

# **MY CATHOLIC FAITH**

## **A Manual of Religion**

By the  
**MOST REVEREND LOUIS LARAVOIRE MORROW, S.T.D.**  
**BISHOP OF KRISHNAGAR**

**"Now this is the everlasting life, that they may  
know thee, the only true God, and him whom  
thou hast sent, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3)**

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# MY CATHOLIC FAITH

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All materials from "A Catechism of Christian Doctrine," Revised Edition of the Baltimore Catechism, and from the 1941 translation of the New Testament, is reproduced in this book with the permission of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C.

Illustrations by Dr. Giuseppe Conti and Mr. Addison Burbank.

# MY CATHOLIC FAITH

TO  
SEEKERS OF THE TRUTH  
THIS WORK  
IS  
SINCERELY DEDICATED

## INTRODUCTION

Anyone deeply interested in converts seeks an exposition of the Catholic Faith which not only defines each article of the Creed and each doctrine of the Church, but which also gives an explanation and a reason for the doctrine. Such an ideal is beautifully satisfied in a Catechism written by one of our zealous missionary Bishops, Most Reverend Louis L. R. Morrow, S.T.D., Bishop of Krishnagar.

This is not the kind of Catechism that can be carried in one's pocket, for it contains 415 pages. But once it is read, it can be carried both in the head and in the heart. The presentation is such as to satisfy the mentality of both children and adults, and is even not beyond an excellent review for those who have studied both Dogmatic and Moral Theology

+ Fulton J. Sheen

National Director  
Society for the Propagation  
of the Faith  
March, 1954

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## **PREFACE**

"My Catholic Faith" is prepared for those who desire to have a concise knowledge of the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. It is a complete manual of religion for the laity, useful for ready reference, for it takes up in a clear and practical manner the questions and subjects that are likely to arouse the interest of the general reader, whether Catholic or non-Catholic.

In the preparation of the book we had especially in mind those earnest souls who seek to understand the Catholic Church, but not understanding it, cannot yet be completely convinced. And this is also why the book has been found invaluable by catechists and members of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, in their work of teaching both adults and children. We have been assured by priest friends that in getting their catechetical sermons ready they have not seldom taken a lesson or two of "My Catholic Faith" because the matter is well divided and to the point.

At the same time, the form in which topics are presented complete in facing pages, as well as the numerous illustrations and non-technical language, make of "My Catholic Faith" a practical textbook for that important subject, Religion. In fact it has already been adopted in the secondary schools and junior colleges of several dioceses in our country.

"My Catholic Faith" is the last book in our "My Religion Series," consisting of: "My Jesus and I" for little ones of the kindergarten age; "My First Communion" for those preparing for that important event; "My Catechism, Book I" and "My Catechism, Book II" for intermediate grades, to be accompanied by "My Bible History"; and lastly this book that we here offer, "My Catholic Faith."

"My Catholic Faith" follows the strictly logical sequence in subject-matter: (1) the Credo, containing what we must know and believe; (2) the Commandments of God and the Church, containing what we must do; and (3) the Sacraments and Prayer, containing the means of grace by which we can attain God. It is not, however, necessary to follow this sequence when reading, teaching, or studying this book. "My Catholic Faith" is so constructed that one group of topics can be taken up independently of the rest. The Credo, which is the doctrinal part, is generally more difficult for young people to understand than the Commandments. For this reason the first part of the book may be postponed by teachers of religion until the other parts have been thoroughly considered.

Special attention was paid to the selection of appropriate texts from the Bible. These will familiarize the reader with Holy Scripture, and effectively prove the falsity of the anti-Catholic charge that the Church discourages the reading of the Bible. The revised editions of the Baltimore Catechism and of the New Testament, which have been so painstakingly prepared by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D. C., are used in this book.

Two subjects of utmost importance are almost completely dealt with: the Catholic Church (lessons 47 to 74), and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (lessons 130 to 140). Other topics which may be termed not strictly doctrinal -- such as Eastern Churches, Roman Curia, Church and

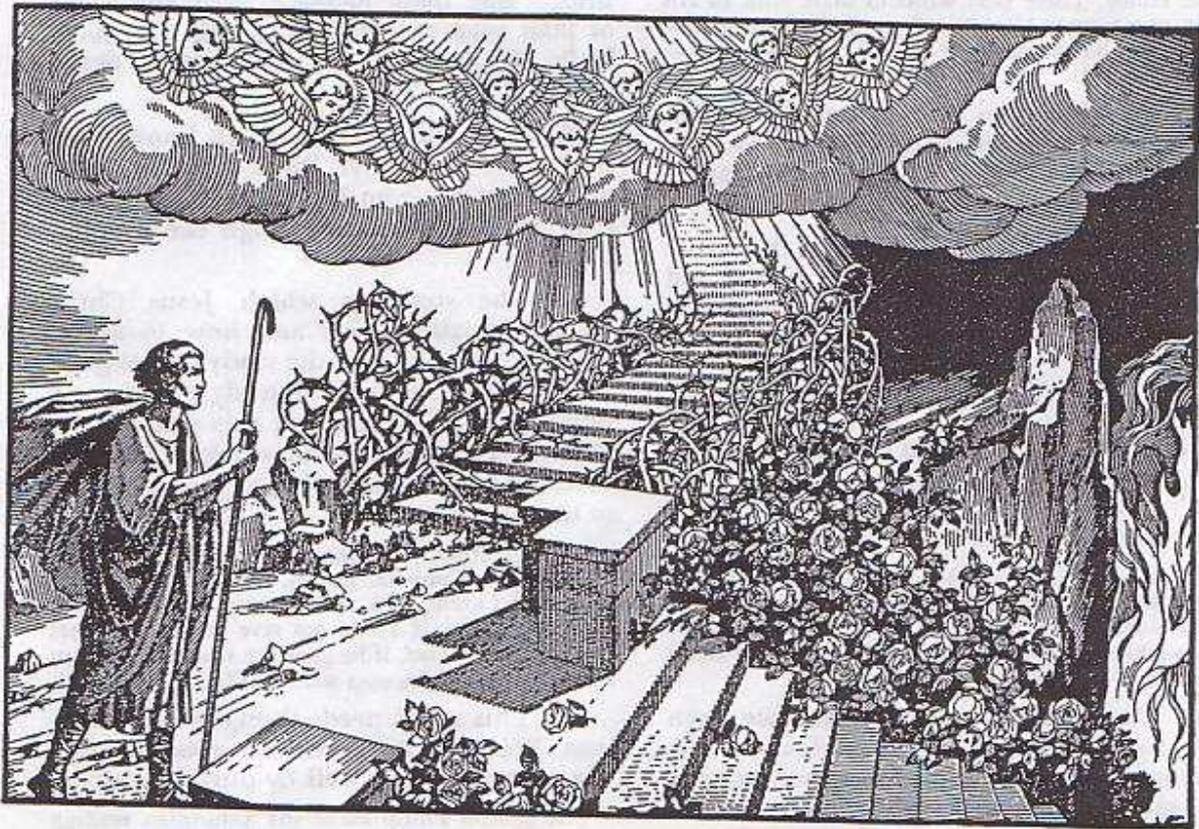
State, Papal Decorations, Science and the Bible, Capital and Labor, Evolution -- are discussed, because we wish to aid our people not only in their devotion, but also in their desire for information about the attitudes and practices of Holy Mother Church.

It is our earnest hope that "My Catholic Faith" will help not only our beloved Catholic people to know their religion exactly, and to practice it according to the teachings of the Church and its Divine Founder, but also non-Catholics, to understand the beliefs and practices of our Church.

*Bishop Morrow*

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## 1. Religion and the End of Man



*In creating us, God gave us the power and right to choose which path we should follow in life: either the path of obedience, or the path of disobedience to His commandments. The first seems wearisome and full of thorns, but reward comes in the end: happiness with God. The second seems full of pleasures and roses, but punishment awaits the traveler at the end: eternal damnation in hell.*

*Each must choose for himself. We may find the choice a hard struggle. We shall be strengthened in the choice of the difficult path if we remember that we belong to God, that He loves us, that He will help us and is waiting for us at the end of the road -- of obedience.*

**What is the destiny of man?** -- Man's high destiny is to go to God, because man comes from God, and belongs entirely to God.

1. Our reason tells us that Someone *made* us. That Someone is God.

Nothing can proceed from *nothing*. If there had ever been a moment when nothing existed, nothing would ever have existed. Therefore, because we exist, we know Someone who made us also exists; that Someone is God. "He made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. 99:3). "All things have been created through and unto Him" (Col. 1:16).

2. Our reason also tells us that God must have made us for some purpose. God made man to *know* Him, to *love* Him, and to *serve* Him in this world, and to be happy forever with Him in the next. God made us for Himself. The *end* of man, as of all creation, is the glory of God; to manifest the divine perfections, to proclaim the goodness, majesty, and power of God.

"The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16:4). Whether he wishes to or not, man must manifest God's perfections, dominion, and glory. Man's very existence does this; even his sins will in the end show forth God's infinite holiness and justice.

3. Through glorifying God, man is *destined* to share His everlasting happiness in heaven. Man was created chiefly for the life beyond the grave; this present one is merely a preparation for the eternal life.

In this life we are exiles, wanderers, pilgrims. Heaven, the Home of God, is our true country, our true Home. There God wants to share with us His own unmeasured bliss. "For here we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come" (Heb. 13:14)

4. We belong to God. Since we are His creatures, we have certain *duties towards* God which we must fulfill. Religion teaches us what these duties are.

**What is Religion?** -- Religion is the virtue by which we give to God the honor and service due to Him alone as our Creator, Master, and Supreme Lord. It is by religion that we know, love, and serve God as He commands us to know, love and serve Him.

It is by religion, then, that we fulfill the end for which we were made, and so save our soul. In order to practice this virtue, we must:

1. ***Believe*** all the truths revealed by God.

In religion we learn about God and His perfections. We learn something about His great love for us. We learn what is right and what is wrong. We learn *what God commands us to do*. We learn about the future that He has prepared for us.

2. ***Carry Out*** in our lives what we learn about the duties we owe to God, about *His commands and wishes*. Mere knowledge is not religion, and will avail us nothing. The devil has knowledge, but he has no religion. Religion includes the *service of God* in fulfilling what we have learned of our duties towards Him. Religion is not a matter of feeling; it is a matter of will and of action.

Our Lord says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and *keep* it" (Luke 11:28). The Apostle St. James said: "But be *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1).

**How can we prove that all men are obliged to practice religion?** -- We can prove that all men are obliged to practice religion, because all men are entirely dependent on God, and must recognize that dependence by honoring Him and praying to Him.

1. It is absolutely *necessary* for us to practice religion. God gives us no choice in the matter. Our *chief business* in life, the business which God commands us to attend to, is to go to God. And this depends on our practice of religion.

It is by religion that we fulfill the purpose for which we were created. By *believing* what God has revealed, we **know** God. By *knowing* God, we cannot help but **love** Him. By practicing what we learn and *obeying* God's commands, we **serve** Him. "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me" (John 14:21).

2. Many people spend their lives in a vain pursuit of riches, honors, and pleasures. But these never satisfy the heart of man even on earth. Besides, they have to be *left behind* when the hour of death comes.

**From whom do we learn to know, love, and serve God?** -- Men learn to know, love, and serve God from Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who teaches us through the Catholic Church.

1. The study in which Jesus Christ teaches us about God and how to know, love, and serve Him, is the study of Religion. It is the most important study anyone can undertake. The *neglect* of this study is the root *cause of crime* in the world at present. Without a knowledge of God men give way to their basest passions.

Our salvation is much more important than a knowledge of physics, poetry, or history. All our science and knowledge, with our wealth and honors, will be profitless if we do not save our soul. "What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

2. This study needs thought and attention. We need to listen to a good *teacher*. We cannot study it well by ourselves alone.

The deacon Philip asked the Ethiopian reading Holy Scripture, "Dost thou then understand what thou art reading?" But he said, "Why, how can I, unless someone shows me?" (Acts 8:31).

**Who are those that advocate no study of religion?** -- Those that advocate no study of religion are generally termed free-thinkers, agnostics, skeptics, and rationalists.

1. These thinkers claim that all problems can be solved by the use of the *intellect* alone, without necessity of any principle, law, dogma or authority.

"Freedom of thought" has a pleasant sound, but it is against reason; by it the mind is fettered by error. We submit our minds freely to natural and scientific truths; that is true freedom. If there is no freedom of thought in mathematics, why in religion?

2. "Freedom of thought" is evidently a *contradiction*; we are not free to think what is not the truth. There are fundamental laws that bind the intellect.

For instance, are we free to believe that the sun revolves around the earth, even if it appears to do so?

3. The intelligent man, in order to attain the kind of freedom humanly possible, should find out to which authority he must submit; he must discover which is the ***Law***. And this is why the rational man studies Religion, to find out this fundamental Law.
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## 2. The Apostles' Creed



*The Apostles, before they parted, gathered together in Jerusalem in the first Council of the Church. There they decided to put down in a brief statement their principal doctrines, so that their teachings might be uniform wherever they preached. This statement of the articles of faith we call today "The Apostles' Creed." It was formulated in order to put into fruition the command of Our Lord: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days" (Matt. 28:19-20).*

**Where do we find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church? --**  
We find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church in the Apostles' Creed.

1. A *creed* is a summary or statement of what one believes. "*Creed*" comes from the Latin *credo*, which means *I believe*; that is, I accept or hold true something on the word of another.

"I believe," with relation to the Apostles' Creed, means that I *firmly assent* to everything contained in it. I believe it exactly as if I had seen those truths with my own eyes. I believe it on the *authority or word of God*, Who cannot deceive or be deceived.

2. The Apostles' Creed is so called because it has come down to us from apostolic times, and contains a *summary* of the *principal truths* taught by the Apostles.

The Apostles' Creed is repeated at Baptism, as a declaration of faith. In ancient times it was required before Baptism, as a sign of fitness for reception into the Church.

3. The Apostles' Creed has come down to us intact, except for a few clauses added by the Church later, in order to counteract various heresies. These additions, however, are not new doctrines, but a clarification of what the Creed already contained.

Thus the words "Creator of heaven and earth" were added to counteract the Manichean heresy that the world was created by the principle of evil; and the word "Catholic" was added, to distinguish the True Church from churches springing up around it. As our Lord said, "And you also bear witness, because from the beginning you are with me" (John 15:27).

4. There are several *other creeds* used by the Church, in substance identical with the Apostles' Creed.

The *Nicene Creed*, which is said in the Mass, was mainly drawn up at the Council of Nicea, in the year 325. The *Athanasian Creed* is said by priests in the Divine Office for Sunday.

**Into how many articles may the Apostles' Creed be divided?** -- The Apostles' Creed may be divided into twelve articles.

1. All the articles are absolutely *necessary* to faith: if even one article is omitted or changed, faith would be destroyed. It is symbolical to divide the Apostles' Creed into twelve articles, because the Apostles numbered twelve; thus we are reminded that the Creed comes to us and was taught by the Apostles of Our Lord.
2. The following are the articles:
  - I. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;
  - II. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord;
  - III. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;
  - IV. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
  - V. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead;
  - VI. He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
  - VII. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
  - VIII. I believe in the Holy Ghost;
  - IX. The Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints;
  - X. The forgiveness of sins;
  - XI. The resurrection of the body;

XII. And life everlasting. *Amen.*

The twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed contain the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, one God in three distinct Divine Persons, -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, -- with the particular operations attributed to each Person. The Creed contains three distinct parts. The first part treats of God the Father and creation. The second part treats of God the Son and our redemption. And the third part treats of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification.

**What act of religion do we make when we say the Apostles' Creed?** -- When we say the Apostles' Creed we make an act of faith.

1. Christian faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to *believe* firmly whatever God has revealed, on the testimony of His word. By it we believe in the truth of many things which we cannot grasp with our *understanding*.

For example, we believe in God, although we cannot see Him. We believe in the Trinity, although it is beyond our understanding. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (He. 11:6).

2. Faith does not require us to believe in anything *contrary to reason*. When we believe what we cannot perceive or understand, we act according to reason, which tells us that God cannot err, lie, or deceive us. We therefore put our *trust in God's word*.

In many *natural things* we often believe what we do not see, as sound waves and atoms, on the testimony of scientists who have studied them. Thus we act *within reason*; but how much more reasonable it is to believe on the word of God!

3. A great *reward* in heaven awaits those who suffer persecution or die for the faith or some Christian virtue. The number of martyrs who have died for the Catholic faith is estimated at more than sixteen millions.

All the Apostles suffered persecution, and all except St. John suffered death by martyrdom, for their faith. St. John the Baptist was beheaded because he censured Herod for violating the law of marriage. St. John Nepomucene was put to death because he refused to violate the seal of confession. "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:32)

4. *Neglect* of the study of the truths of our religion is frequently the cause of lukewarmness, a bad life, and final apostasy and impenitence. We should be zealous in studying the Christian doctrine, in the catechism and religion lessons, in sermons, missions, and retreats.

If we have any doubts, we should consult our priests; God will not forgive ignorance if we voluntarily neglect the means He has granted to dissipate it.

### 3. God the Supreme Being (First Article of the Apostles' Creed.)



*God created the world in six days. On the first day He made light and darkness, day and night. On the second day He made the sky and divided the waters. On the third day of Creation, God caused dry land to appear out of the waters, and bade plants to spring forth from the land. On the fourth day God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. On the fifth day He made creeping things, birds and fishes. On the sixth day God made beasts, and finally, man. Then on the seventh day God stopped working: He rested. "The heavens show forth the glory of God." (Ps. 18:2).*

**Who is God?** -- God is the Supreme Being, infinitely perfect, Who made all things and keeps them in existence.

1. God *made* everything -- men, beasts, plants, planets, stars, everything. Not only that; God *keeps* everything in existence. Were He to take away His hand from what He created, everything would disappear into nothingness quicker than thought. Without a cause, there could be no effects. Without God, could there be anything at all?

"In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). "In him were created all things" (Col. 1:16). "It is he who gives to all men life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25).

2. The traditions of all nations and races support the idea of the existence of God. All nations and peoples have an *inner conviction* of God's existence; their intellect supports their instinctive trust.

Even among the wildest, most remote, and most degraded pagans there is invariably found the *worship of some deity* recognized as supreme, on whom man depends. There are savage peoples without ruler, laws, or even settlements, but never without some god that they worship with *prayer and sacrifice*.

**What do we mean when we say that God is the Supreme Being?** -- When we say that God is the Supreme Being, we mean that He is above all creatures, the self-existing and infinitely perfect Spirit.

"I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no god" (Is. 44:6). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. 'who is and who was and who is coming'" (Apoc. 1:8)

**What is a spirit?** -- A spirit is a being that has understanding and free will, but no body, and will never die.

1. God is a *pure spirit*. As God has no body, when we speak of His eyes and His hands we only speak in a figurative manner, in order to make ourselves more understandable according to our human way of speaking.

Our Lord said to the Samaritan woman at the well: "God is spirit; and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Yet God has often taken on visible forms, in order to be seen by men. Thus he showed Himself in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus, and in the form of tongues of fire on Pentecost. God is neither a dove nor tongues of fire; He merely assumed those forms in order to be seen by mortal eyes.

