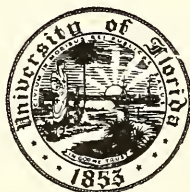



UNIVERSITY
OF FLORIDA
LIBRARIES





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

WHAT THEY ASK ABOUT

MARRIAGE

WHAT THEY ASK ABOUT
MARRIAGE

MONSIGNOR
J. D. CONWAY

FIDES • CHICAGO 10, ILLINOIS

Library of Congress Catalog Card
Number: 55-7774

NIHIL OBSTAT:
Ambrose J. Burke
Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR:
✠ Ralph L. Hayes
Bishop of Davenport, Iowa
January 25, 1955

COPYRIGHT: 1955
Fides Publishers,
Chicago, Illinois

Manufactured by American Book-
Stratford Press, New York City

Contents

	Page
<i>Foreword by Donald McDonald</i>	vii
PART I Preliminaries to Marriage	
Chapter 1 LOVE	3
Chapter 2 DATING	8
Chapter 3 KEEPING COMPANY	25
Chapter 4 ENGAGEMENT	52
Chapter 5 THE AGE FOR MARRIAGE	57
Chapter 6 PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE	65
PART II The Marriage Ceremony	
Chapter 7 CATHOLIC MARRIAGE	73
Chapter 8 MIXED MARRIAGES	87
Chapter 9 MARRIAGE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH	115
Chapter 10 NON-CATHOLIC MAR- RIAGES	135
PART III Life Together	
Chapter 11 MARITAL LIFE	147
Chapter 12 BIRTH CONTROL	180
Chapter 13 THE RHYTHM	201
PART IV Marriage Failures	
Chapter 14 DIVORCE	221
Chapter 15 MARRIAGE CASES	240
Appendix	275
Index	319

FOREWORD

Msgr. J. D. Conway's Question Box is the most popular feature of *The Catholic Messenger* of Davenport, Iowa. Every week for nine years, Monsignor Conway has answered questions on faith and morals for readers of this diocesan journal. This in itself is not unusual. Most Catholic newspapers carry a Question Box. And most Question Box editors are at least as durable a breed as other editors and writers.

What is unusual about Monsignor Conway's Question Box is the wide range of his answer-ability, the realism of his answers and the deftness with which he handles each question sent to him. Nor is this all. The Monsignor is endowed with a dry, astringent wit that gives to his already lucid style a literary flavor, an originality and freshness which mark the creative writer.

It is not easy for a moralist to combine pungent wit with serious instruction. He is always in danger of being remembered as a humorist rather than as a teacher of great truths; and what he teaches is always in danger of being lightly regarded unless he keeps careful rein on his wit, unless he makes sure that it clarifies rather than outshines the primordial truths of faith and morals for which people thirst.

Monsignor Conway writes with a smile. The smile does not soften the "hard truths" of Christian discipline. But it does soften the context in which he (and we) must express those truths, adhere to that discipline in our daily lives. It reassures us that Christian life is not a humorless pilgrimage and that everything that is

“hard” is not necessarily harsh. I recall one instance in which a woman asked why the New Testament directed women to be subject to their husbands. The Monsignor explained why and then added that “women, lacking scriptural authority, have subtler ways of bringing man to subjection.”

Monsignor Conway also writes with wrath, but only on those rare occasions when he receives a question which seems to have been inspired by hypocrisy and pharisaism. His biting reply to the woman who resented another woman’s wearing of the virginal white veil on her wedding day is a masterpiece of just anger, the sentences flicking out like a lash as he administered the “public whipping.”

* * *

It is this large measure of human sympathy for sinners, sympathy which is never permitted to degenerate into maudlin sentimentalism (in which the awfulness of sin is comfortably submerged), that not only gives the counsellor the quality of a true friend, but which also contributes to the realism of his counsel. What Monsignor Conway never forgets is that the eternal truths of dogma and morals can be understood and assented to by man only in a temporal, earthly context, that fallen man’s wounded nature can grasp these truths and incarnate them only amidst varying degrees of difficulty—amidst a confused context, that is, in which error, doubt, distractions and passions mingle with truth and goodness.

Monsignor Conway understands these difficulties, but he does not compromise with them. He sympathizes with young people whose concupiscential urges always threaten rebellion, but he never gives young people the slightest justification for surrender to the rebel. He

agrees with hard-pressed married couples that an eighth, ninth or tenth child will involve economic retrenchment in the family budget, but the use of contraceptives, he reminds them, is not an answer, it is a perversion.

Though Monsignor Conway's range is far-reaching, this, his first book of questions and answers, is limited to questions relating to love, courtship and marriage. Fides Publishers have wisely chosen to introduce the Monsignor to what I am sure will be a wide, and increasingly wider, public in this particular area of human relationships wherein truth and error, good and evil, virtue and vice assume perhaps their most dramatic character and joy and sorrow their most intense poignancy.

It is the happy faculty of Monsignor Conway that he can write about love and courtship and marriage in a way which is immediately and simultaneously useful to young people who need guidance and to their parents who may both need guidance and are charged with giving it to their children. The Monsignor's discussion of the distinction between modesty and chastity is one of the best brief essays I've read on the subject. In this, as in so many other questions, the Monsignor lifts a universal truth out of a particular situation, and he develops that truth in such a way that what might otherwise be a mundane "answer" becomes a rather thorough "instruction."



It is profitless to be much concerned over a writer's personal life. What counts is what he writes: is it true and good? lucid? interesting?

All the same, more than one reader is bound to ask himself, after closing this book, who is Monsignor Conway? What does he do? What background has he had

which might account for his ability to write answers to the most difficult and delicate questions in a way which forces both young and old among his readers to nod their assent and murmur: "He's so right."?

Monsignor Conway, now 49, has had the unusual opportunity to be close to young people. During the second world war, he served as military chaplain with the U. S. Army and experienced four years of active duty in the Aleutians and the European Theater of Operations.

Currently he is director of the Catholic Student Center at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City where he and two fellow priests of the Davenport diocese minister to the moral, spiritual and intellectual needs of more than 1300 Catholic students. At Iowa City he is also pastor of St. Thomas More parish, the campus parish whose congregation consists mainly of Catholic married students and Catholic members of the University faculty. A large part of the priests' time and energy is devoted to giving private instructions in Catholicism to non-Catholic students who are searching for the faith.

Once a week, the Monsignor makes the 55-mile trip from Iowa City to Davenport where he serves as *officialis*, or judge, in the Diocesan Marriage Court. Here he comes to grips firsthand with the tangled web which many couples manage to make of their married life. When he returns to Iowa City each Monday night, Monsignor Conway usually carries in his briefcase many hours of complicated paper work which may, or may not, unravel the tangle of these mixed-up marriages.

Because of this twofold assignment in the Diocese of Davenport, Monsignor Conway occupies a unique vantage point. He can see both the beginning and the end of mistaken marriages. But he can also help reduce these mistakes. He can instruct, guide and counsel privately and by means of his public Question Box in *The Cath-*

olic Messenger. Now, happily, he is being introduced to a larger public.

* * *

In one of his answers in this book, Monsignor Conway observes that young people who know all the facts about modern social life, dating customs and conduct, and the jargon, dress and sometimes peculiar fashions of youth, can, and usually do, make serious mistakes if they do not also know the moral principles which must govern their social conduct. However, moral theologians who know the moral principles but who do not know the modern, factual context in which the principles must be applied, these, too, writes Monsignor Conway, can be guilty of grave error.

Here, then, is a moral theologian who knows both his moral principles and the mid-20th century, the here-and-now situation, in which the principles must be applied.

To the many readers who have told us, and the Monsignor, "The Question Box ought to be published as a book," we can now say, thanks to both Monsignor Conway and Fides, his publisher, "Here is your book." The questions people ask about marriage are interesting. Almost as interesting as what Monsignor Conway writes about marriage.

Donald McDonald

PART ONE

Preliminaries to Marriage

Chapter I: LOVE

Love contrasted with infatuation—Love supposes personality.

Q. Please define what love is, what it means, what it consists of. How can a person recognize true love, and how does it differ (in appearance) from infatuation? How can one be assured that another person loves them?

A. You are asking for a book, not a column. You are asking for answers; you will get a series of comparisons from which to cull for your own conclusions.

Love has many meanings. We will start by eliminating Divine Love, brotherly love, love of parents, and love of dogs. You are obviously not asking about these.

Love is the greatest unifying force in man's nature. It makes the lover seek the loved-one with desire to possess. It makes the lover abandon himself completely to the one he loves. It makes him happy in the possessing and in the giving. So love is both selfish and selfless. It seeks hungrily and it gives generously. These two elements are mingled in every human love. But true love must not have too much of selfishness in it, because then it would become love of self, without the gift of self.

Our love is human. So it is an expression of our complete human nature, both body and soul. True love is not of the body alone; nor is it exclusively a thing of the soul. Man loves not as the animal or the angel, but as man. And man is not a composite of two natures in

conflict, but the only creature God ever made by union of matter and spirit in one nature and one personality. So man's love, if true, has its roots in the soul while it expresses itself through the senses and emotions. If it is not really a thing of the soul, it is not real human love; if it is only in the soul, it is not the love of a real man.

The union engendered by true love is a joining of soul and body to soul and body. It is a union of two minds and two free wills expressed in physical embrace.

True love is not romantic love. True love loves truth—reality. Romantic love creates the object of its love, in dreams. It is blind—to facts; drugged by false expectations.

True love is not infatuation, everyone knows. But to tell the one from the other surely and always, no one knows. It is a question of degree, differing in persons. Much depends on character and maturity. Here are some indications:

Love grows and growth takes time. It has to sink its roots firmly into the deep soil of the soul. It is a perennial plant, and these grow slowly. You fall into infatuation. Falling is fast, with acceleration. Falling is uncontrollable, seldom lasts long, and is often disastrous; but it does provide a whooshing, engulfing thrill.

In other words, if you have fallen head over heels, you are probably infatuated. If the thing has crept up on you quietly but thrillingly, you may well be in love.

True love is based on knowledge. It knows well the one it loves, and knows why it loves. It observes. It appraises. It is held firmly by many ties. It can enumerate in detail the points of beauty of the loved-one, the flights of spirit, the qualities of soul; the walk, voice, words, interests, and mannerisms. The time of its growth has provided it with varied experiences and memories to enrich its thrill. Infatuation is apt to be swept up in the strong attraction of a few compelling traits. It sees

blonde hair, fine face, or fancy figure and forgets all the rest.

Love embraces the whole personality, aware of shortcomings and defects, evaluating them. Infatuation ignores them—as though intensity of feeling should burn them up.

True love is realistic. Its thrill comes from facts. Even its dreams are reasonable and realizable. Infatuation thrives on fancy and fantasy.

True love has as much of giving in it as of seeking. It is centered on the loved one, not on self. It seeks a real union of two as partners. Infatuation would dominate unknowingly, seeing the loved one as a source of personal joy, pleasure and satisfaction.

True love is honest. It does not express what it does not feel and believe. Having fixed its roots in the soul, it lets its tendrils grow out through the senses and emotions, where they become words and actions to entwine the lovers into union—in both soul and body. Expressions of love come slowly, sincerely, naturally. They are never forced or faked. Physical expressions, when they do come, have real deep meaning. Infatuation reverses the process. It is born of expression, thrives on it for hasty growth, and may as quickly wither. The meaning is lacking; it is just fun, thrilling.

Love is constant, enduring, even patient when it must be. Infatuation is as changeable as it was hasty.

Love tends to be faithful. Infatuation is apt to flitter.

Love gives calmness, security, peace, trust and happiness. Infatuation gives thrills, joys, sorrows, jealousies, and uncertainties.

Love gives ambition, inspires work, and leads to honest planning. Infatuation destroys application, appetite, and disposition; and leads to rosy dreams.

Love has ideals, but doesn't over-idealize. Unconsciously its dreams of an ideal partner are revamped to

fit the person loved. Infatuation believes that the person fits its highest ideals. It believes that true love was made in heaven and descended like a ton of electrified dynamite on the predestined mates, chosen inevitably for each other by benign fate.

The physical element is present in true love, strongly present; but it does not dominate good sense and right spirit. Infatuation stresses the sensual.

True love makes no apologies for the loved one; it does not feel ashamed. Infatuation is apt to be embarrassed—before parents, pals, and priests.

True love makes sacrifices; it seeks the happiness of the loved one, and finds its own happiness therein.

True love is based on realities of family, background, education, social position, religion, moral standards, financial situation, friends, interests, and experiences. Infatuation ignores such base concerns.

You may not know his love, for sure, when he tells you, or when he touches you. But you may know it from his faithful devotion to you, his consideration of you, his thoughtfulness towards you, his concern and his sacrifice, his compliance with your wishes, his honest planning of your future together, his sharing of self and experiences with you, his pride and his joy in you, and his peace and happiness with you. He likes very much being with you, even when he is not making love to you.

Q. Did St. Thomas Aquinas say that it was a sin to love an animal, such as a dog?

A. I am not familiar with such a statement; nor can I find it in my *Summa*. But I do find his explanation of the only true and proper object of love: **A rational being**. Animals, lacking soul and reason, cannot be the object of love in the true meaning of the word. Very often

they are the recipients of affection; similar to the "love" shown for a new hat or a good beef-steak. Such affection is not sinful, unless it is excessive and unreasonable—like affection for good wine might be.

Chapter 2: DATING

Instructing teen-agers—Playing the field—A boy's first date—Vanity—That kissing problem—Should I quit seeing him—Beginning young—He doesn't respect her—Time to be home—The divorced convert—Refusing the divorced man—Protestant and Catholic—Invalidly married.

Q. Are there any books available for teen-agers to give them information about sex and dating? We have a boy and girl who are just old enough to start dating, and we do not know exactly how or what to tell them. We want them to get started right and know what dangers lie ahead, yet we do not feel capable of giving them information without some outside help. We had no education on such things from our parents, but we want our children to be better prepared than we were.

A. Your attitude is perfect. First of all you realize that the education of your children along these lines should come from the parents. And secondly, you realize that it should be done wisely and properly, and you are aware of your own limitations.

Education of this kind is one of the most important duties of parents, and also one of the most widely neglected. Parents can be terrible prudes in relation to their children; and of course children quickly respond with like prudishness. Under these circumstances children

develop a sense that certain things are "dirty" and must not be mentioned before their parents. And if these naughty subjects do come up, there arises with them a feeling of shame and tenseness which prevents easy discussion.

If parents are to accomplish anything in giving their children sex instruction, they must build up in them from earliest years a feeling of confidence, ease, and familiarity. They must not evade early questions, or reprimand precocious curiosity. They must impart the right attitude towards sex and birth and kindred vital topics.

This is all easy to say, but often hard to accomplish, especially if our own attitudes on the subject are inhibited or distorted. It is hard to accomplish if we lack the sense of timing, or if we don't know suitable names and descriptions. The names we learned behind the barn are not the ones we should teach to our children.

If you really want to go into this thing thoroughly, I would suggest for your own reading "Christopher's Talks to Catholic Parents," by Father David L. Greenstock. It is published in London, by Burns Oates, and can be obtained from Templegate, Springfield, Illinois, for \$3.75. It is filled with good sense.

Otherwise I should not presume to give a bibliography on this subject. I am not sufficiently familiar with it. The "Queen's Work" pamphlet, "How to Give Sex Instructions," by Father P. J. Bruckner, S.J., is rather widely used. And you might find some suggestions in "Talks to Teen-Agers," by Rev. F. H. Drinkwater.

A little book which seems very good to me, and which is directly intended to help parents give instruction of this kind to their children of all ages, is "Parents, Children, and the Facts of Life," by Henry V. Sattler, C.S.S.R. It is published by the St. Anthony Guild Press.

Pamphlets will never be a satisfactory substitute for

parental instruction, but they may supplement it, and are better than no instruction at all. For a sound presentation of the principles I know nothing better than "Modern Youth and Chastity," by Rev. Gerald L. Kelly, S.J. It is a "Queen's Work" pamphlet at twenty-five cents. Father Lord has one in the same series: "Love, Sex and Teen-Agers."

Q. How many fellows should you go out with before marrying one of them?

A. That may depend on how soon one of them asks you. You can't marry one of them as long as he remains unwilling. If you keep going out with too many of them too long, maybe no one of them will want to marry you.

It may also depend on whether any one of them is the man you really want to live with the rest of your life.

There should be a normal development in the manner of friendship, company-keeping, dating, engagement and marriage. The young teen-ager who first starts dating is much better off if she will play the field without any close attachment, on the basis of friendship, companionship, fun, and not too much dreamy romance.

Then as she gets older and acquires the wisdom of a college freshman, she begins to narrow down her field, to put a little more realism in her dreams, and even to make them resemble conscious planning.

In due time, the right one comes along—we are presuming the ideal situation—things become serious, rivals are pushed out of the picture, and thoughts are turned to such matters as engagement and marriage.

This normal process of development can be seriously upset in either of two ways. The romantic youngster, filled with dreams, and inspired by the movies, may start to fall in love on her first date. She will miss the fun and

experience of growing up. She will miss the companionship and the normal educational process of teen-agers. She will fix upon her life partner before her judgment is well developed, while she is too quickly swayed by sentiment and emotion. She will either marry the fellow now, much too early, or she will continue dating him much too long; and very often this long period of dating may end in frustration and the traditional broken heart, leaving her somewhere on the back corner of the top shelf, where she will have to start her teen-age development at twenty-five or older.

The opposite difficulty is that of the perpetual teenager. She continues flirtations, wide popularity, much dating, parties, and the thrill of new conquests, long past the date when she should start growing up. She must prove to herself that she still has what it takes to attract men, and having attracted them, her interest wanes or her indecision is multiplied, and she wants the proof all over again. Finally, in desperation, she will probably pounce on one of them when he leaves himself open to attack, and marry him because he is the most readily available prospect at the moment. She has not developed her own monogamous attitude. She has not developed complete mutual understanding and love with this particular man. She finds herself in the need of making a sudden transition from juvenile playgirl to serious, mature wife and mother all in one great step, rather than in the normal process of growth.

Play the field heartily and healthily, little girl, while you are popular and young, but play it sensibly and strictly for fun. Play it in accordance with the laws of chastity and decency. Don't let your heart get out of your hands. But don't play it too long. You can't be a child forever. Look over your admirers, pick out the ones you most admire. Pick them not for looks or dancing ability, or popularity as a brilliant quarterback. Pick

them for good, solid character, honesty, decency, and steadiness. Pick out the men whom you think might be good and interesting enough to be companions for life, and then gradually begin to pick out the one—if you are able to interest him.

Q. I am a Catholic boy seventeen years old. I have a problem and would be greatly pleased if you would give me your advice.

I want to go on a date about once every two weeks. I think if I dated a good Catholic girl that I wouldn't be led into sin, but brought closer to God. There are two other reasons why I want to date. One is because I can have something to look forward to. The other reason is because most of the other boys my age do, and I don't want to be different. But my mother thinks I am too young, and she said if I asked any priest, that he would say the same.

A. You are a good boy. Your wishes about dating seem right and reasonable. Your mother may not like me for it, but I must disagree with her. For her consolation, however, not all priests will agree with me either.

Mothers of teen-agers have a problem. They listen to that insistent question: "Mother, may I go on a date?" And most youngsters use your excuse: "All the other kids do." It isn't a very sound argument, really, but it sure puts mamma on the spot. It implies that she is a tyrant, old-fashioned and unreasonable, trying to make social outcasts out of her children and deprive them of normal pleasures.

Mamma's problem is made more complicated because modern teen-age dating is a novelty in the social order, and there are no clearly-defined rules for judging it. Nor can firm rules be made. Customs differ by locality,

and individuals differ even more. It is a local problem and a personal problem.

I am told that in cities children of twelve and thirteen have dates for special events, and by fifteen most of them are dating with some regularity. You live in the country, of course, and there customs are less frantic. But even so, you have reached the acceptable age.

Now do not misunderstand me or mis-quote me. When I say you are old enough to date, I do not mean that you should keep steady company. That is another question entirely, and the rules are different. I think it would be particularly bad for you, who have never dated, to start out going steady—or even dating regularly the same girl. And especially would I warn you about getting romantic and sentimental, and thinking you are falling in love. Have fun, but keep the stars out of your eyes.

Mamma and papa have a right and duty to regulate and supervise your dating. But if they are to do so, they must first understand it. Whether they like it or not, they must recognize it as a social fact. Simply forbidding does more harm than good. Better to encourage wisely—to know the date and know her family—to be friends with her and invite confidence from your boy—to suggest amusements and provide entertainment. When, where and whom your boy dates will depend very much on your attitude and interest.

Modern educators and advice-givers think that early dating is a good thing—and many Catholic authorities agree with them, as long as the dating is strictly for companionship, for a good time, for prestige and for parties—as long as the youngsters do not “go steady” or become emotionally involved.

From my own reading and observance, I am convinced that dating which begins reasonably early and is restricted, at first, to big social events or to very casual

meetings, has an excellent influence on the development of personality and character. It gives poise and confidence and social ease. It reduces emotional excitement in meeting and associating with the opposite sex, and helps to adjust to happy, normal relationships. It develops the ability to judge and evaluate opposite numbers, and reduces the romanticism and idealization which make early love so blind. And finally it widens acquaintance, so that in due time serious choices and relationships may develop more wisely.

Adolescence is the normal time for boys to get interested in girls and girls in boys. This normal trend should be expected, understood, encouraged and guided.

Q. Is it a serious sin for a young woman to stand before a mirror and fix herself up before she goes to a party?

A. If she doesn't, she will probably look like sin. The sin of vanity might be involved in excessive anxiety to look attractive. Simple vanity could hardly be a serious sin.

Q. Is it a sin on the girl's part if a boy gets passionate while kissing her?

A. It is if she knows his state and intentions and lets him keep kissing her—a mortal sin. And if he didn't get passionate while kissing her, she had better never see him again. . . . Which brings up the question, why does she let him kiss her?

This kissing question is the big problem of modern youth. Not that modern youth is different. A kiss does much the same for Joe and Jane as it did for grandpa and grandma. But customs have changed and Joe and

Jane have more opportunity for uninterrupted petting and pawing. And attitudes have changed, so that these youngsters find things socially quite acceptable which would have fairly shocked the oldsters.

What is right about it all? The rules are fairly clear, but the application of them is not easy. Not easy for the realistic moralist. Less easy for the ardent youth. I just read a pamphlet which makes it all neat, black and white, and I thought that the view must be wonderful from that ivory tower. It tells you girls never to kiss any boy until you are engaged to him, and then to do it briefly, discreetly, and with maidenly restraint. I cannot question the author's doctrine or idealism, but I wonder about his psychology.

One of the difficulties is that practice has fouled up the rules, which seem to have become theories for moralists to juggle in their musings, but not practical for teen-agers. Passion seems always a new discovery of each generation. Old fashioned parents knew so little about it that it is strange their children were even begotten.

Actually passion remains the same and the rules do not change. But even to optimistic observers today, the Sixth Commandment seems to be more honored in the breach than in the observance. But the rule is there, strict, harsh, and clear: It is a mortal sin for unmarried people to seek deliberate sexual pleasure, either partial or complete.

Confusion often arises in conscientious souls in determining what is sexual pleasure. There is a sensual pleasure closely akin to it which may be legitimate, though often dangerous. Probably modern youth's fault is going in too much for the sensual without realizing that it rapidly becomes sexual.

When two youngsters, out on a date, park their car and set out to kiss and pet, let us not mince words; the pleasure they seek is sexual and sinful. Of course they

have no intention of going too far, but they want to get all the pleasure they can up to that receding danger point. And morally they are already going much too far.

But what about the affectionate little kiss of friendship? To the eternal gratification of boys, girls are just too blamed affectionate and motherly and sentimental. They simply feel warmly loved and wanted while the boy gets other potent thrills. If the girl realizes the provocation she is giving him—as you do—she is guilty of cooperating in his sin.

What is a poor girl to do these days? If she pets, she sins. If she doesn't, she fears that horrible female oblivion: no dates. My pamphlet makes it all very clear. The worthy boy soon becomes disgusted and disillusioned with the girl who gives him her kisses; and goes back in bright idealism to make a bride of the one who stood him off with a chaste smile. Her kiss, when she does give it, is a sacred symbol of her refined and faithful love—and you can't help wondering if the bright idealist finds it quite worth taking when he gets it. A kiss is a sacred symbol, certainly. But a symbol of both love and lust. And between boy and girl it seldom symbolizes the one without intimating the other.

The only answer I can give is that a woman's attraction is still her total personality, her ability to lead a man on without gratifying and tempting. It is maddening, maybe, but often matrimonial. And in this her sexual attraction is only one factor—the most powerful, maybe, but not unique. She interests him by being interested in him, and by being interesting to him. She intrigues him with her beauty and neatness, her intelligence, wit and cleverness. She lulls him with her capability and sympathy. She is loving—and latent with unrevealed prospects. She's an all-around girl; and she keeps him around, if she wants him. She doesn't have to hold him tightly. He just sticks. (Yes, from up here the view is wonderful.)

Q. You answered my question about my boy-friend's becoming passionate while kissing me, but I still have a problem. What am I to do? Should I quit seeing him entirely?

A. No general answer can be given. The answer must be tailored to fit each individual case. If you are not particularly interested in this boy-friend—if you are not apt to fall in love with him—if he is not the one you think you might seriously want as your future husband, and he persists in trying to use you as a means of arousing his passions, then you should give him the brush-off politely. If prospects are much more serious and promising—if you think he might be just the one, then you should try to make him behave. You probably can, if you will. But if he continues to get out of hand, then the problem needs a re-think.

If you are already in love, or engaged—which does not seem to be your case—then different problems arise. Vigilance, restraint and careful modesty are needed to control the situation, to permit love's proper expression and growth while keeping passion under control.

Let these principles guide you: (1) You must not seek sexual thrills or satisfaction with your boy-friend or fiance. That is a serious sin. (2) There is no company-keeping without some danger to chastity. But the more serious that danger becomes, the more serious must be your reason for continuing the company-keeping. You may not encounter serious dangers to chastity, just for the sake of a casual date or a pleasant friendship. You may face such serious dangers, with proper precautions, for real love and future marriage. (3) You are not directly responsible for your boy-friend's attitude and motives; but charity forbids you to give him scandal or to offer him enticingly the occasion for sin.

Q. What do you think of girls who go with boys at a young age and kiss? Is it a sin?

A. Customs of modern youngsters are mysteries to me. For that matter the youngsters themselves are mysterious. Modern girls of 14 show such a mixture of maturity and childishness, of knowledge and simplicity, of frankness and artfulness, of sweetness and orneriness that you must love them happily while you swear quietly at them in desperation. And boys of a similar age would be better if they just skipped a few years.

Dating, I am told, is a modern phenomenon by which boy meets girl, and vice versa—with little emphasis, we hope, on the vice. It is preliminary to company-keeping, which in turn leads to going steady; and from there on I get really mixed up—and often they do too—in a succession of pins, class rings, diamond rings, and plain gold bands.

Since dating, in the modern sense, is a new custom, it has few established social standards to guide it. Social patterns and controls do not become well defined in a generation or two, especially when trends are confused by such novelties as movies, parked cars, TV; jazz, swing, and be-bop; experiments in prohibition; uncertain habits of eating, drinking, and home-living; and a couple of world wars.

Consequently, there seems to be much disagreement between youngsters and their parents, between moralists and sociologists, between mamma and grandma, as to the advisable age, frequency, and manner of dating. However, though inveterate traditionalists may shake their heads in doubt and clack their tongues in criticism, our modern custom definitely does sanction early dating, though there may remain variations on the manner and frequency of that dating.

Sociologists tell us, with all the familiar modern words,

that early dating accustoms young people easily to each other's company, overcomes hampering shyness and bashfulness, aids proper social adjustment and personality development, gives poise and balance, reduces the emotional excitement of meeting and associating with the opposite sex, broadens experience, gives prestige and a social standing, with confidence and a sense of security, provides a wider acquaintance from which to choose friends and, ultimately, a mate for life.

To this list parents will certainly add that early dating creates some intense problems in the home, causes worries to mom and dad, and provides a few precocious problems for the youngsters themselves. Moralists are sure to point out the dangers and temptations, and their warnings should not go unheard, because passions are real and youthful control lacks prudence and experience. And all of us may wonder if too much early dating does not contribute to the nervous restlessness, the insatiable uncertainty which we sense in adolescents. Blame it not too much though; they could well absorb profusely from our own frantic flounderings.

As I understand it, this dating business (for novice teen-agers) is supposed to be something quite different from going steady. Dates are for fun and for parties, for dances and movies and picnics and games. There is not supposed to be much of love or seriousness in them. You play the field and take your chances, make your conquests, or sit dolefully by the telephone. You endure the drips and the dopes, and try to avoid the squares; and you find some smooth and terrific.

Now what about that kissing business? Certainly early dating should be free of necking, to say nothing of serious petting, which is practically immoral for anyone this side of marriage. Kissing customs vary, as do the kisses themselves. But in any clime, or cling, serious intense kisses are a preparation for something else, which you

kids should not be preparing for until several years hence. Things prepared too early can become stale, or overdone, or spoiled.

Girls say that the boys expect them to kiss; and boys say that the girls expect them to demand it. And neither wants to be found wanting in such important social accomplishments, though both would rather not be bothered—right at first, anyway. And when the kiss is taken or given, naturally no respectable adolescent wants the manner of it to betray childish inexperience or timidity. And the movies have shown them how.

My own opinion: early dating is a social fact; let's accept it. It has its dangers and problems, but it also has its blessings. Rather than wasting our time in stubborn opposition to it, we should try to solve its problems and lessen its dangers, try to regulate it, define its manners and stabilize its customs.

My own advice to my questioner, a girl of very young age, who never expected that she would stir up such a long column by her innocent question: go out on dates, but in the beginning make them rare and special—like a prom or a big party—or make them casual and fun—a coke or a game—and play the field, with care. Talk your dates over with your parents, before and after; they are awfully old, but they understand more than you think, and they love you and want you to be happy. And when it comes to kisses, save them. As a moralist I would find it hard to justify them now; they might well be a sin, and may be more of a sin than you think. Later they will have more meaning, be worth more, and have reason to justify them and keep them from being sins.

Will you be less popular with the boys? I think not. You need not be a prude, or carry on a campaign. Tease them, keep them hopeful, but make them miss . . . and wait.

Q. Several of my friends were talking and this question came up: When a boy and girl go out together and the boy does not respect the girl but tries to do the girl wrong and commit sin with her, who is committing sin if the girl does not consent willingly? Some of the folks think that it is not a sin if nothing happens.

A. If a girl goes out with a boy in good faith, believing that he is a decent young man, and then he tries to force his attentions upon her and to lead her into sin, she finds herself in great danger, but is not guilty of sin unless she willingly consents to his immoral approaches, or to the suggestive thoughts, desires, or sensations which may be aroused within herself. Of course she must ward him off, discourage him, show her disapproval and unwillingness, resist him—even walk home if necessary.

All that is true for the first date which they have. If she goes out with him a second time, she is not nearly so innocent. She knows what she is getting into. She places herself in danger willingly. She is guilty of sin before they even go out together. Her reluctance is more apparent than sincere.

Q. To end a discussion would you please give your opinion of the proper time a girl out of high school (18 or 19 years of age) should be home from an ordinary date.

A. Prudence warns me to stay out of this controversy. So much depends on custom, circumstances and personalities.

The young girl should definitely take into consideration:

1. The wishes and advice of her parents.

2. The routine of her home and the convenience of her family.

3. The character, intent, and conduct of the young man.

4. The dangers of sin or scandal.

5. Her personal reputation.

6. Her duties of the next day; her health and disposition; her need of sleep.

7. The time requirements of the party or entertainment offered.

8. The careful avoidance of dangerous loitering in lanes or limousines.

Eight P.M. is too late if any portion of the time was used for sinful purpose. Two A.M. might be occasionally quite proper if all circumstances justified it.

Q. A young non-Catholic girl is legally married and divorced. Later she becomes a Catholic, fully understanding that she may never be able to marry again. Is she now permitted to go out on dates with single men? She is waiting for the Church to investigate the validity of her first marriage.

A. Married women may not have dates with single men. This girl is married. She must behave as a married person should. If she can't have dates with her own husband, let her stay home with her books and canary—or her television set—or let her go to the show with her girl friends.

Q. If a divorced man asks me for a date, should I tell him, in refusing him, the reason for my refusal?

A. I think it would be best to do so. Do not be offensive, but tell him kindly—and tell him firmly.

Morally speaking he has insulted you by asking for the date. But he probably intended no insult. So you need not be offended.

Telling him the reason for your refusal will usually be the most charitable way of dealing with him. It is better than making him think you don't like him personally. It will also remind him of his position as a married man.

Q. Should a Protestant girl date a Catholic boy and vice versa?

A. If they are wise and wish to avoid the problems of mixed marriage, they will avoid the early dates and company-keeping. Usually these are easy to avoid, but as friendly attachment develops into love, separation becomes increasingly difficult. Finally love will push them to the point where problems and dangers will have little meaning in the face of emotion. They will answer all objections, even their own, by the supreme argument: "But we are in love."

If my answer were directed to the Catholic, I might remind him of the moral obligation of avoiding such dating. I would not be the storming tyrant who declares that every such date is a mortal sin, or even a venial sin. But if he would listen, I would review briefly with him the obligation of avoiding the occasion of sin—and dating a non-Catholic is just that: a possible occasion of various sins. Good, careful, honest thought must weigh the dangers and the reasons.

Q. I have been dating a person who was baptized in the Catholic Church, received his First Holy Communion, and then later quit the Church. He married a Prot-

estant outside the Church. I thought he was separated from her, but now I find that he is still living with her. I am wondering how I should confess it? Must I stop seeing him?

A. This man is not validly married, of course. But you had better stop dating him or you may find yourself a corpse. Even if you don't stop a slug, your reputation will be all messed up. And even if you got this man, what would you have but trouble? If he is now unfaithful to the first woman, he will probably be unfaithful to the second also.

Your manner of confessing depends upon the sins of which you have been guilty. I judge that you have done nothing contrary to chastity. So there may be nothing really serious to confess. Just stay away from him.

Chapter 3: KEEPING COMPANY

Difference in age—The age to begin—Sin to keep company with a non-Catholic?—Parental objections—Getting him interested—Playing a dangerous game—Is it wise to change?—The big break—With a divorced man—Is it a sin?—The ex-seminarian—Must a kiss be confessed? — French-kissing — Young couple in love—Sufficient reason.

Q. I am in love with a man 25 years my senior. I am assured that he loves me, too, but my parents object. I am in my early twenties. Don't tell me to forget him, as this is not an infatuation; it has endured several years. It is love beyond the ordinary, and I doubt that I could be happy with anyone my own age after being with him.

A. Being a Question Box editor has its thrills. Opening the morning mail becomes exciting. You can never tell what people will ask.

In answering your question, I am inclined to address you as "my dear little girl," but then I wonder if it might not be more appropriate to call you "my crazy mixed-up kid." When we Catholics speak of mixed marriage, we usually refer to difference of religion. But great difference of age makes a mixed marriage, and you have to be a bit mixed up already to want to get mixed up in one.

Great differences of religion, age, size, nationality, wealth, interests, education, or social position present special problems in marriage; and just ordinary normal marriage usually has enough problems of its own.

Minor age differences are negligible. It is quite the usual thing for the husband to be three or four years older than the wife, and differences up to ten years or so might be encountered without much fear. But 25 years is a quarter of a century. Where were you while he was flirting with the flappers of the 20's? Why didn't one of them nab him? How old will you be when he becomes a senile old codger in his 70's? Who will do the bunny-hop with you then?

I think you need to psychoanalyze yourself a bit. Ask yourself some blunt questions, and give yourself plain, honest answers. Just why do you want to marry this old gentleman? Are your reasons emotional or economic? Or both? Are you looking for social position? Are you, maybe, infatuated with the thrill of conquest, where assorted others failed? What part does flattery play; he has known many women, of two generations; but he has chosen you. Do you have any measure of pity for the poor old fellow? Is there an element of gratitude mixed in your emotions? Do you possibly have a "parent attachment" to him? Is he a sort of parent substitute? How much of "hero worship" enters the picture? How much "rationalizing" have you done, emphasizing to yourself the reasons why a husband should be older than the wife?

Then you might psychoanalyze him a little. Why does he want to marry you? Of course, you are young and beautiful and lively and desirable. He couldn't help loving you. But why does he want to marry you? I take it that he is not just a silly old fool who has an emotional fixation for teen-agers. He could hardly have reached that senile regression in which he seeks to regain his

own lost youth and to re-live his early loves. If he were these things, would you love him so much? Ask yourself seriously, anyway; such things are entirely possible. Is he, maybe, moved by flattery? Your choice of him assures him of virility and strength and mature attractiveness. He is no callow youth; but his middle-aged manliness attracts, wins, and holds. It's a delightful illusion. And finally, ask yourself: Why did he not get married before? Is there something wrong with him? Was he not desirable? What kind of bachelor life has he led? (In all this I am presuming that he is eligible to marry—and also that he is not a widower.)

And then having studied yourself and him, you should look into the future discerningly. What problems are you likely to face? Parental opposition you have indicated. Public opinion will be critical and comments stinging. Can you take it? Who will be your friends and companions? Veterans of the first world war, or those of the Korean conflict? Dowdy bridge-club dowagers, or your recent college classmates? What is common in your tastes and interests? What will be your recreation? Dancing will tax his heart; you will find dominoes dull. Can you enjoy acting as old as he? Can he stand being as young as you?

He will probably patronize you lovingly. In many ways you will be a daughter instead of a wife. He will hardly trust a mere child like you to manage the household, or make decisions. And he might get impatient of your youthful vagaries and inexperience. You can never become a full partner with him in all of his life; half of it was lived before you were born. Even the more intimate phases of your life together may be unsatisfactory. Physical and emotional adjustments could be a problem. Maybe now you want to escape some of the physical realities of marriage. How will you feel about senile ineffectiveness fifteen years from now?

Women live longer than men, you know. So prospects are that after years of caring for a grumpy old man, you will end up a youthful widow. Too young to be content with a dog and a parrot; too old to start a new life. And in case there should be any children, how will you provide for their care?

To sum it up: We have only one life to live; he has already lived most of his.

Q. What is the proper age for a girl to keep company with a young man?

A. I would prefer to let your mother answer that question. No general rule can apply to everyone. But moral issues aside, the girl who starts keeping steady company too early is missing the best fun of her youth. You might call it the fun of "playing the field," of enjoying the gang, and the thrill of that special date for a party or dance.

I'm antiquated, of course, just like your parents, but I advise no steady company-keeping until after high school. Occasional dates, yes, gallant escorts for the big events or the movies. But no love affair. Your life will be much happier and less complicated. Your development will be more normal, and your ultimate choice of a steady boy-friend will be more judicious. Incidentally, your school grades will be better, you will get more sleep at night, your disposition will be more agreeable, and you will have much less trouble at home.

Q. In a sermon, our priest said that it is a sin for anyone to keep company with a non-Catholic. Isn't he too strong in this statement?

A. He probably meant to say that it is an **occasion of sin**. It is not a sin in itself, but it may well lead to sin—even to a lifetime of sin.

You and I know dozens of good Catholics who are keeping company with non-Catholics. Their parents are nervous about it and their pastor is worried. What will be the result? But no one believes that they are committing serious sin. They go regularly to confession and Communion. How could they do that if they were committing sin, and intending to go right on committing it? Their confessor could not grant them absolution. The pastor might even have to deny them Communion publicly—after all, they would be public sinners.

How are we going to judge the morality of a situation of this kind? It is not bad in itself. You are simply keeping pleasant, friendly, loving company with a nice decent person. It is not even an occasion of present sin. All its dangers are in the future. But we know that those dangers are very real, and they must be foreseen and evaluated now—in the beginning. Because when the dangers become present, you will not be in condition to deal with them reasonably. You will be in love. That means you will be largely incompetent. Your judgment will be confused and prejudiced; and your will will have the rigidity of a sponge.

The dangers are important. The faith, morality, peace and happiness of yourself and your future children are all at stake. What are the chances of attempted marriage outside the Church? Of a mixed-marriage? Of quarrels about religion? Of birth-control problems? Of divorce? These dangers and many others are always present when people of different religions keep company.

We must try to evaluate all these dangerous factors, on one hand, and then compare them with the reasons which urge us to go on keeping company with this person. We like her; she is beautiful; she has a splendid

character, a loving disposition, earns a good salary, is kind to dumb creatures, etc. She is by far the best prospect we ever had, maybe the only one, maybe the last one we can hope for. She is really interested in the Church, and will probably be a convert (don't count too much on this prospect). My parents like her. Her father is my boss. She can cook.

Now if you are honest and make a sensible, fair comparison of dangers and advantages, seeking help and advice when in doubt, and if you find that the certain advantages outweigh all probable dangers, then you are **morally right** in your company-keeping. If the dangers are really great and probable, and your only reasons for running around with the girl are her abilities to dance, drink and neck, then you are **morally wrong** in company-keeping. You are asking for trouble; and you will probably whine plenty, and blame the Church when you get it.

Q. Isn't it wrong for parents to object to their daughter's keeping company with a non-Catholic when he has the intention of becoming a Catholic? My parents insist that I keep company with a Catholic boy whom I know too well to care for.

A. Parents are definitely right in objecting to dangerous friendships for their children. The Church forbids marriage to non-Catholics. Company-keeping prepares the way for these forbidden marriages.

If your young man is sincere, let him give proof of his good intentions by taking instructions NOW. Otherwise you should follow your parents' advice. Easily expressed intentions for the future are not enough. Hell awaits their failure—and sometimes prompts their deception.

Of course no wise parents will insist that their daughter keep company with some particular person. It is probably the surest way of making her dislike him.

Q. I am keeping company with a non-Catholic boy. How shall I go about getting him interested in the Church?

A. Before answering your question I would remind you that you are playing a dangerous game. Have you carefully weighed all the problems? Have you talked the matter over with your parents and your pastor?

The best thing would be for you to discontinue this friendship before you fall in love and lose your good sense in the flame of your own heart. But that is not answering your question. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Show him by your actions and conversation what religion means in your life.

2. Talk about your Church, the religion of your parents, family prayers, your pastor, the Sisters who taught you in school, something you heard in the sermon last Sunday, someone you saw at Mass, that Catholic book you read, the activities of your sodality, or the St. Ambrose football team. Let one thing lead naturally to another. If you get no interested response, be careful! He is probably fighting shy of your important subject.

3. Invite him to go to church with you—to that novena you regularly attend, to Mass, or a mission. Show him your rosary, your medals, your missal.

4. Invite him to a church party or picnic.

5. Have him meet your good Catholic friends. Join them for your fun and companionship.

6. Take him to your home. Let him see what a good Catholic family is like. Point out the family crucifix

and bible. Let him join in prayers before and after meals.

7. Try to have him meet your favorite priest or Sister.

8. Suggest that he read a book.

9. If he gets serious about love, engagements, and stuff, you should get serious too about the dangers and problems of mixed marriage, the law of your Church which forbids such marriages, your unwillingness to marry a non-Catholic, etc.

10. Before you agree to an engagement, make him agree to some instructions or inquiry into the teachings of the Church.

What you do, do quickly. Face the problem frankly. Don't let your friendship become a habit and grow into love while you dilly-dally on the subject of religion.

Any woman who marries a man to reform him is a fool. A woman who marries a man to convert him is a fool's apprentice. And the man who cuts himself in on either deal is fairly fatuous himself.

Q. In a recent issue of "The Catholic Messenger" you say a Catholic girl going with a non-Catholic boy is "playing a dangerous game." A number of times before I have noticed you imply that it is practically a sin for a Catholic to go with a non-Catholic. I don't quite see why it is. I myself am a converted Catholic. I married a Catholic man. In the class I was confirmed with there were 47 adults. Except for four of these adults, all were becoming Catholics because they married Catholics. As I see it, instead of "playing a dangerous game" when these Catholics kept company with Protestants—or non-Catholics—they were actually bringing new members into the Church. Isn't that important?

A. A game may still be dangerous even when a fair percentage win at it. The stakes are high. When you win, you gain happiness on earth and glory in heaven. You help save another soul—the soul of the one you love most. But when you lose, you may lose faith and happiness and your own soul, and possibly the souls of many other people. In your confirmation class were the ones who won. There are plenty who lose. Not much is heard of them except in saddened families, harassed rectories, and the divorce courts.

We all know many like you who have received God's grace and faith through the love and example of a good Catholic man—or woman. That's one reason the Church grants dispensations. Thank God that you won. Pray for those who lose.

Q. Is it wise to change your religion for someone so that you can marry them or shouldn't you change for this reason?

A. It is apparent from your questions that you are a non-Catholic, interested in the problems of marriage to a Catholic. The only sound motive for changing your religion is sincere belief and conviction. You should never change for any other motive. If you are actually contemplating marriage to a Catholic, you may be impelled by that motive to study the religion, take instructions and try to understand it fully. Maybe in the course of these instructions you will come to believe in the Church. That often happens. If your belief becomes honest and firm, you should then become a Catholic.

Q. My boy friend is a Lutheran. He recently consented to take a course of instructions, but after only two in-

structions he was convinced that he could never be a Catholic and refused to take any more. He has many false ideas about Catholics. But he has fine qualities and similar interests, and we have gone together a couple of years. I continue to pray for his conversion, but we are not seeing one another. I think a lot of him and know we could be happily married if it were not for conflicting religions. Shall I just leave things as they are, or shall I tell him about all the Masses, Communions, novenas and prayers that I am still saying for his conversion?

A. Leave things as they are. Looking him up to tell him might well be an excuse to start seeing him again. I am sure you might be happy together if it were not for the difference of religion. But the difference is there; it is real, and big.

You have shown courage; don't spoil it all by weakening and going back to him. I am sure that you will be rewarded with greater happiness in return for the sacrifice you have made.

You have probably read in the papers recently about the conference of Missouri Synod Lutherans, held in Houston, Texas, which strongly condemned the marriage of Lutherans to Catholics. More power to them. We hope they succeed in keeping every living Lutheran from marrying Catholics. They don't want the unborn children of Lutherans condemned to "the soul-destroying religion of the anti-Christ" (meaning: the soul-saving religion of Christ). We don't want the unborn children of Catholics subjected to the hatreds and heresies of Lutheranism. So there.

We can heartily agree with one of their statements; I quote: "We ought to prepare our young people. If our members acknowledge the love of Jesus Christ most of

all, then our answer is they must submit all other love to that.”

You have submitted your human love to your greater love for Jesus Christ. He will love you greatly in return.

Q. I know a young Catholic woman who is keeping company with a divorced man. Isn't this a sin?

A. It certainly is unless the Church has investigated the young man's previous marriage and found him free to marry. Why is it a sin? First of all, it is a scandal and bad example. Second, it is flagrant flirting with the occasions of sin. It can only lead to adultery, a mock marriage, illegitimate children and loss of faith.

It is difficult for Catholics to keep their ideas straight, living as we do in the midst of a growing paganism. Civil divorce does nothing to a marriage. Keeping company with a divorced man is a nice way of philandering with a married man. Do you think it is a sin for a young Catholic woman to run around with another woman's husband? That's what a divorced man is—another woman's husband, until death.

Q. A Catholic woman has been granted a divorce and seems to think that this entitles her to go with other men and even grant them certain liberties. I firmly believe that her divorce entitles her only to live apart from her former husband. Your answer will be greatly appreciated.

A. A divorced woman has no more right to keep company with other men than has a woman living with her husband. Any “liberties” she allows are adulterous, at least in desire, intent, or tendency. Her company-keep-

ing is a fertile source of scandal, and a danger to any decent unmarried men she may entrap.

Q. Is it not sinful to keep steady company with a divorced person, and must this not be confessed, and the practice stopped before one can receive the Sacraments?

A. That is exactly what my moral book says—exactly what the Church teaches.

Lest anyone think that I am stating personal opinion, or am too strict, let me quote from the law of one of our neighboring dioceses:

“Pastors will do everything in their power to prevent Catholics from keeping company with divorced persons. Pastors will inform their flocks that persons who are guilty of such continued and intimate company-keeping are living in a proximate occasion of mortal sin, are giving grave scandal, and cannot be absolved in confession as long as they persist in such an attitude of mind and heart.”

Q. If a young man goes to study with the intention of becoming a priest, and then he realizes that this is not his vocation, when he returns and keeps company with a Catholic girl, have her parents the right to object?

