged; and missionary activities for the conversion of non-Catholics at home and abroad.

Those who cannot give, are not expected to give. But those who can are obliged in conscience to do so proportionately to their ability.

When all do their share, the burden is not great upon each.

Priests and nuns give their lives to the cause of Christ and the good of souls. The laity, if not called upon to give their lives, are obliged at least to give something of the earnings their lives make possible.

And inspired by the same Faith as their priests and nuns, they are only too happy to do so.

SIXTH PRECEPT

Catholics who desire to contract marriage are seriously obliged to make sure that they do so in accordance with the laws of the Catholic Church.

They may not marry outside the Church nor marry relatives or those who are not members of the Church.

The Catholic who conscientiously keeps these laws of the Church will find himself kept by them for God, and for eternal happiness.

For to the Catholic Church Christ said, "Whatsoever you bind on earth is bound also in heaven." And again, "If a man will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen."

Since the Catholic Church has, not a merely human authority, but a divine authority, we know that in obeying the Church we are obeying the will of Christ.

We know, too, that the Church is our spiritual mother, and that we owe to her all that is due to a mother, love for all that she has been to us; respect for her advice; and obedience to her commands.

And we are quite sure that the laws of the Catholic Church have no other purpose than the good of our souls.

INSTRUCTION THREE

The Holy Eucharist

1. THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

In the very first book of the Old Testament (Gen. XIV, 18) we read that Abraham met Melchisedech, a priest of the Most High God, who offered sacrifice in bread and wine.

Half way through the Old Testament we meet with David's prediction of Christ, "the Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Ps. 109, 4.

At the end of the Old Testament the last of the prophets, Malachy, tells us that the Levitical priesthood of the Jews is to be abolished in favor of a new priesthood and sacrifice. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down My name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." Mal. I, 10-11.

Jesus Christ, therefore, is our High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech.

Together with the sacrifice of Himself on the Cross, He must offer a sacrifice in bread and wine, a sacrifice to be offered in every place continuously among the Gentiles to whom He turned after the rejection of the Jews.

That prediction is fulfilled only in the Catholic Church by the sacrifice of the Mass; a clean oblation, or one without any actual shedding of blood, in which the victim is offered under the appearances of bread and wine.

2. THE LAMB OF GOD

In the Book of Exodus we have a detailed description of the liberation of the Children of Israel from their slavery under Pharaoh.

On the night before their liberation they were to sacrifice a lamb, mark their door-posts with its blood, consume it entirely, and set out through the waters of the Red Sea and across the desert towards the promised land of Chanaan, being nourished during their journey by God Himself with manna from heaven.

And we know that the Jews celebrated the Feast of the Passover, of their liberation from an evil tyranny, every year in Jerusalem by offering the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, until the coming of Christ.

For it was Christ who gave us the religion foretold by these Jewish events. When He appeared on the banks of the Jordan, St. John the Baptist, under divine inspiration, directed the attention of the people to Him, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." Jn. I, 36.

For Jesus was to offer Himself in sacrifice on the Cross for us. We were to be delivered from the evil tyranny of sin by the shedding of His blood—a blood applied to our souls as we are led through the "Red Sea" waters of our Baptism.

And as we journey across the desert of this life towards the promised land of eternal happiness in heaven, our heavenly food or "man-na" was to be Jesus Himself in the Eucharist, the true lamb of God offered for us in the sacrifice of the Mass, and to be consumed by us in Holy Communion that He might confer eternal life upon us.

3. THE REAL PRESENCE

The Holy Eucharist is defined as the Sacra-

ment which contains the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

That Jesus left Himself really present in the Holy Eucharist is one of the most clearly revealed doctrines in Sacred Scripture.

Twelve months before He died He promised in the most explicit terms that He would make the gift of Himself under the form of bread. "The bread that I will give," He said, "is My flesh for the life of the world." When the Jews objected, He insisted that He meant what He said. "Amen, amen, I say to you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." Jn. VI, 52-54.