2. Angels and devils are pure spirits. Men are only partly spiritual, because they have a body. Man's soul is a spirit, absolutely independent of matter, and by creatures indestructible.

As spirits, God and men have this in common, though in different degrees: all have understanding, intellect, and free will. By his free will man can even defy his Creator, God.

**What do we mean when we say that God is self-existing?** -- When we say that God is self-existing we mean that He does not owe His existence to any other being.

1. God made us, but *who* made God? God said to Moses, "I am who am" (Exod. 3:14). He exists of Himself, deriving His Being from no other. God is the First Cause.

All other beings and things owe their existence to God. In comparison to Him, we are nothing.

2. Man can never have a *complete knowledge* of God. Man is finite and cannot fully understand the infinite. A cup can contain the immensity of the ocean more easily than man can fully understand the Infinite God.

We know God only partly, from the order, harmony, and existence of things, from our conscience, and from God's revelations to man.

**What do we mean when we say that God is infinitely perfect?** -- When we say that God is infinitely perfect, we mean that He has all perfections without limit.

God is immense and eternal, "an ocean without shore or bottom," the unchangeable Being that only Himself can fully understand: "Of his greatness there is no end" (Ps. 144:3)

1. God is so great and wonderful that He needs nothing to make Him greater or more wonderful. He possesses *all perfections*, countless, innumerable, illimitable, boundless.

God cannot be better, holier, or more perfect than He already is. He is at the acme of perfection, the uncreated, the Infinite. "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee" (3 Kings 8:27).

2. So perfect is God that He is infinitely *incomprehensible*, incapable of being completely understood. Reason can *verify* the revelation that God made of Himself. But when we make our reason or our emotions the final authority, we make ourselves our own god, and shut the road to the supernatural, the Infinite.

God alone can bridge the chasm that yawns between the finite and the infinite. When we take advantage of His grace to seek Him in loving trust, He holds out His hand, a Father calling to children, to cross the chasm safely to Him.

3. The Creator is above all the created, though something of Him, some *likeness* of His Being, may be found in every creature. But even were all creatures, from the most glorious seraphim to the lowliest of moss, to combine their powers and perfections, theirs would be a faint shadow of God's all-encompassing supremacy.

**What are some of the perfections of God?** -- Some of the perfections of God are: God is eternal, all-good, all-knowing, all-present, and almighty.

God's perfections do not exist separately in Him, but are one and identical with Himself. They are only various manifestations of His one nature and perfection. In God, for example, His goodness is one with His wisdom and power. His perfections, besides being one and the same in Him, are also identical with Him: that is, God *Himself* is infinity, wisdom, goodness, power.

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#### 4. The Perfections of God



*God is eternal: He has no beginning and no end. Before there ever was anything, there was God. He always was, is, and ever will be. With God there is no time: everything is present. We cannot imagine eternity, but we can understand what it is to be without beginning or end.*

**What do we mean when we say that God is eternal?** -- When we say that God is eternal, we mean that He always was and always will be, and always remains the same.

1. God had no beginning; there never was a time when there was no God. God can never cease to exist; He will have no end. He will always be living, immortal.

There is no time with God: with Him there is neither past nor future; everything is present. "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8). "Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed, from eternity and to eternity thou art God" (Ps. 89:2). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Apoc. 1:8).

2. God will always remain *the same*. He is the "Father of lights, with whom there is no change" (Jas. 1:17).

God cannot change. The God that is God now is the same God that has ever been, the same God that will ever be, from and throughout all eternity, the "Father of Lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration" (Jas. 1:17).

**What do we mean when we say that God is all-good?** -- When we say that God is all-good, we mean that He is infinitely lovable in Himself, and that from His fatherly love every good comes to us.

1. God is Himself *love*. Love is part of His nature. Compared to God's infinite goodness, the goodness of man is nothing, only the shadow of a shadow.

Men, creatures of God, are good because God made them to His image and likeness. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. 33:9).

2. Out of His *goodness*, God created angels and men, although He had no need of them. God loves His creatures far more than a mother loves the children she has borne.

God gives us the beautiful world to live in. He takes care of our body and soul. He showers benefits and graces on us day after day. He prepares for us a place in heaven. Above all, He sent His Son down to earth to die for us.

**What do we mean when we say that God is all-knowing?** -- When we say that God is all-knowing, we mean that He knows all things, past, present, and future, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions.

1. God is all-knowing. Before His eyes *all secrets*, even the most hidden, are clear, even secrets that will not be thought of by man until the end of the world.

God knows us for what we are: we cannot hide anything from Almighty God. "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we have to give account" (Heb. 4:13).

2. God, all-knowing, will one day make everything *known* to everybody, disclosing our entire lives for all to read and know.

If we think of this power of God to see and know all things, and His promise to make everything manifest on the last day, we can more easily resist temptations to sin. "For there is nothing hidden that will not be made manifest; nor anything concealed that will not be known" (Luke 8:17).

**What do we mean when we say that God is all-present?** -- When we say that God is all-present, we mean that He is everywhere.

1. God is all-present, because there is nothing that can have existence *apart* from Him. All creation exists in Him as thought exists in the mind. There is no place where God is not.

"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" saith the Lord" (Jer. 23:24). "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). However, we must not make the mistake of thinking that God, in Whom everything exists, is limited by this everything. He has no limits, and exists outside as well as in all creation.

2. God is all-present, present everywhere, at the same time. He is not like man, that cannot be in two places at the same time. God is wholly everywhere *at the same time*.

The presence of God should be an incentive for us to do everything to please Him. As we are careful never to do anything wrong in the presence of our mother, how much more careful should we be in the presence of God! "Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him?" (Jer. 23:24).

3. Although God is everywhere, we do not see Him, because He is a spirit, and cannot be seen with our eyes.

Similarly, we cannot see our own soul or that of another. "God is spirit, and they who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

**What do we mean when we say that God is almighty?** -- When we say that God is almighty, we mean that He can do all things.

1. God can do anything, by a mere act of His will. *Nothing* is impossible to God.

"Things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27). The only thing God cannot do is to make a *contradiction*:-- He cannot will wrong, because wrong is a contradiction of His goodness.

2. God's *omnipotence* or power is known to us especially by the magnificence of creation, and by His miracles.

Yet God created all the immensity of the heavens with nothing except His word. "Be light made. And light was made" (Gen. 1:3). In the same way Our Lord worked many of His miracles. "Great is the Lord ... of his greatness there is no end" (Ps. 144).

**Is God all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just?** -- Yes, God is all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just.

1. God is *all-wise*. The more we learn of the wonders of the universe, the more we are amazed by the infinite wisdom of God, by His almighty power.

His knowledge is infinite. He knows how to direct all things to the highest ends, and by the most fitting means.

2. God is *infinitely holy* in Himself. He loves good and hates evil. Therefore He is also *all-just*. He will punish the wicked and reward the good. "Be ye holy, because I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2).

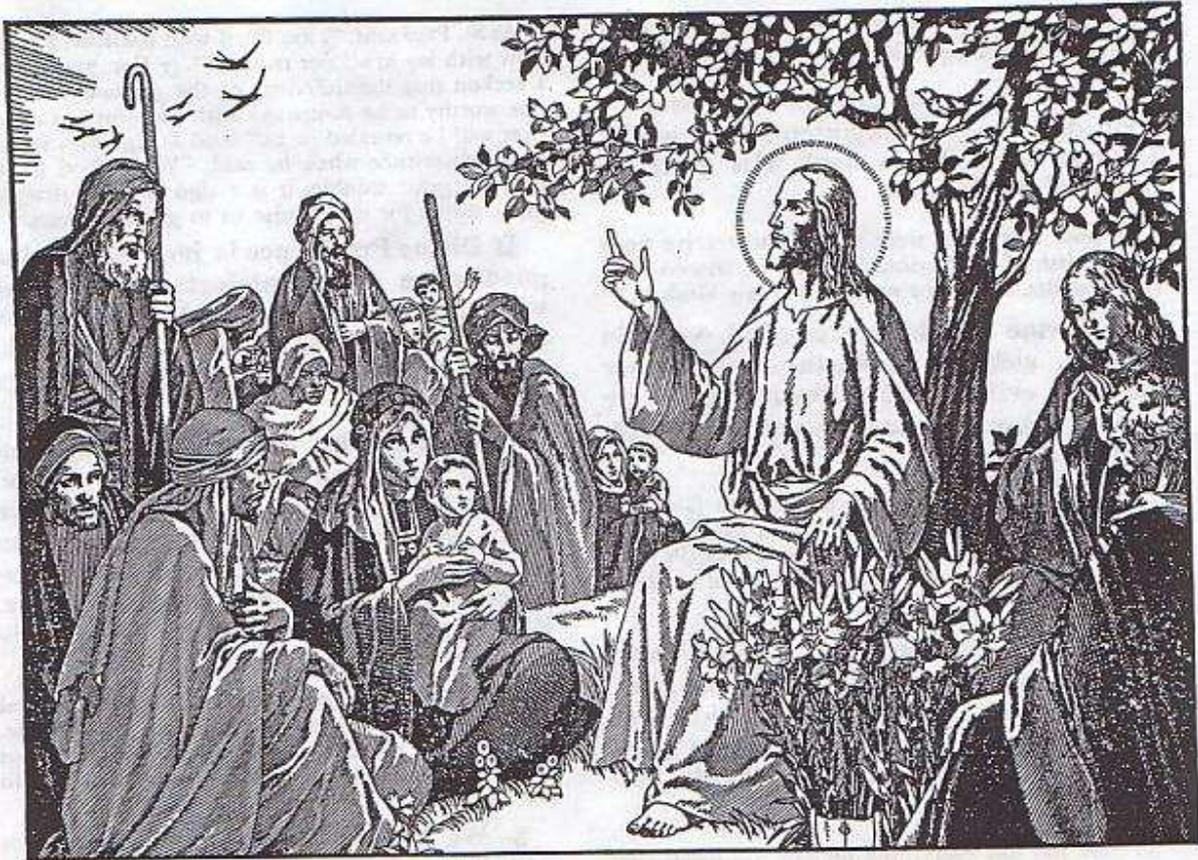
*Partial justice* is done in this life, for often the good are happy, and the wicked are tormented by their conscience. But *complete justice* will not be accomplished till the next life.

3. God is *infinitely merciful*.

He gives sinners time for repentance. He receives us back with joy when we repent. But merciful as He is, we must not presume on His mercy, for "God will not be mocked." "The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. 102:8). "He is long-suffering, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

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## 5. Divine Providence



*Many people make themselves miserable worrying over the future. They should have more trust in Divine Providence. Let them do the best they can, and leave the rest to God, Who cares for them. Our Lord said, "Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they? ... Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' for your Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be given you besides" (Matt. 6:26-33).*

**Does God see us?** -- God sees us, and watches over us with loving care.

1. God preserves and governs the world. If He were to take away for one instant His sustaining power, the whole creation would at once fall back into *nothingness*.

It is as if He held us in His hand. If He withdrew it for a moment, we would be nothing. "When thou shalt take away their breath, they shall die, and return again to the dust" (Ps. 103:29)

2. Nothing happens without the *will or permission of God*. Our Lord tells us that not one sparrow falls to the ground without the will of our Heavenly Father, and that the very hairs of our head are numbered.

God is to the world and men as the engine is to a train, as the pilot is to a ship. He guides the whole universe and all creatures. He guides the nations. "Cast all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7)

**What is God's loving care for us called?** -- God's loving care for us is called Divine Providence, His plan for guiding creatures to their proper end.

1. Divine Providence is *good, constant, and just*. It watches over even the humblest and most despised creature on earth.

Of the paternal tenderness of God, Holy Scripture speaks thus: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands; thy walls are always before my eyes" (Is. 49:15,16).

2. God has special care for those who are poor, despised, and forgotten by the world. He has often shown forth His glory by means of the *humble*.

So poor shepherds were the first to receive news of the birth of the Saviour. So poor fishermen were His Apostles. So a poor maiden was His Mother.

**If Divine Providence is good, why do poverty, sickness, sufferings, and other physical evils exist?** -- Physical evils are often the result of the weakness of creatures in body and mind.

Although we often do not understand God's arrangements, we must have faith and exclaim with the Apostle: "How incomprehensible are God's judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33).

1. Physical evil is partly a *punishment* for actual sin. It serves to *sanctify the good*, and helps them attain eternal salvation. The greatest sufferers have often been the greatest saints. God sends suffering to the just man in order to prove his love.

So holy Job lost everything he had, yet loved God more. So Tobias became blind and poor, and only proved his love for God.

2. God never sends anyone suffering beyond his strength. To gain merit, we must be *patient* and *resigned* under suffering. Let us imitate Our Lord in the Garden, whose prayer was, "Father, not my will, but thine, be done!" Our Lord taught us to say, in the *Our Father*, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

He who resigns himself joyfully to the will of God, in sickness, death, poverty, persecution, and other misfortunes, obtains true peace of heart; he will be blessed even on this earth.

3. God often sends *physical* evil to sinners in order to bring them back into the right way. It serves as a *warning* to them.

Among those who were converted through bodily sickness, we may mention St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola.

4. Sufferings can be a boon, and should be *welcomed*. By sufferings, patiently accepted, the punishment due for sin is diminished or cancelled. The more we suffer in this world, the less would we have to pay in the next life, in purgatory.

As St. Paul said, "I am filled with comfort; I overflow with joy in all our troubles" (2 Cor. 7:4). "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us." And St. Ignatius spoke from experience when he said, "When God sends us some great trouble, it is a sign that He designs great things for us, to raise us to great holiness."

**If Divine Providence is just, why do the good often suffer misfortunes, and the wicked enjoy prosperity and honors?** -- The misfortunes and satisfactions of the world are not real and lasting, and cannot gauge God's justice.

1. No sinner has true happiness; his conscience will not give him inner peace. Riches, honor, and pleasures can never give peace to the spirit. On the other hand, no lover of God has true misery, for he possesses inner peace and a good conscience. Real *reward* and *punishment* begin only after death.

On earth sinners are rewarded for whatever good they do. Their good fortune lasts only for this life. The just are punished on earth for whatever sins they may have committed. Their reward is full in the other life.

2. We must therefore resign ourselves lovingly to the *will of God*. Thus we shall have peace of mind even in the midst of the greatest trials. Suffering should remind us that this is not our true home, and that we are citizens of heaven.

"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing" (Ps. 22:1). "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, because thou hast saved my soul" (Ps. 30:1, 8).

**Is God responsible for sin?** -- God is not responsible for sin; sin is the result of man's wrong use of his free will.

1. God does not will or *cause* sin; He forbids it and will punish the sinner. He permits sin for His own reasons, to sanctify the good, by trying them and giving them opportunities for more faithful obedience.

God created man free to choose good or evil. He wishes us to choose good, in order that we may merit heaven. But since we are free, we can, if we so wish, choose evil. God is not responsible for our sins.

2. Even the evil that God permits to happen, He turns to our good. He *draws good* out of evil.

The wicked persecutions of the Church make the Gospel better known and loved among the just. Thus the patriarch Joseph said to his brothers, "You thought evil against me, but God turned it into good" (Gen. 50:30). "For those who love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. 8:28).

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## 6. Existence of God



*Adam and Eve, our first parents, knew God in the Garden of paradise. God spoke to the patriarchs and prophets, and gave them messages for the rest of men. God gave the Commandments to Moses. Our Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, came and taught about God.*



*From Adam and Eve down to the present, all men have acknowledged the existence of God. Even pagans and primitive peoples recognize a Supreme Being, a god. They have sacrifices, and they worship some deity whom they recognize as superior and supernatural, on whom man depends.*

**How do we know by our reason that God exists?** -- We know by our reason that God exists, because of:

1. The existence of the world.
2. The order and harmony of the whole universe.
3. The testimony of our conscience.

**How does the existence of the world prove the existence of God?** -- The existence of the world proves the existence of God, because it could not have come into existence by itself.

1. Everything in the world had a beginning. Men, animals, plants, the earth, planets and stars, -- all had a beginning. They could not have come into existence by themselves. They must have been made by *Someone Who had no beginning*. Planets and men could no more have made themselves than a watch can make itself.

The astronomer Kircher had a friend who denied the existence of God. During a visit one day, this friend saw a globe in the study of the astronomer. -- "This is an interesting globe," said he; "Who made it?" -- "Why," replied Kircher, "it just made itself!" The friend had a hearty laugh at the idea. Kircher asserted, "It would be much easier for a

little globe like that to make itself than for the immense globe of the earth to create itself."

2. When we see footprints on the sand, we conclude that someone has passed that way. The universe is filled with the *footprints of a Supreme Creator*. Every single existing thing or being gives clear testimony of Him. A light cannot kindle itself; after it is kindled, it will go out in a few hours. But the light of the sun in the heavens has burned for thousands of years and continues to burn.

**How do the order and harmony of the universe prove the existence of God?** -- They lead us to infer the existence of a Supreme Architect and Preserver of surpassing skill.

1. The heavenly bodies go along their appointed courses age after age. The seasons succeed one another year by year. There is splendor, beauty, arrangement, and order everywhere. The whole universe is governed and preserved by *immutable law*.

If you plant an orange seed, you are certain an apple will not spring from it. Every morning you are sure the sun, when it rises, will appear in the east. At night you can go peacefully to sleep, assured that after your rest the day will come again.

2. To say that this *universal* order is the result of accident, or that the planets direct their own courses, is as foolish as to say that an automobile goes sensibly around the city streets running itself.

"The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. 18:2). God is the Intelligent Cause.

3. Long ago the pagan Cicero said: "When we contemplate the heavens, we arrive at the conviction that they are all guided by a Being of surpassing skill."

And Cicero also says, "There is no nation to be found so savage as to be ignorant of the existence of God." The great astronomer Newton often uncovered and bowed when God's name was uttered.

**How does the testimony of our conscience prove the existence of God?** -- By our conscience we can distinguish right from wrong.

1. Our conscience approves the right and condemns the wrong. Thus within ourselves there is a *recognition* of a Supreme Lawgiver to whom we are responsible, Who will reward the good we do, and punish the evil.