The same with a young girl that leaves to enter the convent to become a Sister, and then returns home, and after a while a certain young man starts to keep company with her; but his parents object and don't want their son to keep company with this young lady or get married to her. Is it right, in the Catholic religion, to interfere, if both are good Catholics?

A. In both cases the parents are entirely wrong in their objections. A young girl would be very fortunate in

getting the average ex-seminarian as a prospective husband. He is serious and has high ideals and strong religious principles. He has received a good education and careful spiritual training. He has learned to know himself and has striven to control himself; and he has had the courage to make a critical decision.

A young man is equally fortunate in finding for a friend and fiancée a young girl of high ideals and aspirations, religious fervor and sensitive morality. These are usually the characteristics of a girl who aspires to the religious life. The ardent love and spirit of sacrifice which moved her to serve God by sacred vows can become a boon of happiness to her husband and family. The spiritual training of the novitiate should be a better preparation for marriage than the character development received by her girl friends in the tavern and dance-hall—or the parked convertible.

Some may object that the young man or woman who quits the seminary or convent shows signs of weakness, vacillation, and uncertainty of purpose. In rare cases that might be true. And some there are who leave by request rather than choice. They get the boot. But usually the ex-seminarian or ex-novice has had the courage to look at the stars, aspire to them, and set out towards them. Then having found themselves on a road too steep and rough for them, they have had the courage to turn back in time—facing criticism and ridicule from those who never had the vision or the courage to try the steep road at all—those who never even saw the stars.

The Church wants seminarians and novices to be entirely free. She doesn't want any pressure put on them from public opinion or parental preference. Their choice is solemn, sacred and eternal. She wants them to be able to return to lay life without penalty. She doesn't want them shunned or banned or badgered. The old-wives' superstitions about the "spoilt priest" and the

negated nun are foreign, fanatical and mediaeval. Let God's children be free.

Q. Our pastor told us that "necking" is a grievous sin, and that even a small good-night kiss between teenagers of the opposite sex is a matter of confession. Would you please explain IF and WHY we are obliged to confess this, providing no sin is committed and neither is passionately aroused.

A. The letter which accompanies this question shows that it is from a group of high school students who are very sincere in wanting to know what is right in this matter.

The first thing we will have to do is consult our juvenile dictionary. What do you mean by "necking"? I presume that it is not the same as "petting." A non-Catholic book which I have defines petting as: "physical contact for pleasure which is an end in itself, arising from sexual desire, with sexual stimulation and response . . . stirring up sexual-colored emotions . . . producing tension, etc." There is no question about a thing like that; you know as well as I do that it is a mortal sin.

My informants tell me that necking is a much less intense and purposeful activity. It involves a certain amount of close and pleasant contact; it could be a proper display of affection, a legitimate invitation to love; its thrill might be restricted to that excitement and exhilaration which makes the pulse rapid and quickens respiration, but is not precisely sexual. We might call it sensual; it is not necessarily sinful. But it naturally leads to the sexual, sometimes quickly. So it is a dangerous activity; maybe that is part of the thrill of it. It is strongly counter-indicated for teen-agers.

To judge the morality of necking, we would have to know (1) what is done; (2) why it is done—what the intentions are; (3) what the emotional and volitional results are for the individual; (4) what the dangers are; and (5) how good the reasons are.

The detailed discussion of all those factors would exceed the range of this column, but I think we can sum it up for most of you high school teen-agers. Necking is out, at least when it is purposeful, planned, and prolonged. In this case your pastor is right about it; even if it is not directly sexual, it creates dangers which are too great for the reasons justifying them. If it is casual, infrequent, playful or passingly affectionate, there is probably no harm done.

The freedoms of modern youth are more than four. One of them is freedom of physical contact. Custom sanctions a measure of it; morality cannot always approve what custom sanctions. Freedom of this kind can easily become license. The young people of today have problems resulting from this freedom, problems of judgment and self-control. They must draw a line, and hold that line; and it is not necessarily the arbitrary line moralists might envisage. In other words it is hard for parents or pastor to lay down firm general rules for every action or circumstance. But they do know the principles, and you do well to listen to them in forming your own judgments, because you can easily fool yourself, and convince yourself that the thing you want very much to do is right.

Regarding kissing—we have to face it—the old trick has new meanings, less profound and significant. Oldsters tell us—and we listen a bit skeptically—that it used to come late in courtship, was expressive of deep affection based on love, and was a firm invitation and pledge that love should grow. It was seldom given—they say—except to the man you intended to marry (men were not

so restricted, it seems). It was a beautiful symbol, with sacred significance. If there was fire in it, the flames were sanctifying, because its ardor reflected love divine.

The modern kiss is a nice conventional way of saying: "Good night, big boy, it's been nice knowing you." It still has significance; it means: "We had a pleasant evening, and you are not entirely repulsive." It is still a line crossed; but the line is imaginary, and the rule is that each one should use his own imagination as to where it is drawn and what is beyond. It may be a frank invitation; it may mean simply: Good night.

I have asked some of my best young people, religious and conscientious, and they tell me they see nothing wrong in a simple good-night kiss. Some of them, approaching twenty, think that it is out of place for "teen-agers"—that means under seventeen, by their estimates.

I am not suggesting that we abdicate our position as moralists to even the most honest teen-agers. But if we are to help them with their problems, we must consult them. We know the principles; they know the facts. Practical morality is the application of principles to the facts. If we mis-judge the facts, our moral decision may be just as wrong as if we ignore the principles.

Regarding that "small good-night kiss between teen-agers," I would say this: as long as it remains a small one, modest and friendly, is not too frequently repeated, does not arouse the passions of either party, or occasion serious danger of doing so, it is not a sin, or at least, not so serious that you are required to mention it in confession.

However, kissing does become sinful when passion takes over, and a kiss is one of nature's ways of arousing the passions. It can readily expose you to dangers. You have to have good reasons to encounter those dangers; and high school dates hardly provide those reasons.

That is why my serious college students think the kiss is not called for in teen-age dating.

Beware of the kissing habit. Small good-night kisses don't get smaller; and they may soon mean more than good-night.

Girls should be the arbiters in the kissing game. Each one has the right to decide who may kiss her and who may not. She should never kiss a boy she doesn't really want to kiss. And she would do well to ask herself why she wants to kiss him. No girl should think herself a prude if she refuses a good-night kiss. And most boys will not think her so, if she is simply frank and firm and good natured about it. The teen-age boy has to display his manliness; he must try to get that good-night kiss; sometimes he is a bit relieved if he fails, but is flattered.

Girls sometimes fear that they will be unpopular and not get dates if they refuse to kiss. Are they so unattractive that their kiss must be a come-on? What about their face and figure, their brain and wit and solid goodness, their clothes and hair and Daddy's car? Sex may be the underlying basis of her attraction to boys, but she need not throw it out boldly as bait.

Q. Is French-kissing a sin? When does it become a sin? Is it seriously wrong? I have always been under the impression that it was a mortal sin.

A. Just remain under that impression. It is a mortal sin—unless it is done by husband and wife. It is a sin from the beginning. It has only one purpose: to arouse sexual feelings. It is not a display of affection, not an appropriate means of showing and attracting love. Its purpose is venereal. When any act is done, outside of marriage, for the purpose of obtaining sexual pleasure, that act

is a mortal sin from the beginning, however slight it might be in itself. It is a sin against the virtue of chastity; and all deliberate sins against chastity are mortal sins.

In giving this answer I am presuming that by "French-kissing" you mean kissing in the manner of the doves—which our moral books refer to as the columbine kiss. My dictionary gives 179 combinations using "French" as an adjective. It includes "French leave," "French seam," and "French fried potatoes," but it does not mention a French kiss. I doubt that the French would claim it. Their typical kiss is the accolade; and there is nothing very sensual about that.

Q. I would like to know what a young couple in love should do if they cannot kiss and embrace without feeling some sexual feeling and gratification. They are planning on being married, but marriage is impossible right away. Is it a sin if they have sexual feelings while kissing and embracing?

A. These young people who are honestly in love and plan to be married may very properly express their love with a kiss and an embrace. If they are normal young people, this expression of love is going to arouse sensual pleasure and definite sexual movements. These they must not seek, or voluntarily accept, enjoy, or encourage. They should ignore them, as much as possible.

The principal distinction between this type of kiss and the "French kiss" discussed above, lies in the motive. You are not looking for a sexual thrill; you are not trying to anticipate 50% of the privileges and joys of marriage; you are not trying to see how far you can go without going too far. You honestly love this guy, and you want him to know it; and you want to en-

courage his love for you, and keep him anxious to marry you. That is all very good. Presumably his intentions are similar. He is not trying to make you half his wife already. He is not trying to entice you into petting parties to get a thrill. His hands behave themselves, or are easily put in their place. His kisses are warm, and fervent, and thrilling; but not desperately seeking and demanding.

In these circumstances you are dealing with the virtue of modesty—that virtue which protects chastity. Modesty is a flexible virtue. For good reason it can be pushed a long way without sin. Against it there may be slight sins. Only when immodesty seriously and unreasonably endangers chastity is it a grave sin.

Chastity is uncompromising. No sin against it is venial. If you intend sexual pleasure, you are guilty of mortal sin from the beginning. If you consent to sexual pleasure, accept and enjoy it, you are guilty of mortal sin. But no temptation is a sin; though dallying with temptation may be.

So let modesty protect you. Be sure that your intentions are right. Express your love with fervor and sincerity; accept his love with confidence. But don't let your expressions of love get out of hand; don't let your feelings carry you into consent to sexual pleasure. Don't let your kisses last too long. Let him make you his pet, but don't let his petting become a party.

Q. In a recent answer you stated that a divorcee must "like any other married woman, avoid intimate company of other men." Do you mean to imply that such intimate company is O.K. for the unmarried?

A. That is exactly what I meant. Of course I used the word intimate in its literal sense, not as a euphemism

for illicit sexual intercourse. My dictionary says that such intimate company is "close, personal, private, and familiar." Such company with men is wrong for the married woman or the divorcee. It may be perfectly good and proper for the unmarried couple.

Intimate relations, in the **illicit** sexual sense, are a mortal sin for anyone, whether single, married or divorced. The only difference is that the divorcee commits two mortal sins: one against justice; the other against chastity. Two unmarried people sin only against chastity.

As far as the virtue of chastity is concerned, there is no essential difference between the divorcee and the virgin. Any direct deliberate seeking of sexual pleasure outside of marriage is a mortal sin, whether it be done by thought, desire, solitary sensation, or intimate contact.

But close, personal, private, and familiar company-keeping is not necessarily concerned with the virtue of chastity. It should be governed by the virtue of modesty. The divorcee who keeps company with a man is guilty of serious sin against the virtue of modesty, even if her relations with him remain perfectly chaste. Two youngsters in love commit no sin at all by the same chaste, but intimate company-keeping.

A divorced woman is a married woman. Her divorce gives her no privilege. She must conduct herself like any other married woman in her relations with men. She may not maintain friendships which would be properly distasteful to her husband if he were still living with her and loved her. She may not conduct herself in a manner which might be dangerous to herself or her masculine friend, or a source of scandal to others.

A young boy and girl may very properly develop and maintain close, personal, private, and familiar associa-

tions and friendships; else how would they ever fall in love, attract love, or prepare for marriage?

The virtue of modesty must govern all those things which are even remotely related to chastity: all thoughts and images, reading and pictures, dress and conduct, flirtations and dances and games, embraces and kisses, love-making and engagements.

Chastity is a beautiful, tender, precious virtue which tries to restrain the most violent of human passions and keep them subject to right reason. It keeps us from any deliberate desire of, or consent to, illicit sexual pleasure. Except for husband and wife, all voluntary sexual pleasure is illicit. Any deliberate violation of chastity is a mortal sin.

Most things of tender, precious beauty have to be protected. Chastity is protected by a more rugged, practical, flexible virtue: MODESTY. It keeps dangers away, like a castle guard protecting the queen; or if it must let dangers enter, it keeps watch on them and restrains them that they do no harm.

Dangers try to enter by all doors and windows: especially by sight and hearing and touch. Sometimes they seem to be already inside and attack by imagination. It is the duty of modesty to kick out the thoughts and day-dreams, and to keep external dangers from entering—except when there is good reason to admit them under guard.

Modesty is a prudent guard, not a frightened fanatic, or a stern and stubborn prude. She appreciates the precious, inviolable beauty of the virtue she guards. But she knows that chastity cannot be permanently isolated from all danger. She knows that she must admit some dangers, even serious ones occasionally.

Modesty has her list of rules:

1. Unless there is sufficient good reason, it is a mortal sin to let in any serious danger, e.g. any thought, look,

or touch which tends strongly to excite carnal pleasures, or immediate danger of consent to them.

2. Unless there is sufficient reason, it is a venial sin to admit even minor dangers.

3. It is no sin at all to admit these dangers if there is sufficient reason and they are closely guarded to prevent their doing harm. The harm they might do is to bring on immediate danger of consent to sexual pleasure: a violation of chastity.

Modesty always knows that the more serious the danger, the more serious the reason must be for admitting it, and the closer the guard.

But modesty would become the vice of prudishness if it did not accept sound reasons:

Necessary study is sufficient reason for reading a suggestive book.

Medical examination or care is sufficient reason for prudent but dangerous touches.

Instruction or the discussion of problems may be good reason for dangerous conversation.

Legitimate youthful pleasure, friendship, and development gives cause for dates and company-keeping.

Entertainment and the fostering of social graces and contacts gives reasonable excuse for dances and parties.

Kisses and embraces, in spite of their danger, are a natural and proper way to show sincere affection and attract honest love.

Engagements are an honorable preliminary to marriage.

It is in this realm of sound reason that we find the difference between the divorcee and the debutante. What good reason can the divorcee have for dates? She may get entertainment and relaxation from her loneliness and boredom. But what wife may properly seek men other than her husband for such purpose? She may get friendship, even love. But it will be at the price of

either frustration or sin. It has no legitimate aim or purpose.

Young unmarried people have a variety of excellent reasons for developing similar friendships: the immediate joy and happiness of companionship, entertainment, youthful fun; development of personality, of confidence, of ease and grace and thoughtfulness of others; a step in the process of growing up; the thrill of loving and of being loved; the manly pride and joy of conquest; the feminine thrill of successful charm and attraction; all the proper pleasures, pains, sensations, smiles, tears, and sentiments of infatuation; the tenderness, kindness, jealousies, fears, and fantastic ecstasies of young love; all those marvelously foolish thrills which prepare young hearts for marital bliss.

Two young people in love act the way God made them and intends them to act, in developing their love for each other, in manifesting it when it is real, in attracting it honestly. Such love brings dangers to chastity, as good young people know, and old people well remember. But there is abundant reason for such danger, as long as it is prudently watched.

Without such dangers what would become of marriage, and the grace of its sacrament? How would man and woman develop that love which imitates Divine love? What would lead them to the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose in man's creation, to cooperation with Him in creating new life to live forever, new souls to His image? These dangers are preliminary to parental love and sacrifice, to filial love and confidence, to God's eternal glory, and man's eternal happiness, to love shared with the Divinity.

Who but a coward would shun dangers when so much is at stake. But only the fool becomes foolhardy. There must be prudence, care, good sense, and a loving respect for that precious virtue of chastity. In fact the full real-

ization of present joy, future happiness and sacred purpose demands that modesty be vigilant to keep chastity safe.

Q. You recently had a list of rules about modesty. I just don't understand what would be a sufficient reason to admit dangers. I have never allowed a boy to do very much, because I thought it would be sinful. I would like to ask you just what wouldn't be sinful. It seems if I correct the boys, they just won't ever go with me again. They tell me, "Oh, all the other girls do it." And what about the steady couples? One boy asked me that, and I told him I wasn't that kind of a girl and no one could change my mind. I don't suppose he'll ever go with me again. I liked this boy! I don't know what to do. One thing, I won't change for any of them. In my town I think there are very few girls who are like me. You don't have much of a chance.

A. You have pretty well set forth the problem of youth in courtship. You are a bit wrong, however, in thinking that the problem is uniquely your own. It is shared, in some measure, by all the girls who insist that they are not "that kind of a girl." It is shared by all young men who really want to obey the laws of God, and who have respect for the girls with whom they keep company.

There is a problem, because there is a conflict. On the one hand, we know what is right. We know what God commands. We know what will contribute to our proper moral and psychological development and help us to be happy for life. In conflict with that are our passions and desires. We have inclinations to seek immediate gratification and pleasure, even though we know it is not good for us. Those passions and desires are very strong, and they are common to both boys and girls. Our

modern customs of courtship, and freedom between young boys and girls, contribute to the severity of this conflict. Young men and women, boys and girls, are at least as good today as they ever were. They want to do right. They have faith and sound principles. But they are put in much greater dangers than they used to be. They have to be stronger.

Some girls, and some boys, too, solve the problem by simply choosing one of the alternatives or the other. They let themselves go, with sinful consequences. Or they are simply so strict that they become prudes and repel even close friendship. As usual, the proper solution is somewhere between these two extremes.

As I said in my original article, to which you refer, modesty is not an absolute virtue. It is relative. Relative to the danger. Relative to the necessity of facing the danger. It is an outer defense of chastity, which is an absolute virtue.

Attitude and intention are the important things. If young people are determined to keep the element of sex, all sexual pleasures, out of their company-keeping and dating, the battle is half won, at least. If their attitude and intention is one of compromise, one of trying to determine just how far they can go without being guilty of serious sin, one of trying to decide just where to draw the line, then the battle is half lost before it is begun. Morally speaking, there is really no place for petting, necking or other sensational sparring on any casual dates or ordinary company-keeping. There may well be place for some show of affection, a casual embrace, or playful encouragement.

When it comes to steady company-keeping, with serious intention of marriage, then there is more reason for the encouragement of real love, and for serious signs of affection. Here again, however, the intention must be right. There must be no seeking of sexual satisfaction.

It must be a matter of showing, developing, and encouraging love and affection. It must be a preparation for marriage, not an anticipation of marriage. The young girl's ability to attract the attention, interest and persistent pursuit of young men is not a question of her being "that kind of a girl." It is a matter of her total personality. Good looks help. Friendliness, happiness, liveliness, and interest in others, ability to make others enjoy themselves and to be at ease, carefulness in dress and appearance, all these are factors which are helpful. Sexual attractiveness is a very forceful element, of course, and "that kind of a girl" can always find that kind of a man. She has something definite to offer. But the good girl is not in competition with her. She makes a mistake if she tries to compete. Of course she commits a sin, too. The good girl's offerings are friendship; companionship; a good healthy, hearty time; fidelity; helpfulness; and the promise of enticing happiness for the future and the permanency of family and home.

Your letter indicates to me that your trouble is not your virtue, but the fact that you make a career of virtue. I don't mean that, exactly, either, but you seem to consider yourself an exception. I suspect that there are many other girls in your town quite as good as you. They just don't make it quite as hard for themselves, or so hard for their boy friends. They are good naturally. They ward off a boy's wandering hands with a laugh and a joke, not with accusation of assault. They are pure, but not prudish; chaste, but not sad or fearful. They do not consider their chastity a handicap, but a beautiful virtue, in itself an attraction to a young man. For them modesty is not a handicap, but simply the ordinary sensible rules of the game. They accept it and enjoy it. They have their troubles, but they don't suffer constantly under them.

You are a good girl, and I admire you and wish to encourage you. I hope that nothing I have written in my column will shake the strict moral principles to which you adhere. But try to be happy in your holiness. Make your modesty a virtue, not a morbidity. Don't suspect the motives of every boy you meet. Of course, many of them are going to try you out to see how far they can go. But if you put them in their place handily and cleverly, they will respect you and love you for it. Of course if you slap them down with stern rebuke, they are not apt to come back for more.

Chapter 4: ENGAGEMENT

Breaking it off—The date was set—Conduct of engaged couples.

Q. Two people were engaged to be married, one a Catholic, one not. Due to urgent pressure of the Catholic, the other person reluctantly decided to take instructions. Then after a while the Catholic broke the engagement. This Catholic is very conscientious, and did not make light of the engagement, and now feels responsible that the non-Catholic may not join the Church. I think it is a grace from God that has given the Catholic the ability to break the engagement now. The Catholic feels that a great injustice is being done, but would it not be a greater injustice to go ahead and marry? Would there be any guilt on the Catholic's part if the other person did not continue the instructions? Would not the non-Catholic party if interested, or believed the Catholic Church to be the true Church, go ahead and continue the instructions and join the Church, regardless of the engagement?

A. I do not want to offend you, because you say nice things about the Question Box in your letter. But you do make your questions long and complicated; whereas these characteristics are supposed to belong to the answers. By careful avoidance of pronouns you have successfully confused us as to whether male or female broke the engagement. But you do not conceal a certain personal bias in favor of the status quo. I hope you

did not exert undue influence on the Catholic party to produce said status. Said party seems a bit nostalgic.

Of course no Catholic party, male or female, should continue an engagement to get the other party to continue instructions. I would be a bit wary of this conversion anyway. There seems, according to your story, to have been too much urgent pressure on one side and too much reluctance on the other side. It is true that instructions begun under such circumstances often lead to interest and conviction and faith. But if they are not continued when the "urgent pressure" is removed, then the pressure-exerter should have no regrets or qualms.

In other words, unless your daughter is convinced that she really wants to marry this man, that she really loves him, and that he will make her an ideal husband, then she should maintain the status quo, and let him follow his unpressured conscience about the instructions. (There I go, using personal pronouns and making presumptions, by reading between lines.)

Q. Is a Catholic girl doing wrong if she decides not to marry a Catholic young man after plans had been made and the date set for their marriage?

A. That depends on her motives. If she is honest with herself and the young man, she is not doing wrong. If she now finds her engagement was a mistake, she is obliged to break it. She can change her mind up to the moment of marriage; but not after that moment. She must be fair with the young man, but she must not let herself be influenced by what the neighbors may say.

The Church law recognizes that an engagement to marry involves a certain obligation in conscience; it is a mutual promise, solemnly made, about a serious matter. However, changed circumstances can relieve the

engaged person of his moral obligation. Marriage is infinitely more serious than the promises he made. The Church wants people to be entirely free up to the moment of marriage. So she will not permit a person to be forced into a marriage merely because of an engagement.

Q. I am twenty years old and for a year and a half I have been going steady with a man seven years older than myself. We plan to marry just as soon as all arrangements are complete. We love each other very much and have deep respect for each other.

I know from religious teachings that "petting," passionate embracing and kissing, are sinful and should not be done. But I would like to ask this question: How can two people in love see one another two or three times a week and not find themselves passionate towards each other? If I never kissed the man I am going to marry, how would I know I loved him? When I do embrace him it doesn't seem cheap and sinful to me. If these things seemed really wrong, I wouldn't do them. An impure touch or thought seems wrong (and I know they are), so we make every effort to keep from doing them. We never kissed one another for over a year. But I love him now, and it doesn't seem wrong.

Please tell me the attitude to take on these matters, as it is important to both of us. I want to live and act as my God wants me.

A. No answer of mine could possibly be as inspiring as your question. No counsel of mine could possibly improve on your attitude towards your courtship, love and future marriage. No statement of moral principles could provide a better practical solution of love's problems,

than that which you have conscientiously found for yourself.

My only advice to you is to forget your worries and fears. Certainly, at this stage of your courtship, not every kiss or embrace means sin or impurity. They are honest signs of your affection, which properly demonstrate and increase your love. They are a legitimate test of temper and attraction, a sane preparation for marriage.

You are normal, decent people in love; not bloodless spirits. You have instincts and emotions, and you will soon use them properly to establish a family and give glory to God. Meanwhile you realize that these instincts must be guided by reason; and that these emotions must be kept under restraint. Your intentions are perfect, but you know that good intentions are no proof against indiscretion, without reason and will, and prayer and grace.

Surely God loves you, and is pleased with your love for each other. That love has developed normally, honestly, and properly. You can be proud of your courtship, and thank God for His grace which has guided it. You have laid the best possible foundation for married happiness.

Courtship and engagement are right and necessary. They provide the soil for love's growth. They give you a deeper knowledge and understanding of each other. You learn to be at ease with each other. You come to know each other's likes and aversions, faculties and foibles, aims and ambitions, hopes and habits. You began with a surface attraction, maybe a bit of infatuation. You came to know and appreciate spiritual qualities, to evaluate properties of intellect, to develop mutual interests; and you have found much in common in your social and cultural backgrounds and religious convictions. You have developed deep respect for each other. You are solidly and sincerely in love. You have con-

templated life's problems together. You know that you are suited to each other, and can be happy together through the years.

Your courtship has been normal, frank, and honest. You laid the foundations of love first, in beautiful, steady companionship, and then let it develop naturally. You did not rush it or anticipate it. You did not use courtship as an excuse for thrill and passion. You did not resort to seduction. Your first kiss and embrace were not false or deceptive, but full of meaning, honest, sincere; not artificially sought, but naturally responsive.

Courtship without physical thrill or emotion offers no promise of married happiness. It is more decent, certainly, but hardly more hopeful than the vulgar and venereal wrestling of the wastrel wolf and his limousine louse.

Purity is an attitude towards sex. It is not insensibility. It avoids selfish seeking of sensation. But it is not fearful. Purity is perfectly concordant with true love, as you have kept it in concord. It recognizes that physical expressions of love have their proper place and proportion. They sometimes present danger, but danger is not sin; and in your love and plans for marriage, you have ample reason to face the danger.

Nothing I have here written applies to juvenile dates, or offers excuse for libidinous liberties. Kissing and caressing on the first date are not matters of courtship; they pertain to the art of seduction. Seeking a sexual sensation is seriously sinful. Petting, defined as physical contact for pleasure, is simply fooling with frustrated fornication. Its aim is sensation and stimulation of desire. It is seldom honest; usually selfish; generally artificial. It may be serious, absorbing, fascinating, and compelling. It may breed infatuation and beget a marriage ceremony. But it seldom fosters true love or sane mating, and never develops virtue.

Chapter 5: THE AGE FOR MARRIAGE

Proper age—For a young lady
—Putting off marriage—No
children.

Q. What is the proper age for marriage?

A. I imagine Adam and Eve debated that question as their sons and daughters were growing up. Cain and Abel probably had their own ideas, too, not quite in agreement with the old folks. The debate still goes on.

The law of the Church absolutely forbids a young man to marry before he is 16 and a young lady before she is 14. That is the minimum, and it applies to everyone from Fiji to Eskimo. There is no upper age-limit. So the proper age must be somewhere between 14 and 93.

The ancient philosophers were fond of a Latin phrase which might be literally translated as "Virtue stands in the middle." Neither too young nor too old. Not at 16 or 17; such marriages keep our diocesan matrimonial courts busy. Usually not at such advanced ages as 31 or 35; because the field of choice is narrower, and selfishness has become congealed.

Accordingly, Church law, while allowing marriages to be valid after the minimum ages of 14 and 16, directs the pastors of souls that they keep young people from marrying until they reach the age sanctioned by the customs of each country.

What is the age sanctioned by our customs here in the

U.S.? Certainly not 16 or 17. Some marriages are contracted at that age, but they are usually runaway affairs, frowned upon by parents and neighbors.

Our American way of life, our educational standards, our economic requirements, and our social habits demand a greater maturity from both man and woman before they enter marriage. If they ignore these demands, their marriage may be wrecked by emotional instability, domestic insecurity and financial worries and wants.

Finally, the law of the Church, in Canon 1034, directs pastors to try to keep young people from marrying before they are 21, without the knowledge or consent of their parents. This can probably be taken as a good norm of the Church's attitude. She does not FORBID the marriage of minors, but she is very careful about it and wants the counsel and advice of their parents.

Q. At what age should a young lady marry?

A. A definite answer to this question is so nearly impossible that I recur to the popular refuge of all answer-men. It depends upon personalities and circumstances. If routed there, I can safely resort to truism: It should be neither too early, nor yet too late.

Yet must I scorn timorous evasion? So, fortified by prayer, and appealing to Canon Law to support me, I fare forth with fellow fools and bid the angels bide.

Canon Law can give no absolute answer applicable to the entire world; but it does provide a clue and a directive. Canon 1067 establishes the minimum ages at which marriage is legally possible anywhere: 14 years for the female of the species; 16 for her counterpart. These ages seem scandalously low to us, but not so to the

dusky native of the Congo, or the premature maiden of Melanesia.

The second paragraph of the same canon shows the mind of the Church: "Even though marriage may be validly contracted after these specified ages, the pastors of souls shall take care to divert young people from marriage before the age sanctioned by the accepted customs of their own country."

CUSTOM

The law is clear. But what is the age sanctioned by the accepted customs of our country? The average age of marriage has gone down sharply since the war; the Kiplinger Washington Letter for Dec. 23, 1949, indicates the present average ages as 22 for the women, and 24 for the men.

We do not conclude from this that pastors are required by law to try to keep all the young women of their parishes from marrying until they are 22 years old. Average age is not minimum age, but it does provide a norm for judgment. And the pastor is definitely obliged by law to try to keep his young teen-agers from marrying before the age which our society approves.

The Church law furnishes another indication of attitude in Canon 1034. Again the legislation is directed at the pastor. He must make strenuous effort to keep minors (under 21 years of age) from contracting marriage without their parents' knowledge or consent.

MATURITY

All serious students of marriage problems are agreed that children should not marry before they are grown

up. Marriage is for adults. It presents life's most serious obligations. Reasonable maturity is required for their responsible acceptance and fulfillment.

What is maturity? Age is a factor in it, and a general norm for measuring it; but age is not maturity. We can distinguish various aspects of human development. Most obvious is the physical. Next in ease of measurement is mental growth. Obvious, but rather imponderable, is emotional maturity. And hardly inseparable are those numerous traits which make up personality, and adapt the individual to adult life in modern society.

With due reverence for the Grace of God, and proper respect for true love, there is probably no single factor so important to a successful marriage as MATURITY. Marriage by its essential nature demands physical maturity; but that generally comes early. Mental growth in modern children is rapid, but modern marriage requires higher mental development than formerly; so mental maturity still lags behind the physical. But the emotional elements are usually last to ripen; and they are supremely important. Childish emotional reactions probably ruin more marriages than any other factor.

SACRIFICE

The married person is supposed to give up all the attitudes, habits, and reactions of childhood, and to live a grown-up life of love and pro-creation and adaptation, of sacrifice and self-control and persistent industry. Life must be faced frankly and resolutely, with neither papa's purse nor mama's arms as childish refuge.

Married people must adapt themselves to each other, to their children, to society, and to the intransigent

realities of the economic world. Only grown ups can do so.

The mature woman has a reasonable view of life, and of the world and her position in it. She knows her place in society and adapts herself to it, conforming herself to law and convention. She faces a reality devoid of fairies and fancies. She is willing and able to cooperate in the economic role of life, and to be a home-maker. She does not expect something for nothing, or believe that the world owes her a living—or that her husband will provide it without her help. She is reasonably independent of her parents, and weaned from pouting and tantrums.

PLAYING HOUSE?

The earlier a girl marries the more likely it is that sex and physical attraction have swept her off her infantile feet, to suspend her perilously above the jagged rocks of reality. She has hardly had time to make careful choice of mate. She may have simply launched herself to the first over-whelming surge of romance. The true object of her love may well be love itself.

If a girl marries too early, her only readiness to bear children may be biological. Emotionally her child replaces her doll. As a home-maker she is still playing house. And the callow youth who shares her kindergarten may well blanch and falter before the sudden realities of rent and grocery bills and obstetric fees.

The demands of modern society are complex; but they cannot be ignored or flaunted. Are youngsters able to maintain acceptable standards of living, provide education and opportunities for children, and avoid despair of future security?

Youngsters are easily adaptable. Since they are not

yet grown, they may grow together. But they may also grow apart.

LATER REGRETS

It sounds slightly pagan, but emotionally the youngster is not monogamous. Maturity brings constancy, fidelity and stability.

Too early marriages provide fertile opportunity for later regrets and recriminations over lost opportunities, sacrificed education, and restricted horizons.

Postponing marriage proposes problems, certainly. But any goal worth achieving requires time and planning and sacrifice. To advocate marriage as an easy solution of juvenile temptations is a myopic reversal of values, substituting permanent problems for temporary ones, and dragging children into the midst of the turmoil. At best, marriage may defer the temptations until after the second or third child is born into stern economic exigency.

FORTITUDE VITAL

Adolescent problems must be faced with such fortitude as youth may receive from the Grace of God. Marriage is not a fire-escape. It is for life, and for future generations, and it must be planned as such, long and prayerfully.

We all like to cite our own experience. My years as judge of the matrimonial court have provided me no ready statistics, but constant observation has produced a firm conviction that the earliest marriages break up the earliest. If no girls married at 16 or 17, our total of marriage cases would be appreciably lowered.

HOWEVER—don't wait too long to marry. After your early twenties your field of choice narrows, you begin to get set in your solitary ways, and you tend to develop the attitude, temperament and status of an old maid.

EDUCATION

If you have the opportunity of college, plan to finish your studies, by all means. It may delay your career as wife and mother, but it will greatly enhance your proficiency in that career, which seeks happiness for life and for eternity, for yourself and your husband and your children.

Q. Is it a sin for a woman to put off marriage so that she will be up in years and not able to bear children?

A. There might be some sin of selfishness or shirking involved, but it is a bit hard to pin it down. If she leads a good, virtuous life up to the time of her marriage, she can hardly be accused of serious sin. Maybe it isn't a choice with her anyway. Maybe she just couldn't hook her man sooner. Maybe she has good reason for not having children: physical difficulties, hereditary defects, or the fear of not being able to raise children properly.

If she has no good reason, she is very unwise to thus deprive herself of woman's greatest privileges: The hopeful, youthful love of an ardent husband, the joys of married life while they still have meaning and ecstasy in them, the souls of her own children whom she would help God create for eternity, and the security of their filial love in her old age.

In place of these genuine joys she has courted frustration through her fruitful years, developed her selfish-

ness and artificial self-sufficiency, run the danger of being left to a lonely and senile maidenhood, and chosen too late for complete adjustment the flaccid companionship of some graying, arthritic bachelor.

I am not even considering the possibility that she has been engaged, or stringing along some doddering dolt all her youthful years. That situation offers too many possibilities of sins of various kinds.

Q. Do you think a girl of 18 should marry a college boy who is not working? They would not be able to have children for three years.

A. Permit me to phrase your question differently: Do I think that a girl of 18 should agree to live in sin with a boy for three years? The answer is no.

Chapter 6: PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Papers from the Chancery Office—When to consult the pastor—Choice of Church—Qualifications of priest to instruct—What has to be done.

Q. How long does it take to get arrangements completed for a marriage? Our papers haven't come back from the Chancery Office. What shall we do?

A. Our diocesan regulations instruct those planning marriage to call on their pastor at least ONE MONTH before the proposed date of the ceremony.

In Catholic marriages the banns must be published. That takes three weeks of the month.

In mixed marriages the non-Catholic party must take six instructions, the promises must be signed, and a dispensation sought from the bishop. That will require the whole month.

No dispensation should be taken for granted—until it IS granted. Where there is any impediment to marriage no definite plans should be made. Any arrangements must be tentative—contingent on the dispensation.

This ONE MONTH period is required for marriages without unusual COMPLICATIONS. Your statement that your papers haven't come back from the Chancery Office makes me suspect that there is a marriage case involved. Usually a dispensation is either granted or re-

fused within a few days after it is requested. But marriage cases! They may take YEARS.

Has one of you been previously married? Then you should be making no plans whatsoever for your marriage. In all probability you can never marry. Remember, that first marriage was **until death**.

“Oh yes, but that first marriage was invalid,” I seem to hear you say, or, “But they were never baptized, Father.”

All right, maybe there is an outside chance! But it must be investigated. Documents, testimony, and various kinds of proof must be obtained. People must be traced and found. Courts must be convened. Formalities of law must be observed. There may be appeals. The case might have to be sent to Rome. All that takes TIME.

In marriage cases, beware of anyone who gives you any assurance of favorable results before the final decision. Meanwhile make NO plans. When those papers do come back from the Chancery Office they may say NO.

Q. I plan to be married this Fall. How long is it necessary to consult the priest previous to our marriage? Can a dispensation from the banns be obtained? Could it be possible for us to marry in Advent?

A. You should see the priest at least a month before your marriage, if you wish to avoid disappointment and trouble.

It is possible to obtain a dispensation from the banns if there is good reason for such dispensation. Your pastor, after having made his investigations, will forward your request to the bishop, stating the circumstances and reasons.

Canon 1108, §2, states that the solemn nuptial blessing is forbidden during Advent. The third paragraph of

the same Canon says that the Bishop may permit it, however, for a good reason—a “just cause.” But he will restrict the solemnity.

Try to arrange your marriage for some other time than Advent. If you simply must have it in Advent let the Bishop know the reason, through your pastor. He will decide if your reasons are sufficient.

Of course if you just want to get married, without any nuptial blessing, you can do it any time of the year. GOOD Catholics don't.

Q. Is a Catholic couple free to choose the church in which to be married?

A. No. The Church law requires that they be married in their own parish church by their own pastor—unless their pastor gives them permission to be married elsewhere, or grave necessity intervenes.

If bride and groom are from different parishes, they should be married in the bride's parish—unless there is a good reason to have the marriage in the groom's parish.

Any pastor can validly assist at any marriage in his own parish. But he has no right to marry people from outside his parish—unless he has permission from their own pastor.

Catholics who plan to be married outside their own parish must see their pastor and obtain his permission, usually in writing. See him in plenty of time; there will be many formalities.

Q. A priest is married to the Church. Am I right on that? I realize that he knows the spiritual side of life but how can he be an authority on the physical side of life, such as marriage and the emotions thereof?

A. He isn't an authority on such matters and he doesn't pretend to be.

Your question is probably inspired by the fact that the priest teaches you God's law on married life and relationships. When he does that he is teaching you what God knows and has revealed, and what God's Church teaches. His personal knowledge, authority, or experience does not enter into the question.

You will surely admit that God knows something about the man and woman He created and the emotions He gave them. Marriage obligations are from God's law, not the priest's.

Your priest has spent years studying philosophy and psychology and social and marital problems. He has probably spent many years in observing and listening, in sympathy and understanding. You might be surprised how much he has learned. But above all he has learned about God's law—and heaven and hell.

Q. You insist that people who plan to be married should see their pastor a month ahead of time. Why is so much time necessary? Can't we get a dispensation from the banns? Besides it only takes two weeks to have the banns published three times, and if there should be a holy day between Sundays it can all be done in one week.

A. The law of the Church requires that the banns be published. The bishop can dispense from this law; but whether he should do so or not is a question left to his prudent judgement. You may be sure that he will not dispense unless there is a good reason for it. You can not presume it.

There are many preliminaries to something as important as a marriage. First of all, you will probably want the ceremony on a certain day and at a certain hour.

You will require the services of a priest, and probably of sacristan and altar boys, and organist and choir. Arrangements must be made for all these things. Maybe the priest, and the church, and the altar are already engaged for that day and hour. In some big parishes you might have to make reservations many months ahead of time to get a choice day for a nuptial Mass.

Then there are investigations to be made. The law requires that the pastor who is to assist at a marriage be certain beforehand that there is nothing to prevent its valid and licit celebration. He must investigate diligently. He must question the parties, and very often he must question other people, as witnesses, to be sure that there is no impediment, that the parties marry freely, etc. Often this questioning must be done by other priests in various parts of the country, and the results sent thru Chancery Offices, which give appropriate endorsements. All this takes time; and you will have trouble and frustrations if you try to hurry it.

Then there are documents required. The most important is a baptismal certificate—a new one, not just any old one you have had for months or years. Then there should also be certificate of confirmation. Or if the parties have not been confirmed, the Church law advises that they should receive this Sacrament before marriage—if it can be done without serious inconvenience.

Then if any doubts should arise about the freedom of the parties to marry the matter must be referred to the Bishop. The same is true if the parties are without permanent residence; or if minors want to get married without their parents' knowledge or consent. And the Bishop's office usually becomes involved when the parties are from different parishes, or especially if they are from different dioceses. His office is always prompt and efficient, but the mails are apt to be slow. And maybe no quick decision is possible.

And there are instructions. Even if both parties are Catholics, the law requires that the pastor make sure that they are sufficiently instructed in their faith. And besides that he must actually teach them about the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage, about their mutual obligations as husband and wife, and about the obligations of parents toward their children. He will need time to fit all that into his schedule.

A month may be too short, if you want everything to go smoothly.

PART TWO

The Marriage Ceremony

Chapter 7: CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

Source of the rites—Meaning of the ring—Respect for the ring—Marriage at home—Outside own parish—On Sunday—In the evening—Music—Photography—A Protestant witness—An excommunicated witness—A Fallen-away—White dress—Symbol of virginity—Return of the errant—“Bride and Groom” program—Tom Thumb wedding.

Q. I would like to know where the marriage rites are found? Are they in the Bible or in a special book? I have seen weddings and should like to know.

A. My original answer to this question suddenly became outdated when the new **Collectio Rituum** was issued for the United States, in December 1954. It is still true that the essential parts of the marriage ceremony are found in a Latin book called the **Rituale Romanum**, published by the authority of the Holy See. It is also true that other parts of the ceremony have developed from local custom, which the Holy See has approved or permitted. But now these two sources have been combined by a commission appointed by our Bishops, and the resulting ceremonial has been approved by the Congregation of Rites. It is official. And most of it is in English.

This **Collectio Rituum** is an appendix to the **Rituale Romanum** (Roman Ritual) which is the official source

of all ceremonies for the Sacraments and sacramentals. And since the entire ceremony now has authentic approval for use in the United States—subject to authorization in each Diocese by the local Bishop—it is hardly of practical interest for me to point out, as I previously did, those parts which come from the **Rituale** and those which come from custom. Now it is all from the U.S. Appendix to the **Rituale**.

There are many differences, though. And maybe you haven't seen many marriages according to this new ceremony. So it might be interesting to note some of the changes:

The most remarkable thing is that most of it can be in English—if the Bishop approves, and the priest chooses. Even the solemn nuptial blessing, which is given at Mass right after the Pater Noster, can be in English. Its traditional, inspiring beauty can now be understood by the bride to whom it is chiefly directed, and by all who hear it. Of course it can still be in Latin, too. That language is always proper.

The priest now begins the marriage ceremony with a prayer which he says while standing and facing the altar. Then he turns and gives the usual sermon, exhortation, or admonition to the couple. After that, while everyone remains standing, he asks them the essential questions in the customary form: "John, will you take Mary, here present, etc." Then he tells them to join their right hands and repeat after him the other well-known words: "I, John Smith, take you, Mary Jones . . . for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer . . . until death do us part." It is suggested that the priest wrap his stole around their hands while they repeat these words.

Then there is a little part which must be said in Latin; the ritual calls it the "Confirmation of the Marriage Bond": "Ego conjungo vos in matrimonium: In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti." The priest

then calls upon all present to be witnesses of this holy union which he has just blessed. Then the ring is blessed—in Latin. If it is a double-ring ceremony we now have a form in the plural for blessing both rings—something we lacked before.

The priest, in the double ring ceremony, says to the parties: "Now that you have sealed a truly Christian marriage, give these wedding rings to each other, saying after me: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Take and wear this ring as a pledge of my fidelity."

Now comes a blessing—something new for most of us. Psalm 127 is said: "Happy are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways." After that is the Blessing which is quite long and impressive, divided into six parts. The Psalm recalls the nuptial blessing given outside of Mass, according to the **Rituale Romanum**. But the rest is different, and it merely precedes the blessing during Mass—does not replace it.

Even the ceremony for mixed marriages takes on a spark of life in the new ritual. We are told to give the parties an exhortation before marriage, similar to that given to two Catholics. And after the ceremony we even ask God to bless them.

The essential part of the ceremony is the giving and accepting of consent, the mutual "I will" as spoken by the parties. This mutual consent makes the marriage, both as a contract and as a sacrament. Marriage differs from any of the other sacraments; the parties administer this sacrament to each other when they consent to the contract. The priest must be there. He is an official witness. But he is not the minister of the sacrament. The husband gives the sacrament to the wife, and she gives it to her husband. They are ministers of God's grace to each other—each a means of the other's sanctification and salvation. And they will remain thus throughout

their lives together. They each unite the other to Christ at the same moment they unite themselves to each other. And the continued union of each to Christ will sanctify the mutual closeness of their own bodies and souls.

Q. What is the origin and meaning of the ring in the marriage ceremony?

A. In the old Roman days, before Christianity, the prospective bridegroom gave his fiancee a ring when they became engaged. It was considered a pledge that he would fulfill his part of the bargain and marry her. It corresponded to our engagement ring.

The ring seems to have been adopted by the Church as a part of her marriage ceremonies from the early centuries. Pope St. Nicholas I, in the ninth century refers to it as the *annulus fidei*, the ring of fidelity. It is a sign and a pledge of endless faithfulness.

In different countries and in different times there have been varying customs regarding the ring. In some places it used to be put on the bride's right hand. In some places the priest placed the ring on her finger. In many localities there are two rings: one for the groom and one for the bride. That custom is growing in our own country, and our new ritual—the *Collectio Rituum*—makes special provision for it.

There is an old English custom of putting the ring first on the bride's thumb, while saying, "In the name of the Father"; then on the index finger, with the words, "and the Son"; then on the middle finger, "and of the Holy Ghost"; then finally on the fourth finger while saying, "Amen." Our new ritual has borrowed the words of this ceremony but omitted the action.

The old pagan Romans, like Pliny, said that the ring

was put on the fourth finger because there was a vein in that finger which ran directly to the heart.

Q. Is it wrong to have the diamond taken out of a wedding ring and made into a dinner ring? The lady's husband is living.

A. She's rather unsentimental, isn't she? What does the husband think?

Apart from considerations of propriety and sentiment I can find nothing wrong with this juggling of jewels, unless it were done out of disrespect for the blessing given to the ring, or out of contempt for the sacred bond which the ring symbolizes.

If the wedding ring has worn out or become useless this might be a reason to transfer the stones.

A ring does not lose its blessing until it ceases to be a ring. So it should be treated with the respect due a blessed article, and if it is to be worn without the stones it should be put in proper condition.

Q. Can two Catholics be married at home?

A. Canon 1109 directs that the marriage of two Catholics shall be celebrated in the parish church.

The second paragraph of the same Canon states that the local Bishop CAN permit such marriage to take place in a private home, but only in an extraordinary case and for a good and reasonable cause. Many bishops refuse to grant such permission.

Q. Is it a sin for a Catholic girl to get married outside her own parish?

A. Not if she obeys the law of the Church in the matter.

She might get married in the parish of the groom. Canon 1097 permits this if there is a good reason for it.

She might get permission of her pastor (or the groom's pastor) to be married in some other parish. The pastor will grant this permission if there is reasonable cause for it.

Without this permission she probably won't get any other pastor to marry her anyway.

Q. Can a Catholic couple get married on Sunday, have a nuptial Mass, and receive the blessing the same as on a week day?

A. They can. At least there is no law against it.

The Mass will not be the votive Mass for bride and groom, but the Mass of Sunday, with commemoration of this votive Mass. There are almost a hundred week days on which this votive Mass for bride and groom cannot be said, but only commemorated. It makes little difference, because the nuptial blessing is given, just the same.

It is a NUPTIAL MASS—a mass at which the nuptial blessing is given.

Marriages on Sunday are not usual. The pastor must have Mass for his people. Usually the bride and groom want a Mass for themselves, to which they can specially invite their friends. On Sunday they must either be married at a parish Mass—not very appropriate—or the pastor will have to get some other priest to help him with his double duties. He can not say a second Mass merely as a wedding Mass. He is allowed to say two Masses only for his people, so that they can fulfill their Sunday obligation.

It is a question for your pastor to decide. Most pastors

will discourage Sunday weddings, and with good reason. If your pastor refuses to marry you on Sunday, don't judge him unreasonable. Circumstances in your parish may make it impossible for him. If he permits you to marry on Sunday, it means that he has found some solution to the problems involved.

If you simply want to be married on Sunday, without a nuptial Mass, it will be easier to arrange. But don't be surprised if the pastor objects. Canon 1101 tells him to take care that Catholics are married at nuptial Mass. And naturally he will be opposed to your setting precedents in his peaceful parish. But he really should not refuse, if you insist.

Q. Why aren't marriages performed in the Catholic Church in the evening?

A. Catholics are usually married at Mass and thus receive the solemn nuptial blessing. Mass may not begin later than one o'clock in the afternoon except under the special privilege for afternoon and evening Masses which we now enjoy. But this privilege is granted specifically for the common good—not for individual benefit.

Q. Is the obligation of having an approved march at your wedding as serious as that of abstaining from meat on Friday?

A. Your question reflects a strange comparison. But it does illustrate the fact that both obligations result from laws of the Church.

