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# Ten Good Reasons

WHY YOU SHOULD

BE A CATHOLIC

by R.A.Short



*10 Good Reasons*  
**WHY YOU SHOULD  
BE A CATHOLIC**

by  
R. A. SHORT

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SECOND EDITION

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DEDICATED TO ALL  
INTELLIGENT AND  
HONEST PEOPLE

NIHIL OBSTAT

R. G. Bendas  
*Censor Librorum*

IMPRIMATUR

✠ John Gregory Murray  
*Archbishop of St. Paul*

October 10, 1952

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**"THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE,  
AND HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY"**

# I

## HISTORY PROVES THAT ONLY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WAS FOUNDED BY CHRIST

**B**y the most overwhelming and conclusive array of evidence the world has ever seen Jesus Christ proved that He was the promised Messiah of the Jews, the Redeemer of the world. That is, *He proved He was God*. He proved it by fulfilling to the letter the prophecies of Scripture concerning the time and the place and the miraculous birth of the Messiah that was to come. He proved it by His impeccable holiness and the flawless perfection of His maxims. And He proved it beyond the last vestige of doubt by the miracles He performed, great and awesome miracles so far removed from the natural order they could not possibly be other than manifestations of the power and glory of Almighty God.

Hence the reality of Christ's Divinity is the first and primary reality of Christianity.

The second reality of Christianity, one which proceeds from the first, which is inextricably bound up with it, is the reality of Christ's Church. In order that His holy ministry of salvation would be perpetuated after His sacrifice of propitiation on the cross, Christ founded a Church, a vital, living Church projected into the entire remaining lifetime of the world—a Church invincible, *a Church divine*.

“. . . I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE  
GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST  
IT.”  
Matthew 16:18

Yes, the existence of a divinely constituted Christian Church is just too obvious to be disputed. It is a truth affirmed by the Apostles

and fully substantiated in history. Even the educated pagans and Jews, while they may not believe in its precepts, readily admit that Christ founded a Church.

Yet, strangely, it is here that we run smack into one of Christianity's biggest enigmas. In these modern times there are approximately four hundred individual Christian church bodies, *each one teaching a different doctrine, each one claiming to be the true Church of Christ*. To be sure, none of them could hope to attract members unless they did claim divine sanction. And to further confuse the situation, more and more "divine" Christian churches and doctrinal variations are springing into existence as the years go by.

Recalling that Christ founded only one Church and taught only one doctrine, not a multiplicity of churches and doctrines, the utter absurdity of hundreds of true Christian churches becomes very apparent. Moreover, both the Sacred Scriptures\* and our common sense tells us that God, He who is Truth one and indivisible, would never approve of divisions and conflicting doctrines in the household of the faithful. It just naturally follows, therefore, that somewhere in this great assortment of so-called Christian churches there is one which really *is* the true Church of Christ—that is, there is if Christ wasn't kidding when He promised to preserve the Church He founded. But which one?

An enigma, yes, but fortunately not an unsolvable one when we have the courage to face up to certain facts. The fact of history, for example. A scholarly perusal of history reveals that in the world today there is one Christian Church, and only one, that can trace its history all the way back to the day Christ founded His Church, that can furnish positive historical proof that it has enjoyed a continual, uninterrupted existence from that day till now. That church is the Catholic Church, the church sometimes referred to as the "Roman" Catholic Church, the same church called Catholic by the Apostles and the primitive Christian Fathers:

"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church. . ." *The Apostles' Creed, composed by the Apostles in 67 A. D.* "Polycarp, the Catholic Bishop of Smyrna." *Signature on the letters of Bishop Polycarp, ordained in the priesthood by the Apostle John about*

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\* Eph. 4:4-5.



*the year 88 A. D.* "Where the Bishop is there let the multitude of believers be; even as where Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church." *Ignatius of Antioch in a letter to the Christians of Smyrna in 110 A. D.* "I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. . ." *Nicene Creed, composed by the Church Fathers at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D.*

Note the reference to "one" Catholic Church in the Nicene Creed.

There are some other old Christian churches, true, but none that go *all* the way back to Christ like the Catholic Church. The Nestorians, Predestinarians and Monophysites (Copts), the next oldest in existence today, cannot trace their history past the fifth century A. D. The Greek Orthodox and Waldensian Churches cannot trace their history past the ninth century A. D. And there is not a single Protestant denomination that can point to the pages of authentic and unabridged history and show where it was in existence prior to the sixteenth century A. D. Verification of the dates the above churches sprang into existence and the names of the men and women who founded them can be obtained at any first rate public library.

The Catholic Church, by virtue of her singular antiquity, therefore, must of necessity be the *original* Christian Church, *the only church personally founded by Jesus Christ Himself.*

How can we account, then, for the claims of a number of other denominations that they too can trace their origin back to primitive Christianity? Such claims cannot be accounted for; not without ignoring the clear testimony of history and sullyng our reason. Some denominations, for instance, advance the argument that when their founding fathers departed from the historic Catholic Church they took a share in the apostolic inheritance of the Catholic Church with them. That they, with a great deal of acrimony, renounced the authority of the historic Catholic Church and severed all relations with her matters not; the important thing is that they were once in communion with her and that makes them her lawful heirs. Not a very realistic argument would you say? *How can one be an heir to that which he has renounced?* Another point which somehow evades their thinking is that their organization, their form of government and many of their articles of faith, in short, everything that identifies them as an individual denomination, has *never* existed within the framework of the Catholic Church. To claim that

they can trace the origin of their denomination back to the beginning of Christianity *via the Catholic Church* is, therefore, utterly absurd.

Other denominations, those formed since the Reformation period, defend their claim to being the direct descendants of the primitive Christians by asserting that they have "recaptured" the primitive Christian faith. Like the first Christians, they tell us, they are "Bible Christians" who obtain their rules of faith, not from any ecclesiastical authority but from the Word of God as contained in the Sacred Scriptures. But here again the argument is inconsistent with the facts. *For the primitive Christians had no Sacred Scriptures. The few extant copies of the Old Testament were in the hands of the Jews and scholars and the New Testament was not yet compiled.* The Bible, as Christians know it today, did not make its appearance until late in the fourth century; but even if it had appeared earlier and through some miracle made available to everyone (Remember, there were no printing presses in those days), the masses were not literate enough to read it. So you see, there could have been only one prime source of Christian knowledge during primitive Christianity: the teaching Church—the Church called Catholic. And the Catholic Church, then as now, was administered by bishops, that is to say, *ecclesiastical authority*. Any similarity, therefore, between the "Bible Christians" of today and the first Christians is purely coincidental.

Yes, many and sundry religious denominations will tell you that they were founded by God; but remember this: the pages of history do not lie. The most reputable historical reference libraries recount that the founder of the Greek Orthodox Church was Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, *a human being*. They, likewise, give the details of the origin of the Protestant denominations, pointing out Martin Luther, *a human being*, as founder of the Lutheran denomination; John Knox, *a human being*, as founder of the Presbyterian denomination; King Henry VIII, *a human being*, as founder of the Episcopal denomination; John Smith, *a human being*, as founder of the Baptist denomination; John Wesley, *a human being*, as founder of the Methodist denomination; and so forth. Nor can it, in all Christian sincerity, be said that these men were inspired by God to establish their respective denominations, *because God is an advocate of unity and harmony, not vicious rivalries.*

Think! Any Tom, Dick or Harry can found a church and call it a Christian Church. You could do it . . . I could do it. All we would

need to "qualify" us is a new slant on the Gospels, an overinflated ego to give us "inspiration" and some glib oratory. A following would be virtually assured because there are a great number of people in the world gullible enough and mentally unstable enough to believe anything if it is garnished in sweet talk and extravagant promises. But it stands to reason that at best our new found religion would never be more than a human religion. *It stands to reason that only God can found a divine religion, a Church endowed with His Authority and His guiding Spirit.*

## II

### CATHOLIC CHURCH ONLY CHURCH TO FULFILL PRIMARY CHRISTIAN OBJECTIVE

**F**or three years Christ schooled the Apostles in the tenets of His Holy Faith; for three years He showed them by His own perfect example of humility, love and compassion the way to true Christian piety. Not a very long time according to ordinary school standards, to be sure; but then Christ was no ordinary tutor—*He was the Son of God and He taught with the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Three years of schooling, then came the “graduation ceremony.” After resurrecting Himself from the tomb, the miracle that was to seal His divinity in the eyes of all the world, the Master summoned His proteges to a mountain in Galilee where He very solemnly announced to them the objective for which they had been chosen and so carefully trained:

*“ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME. GO, THEREFORE, AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU ALL DAYS, EVEN UNTO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD.”*

*Matthew 28:18-20*

What tremendous import these words contained. Here, in summary, was revealed the purpose, the whole objective, of His Church: to convert all nations to Him—to the Triune God—through baptism,

through obedience to all His commandments and through the sacramental life He prescribed for imparting sanctifying grace to the soul. *Here was the divine mandate of the Christian Church.* For that is what the Apostles were: the first administrative body of the Christian Church. When Christ issued directives to the Apostles, He was issuing them, not to a small group of mortal men who would soon be gone from the world, but to the divine Church which they represented, the Church that would *never* be gone from the world. In this all Christian denominations agree.