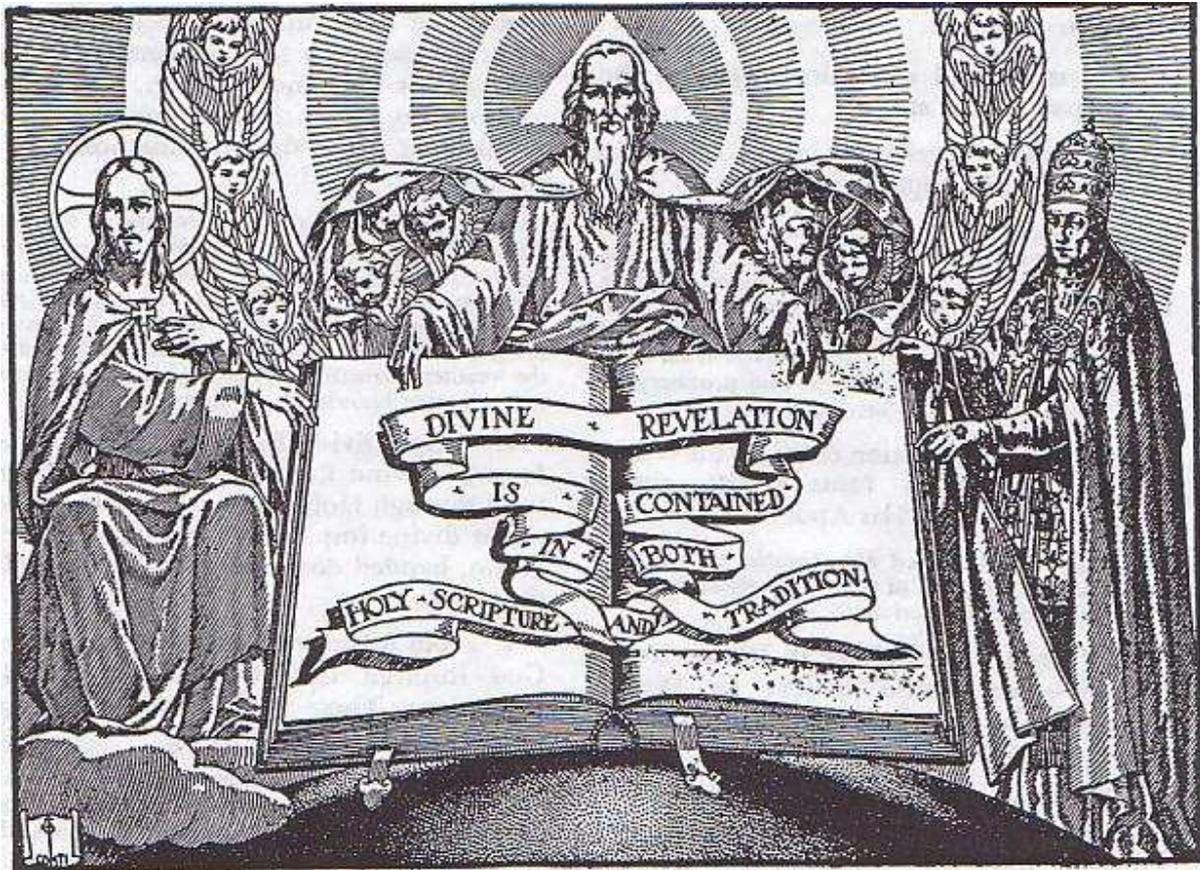
"Only the fool says in his heart: There is no God" (Ps. 13:1).

2. Those who persist in denying the existence of God in spite of external and internal testimony are *atheists* who are eaten up by pride, or live vicious lives, or both. Of them Our Lord said:

"Seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand ... For the heart of this people has been hardened, and with their ears they have been hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest at any time they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their mind, and be converted, and I heal them" (Matt. 13:13-15).

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## 7. Divine Revelation



*Divine Revelation comes down to us by two means: through Holy Scripture, written down under divine inspiration, and through Tradition, handed down orally from Apostolic times. We read the Bible with great respect, for it is the Word of God.*

*We treat Tradition with as great reverence, for God speaks through Tradition as well. It is wrong to believe the Bible alone without Tradition. That is like believing the Word of God written in the morning and denying it spoken in the afternoon.*

**Can we know God in any other way than by our natural reason?** -- Besides knowing God by our natural reason, we can also know Him from supernatural revelation.

1. God has often revealed Himself to men through means beyond the ordinary course of nature. This is supernatural, or ***Divine Revelation***, as opposed to the natural revelation of Himself that God makes in the external world, and the revelation He makes through our natural reason and conscience.

Some revealed truths are beyond the power of the human understanding; we could never, by our own abilities, have known such truths if God had not revealed them. For instance, could we by ourselves have known about the Blessed Trinity, had God not revealed it?

2. The public revelation of truths to men by God *began* with Adam and Eve and ended at the death of Saint John the Apostle.

Private revelations have been made to holy persons, such as those of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary, and those of Our Lady of Lourdes to St. Bernadette. But these private revelations are never proposed to the faithful as articles of faith. When the Church approves them, it merely states that there is nothing in them contrary to faith or morals.

**How may Divine Revelation be classified?** -- Divine Revelation may be classified into pre-Christian and Christian revelation.

1. *Pre-Christian* revelation may be divided into:
  - a. primitive revelation, made to Adam and Eve;
  - b. patriarchal revelation, made to the patriarchs; and
  - c. Mosaic revelation, made to Moses and the prophets.

God spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise. He spoke to Abraham, to Noe, sending Noe to preach to sinful men before the Flood. He sent Moses to the Israelites when Pharaoh oppressed them. The patriarchs and prophets were called messengers of God, and often received from Him extraordinary powers, of miracles and prophecy, in order that they might be believed.

2. *Christian* revelation contains the truths revealed to us by Jesus Christ, either directly or through His Apostles.

Our Lord *commanded His Apostles* to teach all these truths to the end of time. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

**Why should we believe in Divine Revelation?** -- We should believe in Divine Revelation because God, Who is its Author, cannot deceive nor be deceived.

1. No reasonable man can believe in any truth until he is sure it is *revealed by God*. We know that God is the Author of Revelation because He has proved it by external acts, especially by miracles and prophecies.

The writers who made Divine Revelation known worked under direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Who is, therefore its Author.

2. Miracles are extraordinary works perceptible to the senses, that cannot be accomplished by the mere powers of nature. They are brought about by the *action of a higher power*.

The coming to life of a dead man is a miracle. So is the instantaneous cure of a man blind or paralytic from birth. Our Lord and the Apostles worked many miracles.

3. Some extraordinary works never before heard of or known but invented are *not miracles*. They are mere discoveries of previously unknown processes or combinations.

An example is the radio. And so were the first telegraph, telephone, wireless, phonograph, etc. All of these are very wonderful. Even today people in general do not understand them fully. But they are not miracles, because they are produced by the forces of nature as harnessed through the ingenuity of man.

4. Prophecies are *predictions* of future events that could not have been known by natural means. For the confirmation of the faith, or for the benefit of men, God raised up prophets. Generally speaking, the gift of prophecy is a sure sign that the possessor is a messenger of God.

The prophets told about the coming of the Messiah. Their prophecies were fulfilled when Christ came on earth. The major prophets were Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Daniel. They are distinguished from the twelve minor prophets, because of the greater volume of their prophecies. Forecasting the weather correctly is *not prophecy*. It is the result of a scientific knowledge of natural facts.

**How has Divine Revelation come down to us?** -- Divine Revelation has come down to us through Holy Scripture, written down under divine inspiration, and through Tradition, handed down orally from Apostolic times.

1. From Adam and Eve, at different times, God inspired men to *write down* His revelations. These passed from generation to generation as sacred books.

For pre-Christian revelation, there were forty-five of these sacred books, composing the ***Old Testament***. They were jealously guarded by the Israelites, the Chosen People, whom God Himself had chosen to keep His truths intact for the instruction of future generations.

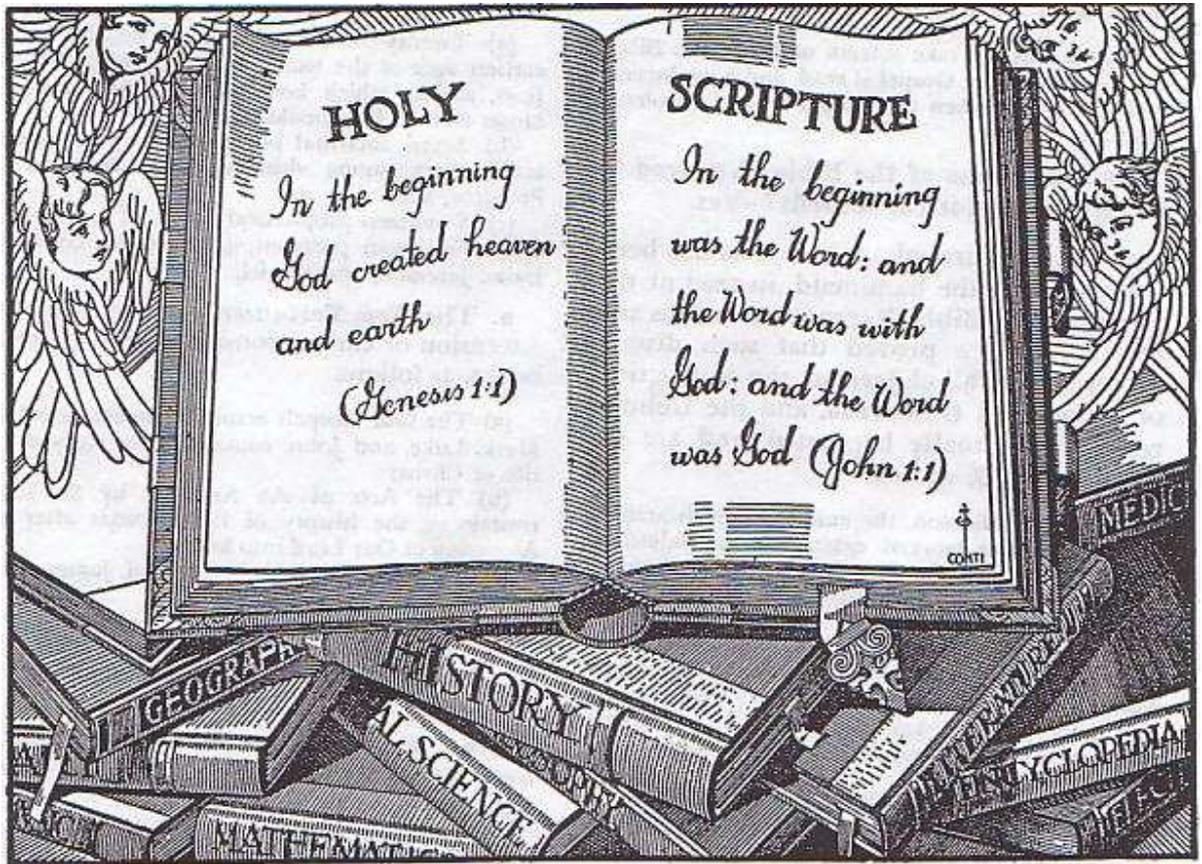
2. Finally our Lord ***Jesus Christ***, Son of God, came to earth to reveal Divine truths to men. After His death, His Apostles and disciples wrote about Him and His teachings.

There are twenty-seven of these books, composing the ***New Testament***. With the forty-five books of the Old Testament they were scattered in different parts of the world, until the Church gathered them together into one Book, ***Holy Scripture***, or the ***Bible***.

3. The deposit of faith which Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church is made up of two parts: Holy Scripture, and ***Divine Tradition***, this latter being composed of the truths passed down by word of mouth, and not written down till after the death of Christ's Apostles and disciples, principally by the Fathers of the Church.

Divine Revelation was completed at the death of the last of the Apostles. Since that time *no new revelation* has been made for the instruction of the whole of mankind. Whenever the Church decides a point of faith, it does so according to *Scripture or Tradition*. It simply finds out what has been revealed from the beginning.

## 8. Holy Scripture, or The Bible



*The Bible is the best Book in the world. It is the Word of God. It is better than any other book that has ever been written or ever will be written. Catholics are not only permitted, but urged, to read the Bible. They must read a version approved by the Catholic Church. Catholic Bibles have the necessary explanations for the guidance of the faithful. To find a text in the Bible, as Matt. 16:26, turn to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 16, verse 26. All texts are found in the same manner.*

**What is Holy Scripture, or the Bible?** -- It is the Word of God written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and contained in the books of the Old and the New Testaments.

1. The seventy-two sacred books, together forming the Bible, were composed by *forty writers* in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The period of composition covers at least 1,300 years, from Moses, to St. John the Evangelist.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1).

2. The writers were *inspired by God*. By a supernatural influence God enlightened their mind and moved their will to write all that He wished, and only that. They acted as free instruments of God, Who directed them and preserved them from error.

The writers of Holy Scripture were, however, *not passive* instruments. Each writer brought his personality with him into what he wrote. The writers were like skilled painters who paint from the same model. The products are similar and all correct, but with differences according to talents.

**Is God the Author of the Bible?** -- Yes, God is the Author of the Bible.

1. An author is not the stenographer that writes down what he is told, but the *one who tells* what is to be written. Since God is the Author, the Bible *cannot contain any error*.

"All Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16) . Copyists and printers, however, can and do make mistakes in copying the Bible.

2. Since the Bible is the Word of God, it must be treated with the greatest *reverence*.

This is why we take solemn oaths on the Bible, stand up when the Gospel is read, and have incense and lights used when the Gospel is sung at solemn High Mass.

**Can the books of the Bible be proved to be reliable historical records?** -- Yes.

1. *Science* throughout the years has been proving itself the handmaid, instead of the enemy, of the Bible. Recent excavations and researches have proved that such distant events as the Fall of Jericho, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Deluge, really and actually happened, and are no mere figures of speech.

Sir Charles Marston, the eminent British archaeologist who has worked extensively in Palestine, firmly declares that far from being mere mythology, the Old Testament is, substantially, contemporary eyewitness accounts of events set down as they took place. Remains he has found include information on events that took place in the times of Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jeremias the Prophet; even the name of Abraham has been found. Tablets found in Babylonia and Assyria refer to the Deluge.

2. The Old Testament was recognized by *Jesus Christ*, approved by Him, and often quoted by Him. Evidences from the New Testament prove that this was written by Christ's Apostles and disciples.

The style of the Gospels shows clearly that they were written by Jews. That the writers lived in the first century is shown by the vividness of their knowledge about Jerusalem, which was destroyed before the end of that century. The earliest Christian writers testify to the reliability of the Gospels; the consent of the churches of the time proves such reliability.

3. The Gospels have not been *changed* by the passage of centuries. This can be proved from the oldest copies, from ancient translations and quotations. The Gospels could not have been altered, because the fervor of the early Christians carefully guarded them.

When in the fourth century St. Jerome was ordered by Pope Damasus to gather all existing texts of the Bible and translate them into Latin, there were some 35,000 ancient copies. After thirty-four years of labor, he finished the translation, our Catholic Bible, called the Latin Vulgate, from which the Catholic English version has been made.

**How is the Bible divided?** -- The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

1. The ***Old Testament***, written before Christ, consists of forty-five books:
  - a. Twenty-one *historical* books relating to the earliest ages of the world, or to the history of the Jews, among which books are the five books of Moses and the four books of Kings;
  - b. Seven *doctrinal* books, made up of maxims and prayers, among which are the Psalms and the Proverbs; and
  - c. Seventeen *prophetical* books, of four greater and twelve lesser prophets, among which books are Isaias, Jeremias, and Daniel.
2. The ***New Testament***, written after the Ascension of Christ, consists of twenty-seven books, as follows:
  - a. The four Gospels according to Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, containing the story of the life of Christ;
  - b. The Acts of the Apostles, by St. Luke, containing the history of the Apostles after the Ascension of Our Lord into heaven;
  - c. Twenty-one epistles by Sts. Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude; and
  - d. The Apocalypse by St. John.

The four Gospels and the Acts are mainly historical. The Epistles are doctrinal. The Apocalypse is prophetic.

**Who are the four Evangelists?** -- The four Evangelists are Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

1. ***St. Matthew*** was one of the twelve Apostles. Before he followed Our Lord, he was a tax-gatherer or publican called Levi.

Matthew was the first Evangelist to write the Gospel, about *six years after* Our Lord's Ascension. His work, written in Hebrew for the Jews of Palestine, was translated into Greek in the time of the Apostles. His work shows Jesus as proving Himself to be the promised Messias.

2. ***St. Mark*** was the disciple of St. Peter, and wrote according to what he heard from St. Peter himself.

He wrote for the Christians of Rome about *ten years after* Our Lord's Ascension. St. Peter approved what he wrote, which shows Christ as the Son of God.

3. ***St. Luke*** was converted by St. Paul and became his disciple.

He wrote about *twenty-four years after* Our Lord's Ascension, for a distinguished citizen of Rome. His work contains many details about the Blessed Virgin.

4. ***St. John*** was Christ's Beloved Disciple. He wrote about *sixty-three years after* Our Lord's Ascension.

The last of the Apostles to die, he wrote in his old age to testify, against heretics who had arisen, that Jesus Christ is true God.

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## 9. Divine Tradition



*Before the 15th century when printing was invented, the Bible was reproduced by copying in longhand. We should be very grateful to the monks and nuns of ancient times who labored lovingly, making manuscript copies of old documents that had come down from earliest times. Without this loving care, we would not have our Holy Bible today.*

**Are all the truths revealed for us by God found in the Bible?** -- Not all the truths revealed for us by God are found in the Bible; some are found only in Divine Tradition.

1. The Bible *itself* states that it does not contain all that God revealed.

"There are, however, many other things that Jesus did; but if every one of these should be written, not even the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written" (John 21:25)

2. The truths of Divine Revelation which have not been written down in Holy Scripture have come to us by the *Tradition* of the Church.

St. Paul bade the Thessalonians: "Hold the teachings that you have learned, whether by *word* or by letter of ours" (2 Thess. 2:15).

**What is meant by Divine Tradition?** -- By Divine Tradition is meant the revealed truths taught by Christ and His Apostles, which were given to the Church only by word of mouth and not through the Bible, though they were put in writing principally by the Fathers of the Church.

1. In a *wide sense* Tradition embraces the *whole teaching* of the Church, including the Bible, since it is only from the Church that we have the Bible. In a *stricter* sense Tradition includes only what was handed down *orally* from the Apostles.

The Apostles themselves say that there is much that they have delivered to the faithful by word of mouth (2 John 12; 1 Cor. 11:2). Among many examples of truths in Tradition, not clearly manifested in Holy scriptures, are: the exact number of sacraments, the time of institution of some sacraments, the books that make up the Bible, the Baptism of infants, and Sunday observance.

2. All the truths of Divine Tradition now have found their way into books. From the first Christian centuries the practices and doctrines of Tradition were preserved by saintly teachers whom we call ***Fathers of the Church***. They were disciples of the Apostles, contemporaries of those disciples, or disciples of the disciples. These holy and learned men instructed the Church in the years of its first growth.

Chief among the Fathers of the first six centuries (*date is of death*), are: the Doctors of the Church (*see below*), and Saints Clement of Rome (99), Ignatius of Antioch (107), Polycarp (155), Justin (165), Irenaeus (202), Cyprian (258), Dionysius (265), Gregory Thaumaturgus (270), Optatus (372), Martin of Tours (397), Gregory of Nyssa (398), Epiphanius (403), Celestine I (432), Vincent of Lerins (450), and Caesarius of Arles (542).

3. Besides the writings of the Fathers, the truths of Divine Tradition may be found chiefly in: (a) writings of the ***Doctors*** of the Church; (b) decrees of Popes and Church councils; and (c) the liturgy of the Church as found in the Missal and rituals.

We call "Doctors of the Church" those ecclesiastical writers, noted for learning and holiness of life, who have by Church authority been proclaimed with that title, and whose feasts have been extended to the whole Western Church. Among the ***Fathers of the Church***, these are honored as Doctors: Saints Hilary (368), Athanasius (373), Ephraem (378), Basil the Great (379), Cyril of Jerusalem (386), Gregory Nazianzen (389), Ambrose (397), John Chrysostom (407), Jerome (420), Augustine (430), Cyril of Alexandria (444), Peter Chrysologus (450), Leo the Great (461), and Gregory the Great (604).

Among the outstanding Doctors of the Church of the Middle Ages are: Saints Peter Damian (1072), Anselm of Canterbury (1109), Bernard (1153), Thomas Aquinas (1274), Bonaventure (1274), Albert the Great (1280). Of later Doctors we have: Saints Peter Canisius (1597), John of the Cross (1605), Francis de Sales (1612), Robert Bellarmine (1621), and Alphonsus Liguori (1787).