The obligation of abstaining from flesh meat on Friday is clearly imposed by Canon 1252 of the Code of Canon Law. It is serious. Violation is a mortal sin.

The obligation of eliminating from Church any music which is improper is stated in very general terms in Canon 1264. The obligation is serious. Deliberate and grave violation would be a mortal sin.

However, it is not quite as easy to distinguish between proper and improper music as it is between flesh meat and good red herring. Anybody knows when he is violating Canon 1252. Only experts can be quite sure about Canon 1264 and even they sometimes argue a bit.

But we do have some pretty definite norms for guidance in Church music. Pope Pius X in a *Motu proprio* of Nov. 22, 1903, stated the principles and laid down the rules. Pope Pius XI reaffirmed them in his Apostolic Letter of Dec. 20, 1928. Diocesan statutes generally require Church approval of all music to be used at weddings, funerals, and other services. Your bishop may have published a list of approved music. Or he may have indicated types of music which are not approved. Quite probably you will find on this second list the popular wedding marches of Wagner and Mendelssohn.

Practically, if you want to observe the law of the Church, as stated in Canon 1264, do not argue with your pastor about the music for your wedding. He is as much obliged to keep objectionable music from his church as he is to keep ham from his Friday table. And he is supposed to know what is objectionable. I have heard vicious rumors that a pastor can sometimes be wrong; but I doubt that anyone has ever proved it—to him.

Q. Is there any reason why the members of a wedding party should not be photographed in the sanctuary?

A. I know of no law against it. It can well be a distraction to everyone in church when bulbs flash and a photographer does contortions at solemn parts of the cere-

mony. On the other hand, the resulting pictures may be precious souvenirs for future years and new generations.

It is something which may be tolerated at times, but should be supervised and regulated. The pastor is the one to supervise and to regulate. Best not to fight with him even if he is stricter than his neighbor. Maybe he is an old bear, but the odds are that he simply has stricter ideas of propriety, and maybe greater zeal for the glory of the House of God. It is a house of prayer and he doesn't want it made a den of shutterbugs.

Q. Can a Catholic couple have Protestant attendants at a marriage ceremony in the Church?

A. The Holy Office gave a decree on this subject on August 19, 1891, stating that non-Catholics should NOT be attendants, but that the bishop could TOLERATE it for a GRAVE reason, and provided there were no scandal.

Your bishop will grant permission for a non-Catholic witness when grave reason for it is shown to exist. Such grave reason might exist in the case of a convert who wants a non-Catholic brother or sister as attendant.

Q. Should a Catholic woman who is married to a divorced man outside the Church be matron of honor at a Catholic marriage at Mass?

A. She should not. She is presumably excommunicated. She has no business in the sanctuary.

I suppose that the term "matron of honor" means that the matron does honor to the bride by attending her. This matron's attendance should shame any decent bride rather than honor her.

Q. Could a person who has left the Catholic Church because of a second marriage be permitted to give his daughter away in a Catholic wedding? Or is there any law which forbids this man to participate in this wedding?

A. The Church does not exclude sinners from her congregation. She cannot permit unrepentant sinners to receive the Sacraments. She sometimes excludes notorious sinners from her ceremonies and her privileges. But she has no law forbidding a sinful father to walk down the center aisle with his hopeful daughter. It is an embarrassing situation for everyone, probably: the father, the daughter, the priest, and the sensitive members of the congregation. But any other solution might be more embarrassing and less salutary.

Q. I am to be married. I cannot afford a white wedding dress and veil. I am told that people will say I am not a virgin if I am not married in white. Is there anything to this?

A. People sometimes say the craziest things! If you did get married in white they might say you were doing it just to make people think you were a virgin.

If you were not a virgin, do people think you would publicly proclaim that fact from the altar?

Really, in our modern social customs, there is no connection between a white wedding dress and the purity of the body or soul inside the dress. A harried hussy may approach the altar demurely in white satin and modest veil. A sweet little saint may wear red if she wishes.

The only thing people should say about you at your wedding is that you are a good sensible girl who does

not put a mortgage on her married life to make a vain display of flaunting fleeting finery.

Q. Are women who become mothers before they are married permitted to wear white as a semblance of virginity when they do marry?

If a priest had knowledge of this case and permitted such a case to occur, would it be a sin against the Catholic Church? Or would it be his duty to forbid this mockery?

A. I presume you mean symbol; there has never remained any semblance of virginity in any mother except the Blessed Virgin Mary.

You presume, without warrant, I believe, that a bride's white gown is a symbol of virginity. We may each presume that the other has not read Kinsey's latest best-seller. But without his scientific data, we may wonder if an occasional non-mother bride, beautiful in her white tulle and lace, might not blush redder than her rouge if she were challenged on such symbolism.

The spirit of your question reminds me of John 8, 7: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

If you read that eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel, you will agree with me that Our Lord would never stop a bride on her way down the aisle and challenge her right to wear a white dress. The Church is Christ's Church, and her priests try to imitate the Master. They would be far from His spirit of love and forgiveness if they were to brand each repentant bride with the Scarlet Letter of her past.

Your question reflects also the vicious double-standard of modern morals. I do not refer to the double standard between the sexes, but to that strictly female double

standard which rates the honest, foolish, pregnant sinner lower than trash, but merely clucks reprovingly at the "smart girl" who knows how to "take care of herself."

And finally, your question reminds me that the greatest sins connected with unmarried pregnancy are not those of the poor unfortunate girl, but those of her vicious, spiteful, prurient, half-envious defamers. We say that her condition is scandalous, and it really is, in the strict sense of the word. It causes her neighbors to commit hundreds of sins against justice and charity—and probably chastity too, in their thoughts and desires and stories.

You speak of mockery, and I ask you in turn: Is it greater mockery for this humbled, shriven penitent, who has known suffering next to hell, to cloak her shame in a white veil, or for her hardened, unrepentant, uncharitable critics to sally with pharisaical swagger down to the Communion rail to receive the God of love?

Q. I know a couple that got married by the justice of peace. Then they got married by the priest. The lady is Catholic. They had four children, and then they got a divorce. Now they want to go back together again, but according to Iowa law, they are not married. So what do they do?

A. They remain really married, of course, but they should comply with the formalities of Iowa law. The best way of doing that is to get a license and take it to the priest, who will have the documents properly filled out and witnessed, and probably put them through a little ceremony of renewing their marriage promises—with full understanding that they are already married. If the husband seriously objects to going before the

priest, let them look up their justice of the peace again. The first time they went to him, he accomplished nothing. This time his services will be entirely adequate.

Q. Why is it that Catholics are never married on the "Bride and Groom" radio program from Hollywood?

A. I have never heard the "Bride and Groom" program but I understand that it is broadcast from some pagan chapel where the most sacred moment of youthful life is made into an amateur quiz show for the vicarious gratification of romantic spinsters, the squealing exaltation of yearning youngsters and the nation-wide sating of the unblushingly curious.

It seems that the uninhibited bride and groom are enticed into thus mocking marriage by lavish gifts of hawking hucksters, everything from orchids and layettes to bungalow and brougham, with a side-trip to Reno. Soft music stresses the sincerity of their soulful love. Bright lights beam beatitude and blessings, and the bliss of begetting. Before a prurient public they pledge permanency, posterity and piquant intimacies. It's dramatic. It's terrific. It's marriage for moderns.

Jesus Christ made marriage a Sacrament. It not only unites two people to each other; it unites them both to God. It is a sacred ceremony—a solemn contract—a permanent bond, from which result serious obligations and vital rights. Its vows are eternal, gravely decisive of earthly happiness and heavenly bliss and of the life and welfare of future generations. It is dramatic indeed, but real, not farcical fare for fatuous dial-twirlers.

The proper place for marriage is the Church. Canon 1109 commands that Catholics be married in church. The bishop alone can permit them to be married elsewhere, and only in exceptional cases and for good rea-

son. He cannot allow them to be married in an airplane flying under the Eiffel Tower, on horseback astride the continental divide, or at a Coney Island side-show.

Q. Our local school is staging a "Tom Thumb Wedding" of children in the kindergarten and first grades. It is not done with any intention of ridicule or mockery of the sacrament, but for the prettiness of the thing; fifty children will be dressed in tux and formals. Can our Catholic children take part in it?

A. Why not? The mediaeval "miracle" and "mystery" plays are a part of Catholic tradition. Pageants are pretty, and a practical means of teaching and inspiring. Modern children may well be given a greater reverence and respect for marriage—at least as a solemn ceremony of grace and beauty, if not as a Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ.

Better that the non-Catholic children of the school aspire to emulate in their own future weddings the dress and prettiness of their "Tom Thumb Wedding," than that their ideal be the dingy, dusty dug-out of some J. P. just over the State line—scene of some of the unions which bore them.

Chapter 8: MIXED MARRIAGES

Inter-faith marriages—The law of the Church—Reasons for the promises—Reply to non-Catholic—Episcopalian opposition—Origin of the promises—Preliminaries to mixed marriage—Some in rectory, some in church—Inside the sanctuary?—The ceremonies—Blessing after conversion—Rules for mixed marriage in Church—Is it a mortal sin?—Rebuttal—Promises not kept—Refusal of dispensation—Recognizing baptisms—Marriage to a Mason—Giving the bride away—A Communist—Inter-racial Marriages—Are they sinful?

Q. Is inter-faith marriage advisable? What are the advantages and disadvantages of inter-faith marriages?

A. This question was asked by a non-Catholic. The answer is directed to the questioner.

Inter-faith marriages are definitely not advisable. Success and happiness in marriage depend largely upon unity or harmony of interests, beliefs, purposes, and convictions. Differences of race, nationality, religion, cultural background, education, social standing, or economic status are dangers to this unity and harmony. Some wag has said wisely that in ideal mating the only

difference between husband and wife should be that one is male and the other female.

The Catholic Church has always strongly opposed the marriage of Catholics to non-Catholics. In general non-Catholic groups have been similarly aware of the dangers of such marriages, and today some Protestant churches, particularly the Lutheran, are quite as forceful as Catholics in forbidding them.

Young people are generally religious and interested in religion, but they can not have that deep appreciation of the importance of religion to life which comes from long experience. Religion is much more than a belief, or a prejudice, or church-membership. Religion is a way of living. It is intimately interwoven with tradition, custom and culture; and is the very thread of which conscience weaves its fabric of character and forms its patterns of action.

Religion can be a great source of unity in marriage. Deep convictions held firmly in common, high ideals giving mutual inspiration, prayers murmured in unison, sacrifice shared for the same God; these can give harmony and solidarity. These can give mutual peace and happiness, dissipate conflicts, and form a strong support in adversity. Religion is something shared, as all married life should be shared.

Religion can also be a great disrupting influence in marriage. When deep convictions clash, high ideals divide, prayers become an annoying mumble, and sacrifice seems a shame, then even sacred things can cause dissension. They can cause trouble and breed mutual ill-will, create conflicts, and precipitate quarrels. Religion is then something which divides where there should be union.

Opposition to mixed marriage is not bigotry or prejudice. It is sane judgment based on experience, observation, and even some statistics. The figures available—too

limited to be conclusive—indicate that the failures and divorces in mixed marriages may be four or five times as numerous as in marriages between two Catholics or two Protestants. Even if figures exaggerate, the danger is great.

The problem of mixed marriage requires clear, cool thinking, and that is often a bit difficult in the midst of that emotional agitation called love. The following questions should be frankly asked and honestly answered:

1. How great is the religious difference? The difference between two Protestant denominations may not be important. But the difference between Catholic and Protestant is very important and vital.

2. How much does your religion mean to you? Are you rather indifferent? Do you consider denominations unimportant? Do you call yourself broad-minded? Or is religion a matter of firm conviction with you? Or deep prejudice? Is it an essential part of your daily life? Are you determined to convince others, and have them agree with you?

3. What about the Catholic you plan to marry? Is he a good Catholic, strong in his faith, firm in his principles, and faithful in the practice of his religion? Is he tolerant and considerate?

4. Would religion be a point of disagreement and conflict between you? You can't really answer this question, of course. Love makes the ways seem smooth ahead, and you have never yet encountered the serious problems.

5. Have you talked about religion between yourselves? Do you argue? Do emotions surge? Have you worked out coolly a firm and honest plan of agreement, and of settling disagreements?

6. What about the children? They can't belong to two religions. You can't raise them with no religion. You know about those promises you will have to sign.

Are you signing them freely and willingly, and without reservation? Will resentments grow up later because you consider them unfair? What about parochial schools? How will you feel when your children study their catechism, learn their prayers, recite their rosary, make their first Communion, show you their holy pictures and crucifixes, jabber about the saints, and eye you critically because you are a heretic? Can you stand being left out like that?

7. What about birth control? Good Catholics are awfully stubborn about that. They think it is a mortal sin. Are you prepared for all the consequences?

8. What about divorce? Catholics are firmly old-fashioned about that, too. Of course, the question will never come up in your marriage—but if it should, what then?

9. What about your family—and your Catholic in-laws? What is their attitude about this mixed marriage? How much trouble might they cause? There is a theory that in-laws are the biggest single danger in mixed marriage.

10. What about marriage before a priest? And the instructions you will have to take—six of them probably?

11. Do you think you might ever become a Catholic? Don't do it unless you are thoroughly convinced and have the Faith. Conversions which are not sincere and thorough may breed resentments and rebellion and cause more danger to the marriage than plain religious differences. But it might be worth investigation. A few instructions wouldn't hurt.

12. Do you have an idea that you might draw the Catholic away from his, or her religion, later? Better not give it another thought. You might just do it; but you probably would not have a happy marriage as a result. If the religion means anything to him, or her, you would only create an uneasy conscience, remorse, and resentments.

13. Can you face facts? Catholics are absolutely convinced that the Catholic Church is the only true Church of Jesus Christ. You can't change them. They firmly believe that they are bound under serious sin to raise their children in the Catholic faith. You may foil them, but you can not change their conscience. You are not asked to agree with Catholics on these points. You should recognize the fact of their convictions.

14. Just how deeply in love are you? Can you possibly break away from this Catholic without fracturing your heart?

Q. In your Question Box a few weeks ago you wrote about a Catholic girl converting a non-Catholic boyfriend. Just what does the Church say about mixed marriages? You used the word FORBID. Each day brings more Catholics in contact with this serious problem of mixed marriages. If we all were better informed we could face the problem much easier.

A. I can think of no better way of answering your question than simply to translate the law of the Church:

Can. 1060.—The Church everywhere most seriously forbids marriage between two baptized persons one of whom is Catholic and the other a member of an heretical or schismatic church; and if there should be danger that the Catholic party or the children be led astray, then such marriage is also forbidden by the divine law.

Can. 1061.—1) The Church does not grant a dispensation from this impediment of mixed religion, unless:

- a. Good and serious reasons urge it;
- b. The non-Catholic spouse gives pledge which will remove danger of the Catholic party's being led astray; and both parties give pledge that all the children will

be baptized and educated exclusively in the Catholic religion;

c. That there be moral certainty that these pledges will be fulfilled.

2) These pledges shall ordinarily be made in writing.

Can. 1062.—The Catholic spouse is obliged to prudently seek the conversion of the non-Catholic spouse.

Can. 1064.—Bishops and pastors shall:

1. Keep the faithful from mixed marriages, as far as they possibly can;

2. If they can't prevent them, then they shall exercise every care that these marriages shall not be contracted contrary to the laws of God and His Church;

3. Keep a close watch on mixed marriages which have been celebrated in their own territory or elsewhere, to see that the parties faithfully carry out the promises they made.

Can. 1070.—That marriage is null which is contracted between a non-baptized person and a person baptized in the Catholic church or converted to the Church from heresy or schism.

Can. 1071.—Everything which the law prescribes in Canons 1060-1064 for mixed marriages, must be likewise observed for marriages which are forbidden by the impediment of disparity of cult.

Can. 1102.—In marriages between a Catholic and a non-Catholic . . . all sacred ceremonies are forbidden; but if the Bishop foresees that greater harm will result from this prohibition, he may permit any of the usual ceremonies, except that in no case shall the marriage take place at Mass.

I shall make a brief summary to clarify the above legal language:

1. Mixed marriages (between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic) are most severely forbidden.

2. Marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized

person is most severely forbidden, and it is also invalid. This is the impediment of Disparity of Cult.

3. The Church will not dispense from either one of these impediments unless the promises are signed, and there is moral certainty that the promises will be kept:

4. Bishops and pastors are commanded to exercise their zeal and care to prevent mixed marriages, to see that they are contracted properly, and that the promises are kept.

5. In accordance with Can. 1102, the Bishop often permits that a mixed marriage take place in Church.

Q. I have been discussing questions of religion with a non-Catholic school-mate. He wants to know why it is that the Church will not permit a mixed marriage unless both parties promise that all children will be raised Catholics. He says the reason is that the Catholic Church wants to have more members than all the other churches; so that if there should be a world war on religion they would be able to win. I am sure this is not the answer, but he has not found my own answers satisfactory.

A. We Catholics honestly believe that our Church was established by Jesus Christ, that it is the ONLY true Church, and the only means of salvation which Our Lord placed on earth.

Can anyone believe that and permit his children to be raised outside that one true Church and thus be deprived of the means of salvation? Can you be a good parent and say: I don't care if my children be damned?

We Catholics honestly believe that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, and that in the Church we are intimately united to our Savior, receiving from Him divine life, which is Sanctifying Grace, the means of our salvation, and our life of heaven.

Can anyone be a good parent and wilfully deprive his children of the greatest spiritual treasures to be had in this world? Can you be a good parent and say: I don't care if my children live in spiritual poverty and die in want of Grace?

We Catholics recall many words of our Lord like these: "I am the good shepherd . . . other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also must I bring that they may hear my voice and that there may be but one flock and one shepherd." We are acutely aware of the great love our Lord has for all those He died to save. We don't want Him to lose any of them, or to be deprived of their love.

Can you be a good parent and say: I don't care if my children be raised without any true knowledge or love of Jesus Christ?

We Catholics do not like to taunt our non-Catholic friends, but we frankly and honestly know that all non-Catholic religions are false—all Protestant religions heretical, founded quite recently by mere men to suit their own fancies. They deny many of the truths taught by Jesus Christ and believed by all Christians for 15 centuries.

Can you be a good parent and say: I do not care if my child be raised in ignorance of the truth, or be taught error against Jesus Christ and His own true Church?

Can you say in conscience: I am going to be a Catholic and save my own soul, but to hell with my children?

The Church would be a traitor to Jesus Christ, her founder, if she permitted you to keep your children from knowing and loving Him, and keep them from union with Him in His own Mystical Body.

Your non-Catholic friend will not agree with the faith you have in your Church, its divine foundation, and its unique means of salvation. If he did he would be a Catholic, too. His position is different; in principle he

believes in private interpretation—that one religion is as good as another—that you can be saved in any religion. All you can ask is that he see the reasonableness and necessity of your position. Believing as you do you can not have your children believe otherwise. You believe in truthfulness, honesty, and sobriety; so you will not have your children raised liars, thieves, or drunkards. You believe in Catholicism; so you will not have your children raised heretics.

Before God you, as a parent, will have a grave obligation to care for the faith and morals, the spiritual training and eternal salvation of your children. If you agree to deprive them of the truth and grace of Jesus Christ and give them man-made substitutes, your own soul will pay for it. The Church will have no part of your crime. She forbids it.

Q. How can I answer a non-Catholic who insists it is wrong to ask a non-Catholic to make the necessary promise, that all children must be instructed in the Catholic faith?

A. An answer to this question is given at length above, but we summarize it briefly:

A Catholic is firmly convinced that his Church was founded by Jesus Christ and is the only true religion on earth. He is obliged in conscience to have his children raised in this religion, since their eternal salvation depends upon it.

Very few of our non-Catholics have any similar conviction regarding their religions. Private interpretation and freedom of choice in religion are generally basic Protestant teachings. Thus the non-Catholic can conscientiously sign the promises.

If a particular non-Catholic can not or will not sign

the promises, then the marriage can not take place. The Church CAN NOT permit it; and it is better so, because a successful union could hardly be based on such conflicting convictions.

Q. Our local Episcopalian Bishop recently disapproved of the members of his church signing promises before marriage with a Catholic that all the children will be raised Catholic. What will happen now if a Catholic wishes to marry an Episcopalian?

A. If the good Bishop is trying to discourage his people from marrying Catholics he has the hearty approval and support of the Catholic Church. But in a particular case, if an Episcopalian—or other non-Catholic—refuses to sign the promises, the Church can not grant a dispensation for the marriage. The Catholic person will have to choose between giving up the non-Catholic or living in concubinage. There can be no marriage. A Catholic who attempts marriage before a minister or a justice of the peace is simply not married at all.

Q. When did the Church first make the law requiring the promises to be signed before a dispensation can be obtained to marry a non-Catholic? Wasn't it in 1908?

A. It was long before 1908. From the very beginning the Church has forbidden Catholics to marry pagans, infidels, Jews and heretics.

There was very little difficulty about it until the time of the Protestant Reformation. Then the requests for dispensations began. But for 200 years after the Reformation very few dispensations were granted.

Only in the past 250 years have mixed marriage dis-

pensions become frequent, and as early as 1782, Pope Pius VI wrote to the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines that before a priest could assist at a mixed marriage solemn promises must be required. The non-Catholic had to give a formal declaration in writing, sealed with an oath and signed conjointly with two witnesses, that the Catholic would be free to practice the Catholic religion, and that all children, regardless of sex, be educated in the Catholic faith. The Catholic had to swear and sign in like manner to remain a Catholic, to educate the children Catholics and to strive for the conversion of the non-Catholic spouse.

We may say, in general, that the promises have been required as long as dispensations have been granted. There have been local abuses, particularly in Germany, where some state laws (Prussia, and later the Rhineland and Westphalia) required the boys to be raised in the religion of the father and the girls in the religion of the mother—and later all the children in the religion of the father.

Under the law of God, the Church could hardly do anything else but require the promises. She cannot grant permission for children to be raised heretics or infidels. She cannot permit a marriage in which the children will be so raised. The Church must safeguard the faith of her children. She cannot give permission for a Catholic to marry into the grave danger of perversion to paganism or heresy.

Q. I am a Protestant and plan to marry a Catholic woman 53 years old. What are the laws of the Church for our marriage? Please give all details.

A. This is a mixed marriage. The difference of religion is an impediment. You will need a Dispensation from

this impediment. The priest will obtain it for you from the Bishop, who has special authority from the Pope to grant it, for sufficient reason.

Before the priest can ask for this dispensation, the following things are necessary:

1. You must take six instructions in Catholic doctrine. These are aimed at answering your questions and doubts, giving you a general knowledge of your wife's religion, of why she believes and does so many things which seem strange to you: why she won't eat meat on Friday, why she must go to Mass on Sunday, what the rosary means, the truth about confession, and purgatory, "worship" of the saints, and the "price" of indulgences.

✓ These instructions are not for the purpose of making you a Catholic (you would need five times as many instructions for that). But they let you know what you are getting into in marrying a Catholic, and they should eliminate many arguments and misunderstandings in your married life.

In the course of these six instructions you will learn the Catholic teachings about marriage:

a. Its Holiness. If you are baptized, it will be a sacrament for both of you—a means used by Jesus Christ to give you the graces needed for a happy and successful marriage. Even if you are not baptized, it is a contract instituted by God to join you and your wife together for life in a love which is based on His own love for each of you.

b. Its indissolubility. Neither one of you can ever marry again while the other lives. Ordinary honesty and decency requires that you understand and accept your wife's convictions in this regard. She is marrying you irrevocably for life. It is not fair that you do less for her. Otherwise your contract would be one-sided, unjust, and selfish. If you leave her, you leave her stranded on lonesome shoals for life.

c. Its unity. You must each be faithful to the other, forsaking all others, excluding all others who might detract from your mutual love and obligations.

d. Its primary purpose, which age will probably not permit you to achieve: cooperating with God in creating new life.

e. Its other purposes: Your mutual love, happiness, and help, physical thrills and comfort, intellectual companionship, emotional fulfillment and spiritual development, the working out together of your purpose on earth and your happiness in heaven.

2. It is only fair to you that you should have the benefits of these instructions, because you will be required to sign two solemn promises before you can get that dispensation. You should fully understand what you are signing.

a. The first promise should offer no difficulty. It is simply that you will not interfere in any way with your wife's practice of her religion. Not by taunts and gibes, not by ridicule or mockery, not by sullen pouting or manifest displeasure, not by unwillingness to provide transportation to church, or reasonable help, even in financial requirements.

b. The second promise offers no difficulty to you, either. In fact you will probably consider it a formality. But regardless of your wife's age and the improbability of your having any children, you must both sign promises that any children born of your marriage will be raised in the Catholic Church, taught Catholic doctrine, and trained in sound Christian morality.

3. Before your marriage takes place, the priest will ask you a number of questions, to make sure that you are free to marry. He will ask the same questions of your fiancée. And you will both be expected to answer under oath. He will want to know the following points:

a. Were you ever baptized? The kind of dispensation

needed will depend on this. If you have a baptismal certificate he will probably want to see it.

b. Were you ever married before? If you were, is your wife dead? If you have a living wife, the Church can hardly permit you to acquire another—even though you may have a divorce from the first.

c. Are you entering this marriage with perfect freedom, intending that it should last until death—intending faithfulness in your marital life, and without any conditions or intentions contrary to the purpose or nature of marriage?

d. Are you intending to observe the laws of God regarding proper marriage relationship? In your case there could hardly be reason to do otherwise and the question will probably be passed over as a formality. But in most mixed marriages it is important to know that the non-Catholic intends to respect the conscience of the Catholic in such matters as birth control. Otherwise the Catholic's earthly peace and happiness may be forfeit and eternal salvation placed in critical peril.

It will take much less time for you to answer these questions than it does for me to write about them.

4. Now you are ready for the marriage itself. Ordinarily your marriage will take place in the sacristy or the rectory of the church. But if you, or your bride, want to have it in church, the bishop will probably grant permission.

In any case, you must be married before the priest. Your marriage to a Catholic would be invalid otherwise. Usually that priest is the pastor or assistant in the parish where you are married. Any other priest must be delegated by that pastor or assistant—or by the bishop.

Your marriage should take place in your bride's parish. If you want to be married somewhere else, she will have to obtain her pastor's permission.

There will have to be two witnesses at your marriage.

They should be Catholics, but for good reason the bishop will grant you permission to have at least one non-Catholic. ✓

The ceremony itself will be very short and simple. Your bride may make you don tie and tails, if she wishes. The Church will gladly marry you in much simpler garb. In any case the acute stage of your agony will be quickly over—and then you will only share the chronic pains of other husbands.

All this must seem frightfully complicated to you. It is really rather simple. Just report to the priest in good time, at least a month before the marriage, and he will take it from there. You mostly remain passive—and that attitude may well continue for years.

Q. How do you explain that some mixed marriages must be held in the rectory and some are allowed to be held in the church? I have a great many non-Catholic relatives and I know I'm going to be asked this question so I would like to have an intelligent answer.

A. The Church law, in Canon 1109 §3, prescribes that a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic shall take place outside of church. The main purpose of this regulation is to show the Church's disapproval of these marriages and to discourage other people from entering into them.

However the same Canon provides that the Bishop can dispense from this law and permit a mixed marriage in the church, when he prudently judges that greater harm would otherwise result.

Many bishops in the U. S. have decided in recent years that the complete exclusion of mixed marriages from the church does result in "greater harm." It takes away all religious aspect and atmosphere, giving the marriage

the appearance of a civil contract. It fails to impress the parties that they are receiving a sacrament (if both are baptized) and that they are entering into a solemn, sacred, life-long contract before Almighty God, Himself.

Since there is a wide-spread and growing tendency in America to belittle the sacred character of marriage and its perpetual obligations, these bishops have judged best to dispense, as Canon 1109 permits them to do. Usually this dispensation must be requested by the parties and recommended by the pastor before the Bishop will grant it. Some parties may not ask it. In some cases the pastor may not recommend it. In some cases there may be no good reason for granting it.

That is why some mixed marriages take place in church and others do not. I hope it is an intelligent answer.

Q. When a mixed marriage takes place in the church, is the Blessed Sacrament removed from the church? I notice that some priests perform this marriage outside the communion rail. From this I gather that a mixed marriage ceremony is not to take place in the sanctuary. Is this correct?

A. Regulations differ in various dioceses. There are also differences in parish customs and in the preferences of pastors. Ordinarily the Blessed Sacrament is not removed from the church, though I suppose the Bishop could require this to be done if he judged best.

A mixed marriage can only take place in the church by permission of the Bishop. In granting this permission he may specify whether the ceremony is to be in the sanctuary or outside the communion rail. In our diocese it may be inside; in our neighboring diocese it must be

outside. We are permitted to wear surplices; our neighbors are not.

Q. I recently attended the first mixed marriage I ever saw in church. The priest did not bless the ring. He used no holy water. He did not give a blessing to the married couple. Is this the usual procedure? If so, why do they say that a couple who were married by a Justice of the Peace or a minister go to the priest to have their marriage blessed?

A. The wedding you saw was performed according to the Bishop's instructions for mixed marriages which he permits in church.

The law of the Church (Canon 1102) forbids all sacred rites at mixed marriages; that includes all blessings, holy water, etc.

However, the same Canon allows the Bishop to permit some of these ceremonies when he judges it best to do so. But he can never permit a mixed marriage to take place at Mass.

That expression to get their marriage blessed is a mistake and a misnomer. It has been out of date since 1908. It should never be used. In the first place, the couple who have gone to the J.P. or a minister are not yet married. There is no marriage to be blessed. They go to the priest to get married. In the second place—if it is a mixed marriage—the priest gives them no blessing at all. They simply get married; and if they are both baptized they receive a sacrament.

We moderns should not cling to old fashioned expressions. Let's quit talking about getting a marriage blessed. It dates us. It's corny. It's ancestral—practically prehistoric.

P.S. The new **Collectio Rituum** suggests a modifica-

tion of the above. The exhortation which we now give after a mixed marriage sure looks like a blessing:

“May almighty God bless you, and unite your hearts in the enduring bond of pure love.

“May you be blessed in your children . . .

“May the peace of Christ dwell always in your hearts and in your home . . .

“May you be blessed in your work and enjoy its fruits. . . .

“May the Lord grant you fullness of years so that you may reap the harvest of a good life, and then may He take you up into his eternal dominions in heaven.”

Q. We were married five years ago. It was a mixed marriage. My husband was then a non-Catholic. He has now become a Catholic. Should we be “re-married” so that my husband may also receive the Sacrament of Matrimony? Can we have our wedding rings blessed? Can we receive any blessing we did not receive at the time of the wedding?

A. You can not be “re-married.” You were married once and that was for life. Your husband has already received the Sacrament of Matrimony. He received it at the same time you did. If he was a baptized non-Catholic at the time of your marriage you both received the sacrament when you said, “I will.” If he was not baptized before your marriage then you both received the Sacrament of Matrimony at the moment he was baptized. Your marriage existed as a valid and sacred contract before he was baptized. But for two baptized people that contract is a sacrament. It suddenly became a sacrament and gave you both its graces when baptism made him able to receive it.

You can certainly have your rings blessed; and you

can now receive the nuptial blessing which you could not receive at the time you were married. It would be good for you to do so.

Q. Please explain the regulations that should be followed when a mixed marriage takes place in the Catholic Church in our diocese.

A. 1. The parties should go to see their pastor a month before the date planned for the marriage.

2. The pastor will give a series of at least six instructions on Catholic teachings and practice, in general, and the nature and obligations of marriage, in particular.

3. The prenuptial questionnaire will be answered under oath by both parties, and the necessary certificates will be furnished.

4. The prenuptial promises will be signed. Both parties promise that all children will be raised Catholic; and the non-Catholic promises, in addition, that he will not hinder in any way the Catholic party's religious belief or practice.

5. The pastor will apply to the Bishop for the necessary dispensation, assuring him that he is certain these promises will be kept by both parties.

6. The Bishop, if he find sufficient reason, will grant the dispensation. He has special faculties from the Holy See to do this.

7. The established fee for this dispensation is \$5.00. The Catholic party will give this fee to the pastor when he (or she) signs the promises; the pastor has to send it to the Bishop when he asks for the dispensation. If the Catholic party cannot afford the fee, it will be readily waived.

8. As a general rule the marriage will take place in

the parish rectory. For sufficient reason the Bishop will grant permission for the marriage to be celebrated in church. In this case the following rules will be observed:

- a. There shall be no Mass.
- b. The ceremony will not be after 6:00 P.M.
- c. No talking or visiting will be permitted in the church.
- d. Everyone participating in the ceremonies will observe Catholic practice in genuflecting and in general conduct in church.
- e. The priest will wear cassock and surplice, and follow the usual ceremonies for mixed marriages.
- f. Only music approved for use in church will be permitted.

N.B. There may be some slight variations from the above in other dioceses.

Q. Is it a mortal sin for a Catholic to marry a Protestant?

A. If it were then the priest who assisted at the marriage would be guilty of mortal sin, too, by his cooperation. Imagine the Bishop granting permission for people to commit mortal sin in church.

Of course, the Church, by her general law, does forbid such marriage under pain of mortal sin. But when she grants a dispensation, she exempts these particular people from her law. The Church could not grant a dispensation for people to commit mortal sin; she grants a dispensation so that they will not commit sin. She does not grant a dispensation until she has investigated a particular case and found that it is better, for the welfare of souls, to exempt it from her general law.

I would refer you to an earlier question in this book about keeping company with non-Catholics.

Q. I have yet to read in any Catholic paper, magazine or catechism anything to the effect that a mixed marriage can possibly work out. Everything I read seems to bring out the point that such a marriage leads to unhappiness, children being raised with little or no religion, a drawing away from the Church by the Catholic, or possibly all three consequences.

I was brought up a Methodist, but after we were married I took instructions and became a Catholic. So, although I'm now a member of the Church, it was a mixed marriage. I don't suppose I'd be considered a truly good Catholic but I'm trying, and that is about the best I can do.

Two of my husband's sisters married non-Catholics. One joined the Church; the other did not; but it has not weakened their religion or their marriages. With three such cases in one family, isn't it reasonable that there are many similar ones?

Though I fully realize that the consequences I mentioned before are possible, couldn't there be a kind word once in a while for us who are really trying to make our marriages happy and lasting?

A. Lady, you have stated the case well. My own kind word is: May the Good Lord bless you and your family abundantly, and increase your kind a hundred-fold. But for a mixed marriage like yours this writer would not exist. It is because of the happy outcome of marriages like yours and your "in-laws" that the Church keeps granting dispensations from her law forbidding mixed marriages—prayerfully hoping that more may turn out thus.

You always hear the other side because statistics throughout the country show that the results generally are not good, and the Church wants to keep her young unmarried children from the dangers involved. None

of the publicity you read against mixed marriages is intended to cause pain to those like yourself who have overcome the dangers. On the contrary you should thank God that He has permitted you to succeed where others might have failed.

Q. A non-Catholic lady tells me that her sister is married to a Catholic, but that this sister refused to sign the promises, and that their two children have not been baptized. One of them goes to the Lutheran Church and the other the Presbyterian. Now my question is, can a valid marriage be performed by a priest for a Catholic and a non-Catholic if the non-Catholic will not sign the promises, or make the promises required for the dispensation?

A. I know nothing about the marriage of your friends. It was probably not before a priest. But this I do know with certainty: No priest can assist at the marriage of a Catholic and a non-Catholic without a dispensation. And no Bishop can grant a dispensation unless the promises are made by both parties in apparent good faith and sincerity.

I have heard that some unfaithful people make promises in bad faith, or fail to keep them. Neither the priest nor the Bishop can do much about this. God Himself will find a way of taking care of it later.

Q. Does the Church ever refuse permission for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic because of the attitude of the non-Catholic (disagreement) during the instruction period?

A. Let us review briefly the law of the Church regarding the marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic.

1. The Church forbids these marriages.

2. The Church will sometimes grant a dispensation for a particular Catholic to marry a particular non-Catholic, but only on the following conditions:

(a) There is a very good reason why she should grant the dispensation, making exception to her law.

(b) The promises are made and signed by both Catholic and non-Catholic that all children will be raised Catholic. The non-Catholic must also promise not to interfere with the Catholic's religion.

(c) There is moral certitude that these promises will be kept.

How can the Bishop have moral certitude that the promises will be kept? Usually he has to rely on the pastor or priest who asks for the dispensation on behalf of the parties. This priest usually gets to know the parties during instructions. He assumes a great responsibility when he formally assures the Bishop that he is certain these parties will keep their promises. If he has found the non-Catholic difficult, unpleasant, and disagreeable during instructions, he may well have serious doubts about this person's sincerity in signing the promises. If he has such doubt, he cannot recommend the dispensation.

In some rare cases disagreements during instructions are simply misunderstandings or a clash of personalities. If this should be the case and the non-Catholic is really sincere about the promises and all they imply, then the case should be taken directly to the Bishop.

Q. I read in Quick magazine that the Church now recognizes the baptisms given in certain Protestant churches, and will approve of the marriage of Catholics to baptized members of those churches. Is this true?

A. Quick was too quick. It jumped the gun by a hundred yards, and should be penalized an equal distance for inaccurate reporting.

The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, in Rome, did give a decision recently on the subject of baptism, in reply to a question proposed by some American Bishops. There is nothing particularly new about this reply. It is a restatement of the traditional Catholic teaching. You learned most of it when you studied your Catechism.

The Church has always taught that any person having the use of reason can baptize. Even a pagan can baptize. He need not believe in baptism himself. He need only intend to do what Christ commanded; say the proper words; and pour, or sprinkle, or immerse in such manner that the cleansing effect of the sacrament is signified.

The question presented by the Bishops arose from the modern teachings of some of these Protestant churches. Their ideas of baptism differ greatly from ours. Some of them don't believe it is a sacrament. Many of them do not believe it is really necessary to salvation. Some of them teach that baptism, itself, does nothing to the soul, but is merely a sign of faith, or of the sanctification already wrought by faith. Some of them ridicule the idea of original sin and its remission by baptism. For many it is only an outward sign of membership in the church.

The Bishops wanted to know whether we should, in view of these teachings, continue to presume valid the baptisms administered in these churches. Do they really intend to do what Christ commanded, or something entirely different which they have dreamed up themselves? The answer is that, in spite of all their errors, they seemingly still intend to do what Christ com-

manded. They simply have strange notions of what He commanded.

The Result: Nothing new at all. We will continue to investigate each baptism, as need may arise, e.g. in receiving a convert, or preparing for a mixed marriage. In nearly all cases the result will be the same: We remain in doubt whether the baptism is valid or not. So we baptize the convert **CONDITIONALLY**.

This decision will not make mixed marriages any easier. It will have no effect on their validity. It simply means that we can make no general presumption that all these baptisms (in the Baptist, Congregationalist, Disciples of Christ, Methodist and Presbyterian churches) are invalid. We never did make such general presumption, anyway. We can still remain a little doubtful about them, just as we always were.

Q. Can a Catholic lady married to a man who is a Mason belong to the Catholic church?

A. She certainly can—and does. I presume that they were married by a priest. If so, there should be nothing to prevent this woman from receiving the sacraments.

The Church warns Catholics against marrying Masons or members of other societies condemned by the Church (Can. 1065). A pastor may not assist at such a marriage without consulting the Bishop. But if the Bishop permits the marriage to take place, the Catholic party remains in good standing with her Church. The Bishop can permit such marriages only for grave reason, and provided there is assurance that the Catholic party's faith will not suffer and that the children will be raised Catholics.

Q. A Catholic friend of mine is going to marry a non-Catholic girl who will not join the Church. If they

are married in the Church is it permissible for her father, who is a Mason, to give her away?

A. There will be no difficulty about that; it is the least of the problems involved. The Catholic man will have to obtain a dispensation from the Bishop before he can marry this girl. If the Bishop grants the dispensation, I am sure he will be little concerned about who gives the bride away.

Q. Can a Catholic marry an active Communist if she herself does not accept the Communist ideas?

A. Marriage to an active Communist is forbidden just like marriage to a non-Catholic. A dispensation is required. The prenuptial promises must be signed. There must be a very good reason for the dispensation or it will not be granted.

Any Catholic who would marry an active Communist is simply asking for World War III on a domestic scale. And she will probably find that her spouse already has the A-Bomb.

Q. Are interracial marriages wrong in the eyes of the Catholic church, even though both parties are Catholic?

A. They are not wrong. The Church has no law forbidding interracial marriages.

There are no objections to such marriages on moral or religious grounds. However, in our country prejudice presents many practical difficulties to the success of such a marriage, particularly between negroes and whites. These social difficulties, as well as differences in attitude, background, and temperament should be given

due consideration. Marriage is for life, and the odds against its success should be kept to a minimum.

Q. Is it wrong or sinful in any way for a young couple of different races (e.g. white and negro) to enter marriage, knowing that their children will be subject to many hardships because of prejudice against them? Would the children themselves be justified in holding it against their parents?

A. First of all, we must make it definitely clear that such a marriage is NOT WRONG IN ITSELF. There is no law of God—no law of the Church—which forbids such a marriage. The laws of some of our States do forbid such marriages, but these laws are not valid for baptized people. It is interesting to note that the courts recently held such a law unconstitutional in California. Only the Church can make a valid law forbidding baptized people to marry.

But circumstances frequently change the morality of an act. And we must always be alert to the consequences of our acts. An act good in itself may be made bad by its circumstances or consequences. From an act like marriage there are many consequences lasting throughout the years and affecting the lives of many people. Many of these consequences we can not foresee. These have no effect on the morality of our act. But others we can and SHOULD foresee. These we must weigh seriously and carefully. Do the good consequences outweigh the bad?

PREJUDICE IS A FACT

Young people of different races contemplating marriage must seriously consider the social problems they themselves will encounter and those they impose upon

their children. We may rightly condemn our racial prejudices. But they are facts; hard, painful and persistent facts. Before a man is justified in subjecting his wife and children to the rigorous reality of those facts, he must think repeatedly and weigh well.

But there are good results to be weighed—mutual love and happiness and helpfulness and the blessings consequent thereto.

In any given case the parties must carefully consider all the consequences. If they judge that the good effects outweigh the bad, they do no wrong at all in marrying. It is the good they intend. They accept the bad with it, as something inescapable in human life.

But they should seek competent advice, too. Because they are apt to be deluded by emotion, and to weigh the scales with their own desires. The problem is serious and the consequences will last for generations.

It should be mentioned that racial prejudice and the resulting social problems are largely local. In many parts of the world there is no social handicap resulting from such marriages.

UNGRATEFUL CHILDREN

But we do not believe the children have any right to blame their parents. They should measure their social handicaps against the benefits received from their parents: life and health, mind and body, home and love and happiness. If their parents had not defied social prejudice these children wouldn't even exist. They wouldn't have personality or immortality.

Their mixed race is nothing more than a social handicap resulting from prejudice. Such a handicap may well serve to develop character, to inspire to greatness, and to lead to the full happiness of self-conquest and victory over circumstances. It really handicaps only those who use it as an excuse for failure or a refuge from fear.

Chapter 9: MARRIAGE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Civil marriage first—Public penance—Christian burial—Getting it sanctioned—Divorcee remarried—Stand of the family—Saving the bum—Wife refuses—Two ceremonies—Attending the reception—Giving scandal—The big ceremony—The fallen-away—The middle-aged—Bridesmaid.

Q. Is it true that anyone who is not married by a priest is not married, but is living in adultery?

If a Catholic couple gets married by a justice of the peace how do they stand? What will they have to do to get back into good relations with the Church? Would it be worse if they had been married by a minister?

Suppose this couple should separate and plan to get a divorce, can they receive the sacraments? Do they have to do anything besides just go to confession?

I know a young man—a Catholic, of course—who says he is going to be married by a justice of the peace and then get his marriage blessed. Is there any law against this?

A. Your question has more parts than a guided missile. But they do fit together well. So we will take them apart and try to answer them one by one:

1. Not everyone is required to get married before a

priest—only a Catholic. Note this, however: a fallen-away Catholic is still obliged by this law, no matter how completely he may have fallen away—no matter what other church he may have joined. The law applies to everyone baptized in the Catholic Church, and to every convert to the Church. The baptized Catholic is bound by this law no matter whom he marries—Catholic or non-Catholic, pagan or Jew.

Two non-Catholics (neither one ever a Catholic) can be married however they want. They should do it legally, of course, but they can choose whomever they wish to perform the job: justice or minister, rabbi or swami. It is perfectly valid, and if they are both baptized it is a sacrament.

It is not quite accurate to say that a Catholic is living in adultery after he has tried to get married before someone other than a priest. Not unless he or his girlfriend has been previously married. Strictly speaking adultery is the sin of a married person who is unfaithful to the spouse, or the sin which a single person commits with a married one. When neither one is married we have some other names for their sin—not pretty names, either—like fornication, or concubinage. But why be technical? Your word expresses the idea.

2. The Catholic couple who have attempted marriage by the justice of the peace are definitely not in good standing. They pretend to be married, but they aren't, really. Pretense alone might not be bad. But they actually live together as though they were married. That is bad.

While they continue to live together in this manner, of course they can not receive the sacraments. In order to get back into good standing with the Church they must do one of two things:

a. Separate and repent. They should make plans for a divorce, make good confessions, and obtain God's for-

givenness for their sins. The divorce is needed to straighten out the contradiction in their position. The state considers them married; actually they are single. After the divorce the state won't consider them married, and everyone will be agreed. Some of the neighbors may consider them married, too, and the divorce should clear that up. It may be a source of scandal to those who do not understand, but for those in the know it will remove the scandal. And it may also remove an occasion of sin.

b. Get married. They should go to a priest; he can advise them. But they must be sure that they really want to get married, and that it will last for life. Their trial-marriage might give them some useful pointers to aid their decision. But he should not marry her just to make an honest woman of her. The process is too long.

It would be worse if they had attempted their marriage before a minister. That sort of thing has a hint of heresy in it, or at least an acknowledging bow to religious indifference. The Church calls that a crime and puts a penalty on it: excommunication.

Sometimes people escape that excommunication because they don't know about it. The Church is very considerate. She won't punish you unless you knew before the crime that she had threatened punishment. Not only does ignorance of the law excuse you from sin in breaking the law, but ignorance of the penalty lets you escape the punishment.

Once this excommunication is incurred it is reserved to the bishop. Your case must be referred to him for **absolution from the censure**—removal of the excommunication—before you can receive the sacraments. And of course he will not give the absolution unless there is repentance and plan of reform. One or the other of the two ways indicated above must be chosen: separate or marry.

3. This question has already been answered. When they separate and plan to stay apart they can receive the sacraments. A real good confession is all they need.

4. Your young Catholic man simply can not get married by the justice of the peace, as we explained above. His efforts to do so are futile. All the justice of the peace can do is fix it so the young man won't get arrested for living with this girl. You ask if there is a law against it. I would say that the sixth Commandment of God forbids it. At least it does if the young man plans to live with his beloved before the marriage is "blessed."

That expression: "to have his marriage blessed" is false and misleading. Since there is no marriage in existence there is nothing to be blessed. What they do, when they go to the priest later on, is get married. And about time!

Q. When I was attending school, some time past, a priest told us that when a Catholic person married before a minister he had to do public penance to be received back into the Church. Has that been changed?

A. You have the advantage over most of us. We are too young to remember public penances. They are very rare in the Church since the Middle Ages. There weren't any "ministers" then.

Any Catholic attempting marriage before a minister is excommunicated. He can only be absolved from his excommunication when he has repented, is ready to accept his penance, and to undo the scandal he has caused, as far as he can. The Bishop is the one who absolves him, and the Bishop can make such reasonable requirements as he judges best to repair the scandal.

Sometimes, and more frequently in former years—it is probably this which you have in mind—a public

apology, or confession of guilt and repentance, was demanded. Most Bishops now feel that sincere conversion and a good life are the best means of undoing the public harm. Public apology or retraction is rare.

Q. When a person is excommunicated because of marriage outside the Church, and dies suddenly without being re-married in the Church, can that person be brought into the Church? If so, why?

A. I presume you mean to ask: "Can that person be brought into the church for burial?" It is only with the aid of six strong men to carry him that he could be brought into the church after death; and we may wonder how much good that may do his soul.

Possibly it may help if we publish again the laws of the Church regarding those entitled to Christian burial. Canon 1239 states that all baptized persons are to be given Christian burial unless expressly denied it by law. Then Canon 1240 enumerates those to whom Christian burial is denied, unless they gave **SOME SIGN** of repentance before death:

1. Heretics, schismatics, masons, etc.
2. Those who have been officially declared to be excommunicated.
3. Deliberate and voluntary suicides.
4. Those killed in duel.
5. Those who gave orders that their bodies be cremated.
6. Obvious public sinners.