When actually instituting this Sacrament at the Last Supper He said, "This is My body, this is My blood." Matt. XXVI, 26-28.

St. Paul, therefore, declares that "whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." I Co. XI, 27.

The Catholic Church has ever held and taught, therefore, just what the Bible says.

Those who deny the Catholic doctrine have to fall back on every expedient to try to make Scripture mean the opposite of what it asserts.

4. TRANSUBSTANTIATION

By a transcontinental railroad one crosses from one end of a continent to the other.

By transubstantiation we mean simply the changing from one substance to another.

For the Catholic Church teaches that Christ is really present in the Eucharist by transubstantiation, or by the changing of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ.

We know by faith in God's Word that Christ is really present in the Holy Eucharist.

We know by observation that He is not there present according to appearances.

It remains that Christ is present by the changing of the inner underlying reality or substance of the bread and wine into the substance of His Body and Blood.

That is, He is present by transubstantiation.

5. COMMUNION UNDER ONE KIND

Moreover, after the consecration of the elements of bread and wine Christ is entirely present under either form.

For wherever He is present, He must be completely present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

Therefore he who receives the smallest particle of the Host alone receives the entire Christ.

And in the Catholic Church, for wise reasons, Communion is given under the form of bread only.

The priest who celebrates Mass must consecrate both bread and wine to secure the sacrificial significance of the Last Supper and of the Cross. And then, of course, he must receive Communion under both kinds.

But even a priest who wishes to receive Communion without celebrating Mass must receive under one kind only at the hands of a fellow priest just as the laity. And he is quite content to do so.

For the whole Christ is present in the Host alone, and one cannot receive more than the whole Christ.

6. ADORATION OF THE HOST

Since Christ is completely present in the Host, both according to His humanity and Divinity, it follows that we are bound to adore Him under the Eucharistic appearances that

veil His Presence.

Therefore, Catholics genuflect, or kneel towards the Tabernacle on the Altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, whenever they enter the Church. For they know that they are entering into the very Presence of Christ.

They offer to the Blessed Sacrament exactly the same adoration that they will offer to Almighty God when they meet Him in judgment.

Their adoration will be more vivid, more intense, better realized then; but it will not be different.

Here in this world we live by faith, and not by sight; but what we believe and what we shall see when the veils are torn away and earth gives place to heaven itself are precisely the same. It is the Lamb of God as He is now in all the glory of heaven whom we adore under the veils of bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist.

And it is to promote this adoration due to Jesus Christ truly present in the Host that the Church publicly exposes the Blessed Sacrament whether for shorter or longer periods, and organizes those Eucharistic Congresses which Catholics attend with such piety and devotion.

With the Eucharist under the aspects of Sacrifice and Sacrament in the Mass and Holy Communion we will deal more fully in our next instruction.

INSTRUCTION FOUR

Why Catholics Attend Mass

1. OUR DUTY TO GOD

The main duty of every human being is that of religion, and neglect of this duty is a very great sin. Religion is that form of justice which inspires us to render to God the acknowledgment due to Him.

Our duties to God may be summed up under four simple headings:

1. God is good in Himself. We owe Him our love.
2. God has been good to us. We should thank Him.
3. We have not been good to God. We should express regret.
4. We desire to be good. And for that we should ask His help.

All four duties attain their highest fulfillment by devout assistance at Mass.

In the Mass Christ Himself, with all His infinite holiness, deigns to become personally our adoration and thanksgiving, expiation and petition, offered to the Eternal Father on our behalf.

2. THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

God has ever been approached by sacrifice; and this will be true from the sacrifice of Abel till the last sacrifice of the Mass has been offered.

What is the Mass?

Man owed to God as gifts the gold of love, the incense of prayer, the myrrh of mortification. But the heart of man had become as an empty casket from which the gold of love had

been stolen by creatures. There was little incense of prayer from the dead charcoal of the flesh with its holy desires burnt out and lying in ashes on the floor. And the myrrh of mortification was most often smothered by self-indulgence.