Now, why do we bring up something that is already generally understood? Simply this: that if Christ issued a mandate to what was unquestionably His one and only duly authorized Church, it would naturally follow that before any of today's churches can claim legitimate authority to teach in His Name and administer His lawful sacraments, *they should be able to show evidence that they have complied with that mandate.* Christ certainly would not, could not, sanction a church which has failed to accomplish the very purpose for which the Christian Church was conceived. Accordingly, the church, or churches, that have complied with Christ's great mandate can be regarded as heirs to the Apostolic authority; and those that have not complied are to be regarded as pretenders, devoid of authority and therefore unqualified to lead us in the way of salvation. Simple logic, born of faith in the divine sincerity of Christ, leaves us no other alternative.

The all important question, therefore, is: Where in the world today *is* that Church which can furnish this proof of its divine heritage?

Without taking the interminable time to go calling on all the churches here and abroad, let us spend a few hours in a well-stocked library and there examine the records of all the Christian denominations. By studiously comparing their respective records with the text of Christ's directive we will obtain our answer quickly—accurately; and we will be spared a lot of unobjective sentimentality.

Ah, the records of Christian achievement are so complete and well ordered in history they leave no room at all for doubt. *Behold, all of the Christian nations of the world, plus all nations that were at one time Christian but have since apostatized,\* were originally Christianized by the Roman Catholic Church and her alone. Behold,*

\* Egypt, Turkey, etc.

*all nations converted to Christ by the Roman Catholic Church were converted by "teaching," by appealing to the individual citizen's own intellect and conscience, never by a proclamation of state law imposed on the people without their approval and consent, the method used by those who later substituted new state religions.\**

How clear the apostolic heritage of the Catholic Church is in the archives of Christian evangelism. After the labors of the Apostles in the North Africa and Mediterranean areas, the Faith of Christ was extended to the British Isles by her Sts. Augustine and Patrick, to Scandinavia by her Sts. Anschar and Olaf, to Germany by her Sts. Willibrord and Boniface, to the Slavs by her St. Methodius, to South America by her St. Francis Solano and Father Anchieta, to Asia by her St. Francis Xavier and Friar Gutierrez, and so forth. But what is especially noteworthy: *every single one of these great emissaries of Christ were sent forth from the See of Rome and labored under the patronage of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.*

Yes, dear reader, the papacy which some Christians hate so bitterly, which they malign and denounce so vehemently, is the same papacy, the very same, *which made it possible for them to be Christians.* For had the popes of the Catholic Church not been so concerned for the spiritual regeneration of their ancestors, it is certain that the great majority of them would still be groveling in paganism. How is that for irony, for ingratitude and sheer unreasonableness?

"What about Russia and the U. S. A.?" you may ask. "Can the Catholic Church claim these nations among her converts to Christianity also?" Well, let us see: History relates that the first Christian missionaries to Russia were Greeks despatched from Constantinople by the Patriarch, Photius, in either 866 or 867 A.D., during his 863-869 schism from papal authority. But it also relates that those missionaries did not actually begin winning converts until *after* Photius and the Greek Church were reunited with Rome; and the Christian Faith was spread and firmly established throughout Russia long *before* the next schism (the current one) of the Greek Church from papal authority in 1054 A.D. That the Russian Church was in communion with Rome during its infancy is evidenced by its liturgical books which, even to the present day, address Pope Martin thus: "Thou didst adorn the divine throne of Peter, and, holding the Church upright on this

\* England and the Scandinavian countries.

rock which cannot be shaken, thou didst honour thy name," and Pope Leo III: "O chief shepherd of the Church, thou do represent the place of Jesus Christ." There can be no question, therefore, that it was the Roman Catholic Church which brought Christianity to Russia, not the Greek Orthodox Church as many people suppose.

The U. S. A. was Christianized by immigration, *not* by evangelization. But the Indians, the only real natives of this country, were introduced to Christianity by Catholic missionary priests who arrived on these shores long before the representatives of any other Christian religion; *thus accounting for the fact that now the vast majority of American Indians are Catholic.* If you would question or underrate the accomplishments of the Catholic missionaries in North America during and before colonial times, you are invited to obtain a good biographical history of early America and read the exploits of the priests Marquette and Jogues of the North, De Smet of the Rocky Mountain area, Gallitzin of Pennsylvania, Mazzuchelli and Loras of the plains, Flaget of Kentucky, Las Casas and Joliet of the deep South and Serra of the West Coast, to mention only a few. It is indeed no coincidence that this nation's oldest cities have Catholic names, e.g., St. Augustine, St. Louis, St. Paul, St. Joseph, New Orleans, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc., and that the State of Maryland, site of one of the oldest American settlements, was named after the Blessed Mother of Christ. True, collective Protestantism enjoys a numerical superiority in the U. S. A. at the present time; but for this no credit is due its missionaries. All credit must go to the colonizing ambitions of the British politic and to an unusually great influx of Protestant immigrants from Scandinavia and the Netherlands.\*

Thus, looking back over the years since the advent of Christianity, we see that, invariably when pagan nations are converted to Christ, it is the great Mother Church, not the Methodists or the Baptists or the Episcopalians or the Lutherans, who is the apostle and the teacher; it is the Catholic Church who alone of all churches has faithfully complied with the divine mandate to "Baptize and teach and make disciples of all nations," *thereby proving that she alone is the Church to which the mandate and all the authority that goes with it belongs.*

\* A study of the religious histories of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa reveals that the same is also true of those countries.

### III

## CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS PRESERVED ONLY IN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**T**he Apostles received their tenets of faith and expressions of divine worship direct from Christ, and the Church Fathers received theirs firsthand from the Apostles. It will be conceded, therefore, that the faith and mode of worship believed in and practiced by those members of the infant Christian Church was the *pure* Christian religion, the *divine precedent* to be adopted by all future generations of the faithful. The Apostle Paul called this precedent of true Christian belief and practice the Christian "traditions":

"Stand firm, and hold the *traditions* you have learned, whether by word or letter of ours." *2 Thes. 2:15*. "And we charge you, brethren, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who lives irregularly, and not according to the *traditions* received from us." *2 Thes. 3:6*.

Now precisely what are the traditions of which Paul writes? What, in summary, did the Apostles and Church Fathers believe and how were their beliefs expressed? Providentially we know the answers to these extremely important questions. We know from the preserved writings of the Church Fathers and primitive Christian historians that the first Christians (1) worshipped at mass, (2) believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist (the consecrated bread of the altar), (3) believed in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, (4) believed in seven sacraments, viz. Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Communion, Matrimony, Holy Orders and Extreme Unction (the anointing of the sick and dying), (5) offered devotion to Christ's Mother



Mary, (6) held that Mary's virginity was inviolate, (7) held that the Church, not the books of scripture, is the pillar and mainstay of truth,\* (8) held that the Church is the only authorized and competent interpreter of the scriptures, (9) recognized the Bishop of Rome (pope) as Peter's successor and head of the Church, (10) venerated the saints.

There they are, a summary of the principal traditions of the Christian Church, the cardinal tenets of Christian belief as espoused by those greatest of authorities, the Holy Apostles and the Church Fathers.

Now some real food for serious thinking is the fact that *all* of these traditions are preserved in only one church on the face of the earth—the Catholic Church. And, incidentally, this is not a statement that originates with the author, but belongs to the Church Fathers themselves, plus a great many other eminent Christian ecclesiastics and scholars of bygone centuries.