The law directs that in case of doubt the Bishop should be consulted; and if there is still doubt, Christian burial should be permitted. The Church is lenient and kind in the matter out of sympathy for family and friends in their sorrow. We should imitate the Church

and be lenient and kind, too, in our judgments. Maybe there was some sign of repentance about which we know nothing. Maybe we don't know all the facts. Maybe we should mind our own business.

Q. Is there any way for a Catholic girl, married to a divorced man by a Justice of the Peace, to have the marriage sanctioned in the Church, or for the girl to still remain in the Church?

A. This girl should go to see her pastor and talk the whole matter over with him. The answer will depend on the circumstances of the man's previous marriage.

In a very few cases it might be possible for the girl to marry the man (she isn't married to him now—only pretending to be).

In most cases she will have to leave him if she values her soul and its salvation. She can't serve God and live with another woman's husband at the same time. He is another woman's husband, you know, even if she doesn't want him—or was meant to him.

This girl is still in the Church. She is a bad Catholic—an adulteress—but still a Catholic. She can't receive the sacraments because she intends to keep on committing sin. But she can go to Mass, and she is obliged to go, even though her lack of sincerity may prevent her getting much good out of it.

Q. Six years ago I married a non-Catholic. He made life miserable and treated me so terribly that my life was in danger. I received permission from the Bishop to obtain a divorce. The alimony which the Court awarded me was not sufficient to support me and my child. So a year later, I married a Catholic before a

justice of the peace. We think a lot of our religion and are worried about our problem. My family feels bad about our situation. Here are the questions I want answered:

- 1. Are we allowed to give money to the Church?*
- 2. Are we allowed to belong to card circles and social activities?*
- 3. Can we belong to any parish?*
- 4. Can we send our children to the Catholic school?*

A. First let me state some general principles:

The fact that you are regularly committing one type of sin and living without sanctifying grace does not change your obligation to observe the other laws of God and His Church. It is still wrong for you to steal, or lie, or miss Mass on Sunday.

Your status may deprive you of certain rights and privileges in the Church, but it does not take away any of your obligations.

So you are still obliged to Sunday Mass, Friday abstinence, Lenten fast, yearly confession and Easter duty. You are obliged to contribute your just share to the support of the Church, and to educate your children in their religion.

Of course you simply cannot fulfill your obligations of yearly confession and Easter duty while you continue in your present status, any more than you can fulfill your obligation under the sixth commandment.

Now to answer your particular questions:

1. You are allowed to give money to the Church. You are obliged to do so, like any other Catholic.
2. You cannot expect to be accepted into social groups. Your sinful status is a public fact. You have no right to expect people to overlook it or condone it. You will be much happier if you do not try to get into groups where you are plainly not wanted.

3. Not only can you belong to a parish, you DO belong. The pastor is YOUR pastor. You are the sheep of his flock who cause him most trouble and worry.

4. You can send your children to the parochial school and you are obliged to do so. Your children have done nothing wrong. They have the same right to a Catholic education as any other children.

Q. If one's sister leaves the Church to marry a divorced man, what stand should the family take? What should they do about writing to her, sending her wedding gifts and inviting her to their home? What should other relatives do? They say that she always sent them such nice wedding gifts that they feel they are obliged to give her a nice gift in return.

She has an aunt who is a nun. This nun sends her gifts at Christmas and sends her prayers to say, telling her to keep praying that things will work out in the end for her. Is this right? It looks to me like this nun is encouraging her to stay with the man and hoping against hope that it will work out for them.

A. The situation you describe presents a most difficult and painful problem for the immediate family. Her parents love their little girl. Her brothers and sisters love their sister. She was once a very good girl. But she began running around with another woman's husband (divorced, of course, but still a husband). She probably kept it quiet for a while and was furtive and ashamed about it. Then the family got to know. They saw the dangers, warned, pleaded, threatened, quarreled and prayed. But she refused to listen. She was falling in love and the love was hopelessly forbidden. That made it more desperately attractive.

At first she may have prayed hard (not against temp-

tation, but that God's will somehow be changed.) Possibly she talked to a priest or two, giving him part of the facts, letting his warnings go unheeded, and deciding that he probably didn't know his canon law very well anyway. "Now there was Jane Blow. She married her man in the Church and they say her case was just like this. How can the Church let her get married and not me?"

She became bitter, I warrant, and blamed the Church, and maybe even screamed that if she had enough money she could get permission to marry this man. Tyrone Power got it, didn't he? And Jane Blow? And that awful girl over in the next block! And they say her husband had been married three times!

So she came to blame the Church, whose laws were unfair, whose priests mercenary and discriminatory. God would understand that she was in love and had to lead her own life.

I sometimes wish that some girl who is preparing to marry a divorced man would omit all the hysterical rationalizing and searching for excuses. It would be refreshingly shocking to hear her declare honestly and humbly: "My passions have subdued my faith. Desire has overridden my morality. I am going to live with a married man who means more to me right now than God. I know it's just plain adultery, but I'll take my chances on hell."

I am not answering your questions. I don't know the answer to the first question. If it is hard for the family to determine what their stand should be, it is harder for an outsider to indicate that stand for them. I can outline principles, but the application of those principles depends much on personalities, circumstances, and family customs.

Here are the principles: The family must do nothing

to encourage, condone, or cooperate with the sinful situation. They must do nothing to add to the scandal of it. But on the other hand they must be just and charitable toward their sinning loved-one. It is sometimes hard to treat a beloved sinner fairly and impartially. There is too much that hurts inside us. We become hard in manner to cover that hurt and fend off further wounds.

At least there must be no "wedding" gifts, neither from the immediate family nor from any of the relatives or friends. None of them should attend the "wedding" or have anything to do with the arrangements for it. The mildest attitude they can take is to turn sadly, look the other way, and ignore the whole thing.

I am afraid that most all of us occasionally share the errors of the good religious aunt. We accept the sinful situation as inescapable, half-condone it by our gestures of kindly tolerance, and resignedly counsel dalliance in the guise of presumptuous prayer. We shrug off all thoughts of heroism in preference to hell, advise that the will while clinging now to sin be kept malleable to conditional future resolution, and hope sentimentally for the miracle which will permit things to be straightened out.

The trouble is that we are daily surrounded by these adulterous arrangements resulting from divorce. Our society accepts them with a smile or a smirk. We get used to them. They seem hardly wrong when non-Catholics are involved, and for Catholics only mitigated sin deserving of sympathy.

Kindness, tolerance and politeness proceed from the beautiful virtue of charity. Neither is there found amongst us anyone without sin to start flinging stones. But we must not let our sentimentality become so thick that it fouls up our judgment of sin.

Q. My brother, a Catholic, has been married and divorced, and his wife has re-married. I think it was largely his fault. Anyway after the divorce he turned out very bad, became an alcoholic, joined up with gangsters, spent time in jail, married a divorced woman, and divorced her. Since then he has met and married a non-Catholic girl, who is a very good person. She apparently straightened him out for a while; then things went bad and he returned to his old habits and companions. He abused his wife, beat her, took her car and traded it for an expensive one, and then wrecked that, and landed in jail. Then he disappeared, leaving her to have their baby alone. Now she has finally found him and wants to help him rehabilitate himself. We have all tried to help him without success, and fear that he is totally lost if her help fails. He has agreed to drop his friends (the bad ones), quit drinking, and leave this locality to try for a new start.

The wife feels (and rightly so) that without God's help she can do little. She would like to become a Catholic, which in my humble opinion is impossible at this stage. Could I advise them to see a minister in their new location and seek help that way? She wants the baby and herself baptized. Or is there any way that they could get this help from a priest? She wants to join a church, and the three of them go together. What can she do?

A. She has a great fund of admirable courage and hope. But you cannot counsel her to do wrong in order to accomplish her good purpose. She would not consider it wrong to join a Protestant church; but you know that it is wrong, and you cannot advise her to do it. She does not consider it wrong to live with this divorced man; you know that it is wrong, but you had best keep quiet

about that and let her remain in her good faith. You would not accomplish any good for either her or your brother by telling her of the wrong.

What can she do? I would suggest that she go to see the priest in the place where they will establish their new home. She will not be able to become a Catholic, under present circumstances; but she can attend the Catholic church, learn much about the religion, and get much more out of even this partial membership than she would from joining some other church. Their baby can be baptized. And I am sure that your brother, if he remembers anything of his early Catholic education and practice, would get no help or consolation out of a Protestant church. He might get some natural help, and maybe the promptings of Divine Grace from his attendance at Mass, even in his sinful state.

It is not an ideal solution. There are evils to which we must close our eyes. But it is easy to close our eyes when these evils are so much less than the former ones, or the alternative ones. Humanly speaking, there is no hope for the total observance of God's law in the case; so we must tolerate the lesser evil. Better that part of the law be kept with a measure of good faith and decency, than that all ten commandments be smashed shamefully. We cannot positively counsel evil, even the lesser evil. But we can blink at it with fairly grateful tolerance.

If this second try at reform meets the fate you fearfully expect of it, then I would certainly advise this good girl, whom you call guileless, to leave this man and let him reform himself. She should not ruin her life for him, especially when her marriage to him is not even valid, and cannot be made so. A wife's work of reform usually involves heroism, sacrifice, suffering, frequent disgrace, and very often bitter disappointment.

(My answer to this question may stir in some minds memory of recent controversy. I certainly hope that nothing I have said will be interpreted as advice to people invalidly married that they should continue to live together, as though sin were preferable to heroic sacrifice. My point is that we are not always required to give advice, especially when we know that it will not be heeded. We cannot recommend or encourage evil, even lesser evil. We cannot even rejoice in the lesser evil itself. But we can rejoice that the greater evil is avoided.

I am presuming that this girl's sin is only material, not formal; and that the man is so oblivious to sin that he is asking no advice from anyone.)

Q. Four years ago, a Catholic boy married a Protestant girl outside the Church. They have lived peacefully, and seemingly very happily together and have two small children. Should an effort be made to break up this union, if the wife refuses to have the children reared as Catholics, thereby making a Catholic marriage impossible?

A. These people are not married. The fact that their sinful life together has been happy and peaceful does not make it sacred. And now the spiritual welfare of two children is involved. Which is more important: To go on lolling pleasurably in sin, or to train these immortal souls for heaven?

But if the marriage is broken up, who will get the children? And what chance will they have to be properly trained, with only one parent? Best thing is to try to convince the woman that the spiritual welfare and happiness of her husband and children is important, and that she is stubbornly making it impossible—probably without sound logical conviction, only prejudice.

Q. I have gone with a Lutheran boy for two years. He goes to church with me, but hasn't joined. He is willing to be married in the Catholic Church but his mother won't let him. She is sick and not expected to live long. The shock of his marriage in the Catholic Church would kill her. If we wait he may have to go into the Army. We plan to be married secretly by the priest and then to have a public marriage in the Lutheran church. Is that wrong? My family say they can't attend this Lutheran marriage. What am I to do?

A. The first thing you should do is obey the law of the Church. Canon 1063 explicitly forbids the thing you are planning to do. Canon 2319 excommunicates you for doing it.

Your family is right. They cannot attend this Lutheran marriage. Do you expect them all to come in full dress to see you excommunicated? Do you want them there to applaud you while you disgrace them publicly and give scandal to all who know you?

If the pastor, who is to marry you secretly, knew of your plans he would not assist at your marriage. That same Canon 1063 forbids him. So you are deceiving him. Is that right?

I don't know just what you should do. But I do know that the Church forbids you to marry this man anyway. She most severely forbids all mixed marriages (Canon 1060). Sure she grants dispensations, but she would never grant you one if she knew what you are planning to do. So by lying and dishonesty you trick her into exempting you from her law.

If you are determined to marry this man, at least wait until God and His grim reaper prepare the way for you. The Army might not harm your young man, and I suspect that the draft, in this case, would do you a world

of good. At least it would be much better for you than excommunication.

If you are both of age, you might, if the Church dispenses you, simply go and get married quietly by the priest. (Period.) That is your right. I doubt very much that you will seriously endanger the waning life of your mother-in-law, unless her blood pressure is unusually high.

Q. A friend of our family—a Catholic—plans to be married soon to a non-Catholic man, by a Justice of the Peace. Would it be wrong for me to attend a reception for her? She is past 25 years of age and should know better. I would like to go to the reception, but I would not like for her or anyone else to think I approve of such an unthinkable act.

A. A Catholic girl who does a thing of this kind puts all her relatives and friends in a sad and delicate position. They have always loved her and they don't want to hurt her. They don't want to stir up family quarrels and bitter resentments. But, in conscience, they cannot give approval to the sinful thing she is doing. They are obliged, where possible, to avoid seeming to give approval.

A Catholic girl who does a thing of this kind knows full well that she is committing sin, violating the law of God and the law of His Church. She has probably done a lot of rationalizing and talking to herself, until she has found many excuses and half convinced herself that God will understand because He knows what true love means, even if cold-hearted clerics never felt it. But she should remember that her family and friends have not followed her in her rationalizations. They still see the sin, stark and shameful.

The Catholic girl should be considerate. She should not try to drag all those she loves into her sin with her. They don't even share the thrill of it—only the guilt. If she must sin, she should do it honestly and quietly, and not try to disguise it in the gaudy trappings of respectability.

These unfortunate affairs—when they are dressed up with parties and splendor—cause family fights and neighborhood enmities, bitter criticisms, and harsh feelings that rankle long. There is no one easier hurt than the person who knows she is doing wrong, but wants to appear to do right. She is just waiting for you to seem to detect the wrong she knows she can't hide.

Now for your question: You can hardly attend this party without giving approval—or seeming to give approval—to all it stands for. Stay away. Not disdainfully, nor with arrogant reproach or righteous scorn, but quietly, regretfully, with a bit of sympathy and a fervent prayer. Don't cast a stone. Admit humbly that it might bounce back. For she is just another sinner. God be merciful to her.

Q. A Catholic friend of mine is giving a pre-nuptial party for a mutual friend of ours, also a Catholic, who has announced her plans to be married outside the Church. May I attend the party?

A. You may not. And you must tell your friend plainly why you may not. She is giving grave scandal by having this pre-nuptial party; and you, as her friend, have an obligation to prevent this scandal, if you can. If she won't listen to you I suggest that you take the matter to your pastor.

Suppose your mutual friend had publicly announced that she was going to live with a man who is not her hus-

band (but is probably validly married to someone else) would you be attending parties for her?

That is exactly what she has announced. She isn't going to marry this man. She is merely going to do some play-acting before a Justice of the Peace or a non-Catholic minister, and then live with him publicly and shamelessly, as an adulteress, defying God and scorning His Church.

If you go to a party given for her you publicly approve her adultery, her perversity, and her scandal. You sin by cooperation.

Q. I read in our local paper a big write-up about the marriage of a Catholic girl (divorced) in a Protestant church. Her father (a Catholic) gave her away. Her sister (a Catholic) was her bridesmaid. Various other Catholics participated in the ceremony. How can this be done?

A. How can murder be done? Or theft? Or adultery? It is done by violating the laws of God and His Church. These people did grave wrong—all of them. They gave serious scandal to hundreds of people. God will probably impose serious punishment for what they have done.

The "bride" is excommunicated.

The loving father gave her away, indeed—to the devil. He gave her grandly and elegantly into a life of adultery.

The sister's beauty attracted the gaze of admiring eyes as she solemnly witnessed her sister's shame and excommunication.

We are not unsympathetic. We can imagine the story. The girl's first husband was a stinker. She couldn't live with him—and now her life must not be ruined. She has found such a nice man. The Church's laws are too strict. You can't expect her to live alone the rest of her life.

Let's make the best of it. Adultery is rather attractive with the right man. Besides he will provide a good home for her. And she will be happy. God will understand.

Such sentimental drivel is widely used to justify euthanasia, abortion, birth-control, divorce, and various other crimes. A jury of women recently used it, in our own State, to free a handsome young man from punishment for confessed murder. Poor fellow! He should have a chance to be happy. Hang the cost to society, public morality and the law of God. But don't hang this nice boy by his pretty neck.

Q. A friend of mine who was baptized a Catholic and made his first Communion, but fell away many years ago, is going to be married in the Episcopal church. I have been invited. May I attend the wedding?

A. You may not. He is obliged to marry before a priest. This attempted marriage of his will be invalid. You may not take part in such sin and mockery even by being present at it. Of course, he may think he is doing right, and thus be excused from formal sin. But you know it is wrong, so you can not be excused. Send him polite regrets. If he is in good faith he will not be offended. If he is in bad faith, he will get the point.

Q. My friend is contemplating marriage to a Protestant who will neither join the Church nor make the promises necessary for a mixed marriage. She is middle aged so I feel that she is old enough to know what she is doing. Will it be wrong for me, a Catholic, to attend their wedding?

A. It most certainly would be wrong. The fact that she is old enough to know better makes it all the more seri-

ous. Young fools might rush impetuously into passionate sin. She is being deliberate and calculating about it. Maybe she excuses herself on the plea that it is her last hope this side of hell.

Q. My cousin, a Catholic, is getting married to a non-Catholic in a non-Catholic church. She is giving up her religion. She wants me to be bridesmaid. My pastor has refused me permission to do so. I understand it, but this cousin's family do not. They are very angry at me. They say this is not freedom of religion.

A. Why do I get so many questions of this kind? The answer should be very clear. Your pastor is entirely right. No Catholic can assist at the marriage of another Catholic in a Protestant church. You can't do it even if the whole family threaten to disown you. You are right and they are entirely wrong. So let them howl. You are not the first person to be persecuted for your faith.

I will repeat the answer I have given so often: No Catholic can be validly married except by a priest. If a Catholic tries to get married by a minister or a judge, he is making a mockery of marriage. He is committing sin and publicly proclaiming his intention to live in sin. Can you join with him in that?

This cousin of yours is doing much worse. She is denying her faith. The martyrs died in torment rather than deny their faith. Her parents evidently back her up and encourage her in making a mockery of Christ and the Church He founded. She is being excommunicated on at least two counts. Would you accompany her to her excommunication in the splendor of tulle, gardenias, and organ music?

Freedom of religion does not mean freedom to commit sin. No one is free to break the first, fifth and sixth

commandments of God, all in one splendid act. That is what your cousin is doing: breaking the first, by denying her faith; the fifth, by scandal; and the sixth by taking to herself a man who is not her husband. Neither are you free to help her break them—to approve, and applaud, and accompany her in her shameless act. You are entirely right. Be firm.

Chapter 10: NON-CATHOLIC MARRIAGES

Are they recognized?—Are they valid?—Must converts re-marry?—Catholic participation—Playing the organ—Catholic mayor.

Q. Why do Catholics not recognize a marriage unless they are married by a priest?

A. Catholics do recognize and consider valid the marriage of two non-Catholics who are married by a minister or a justice of the peace. It is only a Catholic who cannot marry validly except before a priest.

The Church believes that Jesus Christ gave her the right to make laws regarding the valid marriage of her people. Usually such marriages are sacraments, and the Church has charge of all her sacraments. No one disputes the Church's right to make laws regarding the reception of Holy Communion.

The State of Iowa makes certain conditions for the validity of marriage under State law. You must have a license and be married before someone authorized to assist at marriages.

The Church makes similar conditions for the validity of the marriage contract in Church law. A Catholic must be married before someone authorized to assist at the marriage of a Catholic—namely a priest. No one else is authorized.

The State of Iowa would not recognize your marriage if you were married before the sheriff. The Church will not recognize the marriage of a Catholic who tries to get married before the church janitor.

Q. 1. If two baptized non-Catholics are married before a Protestant minister, does the Church consider their marriage valid?

2. What if these two baptized non-Catholics are married before a Justice of the Peace?

3. What about the marriage of two non-baptized persons? Does the Church consider it a valid marriage?

A. 1. The marriage of two baptized non-Catholics before a minister is a valid marriage. It is also a sacrament. Such a marriage, once consummated, can never be dissolved by any power on earth.

2. The marriage of two non-Catholics before a Justice of the Peace is a valid marriage—and if both are baptized it is also a sacrament. It is not the Justice of the Peace who administers the sacrament, but the parties themselves; each administers the sacrament to the other when they give and receive from each other their marriage consent. The same is true in a Catholic marriage before a priest; not the priest, but the parties administer the sacrament.

3. The marriage of two non-baptized persons is a valid marriage too. But it is not a sacrament. It can never be dissolved, however, as long as both remain unbaptized. Should one of these “pagans” become a Catholic, and the other—still unbaptized—refuses to live with the convert in peace, then it might be possible for the convert to marry a Catholic, thereby dissolving the previous marriage. This is the Pauline Privilege. It applies only to marriages of TWO unbaptized people.

Q. If a non-Catholic couple, married for many years, become Catholics, must they be remarried in the Church? Do they have to go through any ceremony at all?

A. The answer is NO, to both questions. (I am presuming that their marriage was valid, as most non-Catholic marriages are.)

It might be advisable that they receive the nuptial blessing, but no serious obligation can be urged.

Q. I am a Catholic and my very best girl friend is a Protestant. When my girl friend marries, she wants me to be her maid of honor at the Protestant wedding. Can I be her maid of honor if I have permission from my pastor—or is there any way of getting permission to be her maid of honor?

A. Your problem is a frequent one, and often a difficult one. Pastors and bishops are sometimes troubled by it, and their decisions are not always consistent. There are so many variable factors, so many pro's and con's. Seldom do we find two cases exactly alike. Here are some of the questions which have been presented to me:

A recent convert has a sister who is being married in a Protestant church and wants her to be an attendant. This sister was her bridesmaid when she was married. It will be very hard to make the family understand if she must refuse. They have been very fine and friendly about her becoming a Catholic.

A Catholic man married a non-Catholic girl. She later became a Catholic. But meanwhile her sister got married, in her own Protestant church, and this Catholic brother-in-law was the "best man." He thought it was perfectly right. Did he do wrong?

Sometimes Catholics are asked to be official witnesses; sometimes only attendants or ushers. Some of the marriages are quiet, almost private; but others are publicized social events. One marriage might take place in a church which has no concept of marriage as a sacrament; another might be in a high liturgical church which requires witnesses as a part of their religious functions. One query might be presented from a typical mid-west bible-belt town where a few scattered Catholics are striving for social acceptance by the entrenched majority; another is from a Catholic community which is only distantly tolerant of anything Protestant. Sometimes it is not a close relative, or a vulnerable in-law who is being married, but only a good friend—or a socially prominent person whose invitation is flattering.

All these circumstances, and many others, make a difference in the solution of the problem. On the one hand we do not want to cause enmities, hurts, and hard feelings between close friends or within families. We don't want to stir up resentments against the Church or against Catholics in a community. But on the other hand, we can not do something wrong, however good our motive. We can not encourage indifference or give scandal.

One basic principle is very clear, and it offers no exception. We can never take ACTIVE part in non-Catholic public worship. The First Commandment of God absolutely forbids it, and Canon 1258 of the Code of Canon Law makes it very clear. Even the Pope could not grant a dispensation from this law. God simply forbids us to worship him in a false manner. All non-Catholic worship is false, because it is not true. The only true worship is that established by Jesus Christ. It is found only in the Church of Christ—the Catholic Church.

God may be pleased with sincere Protestant worship

offered to him by Protestants who are in good faith. He would be offended if Catholics—who know better—were to join with Protestants in offering Him that same false worship. These Catholics would not be sincere or in good faith—unless they were very ignorant.

One of the worst effects of our having anything to do with non-Catholic religious services is that we may give encouragement to that notion widely prevalent in our country that one way of worshipping God is about as good as another as long as the person who worships is sincere. In other words, we may encourage indifference—religious indifferentism—a vice which already has influence upon some Catholics in their attitude and thought.

We are permitted to join with non-Catholics in private prayer or worship. We can say our morning or evening prayers with them, or prayers before or after meals. We can pray with them in civic gatherings or patriotic functions. These are not Protestant religious services.

We may sometimes—for a very good reason—be present in a PASSIVE manner at non-Catholic church services or other religious functions. The second part of Canon 1258 makes this clear: "Passive or merely material presence at non-Catholic funerals, weddings, and similar functions may be tolerated, out of civil courtesy or respect." But the Canon warns that a serious reason is always required even for such passive attendance, and in cases of doubt as to whether there is sufficient reason, the problem must be submitted to the Bishop for decision. He does not grant a dispensation or a permission. He simply decides whether the reasons in this case justify passive attendance.

We may never attend, even passively, if there is serious danger to our faith or danger of giving scandal.

When is our assistance at these functions merely passive or material, and when does it become active?

Note that it is with regard to religious functions that we must be passive. Just to sit in a pew with folded hands is the most thoroughly passive assistance. A pall-bearer moves about and actively exerts himself; but his activities are not contributive to the religious features of the funeral. His assistance is passive. Ushers show people to their seats, look dignified, and wear boutonnières. These are not strictly religious functions, even though they do them in church.

Playing the organ or singing would be taking an active part in the religious ceremony. So these activities are forbidden.

But what about bridesmaids and attendants at a wedding? Do they take active part in the religious features of the ceremony? Or are their activities strictly social or civic in nature—marks of courtesy, respect, love, friendship, or class consciousness?

What do bridesmaids do? They look pretty with much bosom and tulle, smile sweetly and self-consciously, and strangle a tiny bouquet. Nothing essentially religious about that. Their presence is passive, but prominent. They are like a person standing on a high pedestal to watch a parade. They attract more attention—they hope—than the parade—the religious function itself.

But what about the maid of honor and best man? Are they an essential part of the RELIGIOUS ceremony? Is their presence required by this particular Protestant church in order to make the marriage valid before the church? Do they participate in the religious activities? This is often a hard question to answer. It might be different for different churches. However, it does seem that in most non-Catholic churches the best man and the maid of honor do not perform a function which is essentially religious. Their presence is necessary that the mar-

riage may be valid in civil law. Social custom requires them to be there. But the religious ceremonies simply take place around them and very close to them. They are immediate witnesses to these ceremonies, but have no direct part in them. The religious functions could take place quite as well without them. But they do add pomp and prestige; they help the bride out-do the Jones girls. They don't help her offer worship to God or receive sacramental grace. They are glorified groomsmen and bridesmaids, without essential difference in function.

If I am right in this opinion—and I have excellent authority for it—then for an extremely serious reason a Catholic might even be a maid of honor or best man at a non-Catholic church wedding. How serious must the reason be? ✓

Canon 1258 requires a grave reason before a person may even sit in a pew at a non-Catholic funeral or wedding or similar church service. In our country there is no doubt about attending funerals and weddings. Sufficient reason is always there when we go to pay our respect to a friend or a prominent citizen. We may even be justified in going to see the flowers and the dresses, or to kiss the bride, or ogle the best man, or flirt with the bridesmaids.

But what about making a public spectacle of our attendance by flouncing down the aisle to Mendelssohn's melodies or preening at the altar in pastel splendor? That requires a much more serious reason, certainly. And we must carefully consider the possibility of our giving scandal, especially by seeming to encourage religious indifference.

As we indicated earlier, if there should be grave danger to our faith, or serious danger of scandal to others, no reason, however serious, would permit us to be a member of the wedding party. In the following consid-

eration of reasons we will presume that there is no such immediate danger.

To be an usher, a distant bridesmaid, or a simple attendant, very close friendship may be sufficient, if combined with an insistent invitation which it would be embarrassing or offensive to refuse.

✓ You should not consider being a maid of honor or best man except for a very close relative—or in special circumstances, for your very best, lifelong friend, roommate, or shipmate.

Something depends upon the nature of the ceremony, the solemnity of its religious trappings, and the attendant publicity.

Something depends upon the community. Much greater reason is required in a city which is fairly Catholic than in a little town which has a few Catholic families scattered amongst friendly heretics. And in many thoroughly Catholic communities it would be an outright scandal to be in a Protestant wedding party.

My questioner in this case comes from the little heretical town where nearly all her friends and neighbors are Protestant. In my own opinion there is sufficient reason for her to be maid of honor at the wedding of her very best girl friend. The pastor, who knows all the circumstances, is in better position to judge than I; and if he remains in doubt the final decision is up to the Bishop.

If you consider it necessary to ask questions of the pastor or the Bishop, then you must be willing to accept the decision you get. Don't blame your pastor if he seems more strict about this matter than other pastors. He is using his conscience and his judgment about a very difficult problem: Is it active cooperation? Is there scandal? Is there reason serious enough? Often a flat "No" is the safest answer, and the easiest. Maybe it is generally best in the long run.

From the very nature of the problem, we will never

have uniformity unless the Bishop absolutely forbids participation in these ceremonies. That would be a little tough on someone like you, who really has a good reason. It would be much tougher on that poor convert, whose sister would find it hard to understand her refusal, whose family and friends would be offended. It would be rough too on that poor Catholic man who is trying to keep on the right side of his in-laws.

Some dioceses do have regulations forbidding you to be an attendant at non-Catholic weddings. These regulations were probably made necessary by the abuses of those compromisers and socialites who are ready to be anybody's bridesmaid anywhere, at the drop of an invitation. Wherever these diocesan laws exist they must be obeyed.

Here are two points which you must carefully remember, too:

1. You may never assist at a marriage if one of the parties is divorced from a living wife or husband.

2. You may never assist at a marriage in a non-Catholic church if one of the parties is a Catholic—or even a fallen-away Catholic.

Q. May a Catholic girl play the organ in either a non-Catholic home or church for a wedding?

A. The Holy Office in a response of Jan. 19, 1889, has stated that it is wrong to play the organ in a non-Catholic church as a help to the religious service.

Maybe in a particular case it might be interpreted that you were not helping a religious service, but performing a social function of courtesy to the bride and groom. But you are venturing into dangerous territory, and you need careful, competent advice from someone who knows all the circumstances.

I would see no objection to playing the organ for a non-Catholic wedding in the home. That could hardly be considered heretical worship. It is mostly a social function with civil implications. If the religious features are prominent, then it would have to follow the same rules as a service in church.

Q. Can a Catholic mayor of a town perform a marriage ceremony? Is he committing a mortal sin?

A. According to Iowa law the mayor is authorized to solemnize marriages in his own town.

A Catholic mayor can properly assist at the marriages of non-Catholics—unless one of them is a divorced person. These non-Catholics are validly married before him. They have a right to get married, and are in good faith regarding their errors.

But a Catholic mayor must refuse to cooperate in the sin of a Catholic who attempts marriage before him. The resulting marriage would be invalid anyway.

As indicated above, a Catholic mayor must refuse to cooperate in the adultery of divorced persons who seek to marry. Only if forced by the strict duties of his office can he passively permit the illicit “marriage” to take place before him. Rare is the case, I believe, in which he would be so forced.

PART THREE

Life Together

Chapter II: MARITAL LIFE

Things in common—The marital act—What is sin?—Other women—The thief—Forgiveness—Dirty stories—Necessary operation—Abortion—Baby or mother?—Inducing labor—Nursing baby—Vaccination—Defective children—Keeping the Mongolian—Spiritual life—Indulgences—Wife working—For pay—Education—A child's proper up-bringing—Children and the TV set—Radio programs—Taking the child to Mass—When very small—School uniforms—Tell the truth—Sex information—More of the same—Duties to parents.

Q. Please state in your column specifically and in a realistic manner what, besides sex, should be mutual between the average husband and wife with children.

A. First, the children: planning, training, guiding, educating. What can man and woman share more than their own children, who are literally a part of both of them, belong to both of them, and depend upon both of them? Marriage is by nature a joint enterprise for children, and the mutual part does not end with begetting them.

2. Conversation: they should really enjoy talking together. That requires planning, sympathy, understanding, and careful development of interests. Community

of interests is one of the secrets of marriage success. Without it couples gradually drift apart. They won't get it without effort begun early in married life. A psychological survey at the University of Minnesota gave the following cynical report of its eavesdropping:

When men talk to men, they talk about things which interest men.

When women talk to women, they talk about things which interest women.

When man talks to woman, they often talk about things which interest neither of them.

Actually, the ability to talk together freely and easily and frankly is one of the great secrets of success in married life. Each should be able to unburden self completely to the other with confidence of complete understanding and sympathy. They should be able to talk things out calmly and without raised voices and emotional tension. They should have a feeling of companionship and pleasure in conversation. All that takes conscious effort, a sense of humor, and nurtured sympathy.

Each has to be a ready, patient, interested listener.

Each has to recognize and accept a natural difference of interest between man and woman. He is interested in business, politics, the world situation; the crops, horses, cows, and pigs; sports, mechanical things, and income tax. She dotes on clothes, decorations, recipes, patterns, amusements, gossip, and maybe a touch of literature and the arts.

But they can get together on many of these things if they really want to. Good conversation supposes some mental ability and respect for the mental ability of the other person. A problem is presented by a girl, who before marriage had nothing on her mind but getting her man. Now that she has him, it leaves nothing on her mind.

3. Religion: their prayers, spiritual reading, Mass, the

sacraments, their study clubs or study programs. There is hardly limit to the common interests and activities they can develop here, or to the joy they can have in doing them together. Nothing can bring them into closer spiritual union than full awareness of sharing and mutually nourishing the same Divine Life which will keep them together eternally.

4. Finances: saving for a common purpose—a new car, home, T.V. set, or vacation. Working out a budget—knowing that it will probably never work out. Spending together. Sharing. Carefully avoiding the quarrelling and nagging which money often inspires.

5. Hobbies: they have to be developed consciously—planned, shared. Bugs, birds, books, building, coins, stamps, or puttering. They can be fun when done together—not just ways of killing time apart from each other.

6. Recreation: bridge, bowling, billiards, canasta, or camping. Movies, radio and video programs, auto trips, reading. Much depends upon the children, their size and number.

7. Work: around the house—building, painting, decorating, repairing, planning. Around the garden—planting, tending, watching, planning. Around the yard—adding shrubbery, trees, flowers; admiring, hoping, planning. There are even husbands and wives who can have fun doing the dishes together after twenty years.

8. Projects: on the community level. Parish and school activities, P.T.A., Red Cross, scouts, missions. Doing things together.

9. Entertaining friends: having the same mutual friends.

10. Going out together: when there are baby sitters—visiting friends, where husbands are pals and wives can talk about the same people.

11. Sitting quietly together: saying very little, simply

enjoying the peace of companionship and the awareness of love and understanding. When the babies are in bed, or the youngsters out on dates.

12. Sharing problems: helping each other to solve them. Sharing joys and helping each other to enjoy them. Sharing sickness with sympathy—health with gratitude—sorrow with mutual understanding.

I have tried to be specific. My suggestions may be realistic for some couples; idly idealistic for others. So much depends upon character, education, environment, social and financial circumstances, and marital history to date. Efforts to keep marriage alive and full of mutual purpose must begin right after the honeymoon. Too often newlyweds just settle down into a rut, which soon develops friction as the main mutual motif.

Q. A Catholic married couple have gone to confession and intend receiving Communion the next day. Is it sinful for them to have marital relations between the confession and Communion time?

A. Certainly not. Their relationship is normal, right and proper. It is a virtue, not a vice. It is a virtue by which they express the depth of their love for each other, develop that love mutually, and cement the stability of their home. It is a virtue which brings them very close to God and permits them to cooperate intimately with Him in the act of creation. God awaits their ecstatic union with each other before creating a new soul in His own image, to live and love Him forever. It was He who implanted in man and woman the overwhelming desire which produces this union, and He smiles in love at their satisfaction from it. It is not something He tolerates; it is something thoroughly good.

For a married couple to deny themselves the pleasures

of these relations, as an act of mortification, for the love of God, might be a virtue, too—and a virtue of a higher order. But it might also be a sin, unless it is completely voluntary on the part of both. Suppose one of them were put in danger of sin because the other wanted to practice self-denial. It would not be self denial then, but a denial of marriage rights.

The fact that husband and wife have been intimately united with each other during the night does not make them unfit for sacramental union with Jesus Christ in the morning.

Q. Just what is a sin or is not a sin in the marriage act?

A. Only a general answer can be given here, of course. The relationship between husband and wife is blessed by God, and all their natural reasonable acts of affection, love and passion are good and proper. Only two classes of things are definitely forbidden between them, under pain of serious sin: (1) willful efforts to prevent conception by artificial means, and (2) unnatural acts or perversions—which would include pollution.

Apart from these two classes of sinful acts there are others which might be venial sins because they are excessive or morose or somewhat dangerous. But in general there is no touch or look, thought or word in married life which would be a serious sin unless it should lead to adulterous or unnatural desires, or create immediate danger of pollution.

Even those carefully learned and deeply impressed rules of personal modesty which were developed in youth must be gently and intelligently revised for happy and virtuous married living. There can be false modesty in marriage, and it can detract from the warmth and spon-

taneity of marital response, and from the peace and security with which its proper pleasures are embraced.

From childhood we learned to be wary of those thoughts which can quickly arouse sexual feelings or lead to sinful desires. In married life most of those thoughts are neither sinful nor dangerous. For similar reason, before marriage we were careful of our reading, of the pictures we gazed upon, and the stories we told. Married people can relax those restraints, sensibly. A married man can not read just anything; and certainly he must take care lest his eyes lead him to lustful desires of another woman. But the principle or purpose of his restraint is different. A single person may not have any voluntary sexual pleasure without sin; so anything which leads him needlessly close to such pleasure is contrary to modesty and must be restrained. For a married man sexual pleasure is right and good as long as it fits into his proper relations with his wife. Married modesty is seriously violated only if there is real danger that the husband and wife will be led away from each other (into solitary sin or adultery) or be led into improper relations together (voluntary pollution or perversion).

Fears, doubts and inhibitions should be kept out of the marriage relationship. Generous love and mutual consideration should govern in their stead. We must remember that one of the two great purposes of marriage is to develop love and happiness and intense attachment between husband and wife. These things can only be developed by exercise, and the full uninhibited thrill and pleasure of sexual relationships is the most potent means of their exercise. In general, married people should have no scruple about any thoughts, desires, words, acts, feelings, or exciting memories which are a natural, normal part of their mutual life and love. More particular problems should be presented to the confessor.

Q. I know a married man with a big family of a dozen children. He has a fine Catholic wife. Still he hangs around with other women. Is this a sin?

A. On the fiery summit of Sinai the Eternal God gave to Moses a forceful command for His People and the world: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20, 14.)

On a mountain in Palestine, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, gave sanction to this command and stated it more forcefully: "You have heard that it was said to them of old: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. 5, 27-28.)

Q. A young single Catholic man is being attentive to a married woman whose husband is in the service. He devotes his attention to her solely for the entire evening at a local amusement place, takes her out to eat, and then takes her home. This happens several nights each week, yet he insists he is doing nothing wrong.

Isn't this young man wrong?

A. He is so wrong that he is guilty of constant mortal sin, even if he never lays a probing hand on the woman. He might love her as a sister, admire her purity, and be determined to protect her marital fidelity from unscrupulous wolves, but he is still guilty of mortal sin.

He is guilty of the sin of scandal. He is guilty of sins against modesty in flirting with dangers to chastity. He is completely dishonest with himself, and the true measure of his guilt would be reflected in the wrath of the husband, if he knew about it.

Adultery violates two virtues: chastity and justice.

Our friend is guilty of half the sin of adultery. He violates justice however chaste he remains. He is stealing a wife's love, even if he leaves her virtue intact. And he is doing it in the manner of a yellow rat. He wouldn't have a chance if the husband were home. He steals from the one who is away fighting for him.

And the wife—in early American days she would have been flogged publicly. The Puritans had certain virtues.

Q. Generally speaking, is it not the teaching of the Catholic Church that a partner in marriage, if found guilty of adultery, should be forgiven and accepted by the other partner, with perhaps some exceptions in specific cases?

A. It is probably the wiser and more charitable thing for the other partner to do, but the Church does not propose any obligation in justice, unless the other partner has been the cause or occasion of the sin, or has been guilty of similar sin.

Wisdom and charity plead for forgiveness because the alternative is separation with all the difficulties and dangers of single life—to say nothing of the harm to children.

Q. Is it a sin to tell and listen to dirty stories if all persons present are married?

A. Let me answer your question by a general consideration of the virtue of modesty in conversation.

Modesty is a moral virtue which serves as a first line of defense for the more precious and delicate virtue of chastity. It tries to control our external behavior in such

a way that we are not led into serious dangers against chastity and do not lead others into such dangers.

Like most moral virtues true modesty is a happy mean between two vices. It has pruriency to its left and prudishness to its right. It keeps them both under control.

The virtue of modesty expresses itself in dress, gait, bearing, and behavior in general, and particularly in control of our demonstrations of affection and love for persons of the opposite sex.

Modesty exercises restraint over our senses, particularly our eyes and our ears and our sense of touch, to keep them from bringing into our mind images, ideas, and sensations which light a match to the ready fuse of our passions.

Modesty should also rule our speech to keep it from being obscene and suggestive.

Prudes are not modest. They are simply scared. They worry about immodesty, and so keep their minds occupied with it. We don't have to ignore the richness and beauty of the English language to be modest. We need not even avoid the Anglo-Saxon portion of it. We need not resort to Victorian euphemisms, calling legs "limbs" and bellies "stomachs," or otherwise distorting anatomy.

But modesty does not find its wealth of expression in obscenity, nor its greatest humor in ribaldry. It does not revel in the smell of filth, or confine its interest to biology. In adults, at least, modesty respectfully acknowledges the human acts of coition, generation, parturition, lactation, and excretion without finding them constant and exclusive sources of boisterous merriment.

Morally any definite departure from modesty is a sin. It may be only a little sin, if it is not a deliberate attack against chastity and does not seriously endanger this protected virtue. It is a mortal sin if we deliberately seek sexual pleasure from it or if it seriously and need-

lessly endangers our own chastity or that of another person.

So immodest conversation, if engaged in for the purpose of exciting illicit passions, is seriously sinful. Otherwise, if it is only mildly suggestive, it is no more than a venial sin. Even if it is definitely obscene, but also hilariously funny, the humor may so eliminate suggestiveness that it is only slightly sinful.

To overhear immodest conversation is only a misfortune. To frankly listen to it encourages it. To listen from curiosity may clutter up the mind with troublesome ideas. To laugh at it from human respect, or simply because it is rather funny, is certainly not a serious sin. But to deliberately take illicit sexual pleasure from it is a mortal sin; and to deliberately provide such pleasure for someone else is a mortal sin.

Modesty is not absolute. It depends largely on custom. What is customary does not much affect us. Customs differ greatly in different social groups and in different places. A thoroughly modest dock-walloper might scandalize your grandmother. If your husband were to talk to your old-maid sister like he does to that girl in the factory, she would probably slap his face. If your favorite night-club entertainer were to use his trade-talk in your parlor, you would be violently ashamed. Even that model son of yours would not dare use at home choice expressions of the playground. He doesn't want soap in his mouth.

The usual dirty stories of a group of married persons show simple vulgarity in taste and humor. They do not involve serious sin. They demonstrate a certain immaturity: these subjects excited their curiosity, fanned their fancy, and seemed hilariously funny when they were youngsters. So they cling to them in maturity and old age, telling the same old jokes with the pride of experienced narrators and a fixation of youthful daring or

laughing with the false heartiness of good fellowship. A few drinks help, too.

Even if they were now seeking some sexual pleasure from their stories this pleasure would not necessarily be illicit for them as married people. This fact makes a great difference in the morality of their stories before marriage and after.

Q. I am thirty-eight and the mother of six children. Two doctors have told me that I have a fibroid tumor on my uterus, which is impairing my health. Would it be wrong to have the uterus and tumor removed?

A. It certainly would not. It would be wrong to neglect the doctor's advice, impair your health, and endanger your life.

It would be wrong to remove a uterus for the purpose of preventing conception. It would be wrong to remove a uterus that is well and normal. But when its pathology indicates removal, let the doctor decide.

Q. If you have an abortion performed, are you excommunicated from the Church?

A. You are. So is the doctor, or anyone else having a direct part in it.

Q. Must a Catholic doctor save the baby's life before the mother's when one must be sacrificed?

A. No. He will do everything legitimately possible to save both. But he cannot kill either one to save the other.

Probably the primary concern of most doctors will be

to save the mother. This is quite proper. Nearly every human consideration makes her life seem of greater value. No one can object to this preference for the mother, if the baby can be baptized before death. But no doctor will sacrifice the life of the mother to baptize the baby. Neither may he murder an infant to save the mother.

Q. A child who should have been born weeks ago has not yet arrived. Is the doctor justified in forcing the birth? Is the doctor to be held at fault if the child dies?

A. How many weeks, did you say? Justified is hardly the word. He probably has little choice; but we must leave the judgment regarding procedures to him. He is the doctor.

Of course, you cannot hold a doctor at fault every time one of his patients dies. He would be to blame, of course, if he did something intentionally wrong, or if he were negligent, or lacked the knowledge and skill he is supposed to have.

Q. Is there an obligation for a Catholic mother to nurse her baby?

A. It is usually best for the mother to follow the advice of her doctor in this matter. He is qualified to know what is best for the baby and for the mother.

Q. In a case where one parent will not consent to vaccination or immunization of children in a family, is it ever wise for the parent who believes in medicine to take the children and have them cared for without the

knowledge or consent of the other? In case of death or permanent injury to a child not protected by such means, what does the Church say?

A. Do you mean to tell me that there actually are such people still living in our age? I presume that this parent is not a Catholic, but probably a Christian Scientist.

It would be rather hard to answer your question in a general way. We would almost have to know the particular circumstances before making a recommendation. If there were a severe epidemic, and the health of the child were in serious or immediate danger, then the sane parent would probably be obliged to take the child and have it protected without the knowledge, or against the will of the anti-scientific parent.

In ordinary circumstances, it is probably more important to preserve the peace and harmony and trust and understanding of the family. If the death or permanent injury of a child takes place without grave negligence on the part of one of the parents, he can hardly be held seriously to blame. It is certainly putting a strain on the person who knows the value of protective measures to the health of his child, and still does not want to provoke a fight with an ignorant wife or husband. Such is the penalty of mixed marriages.

Q. Is it a sin to have children when these children might be born deformed or mentally deficient?

A. It is not a sin. If you are married, have your children and leave the rest to God. It may be inadvisable for certain people to marry, because of hereditary deficiencies. On the other hand many personal defects are not hereditary, and frequently the hereditary ones will

never appear in the children if the proper mate is chosen.

Don't let imagination and fear run away with you. A good doctor can probably tell you whether there is any serious reason to fear hereditary deficiencies in your children.

Q. A family I know have four normal healthy children, and now they have a fifth child who is a Mongolian. Against advice of the doctor the mother has taken this child home with her and plans to raise it herself. She says that God gave her the child and it is her duty to take care of it. She doesn't want it placed in an institution, particularly a State institution.

A. This good mother should be shown sympathy and understanding, but a bit of firmness, too. God has asked her to be a hero as well as a good wife and mother. But the true heroism demanded is that she give up the child for which she has great affection and tenderness, a child which is appealing and attractive, whose deficiency stabs deeply into a mother's heart. She is asked to be this sort of hero for the sake of the other four children, and for the children which may still be born.

This mother is determined not to shirk her duty, not to be selfish, not to shift her burden to others. Her attitude is admirable. It will become perfect if she adds humility to it—humility which will prompt her to take the advice of her doctor, her pastor, and any welfare worker she may consult. They will all advise her to place the baby in an institution.

The mongolian baby, itself, will be just as well off, and probably better, in an institution equipped to care for it. Special love and attention can do very little for it. It can never develop beyond the lowest grade of

moron. Its needs are mostly physical. There is very little of the intellectual or spiritual which can be done for it. Experience shows that even if the mother keeps the child, the time will come, at least by adolescence, when its problems will become too great to be handled in the home. An institution will then be required. The change will then be a shock to the child and a great emotional strain on the mother, already exhausted from her forlorn hopes and intense cares.

The other children of the family will be much better raised without the deficient child in the home to take a great share of the mother's time and attention—care which could be lavished with much greater results on them.

It is sad, of course, that we do not have many Catholic institutions to care for children of this kind. Their care is expensive, and the parents are seldom in position to pay for it. Apparently Catholic charity has been diverted to activities which show greater immediate results for less time and expense. Church leaders probably console themselves, too, with the valid argument that these children need little spiritual care, and that there is little a Catholic institution can do for them which can not be done almost as well in a State institution.

Your friend will probably have to see her child placed in a State institution. She can console herself with this same argument. The personal love and devotion which Sisters might give will be absent, but there will be skill and efficiency to partially replace it.