So man having nothing worthy to offer, the Eternal Son of God came and offered Himself in the one perfect all-sufficient Sacrifice of the Cross. But the night before He died, to have Sacrifice continued in the Church, He gave Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, bidding His priests to do just what He had done, and telling them that as often as they should do so they would show forth the death of the Lord until His second coming in majesty and glory to judge the world.

He did this in Jerusalem, where the greatest sacrifice of the Jewish religion was offered, and on the very night of that Jewish sacrifice. So it is that

In a sacrificial setting,
At the sacrificial moment,
With sacrificial words,
Christ gave us the Mass.

And by the Mass we are linked with that most awful mystery in which He, God the Son made man, is torn and mangled, battered and bleeding, dying on the Cross for our salvation.

Even now, St. John tells us, after Our Lord's ascension beyond the veil into that true Holy of Holies, Heaven itself, He stands "as it were a Lamb slain," His wounds shining more gloriously than all created light, "making perpetual intercession for us."

Now at Mass we offer under the veils of bread and wine the very Body of Christ who stands unveiled before the Throne of God midst all the Angels and Saints. And by the Mass

we are caught up into His great timeless offering which bridges all the centuries.

On the Cross He offered His perfect humanity in sacrifice for us.

In Heaven He pleads that Sacrifice, offering Himself a wounded, sacrificial, yet glorious oblation.

In the Mass we present that same offering, making it our own, only under the veils of the Holy Eucharist.

3. HOLY COMMUNION

By an extravagance of love Jesus, having offered Himself for us in the Mass, offers Himself to us in Holy Communion.

So He makes common union between our poor little humanity and Himself.

Despite its infinite significance, the Mass is really simplicity itself.

It is but two things.

Every priest is ordained to offer gifts to God in the name of men, and gifts to men in the name of God. And in the Mass he does this as nowhere else.

He offers a Gift to God in the name of men, and that Gift is Christ as our Victim on the Altar.

Then he offers a Gift to men in the name of God, and that Gift is again Christ—in Holy Communion.

And each Communion brings to us the strength of God. In each little Host is concentrated all Our Lord's past, and present, and future love, making over to us all His merits and expiations and prayers on our behalf.

It is at the moment of Communion that He takes us, and holds us, and says to us, "Child, you are Mine; and I will never let you go." For "He that eats Me," He said, "has eternal life."

It is our pledge of glory. To receive "heaven veiled" gives the right to "heaven unveiled."

4. THE CATHOLIC OBLIGATION

Catholics are obliged to assist at Mass on Sundays and the prescribed Holy Days under pain of mortal sin.

This does not mean that Catholics are terrorized into going to Mass.

True, they are unwilling to violate a grave obligation; but it is their own positive sense of justice that takes them to Mass.

If they pay their baker each week for the bread with which they nourish life they realize how much more they are obliged to make due return to God for the life thus nourished.

And God Himself, who gave the Ten Commandments in their right order of importance, devoted the first three to duties to Himself, reserving for the commandment dealing with the religious worship we must offer Him the word "Remember"—which is not permission to forget.

God, as it were, presents His account every week, an account which must be honored.

The acknowledgment of our indebtedness to God is a matter of honesty and justice.

Catholics do not wish to be dishonest and unjust. And when the Church tells them that the main religious duty of Christians is assistance at the Sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, they let nothing interfere with their resolution to be present on those days.

The Holy Days of Obligation in addition to Sundays are:

1. Feast of the Nativity. (Christmas Day.)
2. Feast of the Circumcision. (January 1.)
3. Feast of the Ascension. (Variable.)