Hear the voice of the Fathers:

IRENÆUS (Second Century)—“The Catholic Church, having received the apostolic teaching and faith, though spread over the whole world, guards it sedulously, as though dwelling in one house; and these truths she uniformly teaches, as having but one soul and one heart; these truths she proclaims, teaches and hands down as though she had but one mouth.” *Adv. Haer.*, 1., x., 2; IV., xxxiii., 7.

LACTANTIUS (Fourth Century)—“The Catholic Church, therefore, is the only one that retains the true worship. This is the source of truth; this the dwelling place of faith; this the temple of God.” *Divine Institutions*, Book 4, Chap. 30.

ANTHANASIUS (Fourth Century)—“But it will hardly be out of place to investigate likewise the ancient traditions, and the doctrines and faith of the Catholic Church, which the Lord communicated, the Apostles proclaimed, and the Fathers preserved; for on this has the Church been founded.” *First Letter to Serapion*, n. 28.

AUGUSTINE (Fifth Century)—“These ties (traditions) of the Christian name, therefore, so numerous, so powerful, and most dear, justly keep a believing man in the Catholic Church.”

\* 1 Tim. 3:15

“But didn’t the Catholic Church corrupt the original deposit of Christian Faith during the Middle Ages and subsequent centuries by teaching new, *unchristian* doctrines?” Positively not. That is what the Church’s adversaries would have you believe but it is an accusation without any basis in fact whatsoever. Such a thing would be contrary and thoroughly inimical to everything the Church stands for. In her lifetime she has, as a result of extensive research, expanded and elaborated upon several traditional Christian beliefs, making them more intelligible and meaningful, but never has she invented *new* ones.

*When a Catholic priest is ordained he takes a solemn oath to promulgate no doctrine that was not promulgated by Jesus Christ.*

This accusation undoubtedly stems from the Church’s *ex cathedra* pronouncements in the past few centuries on Papal Infallibility, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Assumption of Mary into heaven. But how anyone who has familiarized himself with the beliefs and practices of primitive Christians can call these *new* beliefs is hard to imagine—unless they just want a bone to pick with the Catholic Church. Far from being modern innovations, these articles of faith have been held by the main body of Christians since the very dawn of Christianity. The Church merely waited until she was absolutely convinced of their *essential* Christian character before giving them the status of a dogma; meaning that they shall thereafter be universally regarded as divinely revealed truth and therefore indispensable tenets of Catholic faith. It is just a necessary, and surely understandable, precaution the Church takes to insure the purity of Christian orthodoxy.

The same course was followed when the Church decreed that Sunday, the day of Our Lord’s Ascension, was to replace the Sabbath as the Holy Day of the week, and when the Church established the Advent, Christmas and Easter devotions. Really, if the Church’s critics have so little faith in her wisdom and authority, should they not be consistent and reject these practices also?

But it would be rash, indeed, for sincere Christians to reject the beautiful Advent, Christmas and Easter traditions. And if every sincere Christian looked deep enough into the source of all the other Catholic traditions they would realize that it would be rash to reject them too. Because the Catholic Church, more than any other human agency, is eminently qualified to distinguish what is authentically

Christian from what is not Christian. *She is the Church to which Christian tradition was bequeathed in the first place, the only Church where Christian tradition had a chance to survive because for many centuries she was the only Christian church in existence.*

We say, therefore, that if you are the kind of person who wants Christianity in all of its beautiful, original fullness; *if you want a faith whose revealed truth you can trust*—here it is.

## IV

### THE PERFECT AND CONSTANT UNITY CHRIST PROMISED HIS CHURCH FOUND ONLY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A careful, sober analysis of the New Testament writings as they relate to the formation of Christ's Church reveals that Our Lord was particularly emphatic on one point: His Church, put on earth to represent the eternal unity of the Divine Trinity, would also be characterized by a perfect and constant unity; would, in fact, be a part of the divine unity. Witness Christ's poignant prayer to the Heavenly Father on this subject:

*"AND THE GLORY THAT THOU HAS GIVEN ME,  
I HAVE GIVEN TO THEM (His followers), THAT THEY  
MAY BE ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE, I IN THEM  
AND THOU IN ME; THAT THEY MAY BE PER-  
FECTED IN UNITY."*

*John 17:22-23*

Nor was Christ any less explicit when He declared, "There shall be ONE fold and ONE shepherd." *John 10:16*. The Apostle Paul did not mince any words either when, writing to his disciples, he told them, "You were called in ONE body." *Col. 3:15*. "ONE body . . . ONE spirit . . . ONE hope . . . ONE Lord . . . ONE faith . . . ONE Baptism." *Eph. 4:4-5*.

Thus it is plain to see that unity was intended by Christ to be one of the most outstanding marks of His Church; *just as it is plain to see that in the history of Christianity there is only one church with a record of long lived and perfect unity: the Church called Catholic.*

Not only during the lifetime of Christianity but never in all the annals of the human race has there existed such magnificent concord and singleness of purpose. Never has a human society, whether religious, political or fraternal, remained solidly intact as a single body, holding to a single rule of conduct, under a single administrative authority, as long as the Catholic Church. Check on this, you scholars, and see for yourselves if this is not the case.

Granted, there have been differences of opinion within the Church from time to time, some of them very sharp differences; but never has the Church, through her Councils and Papal Decrees, failed to resolve those differences when they posed even the slightest threat to her doctrinal or organizational unity. And there have been schisms and apostacies, groups which, for one reason or another, rebelled against papal authority and formed their own separate governments; but never has there occurred a division of authority *within* the Church. For understand, unity of faith and organization and authority, under the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, is more than just an ideal: it is essential to her very existence—*it is the epidermis of the Church's whole organic structure without which she would instantly lose her identity as the one ancient and true Catholic Church*. Nor is that so difficult to understand; especially in the light of what Christ said: "If a Kingdom is divided against itself, that Kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." *Mark* 3:24-25.

Catholic unity has long been recognized as one of the great paradoxes, and perhaps the greatest *miracle*, of Christianity. A paradox because it seems to defy the natural bent of humans to shift with the changing moods of the times, to rebel against authority and discipline and seek for modes of life which demand the least possible moral restraint. A miracle because Catholic unity has withstood, over the course of nineteen hundred years, a long succession of determined attempts by mighty temporal rulers and great continental armies to destroy it. The Caesars killed 30 Popes, countless members of the Church hierarchy and faithful laity and outlawed all public worship for four centuries. Attila and his armies ravaged the Church horribly as they swarmed over Europe—until they were stopped cold on the steps of St. Peter's in Rome and turned back by one lone, unarmed figure—the *Pope*. The Protestant Reformation witnessed the martyrdom, especially in England, of tens of thousands of Bishops, priests and members of religious orders because they refused to break with

Holy Mother Church and embrace the new state religion. Then it was Napoleon's turn to vent his inordinate lust for power on the Church. He vowed that he would destroy the authority of the Pope *forever*.\* And in our own times, we see that the perennial war against the Catholic Church is being waged by the Communists. It is reliably estimated that the number of priests and faithful laity killed by the red tyrants in China, the Balkans and Eastern Europe, already exceeds the toll of any previous period of persecution.

A miracle of survival, indeed. In the history of Christianity literally hundreds of self-styled Christian churches have sprung into existence during periods of religious tolerance, flourished for awhile, then either disappeared entirely or broke up into isolated, sterile little camps when the going got rough. Take the Marcionites, the Montanists, the Novatians, the Manicheans, the Arians and the Jovinians, for instance. All of these churches enjoyed large followings at one time—Arianism had a larger membership than the present-day Episcopalian and Presbyterian Churches combined—but, alas, today all are as extinct as the dodo bird. And consider the Nestorian, Predestinarian, Monophysite and Waldensian Churches—old churches all of them; today you would need a magnifying glass to find them on the map. But the Catholic Church, by far the oldest Church of them all, how she has continued to grow and expand throughout the centuries, mysteriously drawing from all her persecutions greater strength and virility—*ever maintaining that indomitable unity which obviously was her birthright from the beginning*.