In all of this we are not ignoring the spiritual value of a mother's sacrifice and devotion in caring for her defective child for pure love of God. But true spirituality must follow good judgment; it must not overlook greater spiritual values. Happy home training for those other four children is here the primary spiritual goal.

Q. My husband receives Holy Communion at most three times a year. I receive every week. He contends that the sacraments do me little good and that he is likely the more religious. How would you explain this?

A. I suspect that you flaunt your religion just a bit before him, and maintain a little gentle nagging to get him to imitate you. Why not let him lead his own religious life and try to influence him only by unchallenging example.

Why not be humble? You really think that you are more religious than he is and you try to make him feel it. He naturally can't admit, even to himself, that you are better than he. So he has to come back with the defense that his religion doesn't show, that it is way down deep, but oh, so sincere and real—not a fluffy, hysterical saying of prayers and running to sacraments like your religion.

Of course he is all wrong in that. He may have splendid natural qualities and virtues, but he can't maintain much real religion on three communions a year. He might—I doubt it—do a splendid job of observing nine of the commandments, but he is definitely neglecting the first. In that he is joining in the prevalent vice of our country and our age. He is a pretty good man, by average standards, but he gives little real concern to his immortal soul, and he neglects God, his Creator, his Redeemer, his Sanctifier, his future Judge, and the source of his happiness for eternity. He's a pretty good man, but he could be so much better, if he would just try a little.

He may be partly right that the sacraments seem to do you little good. It is not enough for us to receive the grace of the sacraments; we must make use of that grace to become more patient, kind, and considerate,

less selfish, lazy and sensitive, and more thoroughly conformant with virtue.

Keep on receiving our Lord frequently in Holy Communion. You are united to Him there that your will may be made one with His will. As that is gradually accomplished your good example and the shining virtues of your life will so attract your husband to you that his will will be made one with yours, and so one with our Lord's, too.

Q. I say many indulgenced prayers. My husband doesn't have time to say as many as I do; so I include him in each one I say. Will he gain indulgences by my saying them for him?

A. No one can acquire indulgences and have them applied to another living person (Can. 930).

Your prayers are of tremendous spiritual benefit to your husband. You cannot share your indulgences with him, but that should not stop you in your splendid practice. Your example may even lead him to say a few hurried ejaculations in the midst of his busy day, and thus gain a few indulgences for himself.

Q. Do you think a wife should work?

A. She will please her husband if she will do a little work, like getting his breakfast, cleaning the house, and changing Junior's draperies.

Q. What is the stand of the Church on the practice of women working for pay?

A. Pope Pius XII, in speaking to a convention of working women in Rome, on Aug. 15, 1945, strikingly set forth the Church's attitude. He said that woman is by nature the heart of the family, and the home of which she is queen should be the realm of her principal activity.

However, the Holy Father continued, modern life, particularly industrial development, has forced many millions of women from the home and into industry, offices, and business. While we deplore this change, it is a fact and we must recognize it. For the present, at least, we can not change it. We must meet its problems and minimize its bad effects on public welfare and morality.

The point particularly stressed by His Holiness is this: **WOMEN MUST RECEIVE THE SAME PAY AS MEN FOR THE SAME WORK.** To pay them less is unjust and contrary to the public good. It is unjust to the women, whom it deprives of a fair wage. It is unjust to the men who are forced out of their jobs by cheaper female labor.

Q. Would you please clarify the divine law on education? Is it not true that, ceteris paribus, the obligation to attend a Catholic college is just as grave as the obligation to attend a Catholic elementary or secondary school?

A. You ask about the divine law on education, but I wonder if that is the question you really want answered. There is no specific divine positive law on the subject, only those general principles implied in the First Commandment, the general obligation of protecting our faith and avoiding dangers to it. Deductions from the natural law do not permit us to give definite specific

rules applicable to all cases. I think we might summarize the divine law on the subject, as we can know it certainly by human reason, in the following principles:

Parents have a very grave obligation of caring for the religious, moral, physical, and civil (secular) education of their children. This principle is stated in Canon 1113 of the Code of Canon Law. The liberty of suggesting secular as a translation of *civilem* is my own.

All the faithful, from childhood on, must be so educated that they are prepared for right living on earth and for eternal living in heaven. They must be led to know the true, the good and the beautiful. They must not be taught error for truth, evil for goodness, or ugliness for beauty. I have elaborated this principle from Canon 1372, which states (1) negatively, that they must be taught nothing opposed to the Catholic religion or true morality, and (2) positively, that they must be taught religion and morality as subjects of greatest importance.

These are general principles. They are the ones which apply most directly to your question. But in any particular case they are not apt to be the only principles which apply. We must know all the circumstances of each case, because each circumstance may present another principle for consideration. And we can never get a fair and complete answer without weighing all the principles. The despot has a few pet principles and tries to make all cases fit under them.

The two general principles which we should balance here are (1) we may not expose our faith or morality to needless danger, and (2) since we cannot possibly avoid all danger in this world, we must be careful to calculate the risk honestly and take precautions in the face of danger to see that we remain safe. They are the same

general rules we must follow in avoiding any occasion of sin.

You may not recognize that second principle immediately from your textbooks, but I think it is essentially valid. When I speak of calculating the risk, I mean: be sure that you have sufficient reason for encountering these dangers. And the precautions are the means we take to keep the danger remote and harmless to us.

You asked for the divine law. That's why you get a statement of general principles which may seem evasive. On the basis of the divine natural law I would not hazard more precise general deductions on this subject. When it comes to individual cases, I personally know of some parents who are clearly violating the natural law in sending their children to non-Catholic colleges and universities. The violation is grave and evident. But I also know parents who are thoroughly justified in sending their children there.

If it were contrary to the natural law for any student to be in any non-Catholic school, then the Church could not tolerate their being there—no more than she can tolerate murder or theft or formal heresy.

If you are going to get any satisfactory answer to your question, we will have to recur to positive Church law. The Church has evidently taken all these principles of the natural law and made an equitable general application of them, leaving room for adjustment in particular cases. You will find it in Canon 1374:

“Catholic children shall not attend non-Catholic, or secular, or public schools—those which are open to non-Catholics, also. The Bishop is the only one who can decide in what circumstances, and with what precautions against the danger of perversion, their attendance at these schools may be tolerated, and he must abide by the instructions of the Holy See in making his decision.”

Some might argue that this law of the Church does

not directly forbid attendance at non-Catholic or secular colleges or universities. They may find reason for their argument in the use of the words children (*pueri*) and schools (*scholas*) in the canon. But no one will argue that the principles of the natural law are any different; and for all practical purposes we must consider that the same law applies.

In general we can be safe and sure in saying that Catholic students are forbidden to attend non-Catholic or secular colleges and universities unless: (1) they have good, sound, cogent reason for doing so, and (2) there is reasonable certainty that their faith and morality will not be adversely affected. Need of specialized professional courses might provide the sound, cogent reason. A lot of prayerful thought and consultation should be spent on the second condition.

From practice in most dioceses the Bishop's tolerance of the situation under these circumstances can be presumed. But we must not be lax in our judgment. It remains gravely wrong to attend non-Catholic schools for courses which can be had in Catholic schools, unless extreme financial or family considerations dictate otherwise. It is not at all a matter of free choice, or simple preference, or social standing (i.e., snobbery), or athletic preeminence (unless the pay is sufficient to constitute a cogent reason).

Q. How important is a child's proper upbringing? Is it wrong for a Catholic judge to award a Catholic child to a fallen-away Catholic mother who has been proven to be morally indecent?

A. A child's proper upbringing is the most important thing in life. It is the primary duty of the parent. The child's happiness all through this life and the next de-

pend upon it. Society is no more sound than its child-training.

Divorce disrupts a child's upbringing. It destroys the home and with it the child's security and stability. It divides the child's love and loyalty. It removes from the child the essential love, example, and influence of at least one parent, or shuttles him between part-time, conflicting loves, hates, and jealousies.

Divorce imposes a heavy burden upon the judge who must decide custody disputes. Usually the courts favor the mother, who is judged best fitted by nature, temperament, and domesticity to give the child proper care, love, and training. But sometimes the mother is evidently unfit for such responsibility; then the father may receive the children if he can provide a home and proper domestic care for them.

Religious and moral training and example are of primary importance in the child's education. We have a right to expect that our courts give due consideration to religious character and moral constancy in estimating the fitness of parents to have custody of children. But we can hardly expect that they will give preference to Catholics over non-Catholics. They have generally not been inclined to do so, even when the parents themselves entered into solemn agreement before marriage that the children would be raised Catholic.

A Catholic judge should certainly be expected to give due consideration to religious and moral factors in making his decision. But a judge is not always free to make decisions on personal convictions and sublime principles. He must apply the laws—decide on the basis of statutes.

Usually in a contested divorce case there is bitter partisanship. As you present the details of this case, the right is all on the side of the husband, and the wife is absolutely no good. But the judge has to hear both

sides. And his reluctance to impose a decision is understandable. The court generally prefers to let the parties work out their own solution of such personal matters, if it can be done.

Q. I know of someone who doesn't let her children (the oldest is four) go within ten feet of the television set. Am I wrong in letting my son, 2½ years old, turn our set on and off? How far should discipline go? We didn't buy the set just for ourselves, but for our children to enjoy also.

A. Please don't draw me into the field of child psychology or infant education. I usually have no hesitancy in answering questions on subjects I know little about. But when it comes to raising children, my ignorance is so obvious that I could hardly get by with my glib and ready knowledge.

It would seem to me, though, that a television set, even though it may cost several hundred dollars, is of less value than the character of a child. I doubt that the four-year-old youngster would do more than blur the picture and get it out of focus and maybe distort the sound. That may be very annoying to the parents, but I suspect it is of less importance than that they, by their rigorous discipline, get the child's confidence out of focus, blur his perspective, and distort his feelings with the discordant sound of constant reprimands.

If your 2½-year-old boy can turn your set on and off, then I am sure that you are proud of his precocity and his ability, and you do well to encourage him and to build up his confidence in himself and his awareness of your trust in him. It must help to make him feel that the set is partly his and that you share things with him in your family life.

If mama and papa get more pleasure out of a finely-tuned television picture than they do from finely-tuned children, then I imagine your neighbors' attitude finds ready explanation. I am inclined to admire your own patience and understanding. But then maybe you have only one child. Maybe your neighbor has several who have successively tried her patience and strained her tolerance.

Q. My children, like most children it seems, like to listen to cowboy programs. Nearly every western one you hear on the radio has murder or robbery in it, and I sometimes wonder if those programs like Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, and the Lone Ranger are really proper for children to listen to. Also, should children listen to detective stories that always have murder or some other crime? In the end the hero of the program catches the criminals, as in "Mr. Keen" or "Big Town" and the like. Would you publish a list of radio programs that are all right for the whole family to listen to? If not, where could I find such a list?

A. I have delayed answering your question for a long time, hoping that I might find such a list. I have not found it. Probably no adult has had enough courage to listen to all those programs in order to rate them.

There is little doubt that an excessive diet of these gory programs is harmful to a child's excitable emotions and receptive imagination. Nightmares and nervousness may be the result. Forty murders a week are hardly normal fare for developing the emotions. The constant sound of galloping hoofs and firing repeaters will hardly train the young mind to think, the pliant will to act, or the pudgy hand to develop other skills than a quick draw.

Too much radio listening or TV watching is lopsided education for the child. He hears or watches other people do things. He is passive, receptive. But he does not learn to do things himself. His active role is neglected. He may not learn to play games well or to do his tasks promptly and skillfully. His family relationships may be neglected and his associations with other children curtailed. His character formation and personality development are uniquely by absorption, with gun battles, space ships, and green hornets as the principal solvents.

The chronic juvenile radio addict is withdrawn from reality and trained to ride colts on the crime-ridden plains of interplanetary space, where they live on a diet of fabulous breakfast cereals, and use box-tops as medium of exchange. Living becomes a constant succession of thrills, crimes, horrors, hangings, rustling and rockets. How can he then adapt himself to the normal social life of monotonous earth-dwelling men?

The modern parent has a new problem which may well tax patience, judgment, and ingenuity. How to restrict radio listening without revolt. How to develop sound, constructive listening and viewing interests. How to make electronics serve education and character development. How to guide young interests to good shows, and divert inflamed imaginations from frivolous fantasy, frightening fiction, and lurid legends.

Q. Am I right in taking our five-year-old girl and four-year-old boy to church on Sundays? I don't get much praying done trying to keep them sitting still. Or should I leave them at home until they are older?

A. I think you are right in taking them to church. They are old enough to learn how to behave in church, and you can't teach them by leaving them at home. They

will soon be seven years old and then they will have to go to church. By that time they should know how to act.

Q. How can some parents be so stupid and thoughtless as to bring a very small child to church service. They ought to know that it is next to impossible to keep a little tot from growing restless. At least they should sit in a back seat so that they can leave quickly if the child starts to chatter or whimper.

A. Your poor frayed nerves are showing, pal. You must be tired. Maybe you are worrying about something. Do you fight with your wife? Or does the world situation bother you?

I suppose Our Lord was hardly in a position to understand modern tensions when he gently rebuked the Apostles: "Let the little children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 19, 14).

Q. Is the school garb required in some of the parochial schools of our city necessary? Uniforms for the girls (2) are not so bad because school dresses would have to be bought, and the girls are not so hard on their clothes. But—keeping three boys in "dress" trousers (white shirts and ties in one parish, I hear) seems an unnecessary hardship to me. We come from a place where the great leveler, blue jeans (neat and clean) and sport shirts or T-shirts are worn by all the boys. Buying the necessary clothes was a burden, and their up-keep is considerably more than the easy-to-do, long wearing, "no-nagging" clothes of last year. I don't just mind the money (although I imagine it could cause serious diffi-

culty in some families) but a lot of my time, now spent with the clothes, used to be spent with the children.

My children will have a parochial school education, come what may, but I don't understand why an extra hardship like this is added. (I am a convert and had no Catholic education.)

A. You have me at a disadvantage. You can express your opinion anonymously, and you do it beautifully. But I would invite the sharp barbs of pastors and Sisters if I were to criticize their sanctified customs. After all, they know that I am not qualified in this matter, because I have no parochial school. Maybe some of them don't know that I am even less qualified, because like yourself I never even went to one. We wore blue jeans to our school—only we called them overalls.

I have been reading that these are days of freedom in men's dress. First the tie, then the vest, and often the coat have been discarded. If you will keep it quiet, I rather like the idea, and I think we should treat little boys as fairly as men want to be treated. But mind you, I am not criticizing anybody. I'm a very peaceful person.

Q. Is it a sin to tell your children how they got their birthmark, that is, when they tell they marked them before birth?

A. I must say I don't understand the last part of your question at all. Maybe you had better check your own information on the subject before passing it on to your children. Don't tell them untruths. Don't spread foolish superstitions. Birthmarks are a natural phenomenon. Embryology can give you most of the answers. Do you know them?

It is certainly not wrong to tell your children the facts

of life. Their natural curiosity will demand explanations, and these should always be adapted to their age and understanding. If parents don't tell them the truth, the juvenile educators in the alley will surely give them their own distorted version.

Q. I just finished reading your Question Box wherein a mother asks about sex information for teen-agers. I am a young farm mother with two children. My 5-year-old is a curious, probing boy, who often asks questions which I, quite frankly, don't know how to answer. Since the birth of pigs, calves, etc., is a common occurrence on a farm, he often asks where they come from. I have told him that God makes all little animals and people as well. He was satisfied for a while, but now he is curious again about "how they get here" as he puts it.

Should I answer his questions honestly, or should I evade with the old stork angle? My parents and my husband's parents firmly believe in teaching him nothing but the stork angle, as we were educated. I want to know how you feel I should answer. I think this is an excellent opportunity to introduce a child to facts he has to learn eventually. When my child gets to school I don't want him to learn these things second-handed and to feel that I have lied to him. I want him to be told properly and with the right Catholic attitude.

A. Our modern educators love you and all mothers like you. You are saying back to them the same things they keep telling parents over and over again. You have the right attitude towards sex instruction, and that is a good beginning for the battle, if not the half of it.

And you sense the first big problem, too: what words to use. Educators generally hold that we must be digni-

fied, but not evasive. We must use the right names for things, but not vulgar names. And that requires the education of ourselves, first, since nobody taught us those names as children. And it requires much thought and planning.

By all means avoid the stork. That awkward bird is a menace to American children. We may make mistakes in teaching; we may be clumsy and halting and self-conscious about it. But for God's sake let us teach the truth. To teach falsehood is sin. And in this case it is harmful, too. It deprives children of the information to which they have a right; it makes them credulous little goofs who will be shocked and razzed by their companions a few years hence. It will cause them to lose confidence in their parents, who have lied to them, and create a barrier against further instruction when life's problems become big and real. How can we expect children to take their personal questions to parents when they know that the parents evade such questions, lie about them, and are generally embarrassed by the whole subject. It must be something bad if mama and papa avoid it so.

You are right again when you note that those normal observations of the farm child offer a splendid opportunity for the beginnings of sex instruction. That is exactly what Catholic education insists upon. Sex instruction must be casual, progressive, bit by bit, as the curious mind offers the occasion. It should not be thrust upon the child before he is ready; it should not be withheld from him when he wants it. And it must be given him in a normal, factual, matter-of-fact way—without any intimation that there is something dirty, or secretive, or shameful about this greatest work of God's creation. Above all things he should never be reproached for his questions. We can never answer all

the questions children ask, but we should respect their right to keep asking.

It is easy to say all this, I know, but hard to do it—especially for those of us who were diligently taught that stork nonsense until we became of age. And most of us were so taught. Your parents and your husband's parents are no exceptions. But they did their dirty work with you; keep them from fouling up the education of your children. Their intentions are the best, and their methods the worst.

I still haven't told you how to go about it; and my reason is excellent: I don't know. It should not be too difficult if we take the questions one by one, and not try to teach more than the child wants to know at the moment. He wants to know where little pigs come from. So maybe you tell him that there is a sort of little nest inside the mother sow where the tiny little pigs grow until they are big enough to live outside. He is familiar with bird-nests; so he might grasp this idea rather quickly. His next question may be about the process of birth—how the pigs get out of their nest. But he probably won't ask that right away. So you will have time to prepare your answer.

Children usually want to know about their own anatomy—about the purpose of their navel, for instance. And if you have told your story about the little pigs, this may offer you a fine opportunity to explain where this lad came from himself. And so you proceed, taking each step as it arises, or as you sense curiosity unexpressed, making your explanations simple, with just enough detail to satisfy for the moment. Proper sex education is not given in a week or a year. It is a continual process, like all education.

With your attitude I am sure that you will do a good job, if you will overcome your timidity, and look up the words. Let honesty and frankness be your principal

guides, and you cannot go far wrong. Be sure to avoid all sense of shame or any hint of immodesty in the matter. Convey the definite impression that the whole process of procreation is good and beautiful and filled with love; that mothers love their babies so much that they keep them warm and close, not far from their heart, until they get big and strong enough to live alone. And then, maybe, quite a bit later, you can reveal that papa and mama loved each other so much that they cooperated to put the child there in the first place—and that they love the child so much because it is a part of both of them. (You will have to be pretty good to get all that over without faltering.)

Q. I can't resist writing about the question on sex education. Of course I am not an authority as I have only one child, a boy nine years of age. I have answered his questions always as truthfully as possible and always used the correct terms and names of the different parts of the body. When he was three he asked how babies got out of their mothers' tummy; we had a neighbor then who was about to have a child and he knew about it. He forgot it all until about six, and then he asked again, and also other questions which were harder to answer. But I did answer them. Then again when he turned nine, in the Spring, I had to go over some things again and was able to get a book or two that I read to him. He was so interested, and it was not hard to read at all. I gave it to one mother to read to her nine-year-old girl, and when it came to the father's part, she said she just couldn't read it to her. I thought it was so prudish, and really felt sorry for the little girl as I felt she was interested and would have liked for her mother to have finished it, as she knew I had read it to my boy.

The books can be obtained at the library or in a book store. One is "The Wonderful Story of How You Were Born," and the other is called, "Growing Up," which shows the structure of the body, etc. There is also another one called "The Stork Didn't Bring You." I have not read it but looked through it and decided it was a little too old for now.

A. I have looked over the first two books you mention. I particularly like "The Wonderful Story of How You Were Born." It is very respectful, simple, and honest in its presentation. Its author is Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. "Growing Up" is very similar, but a little more advanced. It is written by Karl de Schweinitz. I think either one would be excellent for parents to read, so that they could tell the story themselves. If they are to read either book directly to child, I would certainly recommend the former one. The ideal thing would be to read or tell it in parts, as each question arises and as the child's natural curiosity advances.

There is another little book called "Growing Up," a book for girls, written by a Catholic woman doctor. It is much more advanced—for teen-agers. Published by Benziger Brothers, Inc. I mention it to avoid confusion.

For the use of parents I would also like to mention those books which I cited earlier, especially Father Greenstock's "Christopher's Talks to Parents," and Father Sattler's, "Parents, Children, and the Facts of Life."

Q. What are children's duties to their father or mother who is left alone in old age? My children are all married and have small families, but they are in good financial circumstances. None of them is willing to provide me a place to live though all have plenty of room.

A. The natural law and the Fourth Commandment of God oblige children to support parents who are unable to support themselves. Filial love will usually prompt children to find a place for such parents in their own homes. This may not always be possible. Sometimes a parent, for one reason or another, simply does not fit into the family circle. The ridiculed "mother-in-law" problem is not always a myth. Such questions must be decided honestly and unselfishly in each individual case.

Chapter 12: BIRTH CONTROL

Right attitude—Broken vow
—Sterilization—So many do—
Advice of non-Catholic doctor
—The Bible says—Stand of the
Church—Attitude of the
Church—Books favoring con-
traception—Catholic doctor—
A priest's advice—Wife coop-
erates—False conscience—Mor-
tal sin?—Confession—Buying
the contraptions—RH factor—
Slums—Malthus

Q. Please solve my problem. When I was married, our pastor told me to use my marriage privilege in a natural way. He said that to do otherwise would frustrate God's plan and be a mortal sin. We have been blessed with six lovely children and are very happy, but our financial status prevents us from "keeping up with the Jones'." Lately I have been hearing: "What, another one? You ought to be ashamed. How can you cheat the ones you have by taking from them to give to others?" Am I cheating them, and just what should I do under such circumstances?

A. Maybe you should follow that tendency—which you must have had at times—to tell your critics to go to the devil, whose cause they are representing to you. But it is surely more charitable and patient to simply remind them that another new soul which can be happy with God for all eternity seems more important in your eyes

than a few additional material benefits for yourselves and your children. Your letter leads me to suspect that your family is much more happy than those of your critics.

Q. Many years ago a mother made a vow to the Blessed Virgin that she would never do anything to prevent the birth of children. She has a large family, but recently she advised and assisted her daughter to produce an abortion. She is now afraid to go to confession because she has broken her vow. She can not even pray to the Blessed Virgin now, and she always had great devotion to her. Is the breaking of her vow a sacrilege which can not be forgiven?

A. This mother has been guilty of many grievous sins, but they can all be forgiven if she is sincerely and honestly sorry, as she apparently is. There are more important things than her vow to worry about in this case. Taking the life of a human being, depriving it of the chance of baptism and heaven, the scandal of leading her own daughter into serious sins, and the excommunication from the Church which she has incurred by having part in an abortion.

I wonder if it was a real vow which she took. Vows are not made to the Blessed Virgin, but to God alone. Solemn promises might be made to the Blessed Virgin; but these would not have force of law, or bind under pain of sin.

Sometimes when a person says she made a vow to the Blessed Virgin she means that she made a vow to God in honor of Mary. But before it can be a real vow the person making it must fully realize that she is binding herself under pain of sin—that she is making a special

law for herself. And she must fully intend to accept that obligation and bind herself under sin.

The breaking of a private vow is not called a sacrilege, in the strict sense. But even if it were it would be quickly forgiven if repentance were sincere. It is a sin against religion, and it is serious, but it should not keep a person from confession a single day.

Catholics should not make vows without the advice of their confessor.

The excommunication may cause more trouble. The priest may have to obtain faculties from the bishop to absolve from it. But the seal of confession will be strictly observed. If the mother did not know about this excommunication, she did not incur it, and the priest can absolve her without delay.

The Blessed Virgin will not forget a quarter-century of faithfulness to this vow, or promise, because of one violation, serious as it is. Pray to her with confidence and love—and go to confession at once.

Q. Is it possible for a young couple who have had eight children and are expecting the ninth, who have tried to use the rhythm system and find it impossible on account of physical disturbance of the young mother, to get permission to have an operation so that there will be no more children?

A. It is not possible for anyone in the Church to give you permission to have this operation. The immediate purpose of the operation is sterilization. That is contrary to the law of God. No one can give you permission to break the law of God; no one can give you permission to steal, or lie, or commit adultery.

I think everyone sympathizes thoroughly with you in your problem. You write that you are still very young

and that you have many complicating difficulties in the family. Apparently Our Lord expects you to be heroic. He does demand unusual sacrifices from some people, and usually from those whom He loves most.

Q. Is not the fact that so many good Catholics practice birth control proof that the Church is divided on the matter?

A. Good Catholics don't. Even if an equal number of otherwise good Catholics began robbing banks, it would not prove the Church had changed her teaching on the seventh commandment.

Q. To what extent can a Catholic rely on the advice of her non-Catholic doctor, who tells her she should have no more children? There is no Catholic doctor in her community.

A. She might ask him what he would have her do about it. She might explain to him that artificial birth control is out of the question for her, that it is morally wrong, a mortal sin. Does he merely think it inadvisable for her to have another child? Would he advise periodic abstinence—the rhythm? Or does he think it gravely dangerous to her health or life to have another child—so dangerous that he would not trust the rhythm, but would recommend complete abstinence from marital relations?

If she pins him down this way, she may get some practical advice. It is quite easy for a non-Catholic doctor to simply tell a patient that she should have no more children. To him it seems the safer procedure. Why take a chance? It might be dangerous. It will be difficult,

at least. He intends artificial birth control, of course. He may be inclined to ridicule scruples against this practice; but if a Catholic patient is firm and makes it clear to him that she does not solve problems by breaking the moral law, she may make him realize the problem he poses for her. Once he understands, his advice should be the same as that which a Catholic doctor would give.

I would not be guilty of advising a woman to go contrary to her doctor's warning in a serious medical matter. But I do advise her to beware of his encouragement that she commit sin. In matters of health and medicine he is presumed competent. In questions of morality he may be immorally wrong.

Q. What are the words and where do you find it in the Bible that birth control should not be practiced?

A. Genesis 38:8-10 relates that Onan practiced birth control: "And therefore the Lord slew him, because he did a detestable thing."

Good thing the Lord doesn't keep up his sudden punishment to Onan's successors. Birth control would be not only sinful but an extremely dangerous practice. And race suicide would be quickly accomplished.

Q. Do you think the Catholic Church will ever change its stand on birth control?

A. I'm certain she will not. It's a law of God, not a law of the Church.

Q. I am a convert and have five children. A Catholic told me that the Church does not encourage large fam-

ilies but forbids birth control. Is that statement correct?

A. Almighty God forbids prevention of conception by artificial means. The Church finds it necessary these days to insist that such action is immoral. The Church has made no law in the matter. God's law is perfectly clear.

If nothing sinful is done to prevent conception, the size of the family does not directly concern the Church. God, through his natural laws, will probably take care of that. Catholic writers and teachers constantly point out the advantages of large families over small ones: more immortal souls for eternal happiness and God's glory; more generosity, happier family life, and greater social adaptability; less selfishness, less frustration, and much more genuine love.

Of course, practical, hard-headed (and hard-hearted) moderns will argue in favor of the small family, that it is better to have a few and raise them well, etc. For answer, make your own survey: apart from certain underprivileged large families—made that way by social injustice, or personal defects—is it your own observance that the pampered brats of eugenically proper families are better raised than the wholesome, hearty brood of holy, happy, healthy homes?

Q. I am reading books favoring contraceptives, because I feel I would be dishonest if I did not see both sides of the question. My sister says this is wrong. Which of us is right?

A. Your sister is a smart girl. Your zeal for honesty is misleading you. The label on the bottle says poison, but you feel you would be dishonest if you did not try it

and see for yourself. It would not be right for you to take the chemist's word that it is poison.

If you were a moral theologian I would advise you to read those books. You would be able to pick out their errors. But in your case, your fervent zeal for seeing both sides of the question convinces me you are gullible enough to simply devour those errors.

Q. My non-Catholic sister-in-law says that her doctor (a Catholic) says that it is all right for her to use a diaphragm to prevent her having any more children for a while. She already has four, and the doctor says she should not have another one right away because of her health.

I told her this doctor must not be living up to his religion, if he inserts a diaphragm or advises the use of one.

My question is this, may a person, under any circumstances, use a diaphragm as a means of birth control?

A. The use of a diaphragm to prevent conception is wrong and sinful. It is contrary to the law of God. There are no exceptions to this law. There are no circumstances which permit the use of any type of instrument, medicine, or other material as a means of birth control.

If a Catholic doctor really encouraged your sister-in-law to use a diaphragm, fitted her with one, or directed her elsewhere to be so fitted, he did wrong. He is either (1) ignorant of the true meaning of God's law and the Church's teaching regarding it, or (2) he is deliberately breaking this law in a serious way.

He might try to argue that your sister-in-law is not obliged to observe this law, because she is not a Catholic. He is wrong. The law comes from God, and all His

people are bound by it, whether they be Catholic or heretic, Christian or pagan.

He may argue that she does not believe that birth control is wrong, and hence commits no sin by it. So he is not co-operating in sin or encouraging her to commit sin. He is simply leaving her in good faith and giving her some good amoral medical advice or assistance. Again he is wrong. He may not make use of his patient's ignorance to accomplish a purpose contrary to the moral law. It is like putting a gun in the hands of a child and telling that child to shoot someone. The child is not guilty of sin.

He may argue: well, if I don't fit that diaphragm, she will simply go to another doctor who will, and I will lose a patient. The answer: and if you do fit it, you will lose a soul, and it will be your own.

Q. Can a priest ever advise a woman penitent to have herself fitted with a diaphragm to prevent conception? Sounds incredible, but a friend of my wife solemnly told her that a married friend of hers was so advised by a confessor because they "already have five children and any more would be a severe economic burden." I have heard similar allegations made four times in the last four years by four different married women. One of them swore that her confessor told her: "Go ahead and practice (artificial) birth control but be sure to confess it every time." My question: Do YOU think any priests could be guilty of such grave errors?

A. I do not—definitely and absolutely. I think there might have been misunderstanding of what the priest did tell them, or a process of rationalization in an effort to find excuse. I think that the stories might have been distorted, too, as they passed through the ears and

mouths of three women before they came to you (and I pay my deep respects to your wife). Priests can make big mistakes at times; but I can't imagine one being that far wrong.

If a confessor ever did give such advice, in matters of this kind, the law of the Church requires that it be reported to the bishop—by the party getting the advice.

Q. Is it a mortal sin on the part of a wife if her husband interrupts intercourse against her wishes, or is it only a mortal sin on his soul? His purpose is birth control.

A. The problem you present is a very complicated one, and it is very difficult to give a general answer. Certainly no one is guilty of sin unless they consent to it. A wife is not guilty of sin because of something her husband does against her will. However, in matters of this kind, the co-operation between husband and wife is most intimate. If the wife fully knows that her husband intends to commit sin in the course of the act in which she is co-operating with him, can she give her co-operation? She does not want to commit sin. She gives no direct consent to the sin. But she has an immediate part in the act by which sin is committed. The sin would not be possible without her.

Questions so complicated should usually be taken up in the confessional, and presented on an individual basis, with all the circumstances. We may make these following general observations:

1. Is the wife really desirous of having children? Is she whole-heartedly opposed to birth control herself? Or would she like to avoid conception and at the same time avoid sin? Is she simply anxious to avoid personal responsibility and shift the burden to her husband? The

wife's attitude in this regard can have a great influence upon the husband's action. If she is entirely honest in her own attitude and intentions, in a great majority of the cases she can probably induce her husband to agree with her.

2. Presuming that she is honest, has she really and sincerely tried to get her husband to conduct his relations properly? She must do all that she can to avoid even the material part which she has in his sin. And unless she honestly tries to keep him from the sin, she will also have a formal part in it.

3. If she is honest and sincere in her attitude, and has really tried to get her husband to perform the act properly, then she is probably not guilty of sin. She directly co-operates with him in a relationship which is entirely right and proper. She knows that the relationship will not be completed rightly, but she has no direct part in that. She is opposed to it. She has done all she can to prevent it.

Again, I say it is a matter which should be taken up in confession where all the particular circumstances can be discussed and understood.

Q. Your answers in the Question Box on birth control have caused me some serious thought. My parents believed in birth control; I followed their way. Two was enough for me. I encouraged my children to do likewise. Now, I am wondering: Have I done wrong in encouraging this practice? I have never mentioned this in confession. Now my eyes are opened. Should I make a general confession?

A. Wrong things done in sincere good faith are not sins. When we honestly believe that a bad act is good, we

have no moral guilt in doing it. We do not need to confess it when we later find out that it was bad.

Your sins are things which you do contrary to your own personal conscience. As long as you follow your conscience when it tells you an act is good and should be done, you are guilty of no sin. They might put you in jail for it, but you will never go to hell for it.

Sometimes our consciences are wrong, as in your case. You were wrongly taught. But you followed your conscience. The things you did were wrong, but you committed no sin. If you were to do the same things now that you know better, it would be a sin.

We must never judge past acts by knowledge we acquire later. Judge them by the knowledge you had at the time you did them.

We need confess only actual sins. The wrong things you did were not sins, because you did not know they were wrong. They do not now become sins when you learn that they were wrong. You have no obligation to confess them. I would advise against confessing them. But if you think it would make your conscience more at ease, then you might explain the matter to the priest in confession just as you have explained it to me. That should be enough; and you should then give it no more thought—except to undo, as far as you can, the wrong teaching you have given your children.

Q. Is it a mortal sin to practice birth control? If you confess it, and your intentions are to continue this practice, can you receive Holy Communion in the state of grace, or would you be guilty of mortal sin?

A. Birth control is a mortal sin. It is directly opposed to the purpose of the marriage act. It is contrary to the virtue of chastity, because it seeks sexual pleasure for

its own sake while deliberately frustrating the purpose for which God intended the pleasure.

When we go to confession we must realize the serious wrong in our sins and be honestly sorry for them because they offend God who loves us, because they repudiate the love of our Lord Jesus Christ dying on the Cross for us, or at least because they deprive us of the happiness of heaven and condemn us to the unending sufferings of hell.

We cannot be honestly sorry for our sins if we intend to repeat them. Suppose you had hit your friend in the face, and you told him, "Oh, I am awfully sorry for that; I realize how wrong it was and how it hurt you: I hope you will forgive me. But, of course, you know that as soon as you do forgive me, I intend to hit you again. It gives me so much pleasure."

Can you imagine your friend forgiving you while you are so disposed?

Birth control presents a problem in confession, because often the person who confesses it has no honest practical intention of discontinuing the sin. They simply "feel bad" about sinning and have an uncomfortable wish that the practice were not "necessary," or they make a vague half-hearted promise to "try" with a secret intention of failing in their "try." But even this insincerity is preferable to the attitude of those who have "rationalized" their sin and found excuse for it in their own blinded conscience—who question the Church's teaching and ask, "Did GOD really forbid it?" These have lived too much with the modern pagan errors adopted by their secular neighbors. Their sin is eating away the foundation of their faith.

Unless we are honest in confession our sins are not forgiven. We do not regain the state of grace. If we were to go to Holy Communion in that state we would commit a mortal sin of sacrilege. Do you think our Eucha-

ristic Lord is pleased to be the guest of one who plans to slap Him in the face by mortal sin as soon as the opportunity offers?

Q. I have a friend who was always forgiven at confession in her own parish for preventing conception, and she went to confession in another parish and was not forgiven. Can she now go back to confession in her own parish and get forgiven? Why aren't all our priests the same? I do feel that there is a lot of partiality.

A. It is not a question of partiality but of insincerity, and it is your friend who is insincere. Apparently she has been able to fool her own priest into thinking that she is sincere. He has been trusting her, giving her the benefit of doubt, and hoping that she really intends to mend her ways. But evidently she makes no changes. She goes right out from confession and returns to her old life of sin. Now this other priest has caught her up, questioned her, and detected her dishonesty. She doesn't like it. None of us like to be caught telling lies; and she has been telling lies to Almighty God, to her pastor, and to herself, for a long time.

What does she think confession is? An absolution machine? Certainly it is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to give us His grace and to forgive us our sins. But it cannot pour grace into a soul which has closed itself against grace. It cannot forgive the sins of a person who likes sin better than God, and intends to remain in sin.

What good would it do your friend to go back to her own pastor and fool him all over again? She might get him to pronounce the words of absolution. But what good would those words do her? They would only add one more sin of sacrilege to her soul.

The basic essential for the forgiveness of sins is honest contrition. With that we can often have our sins forgiven even before we go to confession. Without that the Pope himself cannot give you effective absolution. You can sometimes receive absolution without confessing your sins at all, but you can never receive effective absolution without contrition.

The priest in confession acts as a judge. He must judge the disposition of the penitent. If he judges that the penitent is honestly sorry for his sins and really intends to reform, he must give him absolution. If he judges that the "penitent" is not really sorry, but intends to go right on sinning, he is forbidden to give him absolution. It would be a mortal sin of sacrilege for him to do so.

Usually the priest has to accept the word of the penitent. If he says he is sorry the priest will usually believe him. The very fact that he goes to the trouble and humiliation of confession indicates some good purpose. But often the frequency and circumstances of sin must make the priest suspicious. Then on inquiry he may find that this person is living in an immediate occasion of sin—or loves his sin so much he will not give it up. The priest will try to persuade him, but unless he really wants to give up his sin, and is willing to separate himself from its occasion, there is nothing more the priest can do. Absolution would do the penitent no good anyway.

The contrition which is needed for confession comes from a common-sense recognition of the Goodness of God and the evil of sin, and the offense it gives to God; a clear recollection of the love of God for us and our lack of love for Him, of His gifts to us and the return we make to Him, of His death as Jesus Christ on the Cross for us and of our sins which caused His death; a brief glance into the happiness of heaven and the hor-

rors of hell. As men of reason we must then be really sorry for the wrong we have done, and if that sorrow makes any sense we will be determined to avoid similar wrong for the future. It is most insincere to weep with sorrow for past sins while planning future ones with glee. That is to have two minds without making up either of them, to have two faces, the tearful one looking back—for the confessor to see—the anxious one looking forward to the devil's charms.

Honesty is the secret of a good confession. The person who is thoroughly honest with himself, his God, and his confessor, cannot possibly make a bad confession. The person who tries to deceive himself or his confessor can hardly make a good one.

Q. If a person bought some of those contraptions which are on the market to be used for birth control, would they have committed a sin when they bought them, as they had the intention to use them? Would they be guilty of this sin even if they later decided not to use them, and actually never did?

A. The mere buying of those things was a sin, but not nearly as serious as the intention of using them.

When we definitely decide to sin, we are guilty of sin. We are guilty internally of this sin which we decide to commit. Sin is primarily a product of the will. When our will decides upon sin, we are guilty of sin. Sometimes we carry it out; then it becomes an external sin. Sometimes we do not carry it out; then it remains an internal sin. Sometimes we are simply prevented from carrying it out; sometimes we change our minds.

From the rest of your letter I would judge that you are inclined to be just a little bit scrupulous. Scrupulous people should not worry about internal sins. They are

apt to become confused and to be fearful that they have committed sin when they actually have not.

People who are not scrupulous should know that there is a great difference between temptation and internal sin. We may be very much inclined to commit sin; we may dally with the idea; we may give some consideration to the attractiveness of the proposition; we may be on the fence; and all of this may remain only a temptation and putting ourselves in danger of sin.

But it is not until we definitely decide to commit the sin that we are guilty of the internal sin itself. Then, if we later change our mind, we are still guilty of the internal sin which we committed, even though we never put it into practice.

It might be possible for a person to commit a number of internal mortal sins about one and the same action. For instance, you might wake up on Sunday morning, look at your clock, and then decide that you are not going to bother getting up and going to Mass. You roll over and go to sleep. You have committed internally the sin of missing Mass. Then later on you wake up and realize that you are seriously obliged to go to Mass; so you make up your mind to fulfill your obligation. You jump up and start to dress. Then you realize how tired and sleepy you are; so you decide that it is simply too much trouble. You go back to bed again with a definite intention that you are not going to go to Mass this Sunday. Then again before the time of the last Mass, you decide that you must fulfill your obligation. You start the process all over again, but then you start thinking of a trip you would like to take, and you decide that you won't go to Mass after all; you will go on this trip. You might change your mind again and actually go to Mass, but you would be guilty of three serious sins of deciding to miss Mass.

This is quite different from the situation you would

find yourself in if you woke up in the morning, and you were simply awfully tired, very much tempted not to get out of bed, and you started dallying with the idea of missing Mass, without ever reaching a definite decision. You would be fooling with temptation, but you would not be guilty of the internal sin of missing Mass. You might dally with the temptation most of the morning, and then get up and go to Mass and be guilty of no serious sin.

Q. What about the problem of the Rh factor in pregnancy and birth? I know a case in which three babies have died. The doctor recommends sterilization.

A. Your question is a difficult one, and there is no easy solution. We hope the doctors may find a solution soon; but meanwhile we must keep in mind moral principles of right and wrong. We may not solve a problem by committing sin.

Sterilization is wrong when it is done to prevent conception. It is not a solution to this problem.

Artificial birth control is wrong. It can not be presented as a solution to the problem.

In extreme cases continence seems to be the only solution. It demands heroic sacrifice, but is the only choice between sin and death.

If the mother's health is not too critically endangered, normal or periodic marital relations are recommended, with trust in God and submission to His holy will.

It is recommended that all young people know their blood types, and whether they are Rh positive or Rh negative. If a young woman knows that she is Rh negative she will be very smart not to let herself fall in love with a man who is Rh positive. Likewise the Rh positive man may avoid trouble, tragedy, temptation, and

tribulations if he avoids all amorous contact with Rh negative girls. Once they have fallen in love they will hardly be deterred from marriage by distant threats of dangerous abortions and miscarriages or of children born with erythroblastosis, to undergo critical transfusions, with death or debility as the probable outcome.

Q. In the slum districts, where it is a fight to keep alive, it usually happens that families are unusually large, and very often must accept relief, which is a burden on the taxpayers. Why wouldn't birth control be the answer, and if not what would you suggest?

A. Birth control is not the answer because it is contrary to the law of God. It is mortal sin, and we don't solve any problems by mortal sin. The end does not justify the means. Birth control is no more the right solution than rat-poison for the kids, or sterilization for the parents, or a lighted match touched to the shacks.

How does God want us to solve the problem? That is the question we must keep asking ourselves; and much time and effort is wasted by social planners who ignore that question. They find handy rat-poison solutions which destroy the souls of men and weaken the moral fiber of society, while raising the standard of living.

There is probably no single, simple solution. But many things we can do to help: (1) eliminate slum conditions by community effort, (2) provide employment, (3) pay just wages, (4) iron out the various inequities in our industrial and social system, (5) provide capable social workers who can help with family and personal problems, (6) provide schools and churches for education and spiritual training, (7) work out the present thorny problem of adequate medical and hospital care.

We would not be so blind and hard-hearted as to fail

in sympathy for the poor taxpayer. He certainly is not the forgotten man; he is rather the gotten man—they get him coming and going. But relief to the poor is not one of his great burdens. I am sure he is supporting more government workers on fine salaries than he is slum families on relief rolls. The poor may be a burden, but helping them will never cause ruinous inflation which comes from riotous deficit spending and fiscal incompetency. In other words, slum relief has usually been a minor problem of the taxpayer; it hardly rates the name of head-ache amid the racking pains which afflict his oft-gouged frame.

Then there is the question of long-term costs. Easy solutions like birth-control are cheap now. But they tear up God's laws and undermine social morality. What may later be the costs of all that? There will be the devil to pay, of course—and his charges come high. Whence come the frightening costs of Communism to the world? The costs in fears and frustrations and armament prices and disrupted industry? Do they not come ultimately from distortion of truth and perversion of morality?

If we all believed God's teachings and obeyed His laws the world would be peaceful, happy, prosperous and confident. There would be no war, or threat of war, no enmities or injustices, no want or poverty or fear. These things result from breaking God's laws—trying to solve problems cheaply and simply and immorally. Let's do it according to His rules, if we want permanent results here and eternal results hereafter.

Q. A Jesuit priest recently stated that the world does face the "danger of over-population." Is not this Malthusianism? Are we not to believe that when God ordered man to "increase and multiply" He would give

man enough resources to sustain human life in a decent manner?

A. The Rev. Thomas Malthus was an English clergyman of the late 18th century. He was very gloomy about man's prospects, predicting that human beings would soon all be starving to death because population was increasing much faster than the food supply. He made it mathematical; the increase of humans is geometric, 2 - 4 - 16 - 256 - 65536; the best food increase to be hoped for is arithmetic, 2 - 4 - 8 - 16 - 32. So in fifty years—by mid-nineteenth century disaster would be upon us.

The mid-nineteenth century saw an industrial boom and more food per mouth than Malthus had known. While events made his dire predictions ridiculous, he has not lacked disciples who found much truth in his general theories. They are called neo-Malthusians. Their favorite proof is India where the starving population increases five million a year and the food supply increases hardly at all. And usually their favorite facile remedy is birth-control.

The subject is much too vast and complicated for me to have even an opinion on the facts. The world's population is certainly increasing rapidly, and yet we are constantly finding new sources of energy, supplies, and food. In the industrial areas of the world the standard of living increases with the population. There are tremendous opportunities for the improvement of farming methods, increasing soil fertility, and utilizing new areas, to say nothing of the food supply which might come from the sea. If these advances were made the world might feed many times its present population. But prophets of doom warn us that the population growth, led by India and China, will overwhelm us and starve us before we can make these advances.

My faith in God gives me assurance that He knows all the answers and has it all planned out, and is constantly on the job looking after the world, noting each sparrow which falls, and constant in His love for the man He created in His own image, redeemed with His own blood, and adopted as His own son. God has never promised man that He will be free of want, suffering, or catastrophe. But He has promised him eternal happiness if he keeps His laws. He never claimed that His universe was perfect. It couldn't be; it is created. But He has demonstrated considerable ingenuity in solving its problems as they arise. Among living things on earth there seems to be a system of balance and compensation. Let one increase out of proportion and a parasite comes along to reduce it to its place, and then something else handles the parasite. When man disturbs the balance he usually runs into problems. God wants him to use his ingenuity and to work, but if he starts trying to solve his own population balance contrary to God's law, his problems will be eternal.

That thermonuclear bomb recently dropped in the Pacific might be the instantaneous solution to the problem.

Chapter 13: THE RHYTHM

Permission from the priest—
Vatican discovers rhythm—
How will the postponing be
done?—Four under six—
Health—Six in seven years—
Advertising—TV and limou-
sine—The intention which
makes marriage invalid—The
other alternative—Heroism—
Abandonment and prudence.

Q. I have been having a discussion with a Catholic friend concerning the Church's stand on rhythm. Am I right in asserting that it is absolutely necessary to obtain specific permission from your priest in order to practice rhythm?

A. No you are not right. I presume, of course, that by "rhythm" you mean the practice of periodic abstinence from marital relations, during periods of more probable fertility, in order to avoid the conception of children.

In itself, such practice is not wrong. It is perfectly right for husband and wife to have marital relations during sterile periods; and there is nothing wrong in their abstaining from such relations at any particular time, for a good motive, as long as they are both perfectly willing to abstain, and are both able to do it without danger to chastity.

However, motives and circumstances may make the practice all wrong. If husband and wife are simply selfish and do not want to be bothered with children;

if they are simply looking for a good time, with luxuries, laziness, and luscious freedom from responsibilities, then their practice of the rhythm method of birth control is sinful. They want marriage with its pleasures, but they are bent on frustrating its purpose. Rhythmic abstinence is the means they use to accomplish their evil purpose—so it becomes evil from their motives.

The abstinence required by this practice may often put a serious strain on the continence of husband or wife. If it seriously endangers chastity without grave reason, it is seriously wrong. It may put a strain on marital happiness, on nerves and tempers, on mutual love. If it does these things, without serious reason, it is wrong.