**Why must Divine Tradition be believed as firmly as the Bible?** -- Divine Tradition must be believed as firmly as the Bible because it also contains the word of God.

1. Several years passed *before* the Gospels were written down. In the meantime, Christians had to depend on Tradition solely: Tradition is older than the New Testament.

When the books composing the New Testament were written, the various writers had some definite and immediate purpose in mind. For example, St. Paul wrote his Epistles to the various churches of Gentiles that he had converted, to remind them of his teachings in his absence. St. Luke wrote his Gospel for the citizen of Rome, Theophilus, to instruct him in the new religion. St. John's Gospel was to combat heresies denying the divinity of Christ.

2. If the Church teaches any doctrine that *cannot* be found in Holy Scripture, it will be found in Tradition, and therefore traceable to the Apostles.

Those who follow up the course of a river gradually draw near the source, and discover whence the waters flow. In the same way we can trace the historical sources of the teachings of the Church and arrive at their source: the Apostles themselves.

3. Divine Tradition teaches us all the doctrines that were taught by the Apostles. It comes to us from the Apostles. Every single doctrine the Church teaches comes *direct from the Apostles*. The Church does not issue *new* doctrines.

The four Evangelists wrote their relations of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in widely separated places; it is a proof of authenticity that the Gospels agree in their essentials, and often even repeat the very same words. When the writers of the New Testament did begin to write, they did not intend to set down all the details of Catholic faith and practice, but only such points as were immediately interesting or that needed clarification.

**Without Tradition, would we know what the Bible is?** -- No.

1. Tradition teaches us *what books* belong to the Bible. By tradition the Church kept intact all the books of the Bible for fifteen hundred years before the existence of denominations that nevertheless assert the Church does not care for the Bible.

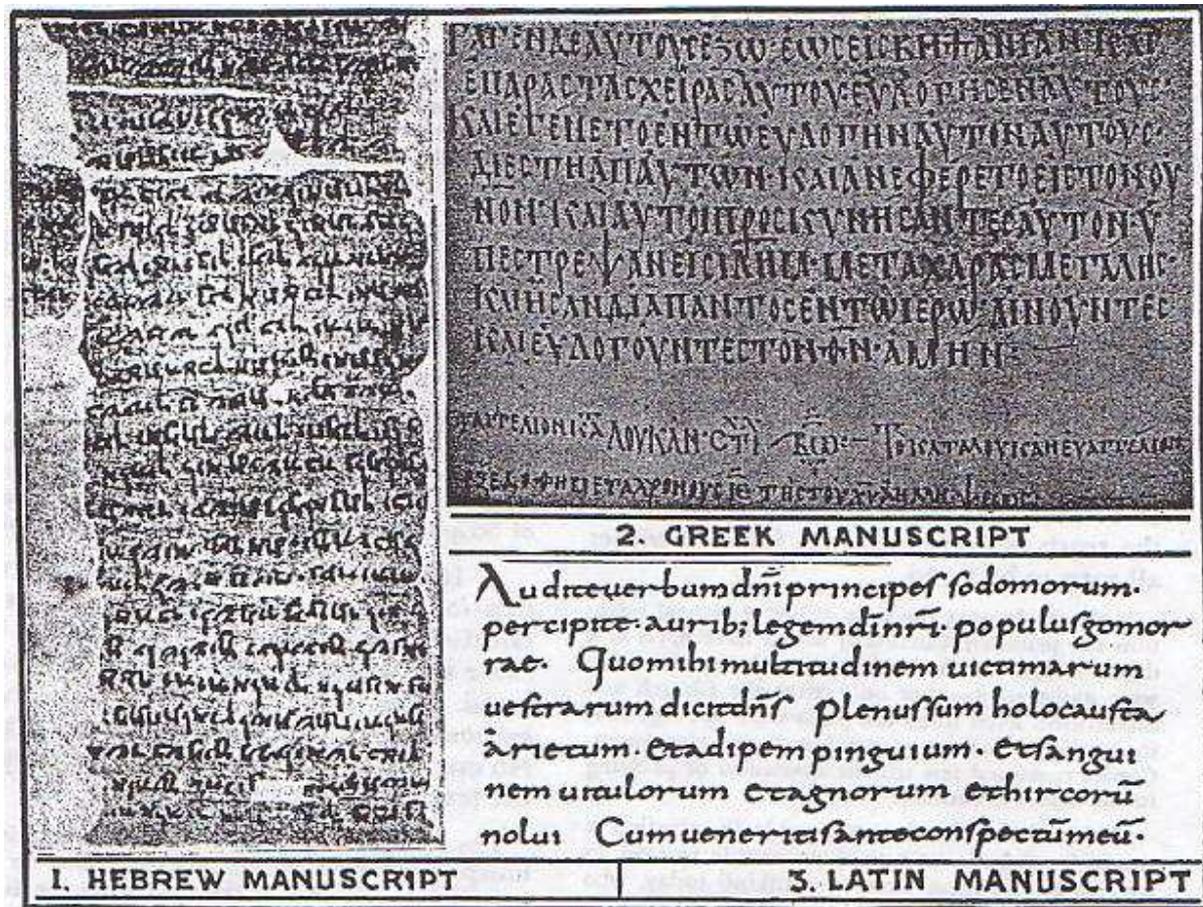
Protestant denominations *reject Tradition*. Consequently, they cannot agree about which books to include in the Bible. One denomination eliminates one part, other denominations omit other parts, according to the respective private interpretation.

2. Having rejected Tradition, Protestants cannot be *certain* that the books they have accepted are genuine. On whose authority have they accepted what they have? Protestant Bibles, the most popular of which is called the "King James version," *omit all or parts* of the Books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Machabees (I and II), and parts of Esther and Daniel.

Luther *rejected the Epistle of St. James*, because the Apostle said that faith without works is dead. Luther and followers omitted the Apocalypse, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistle of St. Jude.

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## 10. The Church and Divine Revelation



Before printing was invented about 1450, books could be reproduced only by making manuscript copies on parchment or sheepskin. A complete Bible cost a fortune, because of the time and expense necessary for copying. Copyists made mistakes, or abbreviations which others misunderstood. The illustration shows manuscripts in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the languages oftenest used in early Bible copies. They give an idea of the difficulties before the invention of printing.

**Did Christ intend the Gospel to be proclaimed by the circulation of the Bible?** -- No; it was mainly by preaching that He intended to convert the nations.

Our Lord said: "Go, *make disciples* of all nations." "*Preach* the Gospel to every creature." "He that *heareth* you heareth me." Christ did not say: "Go and make all nations *read* the Bible."

1. The Apostles *never circulated* a single volume of the Bible, but "they went forth and *preached* everywhere, while the Lord worked with them" (Mark 16:20). The New Testament was not written till Christianity was already established.

Christ bade His Apostles teach all men "to observe all commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). He commanded them to preach, not necessarily to write.

2. God did not intend Holy Scripture to be our rule of faith independently of a Living Voice. Even under the *Old Law*, the Jews, in spite of their great veneration for Holy Scripture, never dreamed of a private appeal to the Word of God.

When a religious dispute arose, it was decided by the high-priest and the Council. Their decision was to be obeyed under penalty of death. Thus the Jews did not appeal to the dead letter of the law, but to the living voice of the tribunal that God had established.

3. When Christ came on earth, *He did not change* this order of things. On the contrary He commanded the Jews to obey their constituted teachers, however disedifying their *private lives* might be.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The Scribes and the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, that they command you, observe and do" (Matt. 23:2-3).

4. Until the Protestant outbreak in the *sixteenth century* (1517), no attempt had ever been made to have any people governed by the *dead letter* of the law in either civil or religious affairs.

No one certainly pretends to live in society according to his own private interpretation of the civil laws. When cases come up, they are always decided by a competent tribunal.

**Why cannot the Bible be the sole guide to salvation?** -- It cannot, because:

1. It is *not within the reach* of every one. If it were the only guide, it should be within the reach of every inquirer, for God wishes all men to be saved.

If the Bible were the only guide to eternal salvation the primitive Christians would have been at a disadvantage, for the books that make up the Bible were gathered together only after the Church was established. Even when the parts were put together, for centuries there were very few manuscript copies. Copies remained few till the invention of printing in the fifteenth century.

If the Bible were the only guide to salvation it would be of little help to those unable to read, as well as to the great mass of mankind today, who have neither the knowledge nor the capacity to penetrate the meaning of the written word.

2. The Bible is *difficult to understand*, frequently full of obscurities and difficulties, even for the learned.

St. Peter himself said of the Epistles of St. Paul, that they have "certain things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures also, to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). The Fathers of the Church, who spent their whole lives in the study of the Bible, all pronounce it full of difficulties, needing careful interpretation.

3. The Bible does not contain *all the truths* necessary for eternal salvation.

For example, every Christian is obliged to sanctify Sunday. But nowhere in the whole Bible, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, is there one word *authorizing* the sanctification of Sunday.

**On whose authority do we accept the Bible as the Word of God?** -- We accept the Bible as the Word of God on the authority of the Catholic Church.

1. By God's command, the Catholic Church proclaimed the truths of Divine Revelation, as contained in both *Holy Scripture* and *Tradition*.

Before His Ascension, Our Lord said to the Apostles: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you ... and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20).

2. It was the *Catholic Church* that in the fourth century declared *which books were inspired* by God and which were not. For fifteen hundred years the Catholic Church was the *sole guardian* of the Bible.

The Bible was not always as it is now, a compact book, bound neatly. For several centuries the Bible was in separated fragments, scattered over Christendom. At the same time other books under the name of Scripture were circulated among the faithful.

3. It is the Church that assures us that the *translation* from the original languages is faithful. The Bible needs an interpreter because it is frequently very difficult to understand. The *Catholic Church* alone was *empowered by God* to interpret the Bible. No one is allowed to interpret it contrary to the teaching of the Church.

The Protestant denominations who favor private interpretation have *divided and subdivided* for the same reason. No two of them interpret the Bible in the same manner. If we are really to interpret the Bible privately, we must know the original languages in which the books were written. How many can have that knowledge?

**Did God intend Holy Scripture to be our rule of faith?** -- No, God intended our rule of faith to be the *Living Voice* of the *teaching Church*.

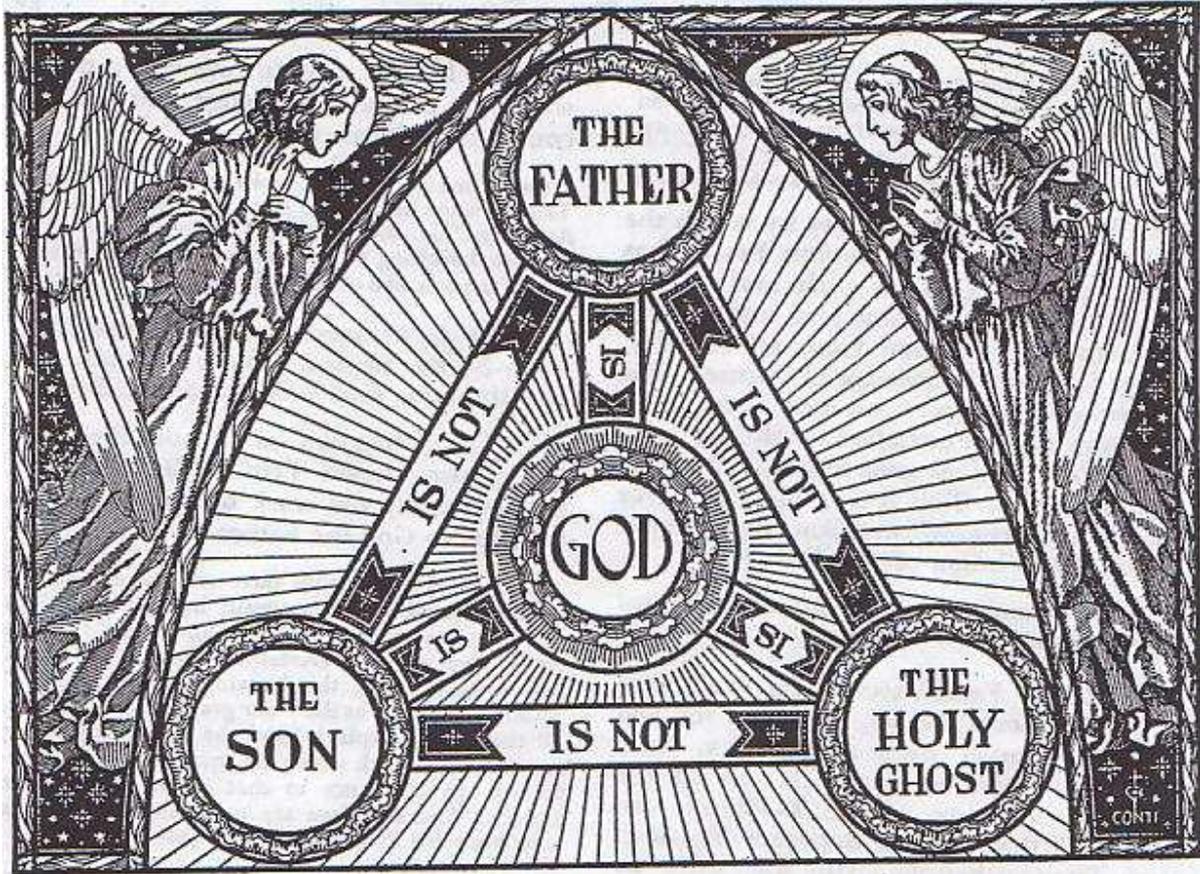
The Apostles and their successors have always taught mankind, especially by preaching. Thus the Church fulfills the command of Jesus Christ, and will fulfill it to the *end of the world*, as He promised. If Our Lord wanted the Bible to be our rule of faith, why did He not write a book, instead of founding a Church?

We can know the true meaning of the doctrines contained in Divine Revelation from the Catholic Church, which has been authorized by Jesus Christ to explain His doctrines, and which is preserved from error in its teachings by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost.

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8).

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## 11. One God in Three Persons



*A good concrete illustration of the Blessed trinity is an equilateral triangle. Such a triangle has three sides equal in every way, and yet distinct from each other. There are three sides, but only one triangle. As we see in this illustration, each Divine Person is different from the other two, but all three are God. Each one is God, distinct from the two others, and yet one with them. The three Persons are equal in every way, with one nature and one substance: three Divine Persons, but only one God.*

**Is there only one God?** -- Yes, there is only one God.

"I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God" (Is. 44:6). There can be only one God, because only one can be supreme, all-powerful, and independent of all.

How many Persons are there in God?-- In God there are three Divine Persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

1. In speaking of the "Persons" in God, we do not use the term in exactly the same way we use it when speaking of people. We use it only for lack of a word to show our meaning better.

In speaking of a man as a "person," we mean that he is an intelligent being, acting individually for himself. The acts he performs belong to him and he is responsible for them -- he himself, not his tongue, nor his mind, nor his whole body even, but the whole of himself.

We speak of three "Persons" in God because to each belongs something we cannot attribute to any other: His *distinct origin*.

From all eternity the Father begets the Son, and the Son proceeds from the Father. From all eternity the Father and Son breathe forth the Holy Ghost, and He proceeds from Them, as from one Source.

**Are the three Divine Persons really distinct from one another?** -- The three Divine Persons are really distinct from one another.

"So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity nothing is afore or after, nothing is greater or less; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as in aforesaid, the unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity is to be worshipped." (*From the Athanasian Creed.*)

1. This is the simplest way by which the *distinct origin* of each Divine Person has been explained: God is a spirit, and the first act of a Spirit is to know and understand. God, knowing Himself from all eternity, brings forth the knowledge of Himself, His own image. This was not a mere thought, as our knowledge of ourselves would be, but a Living Person, of the same substance and one with the Father. *This is God the Son*. Thus the Father "begets" the Son, the Divine Word, the Wisdom of the Father.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

2. God the Father, seeing His own Image in the Son, *loves* the Son; and God the Son loves the Father from all eternity. Each loves the other, because each sees in the other the Infinity of the Godhead, the beauty of Divinity, the Supreme Truth of God. The two Persons loving each other do not just have a thought, as human beings would have, but from Their mutual love is breathed forth, as it were, a Living Person, one with Them, and of Their own substance. *This is God The Holy Ghost*. Thus the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, "proceeds" from the Father and the Son.

"But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me" (John 15:26)

3. But we are *not to suppose* that once God the Father begot the Son and now no longer does so, nor that once the love of the Father and the Son for each other breathed forth the Holy Ghost, but now no longer does. These truths are eternal, everlasting.

God the Father eternally knows Himself, and continues to know Himself, and thus continues to bring forth the Son. God the Father and God the Son continue to love each other, and their delight in each other continues to bring forth the Spirit of Love, God the Holy Ghost. In a similar way, fire has light and color. As long as there is fire, it continues to produce light. As long as there is fire with light, there is produced color. But all three exist at one and the same time.

4. In this imperfect way we vaguely see that God must *necessarily* be three Divine Persons, because only in that way can God with His Divine Knowledge and Will be complete in Himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to us of the Blessed Trinity when before the Ascension He said to His Apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19)

**What do we mean by the Blessed Trinity?** -- By the Blessed Trinity we mean one and the same God in three divine Persons.

1. The Father is God and the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. Omnipotence, and especially the work of *creation*, is attributed to God the Father.

God the Father could have created millions of beings instead of you yourself; but He chose you out of a love wholly undeserved, saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). Let us then cry in thanksgiving, "*Abba*, Father!" (Rom. 8:15). Let us show our gratitude by avoiding all that could displease God the Father, by trying to please Him with virtue, by trying for greater perfection, in obedience to that injunction of Our Lord's: "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48)

2. The Son is God and the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. To God the Son we owe our *redemption* from sin and eternal death; by His death He gave us life.

For us God the Son debased Himself, taking the form of a servant, ... "becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). In Holy Communion we are united with Him, for He Himself said; "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him" (John 6:57). In return we should be "other Christs," and, as the Apostle urged, "walk even as He walked."