Eusebius, one of the great Christian Fathers of the Fourth Century, made a comment on Catholic unity which certainly is as relevant today as it was then. Said he: "For the inventions of the enemies soon disappeared, being refuted by the truth itself; because while sect after sect appeared with their innovations, the earlier ones always passed away and splitting up into numerous and manifold forms would go to ruin in one way or another; the only true, the glorious, the Catholic Church, on the contrary, remaining ever firm and ever the self same in all things, still went on increasing and developing; and showed forth in brilliant light the venerableness and the purity of

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\*Humbled by defeat, Napoleon, who was born a Catholic, reaffirmed the authority of the Pope and on his deathbed asked for, and received, the Last Sacraments of the Church.

its divine doctrine and mode of life.” — *Eccl. Hist., Book 4, Chap. 11.* Prophetic words, these.

Now, what of Protestantism and the Eastern Orthodox Churches? Can you ascribe to them any real honest to goodness unity? Lo, what has become of the original Protestant and Greek Churches? Look at their histories—. In contrast to the nineteen hundred year old, steadfast oneness of the Catholic Church, Protestantism and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have, in a relatively short time, become divided and sub-divided into over four hundred separate church organizations, no two of them recognizing the same administrative authority, no two of them holding to exactly the same articles of faith. Lutheranism, for example, is divided into 22 independent church bodies (called synods) and doctrinal variations; Methodism is divided 17 ways; the Baptists are divided 15 ways; the Presbyterians are divided 15 ways; the Mennonites are divided 12 ways; and the Greek-Russian Church is divided 14 ways. Then there are the numerous sects (Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, etc.) which, while they cannot properly be called Protestant, are definitely a product of Protestantism in that they emerged from the Protestant doctrine of *private interpretation*.\*

Even the Jews, since the destruction of their temple city of Jerusalem in 96 A.D., have ceased to recognize a central Rabbinical authority and became split into many independent factions.

And the divisions outside of the Catholic Church continue unabated. The records show that for every two Protestant bodies that merge in an attempt toward unity, four new ones spring up on the sidelines. The situation has gotten so out of hand that many of the more conscientious Protestant leaders are admitting now that real unity within their ranks appears to be just so much wishful thinking. And they have begun to cast wistful, envious eyes at the great, imperishable unity of the Mother Church of Christianity; *for never has it been more obvious than now that the perfect and constant unity Christ promised His Church is to be found only under her ancient and holy mantle.*

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\* The right of each individual to disavow the authority of the Church and interpret the Scriptures according to his own pleasure.

## V

# CATHOLIC CHURCH CAN PROVE THAT PETER WAS THE FIRST POPE

**T**he Catholic Church claims that Christ placed the Apostle Peter in a position of highest authority in the infant Christian Church and that Peter established himself and his primacy in Rome, Italy, in his later life thus becoming the first pope of the Catholic Church. And here, because of the enormously important implications of this claim, because if this claim can be proved it certifies the exclusive apostolicity of the Catholic Church, we find ourselves dealing with one of the most controversial issues in Christianity. The question, therefore, that we would like to take up here is: What valid evidence does the Catholic Church present to the world to support her claim?

The author has gathered together in this chapter some of the more pertinent evidence offered by the Catholic Church to support her claim and invites you the reader to examine it carefully. Examine it carefully and impartially, without the impediment of past prejudices, then judge for yourself whether or not her claim is a valid one.

### PETER'S PRIMACY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

When Peter was first ushered into Christ's presence Christ beheld him, saying, "*THOU ART SIMON, THE SON OF JOHN; THOU SHALT BE CALLED CEPHAS.*" *John 1:42.* In Aramaic, the language that Christ spoke, *Cephas* means "rock." In Greek, the language of John's Gospel, the word for rock is *Petros*, or when used for a person's name, Peter. Addressing Peter later, Christ said, "*AND, I SAY TO THEE THOU ART PETER (the rock) AND UPON*



*THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH . . . AND I WILL GIVE THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."* *Matt. 16:18. "FEED MY LAMBS; FEED MY SHEEP."* *John 21:15-17. "STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN."* *Luke 22:32.*

*Never once did Christ single out one of the other Apostles and address him in this manner.*

Thus, according to the scriptures, Peter was appointed the highest ranking Apostle. Nor can there be any doubt that Peter was recognized by the other Apostles as their leader. After the Resurrection Peter presided at the election of Matthias (Acts 1:22); he is the first to preach the Gospel (Acts 2:14); the first to work miracles (Acts 3:6); he is the judge of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:1-10); the first to declare the universality of the Church's mission (Acts 10); the first to receive a pagan convert (Acts 10); he presided over the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). And whenever the names of the Apostles are listed in the Scriptures Peter's name always appears first.

#### PETER'S PRESENCE IN ROME

The fact that Peter wrote his Epistle from Babylon, i.e., Rome, is proof positive of his presence there.\* Babylon, the ancient city of iniquity spoken of by the Old Testament prophets, was a cryptic designation for Rome in Apostolic times, as we learn from the Jewish writings and the Sibylline books of the first century. Equally convincing is the testimony of the Romans themselves: About the year 140 A.D., Papias wrote, "Peter came and first by his salutary preaching of the Gospel and by his keys opened in the city of Rome the gates of the heavenly kingdom." Then there is the recent excavations in the catacombs beneath St. Peter's in Vatican City in which some of the world's foremost archeologists participated. According to the official report, the writings found on the walls and on religious articles establish beyond any doubt that the Apostle Peter was buried there after having suffered a martyr's death.

So overwhelming, in fact, is the evidence that places Peter in Rome during his last years almost every scholarly non-Catholic historian, men like Cave, Grotius, Whitby, DeWette, Weisler, Credner, Pearson, Bleck, Meyer, Renan, Hilgengeld and Mangold, have long since expressed their complete agreement with the Catholic Church on this score.

\* 1 Peter 5:13.

## PETER THE FIRST POPE

Among the evidence offered by the Catholic Church to prove her claim that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, the office which has always designated the holder of the title "pope," are the writings of the Christian Church Fathers: In 160 A.D., St. Hegessippus compiled a succession of Bishops of Rome to the time of Anicetus, which contained the name of Peter as first. In 190 A.D., Tertullian states that the Church of Rome recounts that Clement (fourth pope) was ordained by Peter. A poem, "Adverse Marcionem," written about the same time, speaks of Linus (second pope) being the first "whom Peter bade to take his place and sit on the chair in mightiest Rome where he himself had sat." In 214 A.D., Caius calls Victor "the thirteenth Bishop of Rome from Peter." In 225 A.D., St. Hippilytus counts Peter as the first Bishop of Rome. In 250 A.D., St. Cyprian relates that Cornelius (twenty-first pope) "mounted the lofty summit of the priesthood . . . the place of Peter."

To the above testimony must also be added the highly significant fact that at no time in Christian history has anyone other than the Pope laid claim to the title, Successor of St. Peter the Apostle. No one has ever come forth and said, "I, not he, am the rightful holder of the title." Certainly, if the head of any other church possessed the credentials to justify such a claim he would not hesitate for one instant to present them to the Christian world.

There you have it, not all the evidence the Catholic Church can furnish to prove her inheritance of the "keys" of authority vested in the Apostle Peter, for a complete presentation would require volumes, but surely enough to give you a solid basis for opinion. Think it over, dear friend, then let your better judgment settle the issue in your mind once and for all.

## VI

### THE BIBLE IS A CATHOLIC PUBLICATION

As a Protestant, an academically minded Jew, or even a curious agnostic, you have very probably read the Christian Bible a great deal, particularly the New Testament. You may even boast that you are somewhat of an authority on its texts, being able to quote them prolifically and accurately from memory.

But, really, how much do you know about the *origin* of the New Testament—how it came into existence? Not the origin of the individual books for their authors are clearly indicated, but the combined work, the finished edition as Christians know it today. For a broader knowledge and keener appreciation of the Bible, and Christianity too, you should obtain this information.

Oh, you may already know that the primitive Church collected the early Christian writings, totaling about 300, then separated those written by the Apostles from the others and the inspired writings of the Apostles from the uninspired; that the scholarly Jerome translated the approved books into the universal Latin vernacular in 387 A.D. and compiled them into one volume; that Innocent I, who was highest in authority in the Christian community, passed on their canonicity in 417 A.D. These little tidbits from Christian Biblical history are fairly well known. Only you should not be satisfied with such incomplete and superficial information. You should obtain a complete, unabridged and authentically documented history and study *all* the facts. What you will discover will be most interesting and extremely thought provoking to say the least.