Sometimes motives are right and reasons are sound and serious. The number of children, or their frequency may put a strain on health or budget. All selfishness and softness aside, it just does not seem to be advisable to have any more children for a while. Maybe the doctor says so. Maybe the bank agrees. Such reasons will justify practice of rhythm for a time, at least. More serious reasons might be required to permit its practice for many years, or on a permanent basis.

In estimating whether reasons are serious we must always take into account particular circumstances. More serious reasons are required to justify the practice in the beginning of married life than a few years later, because dangers to chastity are greater, and there is the threat to proper marital adjustment and happiness. More serious reasons are required if the couple have no children, or only one or two, than if they have a half-dozen, with the oldest in kindergarten. And always there must be an honest, personal estimate of the dangers to continence. We must always be careful not to place ourselves in immediate occasion of sin.

Since so many factors are involved, married people

frequently find it advisable to talk their particular problem over with their confessor or with some other priest, so that they may be sure they are right in what they are doing. He has professional knowledge of moral laws. His advice is valuable.

But if they, themselves, are honestly certain of what they are doing, and have no doubts of its rightness, there is no need for them to talk it over with anyone. No permissions are required, just a sure, honest, well-informed conscience.

Q. A secular news dispatch recently said that the Vatican did not "recognize" the licitness of the rhythm method of birth control until the Pope's declaration in 1951. The news reports are making it appear that prior to 1951 the rhythm method was illicit. Is it true that the 1951 statement by Pius XII was the first mention by the Church of the permissibility of rhythm? If so, does not the silence of the Vatican prior to 1951 imply that at least it had never been condemned and could, therefore, be presumed to be licit—under the proper conditions, of course?

A. When we studied our moral theology in the seminary—away back in the roaring twenties—we were taught the same basic principles the Holy Father explained in 1951, and the author we studied on the subject was Capellmann, whose book had been published in the nineteenth century; the French translation which we used was brand new, published in 1926. I have just now dug that worn paper-bound volume out of my library, for the first time in twenty years. It is interesting. Capellmann was a German doctor, and the correctness of his moral doctrines had been checked by Father

Lehmkuhl, S.J., widely known as one of the greatest moral theologians of those days.

Doctor Capellmann had devised a theory of periodic sterility which gained wide acceptance for a time. According to his idea conception was practically impossible during nearly half of each month's cycle. The only trouble with his theory was that it was not in accord with facts—almost the opposite of the facts set forth in the more recent Ogino-Knaus theory. People who followed Doctor Capellmann's theory must have practiced abstinence during those days when the chances of conception were least, and then just about the time of ovulation they began to feel themselves safe and free.

The edition of this book which we used—the 19th—had been frequently revised by a Doctor Bergmann, and he made it very clear that this theory of periodic sterility advanced by Doctor Capellmann offered no guarantee whatsoever, and he put that warning in heavy black type. However, he quoted, unchanged, the moral principle stated by the good doctor, that “one could not place in doubt the liceity of this temporary continence”—today we call it periodic abstinence. And it is worth noting that Doctor Capellmann had cited as authority for his principle the great moralist, Cardinal Ballerini.

The point of all this is that **MORAL PRINCIPLES DO NOT CHANGE**. They are perennial, the same century after century. And our secular news services could save themselves some red-faced errors if they would learn this simple fact. Scientific theories may change as new facts are discovered. Then the moralist has the task of judging these new theories in the light of the old principles.

I saw that news story to which you refer, and the person who wrote it was just plain ignorant.

The principle which we now apply to periodic abstinence—rhythm—with its thermometers and its menstrual

calendars, is precisely the same as Doctor Capellmann applied to his erroneous theories in the nineteenth century—precisely the same as earlier authorities may well have used for earlier theories, long forgotten.

Q. Can one have good reasons to postpone children if they have financial difficulties or aging parents to take care of?

A. Yes, these might be good reasons, but how are you going to do the postponing? If you are planning periodic abstinence, you may be justified. If you are thinking of artificial birth control, no reasons are sufficient.

Q. I have four children, the eldest just six and the baby a month old. Would it be a mortal sin for us to use the rhythm system for just a year or two? We are both in agreement about it.

A. It would not be a sin. On the contrary, you would be quite justified in view of the difficulties of money, health, and work which you outline in your letter.

Q. I read your recent article on the use of rhythm in marriage. I would like to ask a question about ourselves. We live on a large farm, have three children, and my health is not very good at the present time. My husband is in favor of the practice of rhythm and complete abstinence at certain times. Would it be a sin for us to practice it occasionally for several years until I felt I could have another child?

A. Apparently, because of your health, you and your husband would be justified in the practice of rhythm, if

you are both willing and able to abstain from marital relationships, as this practice requires. I notice that your oldest child is nearly eight years old and your youngest just about a year. Apparently your children are not coming too close together, and health is the only thing which justifies you in this practice.

Q. We have been married seven years and have six children. We have no savings. My health is getting very low. I feel we have a morally sound and sufficient reason not to have any more children now.

A. I agree with you. Just don't commit sin to avoid having them. In your letter you ask about the "rhythm" method of trying to avoid conception. You are certainly justified in using it. I would suggest that you consult your doctor or some good book on the subject.

Q. Recently the Question Box condemned the distribution of literature on the rhythm method of birth control. I have it on the advice of my confessor that the rhythm method, if mutually agreed upon by a couple, is approved by the Church. If this is true then why should the literature be condemned?

A. The literature condemned was false and misleading advertising material. Among other things it quoted Pope Pius XI completely out of context and meaning—making him a salesman for the "Menstro-Rhythm Routine." I don't know this book at all. Maybe it is all right. But its methods of advertising are unethical, unscientific, and subversive of Catholic doctrine.

Your own confessor has evidently given you very fine advice in your personal case. Your record of four chil-

dren and two mis-carriages in five and a half years of married life indicates a valid and sufficient reason for you and your husband to use this method of restricting conception. And your attitude of willingness to accept God's will in the matter of future children is thoroughly Catholic and commendable.

The "rhythm" is essentially marital abstinence and consequently not wrong in itself if mutually agreeable to both parties. But its use may have bad effects, particularly as an occasion of temptation or sin to one party or both, and as a strain on marital love and harmony. Consequently its use should not be advocated, advertised and encouraged. It is to be recommended in specific cases with care and circumspection.

It should be practiced only where there is sufficient reason to justify it, and where its dangers are eliminated as much as possible. Usually you should consult your doctor as well as your confessor if you expect its use to be successful. Don't fall for quacks, and their false advertising.

The claims of this particular literature are ridiculous. If the book is equally unscientific it has one good feature: Its trusting use may give life and immortal souls to some unplanned babies.

Q. What about the practice of rhythm by a man who drives a \$2,000 car and is paying on a television set?

A. I would hesitate to make any judgment in such an intimate matter of personal conduct unless the problem were brought to me by the person concerned. As you present the question, you make the case look bad for him. And yet, I wonder. How many children does he already have? What are their ages? What is the condition of his wife's health? How badly does he need that car?

Where would he find one under \$2,000? Isn't TV becoming standard home equipment? How long does he intend to practice rhythm? Is his wife in favor of this practice? Do they find themselves guilty of sin during their periods of abstinence?

We should know the answers to these and many similar questions before we may either condemn or condone the practice of your friend.

In giving you this evasive answer, I am stating in simple words the instructions given by His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, in his talk to a convention of obstetricians. This talk attracted wide attention at the time, because many secular newspapers and non-Catholic churchmen persisted in misinterpreting his statements on this and other moral questions; and the Holy Father took occasion, the following month, in a talk to parents of large families, to clarify his remarks so that no one could have excuse for misunderstanding him.

The Holy Father strongly emphasizes the importance of the right attitude of husband and wife towards children. There should be a genuine love of maternity, a deep appreciation of the value of human souls, a generous attitude towards the obligations of parenthood. This sincere internal acceptance of the office and duties of parents is a basic demand of right moral order in all those who are to enjoy the privileges of marriage.

Opposed to this generous attitude of love and acceptance of duty is the selfishness which simply does not want children because of the pain and inconvenience of bearing them, the trouble of caring for them and raising them, and the personal and financial sacrifices they involve. This selfishness may well be the cause of many sins in married life.

The Pope then poses the question of how we can reconcile the obligation of prompt and generous acceptance of parenthood with the growing recourse to nat-

ural sterile periods (rhythm), which seems to be a clear expression of contrary will.

He then points out that this practice of rhythm is essentially different from those practices of artificial birth control which are a perversion of the marital act itself. In the practice of rhythm the marital act is natural and proper. It is simply restricted to certain days, and avoided on other days.

In determining the morality of such practice, he says, the conduct of the married couple must be examined attentatively. It will be morally right, if they have sufficient good reason for their practice. It will be morally wrong if their reasons are not good and sound.

It is not enough that the husband and wife (1) do not pervert the marriage act itself, and (2) are willing to accept and educate any child which may come despite their best efforts. Marriage is a state of life which confers certain rights and imposes certain positive obligations. Human nature and the Creator Himself impose on those who use the rights of marriage an obligation to preserve and propagate the human race. The individual, society, the State and the Church depend, for their very existence, on the fertility of marriage. It is a general moral principle that we are excused from positive obligations of this kind only for grave reasons.

It is therefore a sin against the sense of married life for people to embrace that state, and make use of the privilege which it makes licit, and at the same time to deliberately and constantly avoid its primary duties—without serious reason.

Serious reasons can exempt from this positive obligation for a time—for a long time—or even forever. Among these reasons the Holy Father indicates four general classifications: medical, eugenic, economic, and social.

In his second talk (to parents of large families) he stresses the fact that the Church is not harsh or unfeel-

ing, but knows how to consider with sympathy and understanding the real difficulties of married life in our days. He praises medical science for its progress in determining periods of fertility, and expresses hope for greater knowledge and accuracy. And he indicates that there are many reasons, indeed, which justify the practice of rhythm—that it can be legitimately used within broad limits.

Temporary observance of rhythm requires less serious reasons than its constant use throughout marriage. That is why I would want to look into your friend's situation thoroughly before I would condemn him—or approve his course of action.

Q. I have a question which is causing my wife and me a great deal of unrest. I think I have read somewhere that if a person gets married with the intention of not having children the marriage is invalid. In our case, that seems to have been the intention, at least on my part. The war, and military service, and economic conditions were reasons for my intention. We began using birth control at the start of our marriage and continued it for eight months. Then we stopped it, and have never resumed the practice. The irony of it is that we never did have any children, though we have seen doctors about it, and done everything we could, especially these past several years.

A. You need not worry about the validity of your marriage. It is entirely valid. You entered into it with sinful intention. You were probably guilty of sacrilege in receiving the sacrament of Matrimony with such intention. You committed many sins during the first eight months of your married life. But you don't have to worry about any of those old sins, either; because you

have long ago repented of them and been forgiven. And it looks like God may have punished you already. The absence of children in your home may not be a direct retaliation for your sins; the sins themselves were probably quite useless. But the absence of children is painful to you and a cause of sorrow; and God will be pleased that you accept it as a punishment, in a spirit of penance and reparation.

The procreation of children is the primary purpose of marriage, and a definite positive intention of absolutely excluding that purpose in marriage would make the marriage invalid. But on the other hand we know that not all men and women enter into marriage with intentions entirely pure. They fully intend a real marriage; but at the same time, in the back of their minds, or in the front of their minds, they have the intention of violating the terms of the contract they are entering into. They give the marriage rights and accept them; but they expect to do a little chiseling on their obligations. Such intentions are sinful, but not invalidating. You may go to hell for them; but you can't get out of marriage because of them.

If it would help your own peace of mind, you and your wife could formally renew between yourselves, and without any witnesses, your marriage promises. If your marriage were invalid, that invalidity would be secret. It could never be proven in court. And such secret invalidity is healed by secret giving of promises with true intention.

But actually there is no doubt about it. Your marriage is valid.

Q. Will you please explain the two following passages from Pope Pius XII's comments on "rhythm" birth control:

1. "The other alternative would be the limitation on 'fertile' days of the use of the marriage right and not of the right itself."

2. "But the moral licitness of such conduct would be approved or denied according to whether the intention to observe these days continually is based on sufficient and secure moral motives or not."

A. You ask difficult questions; so you will have to accept difficult answers:

1. In order to understand the other alternative you have to recall the first alternative from the preceding paragraphs. The Holy Father said, in substance:

Suppose that two people enter into marriage with a definite positive intention or agreement that they will not have marital relations except on those days of the menstrual cycle on which the woman is considered sterile. Such an intention or agreement might make their marriage invalid. In the valid marriage contract the husband and wife give each other rights to mutual acts which by their nature are directed to the begetting of children. These rights are by nature permanent, not intermittent. If the contracting parties were essentially to restrict these rights at the time of marriage they would not be making a valid marriage contract.

On the other hand these people might be getting married without any idea of restricting the rights they give each other. They give the full rights of husband and wife, but they simply make a little private agreement on the side that they won't use these rights except during certain phases of the moon's cycle.

So, the Pope says, if we want to know whether their marriage is valid or not we must examine their intentions very carefully. Do they restrict to certain days the marital rights they give each other (first alternative), or do they give the full rights without restriction, but

simply plan not to use their rights on certain days (second alternative)?

The distinction will be clearer if we compare it to your right to hunt ducks. You get such a right when you buy a hunting license, and you have that right from dawn to dark all during the open season. Now suppose that when you got your license you found that it restricted your hunting rights to Saturdays and Sundays (first alternative). You would be rightly indignant and feel you were cheated. On the other hand, when you get your license, you may have no intention of hunting except on Saturday and Sunday (second alternative). Such intention does not affect the rights given in your license.

The Pope doesn't say so, but if you have any idea of getting your marriage declared invalid on these grounds, you had better pray for a miracle. The court will always hold for the second alternative unless you absolutely prove the first. And that is nigh impossible.

2. Then, supposing that your intentions represent the second alternative and your marriage is valid, is it right or wrong for you to restrict the use of your marriage rights to certain days, strictly avoiding relationships on more fertile days? The Pope says that depends on how good a reason you have. Are you simply trying to escape the pains, trials and obligations of parenthood? Or is there real danger to life or health or family welfare?

The rightness or wrongness of your periodic continence will depend upon your motives. Are they morally sound and sufficient?

Q. I once read that Tom Braniff's daughter had lost seven children in childbirth, and then had died trying to give birth to an eighth child. This woman was praised for her sanctity and heroism by a priest and a bishop. Don't you think she showed more rashness than hero-

ism, more presumption than holy understanding of God's providence? Should we not cooperate with God's providence, rather than tempt it?

A. I'm afraid we ordinary people will never quite understand heroes. I suspect we may admire them far above us when we get to heaven.

Q. You dropped that question about Braniff's daughter—rashness versus heroism, etc.—as if it were a hot potato. I dare say that's just what it is. No one can possibly judge another person without knowing all the facts and all the motives. But it is a terribly interesting question, and I wondered if it couldn't be handled "theoretically speaking"? Abandonment and Prudence have to kiss somewhere along the line.

A. Prudence is a maligned virtue. It is invoked as excuse for fear, delay, indecision, and downright laziness. It is cited as reason for excessive worry, absorption in worldly affairs, preoccupation with security, cleverness in making deals, slyness with the truth, and sharpness in judging others.

It's a shame. Prudence is a beautiful virtue, a sort of judge, moderator, and guide of all the other virtues. It resides in the intellect, man's highest faculty; and is exercised by right reason and sound judgment. It is closely connected with courage, is inspired by love of God and neighbor, and is rudderless without Faith and a complete trust in God's love, mercy, providence, and fatherly care of His children.

Not only should Abandonment and Prudence kiss somewhere along the line, they should, in the perfect man, proceed happily toward heaven in constant embrace.

Should we say that Jesus Christ despised the virtue of Prudence? Yet he preached that abandonment which has been the inspiration and literal guide of great saints like Paul the Apostle, Francis of Assisi, and Anthony the Abbot, to say nothing of the thousands of martyrs who sought death for Christ with prudent zeal.

Against the world's judgment He called blessed the poor in spirit, the meek, those who mourn and suffer persecution. He urged that "if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also . . . if he take away thy coat, let him take thy cloak also . . . if he force thee to go one mile, go with him two." Was He scorning Prudence in advising such worldly foolishness?

"Give to him that asketh of you . . . and lend, hoping for nothing thereby . . . love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you." Did he forget Prudence in advising us to such worldly imprudence?

"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand does. . . . Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . Be not solicitous for your life what you shall eat or for your body what you shall put on. Behold the birds of the air . . . and the lilies of the fields. . . . Your Father knows that you have need of all these things. . . . Seek first the kingdom of God . . . and all these things will be added unto you. Be not solicitous for tomorrow . . . sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

When He sent out the Twelve to evangelize Palestine He told them not to "possess gold or silver, nor money in your purses . . . nor two coats . . . nor shoes . . . nor a staff." And He gave them that advice which impromptu speakers regularly invoke: "Take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak."

And then there are those words which probably inspired the heroic prudence of Braniff's daughter: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill

the soul. . . . He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it."

He did not advise recklessness. He advised faith and trust and confidence in the loving care of an omnipotent Father: Two sparrows sell for a farthing, and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father . . . the very hairs of your head are numbered . . . you are better than many sparrows. "If you being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask Him."

In the face of such advice, most of us like to turn in defense of our conservatism to the Parable of the Prudent Virgins, or the story of the man to whom the Lord gave the five talents, or the comparison between the wise man who built his house on a rock and the foolish man who built his house on the sand. We like to remember that we are admonished to sit down and count up our money and resources before we start building the house, lest we find ourselves embarrassed with a gaping foundation.

If we really study these examples which we cite in defense of our worldly care and wisdom, we will find that Our Lord was urging true heavenly prudence in each case—the same type of trusting prudence which He recommended in His abandonment. The person who really believes that God is his loving Father, trusts Him completely, and loves Him without reserve, will understand that the greatest prudence is exercised in placing himself completely in the care and protection of that capable, solicitous, and provident Father.

Prudence is the habit of judging all actions in relation to the final goal of life: God and His heaven. Prudence judges carefully and surely of the particular means to reach this goal. It applies ideals and motives to the practical details of daily life. It helps us make the

right choice of thoughts and actions each moment of the day so that each thing we do will lead us nearer God. The imprudent man is he who chooses things which put him in danger of sin, or things which slow up his advance toward his final goal.

When Prudence is thus understood in its true sense we see that it does not contradict that complete abandonment to Divine Providence which has characterized many of the greatest Saints. They have been supremely prudent. They have chosen the radical means which took them racing directly to their final goal—straight up the steepest part of the mountain, bouncing off the boulders, without thought to the pain of the climbing or the hurt of the bruises.

Most of us lazily admit that we are not capable of such supreme heroic prudence. So we distort the name and call our slow plodding prudence. We say we are prudent when we avoid the dangers and hardships of the direct way, skirting deviously the sheer, jagged cliffs. We say we are prudent when we try to enjoy fully the way itself, and provide for its ease and security, lowering our gaze the while from the final goal.

We confuse worldly wisdom with the moral virtue of Prudence. We may be sharp and sure and safe in secular judgments, but deviate far from the direct path along which Prudence guides.

These are the reasons back of my earlier answer which seemed evasive. It would seem that Braniff's daughter had that heroic, wholehearted, trusting, heavenly prudence of which most of us believe ourselves incapable. She is affronting reproof to our tepidity, timidity, and worldly wisdom. We can't take such reproof without defense; so we characterize her direct, heroic, sacrificing love and confidence as imprudence. We who would not dare such dangers are simply prudent. That

is why I say we ordinary sluggish servants will gaze upward in admiration at her and her daring, direct companions as they cluster closely around the Master in His celestial home.

PART FOUR

Marriage Failures

Chapter 14: DIVORCE

The Church's efforts—Indissolubility—Separation—Permission—Grounds for divorce—Receiving the sacraments—Divorcee wearing diamond—Joining the Church—Baptizing the children—Godparents—Divorcee as friend—Fixing it up—Keeping company—That relative of ours—Married again—Belonging to the D.C.C.W.—Christian burial—The Catholic lawyer.

Q. What is the Catholic Church doing about the divorce problem in the United States today?

A. The Church uses the full impact of her moral influence and teaching to counteract the frightening trend of divorce which today threatens to destroy the family as the stable unit of our society. The Catholic church is just about the only organization really opposed to divorce in the U. S. today. Others want divorce—but without its evil effects.

Here are some of the things the Church is doing to combat divorce in a practical way:

1. She constantly teaches the same old doctrine of the divine origin, the sanctity, the sacramental nature, and the permanence of marriage. Students in her parochial schools and catechism classes hear it from first grade to Ph.D.

2. In all parishes pastors preach on the subject frequently.

3. Our Catholic papers run the danger of monotony in presenting the same theme.

All this teaching is done to create a proper idea and attitude regarding marriage strong enough to withstand the prevailing and perverting influences of our modern secular society. A proper attitude towards marriage is the best guarantee of its success.

4. The N. C. W. C. Family Life Bureau has been established in Washington by the bishops of the U. S. to study family problems and to aid the various dioceses in their efforts to solve these problems. The director of this bureau has many years of experience in his work, and is a nationally known authority.

5. The National Council of Catholic Women has a similar organization for the welfare of the family, and promotes its activities through diocesan and parochial groups affiliated with it.

6. The Cana Conferences (and Pre-Cana Conferences) have become popular in recent years. They are now being held in many dioceses.

7. Pastors are required to give pre-nuptial instructions on the nature of marriage and its duties and obligations.

8. The Church discourages hasty marriages (a frequent factor in divorce). Banns must be published, investigations made, and instructions given. Arrangements for marriage should be made with the pastor a month before the date.

9. The Church strongly discourages marriage of people with divergent religious beliefs. She knows that a common understanding on important issues is a requisite for happy married life.

10. In all her teaching, in the pre-nuptial instructions and especially in the marriage ceremony the

Church emphasizes the necessity of a sacrifice of individual wishes for the sake of common happiness. Selfishness is the basic cause of most marriage failures.

11. The Church discourages early marriages and juvenile company-keeping. Pastors are generally forbidden to assist at the marriage of minors without the knowledge of their parents.

12. The Church law discourages Gretna-Green marriages, requiring that marriage be performed in the parish of one of the parties, usually that of the bride. The pastor's permission must be obtained for it to be elsewhere.

13. She wants marriage to be solemn and impressive, with emphasis on its sacred nature. That's why Catholics should be married at Mass. That's why the bishop can even permit mixed marriages to take place in Church.

14. Marriage clinics have been established in many of our dioceses. In some places attorneys and court officials cooperate, with the result that hardly ever does a Catholic file suit for divorce without first appearing before the clinic, which makes every effort to effect a reconciliation and to solve the problems involved.

15. Nearly every diocese and all our cities of sufficient size have a bureau of Catholic charities, staffed with trained social workers. One of their primary duties is that of assisting in the solution of family problems.

16. The law of the Church does not permit a Catholic to obtain a divorce without permission of the bishop. She makes it clear that such divorce, if permitted, is only a separation, not freedom.

17. She does not permit divorced people to remarry—whenever she has anything to say about it. A divorced Catholic cannot remarry. A Catholic cannot marry a divorced person (once in a hundred times the first marriage might have been invalid. Occasionally a convert

can use the Pauline Privilege to dissolve a former marriage. The Church will investigate these cases).

The insistence of the Church on the strict observance of this law of God daily loses her many members, weaklings who absorb the ideas and moral attitudes of their pagan-like surroundings, and prefer adultery to the Deity.

Q. As I understand it, the Catholic Church does not recognize divorce, basing its contention on the text "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." If this be the basis, then why cannot a Catholic marry a divorced non-Catholic who has been married by a Justice of the Peace? A Justice is a civil servant so there is no contact with God, is there?

A. God does the joining together in every valid marriage, wherever or however it is contracted. He made the contract of marriage, and when two people enter into this contract they do so on His terms, not their own.

There can be no marriage apart from God. Even pagans marry before God, if they marry at all.

Marriage is a contract entered into freely by a man and a woman. But once the contract is made it becomes much more than a contract. It becomes a permanent state, or status. The law of God and the welfare of society require that this status should not be changed.

Nobody has to marry. He does so freely. But once he does, it is forever. The parties make the contract by their consent. But they can't unmake it by withdrawing their consent. The contract, once made, creates a status pre-determined by God. Only God can alter that status.

It is not the Justice of the Peace who makes the marriage between two non-Catholics. The parties make the marriage themselves by their mutual contract. The Jus-

tice of the Peace only witnesses the contract as the state requires.

It is not the priest who makes the marriage between two Catholics. These Catholic parties make the marriage themselves by their mutual contract. The priest only witnesses the contract as the Church requires.

In principle Catholics might also marry before a Justice of the Peace, except that the Church law requires them to marry before the priest under pain of invalidity. There is no such requirement for non-Catholics. So Catholics can only marry validly before a priest, but two non-Catholics can marry validly before a Justice of the Peace or a minister.

Q. Is a separation of a Catholic married couple wrong?

A. It is wrong, unless there is reason sufficient to justify it. By their marriage vows husband and wife are obliged to live together.

Temporary separation, by mutual agreement of husband and wife, may be justified by circumstances. But the parties must show due concern for the danger of scandal and the occasion of sin. Usually, if the separation is to last very long the matter should be presented to their pastor, who may in turn present it to the bishop.

Certain definite reasons may justify one party in separating from the other, without mutual consent. These reasons are listed in Canon 1131:

1. This other party falls away from the Church and joins a non-Catholic religion.
2. This party insists on giving the children a non-Catholic education.
3. This party leads a criminal or disgraceful life.
4. One party causes serious danger to soul or body of the other party.

5. One party by cruelty makes life together too difficult.

6. Other causes similar to these.

The Bishop must be consulted in these cases and he must authorize the separation. Otherwise it is not legitimate, unless in a particular case the reasons are certain and there is danger in delay.

This separation is temporary in principle. Once the reasons for the separation cease to exist, the parties are obliged to live together again.

The only reason which, by its very nature, justifies permanent separation is adultery.

Seldom is there any justifiable reason for Catholics to obtain a civil divorce. It usually causes scandal. It often gives the divorced parties a false feeling of freedom. They begin to feel that they are really single; they start keeping company, developing dangerous friendships, and laying the foundations of adulterous unions.

Before a Catholic may obtain a divorce—whatever the circumstances—he must consult the Bishop and obtain his permission.

Q. Several Catholics in my parish have got a civil divorce recently without consulting me (the pastor) or getting permission from the Bishop.

A. They are certainly not very good Catholics. They have acted contrary to the law of the Church in a very serious matter. Maybe they did it in ignorance; but a good Catholic should know better.

No Catholic may begin proceedings for civil divorce without permission of the Bishop.

No Catholic lawyer may accept such a divorce case unless the Bishop's permission has been granted.

Canons 1131 and 1132 of the Church law make the

Bishop the judge in cases of separation of husband and wife.

All Catholics should keep in mind that a decree of divorce—even when obtained with the Bishop's permission—does not change the status of husband or wife, as married persons. It does not give either one the right to have dates or keep company with a third party. They remain married—as long as they both shall live.

Q. What are the extreme grounds which the Church will recognize as sufficient to permit the Catholic party to a mixed marriage to file for divorce?

A. Talk to your pastor about your problem and have him refer the matter to the Bishop. He will personally judge whether or not the reasons are sufficient in any particular case.

Divorces are very dangerous things for Catholics, and absolutely the last resort in solving marriage problems. When a Catholic receives permission to get a divorce he solemnly assures the Bishop:

That he fully understands the meaning of divorce; that it makes no real change in his status; that he remains a married man with all the obligations of a married man.

That he knows he can never marry again, and that a divorce gives him no license to keep company with other women.

That he will lead a good, honorable Catholic life.

That he will try by every reasonable means to effect a reconciliation with his wife.

What is the usual result?

The divorced man gradually forgets that he is a married man. He begins to act less like a married man. He soon has casual dates; then serious company-keeping;

and probably ends up in an adulterous union which causes serious scandal and brings two souls into life-long nearness to hell.

When husband and wife plainly cannot live together, simple separation is the best solution. It keeps them aware of the eternal truth that they are married.

If legal arrangements are necessary, separate maintenance is the advisable solution. It does not create the illusion of freedom.

If nothing will solve the problem but a divorce, then the Bishop may permit it. The results are seldom good.

Q. May a woman who has gotten a divorce with permission of the Bishop receive the sacraments? She has not remarried.

A. She may. The Bishop would not give her permission unless there were sufficient reason for her to live separate from her husband. Of course, like any other married woman, she must avoid dates and the intimate company of other men.

Q. A good friend of mine has been separated from her husband for several years. She recently got a divorce; and the last time I saw her she was wearing a diamond. Should I try to do anything to keep her from attempting another marriage?

A. You certainly should, if there is any hope of success at all. It is a delicate thing to handle, requiring much tact and evident charity. You must be sure of your friendship with her, and careful not to give such offense as might drive her to more obstinate rebellion. But we do have an obligation in charity to help our friends and

to try to keep them from spiritual ruin. The manner of fulfilling that obligation depends much upon circumstances. It requires good judgment and reasonable opportunity. Even then it may not succeed.

Maybe you can get your friend to talk to a priest about her problem. If she has any children, their spiritual welfare might be brought to her attention. She must still have the Faith; heaven and hell are good realistic arguments.

It is pretty late now to start your good work for her. You should have tried it when she started running around with this man. That was when her sin began.

Q. If a divorced woman, who has never been baptized, wishes to join the Church, is it permitted?

A. Yes. She has a soul to save. The Church is the means Jesus Christ gives her to save it.

Before a priest baptizes her he will want to have reasonable assurance of her sincerity. She must understand her obligations as a Catholic and agree to obey the laws of the Church.

It is probable that she can never marry again. The Bishop will have to decide that after knowing all the facts. He might even have to send the case to Rome.

It might be that she would have to return to her husband from whom she is divorced. This will seldom happen, but if her marriage to him is valid, and he wants to live with her, and will treat her right, and respect her religion, she must do her part.

Q. A Catholic woman is married to a divorced man outside the Church. They have children and have had them baptized in the Catholic Church. How is this pos-

sible? I had been told that such a child could not be baptized in the Church.

A. Would you refuse a child the means of salvation, just because its parents are sinners? The Church has concern for the spiritual welfare of each individual, even though his paternity be spurious or his maternity suggest caninity.

Q. My godparent has given scandal by getting a divorce. I am now an adult. What should I do? Keep the same godparent?

A. There is no way of getting a new godparent. You get them only through baptism. When a child is grown it can help its parents. Maybe you can do something for your godparent. Proceed with charity and kindness.

Q. May a young Catholic woman have as a close friend a young girl, not a Catholic, who has been divorced?

A. She may certainly have such a person as friend, but the closeness of her association with her will depend much on circumstance. We must always be careful of the danger of sin for ourselves. And we must avoid giving approval to the sins of others.

This Catholic woman should always keep clearly in mind that this young girl is a married woman. If she finds herself excusing, approving, or encouraging conduct improper to a married woman, then the friendship is becoming a danger to herself.

Q. What procedure does a Catholic couple have to follow if they have been divorced and now wish to live together again?

A. These people are still husband and wife before God and His Church. But the state doesn't consider them married. So they must fix that up by going through the legal formality of a marriage.

The couple should go to see their pastor. He will be glad to help them.

Q. A friend of mine, an older Catholic woman, has been divorced for years. Her husband is still alive. She has been steadily keeping company with a non-Catholic man. She receives the sacraments once in a while, but continues to go out steadily with her gentleman friend. Is she committing a sin in receiving the sacraments while enjoying the company of a third party? Please state all the facts and rules about this, so there can be no doubt about the right or wrong of this situation.

A. We answer questions like this so often that I fear monotony in the column. But the questions keep coming. Apparently situations of this kind are as numerous as they are scandalous.

In order to get the proper perspective, let us suppose that your friend were not divorced but still sharing her husband's home. What would you think of her then if she went out steadily with some gentleman friend? She would probably be called some very unfancy names. Decent people would be inclined to avoid her. She would hardly dare go to the sacraments.

Morally her divorce makes no difference. She is just as guilty as if she left her husband's bed to meet her old boy friend. The same names fit her, and she has no more right to the sacraments. If she really explained the situation to her confessor he would not give her absolution.

Many will object: but maybe she is not committing

sin with him. Well maybe. If I am skeptical it is because I have seen so many cases of pure sweet friendship with divorcees end up in attempted marriage outside the Church. Plain adultery is not the only violation of the sixth commandment, you know. And even if they carefully observe this commandment, even to bidding good-night with a hand-shake, they would still be giving sinful scandal to all who see and know them—and won't believe the handshake.

The rules in this matter come from the sixth commandment of God. The Church has not made them up. Husband and wife are married as long as they both shall live. They promise to cling to each other, and forsake all others. Sometimes they quit clinging. Occasionally one or the other may be justified in this. But they are still married however little they cling, and they must still forsake all others.

The rules may all be summed up in one, and it is very simple to state: A divorced woman must live exactly as she would if her husband still lived with her. Divorce makes no change in the rules.

There is no double standard. A divorced man must live just like any other married man.

Q. A relative of ours is going with a man who has been married twice. His second marriage was with someone who had been married twice before; so we can discard that. But his first marriage was all right. Both he and his first wife had been baptized in the Christian church; they were married by a judge, and it was the first marriage for both.

This relative of ours has been told by the parish priest that she must give up this man, as she is going with a married man. His first wife is still living, and he re-

mains married to her, even though he does not live with her.

Our relative claims that she is doing no wrong; and since she thinks so, she isn't doing wrong. Most of our relatives are agreeing with her. If this is true, then why do we have confessionals?

A. Your relative is guilty of mortal sin every time she goes out with this man. She is guilty in spite of the rationalizing she has done to justify herself. She is guilty in spite of the fast talking she has done to herself and to her relatives. She is guilty in spite of the clever way she juggles her own conscience. She has a false conscience, but it is deliberately false. She has made it false herself, and it does not excuse her from sin, because it is not honest.

A drunk can talk himself into thinking that his drinking is not a sin; he has to have the stuff for his stomach or his nerves. A fornicator can justify himself: men are human aren't they, and you can't expect us to live like monks, and anyway what we did was perfectly natural, and we were in love . . . at the moment. (Love covers a multitude of sins, and is used as justifying excuse for another multitude.)

A thief might justify himself: he has to eat doesn't he? And it isn't right for one man to have all the dough while another is without bread. Even a murderer claims the victim deserved to die.

We must follow our own certain conscience, and when we do we are not guilty of sin, even if our conscience is wrong. That is the sound principle your relative has in mind. But she is not really following that principle. Her conscience is not certain; she has disturbing doubts, but she won't consider them fairly. In so far as her conscience is wrong, she has made it wrong deliberately. She has a dishonest conscience. You may

rightly follow a false or erroneous conscience when you are honestly and sincerely mistaken; you cannot follow a falsified conscience.

Actually, if she will be honest with herself, your relative knows that she is wrong. She knows that she would be guilty of mortal sin if she went next door and took the husband away from his wife and went out with him for the evening. She knows that she would be guilty of mortal sin if she met that same next-door neighbor in another town and went out with him, without the wife being any the wiser; she knows particularly that this would be a mortal sin if she kept doing it frequently. It is not the wife's objection that makes it a sin; she might be "tolerant" and generous and tell him to have his fun. It would still be a mortal sin, simply because he is married. The man your relative is going out with is just as much married as the man next door. His wife probably doesn't care; she may be living with another man; but that doesn't set him free. She is still his wife. Only death can change that.

When will Catholics quit thinking like non-Catholics on the subject of divorce? Can't they understand that divorce doesn't mean a thing? That it is a fake, a fraud, and a phoney? It does absolutely nothing to the marriage bond. A divorced man is just as much married as the man next door who is in bed with his own wife.

Maybe Catholics get this attitude because they know of some non-Catholic marriages which were declared invalid or were dissolved by the Pauline Privilege. They somehow figure that if some of them are invalid or subject to dissolution then there must be something wrong with all of them. That is not reasoning; it is simply pushing ideas around in a maze. No Catholic should EVER keep company with a divorced person until he (or she) knows for CERTAIN that this person's first marriage was invalid or dissoluble. Don't take the opin-

ion of quacks or gossips, who tell you that this case is just like Aunt Minnie's, and she got married in the Church. Take the matter to your own priest, and let him refer it to the Bishop. No one else can give you a reliable answer.

Q. I have a friend who has a sister and she was married and divorced, and then got married again. This friend of mine says that her sister still received the sacraments and is a Catholic. Is this possible?

A. In order to give a satisfactory answer to your question, I would have to know all the circumstances. I suspect that this woman—your friend's sister—attempted her first marriage outside the Catholic church, possibly before a justice of the peace or a minister. In that case, it would be no marriage at all. A Catholic must be married before a priest or she is not married. She would simply be living in a "respectable" state of sin. Consequently, when she got a divorce she would be perfectly free and could then contract a valid marriage in the Church.

This I know: that if her first marriage was valid and her husband is still living, she cannot contract another valid marriage. She cannot be living with another man and be a Catholic in good standing. She cannot receive the sacraments, since she is living in a state of sin.

If you want to give me more complete details, I will be glad to answer your question more thoroughly.

It is not recommended practice for us to try to figure out other people's personal and spiritual problems. It does not worry me in the least, and it should not worry you, that this woman is receiving the sacraments. You may be sure that if she is receiving the sacraments in a parish where she is known to the pastor, her marital

status is all in proper order. You may also be sure that the Church has "pulled no tricks" or made no special deals for her.

The Church's laws regarding marriage are very definite and certain. It is well for all of us to try to understand them. But when we do not understand them, we should not, in our ignorance, be critical and imply that the Church is doing something wrong. The Church's laws regarding marriage have been established throughout the centuries. Anyone who wants to study them thoroughly can understand them. They are necessarily somewhat complicated, because this is a complicated subject. But they are made to guard the integrity of the family and the sanctity of the sacrament; and the Church is strict and zealous that the unity, permanency, sanctity, and fidelity of married life be rigorously respected.

Q. Is it right for a woman to belong to the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women when she has been married and divorced twice and still goes to church? I have heard others say that it is very wrong. After all, such people are a disgrace to the Catholic Church.

A. "Now when the Pharisee, who had invited Him, saw it, he said to himself, 'This man, were He a prophet, would surely know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.' "

"And Jesus answered and said . . . 'Her sins, many as they are, shall be forgiven her, because she has loved much.' " (Luke 7, 39-48)

I tried to write you, but you evidently put a false address on your letter—and maybe used a phony name, too. So I must presume that this scandalous character, who has incurred your feline fancy, is reformed and

repentant, and now in good standing in the Church. You say that she has been twice married and twice divorced. That comes out even and leaves her single, sad, and possibly saintly. Her past may be full of sorrow, sin, and shame—like the past of that Magdalen, who gave up her seven devils and became the close friend and companion of Mary, the Virgin; sharing the vigil of Calvary with her. At present she is trying to be a good active Catholic, dodging the stones of those who are without sin.

Q. Can a person be given a Christian burial when they have done the following: married and divorced once; then married their second cousin and divorced from the cousin. I thought Catholics are forbidden to marry second cousins.

A. The only thing which prevents this person from receiving Christian burial is the fact that she is still living. I presume this is the same person who belongs to the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (see question above). She is apparently not living in sin at the present time.

You tell me very little about her marriages. Was either one of them valid? Was either one before a priest? If not, then the best thing she did in either case was to get a divorce.

If the first marriage was valid and the first husband still lived, the second marriage would be an adulterous fake, even if the second man were of another race. Why quibble about a second cousin?

If either of these marriages were valid and the husband is still living, your friend is a married woman, separated from her husband. She must have a very good reason to live separate from him like that—and I hope

she obtained the Bishop's permission when she got her divorce. If she did she is a good Catholic, and you should quit picking on her.

Q. Is it right for a Catholic lawyer to accept divorce cases?

A. With few exceptions, the answer is NO. Divorce is a legal permission to engage in bigamy. It is wrong for a lawyer to cooperate in preparing the way for legalized sin. A good fat fee is not sufficient reason for him to do so.

What are the exceptions?

1. The marriage is invalid. If a man and woman are to live together as husband and wife, they must be validly married. If their marriage is evidently invalid they must separate. In such case divorce is right and proper. For instance if a Catholic got married by a Justice of the Peace, he would not be married at all. Unless he intends to get married by a priest, the quicker he gets a divorce the better. Any lawyer can take such a case.

2. The lawyer knows that his client is seeking a divorce merely to protect herself from molestation, or to get custody of children, or to obtain a financial settlement—and has no intention of ever marrying again. Even then the lawyer can probably not take the case if he knows he is setting the other party free to enter a contemplated marriage.

3. Some theologians say that a Catholic lawyer can take a divorce case if he is in dire financial straits, and there is no other way out for him. Better theologians recommend that he get a good honest job digging ditches.

The broadminded theologians reason this way: The sin of the separating parties is in their remarriage after

the divorce, not in the divorce itself. Therefore, since the obtaining of the divorce is not essentially wrong—in itself—the lawyer's part in it would be justified by a very grave reason—such as starvation.

This supposes that there is no scandal involved—and there nearly always is. Even broadminded theologians say that it is better to starve than to give scandal.

Catholic people are forbidden to get a divorce without permission of their Bishop. No Catholic lawyer may ever accept the divorce case of a Catholic until he knows the Bishop's permission has been obtained. Of course the Bishop will never grant permission unless the parties clearly understand that divorce is only a legal separation, and that they remain married until death.

Chapter 15: MARRIAGE CASES

Grounds for annulment—Dissolution of bond—Pauline privilege—What if both are baptized?—All three wives unbaptized?—Charge for marriage cases—Procedure in marriage cases—Cancelling marriages—Neither husband baptized—She likes Catholics—Can't do it twice—Must they give up all religion—Was it annulled?—Can he become a Catholic?—One mistake—What a woman—That husband—What is their status?—Young fools—My son—Miscellaneous cases.

Q. What are the grounds for the annulment of marriages in the Catholic Church?

A. There aren't any. The Church does not annul marriages. To annul means to nullify—to make something null and void, usually by authoritative decree. It implies that the thing made null had some valid existence, but was invalidated—erased, rescinded—by the decree. The Church cannot do things like that to sacramental marriages. Once valid and consummated they can never be nullified by any power on earth.

Of course I am being technical instead of answering your question. You want to know the grounds for a DECLARATION OF NULLITY. The Church does

declare a marriage null when she finds it to be null, as a matter of certain fact. She makes such declaration only after careful investigation. Exact legal procedure is required, and the proof of nullity must be certain beyond reasonable doubt.

This distinction between annulment and declaration of nullity is important. An annulment would be a kind of divorce; but a declaration of nullity is simply a statement of fact. The fact is that this union, which looked like a marriage on the surface, actually never was a marriage. Something essential to marriage was lacking from the beginning. It never was a real contract—never a sacrament.

There are three general types of things which can make a marriage invalid. We may designate them as (A) lack of form, (B) impediment, and (C) defect of consent.

(A) LACK OF FORM. The law of the Church, in Canons 1094 and 1099, requires under pain of nullity that a Catholic must be married before a pastor (or his delegate) and two witnesses. If a Catholic should attempt marriage before a justice of the peace or a minister the marriage would be invalid—no marriage at all.

In cases of this kind the facts are usually easy to prove, and the legal procedure is rather simple. You merely have to prove to the Bishop that (1) you are a Catholic—your baptismal certificate will prove that—and (2) that you were not married by a priest. The great majority of declarations of nullity given in the United States are based on these grounds. We say “he was married outside the church”; so his marriage doesn’t count.

It is possible for there to be a defect in the required form of a marriage, even though it takes place before a priest. But this is rare, and often rather difficult to prove. The procedure, or trial, is long and complicated.

(B) IMPEDIMENTS. There are thirteen different

impediments of Church law which not only forbid marriage between certain persons (e.g. cousins) but make the marriage invalid if it is attempted in spite of them. From some of them the Church may grant a dispensation, which removes the impediment in a particular case and permits the marriage to take place properly and validly. The first three of these impediments are encountered rather often in marriage cases, and are usually easy to prove:

1. **Bond of a previous marriage.** We call this **ligamen**. A man who has a living wife cannot validly take unto himself another. Neither can a divorced woman validly marry another man while her husband liveth.

It is not at all rare that A (feminine) and B (masculine) get married and then divorce, and then A tries a second marriage with C (masculine). This doesn't work out either; so there is another divorce. Now C wants to marry a Catholic girl. He claims his marriage to A was invalid, because A already had a living husband, namely B. Usually the facts can be established. A few marriage certificates, divorce decrees and identification papers will give the proof needed.

2. **Disparity of worship.** A baptized Catholic cannot validly marry a non-baptized person—unless the Church removes this impediment by dispensation.

3. **Blood relationship**, which we call consanguinity. A man may not validly marry his sister, aunt, niece, or cousin within the third degree of blood relationship.

4. **Affinity.** A man cannot marry his deceased wife's sister or mother or daughter (by another marriage). Neither can a widow marry her former husband's brother, father, or son.

5. **Public honesty.** If a man and woman openly live together, even though not validly married, the man may not later marry the woman's mother or daughter.

The woman is similarly restrained from marriage to her ex-mate's father or son.

6. **Impotency.** No person can validly enter a contract which he is incapable of fulfilling.

7. **Age.** A girl cannot marry validly until she is 14. Her counterpart must be 16.

8. **Holy Orders.** Imagine a priest trying to get married before another priest and two witnesses.

9. **Solemn Vow** in a religious order.

10. **Kidnapping** for purpose of marriage. A man can't marry the girl he violently steals and runs away with—even though she might later be willing. He must first set her free.

11. **Crime.** A married woman and her lover agree to get married after the husband passes on to his Maker—or maybe they even scheme to hasten his passing. Their crime is an impediment to their future marriage, even should the husband pass.

12. **Spiritual relationship.** You can't marry your sponsor in baptism, or the person who baptized you.

13. **Adoption.** If the State law prevents your marriage to your adopted brother the Church law agrees. It is rare that State law makes such marriage invalid.

(C) **LACK OF FREE AND PROPER CONSENT TO THE MARRIAGE.** Marriage is a contract between two parties. There can be no real contract unless both parties give their consent freely—and intend to contract marriage as God established it. The following are the common defects under this heading:

1. **Force or fear.** A person is unjustly coerced or frightened into the marriage.

2. **Agreement, or condition, or definite positive intention** (a) against contracting marriage at all, (b) or against the primary purpose of marriage, (c) or contrary to one of the essential properties of marriage.

That is a complicated statement, but this whole sub-

ject of defective consent is complicated. It cannot be made simple. And proof of nullity on these grounds is much more difficult and complicated than the statement.

(a) A person could go through a ceremony of marriage and never really intend to contract marriage at all. He might wish to avoid prosecution on a seduction charge, or simply fool the public into thinking he was married. He speaks the words of marriage, but intends no marriage at all. We call this total simulation. Sometimes it can be proven.

(b) The primary purpose of marriage is the conception, birth, and education of children. A definite agreement at the time of marriage not to have any children, or to limit the number of children MIGHT make the marriage invalid. In cases of this kind both proof and judgment are extremely difficult, and declarations of nullity are rare. The distinctions are too technical to explain in an answer of this kind, but if the agreement or intention of avoiding children prevents the giving and accepting of true matrimonial rights, it makes the marriage invalid. The ordinary intention of practicing birth control does NOT make marriage invalid. It is simply a mortal sin.

(c) The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility. An example of an agreement, under this heading, which would make a marriage invalid, is this: the bride and groom seriously agree before the marriage that if things don't work out well they will get a divorce and each be free to marry someone else. They are definite and positive about it. They really mean it. So they eliminate indissolubility from their "marriage." But God made marriage indissoluble; there is no other kind of marriage. So in eliminating indissolubility they eliminate marriage itself. (Proving it is something else.)

Q. Recently you stated that the Church never annuls a marriage—only declares one null when she finds it so. But what about a Pauline Privilege? Isn't it an annulment? It dissolves a marriage which once was valid.

A. You would make my face red if I had not deliberately hedged in answering that question previously. I was careful to say that the Church cannot nullify the valid bond of a sacramental marriage once it has been consummated. I hedged because I wanted to avoid the subject you here propose. I did not want to mix two different questions in one answer when that answer was already much too long and complicated.

If a marriage is not sacramental, it is possible for the Church to nullify it under certain circumstances, and for very good reason.

If a marriage is not consummated—even though sacramental—it is possible for the Church to nullify it under certain circumstances, and for very good reason.

However, the Church does not use the word nullify. She dissolves the existing bond. Practically there may not be much difference, but the Church dislikes the word annulment. She finds it almost as unpleasant as the word divorce. Yet in a very true sense, if properly understood, the dissolution of a marriage bond—whether non-sacramental or non-consummated—is a type of divorce.