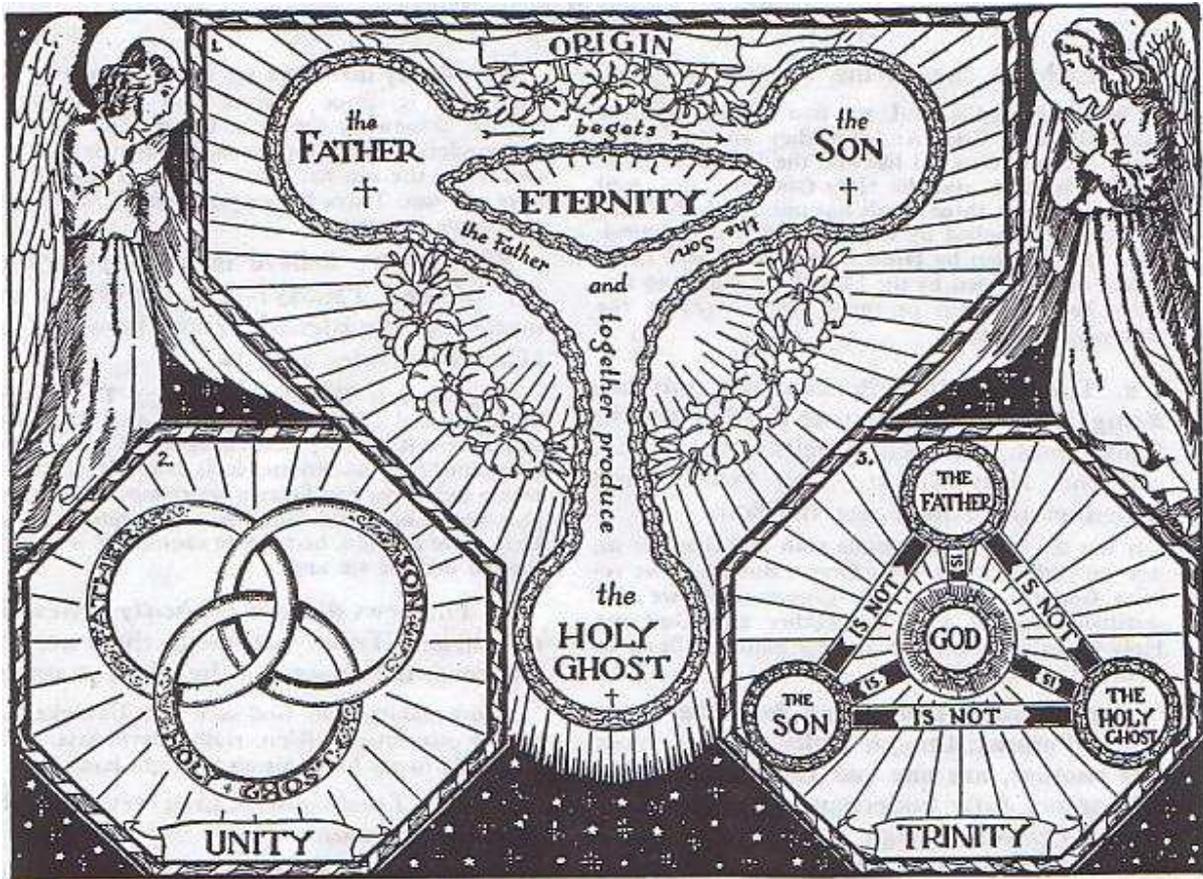
3. The Holy Ghost is God and the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He manifests Himself in us particularly in our *sanctification*. The word "Ghost" applied to the Third Person means "Spirit."

At our Baptism God the Holy Ghost purifies us from all sin and fills our souls with divine grace, so that we become truly children of God, sons and heirs, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. By Baptism we become living temples of the Holy Ghost: "Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

In return for such benefits we should make our body the instrument for the glory of God, keeping it from all stain of sin, adorning it with virtues. "Glorify God and bear him in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20). Let us keep our souls a sanctuary for the Holy Spirit, that God may be happy to dwell in us.

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## 12. Unity of the Blessed Trinity



*"And the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. ... But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of The Holy Ghost is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. ... The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. ... And in this Trinity nothing is afore or after, nothing is greater or less, but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal" (From the Athanasian Creed).*

**Are the three divine Persons perfectly equal to one another?** -- The three divine Persons are perfectly equal to one another, because all are one and the same God.

*"Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father Uncreated, the Son Uncreated, and the Holy Ghost Uncreated. The Father Infinite, the Son Infinite, and the Holy Ghost Infinite. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal, and yet they are not Three Eternals but One Eternal. As also there are not Three Uncreated, nor Three Infinite, but One Uncreated, and One Infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not Three Almighties, but One Almighty." (From the Athanasian Creed.)*

All three Persons are *equal in every way*, equal in power and glory. The attributes and external works of God are common to all three Persons. However, in *human speech* we attribute certain works to each Person.

Thus we attribute to the Father the works of creation, to the Son the work of redemption, and to the Holy Ghost the work of sanctification. In reality these works belong equally to all three.

**How are the three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, one and the same God?** -- The three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God because all have one and the same divine nature.

1. Each of the divine Persons is God.

"So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord. For, like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by Himself to Be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, there be three Gods or three Lords." (*From the Athanasian Creed.*)

2. There are three Persons, but only *one Being*. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost. The Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son.

It was the Son Who became man and died for us, not the Father or the Holy Ghost. But when we receive God the Son in Holy Communion, we also spiritually receive God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. The Blessed Trinity then dwells in us as in a Temple.

**Can we fully understand how the three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God?** -- We cannot fully understand how the three divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God, because this is a supernatural mystery.

1. A supernatural *mystery* is a truth which we cannot fully understand, but which we firmly believe because we have God's word for it. A supernatural mystery is above reason, but not contrary to it. No man can explain a mystery; neither can anyone know it unless it is revealed by God. "Great art thou, O Lord, in counsel, and incomprehensible in thought" (Jer. 32:19).

It is not unreasonable to believe in a supernatural mystery. There are many natural mysteries around us that no one has yet been able to explain, yet we believe them: electricity, magnetism, force, and many of the processes of life.

2. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is a *strict mystery*; that is, we cannot learn it from reason, nor understand it completely, even after it has been revealed to us.

The doctrine contains two truths our reason cannot fully understand: (1) that there is only one God; and (2) that each of the three Persons is God. We can understand each of these truths separately, but not when taken together.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is *not a contradiction*. We do not say that there are three gods in one God, nor that the three divine Persons are one Person.

We only say that there are three Persons in one God, that is, three Persons, and one nature or essence. Somewhat similarly, the soul of man has will, understanding, and memory, but it is only one soul. Also, the sun has form, light, and heat, but it is only one sun. Three flames put together make only one flame.

**Why do we believe in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity?** --We believe in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity because God Himself revealed it to us.

"Thy word is Truth" (John 17:17). The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is the greatest of all mysteries. We believe it because God has revealed it to us, but we cannot fully understand it. It would be foolish to refuse to believe just because we cannot understand; that would be like a blind man who refuses to believe there is a sun, because he cannot see it. Is God limited because we are?

1. The Jews did not *explicitly* believe in the Blessed Trinity, although there are references to the mystery in the Old Testament.

Before making man, God said: "Let Us make man to Our own image" (Gen. 1:26). David says: "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand."

2. *Our Lord* Jesus Christ revealed the mystery. He said:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). "But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me" (John 15:26).

3. The Blessed Trinity *manifested* Itself at the baptism of Jesus Christ.

God the Father spoke from the heavens; God the Son was baptized; God the Holy Ghost descended in visible form, in the form of a dove.

**When do we profess our faith in the Blessed Trinity?** -- We profess our faith in the Blessed Trinity especially when we make the sign of the cross.

1. We also honor the Blessed Trinity every time we say the *doxology* or "prayer of praise": "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end."

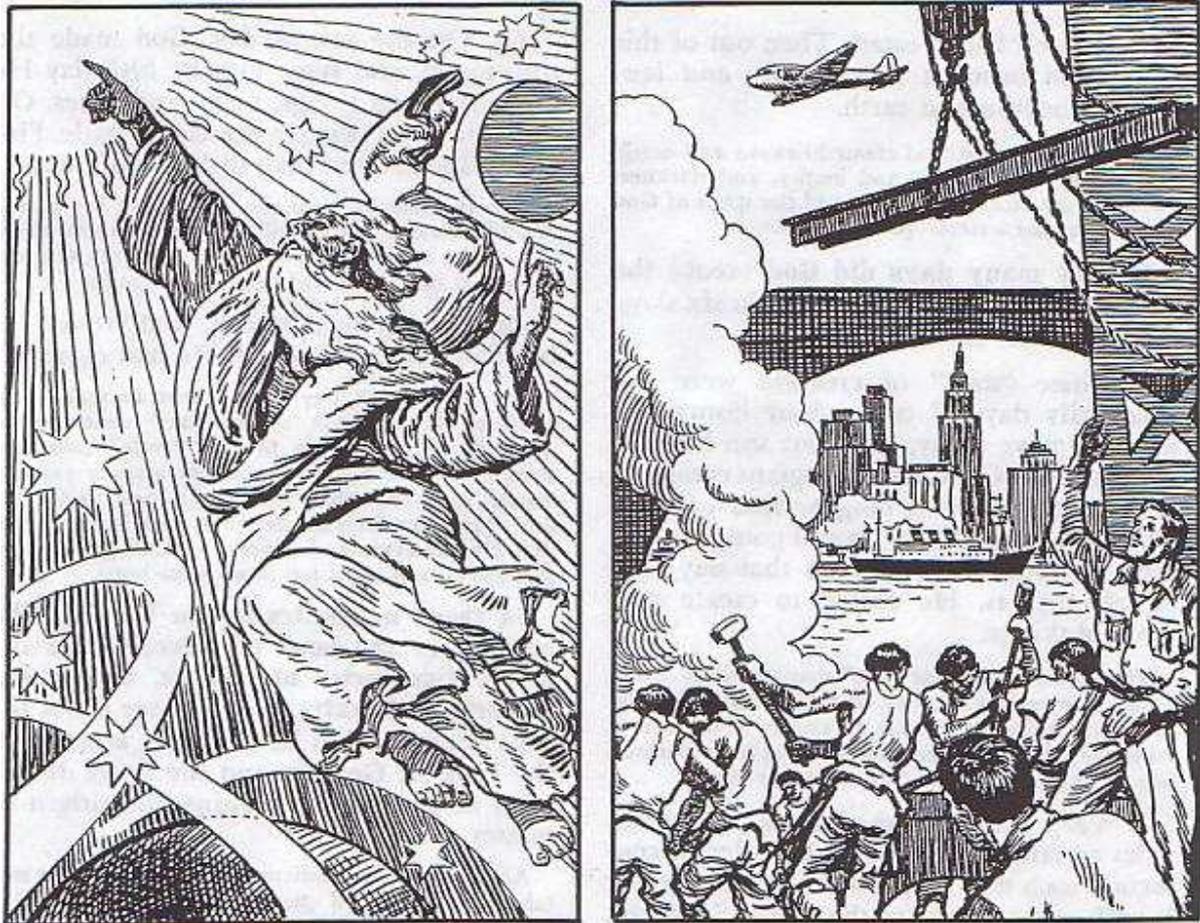
The Feast of the Blessed Trinity, called Trinity Sunday, is kept on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

2. All the *sacraments* are administered in the name of the Blessed Trinity.

On our death-bed the Church through the priest will comfort us with the words: "Even though he hath sinned, he hath not denied the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

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### 13. Creation



*God is almighty. He can make anything from nothing, by a mere act of His divine will. It was thus that He created the heavens and earth and everything that is in them. Man can make many wonderful things, but he must make them out of something. He must use the things God created. Before he can make a stone house, he must have stone, cement, brick, etc. But God needs nothing to make anything. Only God could create the very first thing or matter in the universe.*

**What do we mean when we say that God is the Creator of heaven and earth?** -- When we say that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, we mean that He made all things from nothing by His almighty power.

"All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing" (John 1:3) "For in him were created all things" (Col. 1:16).

1. In the beginning God alone lived. Then *out of nothing*, by His almighty power, He created heaven and earth, and all things in heaven and on earth. Only God can *create*; that is, He alone can make something out of nothing. Time began with this creation. Before it there was only eternity.

"Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed, from eternity Thou art God" (Ps. 89:2).

2. God created heaven and earth, and everything in heaven and earth. By this is meant *everything* which is not God. "Heaven" refers to the angels and their abode; and "earth" to all the material universe, including the earth, stars, planets, and all things and beings in them.

God created everything by an *act of his will*. "He spoke and they were made; he commanded and they were created" (Ps. 32:9).

3. In its first book, Genesis, Holy Scripture tells the story of Creation. In the beginning all was void and empty and dark; that is, there was nothing but chaos, which God Himself had created. Then out of this *chaos* God brought about *order and law*, creating heaven and earth.

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2).

**In how many days did God create the world?** -- God created the world in six days, resting on the seventh day.

1. These "days" of creation were not necessarily days of twenty-four hours like those we have today, since our sun had not yet appeared. Catholic theologians commonly interpret them as *long periods of time*. Thus the "seventh day" is still going on. For Holy Scripture says that on that day God rested; that is, He ceased to create new kinds of things.

The Hebrew word for "day" may stand for a day, a week, a month, a century, or any indefinite period of time. *Fundamentalism* is an enemy of Science; it takes the "days" of Creation as of 24-hour periods, like the periods we call "days" in our time.

2. Very probably the sacred writer divides creation into six days in order to *consecrate* each day of the week by connecting it with one or more of the Creator's works; and to impress on the Jews the divine command to *sanctify* the seventh day.

In the creation, God worked from the lower to the higher: He first made plants, and then He created the animals that would use them for food. Man was the crown of His earthly creations; all other works in the material universe, were for man's enjoyment and use.

- a. On the *first* day, God said: "Be light made," and light was made. Then He divided light from darkness, and called the light Day and the darkness Night. On the *second* day, God made the sky or firmament and divided the waters.

The "heaven" thus made is the material heaven in which the stars, the moon, and the sun pursue their courses.

- b. On the *third* day, God made dry land to appear, bade it bring forth plants.

In its account Holy Scripture concerns itself chiefly with our earth. Originally a fiery ball of gaseous matter, it gradually lost its heat, and land began to appear, apart from the sea. The moisture and warmth encouraged the development of organic life, the beginning of which had been implanted by God in the original primary matter.

- c. On the *fourth* day, God made the sun, moon, and stars. On the *fifth* day He made creeping things, birds, and fishes. On the *sixth* day, He made beasts and cattle. Finally, "God created man to His own image."

Man is different from the animals in his possession of reason and free will. Surpassing them all in dignity, he is the crown of God's creations, the one for whom the world had been made ready.

- d. On the *seventh* day, God "rested ... from all His work which He had done."

On the seventh day God ceased to make new kinds of things. This "seventh day" continues to the present; everything that is "made" now is a development or a combination of already existing matter. It is true that "nothing is new under the sun." However, God continues to work in this sense: that He preserves and governs created things, and that He creates souls for those to be born.

**Is there no contradiction between the account in the book of Genesis, and the latest discoveries of science, concerning the origin of matter?** -- No, there is not the least contradiction between the account in the book of Genesis, and the latest discoveries of science, concerning the origin of matter.

An apparent contradiction arises through the mistake of uninformed persons, who forget that the Church reads the Bible bearing in mind *the principal object of the sacred writers*.

1. In writing the account of the creation, the sacred writer, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, wished to impress upon the Jews (for whom he was writing) that there is but one God, and that He created the entire universe, living and lifeless.

At that time the Jews were surrounded by idolatrous peoples who believed in the existence of many gods, and worshipped all kinds of creatures, even the sun, moon, plants, animals, and images.

2. In pursuing his aim, the sacred writer used the *form that was most effective*, under the circumstances, to convey his meaning. It is a *popular* form: that is, it relates historical events in popular expression and order.

The words used, while in themselves not scientifically exact, are in conformity with *ordinary speech*, and understandable by ordinary people. In the same way today we say, "The sun rises

in the east", even when we know through the investigations of science that the sun does not "rise" at all. Events are set down in an order not necessarily scientific, but suited to the understanding of a primitive people, and therefore of all mankind. We must remember that the sacred writer was not aiming to teach physics or anthropology, but Faith.

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## 14. Revelation and Science

**Do Revelation and Science contradict each other?** -- No; Revelation and Science do not, and cannot, contradict each other, for both are of God.

1. There may at times be an *apparent conflict* between faith and science; but this is only apparent, and never real. God cannot contradict Himself. He cannot lead us into error.

True Science is the handmaid of Religion. Science and the scientific method are means of arriving at the truth, and Religion is Truth. The greatest scientists have been Christians; a majority of outstanding leaders in science were Catholics, and many were priests. Only the shallow dabblers in science absurdly pretend that there is a conflict. The apparent conflicts arise from *false interpretations*, as when one takes for scientific truth what is false or not proved, or accepts as a doctrine of faith something not taught by the Church.

2. There can never be a real conflict between Revelation and Science, because they deal with entirely *different spheres*. Revelation is concerned with Faith and spiritual things; physical Science is concerned only with material things.

The Bible's purpose is to teach salvation; but people make the mistake of considering it a treatise on Science. St. Thomas and St. Augustine taught that when the Bible describes some phenomenon of nature, it sets it down in terms of its *appearances*.

3. No scientific experiment or theory can *dispense* with the necessity of a Creator. Unless His existence is accepted, we can never explain: (a) the origin of matter, even the most elementary; (b) the origin of motion; (c) the origin of the very first living organism, and of the spiritual soul of man; and (d) the origin of the order and law so apparent in the universe.

**What are the only difficulties found by some scientists in the Biblical account of the creation?** -- The only difficulties found by some scientists in the Biblical account of the Creation are connected with the order or sequence of events followed in the Book of Genesis.

1. If we study the proper interpretation, even these difficulties will be found not to exist.

The account in the Book of Genesis is in *logical, not chronological*, order. The writer groups together similar works of creation, for the easier understanding of a primitive people.

2. The Church has not made any positive definition of the way in which the Biblical account of Creation is to be interpreted.

Catholics are *free to accept* the interpretation that they prefer, so long as they also accept the fact taught: that God created the whole universe and everything in it.

3. Neither Revelation nor Science gives a definite answer to the question concerning the age of the world. Geologists assert that *long periods of time* were necessary for the formation of the various strata of the earth's surface. Astronomers assert that some stars are *a million light-years* from the earth.

A Catholic is free to hold on this point whatever he believes is a sound and scientific conclusion. The estimates of scientists vary.