4. Feast of the Assumption of Mary. (August 15.)
 5. All Saints' Day. (November 1.)
 6. Feast of the Immaculate Conception. (December 8.)
-

Besides attendance at Mass on Sundays and on these Holy Days, Catholics are obligated to receive Holy Communion under pain of grave sin once a year at least during the Easter period between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday. But that is merely the outside limit of the Catholic obligation. It is quite the normal practice for good Catholics to receive Holy Communion monthly, weekly, or even daily.

5. HOW TO ASSIST AT MASS

Since we are obliged to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, with our complete personality, our assistance at Mass must be an act of supreme reverence, recollection, and piety.

Surely then we should pray as earnestly as a starving man would beg for the crust of bread necessary to keep his body and soul together.

For we need God's grace more than such a starving man needs that crust of bread.

The will must be employed by the intention of worshipping God, humility dictating our profound adoration and gratitude, reparation and petitions.

The mind must be in it by attention, banishing all distractions and concentrating on the duty of prayer.

The heart must be in it by devotion, filled with holy desires of virtue and holiness, and of that heaven which we all hope to attain.

INSTRUCTION FIVE

The Sacrament of Penance

1. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Since Jesus Christ is our only Savior, and our principal Mediator, there can be no forgiveness of sins except through His death on the Cross.

But it is of the utmost importance to note that Christ's death on the Cross did not destroy sin. It contains the power for the destruction of sin, a power that becomes effective when applied.

We have already seen that original sin is destroyed by the Sacrament of Baptism. And since no sin can be destroyed except by the Precious Blood of Christ, it follows that Baptism is one of the means instituted by Christ for the application of His redeeming work to souls.

But even after their Baptism people can, and do sin; and Christ knew that they would sin.

Now if the Sacrament of Baptism is necessary for the destruction of the original sin we did not personally commit, how much more necessary will be a Sacrament for those we do actually commit after Baptism!

Christ therefore provided another Sacrament for the forgiveness of such actual sins—the Sacrament of Penance or Confession.

By this Sacrament sins committed after Baptism are forgiven by a duly authorized Catholic priest.

2. CAN A MAN FORGIVE SIN?

God alone, of course, can forgive sin. Sin is an offense against God, and it is the One who has been offended who must do the forgiving.

But God can certainly delegate His power, and make use of men in the bestowal of His forgiveness.

Men may say that they believe in going straight to God, and that they do not want any human agency. But, in this matter, it is not a question of what we prefer to believe or do. It is a question of what God declares, appoints, and commands.

After all, we are the ones who have sinned, and it is God who does the forgiving. And it is God who has the right to lay down the conditions. We cannot dictate our own terms!

But the question will come: Did God delegate His own power to priests acting in His Name? The answer is that He did so.

3. CHRIST GAVE THE POWER

The New Testament tells us that Christ breathed upon His Apostles and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Jn. 20, 23.

Obviously, such a power could not be exercised indiscriminately. Just as a judge in a civil court must know the case he decides, so the priest must know the sins he is required to forgive, together with the dispositions of the penitent, and the willingness to repair such harm to others as the sins may have occasioned.

St. Paul, therefore, said clearly, "God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Christ, has given to us the ministry of reconciliation." II Cor. 5, 19.

For over 1,500 years the whole Christian Church knew of no other interpretation of this New Testament teaching save that manifested today by the Catholic doctrine of Confession.

We must remember that a Christian is not merely an isolated individual. He is a member of that great family of God's children on earth—the Church. And if he sins, he sins against

God.

He does harm to his own soul, becomes an unhealthy member of the Church, and offends God.

And all three enter into his reconciliation. He humbles himself by contrition, submits his sins to a representative of the Church by confession, and through that representative God grants absolution.

4. THE GREAT CONSOLATION

And this is the real road to peace of soul. The sense of interior guilt is one of the greatest of miseries. In all of us there is a longing to own up to evil, and to make a clean breast of things. "I'll never admit it," is the cry of a wretched soul strangled in its own pride.