You will discover, for example, that the primitive Christian Church

that collected the Apostles' writings and the Catholic Church were one and the same Church; that Jerome was a devout Catholic monk; that Innocent I was *Pope Innocent I*. You will discover, in short, that it was the hierarchy and scholars of the Catholic Church who gave the New Testament to the world and no others. *It could not have been otherwise because the Catholic Church was the only Christian Church then in existence.*

“But what about the reports describing the Church’s suppression of the Bible?” you may ask. Bunk . . . pure unadulterated bunk. Honestly, would the Catholic Church spend three centuries collecting the books of the Bible from the four corners of the known world, many centuries laboriously copying it by hand and shed her blood protecting it from heathen tribesmen if she did not value it highly? Think! Would she base the liturgy of her divine worship on the Gospels, incense them at High Mass, kiss them at Low Mass and read them aloud at mass each day of the year if she did not hold them to be truly the Holy Word of God? Why would she call the right side of her altars the “Gospel Side” and the left side the “Epistle Side” if she did not have a very high and reverent regard for the Bible? Ask yourself, dear reader, where else in the world is there such great love and respect for the Bible?

History tells us that after the Catholic Church compiled the Bible back in Christian antiquity it remained her exclusive property for seven centuries, until the Greek Schism in 1054 A.D.. Now if the Catholic Church had little regard for the Bible as her enemies allege, how, pray tell, can they be sure that the Bible they have received from her is whole and true? How can they be sure the Catholic Church did not make a great lot of deliberate changes and omissions in the context of the New Testament Scriptures when she had them all to herself? Or that the complete work is not a big Catholic forgery?

The plain truth is: no one, absolutely no one, can be sure of the authenticity and inspiration of the Bible without complete faith in the holy integrity of the Catholic Church. Unless there is complete faith in her integrity and authority there can be no certainty at all in the religion of those who regard the Bible as their sole guide to eternal salvation.

Yes, it is quite true that the Catholic Church did condemn John Wycliff’s, Martin Luther’s and William Tyndale’s translations of the

Bible. This she freely admits. But not, as some allege, because they translated the Bible into the vernacular of the common people, but because they made *erroneous* translations. Bunsen, eminent Protestant Biblical scholar, reported that he found no less than 3,000 inaccuracies in Luther's translation alone. Therefore it is easy to see that in condemning the Bible translations of those ambitious but self-willed men the Church was merely exercising a sacred trust, that of keeping God's articles of faith whole and incorrupt. She was doing no less than the United States Government would do if someone printed and circulated spurious copies of the United States Constitution.

Further evidence of the Catholic Church's wisdom with respect to the Holy Bible is in the manner she dispenses its truths. Whereas all other Christian churches either give their members divers interpretations or encourage them, learned and unlearned alike, to figure it out for themselves, the Catholic Church gives her faithful one, uniform, authoritative and never changing interpretation. *She alone regards God's truth as one immutable truth, not to be bandied around by human whim and prejudice. See 2 Peter 3:16.*

Truly, all Christianity can raise its voice in a great concert of thanks to the Catholic Church, not only for giving them the Holy Bible in the first instance but for her devoted guardianship over the whole truth of its contents. For unless the Holy Bible is preserved whole and incorrupt it ceases to be of value in the edification of the soul—it ceases to be a *holy* Bible.

## VII

### CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRIST'S MOTHER

One characteristic of the Catholic Church that strikes the observer as being most peculiarly Catholic is her great and unswerving devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary has been variously referred to by Catholics as "the Fair Bride of the Canticles," "the Stay of Believers," "The Church's Diadem," and many other such lavish terms of affection. So great, in fact, is the love and tribute paid to Mary by Catholics it very often is mistaken for adoration.

Now the question is, what justification is there in the House of God for such magnanimous affection for another human being? For that it what Mary is—not a deity, not an angel, but another human being.

The Catholic position concerning Mary, briefly, is this: That while she is a human being, she very definitely is not an ordinary human being. Through the Special Providence of God she was conceived immaculately without any stain of sin and given all the graces proper to qualify her to become the Mother of the Redeemer. By virtue of her Divine Maternity Mary became *the Media through which Salvation came to the world*.

Thus God elevated Mary to the highest dignity possible to a mere creature. She was drawn into a more intimate relationship with Him than any other member of the human race. Jesus Christ, who was God Incarnate, was Blood of her blood, Flesh of her flesh. At her breast He was suckled. In her arms He was cradled . . . bathed . . . clothed. It was Mary, always the tender and devoted mother, who

watched over the Divine Christ until He was grown to glorious manhood, who trudged the torturous Calvary road with Him, who received His Sacred Body down from the cross and laid Him in the tomb.

*Alas! It was from Mary that Christ took the blood He shed for the redemption of the world.*

When Catholics pay homage to Mary, therefore, they are expressing their gratitude for the great and vital part she played in the divine plan of redemption, gratitude to her and gratitude to God for conceiving her. When Catholics pay homage to Mary they are simultaneously and in the most gracious way paying homage to her Divine Son. It is as reasonable as that.

Despite the reasonableness of this, however, there may still be some who find it difficult to accept Mary in the same spirit of reverence. Very often old prejudices become so deeply ingrained in the mind they cannot be uprooted even by reason. For the benefit of those persons we simply point out that if Catholics are wrong in their great reverence for Mary, then so was the whole Christian community from the time of the Apostles until modern times. For history furnishes abundant proof that devotion to the Mother of God is as old as Christianity itself.

Even Martin Luther, though he repudiated a number of traditional Christian beliefs, held fast to this one. In his *Deutsche Schriften* Luther wrote, "Therefore, in a word, all dignities are embraced in Mary when we call her the Mother of God; no one can speak greater things of her or to her." Again in his *Postille* on the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, he wrote, "Gladly will I have Mary pray for me." The Hail Mary, Luther's biographers tell us, was one of his favorite prayers.

Verily, it would be very difficult to scorn the Mother without offending the Son.

## VIII

### CATHOLIC CHURCH IS MODERN CIVILIZATION'S GREATEST BENEFACTOR

“**B**Y *THEIR FRUITS SHALL YOU KNOW THEM.*” With these words Christ restated an old axiom: the best way to distinguish the useful from the useless—the godly from the godless. It means, simply, that the measure of a person’s true worth is the good he contributes to society. Fame, wealth and power, in themselves, are negative. Good works born of brotherly love *and in tune with the Will of God*—only that is positive. The same rule, of course, applies equally to governments and institutions.

Which brings us to the question: What is the temporal value of the Catholic Church to society? How much good has she contributed to the world during her lifetime, not only in the sphere of religion but in the fields of social, cultural and scientific achievement? How do her good fruits compare with those of other religions?

Here again the record speaks for itself. A glance into the history of our civilization’s progress reveals that the Catholic Church has, by and large, been the world’s greatest single contributor for the common good. In the field of social justice we note that it was she who not only conceived of the Magna Carta, that great document which formed the basis of all modern law and jurisprudence, but collaborated in its writing. Then, more recently, there was the encyclical of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI on the inherent rights of all classes; especially the laboring classes. We have the word of no less an authority than the late great



U. S. Senator, Robert Wagner,\* that these papal encyclicals provided the inspiration for almost all of the progressive social legislation in the past several decades. This and other knowledge of Catholic justice eventually led to Senator Wagner's conversion to the Catholic religion.

Former President Woodrow Wilson, in his book, *The New Freedom*, had this to say about the Church's role in the development of democratic principles in government: "Society from the bottom has always interested me profoundly. The reason why government did not suffer dry rot in the middle ages, was that most of the men who were efficient instruments of government were drawn from the Church—from that great religious body which was the only Church, that body which we now distinguish from other religious bodies, as the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was then, as it is now, a great democracy." Woodrow Wilson knew what he was saying because, besides being a great statesman, he was one of the most astute scholars of his day.

A similar observation was made by the eminent non-Catholic clergyman, Dean Farrar, who wrote: "What was it which saved the principles of law and order and civilization? . . . What kept alive the dying embers of science? . . . What was the sole witness for the cause of charity, the sole rampart against intolerable oppression? . . . What weak and unarmed power alone retained the strength and the determination to dash down the mailed hand of the baron when it was uplifted against his serf, to proclaim a truce of God between warring violences, and to make insolent wickedness tremble by asserting the inherent supremacy of goodness over transgressions, of knowledge over ignorance, or of right over brute force? You will say the Church; you will say Christianity. Yes, but for many a long century the very bulwarks and ramparts of the Church were the monasteries, and the one invincible force of the Church lay in the self-sacrifice, the holiness, the courage of the monks and of the missionaries sent forth from the monasteries."