*As a practical demonstration that there is no contradiction between Divine Revelation and Science, we here list some of the thousands of scientists who through the ages have been practising members of the Catholic Church and at the same time outstanding in Science. These men not only found no conflict between science and religion, but became more firm in their faith as they delved deeper into science. As Marconi, one of the greatest scientists of our time, declared: "Science alone is unable to explain many things, and most of all, the greatest of mysteries -- the mystery of our existence. I believe, not only as a Catholic, but also as scientist." We do not include here the names of Catholics preeminent in navigation, architecture, art, music or literature, limiting ourselves to natural and physical science.*

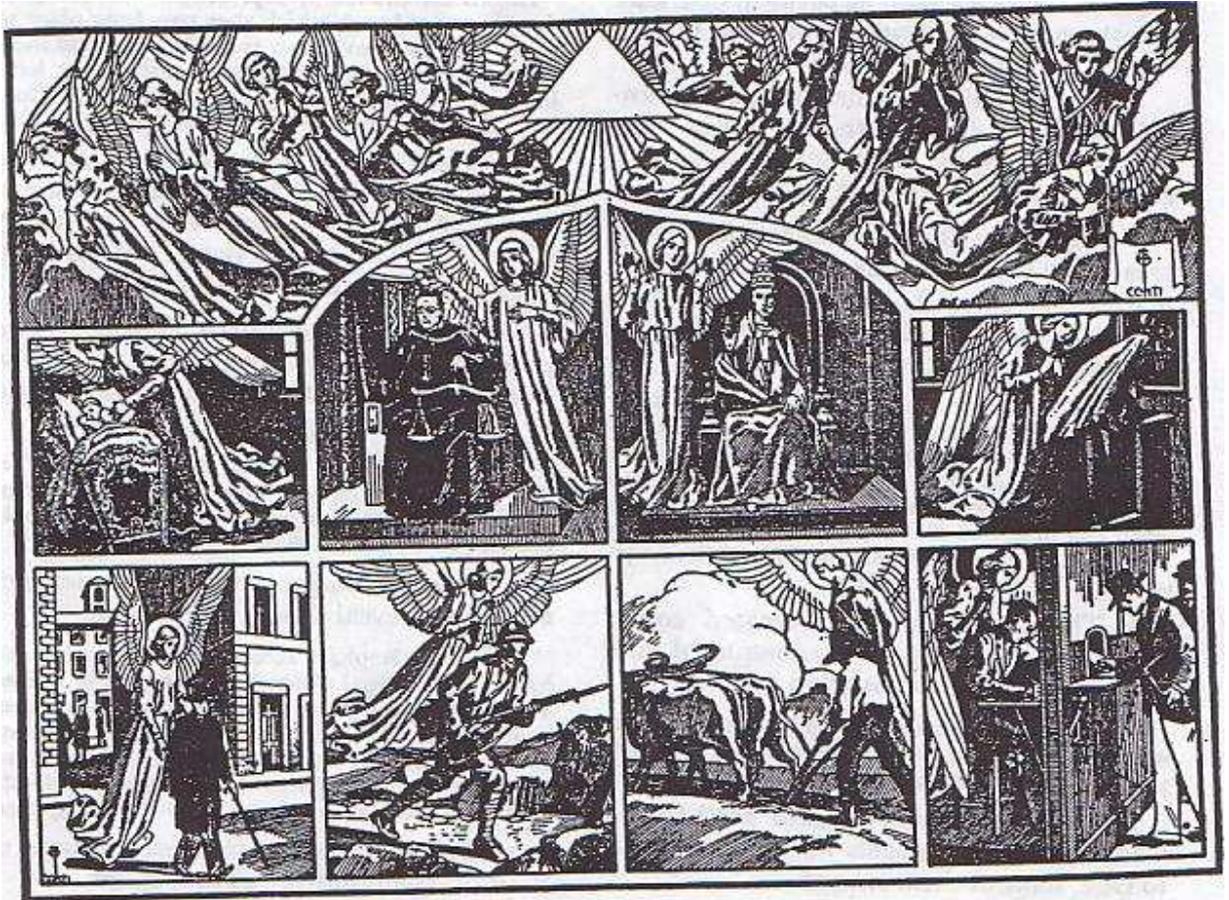
### Some Catholic Scientists

<b>Algue</b> , a priest, invented the barocyclonometer, to detect approach of cyclones.	<b>Ampere</b> was founder of the science of electro-dynamics, and investigator of the laws of electro-magnetism.
<b>Becquerel</b> , Antoine Cesar, was the founder of electro-chemistry.	<b>Becquerel</b> , Antoine Henri, was the discoverer of radio-activity.
<b>Binet</b> , mathematician and astronomer, set forth the principle, "Binet's Theorem."	<b>Braille</b> invented the Braille system for the blind.
<b>Buffon</b> wrote the first work on natural history.	<b>Carrell</b> , Nobel prize winner in medicine and physiology, is renowned for his work in surgical technique.
<b>Caesalpinus</b> , a Papal physician, was the first to construct a system of botany.	<b>Cassiodorus</b> , a priest, invented the watch.
<b>Columbo</b> discovered the pulmonary circulation of the blood.	<b>Copernicus</b> , a priest, expounded the Copernican system.

<b>Coulomb</b> established the fundamental laws of static electricity.	<b>De Chauliac</b> , a Papal physician, was the father of modern surgery and hospitals.
<b>De Vico</b> , a priest, discovered six comets.	<b>Descartes</b> founded analytical geometry.
<b>Dumas</b> invented a method of ascertaining vapor densities.	<b>Endlicher</b> , botanist and historian, established a new system of classifying plants.
<b>Eustachius</b> , for whom the Eustachian tube was named, was one of the founders of modern anatomy.	<b>Fabricius</b> discovered the valvular system of the veins.
<b>Fallopian</b> , for whom the Fallopian tube was named, was an eminent physiologist.	<b>Fizeau</b> was the first to determine experimentally the velocity of light.
<b>Foucault</b> invented the first practical electric arc lamp; he refuted the corpuscular theory of light; he invented the gyroscope.	<b>Fraunhofer</b> was initiator of spectrum analysis; he established laws of diffraction.
<b>Fresnel</b> contributed more to the science of optics than any other man.	<b>Galilei</b> , a great astronomer, is the father of experimental science.
<b>Galvani</b> , one of the pioneers of electricity, was also an anatomist and physiologist.	<b>Gioja</b> , father of scientific navigation, invented the mariner's compass.
<b>Gramme</b> invented the Gramme dynamo.	<b>Gutenberg</b> invented printing.
<b>Herzog</b> discovered a cure for infantile paralysis.	<b>Holland</b> invented the first practical submarine.
<b>Kircher</b> , a priest, made the first definite statement of the germ theory of disease.	<b>Laennec</b> invented the stethoscope.
<b>Lancist</b> , a Papal physician, was the father of clinical medicine.	<b>Latreille</b> was pioneer in entomology.
<b>Lavoisier</b> is called Father of Modern Chemistry.	<b>Leverrier</b> discovered the planet Neptune.
<b>Lully</b> is said to have been the first to employ chemical symbols.	<b>Malpighi</b> , a Papal physician, was a botanist, and the father of comparative physiology.
<b>Marconi's</b> place in radio is unsurpassed.	<b>Mariotte</b> discovered Mariotte's law of gases.

<b>Mendel</b> , a monk, first established the laws of heredity, which gave the final blow to the theory of natural selection.	<b>Morgagni</b> , founder of modern pathology; made important studies in aneurisms.
<b>Muller</b> was the greatest biologist of the 19th century, founder of modern physiology.	<b>Pascal</b> demonstrated practically that a column of air has weight.
<b>Pasteur</b> , called the "Father of Bacteriology," and inventor of bio-therapeutics, was the leading scientist of the 19th century.	<b>Picard</b> , a priest, was the first to measure accurately a degree of the meridian.
<b>Regiomontanus</b> , a Bishop and Papal astronomer; was the father of modern astronomy.	<b>Scheiner</b> , a priest, invented the pantograph, and made a telescope that permitted the first systematic investigation of sun spots.
<b>Secchi</b> invented the meteorograph.	<b>Stensen</b> , a Bishop, was the father of geology.
<b>Theodoric</b> , a Bishop, discovered anesthesia in the 13th century.	<b>Torricelli</b> invented the barometer.
<b>Vesalius</b> was the founder of modern anatomical science.	<b>Volta</b> invented the first; complete galvanic battery; the "volt" is named after him.
Other scientists: Agricola, Albertus Magnus, Bacon, Bartholomeus, Bayma, Beccaria, Behalm, Bernard, Biondo, Biot, Bolzano, Borrus, Boscovitch, Bosio, Bourgeois, Branly, Caldani, Cambou, Camel, Cardan, Carnoy, Cassini, Cauchy, Cavaliere, Caxton, Champollion, Chevreul, Clavius, De Rossi, Divisch, Dulong, Dwight, Eckhel, Epee, Fabre, Fabri, Faye, Ferrari, Gassendi, Gay-Lussac, Gordon, Grimaldi, Haüy, Heis, Helmont, Hengler, Heude, Hilgard, Jussieu, Kelly, Lamarck, Laplace, Linacre, Malus, Mersenne, Monge, Muller, Murphy, Murray, Nelston, Nieuwland, Nobili, Nollet, Ortelius, Ozaman, Pelouze, Piazzzi, Pitra, Plumier, Pouget, Provancher, Regnault, Riccioli, Sahagun, Santorini, Schwann, Schwarz, Secchi, Semmelweis, Spallanzani, Takamine, Tieffentaller, Toscanelli, Tulasne, Valentine, Vernier, Vieta, Da Vinci, Waldseemuller, Wincklemann, Windle, and a host of others, too many to mention.	

## 15. The Angels



*Whoever we are, wherever we are, each of us has always a guardian angel at our side. He sees everything we do: both good and evil. We should always be very careful not to offend or hurt him. We should often thank him for his love and care. We should ask him to intercede with God for us in our necessities. We should pray to him often, especially in temptation or danger.*

**Which are the chief creatures of God?** -- The chief creatures of God are angels and men.

1. God created angels and men for His own external *glory*. Their creation was a reflection of His wisdom and greatness.

By reason alone we cannot know that angels exist. However, reason indicates that in the orderly sequence of creatures from the lowest to the highest, there would be a greater gap between man and God, did not the angels exist.

2. God created angels and men for their good and happiness. They find their happiness in their *union* with God. God did not create angels or men for His own happiness; He is perfectly happy in Himself alone.

**What are Angels?** -- Angels are created spirits, without bodies, having understanding and free will.

Angels are spiritual beings superior to man and inferior to God; this is of faith. We do not know the number of angels, but we can infer from Holy Scripture that their number is very great.

1. Before the creation of man, God created hosts of angels. They are *pure spirits*, without bodies, in contrast to men, who have both body and spirit.

When angels or devils appear to men, they assume human form or some other visible shape. Thus the angels that appeared to the Blessed Virgin and to Zachary assumed human form. The devil that tempted Eve appeared as a serpent.

2. Even *demons* are pure spirits. They were angels before they became devils.

The word "angel" means messenger, and angels have often been sent by God to make known His will to men. Even the devils do service to God, since God always turns the attacks of the devil to show forth more brightly His own glory.

**What gifts did God bestow on the Angels when He created them?** -- When God created the angels He bestowed on them great wisdom, power, and holiness.

1. Angels are the *most excellent* beings created by God. They are nobler in nature than men. They know more, and have greater power. Of all God's creatures, angels resemble Him most.

We can imply the knowledge of the angels from the words of Our Lords: "But of that day (the day of Judgment) and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father only" (Matt. 24:36). The power of angels was shown in Egypt when one destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians; another angel destroyed the hosts of the Assyrian King, for blaspheming God.

2. The angels were not created equal. They rank according to the amount of gifts given, and the work assigned to them.

In the Bible nine choirs of angels are mentioned: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, virtues powers, principalities, archangels, and angels.

**Did all the angels remain faithful to God?** -- Not all the angels remained faithful to God; some of them sinned.

1. God gave *free will* to the angels, as He did to men. He put them to a test, in order to make them earn the happiness of heaven.

We do not know the exact nature of the test which God gave the angels.

2. In this trial, many angels, using their free will, *refused to submit* themselves to God; for this serious sin they were punished.

"For God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but dragged them down by infernal ropes" (2 Pet. 2:4). Wherever the devils were later permitted to go, they had in a way their hell with them, for they were forever deprived of the love of God.

**What happened to the angels who remained faithful to God?** --The angels who remained faithful to God entered into the eternal happiness of heaven, and these are called good angels.

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father" (Matt. 18:10).

1. The good angels behold the face of God continually, praise and glorify Him, and are *perfectly happy* in His presence.

Angels are commonly represented with wings to show the speed with which they pass from place to place. They are also shown as small children to show their innocence and perpetual youth. They have harps to indicate their perpetual praise of God, and lilies, to symbolize their perfect purity.

2. When we say that the angels were in *heaven* before their test, we do not mean that they *saw* God. They were very happy where God had placed them, but they did not see God until they had been proved.

**How do the good angel help us?** -- The good angels help us by praying for us, by acting as messengers from God to us, and by serving as our guardian angels.

Our Lord Himself said of little children: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

1. The good angels are God's *messengers*, and often reveal God's will to man.

The angel Raphael accompanied Tobias on his journey. The angel Gabriel was sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation. Angels appeared to the shepherds at the Nativity. An angel was sent to St. Joseph after the departure of the Magi, and after the death of Herod. Angels appeared to the women at Christ's sepulchre, and to Mary Magdalen.

2. Certain angels have *special charge* of nations, communities, churches, etc.

Our Lord Himself several times spoke of angels; especially the guardian angels.

**How do our guardian angels help us?** -- Our guardian angels help us by praying for us, by protecting us from harm, and by inspiring us to do good.

1. Our guardian angels are given *special care* of us, watching over each from birth to death.

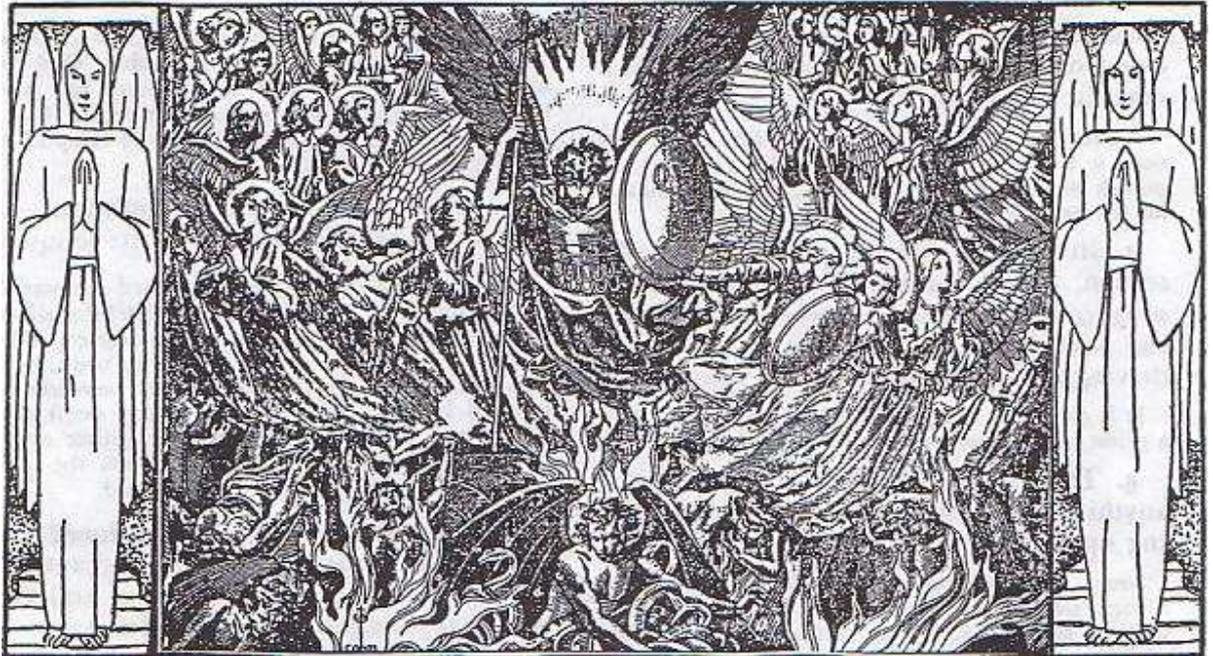
We should always love and pray to our Guardian Angel who never leaves our side. The Church celebrates the feast of the Guardian Angels on October 2.

2. Our *guardian angels* put good thoughts into our minds, moving our will to what is good. They protect us in dangers of soul and body. They offer our prayers and good works to God. They pray for us. They help us in our work and needs.

"He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 90:11). For instance, angels kept Daniel safe in the lions' den, and the three young men in the fiery furnace. We often hear of little children meeting with accidents and escaping unhurt. But the chief work of our guardian angels is to keep us safe from the devil.

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## 16. The Devils; Temptation



*It was the archangel Michael who led the good angels: "And there was a great battle in heaven; Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven" (Ap. 12:7,8).*

**What happened to the angels who did not remain faithful to God?** -- The angels who did not remain faithful to God were cast into hell, and these are called bad angels, or devils.

"Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

1. We also call them *demons* or *fallen angels*. Led by the most excellent of the angels created by God, Lucifer or Satan, the bad angels *refused to obey* God when He tested them. God did not give them a chance to repent, but cast them at once into hell.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer. ... Thou saidst in thy heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, ... I will be like the Most High,'" (Is. 14:12-14). Jesus said, "I was watching Satan fall as lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

2. God did not create devils, but glorious angels. The rebel angels *turned themselves into devils* by their sin.

By one grave sin against God these angels of light became vile demons, and were condemned to hell for all eternity. We should draw a lesson from this and determine never to sin.

**What is the chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us?** -- The chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us is by tempting us to sin.

1. The bad angels *tempt* man and try to draw him away from God. Often the devil appears as an angel of light, and we are tempted by evil which appears good. Under this guise the devil is most dangerous.

"Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8-9).

2. Without God's permission, the devil can do us no harm. God sometimes permits the devil to tempt just men, to *cleanse* them from imperfections.

Our Lord Himself was tempted by the devil. God permitted Job to be harmed bodily by the devil. Saint Anthony, Saint Teresa, and many other saints suffered from the temptations of the evil one. But these temptations only drive the just to greater love of God. "The life of man is a warfare" (Job. 7:1).

3. Sometimes devils are permitted to *enter* the body of a man, exercising power over his faculties; this is called diabolic "possession". At other times devils torment one from without; and this state is called diabolic "obsession".

When God permits diabolic obsession or possession, it is to show in some way His glory, or to punish sin, convert sinners, or provide some means for the practice of virtue.

4. In cases of diabolic possession or obsession, the aid of the Church should be sought; for the Church received from Christ the power of *exorcism*. This is the act of driving out or warding off evil spirits. It is only with the permission of his bishop that a priest is permitted to exorcise evil spirits.
5. The Church forbids Catholics to have anything to do with *spiritism*. This is calling up the spirits of the dead.

Some manifestations are spirit-rapping, table-lifting, slate-writing, apparitions, communications through mediums in a state of trance. Most of the spiritist seances are fraudulent, but sometimes the devil manifests himself. God can permit the souls of the dead to return to earth. But there is no indication that He permits Himself to obey mediums. The devil may sometimes impersonate the spirits of the dead. Satan is old and skillful in deceit, and can assume the appearance of an angel of light.

**Do all temptations come from the bad angels?** -- Some temptations come from the bad angels; but other temptations come from ourselves and from the persons and things about us.

1. This is what we mean when we say that temptations come to us from the *flesh*, the *world*, and the *devil*.

The evil inclinations of our weak and corrupted nature tempt us to sin. The world, with its sinful wants and vanities, tempts us to sin. The devil goes about continually tempting us, making use of both our nature and the world for his evil purposes.

2. In itself, temptation is *not a sin*. It becomes sinful *only* when: (a) we bring it upon ourselves by carelessness or overconfidence; (b) we play with, take pleasure in, or yield to it.

The greatest saints have often been most strongly tempted. Our Lord even permitted Himself to be tempted. Thus we see that temptation is not a sin, because we are not responsible for it.

3. God permits us to be tempted in order *to try us*, to let us win an eternal reward.

God subjected the angels to a test. Those who passed it are now enjoying Him in heaven, their reward. "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (Tob. 12:13).

God permitted the devil to tempt our first parents. Temptations serve to keep us humble. God permits all mankind to have temptations but never temptation beyond their strength to resist. "God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength" (1 Cor. 10:13).

4. The stronger the temptation, the greater the *graces* God gives for its conquest.

The conquest by the saints of wicked temptations have made them greater saints. Christ Himself was tempted by the devil, to gluttony, to avarice, and to pride. He wanted to show us that by resisting we may rise to greater love of God. Good men who are worried because so many temptations assail them should remember that ants quickly gather over a jar of honey; the devil strives to catch the good, because he is already sure of the wicked.