The non-consummation of a marriage is very hard to prove—even on the rare occasions when it is a fact. But the Church demands that the proof be definite beyond reasonable doubt before she will touch the bond. If it were consummated, she **COULD NOT** dissolve it. Besides there must always be good, serious spiritual reasons for granting the favor. And only the Pope can grant it.

The dissolution of a non-sacramental marriage is a

favor granted to a convert to aid this person in joining the Church and practicing the Faith. Usually it is done by the Pauline Privilege. To understand this we should read the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 7, 12-15. St. Paul has just been stressing the command of the Lord that a wife must not depart from her husband, and a husband must not put away his wife. Then he continues: "If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she consents to live with him, let him not put her away. And if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he consents to live with her, let her not put away her husband . . . But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."

The Pauline Privilege applies to the marriage of two non-baptized persons. It presumes that one party has received baptism since the marriage and is a convert to the Church. The other party remains unbaptized, and now expressly refuses to be baptized or live peacefully with the convert. When the facts are all proven with certainty the Bishop may permit the convert to marry a Catholic. This second marriage—a sacramental one—dissolves the first, which was only a natural bond—a contract, but no sacrament.

As long as the bond of a marriage remains non-sacramental, or at least is not consummated after it becomes sacramental, it is possible for the Church to dissolve it. The fact that she can does not mean that she will. She considers such dissolution a favor—not a right. And she will grant this favor only (1) if the facts are clearly proven, (2) there is very good reason for it, which usually means that it will be helpful to individual souls, and (3) there is no scandal or harm to religion which will be caused by it. She cannot grant a favor to individuals if the Church, or society in general, will suffer because of it.

Dissolutions of this kind—except for the Pauline Privilege—can only be granted by the Pope himself.

Q. Can a divorced non-Catholic woman who has never been baptized become a Catholic and marry a Catholic man before a priest? Her husband was never baptized either, and she has not seen or heard of him since their divorce.

A. This looks like a case for the Pauline Privilege. But all facts must be investigated before an answer can be given. Only the Bishop or his delegate can give that answer with authority. The Bishop must know:

1. That this woman is a good sincere convert.
2. That her marriage was apparently valid.
3. That she is not—at least since her conversion—the cause of the break-up of the marriage, or of preventing reconciliation.
4. That she was certainly never baptized before her marriage.
5. That her husband remains unbaptized at the present time.
6. That the husband definitely and expressly refuses to be baptized himself and live in peace with his convert wife (still his wife in spite of their divorce). These questions must be asked the husband after the convert's baptism. Hence the husband must be found. If he simply cannot be found, the Bishop will have to refer the case to the Holy See, or at least to the Apostolic Delegate.
7. That the convert woman has not been guilty of adultery with the Catholic man she plans to marry. Such adultery, combined with an agreement of future marriage, would cause an impediment of crime, which

would prevent their valid marriage. For sufficient cause the Bishop can dispense from this impediment.

If he finds the right answer to all these questions the Bishop can permit the convert to marry a Catholic. This marriage, when it takes place, will dissolve the previous one. This is the privilege of St. Paul (I Cor. VII, 10-15).

Q. Does the Pauline Privilege apply if the parties are both baptized non-Catholics, or if one is a baptized non-Catholic and the other unbaptized?

What if one party is a fallen-away Catholic and the other a non-Catholic, either baptized or unbaptized?

A. The Pauline Privilege may be used ONLY to dissolve the marriage of two people who were BOTH NON-BAPTIZED at the time of their marriage. One of the parties must remain unbaptized at the time the privilege is used, and the other must be a convert, baptized since the marriage.

If both parties were baptized non-Catholics, and their marriage was valid, there is absolutely nothing that can ever be done about it. Their marriage is a sacrament and it lasts until death.

Even if they were not both baptized at the time of the marriage, but got baptized while still living together, there is nothing which can be done to dissolve their marriage. It became a sacrament the moment they were both baptized. Once a sacramental marriage is consummated by marital relationship there is no power on earth which can dissolve it.

If only one of them has been baptized, and the non-baptism of the other can be clearly proven, then I would suggest that the interested party take the matter to the pastor and ask him to submit it to the Bishop. Maybe something can be done. It is not a case for the

Pauline Privilege; but neither is it a sacramental marriage. It would have to go to the Pope, himself, but maybe he could dissolve the marriage in favor of a good, sincere convert.

The case of a fallen-away Catholic is quite different. If the marriage was before a priest, better give up any hope of doing anything about it. But if it was before a justice or a minister it was probably invalid. A Catholic, even though fallen away, can only be married validly before a priest. So his marriage to a non-Catholic, whether baptized or unbaptized, if not before a priest, would be invalid because of lack of form (Canon 1094). His marriage to a non-baptized person would also be invalid because of the impediment of disparity of cult (Canon 1070).

Q. A Catholic woman married a convert, who had been married three times before he became a Catholic. She says it was permitted by the Pauline Privilege. It doesn't seem probable to me that all three of his wives were unbaptized.

A. It is not necessary that all of them were unbaptized, only the first. The second and third were never his wives, anyway, only concubines. He was validly married to the first one; so he couldn't marry a second or third while she was living.

Now, after his conversion and baptism, the privilege granted by St. Paul the Apostle permits him to marry a Catholic, thereby dissolving his first valid marriage to an unbaptized person, who has left him and refuses to live with him. (First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 7:12).

I must say that this Catholic woman has supreme confidence in her feminine powers, to think that she

can hold this converted rover after three others have failed.

Q. Why is there a charge for a marriage case? Wouldn't it be for the good of the parties if there were no charge? A friend of mine had to pay \$150. Another friend, a relative of a priest, didn't have to pay anything.

A. I shall answer your question as Officialis of the diocese, and reveal to you some facts about my own office.

There is often a charge for handling a marriage case because of the expenses involved. Somebody has to pay these expenses. Who should it be? The interested parties? The priests? Or you and your neighbors—the faithful of the diocese?

Actually, much of the expense of every marriage case is borne by you and your neighbor, who contribute to the support of the diocese. The charge we make against the interested parties only lessens your burden a bit.

Much of the expense of marriage cases is borne by faithful pastors and assistants, who spend hours filling out papers and driving a few hundred miles to obtain the testimony of unwilling and insulting witnesses, all without any compensation, except the spiritual reward they will receive in heaven.

Much of the expense of marriage cases is borne by a dozen self-sacrificing priests who serve on the matrimonial court without any compensation, but often at considerable personal expense, and in addition to their regular duties as pastors, assistants, professors, and chaplains.

Besides these 12 unpaid members of the court, there is one priest expressly assigned to these cases. He finds it practically a full-time job. He must be paid some sort of pittance. He had to be prepared for this work by

years of special study in Canon Law, at the expense of the diocese. Some of the other 12 priests had to have this special study, too.

Then there must be a full-time stenographer and secretary to take care of correspondence, copying, filing, and other office duties. Even if she is poorly paid, her salary will be \$2,000 a year—and she earns it.

Then there is the expense of maintaining an office. We have no system of cost accounting, but by conservative guess, that expense must exceed the salary of the secretary, even though the diocese owns the building.

That adds up to at least five thousand dollars a year in overhead. Then each case may present special expenses for documents, telephone calls, postage and registration fees, and the like.

We handle about 120 marriage cases a year. For at least half of them we receive nothing from the parties, because they are unable to pay, or it is judged inadvisable to request payment from them.

That leaves about fifty or sixty paying cases. The charge on them ranges from \$5 to \$50, depending on the amount of work and expense involved. For nine cases out of ten, the charge ranges between \$5 and \$15. Suppose we take fifteen as an average. Sixty cases at \$15 each brings us \$900 to balance against five or six thousand of expense—not counting the donated services of a hundred priests in this diocese and in others throughout the country.

Your friend who paid \$150 must have had her case appealed, either to the Archdiocese or to Rome. She got at least two trials for her money. We have no such charge here. Our top fee is \$50, and this is for a formal case, which usually requires the work of six or seven priests and several days of our secretary's time, not to mention a ream of paper and assorted headaches.

Of course we do have to collect more for cases which

are sent to Rome—often a total of \$75 or \$100. The greater part of this is sent to Rome, where they make just about as much money on marriage cases as we do—a 500% loss. You and I eventually pay that loss by our donations.

Incidentally, these cases which go to Rome have to be translated into Latin, and they may total a hundred pages. What would be your charge for translating a hundred pages of documents and testimony into Latin?

If people who present marriage cases were to pay what it actually costs to handle these cases, the charges would probably be ten times as high as they are.

Q. In answering that question about the charges made for marriage cases you said that you were writing as the Officialis of the diocese. What kind of person is that? How are marriage cases handled anyway?

A. Most marriage cases begin in the parish. They are brought to the rectory by the interested parties, or they are discovered during parish visitation by one of the priests. The first thing the priest does is to present the matter to the Chancery Office, usually in brief written summary. From that point on almost anything can happen, depending upon the type of case involved, the administrative set-up of the Chancery Office, the truth of the claims made, the availability of proof, and the cooperation of parties, witnesses, and priests delegated to take testimony.

I should first explain briefly the organization of the Chancery Office and the Tribunal—usually called the matrimonial court. In most dioceses of the United States the Chancery Office is the administrative office of the Bishop. It executes his orders, sends out his letters, grants dispensations, receives parish reports, keeps the

files and the accounts, takes in diocesan collections, and cares for a thousand details. In doing these various things the Chancellor uses authority delegated to him by the Bishop.

Each diocese has a Vicar General—a sort of second self for the Bishop. In some places he is active in administrative affairs, but usually in smaller dioceses he is kept around to fill in when the Bishop is sick or away from the diocese. It is not often that he has much to do with marriage cases.

Each diocese has an Officialis. He represents the Bishop in judicial matters. He is the judge. In many dioceses he is also delegated by the Bishop to handle administrative matters relative to marriage cases. In other dioceses these administrative matters are handled by the Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor, a Secretary, or a Notary. In our diocese the Officialis does it, and the procedure I will describe is largely our own.

To help the Officialis judge certain types of marriage cases there are a number of Synodal Judges—not less than two nor more than twelve.

Each diocesan court has a Defensor Vinculi—defender of the marriage bond. It is his primary duty to see that no marriage is declared invalid unless it really is invalid and is proven to be so. Nothing moves in a marriage case without his O.K. And he can always appeal if he isn't satisfied. And sometimes he has to appeal.

Nothing can be done without a Notary. Written things have little or no value unless he signs them. He is appointed by the Bishop like all the other members of the court; and he joins the others in taking a solemn oath of office.

The diocese has a Promoter of Justice—a sort of ecclesiastical district attorney—who looks after the public interest. He sometimes appears in marriage cases. Then

there are a variety of other officials who serve notices, execute decrees, etc. They are often delegated as needed.

There are four types of marriage cases, each of which receives a different process of handling:

1. ADMINISTRATIVE CASES. These are not handled by judicial process; they are not tried in court. They require proofs and careful judgments, but these are made by the Bishop or by someone delegated by him. In our diocese the Officialis is the one delegated. Two types of cases are handled in this way:

a. DEFECT OF FORM—more properly called TOTAL ABSENCE OF THE FORM OF CANON 1094. When a Catholic attempts marriage before a justice of the peace or a minister the nullity of his marriage is readily apparent. Proof is simple: a baptismal certificate, a marriage certificate, and maybe a little testimony or a search of official records.

b. PAULINE PRIVILEGE. The non-baptism of both parties must be proven with certainty. Interpellations must be made; that means that explicit questions must be presented to the pagan party—the one remaining unbaptized—asking his, or her attitude about becoming a Catholic and effecting a reconciliation with the convert.

2. INFORMAL CASES, also called documentary cases (because the proof is mostly by official documents) or 1990 cases (because they are described in Canon 1990). These are real judicial cases—court trials. But they are handled by one judge, formal procedure is cut to a necessary minimum, and the proof is very clear and certain—usually by documents like marriage and baptismal certificates. There are seven types of cases which can be handled in this way, but practically the only ones we often see are:

a. Disparity of Cult—when a baptized Catholic has

tried to marry a non-baptized person, without a dispensation from this impediment.

b. Consanguinity—blood relationship.

c. Ligamen—bond of a previous marriage. These are the most common. They are usually presented by converts, or by non-Catholics wishing to marry Catholics. They are apt to be a bit complicated, but if you get enough marriage certificates and divorce decrees, and keep them all in the proper order, the pattern of proofs will gradually emerge.

3. ROMAN CASES. These are cases which the Bishop prepares and sends to Rome—usually to the Holy Office or the Congregation of the Sacraments. They are usually “Privilege of the Faith” or “Non-Consummation” cases. The Bishop delegates a special “Court of Instruction” to prepare these cases—and for the second type of case he needs special authorization from Rome to delegate the court. In our diocese he uses the Officialis to head these courts and look after the details.

4. FORMAL CASES. These are the real headaches. Each case must be tried by a court of three judges. Exact procedure must be followed or the whole trial is invalid. Witnesses must be formally questioned. Everything must be in writing, parts of it in Latin—and the pages mount to many score. The notary must sign everything. The Defender of the Bond has to be in on every step. And the final decision keeps the judges awake nights. The law is apt to be complicated, the proofs hard to estimate, and various intangibles—such as intention—difficult to evaluate. But the marriage cannot be declared invalid unless the proofs are found certain and conclusive by the judges.

After a final decision in one of these formal cases you have sometimes only well begun. If the decision is negative (marriage not invalid) the interested parties can appeal. If the decision is affirmative (marriage is in-

valid) the Defender of the Bond must appeal. And then the whole thing has to be tried over again in another court—usually the Archdiocese.

If the two courts agree, that can finish the matter, unless someone insists on further appeal. But if they disagree there is almost certain to be another appeal—this time to the Roman Rota. But that's a long story all by itself, and this one is now long enough.

Q. I have a friend who was married a few years ago. He was Catholic, and so was the girl. They were married in the Church. After two months she decided he wasn't the guy she wanted; so she left him and got a divorce. She is now living with her fourth husband.

Isn't there any way my friend can get his marriage cancelled and still remain in the Church? He would like to go out with girls, but doesn't want to give them a reputation of dating a divorcee. It would really put his mind at ease if he could just know that he could get married in the Church, if he ever wanted to marry again.

It seems such a pity that just being married two months can wreck his whole future when it really was an unforeseen mistake.

A. I don't know your friend, but I find myself admiring him. He is a hero; and it is well, because a hero is just what God is asking him to be. If he is to serve God and save his soul, he will have to keep on making heroic sacrifice of marital happiness. He has a wife, even tho she is a bum. So he cannot have a second one. That would be bigamy. A decent married man does not go out with girls. So your friend behaves himself. God bless him and reward him.

The Church does not go about "cancelling" mar-

riages. She wouldn't do it for Henry VIII; so She lost all England. She won't do it for your friend, even tho he lose his soul and drag someone else down to hell with him. She will not, because she CANNOT. It is a law of God. The Church cannot break God's laws.

The Church would like for your friend to have his mind at ease. Peace of mind is good for the soul. But not peace at any price. We will never acquire real peace of mind by breaking the law of God. We do not always find peace the easy way. It sometimes takes heroic sacrifice. I think your friend has found the way.

It is a pity, indeed, that just one marriage should "wreck his whole future." But polio, or T.B., or an auto wreck might do as thorough a job, and just as quickly. You are wrong in supposing that "two months" of marriage wrecked his life. It was much quicker than that; it was done in an instant—that instant in which he said: "I will." You see, he married for life. He made a solemn, sacred contract before God and the Church, and he knew well that there was no backing out once it was made. God give him strength to keep the contract he made.

And may God protect other young men from making such contracts with bums! And protect good young girls, too, from giving themselves for life to handsome hopeless hoboes.

At least half the answer is in choosing the right gal, or the right guy. It's hard to be sure, of course, but it will help to use your brains. Lead with your head, not with your heart. The first choice has to be the right one.

Your friend should talk his case over with a priest of course. There is about one chance in a million that his marriage might have been invalid for some reason which you have not indicated. If the marriage is not invalid, he should accept facts as they are, and continue to live as a married man—whose wife is away. He must

be careful not to go to hell, himself; because he would surely meet her there.

Q. I have a question concerning a close friend of mine. Would you please answer it right away in "The Question Box"? The question is: Is it at all possible for a Catholic man to be married by a priest if this man marries a twice-divorced woman, and this woman is willing to become a Catholic? The two ex-husbands are living, but neither the woman nor her ex-husbands are baptized in any faith, I think. If this Catholic man cannot marry in the Church, and marries outside the Church, would he have to give up his religion and could not receive the sacraments ever?

A. It is never possible to give a definite answer in a marriage case until all the facts are known with certainty. Your friend should go to see his pastor and take this woman with him. They should give the pastor all details: names and addresses of all parties, dates and places of marriages and divorces, etc.

The pastor will refer the case to the Chancery Office. The priests whom the Bishop has appointed for this work will then make the necessary investigation, obtain documents and the testimony of various people. On the basis of the information and proofs thus obtained the Bishop will decide what can be done in the case, in accordance with the laws of God and the Church.

In this case, IF it should be positively and certainly proven that neither this woman nor her first husband was ever baptized, IF it was the first marriage for both of them, IF the woman takes instructions and becomes a Catholic, and IF her first husband positively refuses to live with her after she is baptized, then she may be

permitted to make use of the PAULINE PRIVILEGE to marry a Catholic man.

What about her second husband? Well, he will have to be contacted and some investigations made, but IF all the IF's above are verified, her "marriage" to him was never a real marriage at all, but only legalized bigamy, because she had one husband all the time (her first) and she could not marry another validly while he lives (except by the PAULINE PRIVILEGE). So the bishop will declare the second marriage invalid.

Does that all seem complicated? It seems that way because it is complicated.

Now as regards your final question: If your friend should try to marry this woman outside the Church, it would only mean that her bigamy had now become polygamy. They would not be married at all. He would be living with another man's wife—and of course he could not receive the sacraments while he continued to live that way.

Q. A non-Catholic girl marries a Catholic boy in a Protestant church. Later on they get a divorce. Then the girl meets a Catholic boy and joins the Catholic Church for him. Can they be married in the Church? How long is it usually before such a case is passed on?

A. Presuming that your facts are correct, they can be married in the Catholic church. The case can be decided just as soon as a few essential documents are presented to the Chancery Office. See your pastor. Don't trust Question Box editors on marriage cases.

Q. Can an unbaptized girl, who married a baptized Catholic boy in the rectory, get a divorce and then be-

come baptized in the Catholic Church and marry another Catholic boy in the Church?

A. No, probably not.

Q. When a Catholic man or woman who has been married in the Church gets a divorce can either of them be married again?

2. If so, can they marry in the Church?

3. If they do marry again, do they have to give up all their religion or only the sacraments?

A. 1. The answer to your first question is: NO.

2. Since the law of God forbids their marriage, it is quite apparent that they cannot marry in the Church.

3. Of course they need not break the nine other commandments just because they break the sixth. They won't necessarily lose their faith, but it may make them so uncomfortable in their sinning that they will push it out of their minds. The Church will not keep them from Mass, which they are still obliged to attend. Maybe when the final judgment is made hell will be made a little more comfortable for them because they kept the other commandments; but it will still be hell.

Q. I have a Protestant friend who was married to a Catholic by a priest, but he claims to have a certificate stating that this marriage was annulled. Later he desired to be married to another Catholic girl by a priest, but was told that he could not be. So they married outside the Church. I contend that if the first marriage was actually annulled, they could be married in the Church. Am I right or wrong?

A. You are right—unless we are all misunderstanding each other. What does your Protestant friend mean by an annulment? Maybe he has a decree of annulment from the civil court. If so, that would mean no more than a divorce.

Apparently you understand him—and I understand you—to mean that he has a decree of nullity from the Church Court. I would frankly disbelieve this claim, until I saw the decree. The odds are a thousand to one against it.

If he actually did have a decree of nullity from a Church Court he could have married the second Catholic girl before the priest.

What secret attractiveness does this bigamous heretic have for Catholic girls anyway?

Q. Is there any way a divorced man, married to a Catholic outside the Church, may become a Catholic?

A. There might be. It would depend upon his sincerity, and the validity of his first marriage, or the possibility of a dissolution of that marriage by the Pauline Privilege. He should go to see a priest. Each marriage case is a separate problem. No general answers can be given.

Q. Two non-Catholics, both baptized, were married legally before a Justice of the Peace. Call them John and Mary. One was an Episcopalian and the other a Baptist. After a divorce from John, Mary married James, a baptized Lutheran. Now they are divorced, and James wants to marry a Catholic. Is he free to do so? Both John and Mary are still living. Would it make any difference if John were to die before James marries his Catholic girl-friend?

A. I would say that James is as free as any other Lutheran to marry a Catholic. There is an impediment of Mixed Religion, of course. The usual instructions will be required, and the promises signed.

A declaration of nullity is required, but apparently James was never married to Mary. He couldn't marry her because she had a living husband, John. They went through a civil ceremony which made their adultery look nice to their uncritical neighbors. But it was still adultery—except that they might have been in good faith.

Don't worry about John. Even if the poor man dies you can still marry James. He had done his part by remaining alive until the time of the marriage of Mary and James. His living made their marriage invalid. He might die afterward, but their marriage would remain invalid, even though they were still living together.

Q. I am a Catholic girl 20 years old, very much in love with a non-Catholic man. He has been married and was divorced four years ago. If I marry him will I lose the right to receive the sacraments? He has made a mistake once, but is willing to join the Church, if permitted.

A. Take the matter to your pastor or some other priest immediately.

Remember that no two marriage cases are exactly alike. All the circumstances must be known before any answer can be given. The priest will want to know when and where this man was married, whether his first wife had been previously married, whether either of them had been baptized, etc.

You ask if you would lose the right to receive the sacraments. You certainly would if you tried to marry

this man outside the Church. But much more important, you would probably go to hell. The sacraments would not be taken away from you simply as a punishment to show that the Church was displeased. You simply could not receive the sacraments because you would be committing sin constantly, living scandalously with another woman's husband. How could you make a good confession? How could you firmly resolve to amend?

Remember these two points: (1) His divorce did nothing to his previous marriage. If it was valid, it still exists. (2) You, as a Catholic, cannot marry anyone except before a priest and two witnesses. A marriage attempted before a Justice of the Peace or a minister is simply play-acting.

Q. A young couple married in the Catholic Church. Later they divorced and the wife remarried by a minister. Then she divorced this second man and remarried the first one in the same Catholic Church where the first marriage had taken place. Now she is again divorced and claims to be preparing to marry again in the Catholic Church to still another man. Please explain. Is this lady still Catholic? Can she remarry the second and third time in the Church? The first husband is still living.

A. What a woman! She certainly tries to keep married life from being monotonous.

When she married that first time in the Catholic Church she married until either she or her husband should die. Both are still living. So that marriage is still in force. Whatever arrangements she makes with other men, poor No. 1 is still her husband. The others are just . . . men. The forgiving fellow was willing to take

her back after No. 2 was through with her. Maybe he will still be around after No. 4 has had enough. He is her only husband, and the only time she is living as a Catholic should is when she is living with him.

Of course, that second marriage—the one before a minister—was no marriage at all; only a public agreement for illicit cohabitation. When she went back to her first husband, no marriage ceremony was really needed—only confession and absolution from excommunication. But the laws of the state required a marriage ceremony; so the Church had one; just to fulfill the state law. It didn't mean a thing. They were already husband and wife.

You may be sure that the new marriage she is now planning will not take place in the Catholic Church—not while that poor, faithful, long-suffering husband is still alive. She is his until death. And I imagine we are quite agreed that he can have her!

Q. My husband and I are divorced. We are both Catholics. He is going to marry a Protestant girl now, who is getting a divorce. He will probably have to be married by the Justice of the Peace, won't he? Would a priest marry him when he has a legal wife (me)?

A. No priest will marry him. He cannot get married. He has one living wife (you). He can't have two. The most he can do is make "legal" arrangements to live in adultery with another man's wife (her). He will get himself excommunicated in the process.

Q. A Catholic woman has been divorced, and has married again to a non-Catholic, who is also a divorced person, in a civil ceremony, of course. Just what is the

status of this couple? May she attend Church or receive the sacraments?

A. Presuming that the facts are as stated: these people are living in adultery. The woman can attend church; she will not be the only sinner present. But she cannot receive the sacraments. She could not possibly make a good confession. It would be utterly ridiculous for her to swear she will sin no more when she fully intends to sleep with another woman's husband that very night.

Q. A Catholic man marries a non-Catholic girl without a Catholic marriage—civil marriage only. They are divorced. Another Catholic man is now wanting to marry this same young lady, who will not have a Catholic wedding. Can the first man get back into the Church? How? Can the second man marry the young lady and yet be a Catholic? How? What is your advice to this second young man?

A. That civil marriage was never a real marriage. So now that young fool No. 1 has become wiser, let him go back to confession and do penance for his sins. He was never really out of the Church; just a scandalous sinner in the Church.

As for young fool No. 2, if he refuses to learn by the experiences of No. 1, he can repeat the process, become a scandalous sinner himself, and learn by his own experience. Maybe if he does not try the mercy of God too far he will get the grace of repentance too.

Of course No. 2 will not be married unless he has a Catholic marriage; and apparently the young lady is not willing to be really married. If she hates Catholics so much, why does she use her seductive wiles on them?

My advice to young fool No. 2: If the lady hates your

religion she will come to hate you too. Is something second-hand, soiled and sordid worth the price of eternal salvation? Let her use her seduction on some non-Catholic whose civil marriage to her will be valid—even if not lasting.

Q. My son, a Catholic, married a divorced woman before a Justice of the Peace. Her husband is married again. She wants to become a Catholic and be married by the priest. But our parish priest doesn't want to bother with it. They live in adultery. Is there any chance of salvation for them?

A. Probably your parish priest knows that your son simply cannot marry this woman, even if she becomes a Catholic. She has a living husband. She can't have two of them.

If you really believe that your parish priest has not properly investigated the matter, refer your son to the Bishop. It is best that he do this by letter, giving all pertinent dates, places, times, and circumstances of all marriages, divorces, and baptisms concerned.

There is a chance of salvation for them, as for everyone: let them avoid sin and obey the law of God. In other words, let them separate. If they can't marry, and they really want to be saved, there is no other way. Strange that this reasonable solution seldom occurs to people living in bad marriages. Where surgery is clearly indicated as the only remedy, it is foolish to dally with palliatives.

MISCELLANEOUS CASES

Q. When a person gets his marriage annulled by the Church does he have to get a civil divorce?

A. If the Church has declared that your marriage is null (never was a real marriage) then you most certainly must have a civil divorce before marrying again. Otherwise you might be charged with bigamy.

Usually the Church will not grant a declaration of nullity (or permission for the Pauline Privilege) until after a civil divorce is obtained. Thus she avoids civil suits and complications.

Q. My nephew, who is a Catholic, is keeping steady company with a girl who has been married before. This is a deep concern to me, but he tells me that her former husband was not baptized until after they were divorced, and that they can get the record of this. Therefore, if this couple should marry, would they have a chance of getting married in the Church right?

A. If your nephew is wise, he will go immediately to a priest, and present the entire matter to him. He should not presume. He should not keep developing a love which may lead him into revolt against the laws of God and the Church.

On such scanty information I cannot give a firm opinion of the possibilities of his marrying this girl in the Church.

Q. May a Catholic who has been married outside the Church get a divorce and then get validly married?

A. By "outside the Church" I presume you mean that this Catholic attempted marriage before a Justice of the Peace or a minister. He isn't married at all; so the quicker he gets out of his unholy alliance the better it is for him.

Of course, he must get a divorce before he can marry again. And he must also get a declaration of nullity of his first marriage from the Bishop. That usually is not hard to obtain because the nullity is evident.

Q. I have been a widow for about four years and have been keeping company with a divorced man. He was never baptized in any Church and was previously married by a Justice of the Peace. Would it be possible for us to marry in the Catholic Church?

A. I presume this man's wife is living. Just what is your own opinion of a woman who consorts with a married man?

My dear lady, you have been seriously violating the law of God, by giving scandal, by placing yourself in grave danger of adulterous relationship, and by fostering a felonious fascination which may lead either to a broken heart or a blasted soul.

You should have asked these questions before you began your illicit relationship. The answer is very uncertain until all the facts are known. And I wonder if you still have the faith and fortitude to accept a negative answer if God's law requires it.

Take the case up with your pastor. Best to take the man with you so that he can give all names, facts, dates and circumstances. The investigation can begin from there.

Meanwhile, remember he is a married man, until proven otherwise.

Q. In general, what documents are required in investigating the validity of a non-Catholic marriage? Are

268

statements from persons known by the investigating party ever used?

A. You should consult one of the priests of your parish and have the case referred to the Chancery Office for investigation. The documents required may well be different in each individual case.

The Church will not investigate the validity of a non-Catholic marriage unless the spiritual welfare of a Catholic or prospective convert is directly involved.

Statements collected by private individuals are of little use. Give the Chancery Office the names and addresses of witnesses. Their testimony can then be taken in proper manner. Testimony of friends and relatives of the interested parties will be taken and evaluated by the judges.

Q. Can a couple of non-Catholics marry by a Justice of the Peace, then get a divorce, and the man become a Catholic and marry a Catholic girl by a priest?

A. Generally, NO. But generic answers to marriage questions aren't much good. Each case must be investigated separately. There are many variable circumstances which must be considered.

If you are personally interested in the possibility of such future marriage, take it to a priest at once. He will not try to solve it himself, but will send it on to the Bishop.

If you are merely the parish gossip trying to figure out how Mary Smith was able to marry that divorced man, I would politely suggest that you mind your own business. But of course you won't, so here are a few of the principles which the diocesan officials had to consider in deciding Mary Smith's case:

1. Non-Catholics marry validly before a Justice of the Peace or a minister. Only Catholics (including fallen-aways) are obliged to marry before a priest.

2. If these two non-Catholics were both validly baptized their marriage was a sacrament, and once they lived together as man and wife, no power on earth (including the Pope) can ever dissolve their marriage. Neither can marry again while the other is living.

3. An invalid marriage is no marriage at all. Take as an example, this non-Catholic couple of yours who were married by a Justice of the Peace: We will call them Jack and Jill. Maybe Jill had been married before and divorced. Because she already had a husband she could not validly marry Jack. So when Jack decides to leave the little wench, he is free to marry anyone who will have him.

Or maybe Jack and Jill were related—third cousins. Their marriage would be invalid for this reason, if they were baptized people.

Or maybe Jill had been baptized a Catholic as a child—and was really obliged to be married by a priest. Then her marriage to Jack would be invalid, and Jack would be free.

There are a dozen other possible circumstances which might have made the marriage of Jack and Jill invalid and leave Jack free to marry his Catholic girl. But don't ever bet any good money on it. Invalid marriages are hard to find—and harder still to prove invalid.

4. If Jack and Jill were BOTH unbaptized, Jack can probably use the Pauline Privilege after he becomes a Catholic, to marry his Catholic girl. On the authority of St. Paul the Apostle, this dissolves his previous marriage.

5. Every consideration will be given a sincere convert to the true faith. Previous mistakes will not be held against him. Where possible he will be given the bene-

fit of the doubt. But the Church won't permit him to become a bigamist, just because he is a convert.

So if Jack married your Mary Smith before the priest, you can be sure there is a thick file in the archives of the Bishop's office, and maybe even in Rome, filled with proof that he was free to marry her, by the laws of God and the Church.

Q. Can a Catholic girl who married a divorced non-Catholic by a minister re-marry him before a priest if he joins the Catholic Church while his first wife is still living?

A. See the answer above, and keep these additional points in mind:

1. The Catholic girl is not married to this divorced man. She is merely living with him, and he is married to another woman. That ceremony before a minister didn't mean a thing, except as camouflage for curious but undiscerning eyes. If she should be permitted to marry this man in the Church it would not be a re-marriage for her—simply a delayed marriage.

2. This Catholic girl is probably excommunicated, on two counts. There is a penalty of excommunication for attempting marriage before a minister, and another similar penalty for attempting marriage with a divorced person. Ignorance of these penalties possibly saved her from incurring them.

3. On the basis of the information you give it would be impossible to give an answer which would have any value at all. In general, of course, non-Catholic marriages are valid. If two baptized non-Catholics are validly married and live together as man and wife there is no power under heaven which can dissolve their union while both are alive.

Q. My sister is keeping company with a divorced man. She says it is all right because she can marry him if he becomes a Catholic. He was baptized in the Methodist church and married a non-Catholic, probably unbaptized. It was the first marriage for both. He is willing to become a Catholic.

A. I like your manner of asking a question. You give most of the essential details. But definite answers can not be given in marriage cases until all the proofs are in.

My first advice to your sister—and I would give it very forcefully and urgently—is that she cease immediately her illicit relationship with this married man. It is illicit even if they act like brother and sister when they are together.

After she has separated herself from his overwhelming masculine influence maybe she can give the whole question of wanting to marry him a good sound re-think, and do some good honest praying over it, and seek some good advice. Should she marry a man who has made a failure of one try—a man who could not get along with the first woman of his choice?

If her re-think produces no good results—and the hope is only fondly theoretical—then she can advise him to present his marriage case to the proper authorities. Maybe something can be done. It is hard to say from this distance. This much is certain: it will take a LONG time, at the very best. A year, at least. And meanwhile there should be no counting on a favorable answer; and no illicit company-keeping. Even if he becomes a Catholic and presents his case to Rome he remains another woman's husband. And it is illicit to fool around with another woman's husband.

That is the way the case should be solved. If your sister follows my advice she will be the first one who has ever done so.

Q. Does a non-Catholic have to join the Church to marry a Catholic who is divorced and gets the divorce recognized by the Church?

I am a Catholic and was married to a non-Catholic in the Church, but after the war I found it was all a mistake. So we got a divorce. Later I learned that my ex-husband was never baptized, and my friends tell me that this will get my divorce made legal in the Church. But they say that my boy-friend will have to join the Church. He says he will if he must, but he doesn't like the idea.

A. Wait a minute. You are asking questions too fast for me to answer them. Let me ask you a few.

First of all, what are you doing with a boy-friend while you have a living husband?

Secondly, who gave you permission to get a divorce from your husband? When you married him you solemnly promised before God that you would live with him until death. Does such a promise carry no obligation?

Thirdly, who are the friends who are giving you all this screw-propelled information? You had better see your pastor or send full information to the Chancery Office.

Don't talk about having your divorce made legal in the Church. That doesn't make sense. If you were ever validly married you are married until death.

There is an outside chance that you were never really married. Don't bet more than a nickel on it at 20-to-1, but do talk to a priest about it. Ask him to find out about the dispensation which was granted. Give him all the facts; so that he can study all the angles. But don't blame him if he must give you a negative answer. He is a priest, not a magician. He can't change facts. He can only consider them.

If your first marriage were invalid (I will offer odds of 100-to-1, sight unseen, that it was not) then you are as free to marry as an unspoiled maid. Like such maid you could only marry a non-Catholic if the Bishop gave you a dispensation. He would probably give it. In any case, if your boy friend feels that way about it, we don't want him in the Church.

Q. Why are so many divorced men and women being married in the Church anymore, and by a priest? I know of a case, etc. (and so on through several cases).

A. More divorced people are now being married in the Church because there are more divorced people.

If a divorced man remarries in the Church you may be practically certain that his case is one of the following:

1. His wife is dead.

2. His previous marriage was never a marriage at all (invalid from the beginning) and has been so found and declared after long and careful study, by the Bishop, himself, or his matrimonial court.

3. The man is a convert, never previously baptized, and he is using the Pauline Privilege to marry a Catholic. St. Paul is responsible for this, but on the authority of Jesus Christ.

None of these things are more modern than the Apostles.

If you really want to know which of these circumstances applies to the various cases you mention, I would suggest that you ask the parties themselves. They might tell you—off.

APPENDIX

MODESTY AND CHASTITY

Q. What do you think of girls who drink and smoke?

A. What other kind of girl is there?

No, honestly, I think they are good and beautiful and silly and lovable, and sometimes a bit mixed up, just like the girls who don't drink or smoke. I have no criticism of them at all as long as they are temperate, sensible, orderly and honest about both habits. A girl who gets drunk is usually an immoral mess. And I know very few girls who are able to smoke neatly and comfortably. They take nervous puffs, scatter ashes, and smear lip-stick on butts which they leave lighted.

Frankly, if a girl sought my advice personally, I would recommend that she neither drink nor smoke. It is not merely that I am old-fashioned in my tastes; I think she will encounter fewer problems, pains, and expenses—in our American way of living—if she has neither habit. And she can probably be quite as happy. If she decides to drink and smoke, however, I will think none the less of her, nor love her less. But I will worry a little that she remain temperate and snuff out her cigarette butts neatly.

We Catholics make a great point of claiming that we are not puritanical. We hold all of God's creatures to be good in themselves, and only the abuse of them bad.

But in our attitudes and prejudices many of us turn out to be quite as puritanical as our Methodist neighbors—particularly those of us with Irish in our ancestry.

Sobriety does not require total abstinence in either man or woman, boy or girl. Drinking is not wrong. But it is wrong—and dangerous—to drink excessively. The great danger of excessive drinking is that it leads to many other things—especially sins against chastity. It lowers restraints, lessens self-control.

Abuse of alcohol usually results from a wrong attitude towards alcohol; and our American attitude is very wrong. In many countries the prudent, sensible use of alcohol by young people is a matter of training and custom. We have few sensible, prudent drinking customs, and those we have are forbidden to our youngsters. We are basically puritanical and pharisaical, and they become defiant. They feel it is wrong to drink, but they drink anyway, with a feeling of guilt and devilishness—instead of knowing that it is right and drinking rightly.

In spite of our mixed-up social attitude towards drinking, it is necessary for each young person to form his or her personal attitude towards drink; and we should not be critical just because our personal attitude is different.

There are those who can engage in sensible social drinking without danger. They enjoy drinking and are not harmed by it. Let them drink. Bad cess to those who raise eyebrows.

There are those who never drink at all, simply because they prefer not to drink. The Lord bless them. And the devil take the inconsiderate fool who mocks them.

There are those who simply should never drink at all. They can't stand it. They drink too much. They lose control and tend to foul up. They may even be al-

coholics. The Lord help them. And we should help them, too—but not to another one!

There are those who like to drink, but give it up as a sacrifice. God reward them.

Criticisms, ridicule, social pressures, and insistent invitations which try to change a girl's personal attitude towards drink are as much opposed to her personal liberties as the blue-laws which forbid her to drink. The worst thing about non-drinkers is their intolerance of drinkers. And the worst thing about drinkers is their infernal insistence that others must drink with them.

The same general rules apply to smoking. Too many girls smoke because it is a fad, and they are afraid not to conform. Too many smoke from nervous habit and not with relaxing comfort. Too many smoke too much—and too obviously. There should be temperance in smoking, too, and consideration for others, and feminine grace. Fortunately the incidence of lung cancer is much less in women than in men.

Q. I would like to know just what are considered "impure thoughts." I get greatly confused as so many thoughts go through a person's mind.

A. As long as they go through your mind and are not invited to stop and linger, pay them no heed. There isn't a sin in a mile-long train of those hurrying, uninvited thoughts. Stopping to worry about them only makes them linger around hopefully. Simply laugh at them as they go by and they will hurry along harmlessly.

The thoughts which we call impure are really images—mental pictures, flashing or lingering—of sexual things. No mind is entirely free of such images. They are not really bad things in themselves. Theologians call them indifferent—neither bad nor good. They may serve a

bad purpose in arousing us to sin. They are apt to be vivid, dynamic things, like a quick fuse to high explosive—highly dangerous in their consequences, but not really bad themselves.

The sin connected with impure thoughts comes from the carnal (sexual, venereal) pleasure which they arouse and to which we consent. It is a mortal sin to entertain such thoughts for the purpose of getting such carnal pleasure. When we have this deliberate bad intention we commit mortal sin even though our impure thoughts might be interrupted before they really get going. By our bad intention of sexual pleasure, we sin against the virtue of chastity—and that is always a mortal sin.

There is another virtue called modesty which protects us from dangers of sin against chastity. Sins against modesty may be slight or serious depending on how serious the danger they induce.

If we have no intention of committing sin by enjoying carnal feelings, the only sin of “impure thoughts” comes from the danger inherent in them—the danger that they will lead to feelings which will induce consent. Very often that danger is serious and sudden. In that case it is a serious sin to dally idly with such thoughts.

Sometimes the danger of consent to carnal feelings might be slight or remote, because the thoughts are not very seriously sexual. In that case the idle entertainment of them would be only a venial sin. It might be just plain curiosity, or romantic dreaming, or lazy dawdling. There is usually some sin, but it becomes serious only as the danger to chastity becomes serious. And chastity is violated when we consent to sexual feelings.

Sometimes a person might have good reason for letting his mind dwell on “impure thoughts.” Suppose he is a medical student learning gynecology or obstetrics.

If his intentions are right and he takes proper care to avoid immediate danger to chastity (i.e. consent to carnal pleasure) he may study such matters without sin. If you or I were to read the same books out of curiosity we would be guilty of sin—slight or serious, depending upon the danger. We don't have his good reasons to run such dangers.

Most of our talking about "impure thoughts" is for single people. Married people rarely run serious danger to chastity because of such thoughts, and can pretty well ignore them unless they start leading to solitary sins or desires of things contrary to marriage vows.

For single people we might summarize by cautioning against two extremes. The one is the way of the foolish fellow who thinks he can flirt with frivolous fantasies without danger. The other is the way of the fearful fellow who sees sin in every fleeting fancy, starts trembling as it enters his mind and throws up a blockade of fear against its easy exit. Such thoughts are not even serious temptations. They are to laugh at—not to fear.

Q. Does one sin by thought in any other way than sins of impurity?

A. The Tenth Commandment states: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." Coveting is an internal sin of thought and desire.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that "everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment." (Matt. 5, 22) Anger is essentially an internal sin of thought and emotion.

"Do not judge, that you may not be judged." (Matt. 7, 1) Rash judgment is forbidden by the Eighth Commandment. It is an internal sin of thought and will.

Internal sins are really in the will rather than in the

mind, or intellect. The sin comes from the will's approval of the thoughts which are in the mind.

All sins are internal before they become external. You decide to do a thing before you do it. By your decision you are already guilty of internal sin—even if your gun fails to fire.

Moralists usually distinguish three types of internal sins: desire, delight, and complacency. **Desire** is a deliberate wish to do something forbidden. "I would do it if I could." It may be the desire to steal, murder, or tell a lie.

Delight is the approval of the will to a past sin. "I am glad I stole that money." "I am glad I bludgeoned that bloke."

Complacency is the physical pleasure we get from imagining the gory triumph of our revenge, the tortured victim of our hate, or the exultant victory of our vanity.

Thus we may find many ways to sin by thought and still remain chaste.

Q. What should I do in company when people start telling dirty stories?

A. There are many things you may do, depending upon how offensive or suggestive the stories are, how well you know the people, and your position and influence among them. Use your own good judgment in a particular case.

1. Reprimand or admonish them. This presumes that you have some influence, or a position of authority, and that the talk is seriously offensive.

2. Simply leave. This requires courage—if the leaving is obvious—and may give offense. It should only be done

with reflexion and when the talk is really bad. Will your leaving have a good effect?

3. Change the trend of the conversation. This is best of all. It is a positive use of your influence, unobtrusive and inoffensive. Be careful not to be clumsy at it, nor more obvious than is required.

4. Simply sit quiet and pay as little attention to the conversation as you may, giving it no encouragement. This is the negative solution. A bit cowardly sometimes. It is probably the best treatment for the casual dirty story or talk that is not really very bad.

Don't be a prude. Judge your conversation in the light of the persons and circumstances. Don't expect a mule-skinner to talk like a nun. Keep your sense of humor alive. If it's really funny, laugh. If it's merely foul, retch—but try to preserve your own dignity in the process.

Q. Would you please tell me if it is a sin for a woman to wear shorts in public? What about the men who delight in looking at them?

A. The subject of women's dress is one on which I modestly refrain from writing with any claim of authority. My knowledge of the subject is only that of an interested, but bewildered observer, often entranced and occasionally amused. The entire realm of feminine fashions transcends the competency of the mere male, at whose vulnerable curiosity it is chiefly aimed. By bewildering does it bewitch.

All I can do, in answering your question, is invoke again the general rules of modesty and apply them to this elusive subject.

1. Modesty in dress is a matter of custom and convention. What is customary does not affect us. The lit-

tle girl in Uganda is thoroughly modest in her ebony nudity. Grandma's elders found her shocking if she showed her ankle beneath her seventh petticoat.

Advancing trends often violate modesty. Unaccustomed exposures startle, excite, invite, and may arouse to sin. When they become the established custom, they attract no special attention. They become modest. Those at the forefront in fashion trends are often guilty of sins against modesty. Those who follow them discreetly, at sufficient distance, are modest in the same dress. That evening dress which intrigues by the fascination of its unresolved conflict between modesty and gravity becomes acceptable and proper once time and custom have demonstrated the close but constant defeat of gravity; and modesty may even trail reluctantly in the wake of modern bathing suits.

"Be not the first by which the new is tried,

"Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

2. If a girl dresses immodestly with unchaste purpose, then she is guilty of serious sin. Her motive may be the sexual thrill she gets from exposing herself. It is more probably the suggestion, excitement and seduction she can exert on men—or on some particular man. If her motive is venereal, she sins against chastity; and that is always a mortal sin.

3. If a girl dresses immodestly simply to be a la mode, merely to be smart and elegant, or because she is vain about the bronzed shapeliness of her legs, then her sin may be only venial—or she may be guilty of no sin at all.

Here we must investigate reasons, motives, and dangers. Manner of dress, in itself, is not a sin. It becomes a sin if it endangers chastity without sufficient reason. How good is your reason for dressing in this fashion? How great is the danger to chastity in yourself or someone else? Answer these questions and weigh the answers in balance against each other. If the reason outweighs

the danger, there is no sin. If the danger is too great for the reason, there is some sin involved. It may be mortal or venial, depending upon how really serious the danger is—how really slight the reason.

Every girl should remember that modesty is the virtue which protects chastity. When she lets down its defenses, she endangers a very precious virtue in herself, or in someone else. She should also remember that her real attractiveness lies in her total personality: her goodness, friendliness, vivacity, unselfishness, stability, generosity, etc., and not alone in enticing exposure of a smooth curve.

As regards the second part of your question: the man who delights in the short look is mostly a normal male, with a sense of humor, tickled by the incongruity of bulk, bulge, and billow; or with a sense of the esthetic inspired by symmetry of curve, suavity of motion, and warmth of color; combined with a tendency to ribaldry, apt to whistling appreciation or amusement.

Q. When does a person commit mortal sin against modesty in dress? Is it all right to wear sun dresses and shorts? How about wearing sun dresses down town?

A. A woman would be guilty of mortal sin if she deliberately dressed in a manner intended to provoke men to sin—if she simply wanted to arouse and excite them.

Regardless of her intention, a woman would be guilty of mortal sin if she knowingly dressed in a scandalous and suggestive manner, daring beyond accepted custom, indiscreetly diaphanous, rarely revealing, audaciously adherent.

Otherwise, immodesty in dress will generally be a venial sin, inspired by levity or vanity, in an effort to

display beauty, attract attention, and keep up with the Jones girls.

Moralists are generally considered a bit stodgy and their traditional Latin lacks the verve of modern slang, but they do show a profound understanding of human nature. One of them sums up his principles on the nicety of feminine adornment as follows: Dress is good and proper if it is in keeping with the accepted customs of the country and is displayed for a good purpose, e.g. that a woman may please a man, or find a husband.

Sun dresses and shorts have their place, but they should be kept securely in their place, restricted and precarious as it sometimes seems. Our midwest customs find them outre and distracting on the village streets.

Q. Is it embarrassing for priests, when calling in homes, to be greeted by a young matron, age 25 to 35 years, with three to seven children, clad in shorts? (I am 33 with five children; as you see I am including myself.)

A. Do you mean the children are clad in shorts, or the matron? And just which matron are you taking a dig at?

Q. You certainly evaded my question about those shorts. The matron at whom I was taking a dig was apparently myself. I like to wear shorts around the house these hot days. But we are expecting some unannounced visits this summer from priests who are friends of the family. I felt that if it would be embarrassing to them, I would refrain from wearing shorts this season. I mentioned the children, because I thought their presence in the house would make a difference in the situation. I have discussed this question with other

women, and we all want to know the answer. To repeat my question: is it embarrassing for priests, when calling in homes, to be greeted by a young matron between the ages of 25 and 35, clad in shorts?