Statements like these by learned and fair-minded people on the contributions of the Catholic Church to social justice and good government would fill volumes.

The roll call of Catholics who have risen to immortality in the fields of science and the arts reads like a modern big city telephone

\* Author of the Social Security Act, National Labor Relations Act, National Industrial Recovery Act and the United States Housing Act.

directory. On her roster of famed scientists appears such names as Copernicus, Gerbert,\* Galileo, Pasteur, Ampere,\*\* Mendel,\*\*\* Volta, Muller, Madame Curie and Marconi. Among her musicians are to be found the immortal names of Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Chopin, Liszt, Gounod, Verdi, Schubert, Strauss, Paderewski and Kreisler. Her artists include such renowned names as Michelangelo, da Vinci, Raphael, Goya, El Greco, Velasquez, Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyck and Durer. In the field of literature we find such Catholic names as Cervantes, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare,\*\*\*\* Hugo, Dostoevski, Chesterton, Undset and the late Fulton Oursler.

And it might be noted in passing that mechanical printing, the medium by which all culture and learning is preserved and transmitted, is the invention of the very devout Catholic, Johannes Gutenberg. Gutenberg's first printed work was the Catholic Bible.

Then there is the field of exploration, the establishment of the world's avenues of communication and commerce. Again we see Catholics playing the dominant role in the persons of Leif Ericson, Marco Polo, Columbus, Magellan, Cortez, Ponce de Leon and Vasco da Gama. History recounts that America is named after the Catholic navigator and map maker, Amerigo Vespucci.†

And finally, in that field that best reflects the attributes of Almighty God, *charity*, it is to be observed that the Catholic Church, since her very inception, has operated more orphanages, homes for the aged, hospitals, leprosariums and charities for the afflicted and oppressed than all other religions in the world *combined*. Biased opinion? No. The International

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\* Gerbert was the family name of Pope Sylvester II, known as the father of modern mathematics. He introduced the use of Arabic numerals into Europe, formulated the decimal system for computing fractions and invented the first mechanically operated calculating machine.

\*\* Ampere, a Catholic priest, was first to discover a system for measuring electricity.

\*\*\* Mendel, a Catholic monk, pioneered the study of heredity.

\*\*\*\* Recent discoveries furnish conclusive proof that Shakespeare never relinquished the Catholic faith he received from his parents, although he was forced to practice his faith in secret because of the intense persecution loyal Catholics were being subjected to in England during his lifetime.

† There are a few historians, however, who claim that the English explorer, John Cabot, who landed at Nova Scotia about the same time Amerigo Vespucci went ashore at Florida, named the new continent after his financial backer, Richard Ameryk. But this would not, if true, change the picture as Cabot and Ameryk were Catholics also.

Red Cross, which is noted for its impartiality, can corroborate these figures and, very likely, add a few of their own.

In 1946, Mahatma Ghandi wrote of the Catholic Church and its care for the world's lepers: "A leprosarium demands the highest idealism and the most perfect abnegation. The world of politics and journalism possess no heroes comparable to Father Damien of the Molokai Leprosarium. But the Catholic Church can count in thousands those who, after the example of Father Damien, are dedicated to the service of the lepers. It is worth-while to seek the source of such heroism."

The Catholic Church, at the present time, is caring for over 79,000 lepers, or about 65-percent of all the hospitalized lepers in the world—*and only the smallest fraction of these lepers are Catholic.* Moreover, 95-percent of the leprosariums under the Church's administration were founded by her and are being supported solely from Catholic charities. Needless to say, a great many priests and nuns have fallen victim to the dread disease as a result of their close contact with it—but that has not deterred them. The greater the squalor and the misery, the greater the need for charity; and the great heart of the Catholic Church never ceases to respond.

Do not, however, misconstrue what is meant here. The author does *not* mean to convey the impression that the Catholic Church has a corner on charitableness, or on any of the other forms of humanitarianism herein described. A large number of secular organizations, and not a few non-Catholic religious bodies, have contributed much toward social welfare and the progress of our civilization. It would indeed be a gross injustice to deny to others the credit which is their due. The point this chapter was meant to convey, is this: The Catholic Church, since the advent of Christianity, has been, and continues to be, *the greatest single force* in the world for justice, morality and the advancement of modern culture; *Especially where religion is concerned, she has been the most faithful and consistent Good Samaritan.* The truth of this statement, as we have already shown, is simply a matter of record.

In other words, dear reader, if you are looking for a really good and holy cause with which to associate yourself, a cause which has proven its value to humanity in unprecedented fashion—*be a Catholic.* Your life and your life's eternal reward cannot help but be the better for it.

## IX

### SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PROVED BY HER MIRACLES

Up until now in this little work we have examined some of the pertinent passages of Sacred Scripture, heard the voice of the Church Fathers, reviewed the testimony of history and mulled over a host of statistics. That the Catholic Church is all she claims she is, i. e., the one true, apostolic Church of Christ, should be very apparent by this time. Yet we know that there will be some hardened skeptics who will demand additional proof. The Scriptures, they will say, have been interpreted too many ways to instill confidence in their exact meaning; the Church Fathers could have been premature in their classification of the Catholic Church; history, like those who write it, can be bias; and statistics can easily be rigged. A cynical view for anyone to have, to say the least, and one that could conceivably shut the door on all faith, not only faith in religion but faith in humanity as well.

Still, as cynical and unreasonable as this challenge is, the Catholic Church is fully prepared to meet it.

Like Christ, who was also asked to furnish positive proof of His Divinity,\* the Catholic Church points to her many miracles. Not those simple mind over body "healings" indulged in by some religious sects, called "neuro-pathical cures" by medical science, and which are not miracles at all in the religious sense, but real miracles entirely removed from the natural order, *miracles that visibly reveal the Divine Presence*—miracles such as have never occurred within the framework of any other religion since the time of Christ.

\* Matthew 11:3-5.

The miracle of St. Francis, for instance. This humble and devout monk, founder of the Franciscan Order, was absorbed in prayer one day in 1220 on the slopes of Mount Alvernus in Italy when a flaming light in the form of a cross appeared out of the sky and hovered immediately above him. In his prayers Francis had been petitioning Christ for a share in His suffering. When the blazing cross ascended back into the heavens Francis was left with the wounds of the Crucified Christ in his hands, feet and side, *exactly where Christ had received them*, wounds that never stopped bleeding during all of Francis' lifetime. The whole countryside testified to having witnessed the dazzling white cross over Alvernus and doctors from far and wide who examined Francis' wounds were never able to attribute them to natural causes.

Francis' was the first recorded case of the Holy Stigmata but since then at least 148 cases have been reported and duly examined by Church and medical authorities, *all of them Catholics known for their Christian piety*. Two stigmatics are living in the world today.\* And medical science still can offer no explanations other than to say, "Miraculous!"

Of world renown are the miraculous waters at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, France. Here, in 1858, the Blessed Virgin appeared to the girl Bernadette on 18 different occasions and on her last ordered a spring of water to flow from the spot where she stood. Church authorities, after lengthy investigation and being satisfied that Bernadette's experience was more than just an hallucination, erected a beautiful basilica on the grotto site in 1876. Then pilgrims came to bathe in the grotto waters and at once the miraculous curative properties of the water became evident. Incurables, people with malformed bone structure and people completely ridden with cancer, who bathed in the water emerged normal, healthy people.

At the invitation of the Church a clinic was installed on the premises (now one of the most modern in all Europe) and every cure was given thorough medical examination to determine whether or not they might be due to psychological or other natural influences. The diagnosis of leading clinicians who have come to Lourdes from every part of the world and examined the case histories: "Miraculous."

If space allowed we could go on and on describing the super-

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\* Theresa Neumann of Bavaria and Padre Pio of Italy.

natural occurrences that distinguish the Catholic Church from all others. There was the Cure of Ars, St. John Vianney, who healed the blind and lame and wrought thousands of conversions with his prayers. A throng of people observed rose petals falling mysteriously out of the air during the canonization of St. Theresa of Lisieux. The appearance of the Blessed Virgin in 1917 to the three Catholic children of Fatima, Portugal, during which the sun danced, spun and fell from its normal position in the sky, is a miracle of singular significance in our times. Here she prophesied that unless the world turned from its wickedness to God Russia would grow powerful and bring great misery to the people. Over 100,000 people testified to having witnessed the Fatima miracle and the entire world has witnessed the fulfillment of its prophecy.