**Can we always resist temptations?** -- We can always resist temptations, because no temptation can force us into Sin, and God will always help us if we ask Him.

The *length of time* during which a temptation persists does not make it sinful, if we continue resisting it. A temptation may attack us all our lives, but as long as we fight it, or pay no attention to it, as long as we do not yield, we commit no sin. We have not been conquered, and God will reward us for the good fight.

1. No temptation can do us *harm* if we obey God's laws and keep away from sin. If we resist, temptation will flee from us.

Our lot for all eternity depends entirely on ourselves. God votes for heaven; the devil votes for hell. The *deciding vote* is ours. Shall we vote for heaven or for hell? "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

2. When assailed by temptation, one must at once *resist*. It is easier to conquer temptation at the beginning than later on, just as a fire is easier to put out at the outset.

Since nothing can be done without divine grace, one must pray. One must imitate the Apostles who had recourse to Jesus when a storm arose. Let him say at once, "Lord, make haste to help me!"

3. Some *remedies* against temptation are:
  - a. Watchfulness and prayer.

"Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41). Avoid idleness, keeping always occupied, either by work, or by wholesome recreation. If evil thoughts enter the mind, think of other things, in this way ignoring the temptation.

- b. Frequent confession and Holy Communion.
    - c. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Guardian Angels.
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## 17. An Image of God



*The Book of Genesis describes the creation of the first man and the first woman in these words: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs. ... And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman" (Gen. 2:7, 21, 22). Such was the creation of Adam and Eve, our first parents. God gave them power over all created things: the earth, the beasts, birds, fishes, plants, and all things else.*

**What is man?** -- Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God.

Before the creation of man, God said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

1. God formed the body of man from the slime of the earth; but He *breathed the soul* into man's body. In this way the soul came direct from God, and indicates closer likeness to Him.

We should always reverence our likeness to God, trying to perfect it by making our soul as holy as possible. Once the enemies of a king tried to make his son do something wrong. But the youth proudly and resolutely answered, "No! I am the son of the king!" By Baptism man becomes the adopted son of God, Who is infinitely higher than any earthly king. His soul is like his Father in Heaven.

2. The soul of man is different from the soul of brute animals. Animals have senses and *instinct*, but neither reason nor free will. *Free will* is that power of the soul to choose whether to act or not to act.

If a horse has not eaten for a day, and you put some hay before him, he will eat, because his instinct moves him to do so. But a hungry man may fast for days, and still refuse to eat however hungry he may be, if he wills not to eat. ***The difference between man's free will and animal instinct is that a man can say "No" to himself.***

3. The soul and the body are not loosely connected parts of man; they are *united* in a substantial union. The soul is not located in any particular member of the body, but is whole and entire in each part

**Is this likeness to God in the body or in the soul?** -- This likeness to God is chiefly in the soul. Man continues in this likeness to God only when he remains in God's grace, for then he is a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).

1. Like God, man's soul is *an immortal spirit*, with understanding and free will. Some deny the existence of the soul, because it cannot be seen; yet the same people would not deny the existence of human reason, even if this cannot be seen, either.

Some claim that man has two souls, one good and one evil, striving for mastery. But the struggle that we often experience comes from only one soul with different tendencies arising from the fact of our being made of both body and soul, partly material and partly spiritual. In a living person, the soul should not be considered apart from the body; their union is as close as the relation between a musician and his instrument at the hour of a concert.

2. Through his two faculties of the soul, understanding and free will, man obtains *dominion* over the material world, as God possesses power over the entire universe.

As God said before creating man: "Let him have dominion over the beasts and the whole earth" (Gen. 1:26). Through his likeness to God, man has the power to know the true, the good, the beautiful, so far even as to know the Source of all truth, goodness, and beauty, God Himself.

**How can we prove that the soul of man is immortal?** -- We can prove that the soul of man is immortal, because man's acts of intelligence are spiritual; therefore, his soul must be a spiritual being, not dependent on matter, and hence not subject to decay or death.

If even matter cannot totally disappear, however small the particle, how can the soul of man, of a far higher order, be thought to suffer extinction?

1. Man has *mind and will*. He can reflect, reason, plan for the future, make judgments, remember. These prove his soul spiritual. Such a soul cannot die as the body does.

Man longs for an ideal state of perfect happiness, such happiness as is impossible to attain on earth. This universal longing must have been placed in men's souls by God Himself; it is a desire for the infinite happiness of a union with the Creator. If, therefore, man's soul were not immortal, he would have no chance to realize his dream of bliss, and God would be cruel in implanting the longing for it in his breast.

2. There have been many instances of the dead *appearing* to the living. In the Gospel, Moses and Elias appeared on Mount Thabor to Christ and three of His Apostles. At Christ's death, many who were dead rose and appeared in Jerusalem.

The Blessed Virgin has through the centuries continued to appear to men; such instances are almost innumerable. Saints have also returned to earth to comfort or instruct the living; even souls in purgatory have returned, to beg for prayers. We must, however, be very careful about believing in particular instances of appearances by the dead; the devil can and often does use this instrumentality to trick the gullible.

3. *Belief* in the immortality of the soul and a life after death is universal among mankind, including the most primitive peoples.

In the Bible are many instances of the belief of the Jews in another life, where the souls of the dead would be. For instance, one of their laws forbade holding with the dead. The Greeks and Romans believed in Tartarus and Elysium, places for the dead. Other nations have different cults to the dead, especially during their burial ceremonies. Such cults would be meaningless did those who took part in them not have an idea of another life for departed souls.

4. If the soul were not immortal, the wicked who commit evil all their lives would go unpunished. The just who suffer continually on earth would not receive any reward. This would be *injustice* impossible to the perfect justice of God.

If even man, imperfect as he is, can see innumerable examples of injustice in life, could not God? Would He not have a way of correcting such injustice? And if so, since it cannot be corrected in this life, there must be another, where immortal souls go to obtain perfect justice.

5. Holy Scripture, the Word of God, teaches that the soul is immortal.

"And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always" (Dan. 12:2). Our Lord Himself said to the good thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). "And

do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28). "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32).

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## 18. Adam and Eve: Our First Parents



*Our first parents were perfectly happy in Paradise. If they had not sinned, they would never have died or suffered from sickness and sorrow. When the time came for their leaving the earth, they would have been taken body and soul to Heaven. The tree of life grew in Paradise. By eating of its fruit Adam and Eve were preserved from death, sickness, and all manner of weakness of the body. All these gifts were lost as a punishment of the sin our first parents committed.*

**Who were the first man and woman?** -- The first man and woman were Adam and Eve, the first parents of the whole human race.

1. God made Adam's body out of the slime of the earth, and breathed an immortal soul into it (Gen. 2:7). God then cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and taking one of his ribs formed it into Eve (Gen. 2:22).

Adam's body was formed from the earth. But his soul was immediately created *out of nothing* by the almighty power of God. The soul of every person is created in this way. We do not inherit our soul from our parents; it comes *directly* from the hand of God at the same moment that we receive life.

2. Adam and Eve were our *first parents*. All of mankind makes up one great family.

Sacred Scripture says that before the creation of Adam "there was not a man to till the earth" (Gen.2:5) ; and that Eve was the "mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20). Legends of all races tell of an *original happiness* from which man fell, and of a flood that covered the earth.

- a. All men have common bodily characteristics.

The beat of the pulse, the temperature of the body, the physical structure, and even such faculties as the sense of smell, of sight, of hearing,--all these vary little among different races. Differences are results of variations in climate, food, ways of living, and opportunity.

- b. Emotionally and intellectually all races are the same.

Researches have discovered a universal sameness in ideas of right and wrong; there is a universal moral code, even among the most primitive of tribes. For example, all men consider wrong the murder of those who are not enemies, cruelty to children, incest, and irreverence. If the moral code were the result of fear of reprisal, why was not stealing considered wrong when committed against an enemy? Science almost compels the conviction of the origin of mankind from only one pair of ancestors; Religion declares it.

**What was the chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God?** -- The chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God was sanctifying grace, which made them children of God and gave them the right to heaven.

1. God created Adam and Eve in the state of innocence and holiness. This made them pleasing to God, and full of love for Him. It made them children of God, and therefore heirs of heaven. This state of innocence we term "*sanctifying grace*".

"God filled them with wisdom and the knowledge of understanding.... He created in them the science of the spirit, he filled their heart with wisdom. ... And their eye saw the majesty of his glory, and their ears heard his glorious voice" (Ecclus. 17:6,11).

2. God's abiding grace made Adam and Eve so happy that their happiness almost equaled that of the angels.

"Thou hast made him a little less than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:6).

**What other gifts were bestowed on Adam and Eve by God?** -- The other gifts bestowed on Adam and Eve by God were happiness in the Garden of Paradise, great knowledge, control of the passions by reason, and freedom from suffering and death.

If our first parents had not sinned these gifts would have been transmitted to all men as the possession of human nature.

3. God put Adam and Eve in the "paradise of pleasure", a garden which contained all kinds of plants, flowers, birds, and beasts, - everything good that could be imagined.

All the birds and beasts were perfectly obedient to Adam and Eve. In the midst of the garden grew the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Near it was the tree of life, which protected Adam and Eve from disease.

4. God also gave Adam and Eve *infused knowledge*; that is, without experience or study they knew all that full-grown persons needed to fulfill the purpose of their creation, and as educators of men.

For example, Adam knew the indissolubility of marriage; his insight helped him give suitable names to the animals.

5. God blessed Adam and Eve with a freedom from subjection to their lower appetites, such as impurity, drunkenness, etc. They had no *inclination* to evil.

Their will was free from all weakness, weakened by no sensual desires. On account of the absence of rebellion of the flesh against the spirit, they felt no shame even though they were naked in Paradise.

6. Lastly, God gave Adam and Eve freedom from bodily disease and death.

Adam and Eve were created *immortal*, and were made free from all subjection to sickness, which is the prelude to death. Had Adam and Eve been faithful to God, they would never have died, nor suffered disease.

**What commandment did God give Adam and Eve?** -- God gave Adam and Eve the commandment not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree that grew in the garden of Paradise.

7. God wanted Adam as head and representative of the human race to *merit* heaven. And so, after granting him His abiding grace, and blessing him with wonderful gifts, and giving him the Garden of Paradise to live in, He commanded him not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree.

"Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Gen. 2:16,17). The fruit of the forbidden tree was not evil in itself, for in Paradise God did not place anything bad. It was bad only because it was forbidden; and if Adam and Eve partook of it they would have disobeyed God.

8. If Adam and Eve had been faithful to God, they would have passed without disease and without bodily death from their earthly Paradise to heaven, God's home, where they would see Him face to face.

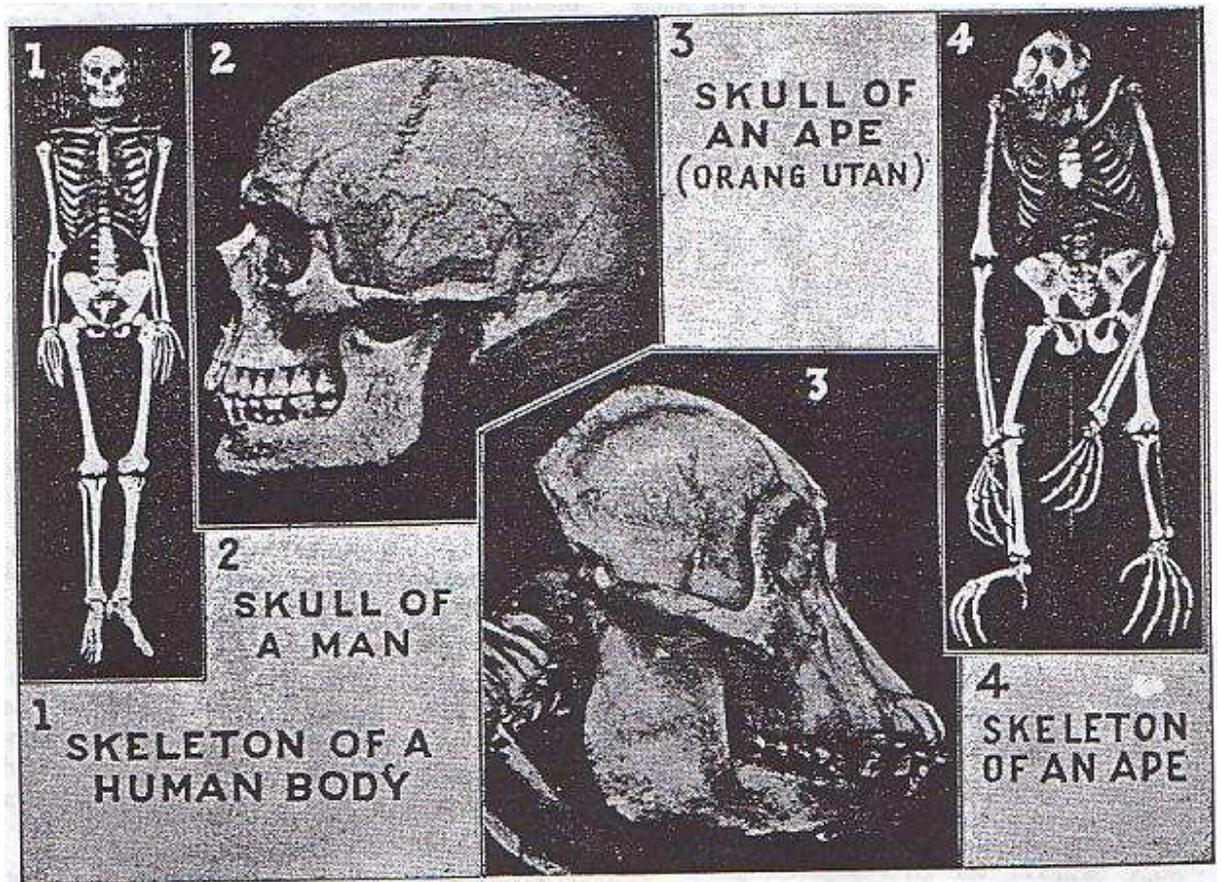
All the children of Adam, the entire human race, would have been born as Adam had been Created, in a state of friendship with God, and with all his gifts. If one had sinned, he would have been punished by God, but not being the head of the entire human race, he would not have passed on the stain to his descendants. Everybody would then have suffered for his own sins alone.

**Did Adam and Eve obey the commandment of God?** -- Adam and Eve did not obey the commandment of God, but ate of the forbidden fruit.

The devil tempted Eve to eat of the fruit. and she ate; then she gave some to Adam, and he also ate (Gen. 3:1-13).

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## 19. Evolution and the Bible



*Although there are some points of similarity between the skeletons of man and the ape, the differences are numerous and fundamental. As one scientist remarked, evolutionists might as well claim that man descended from any other form of life, because differences between man and the ape are as important as between man and other forms. The ape has neither chin nor forehead, its foot grasps like a hand. Its teeth are not arranged in close rows. If it were forced to stand erect, it would be looking upwards, not forward. The average weight of its brain compared to that of its body is as 1 to 70. For man the ratio is 1 to 35. The ape cannot speak articulately.*

**How did the body of the first man originate?** -- According to the Bible, the body of the first man was made by God from the slime of the earth.

"And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth" (Gen. 2:7).

1. The *natural and obvious meaning* of these words from the Book of Genesis is that the body of Adam was made directly by God from *created* substance. Such is the traditional Catholic interpretation.

The Church teaches that the Genesis account is substantially historically true. But Catholics are not forbidden certain liberty of interpretation. For example, the "day" of

creation is not necessarily - and not probably -- our 24-hour day. We may consider the work done by God in one "day" as an immediate act, or as the result of a long period of development through the functioning of natural forces.

2. Holy Scripture was not written for the purpose of serving as a *technical reference work* in science. The sacred writer's aim was to tell the story of creation, for the belief of the people, not for scientific investigation.

**What is the theory of evolution?** -- Evolution is a theory concerning the origin and development of plants, animals, and man.

1. The theory holds that life *began with the simplest forms*, then developed into more complex forms, until at last the most complex form, man, was "evolved".

Some evolutionists hold that the monkey or ape and man both *developed from a common ancestor*. Darwin's first man was a highly-developed ape. "Man when he was in honor did not understand; he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them" (Ps. 48:21).

2. Many speak as if the theory of evolution had been thoroughly and scientifically *proved*. This is not so; at present conjectures still largely underlie the theory. *Natural science* alone can never explain how the first human body was actually produced.

Unaided, it cannot explain the origin of inorganic matter, or the origin of life in the simplest organism. Divine Revelation alone can give the answer to the origin of man, and of all created things.

3. The evolutionists based their theories on the discovery of the so-called "missing link," from which the first man is supposed to have developed, a link between man and the ape. *There is no such "missing link"*. All skeletons discovered have been proved to be either of genuine men or of real apes. Of the distinguished modern scientists who deny that evolution is an established fact, we might mention: Fabre, the outstanding naturalist of modern times; Millikan, the great physicist; John Burroughs, the naturalist; Professors Richet (Paris), and Henderson (Harvard); Dr. Dwight, the anatomist; Alexis Carrel, and Sir Bertram Windle.
4. However, even if the theory of evolution *could* be scientifically proved, even if a "missing link" *should* be discovered, the theory would not be opposed to Catholic doctrine, which merely requires belief in the immediate creation of Adam's soul, in the image of God. Any "evolution" was surely begun by an Intelligent Cause: God.

We therefore take literally the Book of Genesis, which tells of the peculiar creation of man, of the formation of the first woman from the first man, of the original happiness of our First Parents in the state of justice, of their integrity and immortality, of the test to which God put them, of their transgression of the divine command at the instigation of the devil in some form, of the loss of the original innocence, and of the promise of the Redeemer.

**What is the origin of the human soul?** -- God directly creates every human soul out of nothing.

1. From the very beginning, God has created every human soul out of nothing.

Thus He created the soul of Adam, when after forming his body, He "breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Every human soul is created at the same moment that one comes to life, at conception.

2. Man's soul is *not produced from some other soul or matter*. It is spiritual and simple. It did not exist before the person lived. It did not come to exist after he was already alive. Man's life is due to his soul. As soon as the soul leaves the body, life ceases.

The investigations of scientists have discovered a singular universality and sameness in ideas of right and wrong, a moral code, in all races and peoples, however primitive. These are universally looked upon as wrong: the wanton murder of one not an enemy, stealing from one's own group, maltreatment of children, irreverence, incest, adultery. If this attitude resulted from fear of reprisal, why is not murder considered wrong when against an enemy? Why has incest always been regarded as wrong, when primitive men surely could have no idea of the evils of inbreeding? One must conclude that this universal *conscience* comes from One Source.

3. Man's soul is *not derived* from his parents. Only his body is derived from them. There is no possible "evolution" of the soul, for it is a spiritual substance, not subject to the laws of physical nature, and could not possibly be developed from a lower or material form of life.

Manifestations of the soul, like cleverness, talent, traits of character, etc., by which children resemble their parents, are due to the *attributes of the body* that they derived from their parents, or to training in the family. If one holds a colored glass to the light the reflection will have the color of the glass. But the glass did not make the sun whose reflection is cast. Is even the mind a product of evolution? The most primitive man is capable of abstract reasoning. The most intelligent beasts cannot think in *concepts*.

**How many centuries were there from Adam to Christ?** -- The Church has never given a decision; this question will perhaps never be answered.