A. On the basis of personal experience, I do find it just a bit embarrassing but much less so, if the children are around. My parish is made up largely of students' families living in hot barracks and Quonsets. Shorts seem to be standard summer gear. My embarrassment has not been great enough to prevent my noticing that while some matrons may wear shorts on the sage advice of their couturier, others apparently consult only their personal comfort with little concern for the esthetic. It seems to me, too, that in your chosen age group—25 to 35—there is noticeable progression from the comely to the comfortable, correlated to the passing of years.

But I am drifting wide from familiar shores of security; so I will launch onward, scorning the shoals of error and ignorance, and give you my incompetent advice: Your home is your own; so be comfortable in it—and comely, too, I am sure—with due regard for modesty as determined by accepted custom. When guests come, be considerate of them; and if they are a bit prudish, pretend offense, or seem unduly fascinated by femoral phenomena, then you might quietly excuse yourself and shortly reappear in something not so short.

Q. Several persons have told me that their pastors say that sleeveless dresses are not to be worn in Church. Is this a matter to be decided locally by individual pastors, or is it considered improper and wrong by the Church? I have never heard our pastor saying anything in regard to this.

A. Your pastor is probably a poor, ordinary man like myself who is rather bewildered by feminine fashions, and makes no pretense of being an authority on the subject.

The Church teaches that women should be modest in dress at all times. I have a vague impression that this teaching is often disregarded. I am not very certain about the matter. As I understand it, modesty in dress means that a woman should conform to accepted customs and standards. She should not wear clothes which are needlessly suggestive or an occasion of sin to the ordinary male whom she may encounter. She should wear clothes which are appropriate to the place and circumstances. Even a modest bathing suit, if one could be found, would be very immodest on the city streets. It would be scandalous in Church. Even a modest evening dress would be improper at the Communion rail.

As regards sleeveless dresses, I would suggest, lady, that you consult your fashion experts and conform to the customs of your local community. I have seen a number of sleeveless dresses in our church these warm days, and I have noticed nothing improper about them. They might be out of place in a community where custom does not sanction them.

I have always maintained, in this Question Box, that I am not an authority on feminine fashions, and yet I have found myself involved in questions on this subject several times recently. I try not to dodge an issue, even though I sometimes have to dodge the rebuttal. But there are some questions on which my opinion simply is not worth very much.

Q. Is it not a mortal sin against the Sixth Commandment to read those immoral "Pocket Books," regardless of whether the reader is married or not?

A. 1. Not all "Pocket Books" are immoral. I presume many of them are.

2. Any person who reads an immoral book for the purpose of getting illicit sexual pleasure out of it is guilty of mortal sin against chastity.

3. Any person who reads a book which is definitely and professedly immoral commits a mortal sin of disobedience to the law of the Church (Canon 1399, No. 9).

4. A person who reads a book which has immoral or suggestive parts in it, but is otherwise reasonably good, must be governed by the rules of modesty.

a. He must have no intention of reading for illicit pleasure.

b. He must foresee no immediate danger of consent to illicit suggestions or movements.

c. He must honestly evaluate the danger of sin or harm, and then weigh against that danger the good reasons he may have for reading the book. If the danger is serious, then he must have a serious reason, like necessary study. If the danger is slight, then any good reason may suffice, e.g., literary or entertainment value of the book, sometimes even curiosity.

To endanger chastity without sufficient reason is a sin. It may be mortal or venial depending on how serious the danger is in comparison to the good purpose which might justify it.

It is most important that the reader be honest with himself. He should not delude himself with the usual: "Oh, it won't hurt me." He need not be a prude, afraid of four-letter words. But he should not take needless chances. Chastity is a precious virtue. It should be protected sanely. In doubt, consult parents, teacher, or pastor.

5. Where the virtue of modesty is concerned, it makes a great deal of difference whether the reader is single or married, young or old. A married person

might read without danger to chastity a book which would be a serious occasion of sin to a prurient teenager:

Habitual reading of most of the books and magazines displayed at the corner drug store is a narcotic for the intellect and a palliative for the will, destructive of literary taste, perversive of human values, disruptive of moral standards, and conducive to neurotic irregularity in youthful development.

Q. Sins against the Sixth Commandment are always mortal sins, aren't they?

A. No. Deliberate sins against chastity are always mortal sins. But there are some sins against chastity which are only partially voluntary, and hence only venial sins. And there are various and sundry sins against modesty which are only venial.

When we deliberately seek illicit sexual pleasure in any form we are guilty of mortal sin. When we voluntarily accept, consent to, and enjoy illicit sexual movements and sensations we are guilty of mortal sin. These things are against chastity.

When we look at suggestive pictures out of curiosity, read books or attend movies, objectionable in part, steal furtive glances at this and that, dawdle with fascinating phantasies, or linger languorously in loving embrace, we are dealing essentially with matters of modesty. Sometimes there is no sin; sometimes there is venial sin; sometimes there is mortal sin. It all depends upon motives and reasons as compared to dangers of consent to sexual pleasures. If the motives are questionable and the reasons flimsy, the sin increases with the seriousness of the dangers and movements aroused. It can quickly become mortal.

CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY

Q. Why can't a priest marry? The Apostles were the first priests, and some of them were married. When did it change? If it is a law of the Church, could it not be changed? Will it ever be changed?

A. A priest cannot marry because of the law of the Church stated in Canon 132: "Clerics in major orders are forbidden to marry and are held to the obligation of observing chastity in such manner that if they should commit sin against chastity, they would also be guilty of sacrilege."

A priest cannot marry because of the impediment established by the Church in Canon 1072: "Clerics in major orders invalidly attempt marriage."

A priest cannot marry because at the time he received sub-diaconate, he made an implicit vow—for life—that he would never marry.

The present discipline of the Latin Church is so strict that absolutely no exception or dispensation is ever made for a man already ordained a priest. The Pope will occasionally dispense a deacon or subdeacon from his vow and from these laws, so that he can validly and properly marry. A priest who attempts to get married is automatically excommunicated (Canon 2388), deprived of any Church office he holds (Canon 188), and made irregular for the exercise of any priestly function (Canon 985). The excommunication is reserved to the Holy Father and will be removed when the priest has straightened himself out and repented. Only in rare cases, after long penance, will the irregularity be removed (so that he can say Mass or administer the sacraments), or any Church office given to him.

Our Lord apparently commended those who remain unmarried "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven"

(Matt. 19:12), and St. Paul was quite explicit in urging those who could to remain celibate (I Cor., 7:7-8 and 32-35). But there was apparently no law on the subject in the early Church. There is evidence, however, of a gradually growing custom that Bishops and priests should observe celibacy.

The first definite law of celibacy that we know about was enacted at the Council of Elvira, in Spain, about the year 300. It imposed the obligation of celibacy on Bishops, priests, and deacons. It was a local law, of course, and it seems that the Fathers at the first General Council, at Nicea, twenty-five years later, refused to make it a general law for the whole Church. This was possibly due to the custom and discipline of the eastern part of the Church, which permitted married men to be ordained and keep their wives, but forbade them to marry after they had been ordained.

From the year 300 on through the fourth and fifth centuries, the custom and laws of celibacy became rather general, encouraged by such great Doctors of the Church as Sts. Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Hilary. However, St. Ambrose admits that about the year 400 there were still married clergy to be found, especially in the outlying districts. By the time of Pope Leo the Great (446) the law of celibacy was quite generally accepted in the western part of Christendom.

That does not mean that celibacy has been universally enforced or observed ever since. With the break-up of Charlemagne's empire towards the end of the ninth century, there came upon Europe a period of war, barbarism, and general corruption, sometimes called "The Iron Age." Clerical standards declined with the rest of civilization, and married priests and Bishops were numerous. It took the great popes of the eleventh century like St. Leo IX and St. Gregory VII to stop the general spread of corruption and restore respectability to the

clergy. But it seems that even Gregory VII permitted the priests in certain places (like Normandy—land of William the Conqueror) to keep the wives to whom they were already married.

The first general law of the Church regarding celibacy seems to have been that of the First Lateran Council, in 1123. It was confirmed and made more explicit by the Second Lateran Council, sixteen years later; and was made very strict, clear, and definite by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. From the twelfth century on, in spite of laxity at certain times and in certain localities, there has been no doubt of the law. The Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, took strong measures for its general enforcement.

It is only a law of the Church and could be changed. No one knows what the future may hold, but judging by the present attitude of the Church—from the Pope to the laity—there is no prospect that it will be changed. In spite of sacrifices and hardships, the clergy in general favor the law strongly, and the laity would find it hard to tolerate anything else. Here are some of the reasons:

1. Virginity and celibate chastity have always been held in high honor in the Church.

2. Sacrifice, penance, self-denial and self-control have great spiritual value when exercised for the love of Jesus Christ. These factors are essential to the practice of chastity in celibate life.

3. Great merit is gained from faithfulness to a vow and obedience to law.

4. Celibacy permits the priest to give his first thoughts and attention to his people and to his work. A husband is bound by the sacred marriage bond to think first of his wife and family.

5. The priest has no children of his own that all the children of the parish may be his.

6. It is comparatively easy for parishioners to take

care of personal, material needs of a celibate priest. It is much more difficult for them to maintain and educate an entire family.

7. Collisions between parish interests and family interest are eliminated.

8. Celibacy permits the priest's work to be a vocation—an objective to which he can devote all his time and interest. The family man may be required to make his work a profession or trade—a means of supporting his family.

9. Celibacy enhances the priest's influence with people, increasing their respect for him.

10. If the vow is strictly kept, it serves as a source of inspiring example to the people.

11. Celibacy increases the confidence of the people in the priest. It sets him apart so that he can be trusted with secrets. Can you imagine going to confession to a married man? Even the notorious George Sand asked: "Is the secrecy of the confessional compatible with the mutual confidences of conjugal love?"

12. In missionary work the advantages are doubled—both spiritually and materially. The celibate priest can live like one of the natives without concern for the health, security and happiness of his family. He can face dangers without worrying about family obligations. And it costs much less to send him out alone and to maintain him.

13. A married priest would inevitably become involved in neighborhood gossip, family quarrels and problems, feminine jealousies, baby's care, and children's illness; the correction, direction and education of his offspring; the distractions, noise, interests, joys, frictions, and emotions of family living. How would he ever find time and place for prayer, meditation, study, and the preparation of sermons—to say nothing of the Divine Office?

The priest is aware that he gives up much in the warmth of personal, human love. He must substitute for it the love of Jesus Christ and the spiritual love of his people. He gives up love on earth, in the hope of obtaining eternal love in heaven. He knows that he gives up the normal fulfillment of his strongest sensual desires and must divert his interests and energies into fields of sacrifice, work and devotion. He gives up children born of his life and in his likeness; in their stead he spiritually begets souls to the supernatural likeness of God. In this world we must often give up one thing to have another—and better—thing.

Q. I have been told that Roman Catholic priests sometimes get married and are still priests. If so, can you tell me how that is, and in what part of the world they are located?

A. It is not permitted for any priest in any part of the world to be married once he has been ordained. However, some of the Eastern churches, which are called Uniate churches, do ordain married men. These married priests are found mostly in the Eastern part of Europe, in those sections which are largely behind the Iron Curtain.

In the Latin Church it is extremely rare that a married man be ordained. Usually it is only after his wife dies. By special permission of the Pope, it has happened that a married man has separated from his wife and that she has entered a convent and he has been ordained a priest.

The discipline of the Church which forbids priests to marry is simply a law of the Church and nothing more. It is a very strict law, and there are no exceptions in the Latin Church which would permit a priest to

continue to live with his wife after he were ordained. But it is not impossible that this discipline could be changed or relaxed in particular cases or in particular countries. There is no indication that such change will ever be made. All Catholics, and especially the priests, seem to prefer the present discipline. It involves sacrifices, but there are great compensations for the sacrifices.

Q. I am enclosing a clipping I cut out of the Sunday paper. How can this man become a priest and still stay married?

A. Your clipping tells the story of the Rev. Rudolf Goethe, 70, a former German Lutheran pastor who became a convert to Catholicism, together with his wife and son, and then was permitted to become a priest, while continuing to live with his wife.

It is rather startling, of course. Probably nothing like that has been done in the Latin Church for a millenium. But there is really nothing hard or impossible about it. The law of celibacy of the clergy is simply a law of the Church—like abstaining from meat on Friday—and the Church can dispense from her own laws whenever she judges it well to do so.

The unusual startles us. The Church dispenses from her laws of fast and abstinence every day—and even from her very strict laws about marriage. We think nothing of it. We are used to it. The Church has hardly dispensed from the law of clerical celibacy in several hundred years. So we are astounded. What is the Church coming to?

Your article emphasizes that this is an individual and personal case and does not imply any change of policy or any relaxing of the law of celibacy. Apparently there were exceptional reasons why this good old man should

become a priest, but he could not turn his wife out. The Bishop of Mainz recommended the case to Pope Pius XII, and the Pope personally considered all the reasons. He judged that a dispensation from the law was in order for this particular man that he might offer Sacrifice to God before he dies. So the Pope dispensed. He did it personally. No one else could do it.

Father Goethe is far from being the only married priest in the world. Married men are regularly ordained in many Catholic churches of the Eastern rites. He is merely the only married priest of the Latin rite. No, even that is not accurate. We should say he is the only married priest of the Latin rite who is permitted to live with his wife—for the Church has frequently granted permission for a married man to be ordained when he and his wife voluntarily separate, especially if she becomes a nun.

Q. I have been reading about the scandalous marriage of a priest from Wales to a Catholic girl in London. What is the status of this priest? The paper said he was excommunicated. Does he still have the power to say Mass? I claim that once a priest, always a priest. My sister disagrees with me. She says he can never say Mass again. What about his hearing confession?

A. Strange the things which make international news! But it is encouraging that this sordid thing is so rare that it gets the front page and pictures.

Of course the marriage amounts to nothing. It is null, void, vile and vacuous. It can never be made valid. Holy Orders is a diriment impediment to marriage—it makes marriage invalid, and the Church never dispenses a priest from it.

The paper was right. Both priest and female are ex-

communicated, and only the Pope can absolve them (Can. 2388). Besides that, the priest is deprived of any office which he holds in the Church (Can. 188).

But excommunication is a medicinal punishment, imposed by a kind mother, the Church, to reform the criminal. When he is reformed and is ready to accept his penance, he must be absolved from the excommunication.

So, if these two sacrilegious lovers part company and repent, they can be absolved. The Church is merciful; like her divine founder, she forgives readily. This girl, except for her public disgrace, will be back in good standing in the Church. Like Magdalene at the Cross, she will kneel at the altar and receive her Lord.

The priest, too, can receive the sacraments and be a good Catholic. As a penance he will probably be required to live in a monastery—even under penalty of falling back into excommunication if he leaves.

BUT the priest will not be able to perform any of his priestly functions. He can't say Mass, or hear confessions, or preach, or give the last rites to the dying. This is because he is **irregular**.

By attempting marriage the priest incurred this **irregularity**. (Can. 985). It is not a medicinal punishment like excommunication, but a regulation made out of reverence for the Mass and the sacraments and for the protection of the Church and the faithful. Repentance and reform do not entitle one to dispensation from irregularity. As a matter of fact it is very seldom that the Church ever dispenses in a case like this.

In other words, the priest may repent and go to a monastery, lead a good Catholic life, and become a saint, but he will not again be permitted to say Mass or administer the sacraments. Only rarely, in very deserving cases and after long penance, will the Church allow

him to say Mass—and then only as long as he remains in the monastery.

The POWER of saying Mass was given by God in the sacrament of Holy Orders. It can never be taken away. He is a priest forever. Our Lord is at his mercy. If he dares to be perverse and sacrilegious and to defy heaven, he has the power to call God down into his hands—to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. He has the POWER to do this even though he is excommunicated and irregular. But he does not have the right.

But suppose this couple do not repent. What then? The girl simply remains excommunicated, and after a year becomes suspect of heresy (Can. 2340). But the priest, after due warning by his Bishop, can be degraded. This means that he is deposed and deprived of all offices, rights, and privileges; forbidden to ever again wear clerical dress, and reduced to the state of a lay person—in everything except his obligations.

Degradation is the worst punishment the Church can inflict on a priest. It is complete. It is forever. But even this does not take away the powers given him in Holy Orders. It simply forbids him to ever use any of them. But even a degraded priest can repent and live and die a good Catholic. The Church, like Our Lord, wishes not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.

STERILIZATION

Q. I am enclosing a clipping from the Sunday paper. By reading its contents you can see my revolt at learning of such happenings. (The article tells about the sterilization of 70 of Iowa's insane, feeble-minded and epileptics during 1952., Ed.) How did such a law get passed? This seems to me to be morally wrong, for soon it might come to pass that because I have terrific sinus

trouble or poor eyesight, I would not be allowed to help in God's plan of raising children. I am not married, but plan to be very soon. Wouldn't it be enough just to confine these people? Please give me an exact moral standing on this problem according to Catholic teachings. Is sterilization right in cases such as these? After all these people have souls even if they are mentally retarded.

A. Your revulsion testifies to your sound training in morality and your correct attitude towards the rights of man. I hope that you may be very happy in your married life, that God will create with your help a dozen new souls to live forever, and that none of them will have sinus trouble or myopia.

This immoral law of sterilization has been on the statute books of the State of Iowa for more than forty years. It is annually put into effect, with no word of protest and few people to share your revulsion. Occasional reports are made and casually noted. Many Iowans feel a little surge of pride that their State for nearly half its term of history has been a practicing leader in the eugenics movement; and if they are interested in the law they may congratulate themselves on the careful legal and medical safeguards provided in this statute to protect the "rights" of its victims. In Iowa we practice our immoralities in a legal and proper manner. We would never think of taking away a man's natural rights—without due process.

In Iowa we have a State Board of Eugenics, established by law. Its members are: The Medical Director of the State psychiatric hospital connected with the College of Medicine of the State university; the Commissioner of Public Health; and the Superintendents of Iowa's seven State hospitals.

This Board of Eugenics receives annual reports of

feeble-minded, insane, and defectives of various kinds. If the majority of the board believes that procreation by a certain person would produce a child with inherited tendency to feeble-mindedness, syphillis, insanity, epilepsy, criminality, or degeneracy, or one which would probably become a social menace or a ward of the State, they may issue an order directing this person to be sterilized.

The law provides that this order be served on the person, his guardian, his nearest kin or personal friend. If the person himself (or his guardian, nearest kin, or personal friend) consent to the sterilization, all goes smoothly.

If consent is refused, the matter is turned over to the District Court for trial. If the court upholds the order, the person will be taken into custody and the operation performed.

Hitler had a similar law. But he was a bit crude in applying it. The Iowa law is pathetic in the nicety with which it insists upon the observance of due process, right of appeal, representation, bail, and free choice of physician, all as steps in depriving a man unjustly of a fundamental natural right.

We trust our state board of eugenics, and our courts. Otherwise we might all have the same fears the Germans had under similar law. As it is administered, none of us normal people are ever its victims. Actually we can be grateful that the board has been conservative in applying the law.

Of course, the law is not right. It is morally wrong. It violates basic natural rights. But our laws are little concerned with morals today; and only a few old-fashioned jurists believe in such things as natural rights. Of course the Declaration of Independence makes special mention of these rights as divinely given and self-evident, but then it used medieval terminology.

On September 7, 1953, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, addressed the delegates to an international conference on "Medical Genetics." He gave a beautiful summary of the science of genetics and praised the worthy aims of eugenics, and then emphasized certain philosophical and moral principles which must be kept in mind, and certain methods which must be avoided as morally wrong. Among these wrong methods is that of "eugenic sterilization." He calls it "harmful to morality" and "contrary to the natural law."

The Holy Father points out that we must be extremely careful also about that segregation which you suggest, and about the prohibition of marriage to defectives. Of course those who are incapable of conducting themselves in a human manner and are a dangerous menace to society can and should be segregated. But we cannot lock a man up simply because he is odd, or has fits. We can advise him against marriage, and advise others against marrying him. But we must be careful not to take away his natural rights as a human person. Even if there be doubt of his natural fitness to marry, we must insist upon the right until the doubt becomes a certainty.

In other words man's natural rights are fundamental and inviolable, given him by God. Neither you nor I nor the State nor the Church can take those rights away from an innocent man, no matter what legal process we use.

There is another moral principle involved in sterilization which would not be found in segregation: You may not mutilate the body of an innocent person, except for the general health of the body. Mutilation is involved in operations which remove members or organs, or cause them to lose their natural functions. Sterilization is mutilation. Eugenic sterilization does not contribute to the general health of the person. It may not

affect it adversely; but the point is that it is not an operation indicated as a cure for any physical or mental ailment of the person. It has other purposes, social, racial. These purposes cannot be achieved by immoral means, or at the expense of the rights of the individual.

ANTI-VD PROGRAM

Q. What about supporting the anti-VD program of the American Social Hygiene association? I received the enclosed material from our local representative, asking for a contribution.

A. There seems to be nothing objectionable in the material you send. The program as outlined is entirely praiseworthy. Its ultimate objective is to stamp out venereal disease and its stated aims are:

1. Curb upsurge of prostitution.
2. Help protect armed forces.
3. Educate more parents.
4. More aid to teachers and clergy.
5. Help uncover the untreated "millions."

In the present nation-wide anti-VD campaign there has been much offensive and objectionable publicity. We believe in calling a spade a spade, but we do not like to be hit in the face with the dirty thing. We do object to a campaign which frankly announces its purpose: To make our nation safe for fornication.

Betterment of the nation's health is a noble ideal. It is Christian charity to protect the health of children, to safeguard an innocent wife or husband, to cure suffering and disease, to educate against danger, and to guard our nation's strength. It is even charity to protect the sinner himself from disease to be incurred by his own

act—but not for the purpose of leading him to sin more readily.

We do not believe in taboos which keep disease from treatment and cure. We do not foster a superstitious defense of VD as a forceful deterrent from sin. Motives religious, moral and social should take care of that. But we do object to the denial of personal guilt implicit in much of the present campaign literature.

OPERATION ON BRODIE TWINS

Q. What about the morality of this operation which took place in Chicago, separating the Brodie twins at such grave risk to their lives? Is it right to do that?

A. I see no reason to doubt the moral rightness of this operation. To be sure the operation gravely endangered the life of both boys. But the reasons for the operation were proportionately grave. Their future life, happiness, health, security, normality and morality were all at stake. The operation was performed for the best of motives. Every possible care was taken to insure its success. Every available bit of scientific knowledge on the subject was called into use; and the finest technical skill was generously given. Long hours of tense sacrificing work were dedicated to the cause—a charitable work of great merit to all involved.

It would not be right to perform such an operation if the death of one child or the other were the inevitable result—if there were no chance at all of saving one of them. The operation would then be direct killing of one of them in an effort to save the other. It is wrong to deliberately kill an innocent person, no matter how sublime the motive of the murder. But as long as both children had even a slight reasonable chance of survival, the operation would seem to be justified because of the grave reasons urging their separation.

DEATH-BED CONVERSION

Q. In a town where I used to live there was a family; the mother was Catholic; the father a non-Catholic. The family were all raised Catholics. The father helped in seeing that they attended Mass and instructions in the Catholic Faith. The father never went to the Catholic church, only on rare occasions. It was said that he never cared to become a Catholic, that the only reason he would like to be a Catholic was so that he could be buried beside his wife, and he knew he couldn't be buried in the Catholic cemetery unless he'd be a Catholic. One day he was taken suddenly ill. The Catholic doctor was called; he told him it was his heart, but he recovered and was able to be around again. When another very severe attack came, the same doctor was called; he was hurried to the Sisters' hospital, the chaplain was called and he was baptized, and he passed right away. The funeral was from the Catholic church, the pastor said the Mass, and it was attended by a large number of Protestants.

Now, Father, we all know Baptism washes away all sin, but in a case like this what do you think? Of course he may have had more faith than anyone knows, toward the last; and may have had time even to ask to be baptized; but it seems to me he must have been unconscious when they took him in, as he passed away so soon.

A. You have just barely escaped one of my real sharp retorts. You seem to be critical of what was done for this good man; and I was going to suggest a bit of own-business-minding. But the point of my retort would have been that we must not judge critically the motives and intentions of other people. So why should I judge yours critically? Maybe you are honestly interested in the spiritual welfare of this man and anxious for assur-

ance that he got to heaven. So I turn my retort upon myself and eat my sharp words in meditation.

Your question suggests a number of comments. Salvation is not automatic; the soul does not float into heaven on the waters of baptism. An adult must have the desire to be baptized, else the baptism becomes no more than a pouring of water. An adult must be sorry for his sins, else baptism will not remove a one of them. He must have Faith already if baptism is to give his Faith supernatural value. He must wish to be saved, or God Himself can't save him. But if he is simple and honest in his Faith (even though mixed up a bit); if he just plain wants to get to heaven, if he sincerely regrets his sins because they can keep him from heaven, then baptism can work a miracle for him.

In spiritual matters of this kind, and particularly in danger of death, a man should get the benefit of the doubt as long as there may be doubt about his Faith, or his motives, or his contrition. Probably that was what the chaplain did: give him the benefit of the doubt. And I strongly suspect that our good man is grinning, up in heaven, over the graces which were given him in his last hour. But in a way he had them coming, too (if we could ever merit grace). Look at the record:

His wife had prayed for him for years. She had probably had Masses said, and made novenas, and said rosaries, and shed some pleading tears before God.

His children had prayed for him. He was their dad, and they loved him. He had helped provide them with the means of getting to heaven; he just had to get there, too.

He had been generous, tolerant, kind and conscientious in getting his family to Mass and his children to instructions. He had provided for the spiritual welfare of those in his care, even though he hardly half believed it necessary. Humility should have a rich reward.

He had faithfully kept the promises he made before his marriage—not to interfere with his wife's practice of her religion, and to raise the children Catholic. Honesty and faithfulness are basic ingredients of sound character.

He longed to be buried beside his wife. He loved her, and his love for her helped sanctify him. Love is the essence of sanctity.

He was not very religious. He had not been raised that way. He was probably very honest about it, frankly didn't see the need for it, and was unwilling to pretend. He was wrong, sure; but very honestly and heedlessly wrong.

He had lived very near the Faith, and the Mass, and the sacraments, even though he had never quite received them; there must be some grace which flows from them by spiritual induction.

He probably had much more of the Faith than he realized. He was not a theologian. He did not have everything straight. How many Catholics do? But he knew a lot about God, and Jesus, and the Church, and goodness; and he sort of took them for granted in an uncritical way.

He rather wanted to be a Catholic, to be buried beside his wife. No great spiritual motive there, nothing supernatural. But not a bad little natural motive for a beginning. Great conversions have sprung from less fertile seeds.

God is awfully good and generous. He loves us much more than we can possibly imagine or understand. He will save us all if He can possibly do it without forcing our free will. Why, He even died to do it! If He finds someone more than half willing to believe Him and love Him and serve Him, His grace can probably do the rest.

I am quite confident that our good man did not re-

ceive baptism in vain. Let's you and I try real hard to get to heaven, and see if he isn't already there.

RETURN OF THE ERRANT

Q. Several years after I married, I became a convert. Then later, because of family pressure, I quit going to church. The longer I stayed away, the harder it was to get started again. Always in my heart I wanted to go and I never gave up my Catholic prayers. Now this pressure I speak of has been released. I can go back, but because confessions were always the hardest part for me, I fear the whole procedure and hesitate at the thought of it all. I am a very shy person. Please tell me how to go about returning to the Church. I have no idea what it entails, or what to do first.

A. It is really a very simple thing, and it can be over in five minutes. Simply pick out a priest in whom you have confidence, go to him in the confessional (next Saturday evening would be a good time), tell him plainly and honestly your little story. He will be very happy to have you come back, and he will join you in thanking our good Lord for the grace which brings you back. He will then remind you to tell Jesus that you are sorry for your sins of these past years and to promise Him that you will be a faithful Catholic for the future. He will then indicate a little penance for you, give you absolution, and give you his blessing as he sends you on your way, happy and holy.

That's it. It's all over. You are back. Next morning you can go to Holy Communion. The joy and peace you will have will quickly compensate for the few moments of painful sweating you may have had in getting yourself into the confessional.

If you have tried it and find that you simply cannot

get yourself into that confessional without help, then why not go to the priest outside of confession and explain your problem to him? He can probably make it easier for you.

In any case give no thought to the manner of making your confession. Just get in there and tell your story in your own way and your own words.

WHAT IS CANON LAW?

Q. What is Canon Law? Why does the Church have her own law? Isn't the law of the State enough?

A. Canon Law is the law of the Church—that law by which she regulates her own internal affairs. The rules for her own members, it is neither in conflict, nor in competition with, the laws of the State. It is in another sphere, generally concerned with other matters.

Canon Law is found in the Code of Canon Law. It is made up of 2414 separate canons, or laws, many of them subdivided. In its origins it goes back to the time of the Apostles. In its present form it was published in 1917 and became effective in 1918. It is in Latin, and there is no authorized translation. It is published only by the Vatican Press, but it is available in book stores all over the world.

Canon Law has had a tremendous influence on the development of civil law throughout all of western civilization. One of the highest degrees our civil lawyers receive is that of LL.D.—Doctor of Laws. Have you ever wondered why there are two L's, or why "laws" is in the plural? Originally one of the L's was for civil law, and the other for canon law. A man was not a thorough lawyer unless he was versed in both laws.

It will help to understand why the Church needs her own law if we consider some of the subjects treated in it. Even a list, by name, of all the different subjects,

would exceed the length of this column. We will try to give a brief summary.

The first part of the Code deals with a variety of technical subjects primarily of interest to lawyers, such as the nature of laws, their extent, force, promulgation, repeal, and interpretation.

The second part deals with persons. You become a person, under the laws of the Church, by **baptism**, and your status may differ because of your age, sex, place of birth or residence, your relationships with other persons, or the particular rite to which you belong. All these things are here defined and determined.

Considered first among the particular classes of persons are clerics. Their rights and privileges, duties and obligations are defined: everything from regular prayer, meditation and confession, to tonsure, roman collar, and celibacy.

Clerics hold various offices or positions in the Church. So the law next determines their appointment or election to these offices (and that involves an entire set of laws on the subject of voting and counting votes) and their resignation, removal, or transfer from these positions.

The greatest of all clerics is the Pope. His authority and position are defined in the law.

The Cardinals form the Senate of advisors or aides to the Pope—their number, rank, appointment, duties and privileges are defined.

The Roman Curia is the government of the Church. It has its various departments or secretaries (Congregations), its offices, and its courts (Tribunals). Most of these are headed by Cardinals and staffed by a variety of Bishops, Monsignors, priests, and laymen flanked and aided by a battery of consultors (technical experts, professors, big-name canonists, theologians, etc.). The constitution, authority, and duties of these various Congre-

gations (eleven of them), Tribunals (three) and Offices (four) are defined in the law.

Then there are ambassadors (Legates) or delegates of the Pope to various nations or for special events. There are Patriarchs in certain venerable sees, and Primates in various nations. There are laws about each of these.

The various territorial divisions of the Church are governed by Archbishops, Bishops, Vicars Apostolic, Prefects Apostolic, and sometimes by Abbots, or by Apostolic Administrators. There are laws for each of these and yet other laws to provide for the administration of their territories when they die or become incapacitated.

The Archbishops, Bishops, etc., have a formidable battery of aides and delegates to help them in the work of their Archdioceses, Dioceses, etc., e.g. the Vicar General, Chancellor, Officialis, Notaries, Canons, Consultors, Deans. There have to be laws about all these: their appointments, duties, rights, resignation, removal, etc.

Then, of course, there are pastors, and their assistants, and various types of vicars. It takes many laws to define their rights and duties and to lay down the terms of their appointment and tenure.

More than 200 canons are required for the various Religious Orders and Congregations of men and women, their provinces, monasteries, convents, novitiates, cloisters, churches, and chapels. The meaning of their vows is determined, their ownership of property, and the election and appointment of their superiors.

After all that, remarkably few canons are needed for the laity. They are rather free and unfettered by law.

Things

Up to this point we have been dealing with persons. Now the law turns its attention to things.

First and most important in this section are the sac-

raments and the Mass. There are separate chapters devoted to each of the seven sacraments; the manner of their administration; who can receive them and when and how, at what age and under what conditions; the materials to be used; the ceremonies; the minister; sponsors; records, etc. The Eucharistic fast, the seal of confession, and the rules for ordaining priests all have their place.

Marriage presents a particularly complicated set of laws, defining all the impediments, dispensations, form, and requirements of consent.

The part on the Eucharist is divided into two sections: (1) the Mass, and (2) Holy Communion. You may imagine the number of laws required for these.

Then there are the sacramentals: consecrations, blessings, and the like.

Then, under the heading of things are Holy Places: churches, chapels, cemeteries. There are laws about how churches are built, consecrated, and desecrated, about their altars and furnishings. There are the laws about funerals. And many such things.

Then there are Holy Times: feast days, fast days, days of abstinence.

And there is the whole subject of Divine Worship: the care of the Holy Eucharist, statues, pictures, relics, vestments, church music . . .

Then there are laws about preaching, teaching the catechism, and giving missions. Laws about seminaries, colleges, and schools. Laws defining the right of the Church to teach. Laws about books, their publication and censorship.

There is much more; but we will pass it by.

Judicial Processes

The fourth book, or section, of the Code deals with trials under Church law: the intricate legal machinery

which the Church uses to see that justice is done. We cannot possibly go into detail here. There are 642 complicated canons which only lawyers are expected to understand. Their most common application is in the trial of marriage cases.

Crime and Punishment

Heresy, simony, bigamy, abortion, and a variety of other moral derelictions are classified as crimes under Church law; and the Church has provided certain punishments to fit the crime, primarily for the purpose of reforming the criminal. The Church uses no form of corporal punishment. The best known and most serious of her punishments are interdict (which forbids Divine Worship in a certain place), suspension (for priests guilty of crime), and excommunication.

As soon as the criminal has repented and given evidence of reform, he must be absolved from these punishments. The Church is not vindictive. She punishes with love.

CHANGE IN CANON 1099

(Written in 1948—Before the Change Became Effective)

Pope Pius XII has made a change in Canon Law. It is a tiny change, but it is the first in thirty years. So it has attracted attention.

The Code of Canon Law went into effect on Pentecost Sunday, 1918. It is the law of the Church. The Code has 2414 canons, and since they became law there has never been a change in any of them. Now the Holy Father has changed a little part of ONE canon. Yet this tiny change is important.

What is it all about? Press releases on the subject have been confusing.

The decree of the Holy Father completely eliminates

the **final clause of Canon 1099**. This clause had exempted certain fallen-away Catholics from the obligation of being married by a priest.

Catholics can be validly married only before a priest and two witnesses, and not just any priest, either. It must be the bishop in his own diocese, or the pastor in his own parish, or the delegate of this Bishop or pastor.

This was the law of the Church before 1918. It is the law of the Church now. It is clearly stated in Canon 1094 of the Code.

Non-Catholics are exempt from this law when they marry other non-Catholics. Their marriage before a minister or a Justice of the Peace is valid. That was the law before 1918 and is the law now.

Canon 1099 of the Code states this exemption of non-Catholics. And then the **last clause** of the canon extends this traditional exemption to children of non-Catholics, baptized in the Church, but not raised Catholics.

When the Code made this exemption of children of non-Catholics in 1918, it was something new. It was a change from the previous law. Pope Pius XII has now eliminated this change. The new law will be the same as the old law, before 1918. Non-Catholics will be exempt, as always, but no Catholics will be exempt—even though they have never been practical Catholics.

REASON FOR THE EXEMPTION

Who are these children of non-Catholics? It sometimes happens that a child of non-Catholic parents is baptized in the Catholic Church (usually in danger of death) and by this baptism becomes, technically, a Catholic. Usually such a child will not be raised a Catholic. He will know and care little about the law of the Church.

Then there are the children of mixed marriages. They have one non-Catholic parent. And sometimes the

Catholic parent becomes careless. Then these children of mixed marriages, baptized Catholics, may be raised outside the Church. They will grow up to know and care little about the law of the Church.

Unless they marry Catholics, these children, raised without any Catholic training, will certainly never marry before a priest. But the law before 1918 (and after 1949) classified them as Catholics. Any marriage they attempted before a minister or a Justice was invalid.

The purpose of the last clause of Canon 1099 was to let them marry validly, just like non-Catholics, which they were, practically.

The idea was good, but it caused confusion. Various technical questions of interpretation arose. It is said of lawyers (both canon and civil) that they never believe anything the first time they read it. They always read it over again and find that it really means something different.

Law always requires official interpretation. The United States has its Supreme Court for that purpose. The Church has its Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Code. This Commission is made up of Cardinals, and one of its principal tasks, ever since 1918, has been the interpretation of this last clause of Canon 1099.

In solving practical cases difficulties came in abundance. The Bishop and his matrimonial court suffered most. Problems which they couldn't decide finally went to the Holy Office.

Whose marriage was valid? Whose marriage was invalid? The answer frequently depended on whether a particular person had been raised a Catholic. If he were a child of non-Catholic parents (or of a mixed marriage) and had been raised from infancy outside the Church, his marriage before a justice or a minister was valid. If

raised a Catholic, even partially or for a short time, this same marriage would be invalid.

There are varying degrees of **being raised a Catholic**. How much Catholic training was required? How determine degrees? How determine zero?

REASON FOR THE CHANGE

Throughout the years these problems and difficulties came to the attention of the Holy See. Good marriage law tries to make the validity of the contract **certain**. This final clause of Canon 1099 helped make validity uncertain. Its purpose had been fine, but its results were disturbing.

Now this entire **final clause** is revoked. After January 1, 1949, it will simply be erased from the Code.

What is the practical result of this erasure?

After January 1 any person who has been baptized a Catholic will be bound to the Catholic form of marriage. He may not even know that he is a Catholic, but he can marry validly only before a priest and two witnesses. Any other attempt at marriage is only a sham—in spite of his good faith. He may have been raised a Protestant, a Mohammedan or a pagan. He is still bound to the Catholic form of marriage.

The new law will make a few more marriages invalid. That is regrettable, except that the people concerned neither know nor care about it. They are Catholics only in name—only by baptism.

Few people will be affected, only those baptized Catholics (children of non-Catholics or of mixed marriages) who have never had any Catholic training after their infancy. These must now marry before a priest, like any other Catholic. Once a Catholic, always a Catholic.

The new law will make the task of the Bishop and his matrimonial officials easier. In deciding the validity of

the civil marriages, it will no longer be necessary to seek extensive evidence on early education. It will no longer be necessary to ask the Holy Office to decide whether this particular man was raised a Catholic or grew up without religion. Once a Catholic, always a Catholic—no exceptions.

But diocesan officials will hardly notice these practical benefits for a few years. Next year's marriages will hardly become marriage cases before 1950. Next year we will still be deciding 1918 marriages and 1948 marriages. They must be judged valid or invalid on the basis of the law under which they were contracted. Once valid they are always valid, however the law may change.

After the year 2000 A.D., the marriages of 1948 will seldom be live issues. But even then some unfortunate matrimonial official will be asked by John Jones—doddering but hopeful—to decide whether his marriage in 1948 before a Justice of the Peace was valid or not. And that official, after pages of evidence and days of perplexity as to whether said John Jones was raised a Catholic or not, will fervently bless the memory of Pope Pius XII. And he will be joined in his blessing by many souls in heaven, whose right to sacraments, and thence to grace and salvation, has resulted from his new law.

MARRIAGE VS. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Q. Is the marriage state equally as high as that of the religious?

A. A certain man came to Jesus and asked him: "Good Master, what good work shall I do to have eternal life?" And Jesus replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments." Do not kill, or steal, or commit adultery, or bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother, and love thy neighbor as thyself. These are the

things necessary to get to heaven. They are the rules of the life of the layman.

But the young man said to him: "All these I have kept; what is yet wanting to me?" Jesus said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come follow me." This is the advice followed by the religious. (Matt. 19, 16-21).

The married person serves God and saves his soul by keeping the Commandments and loving his wife and family and neighbors. The religious dedicates himself to a life of perfection. Besides the Commandments he vows to follow the advice and recommendations of Jesus Christ. He gives up father and mother, home and family, all the world's goods, his own desires, and his own will, to follow Jesus Christ most closely.

The Council of Trent declared virginity and celibacy to be a higher state than marriage (Sess. XXIV, Can. 10 —as St. Paul had taught in I Cor, 25-40). The Code of Canon law directs everyone to hold the religious state in honor (Can. 487) and decrees that religious shall have precedence over laymen (Can. 491).

The religious state is higher, but not all are called to it (Matt. 19, 12).

OBLIGATION TO MARRY

Q. If a young woman feels sure that she is not called to a religious life, does that mean that she is bound to get married?

A. No. Most women have a vocation to either marriage or the religious life. But there are undoubtedly vocations to celibacy in the world. Much depends upon motives. If selfishness, vanity, ambition, or fear is the reason for not marrying, there is hardly question of a real vocation, and a lonely old age is in prospect with sharp-tempered unhappiness and an overwhelming sense of

frustration. But when love and generosity and a spirit of sacrifice are the reasons for not marrying, some of the world's greatest women are produced, their own devoted kindness and interest in others keeping their lives from loneliness.

We should never pass judgment on an individual case; it is a matter of personal conscience. A person must honestly try to please God in choosing a vocation. Not all women marry with that idea uppermost in mind. A woman choosing celibacy in the world should not forget old age.

INDEX

Chapter 1: LOVE

Love contrasted with infatuation	3
Love supposes personality	6

Chapter 2: DATING

Instructing teen-agers	8
Playing the field	10
A boy's first date	12
Vanity	14
That kissing problem	14
Should I quit seeing him?	17
Beginning young	18
He doesn't respect her	21
Time to be home	21
The divorced convert	22
Refusing the divorced man	22
Protestant and Catholic	23
Invalidly married	23

Chapter 3: KEEPING COMPANY

Difference in age	25
The age to begin	28
Sin to keep company with a non-Catholic?	28
Parental objections	30
Getting him interested	31
Playing a dangerous game	32
Is it wise to change?	33
The big break	34
With a divorced man	35
Is it a sin?	36
The ex-seminarian	36
Must a kiss be confessed	38
French-kissing	41

Young couple in love	42
Sufficient reason	43, 48

Chapter 4: ENGAGEMENT

Breaking it off	52
The date was set	53
Conduct of engaged couples	54

Chapter 5: THE AGE FOR MARRIAGE

Proper age	57
For a young lady	58
Putting off marriage	63
No children	64

Chapter 6: PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Papers from the Chancery Office	65
When to consult the pastor	66
Choice of church	67
Qualifications of priest to instruct	67
What has to be done	68

Chapter 7: CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

Source of the rites	73
Meaning of the ring	76
Respect for the ring	77
Marriage at home	77
Outside own parish	77
On Sunday	78
In the evening	79
Music	79
Photography	80

A Protestant witness	81	Public penance	118
An excommunicated witness	81	Christian burial	119
A fallen-away	82	Getting it sanctioned	120
White dress	82	Divorcee remarried	120
Symbol of Virginity	83	Stand of the family	122
Return of the errant	84	Saving the bum	125
"Bride and Groom" program	85	Wife refuses	127
Tom Thumb Wedding	86	Two ceremonies	128
Chapter 8: MIXED MARRIAGES		Attending the reception	129
Inter faith marriages	87	Giving scandal	130
The law of the Church	91	The big ceremony	131
Reasons for the promises	93	The fallen-away	132
Reply to non-Catholic	95	The middle-age	132
Episcopalian opposition	96	Bridesmaid	133
Origin of the promises	96	Chapter 10: NON-CATHOLIC MARRIAGES	
Preliminaries to mixed marriage	97	Are they advisable?	135
Some in rectory, some in church	101	Are they valid?	136
Inside the sanctuary	102	Must converts re-marry?	137
The ceremonies	103	Catholic participation	137
Blessing after conversion	104	Playing the organ	143
Rules for mixed marriage in Church	105	Catholic Mayor	144
Is it a mortal sin?	106	Chapter 11: MARITAL LIFE	
Rebuttal	107	Things in common	147
Promises not kept	108	The marital act	150
Refusal of dispensation	108	What is sin?	151
Recognizing Baptisms	109	Other women	153
Marriage to a Mason	111	The thief	153
Giving the bride away	111	Forgiveness	154
A Communist	112	Dirty stories	154
Interracial marriages	112	Necessary operation	157
Are they sinful?	112	Abortion	157
Chapter 9: MARRIAGE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH		Baby or mother?	157
Civil marriage first	115	Inducing labor	158
		Nursing baby	158
		Vaccination	158
		Defective children	159
		Keeping the Mongolian	160
		Spiritual life	162
		Indulgences	163

Wife working	163	Vatican discovers rhythm	203
For pay	163	How will the postponing	
Education	164	be done?	205
A child's proper up-		Four under six	205
bringing	167	Health	205
Children and the TV set	169	Six in seven years	206
Radio programs	170	Advertising	206
Taking the child to		TV and limousine	207
Mass	171	The intention which	
When very small	172	makes marriage in-	
School uniforms	172	valid	210
Tell the truth	173	The other alternative	212
Sex information	174	Heroism	213
More of the same	175	Abandonment and pru-	
Duties to parents	176	dence	214

Chapter 12: BIRTH CONTROL

Right attitude	180
Broken vow	181
Sterilization	182
So many do	183
Advice of non-Catholic	
doctor	183
The Bible says	184
Stand of the Church	184
Attitude of the Church	184
Books favoring contra-	
ception	185
Catholic doctor	186
A priest's advice	187
Wife cooperates	188
False conscience	189
Mortal sin?	190
Confession	192
Buying the contraptions	194
RH factor	196
Slums	197
Malthus	198

Chapter 13: THE RHYTHM

Permission from the	
priest	201

Chapter 14: DIVORCE

The Church's efforts	221
Indissolubility	224
Separation	225
Permission	226
Grounds for divorce	227
Receiving the sacraments	228
Divorcee wearing dia-	
mond	228
Joining the Church	229
Baptizing the children	230
Godparents	230
Divorcee as friend	230
Fixing it up	230
Keeping company	231
That relative of ours	232
Married again	235
Belonging to the	
D.C.C.W.	236
Christian burial	237
The Catholic lawyer	238

Chapter 15: MARRIAGE CASES

Grounds for annulment	240
Dissolution of bond	245
	321

Pauline privilege	247	Must they give up all religion?	260
What if both are baptized?	248	Was it annulled?	260
All three wives unbaptized?	249	Can he become a Catholic?	261
Charge for marriage cases	250	One mistake	262
Procedure in marriage cases	252	What a woman	263
Cancelling marriages	256	That husband	264
Neither husband baptized	258	What is their status?	264
She likes Catholics	259	Young fools	265
Can't do it twice	259	My son	266
		Miscellaneous cases	266-274

APPENDIX

Modesty and Chastity

Girls who drink and smoke	275
Impure thoughts	277
Other sins of thought	279
Dirty stories	280
Wearing shorts in public	281
Modesty in dress	283
Modesty before priests	284
Shorts in the home	284
Modesty in church	286
Those pocket books	287
Are they mortal sins?	288

Celibacy of the Clergy

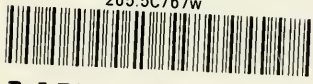
Why can't a priest marry?	289
Some are married	293
Married man ordained	294
Grave scandal	295
<i>Sterilization</i>	297
<i>Anti-VD</i>	301
<i>Was this operation right?</i>	302
<i>Death-bed conversion</i>	303
<i>Return of the errant</i>	306
<i>What is Canon Law?</i>	307
<i>Canon 1099</i>	311
<i>Marriage vs. religious life</i>	315
<i>Obligation to marry</i>	316

Due	Returned	Due	Returned
4-5-56			
APR 23 '56	APR 11 '56		
OCT 24 1956	OCT 15 '56		
10-25-56			
NOV 11 '56	NOV 30 '56		
JAN 3 '57	DEC 14 '56		
3 DAY RESERVE			
7 AM - 3 PM			
OCT 22 '59 ML	OCT 22 1959		
NOV 29 '60 ML	NOV 29 1960		
MAY 30 '61 ML	MAY 30 '61		
JUL 23 '63 ML	JUL 24 '63		
APR 14 '64 ML	APR 10 '64		
FEB 26 '65 ML	FEB 25 '65 ML		
APR 4 '65 ML	MAR 21 '65 ML		
APR - 1 '66 ML	MAR 30 '66		

265.5
@ 767w

138
139

What they ask about marriage. main
265 5C767w



3 1262 03247 6284