Yes, we could cite many supernatural manifestations that have occurred within the holy framework of the Catholic Church, but the above should serve to prove our point; namely, that the Catholic Church is divinely constituted, the only church on the face of the earth so constituted, *the only church on the face of the earth in direct and visible communion with Almighty God and His Heavenly Court.*

# X

## CATHOLIC CHURCH GIVES HER FAITHFUL INCOMPARABLE PEACE OF SOUL

Here is an intriguing question: Just what is it about the Catholic Church that gives her her great universal appeal? Everyone, even her bitterest enemies, will concede that she has that. The spectacle of her 431 million members from every walk of life, representing three-fifths of all Christianity, is evidence that cannot easily be ignored.

Is the Catholic Church's appeal due to her beautiful edifices, the greatest works of architectural art on the face of the earth? Or to the awe inspiring splendor of her liturgies and processions? Or, to take a peek "inside" Catholicism, does her popularity stem from her cogent, forceful and uncompromising doctrine?

No doubt, these things do command a certain admiration and probably contribute a great deal toward cultivating interest in the Catholic religion. But, surprisingly, it is not these that pull the trigger of final assent in the minds of millions of converts year after year all over the world. No, the main, the most potent factor in the popularity of the Catholic Church is something vastly more alluring.

Ask the Catholic convert sometime. He or she will tell you that their primary motive for embracing Catholicism is the incomparable peace and joy the Catholic Faith produces in the soul. Confusion and despair, loneliness and melancholy, these have no place in the life of the Catholic. In the lives of devout Catholics they are, in fact, unknown states of mind.

That is because Catholics are given a positive and consummate consciousness of the Reality of God and His Loving Solitude. Suspi-

cion and guesswork are ruled out altogether. The whole order of creation is brought into clear and beautiful focus. And the Catholic beholds in the midst of it all the sublime motive, the true and transcendent purpose, of his existence. No longer does he grope and flounder through life like a ship on a tempestuous sea without a compass. He knows where he is headed and he has a skilled and experienced navigator to take him there. His is a wonderful feeling of safety.

Nor does the Catholic rest his convictions on the authority of some fly-by-night theorist. He rests his convictions on the authority of a mighty two thousand year old institution that has produced not only the world's greatest theological and metaphysical minds but legions of saints without parallel in the history of the human race. His convictions rest on the authority of that Church which alone can furnish positive historical proof that it was founded, not by some ordinary person like you and me, but by the God-Man Christ Himself. In short, the Catholic has the supreme satisfaction of knowing that his convictions rest on the most reliable authority of all.

Yes, the peace of soul the Catholic Church gives her sons and daughters constitutes her real appeal to humankind. But it is a peace that must be traced to its first source to be fully understood and appreciated.

The first source of this great blessing is found in the Church's vitals: the Mass, the Sacraments, the Benedictions, the Holy Rosary, the Stations of the Cross and the Litanies to God and His Heavenly Court; especially the Mass for it is here the faithful meet Christ their Savior *face to face* in the Holy Eucharist. When a devout Catholic participates in these solemnities he is at once removed from all the ramifications of the world. He experiences an intimacy with God that is joyously real and quite beyond compare. His whole being is refreshed and exhilarated, as a draught of cool water refreshes and exhilarates a man just off a burning desert. He is given a new lease on life. He is given *peace*, the true peace that only complete reconciliation with God can produce.

Here is the explanation for the almost total absence of Catholics in mental hospitals. In the U. S. A., for instance, less than three per cent of the people committed to mental hospitals during the ten year period just ended were Catholics, although Catholics comprised 27



per cent of the population. But what is even more significant, Catholics constituted less than one per cent of the patients afflicted with paranoia (chronic hallucinations) and dementia praecox (deteriorated mentality). Then there is the 1952 report of the non-partisan World Health Organization which gives the lowest suicide rate in the world to the countries with the highest percentage of Catholic population. What could be better proof of the stabilizing and strengthening influence of Catholicism on the mind?

. . . . .

So why not join the Catholic Church, dear friend, and share in this wonderful joy and tranquility, this intimate friendship with Almighty God? Why not "Go, show thyself to the priest" as Christ advised \* and let him give you "the pearl of great price," the beautiful, the precious, the eternal Catholic Faith? Do this and 431 million people promise you that you will never cease being thankful, never cease singing in your heart, "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life at last I've found thee . . . ah, at last I know the secret of it all."

But especially will you be thankful at the moment of death. When the element of life begins draining out of your body and you realize that in a few seconds you will be standing before the Justice Seat of God, what a comfort to look back on all the moments of reconciliation with Him at Mass and the Sacraments, to feel the Unction of the last rites being administered to you by the priest and hear his impassioned prayers as he pleads your case before the Divine Tribunal, to *know that you die a bonafide member of Christ's Mystical Body on earth*. Yes, it is then that you will be especially thankful for the peace that is the Catholic Faith, then that you will have really discovered the "appeal" of the Catholic Church.

May God bless you and quicken your decision.

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\* Luke 5:14.

## ANSWERS TO A FEW QUESTIONS

*Q. What actually takes place at the Mass?*

A. The Mass is the chief form of worship in the Catholic Church and is a repetition of the Last Supper at which Christ changed bread and wine into His own Body and Blood, offered it up to the Father for the remission of sins, gave it to His Apostles to eat and drink, then ordered them to perpetuate the Holy Rite. *Luke 22:19-20*. Catholics believe that the Mass is the only perfect form of worship because Christ prescribed it, because at Mass the faithful make the most perfect love offering of all to God, *His own Divine Son*, and because at Mass the faithful have the ineffable privilege of receiving into themselves Christ's own Divine Substance in the Holy Eucharist, the food of everlasting life. The Mass has been the chief form of Christian worship since the days of the Apostles and is still the chief form for four-fifths of the world's Christians.

*Q. Why do priests speak Latin at Mass instead of the language of the congregation?*

A. Latin is the language of the Mass because it is the universal language of the Church. But more especially Latin is used because it guarantees universal and continual uniformity of worship. Latin is the only language in the world that does not change. Catholics quickly learn to follow the Latin of the Mass by using a *Missal*, a little book containing the full translation. But Latin is not the only language the priest speaks at Mass. The Gospels, Epistles and the Sermon are spoken in the language of the congregation as are a large number of prayers.

Q. *Christ said all who believe in Him will be saved. John 6:47. Is not Christ's true Church then a spiritual union of all who believe in Him, regardless of denomination, and not any one physical and autonomous organization?*

A. Yes, Our Lord did say all who believe in Him will be saved, but He qualified that statement by asserting that belief in Him implies belief in *all His teachings and recognition of the authority of His visible Church to administer those teachings. Matt. 16:18 and 18:17.* Bear in mind that Christ taught only *one* doctrine; therefore, in order for a church to qualify as His true Church, it must also teach only one doctrine. Hence, to presume that Christ's true Church is a union, spiritual or otherwise, of hundreds of denominations teaching hundreds of *different* doctrines is absolutely contrary to all reason. *How can the various denominations constitute a union of belief when it is precisely for the reason that they are divided in belief that they are separate denominations?* Further, the divine Christ was too filled with compassion and mercy to make people obtain their means of salvation from anything so intangible and incomprehensible as a *spiritual* body. That is why He committed the perpetuation of His holy ministry of salvation to the Apostles, a physical, living organization, declaring to them: "He who heareth you, heareth me." *Luke 10:16.* "As the Father has sent me, I send you." *John 20:21.* "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." *Matt. 28:19-20.* Obviously, the last statement is a guarantee that His visible, living Church, its unity and its authority, would not end with the Apostles but would continue on in their legitimate successors throughout the lifetime of the world.

Q. *What is the real purpose of statues in Catholic Churches?*

A. The practice of placing likenesses of the Holy Family and the Saints in the Church originated during primitive Christianity and was done to accomplish a twofold purpose: to provide the faithful with a *visual* portrayal of the main figures and events of Christianity\* and to remind and inspire the people to emulate the heroic Christian virtues of the prototypes they represent. Many

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\*The value of visual education is recognized by all modern educational authorities.