Many Protestants today regret the loss of the Confessional. They point out its perfect adaptation to human psychology; how it keeps men aware of their responsibility to God; how it secures the reparation of wrongs; and the force it is for social good.

But for us there are only secondary considerations. Whether we approve of Confession or not, the fact remains that Christ instituted this Sacrament, and faith in Christ leaves no choice but to accept and make use of it.

5. THE PART OF THE PRIEST

When hearing the confessions of those who come to him, the priest is Judge, Teacher, Physician, and Father.

1. JUDGE. As judge, he must hear the case in order to decide whether he should absolve or not, and to determine what reparation should be made when harm has been done.

And as judge he needs jurisdiction from his bishop, who thus retains control over

those who engage in this responsible duty.

2. **TEACHER.** As teacher, the priest is obliged to prepare for this work by long years of study that he may be able to explain God's Law to penitents where necessary, and put wrong consciences right.

3. **PHYSICIAN.** As spiritual physician he must note the causes of sin, and prescribe remedies against their future occurrence.

4. **FATHER.** As spiritual father he must ever show sympathy and compassion, realizing that he is dispensing the mercy of God.

And always, of course, he is bound by the Seal of Confession never to reveal or make use of any knowledge he obtains in the Confessional.

No penitent need ever fear that his confidence will be abused. Whatever he finds it necessary to say in order to explain his sins will be as if it had never been said, apart from those few moments in the Confessional.

6. THE PART OF THE PENITENT

In order to make a good confession one must:

1. Examine his conscience, praying to God for light, and trying to recall what sins he has committed against the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church, and the duties of his state in life.

2. Then he must try to enkindle in his heart sincere sorrow for these sins, together with a firm resolve to do his best to avoid them in the future.

3. After this preparation he enters the Confessional, kneels down, makes the sign of the Cross, and says to the priest, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."

At once he should say how long it is since his last good confession, and proceed to tell all mortal sins since that last good confession.

If he has any mortal sins to tell, he must mention their different kinds, how often he committed them, and any circumstances which could altar their guilt.

He may also confess such venial sins as he wishes to mention. But if he has no mortal sins to tell, he must mention some venial sin, or else some definite sin from his past life.

Having told his sins, he adds, "For these and all the sins of my life I am very sorry, and ask you, Father, for a penance and absolution.

4. Then he listens for the penance, asking the priest to repeat it if he has not clearly heard it; and listens also to such advice as the priest finds it necessary to give.

5. The priest will then give absolution, during which the penitent repeats the Act of Contrition.

6. Returning to his place in the Church the penitent there says the prayers given him as a penance, and offers thanksgiving to God for His great goodness and mercy.

INSTRUCTION SIX

The Sacrament of Matrimony

1. IDEA OF MARRIAGE

God Himself established marriage that human beings might co-operate with Him in the creation of children, and take His place as visible agents of His paternal love.

The very word matrimony is built up from two Latin words *matris* and *munus*, meaning the duty of motherhood.

And the union between husband and wife is in order that the wife may have the duties and privileges of a mother in her own home, bringing up the children God sends to love and serve Him.

But sin came upon the human race, and only too often disordered passion usurped the place of genuine love. Selfishness undermined the sense of duty, and the marriage state was degraded from the high level intended by God.

Therefore Christ determined to purify marriage. He condemned its degradation, lifted the natural contract to the lofty dignity of a Sacrament, and attached to it those graces which would counteract the tendencies of fallen human nature.

2. THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENT

In his Epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul sets before us the union between Christ and His Church as the model of what the union between husband and wife should be.

And he concludes by saying that marriage "is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." Eph. V, 32.

He has in mind, therefore, Christian marriage between members of the Church. And from

his words we draw the following conclusions.

1. As Christ acknowledges but one Church, so a husband can have but one wife.

2. As there can never be a divorce between Christ and the Church with which He promised to remain all days till the end of time, so there can never be a divorce between a Christian husband and wife.