Protestant churches use paintings and stained glass murals to accomplish this aim but the Catholic Church, in addition to pictures, uses statues which, being more realistic, are more effective.

Q. *Can the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory be proved by Scripture and reason?*

A. The Scriptures refer to Purgatory but they do not call it by that name, the same as the words "Bible," "hospital," "aunt," "uncle," etc. appear nowhere in the Scriptures but are clearly inferred. Purgatory, simply, is the name the early Christians gave to the place where souls go that are defiled, hence cannot go to heaven (Apoc. or Rev. 21:27), but are not sufficiently defiled to be eternally committed to hell. It is the place where slight sins are purged away and the "soul saved so as by fire." *1 Cor. 3:15*. The reason and justice of a place of purgation in between heaven and hell is best illustrated by our courts of justice when they acquit the innocent man (heaven), sentence a man guilty of a minor crime to temporary imprisonment (purgatory) and sentence a man guilty of a great crime to life imprisonment (hell).

Q. *Why aren't priests permitted to marry and have families?*

A. In some areas of the Catholic Church, as in the Eastern Rite Churches of Syria, Armenia, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt, priests *are* permitted to live in the married state. It is an old, time honored tradition with them and is tolerated because, in the final analysis, celibacy is *not* a dogma of faith. But to understand the wisdom of celibacy in the priesthood of the Western Church, which constitutes the main body of Catholicism and which holds to traditions more ancient than those of the Eastern Church, it is necessary to understand what the vocation of the Catholic priesthood really represents: *The Catholic priesthood is a continuation of the earthly Priesthood of Christ*. Christ cast the die for the priesthood when He declared to the Apostles, the first priests of His Church, "As the Father has sent me, I send you." *John 20:21*. Which is plain language meaning: as He lived, so should those who carry on His work live. He was to be regarded as the Archtype, the Divine Model, in all things pertaining to the priestly vocation—and *He was a celibate*. His ministry was one of complete dedication, therefore the continuation of His

ministry should also be one of complete dedication allowing for no separate interests and restricting obligations such as marriage would impose. By their own admission the Apostles accepted celibacy and all the other sacrifices that complete dedication to God implies. *Matt. 19:27*. And by Christ's comment on their admission it is clear that they were doing the correct thing. *Matt. 19:29*. But perhaps the most eloquent testimonial in the Sacred Scriptures for the justification of celibacy in the priesthood was given by the Apostle Paul when, addressing those of his disciples who wished to serve God with their whole heart, he said, "I would have you free from care. He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please God. Whereas he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided." *1 Cor. 7:32-33*. Also see *Matthew 19:12*.

Q. *Is not confessing one's sins to a priest a contradiction of that passage in Sacred Scripture which declares that Christ is the sole mediator between God and man?*

A. No. Not unless one thinks Christ was given to contradicting himself. For it was none other than He who instituted confession, or the Sacrament of Penance as it is properly called, in the Church. *John 20:21-23*. That no contradiction exists, however, is easily explained. Simply bear in mind that it is not to some ordinary Joe Doakes that one confesses his sins, but to a priest of Christ's Church, *the Church which is the visible Body of Christ living still. Col. 1:24*. Hence it is directly to Christ, "the sole mediator," mystically present in the living fibers of His Church, to whom confessions are made. And it is by Christ's authority vested in His Church that sins are forgiven. *Matt. 18:18*. The Church points out, however, that the conditions for forgiveness are sincere contrition and a firm resolve to resist the temptations that might lead to future offenses against God.

Q. *Do Catholics confess all the details of their sins to the priest?*

A. No. And if one volunteered the details the priest hearing the confession would politely refuse them. All the Church requires is a listing of the *types* of sins, the number of times committed and, when any doubt exists, only enough circumstantial information necessary to

establish the seriousness of the sin. By seriousness is meant willfulness and the extent of the harm done to others. Remember, sins are as disgusting for the priest to hear as they are to tell, perhaps even more so, therefore he would have you refrain from what is not absolutely necessary to the Sacrament. Then too there are usually others waiting their turn to be heard and it is a matter of conscience to the priest to get to them as soon as possible. Actually, the Church asks for a less detailed account of the intimate side of people's lives than do doctors and lawyers; but, even so, what has been revealed in the confessional is infinitely more private. *A priest is forbidden under pain of excommunication to repeat what he has heard in the confessional, no matter to whom.* Confession is one of the least understood of the Sacraments of the Church and, consequently, is one of the main stumbling blocks in the minds of prospective converts. But, as any Catholic will testify, it is not the painful experience some people imagine. Rather, confession is a wonderful, *relieving* experience. Once it is experienced it is recognized as one of the most precious and salutary of the Sacraments, one of the brightest jewels in the bountiful treasure that is the Catholic Faith. For it is by this Sacrament that peace with God is renewed, the door to the Eucharistic banquet opened.

- Q. *What is the extent of the loyalty Catholics owe to the Pope and what is the justification for it?*
- A. The only loyalty Catholics are required to give to the Pope is in matters relating to faith and morals. As Successor of St. Peter, appointed by Christ the first head of His Church (*Matt. 16:18*), the Pope is recognized by Catholics as Christ's Vicar on earth, the supreme authority on such matters in the household of the faithful. Nor is there anything illogical or totalitarian connected with such authority; first because Christ, who is Infinite Wisdom, could not create an illogical office, and secondly, because there is not now and never was a united, harmonious branch of human society without a supreme authority in its government. Put an army in the field without a high command and see how confused and ineffectual it becomes. The fact that the papacy has endured without change or interruption longer than any government that

has ever existed on earth is further proof of its divine origin and soundness.

Q. *Wasn't the sixteenth century Reformation justified in view of the worldliness of the popes and many of the Catholic hierarchy?*

A. That all depends on whether you are referring to the Catholic Reformation or to the Protestant Reformation. If you have the former in mind, it was indeed justified. There is no question but that the private lives of Pope Leo X (1517-1521) and Clement VII (1523-1534) and many of the bishops and clergy of that period failed to measure up to the holy dignity of their office. It was a situation that demanded correcting and which got correcting—but quick. So aroused with indignation were the conscientious bishops and lesser clergy, notably St. Robert Bellarmine, St. Canisius and St. Charles Borromeo, that by mid-century every one of the offenders had either been deposed from their positions of ecclesiastical responsibility or persuaded to mend their ways. And to make certain that the private lives of her priests would never again cast a shadow on the precious good name of Holy Mother Church, a strict code of discipline, which obligated all priests and members of the hierarchy under pain of severe censure, was inserted into Canon Law at the Council of Trent in 1547. *Since then there has not been a single pope or bishop who could be called to account for his private life.* If, however, you have the Protestant Reformation in mind, that very definitely was *not* justified, nor was it a reformation in the literal and true sense of the word. *You do not reform the Christian Church by splitting it into hundreds of hostile camps and conflicting doctrines, by repudiating a large number of beliefs held by all Christians since the beginning, and by defaming and seeking the destruction of the one authority which alone has defended and preserved and spread the Gospel of Christ throughout the entire civilized world.*

Q. *Does the Catholic Church teach that only Catholics go to heaven?*

A. No. The Catholic Church holds that it is *much easier* for a Catholic to attain eternal salvation because she alone is in possession of the *whole* deposit of saving precepts and the Christ given authority to administer them. She believes that God will make allowances on the Judgment Day for those people who, *through*

*no fault of their own*, are unaware of the divine mission of the Catholic Church and who live virtuous, Christlike lives to the best of their knowledge and ability. God is Justice. The form and extent of those allowances can only be speculated on, but reason demands that a person will attain a higher state of spiritual perfection with its commensurate reward *through Grace received from the Sacramental Life of the Church*, than that which is attainable outside of the Church. If this were not true, Christ would never have founded the Church in the first place.

THE END



*Blessed be the chosen one, who has chosen the Catholic Church, that Holy Lamb which the devouring world has not consumed. Give heed, therefore, to my instructions, as my disciples, and depart not from the Catholic Faith, which I also, having received in my boyhood, have preserved immovable; neither turn aside from it in any doubt.*

*Ephraem, Church Father of the Fourth Century  
Book 2, Testament, pages 242-243*





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