3. As Christ has ever protected His Church, so husbands should protect and care for their wives.

And as the Catholic Church has ever been true to Christ, and obedient to His will, so wives should reverence and obey their husbands.

4. As the Church is fruitful by the grace of Christ, bringing us forth to the spiritual life, and never stifling the life of grace in the souls God sends to her, so the Christian wife brings forth the children God sends to her as the result of her marriage, never deliberately frustrating the consequences intended by God, permitting selfish and sinful misuse of the privileges of her state.

3. DOCTRINAL SUMMARY

1. DEFINITION. Matrimony is a Sacrament which unites a Christian man and woman in lawful marriage or wedlock.

2. PURPOSE. The purpose of marriage is threefold:

1. The lawful propagation of the human race.

2. Mutual companionship and edification of husband and wife. Husband and wife should adapt themselves to each other in a spirit of self-sacrifice, bearing with each other's faults, faithful in their respective duties, and rivals as to which will best serve God.

3. The rearing of children in the love and fear of God. Parents are obliged to provide

for their children's bodily needs, give them a suitable education, teach them their religion, see that they fulfill their duties of piety and prayer, and set them an example of Christian virtue.

3. **PERMANENCY.** Death alone dissolves the bond of Christian marriage. No human power can do so. Christ said definitely, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Matt. XIX, 6.

The Christian religion excludes divorce and remarriage. Catholics, therefore, contract marriage until death comes to one or other of the parties.

4. **EFFECTS.** The Sacrament of matrimony has a threefold effect:

1. It sanctifies the love of husband and wife in the Love of Christ for them both.

2. It gives them the grace to bear with the trials of their state.

There are many consolations in marriage. True love is a great gift, and children in whom the parents live over again are a great joy.

But there are difficulties, temporal cares, sufferings, and anxieties. The grace of the Sacrament helps Catholics to triumph over these.

3. It inspires both husband and wife to educate their children in thoroughly Christian ideals.

4. CATHOLIC MARRIAGE LAWS

NOTE. Since marriage is a Sacrament of Christ, and the Sacraments have been entrusted to the Church, the Church alone has the right to make laws concerning this Sacrament.

The State has but the right to legislate for the civil effects of marriage.

Catholic ideals, rules, and laws, are as fol-

lows:

1. When contemplating marriage, young people should pray that God may direct their choice, asking and respecting the advice of their parents.

2. Attention must be given to the impediments to marriage. Catholics are forbidden to marry relatives within the third degree of blood-relationship; a divorced person whose previous partner is still living; or a person who is not a Catholic. Concerning this last case, see below.

3. During courtship they should rigidly observe the rules of Christian modesty and reserve. God has a special blessing for those who have not anticipated privileges lawful only to those actually married.

4. No Catholic can contract a valid marriage except in the presence of an authorized Catholic priest and two witnesses. And the Catholic ceremony must be the only ceremony to take place.

5. As the Banns, or notice of the marriage, must be published three times in the Church prior to the ceremony, the pastor should be approached well beforehand in order to permit necessary arrangements.

6. As marriage is a Sacrament of the living, both parties must be in a state of grace during its celebration under pain of sacrilege.

Marriage should always be preceded by confession and Holy Communion; and whenever possible it should take place in the morning, accompanied and sanctified by a Nuptial Mass.

5. MIXED MARRIAGES

The Church forbids Catholics to marry those not of their own religion, because such marriages often bring unhappiness; lead to a con-

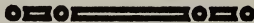
flict of conscience concerning marital duties; endanger the faith of the Catholic; and hinder the proper religious upbringing of the children.

However, for good reasons, a dispensation may be obtained for a mixed marriage, but only on the following conditions:

1. That full freedom be guaranteed to the Catholic party in practising the Catholic religion.

2. That the Catholic party by prayer and good example will try to lead the non-Catholic to the true Faith.

3. That all children born of the marriage will be brought up as Catholics.



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