1. It is generally admitted that *the Bible teaches nothing definite* on the matter. The line of patriarchs, which it gives, with their ages, probably contains many gaps.

A man is said to be a son of another, whereas he may only be a remote descendant. In the same way the Bible speaks of Our Lord as the Son of David, although David preceded Him 1000 years.

2. Some Catholic theologians state that the age of man may be stretched to *ten, or one hundred thousand years* or even longer. Neither scientists nor theologians have come to a definite solution.

## 20. Original Sin



God punished Adam and Eve for the sin they committed. "And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken" (Gen. 3:23). All the calamities in the world today, war, disease, poverty, etc., are consequences of Adam's sin. We inherited all the weaknesses that were part of his punishment.

**What happened to Adam and Eve on account of their sin?** --On account of their sin Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace, the right to heaven, and their special gifts; they became subject to death, to suffering, and to a strong inclination to evil, and were driven from the Garden of Paradise.

1. Adam and Eve immediately lost God's abiding grace and friendship, their holiness and innocence: they lost *sanctifying grace*.

This was the worst punishment. Having lost sanctifying grace, they lost the right to heaven, to see God.

2. They lost their *special gifts*: they became subject to suffering and death.

Their minds and wills were so weakened that they became inclined to evil, subjected to temptation. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:16-19).

3. God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Paradise.

"And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure" (Gen. 3:23,24).

4. Some wonder how the eating of one fruit could have been so grievous a crime. We must remember that God gave Adam and Eve every blessing. He only required them, as *proof* of their faithfulness, to abstain from eating the fruit of one tree.

Doubtless Paradise was filled with trees having more delicious fruit than the forbidden tree. Pride and disobedience and ingratitude caused them to sin. They defied God, and despised His threats. *They wanted to be as Powerful and great as God.*

**What has happened to us on account of the sin of Adam?** --On account of the sin of Adam, we, his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace and inherit his punishment, as we would have inherited his gifts had he been obedient to God.

"Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed into all men" (Rom. 5:12).

This sin in its is called *original sin*. It is the state in which every descendant of Adam comes into the world, totally deprived of grace, through inheriting the punishment, not of Adam's personal sin, but of his sin as head of the human race. This sin is called original because it comes down to us through our origin, from Adam.

Thus all men are *born in sin*, that is, they are born without the friendship of God, and with no right to heaven. Original sin does not come to us from Eve. but from Adam alone, since God made him representative and head of the whole human race. Eve was punished for her disobedience, as Adam was, but did not pass on her guilt to all mankind. Our original sin comes from our first father.

1. Because of original sin, heaven was closed to all men until the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord instituted the sacrament of Baptism in order to restore to us the right to heaven that Adam had lost.

A person after baptism is in the state of grace and free from sin. If he dies immediately after baptism, even if he had committed sins, he goes straight to heaven. His sins and their punishment are all forgiven him.

**What are the chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin?** --The chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin are: death, suffering, ignorance, and a strong inclination to sin.

1. By original sin we became subject to disease and death. This was part of the punishment God laid on Adam.

"In what day soever you shall eat of it, you shall die the death" (Gen. 2:17).

2. Our whole nature became inclined to evil. Our reason is in perpetual conflict with our passions.

Even after our souls are cleansed of original sin by baptism, the corruption of our nature and other punishments, such as sickness, evil inclinations, etc., remain. "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil" (Gen. 8:21). "The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17)

**Is God unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam?** --God is not unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam, because original sin does not take away from us anything to which we have a strict right as human beings, but only the free gifts which God in His goodness would have bestowed on us if Adam had not sinned.

1. All mankind must suffer for the sin of Adam because he was the *head* and representative of the whole human family.

In much the same way, the ruler of a country represents the whole people. He declares war or makes peace, and the people are affected by his acts. When Alfonso XIII of Spain was dethroned, his children lost their right to the throne through no fault of their own. So also the children of a rich man who goes bankrupt lose all the inheritance they hoped for, through no fault of theirs.

2. We should have shared in Adam's *blessings* of soul and body without any merit of our own, if he had not sinned. In the same way we share in his guilt.

If Adam had not sinned, we would have been born in the state of holiness and grace that had been his. Each man, however, would have been free to commit actual sin, and to be cast into hell. However, not being the head of the human race, he would not have transmitted his sin to all mankind.

**Was any human person ever preserved from original sin?** --The Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin in view of the merits of her Divine Son, and this privilege is called the Immaculate Conception.

"And when the angel had come to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women'" (Luke 1:28).

1. From the very first moment of her conception the *Blessed Virgin* was preserved from all stain of original sin. She was *conceived and born* without original sin.

God, having ordained that Mary was to be the Mother of His Son, could not permit her soul to lack for a single instant all those graces that would make her most pleasing to Him.

2. Our Blessed Mother's soul was created as *pure* and spotless as the soul of Eve. Where Eve committed sin and lost her spotlessness, our Mother Mary kept herself pure and spotless to the end of her life.

We commemorate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 8.

3. *St. John the Baptist* was cleansed from original sin while he was still in the womb of his mother. He was born free from sin, but he was, like us, conceived in sin.
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## 21. Actual Sin



*Christ permitted Himself to be tempted by the devil. After Our Lord's forty days' fast in the desert, the devil appeared to Him and tempted Him to gluttony, to pride, and to avarice. But Our Lord resisted the devil and sent him away. Then angels came to minister to Him. God wishes to show us that temptation, far from being a sin in itself, is a source of merit if we resist firmly. Then God will send us His blessings and consolations, and we shall be dearer to Him after our successful fight against temptation.*

**What is actual sin?** --Actual sin is any wilful thought, desire, word, action, or omission forbidden by the law of God.

1. There are two general classes of sins: original and actual. Original sin is the kind of sin that we *inherit* from Adam. Actual sin is the kind of sin that *we ourselves commit*. In general, when we speak of "sin" we mean actual sin.

Sin is an offense against God, a violation of His commandments. To sin is to despise God, to disobey Him, to offend Him. One who sins takes the gifts that God has given, and uses them to insult Him.

2. No person exists who does not sin, however holy he may be. The only human being who was created *without sin*, and never committed sin, was the *Blessed Virgin*; this was a special privilege bestowed on her because she was to be the Mother of our Saviour.

St. John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

**In what way do we fall into sin?** --We fall step by step from temptation into sin.

The different steps at times follow each other rapidly and are accomplished in the twinkling of an eye.

1. Sin is not committed without temptation. First an evil thought comes into the mind. This in itself is not sinful; it is only a temptation.

A man may be in a jewelry store looking at some jewels. The salesman turns away to talk to someone else, leaving a precious diamond ring on the counter. The thought enters the man's mind that it would be easy for him to take the ring and walk away unnoticed. This is temptation, not sin.

2. If we do not immediately reject the thought, it awakens in the mind an *affection or liking* for it.

If the man in the above example does not resist and reject the thought, but plays with it, and becomes pleased with the idea, he thereby gives partial consent, and commits a slight sin.

3. Next the thought is followed by an evil *desire* in which we take pleasure.

If, still playing with the thought, the man wishes that he could take the diamond ring without being noticed, the consent is complete, and he commits a sin in his heart (interiorly).

4. The *resolution* to commit the sin when occasion presents itself follows. Then the exterior *act* is committed.

Finally, the man glances to see if the salesman is still busy. Then he takes the ring and walks away with it. Thus the wish or desire has been translated into an exterior act. Even should the man be prevented from stealing, he is guilty of grave sin.

**Why is an exterior sin more evil than an interior sin?** --An exterior sin is more evil than an interior sin, because it is attended by worse consequences.

1. An exterior sin often causes scandal, and is more severely punished by God here on earth as well as after death.

Drunkenness reduces the drunkard and his family to poverty and sickness. Impurity destroys the body, sometimes producing insanity. Murder often leads the culprit to the electric chair.

2. And worse, an exterior sin increases the malice of the will, and destroys the sense of shame. The repetition of exterior sins forms the *habit* of sinning, and vice is formed. The

conscience goes to sleep, and the sinner becomes so hardened that he no longer sees the evil and wickedness of his sin.

Thus it becomes easier and easier for him to commit sins of a worse kind. His state becomes worse and worse until finally he becomes a *hardened sinner* who believes himself sinless.

**Are all evil acts sinful?** --Not all evil acts are sinful; there may be times when such acts are not sinful, as:

1. When we *do not know* that the act is sinful.

Noe became intoxicated, but committed no sin, because he was not aware of the strength of the wine. So one might by mistake take poison instead of medicine and die, but he would not be guilty of suicide. Such an act is termed a *material sin*.

2. When the act is done through *no fault* of our own.

If one is not aware that a certain day is a day of abstinence, and eats meat, he commits no sin. Again, one might by pure accident and through no negligence on his part drop a loaded revolver. Even if it explodes and kills a person, he is not guilty of murder.

3. When we do not consent to the evil.

A stronger man may take our hand, and in spite of our refusal and protest force it to drop a lighted match into a gasoline tank. Even if there is an explosion and a whole town is set on fire, we are not guilty of arson. In the same way, as long as one does not consent to an evil thought, it remains a temptation, and he commits no sin.

**When are we guilty of sins which we ourselves do not commit?** --We are guilty of sins which we ourselves do not commit when we cooperate with another person's sins.

1. We share in another's sin: (a) by counsel; (b) by command; (c) by consent; (d) by provocation; (e) by praise or flattery; (f) by silence; (g) by assistance; (h) by defense or concealment; and (i) by not punishing the evil done.

Thus rulers, legislative leaders, parents, employers, teachers, superiors, owners of shows and theatres, editors, publishers, and others in a position of responsibility, may easily render themselves guilty of the sins of others. One who is to blame for another's sin is as guilty as if he had committed the sin himself.

2. One who tempts or provokes another into sin is perhaps *the more guilty* of the two.

Our Lord says: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

**How many kinds of actual sin are there?** --There are two kinds of actual sin: mortal sin and venial sin.

1. Another classification is: (a) sins of thought; (b) sins of desire; (c) sins of word; (d) sins of deed; (e) sins of omission.

If we take pleasure in thinking proudly of ourselves, we sin by *thought*. If we cannot rest content because we envy somebody's clothes and wish we had them, we sin by desire. If we get angry and say angry words to someone, we sin by word. If we are so angry that we begin striking the person, we sin by deed. If we do not do what is our duty, such as going to Mass on Sunday, we sin by omission.

2. Sins are also classified into (a) our own sins; and (b) sins in which we cooperate and for which we are responsible.

We must not be presumptuous and over-confident. We must remember that when we do not sin, it is only through the grace of God. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). A *humble distrust* of ourselves is a preservative against sin.

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## 22. Mortal Sin



*Mortal sin is the greatest evil in the world. It separates us from God. Because of our mortal sins, Jesus Christ suffered agonies and died on the cross. To strengthen our resolution not to commit sin, we should remember also that even a single mortal sin is enough to send us to hell.*

**What is mortal sin?** --Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God.

1. Any wilful thought, word, action or omission, in serious *violation* of God's law, is a mortal sin. Examples of mortal sin are blasphemy, wilful murder, adultery, arson, robbery, etc. Mortal sin occurs as soon as God is no longer our final end in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Each mortal sin we commit is a three-fold insult to Almighty God: it insults Him by rebellion or disobedience, by ingratitude, and by contempt.

2. Circumstances of person, cause, time, place, means, object, and evil consequences *enhance* or *decrease* the guilt of the sin.

Thus mortal sins, although all mortal, differ in the weight of their guilt.

**Why is this sin called mortal?** --This sin is called mortal, or deadly, because it deprives the sinner of sanctifying grace, the supernatural life of the soul.

1. Without sanctifying grace, the soul is displeasing to God, *unclean*, and can never behold Him or be with Him in heaven.

Without sanctifying grace, the soul is without God; and without God, the devil makes the soul his habitation. "Know thou and see that it is an evil and bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God" (Jer. 2:19).

2. The sinner loses charity towards God and his fellow-men, and by the *weakening* of his will and the darkening of his intellect, is liable to fall into other mortal sins.

The devil cries to his subordinates, "God hath forsaken him; pursue him and take him, for there is none to deliver him" (Ps. 70:11).

3. Without sanctifying grace, the soul is truly "*dead*"; and if an adult dies in that state, he will suffer the torments of the damned.

The word "mortal" comes from the Latin *mors*, which means *death*. St. John Chrysostom said, "Sinners are dead while they live, and the just live after they are dead."

**Besides depriving the sinner of sanctifying grace, what else does mortal sin do to the soul? -**

-Besides depriving the sinner of sanctifying grace, mortal sin makes the soul an enemy of God, takes away the merit of all its good actions, deprives it of the right to everlasting happiness in heaven, and makes it deserving of everlasting punishment in hell.

1. Man was made *for God*, and what an awful calamity it would be to become His enemy! It would be as if the food which was made to support and sustain man should all of a sudden turn to poison him instead.

Through mortal sin, the sinner becomes a stranger to divine love, and to the love of neighbor; his heart turns cold because he has put out the flame of charity by grave sin. His reason, a gift of God, is obscured, and he fails to perceive the things of God. Thus a sinner the more he sins, becomes more insensitive to evil; his will is finally so weakened that all conscience is lost, and he falls into greater and greater sins more and more easily.

"Adulterers, do you not know that the friendship of this world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of this world becomes an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).

2. During all the time that the sinner remains in mortal sin, all his good works do not help him to heaven: he earns *no merits* until he gives up his state of mortal sin.

As the Apostle says, "If I give my body to be burned and have not charity, I am nothing." One who falls into mortal sin may be compared to a merchant coming into his home port, laden with all kinds of treasures collected from abroad, upon which he has spent years of labor and incalculable wealth. Just as he enters the harbor his ship is torpedoed, and he saves nothing for all his trouble. In a similar manner, one who dies in mortal sin gains nothing, however numerous the good works he may in life have performed.

3. However numerous the merits previously earned by the sinner, however many his good works, if he dies with only one mortal sin on his soul he goes to *hell* forever.

Is this not something to be feared? It is because mortal sin presupposes a *hatred of God*. Let us be reasonable men, and consider the utter folly of selling our birthright, God and heaven, for the mess of pottage that is sin and its effects. "Then he will say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire'" (Matt. 25:41).

**What three things are necessary to make a sin mortal?** --To make a sin mortal, these three things are necessary:

*First*, the thought, desire, word, action, or omission must be *seriously* wrong or considered seriously wrong. - The matter must be *grave*, something very important.

A slight act of vanity or impatience is not serious matter, but murder is. Things seriously evil are known to be such from Sacred Scripture, Tradition, the teachings of the Church, or from their nature.

*Second*, the sinner must be *mindful* of the serious wrong. - He must have full knowledge and reflection or attention, and know that what he does is grievous.

The person must know the malice and evil of what he is doing. A man who steals a precious diamond ring in the belief that it is glass has not full knowledge. A man who throws a lighted match thoughtlessly aside may throw it into a gasoline tank and cause an explosion, but he has not full attention. "For I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a bitter adversary; but I obtained the mercy of God because I acted ignorantly, in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13).

*Third*, the sinner must fully *consent* to it. -He must do it of his own free will, saying deliberately, "I will do this."

When one realizing what he is doing, still freely does it, he gives the matter deliberate consent. Therefore infants and idiots cannot commit mortal sin; they cannot fully realize what they do.

**Is mortal sin a great evil?** --Mortal sin is a great evil, the greatest evil in the world, a greater evil than disease, poverty, or war, because it separates us from God.

"But they that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul" (Job. 12:10).

1. It is a *rebellion* against and contempt of God, the blackest ingratitude towards Him.

Our heavenly Father gave us everything we have, and in return we offend Him. We desecrate His temple. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). By mortal sin a vile and insignificant creature offends and insults the infinite Creator.

2. It is *crucifying* Christ again, "since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and make him a mockery" (Heb. 6:6).

We can never fully realize the malice of mortal sin. We can get a small idea of it by remembering that God sent His own beloved Son to suffer untold agonies, to save us from its consequences.

3. Mortal sin must be a most terrible thing indeed to make a just and merciful God create hell for the everlasting punishment of the rebellious angels and of sinners who die with even *only one* mortal sin.

Even considering only its temporal penalties mortal sin is great folly. Upon it follows moral disquiet; the sinner loses the serenity and cheerfulness of the just soul. "The wicked are like the raging sea, that cannot rest" (Is. 57:20). Sickness and want are often consequences of sin, as well as loss of a good reputation.

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## 23. Venial Sin



*We are prone to look upon venial sin as of no consequence, and to be careless about guarding against it, forgetting that it is second only in evil consequences to mortal sin. In Holy Scripture we see from many examples how God regards venial sin; even in this life He has punished it most severely. For only a slight doubt about God's mercy, because of the wickedness of his people, Moses was punished: he was not permitted to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.*

**What is venial sin?** --Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God, which does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and which can be pardoned even without sacramental confession.

1. A sin can be venial in two ways:
  - a. When the evil done is not seriously wrong. If we sin against God in matters of *slight* importance, we commit venial sin.

Grumbling when told by Your mother to open the window is not gravely wrong; it is a venial sin.

- b. When the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong, or does it on the spur of the moment, without sufficient reflection, or *without full consent* of the will.

Stealing an expensive diamond ring is seriously wrong, but if the sinner took it in the belief that it was only a cheap imitation, the sin had not full consent, and is venial. If one eats meat on a day of abstinence, thinking it only a slight sin to do so; or if one in a sudden outburst of anger insults a companion seriously, he commits a venial sin for lack of sufficient reflection and consent.

2. Examples of venial sin are impatience, slight faultfinding, lies that harm nobody.

The word "venial" comes from the Latin *venialis*, meaning *easily pardonable*. Even the most just of mortals falls into venial sin again and again. God permits this to keep us humble. The most imperfect of mortals attains a very high degree of perfection as soon as he can avoid all *deliberate* venial sin: as soon as he does not commit any sin deliberately, with full advertence and consent.

3. If a person is in the state of grace, venial sins are *forgiven* in many ways without necessity of confession.

Provided one has sorrow and a sincere resolution not to commit the sins again, they are forgiven not only by Confession, but also by Holy Communion, by acts of contrition, prayer, good works, etc.

4. A distinction exists between venial sins and *imperfections*. Imperfections are faults that arise from ignorance or weakness, not from a bad will.

For instance involuntary distractions in prayer, "white lies" told while telling a story or in exaggerations or jokes, bad manners that hurt no one much, are imperfections. We should, however, try to avoid all imperfections, for they are not praiseworthy, are often a cause of irritation to others, and make us accustomed to doing what is not correct.

**How does venial sin harm us?** --Venial sin harms us by making us less fervent in the service of God, by weakening our power to resist mortal sin, and by making us deserving of God's punishments in this life or in purgatory.

1. Although venial sin is not a grievous offense against God, it is nevertheless a *great moral evil*, next alone to mortal sin.

It is like a drop of ink in a glassful of clear water; the ink, however little, takes away the clearness.

2. If often committed, venial sin *weakens* the will, lessens our power to resist evil, and makes it easier for us to fall into mortal sin.

"He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (Ecclus. 19:1). "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in a very little thing is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). A great fire is started by a tiny breeze. Venial sin, by weakening the will, makes us indisposed for good, and lukewarm in God's service.

3. Venial sin deprives us of many *actual graces* we need for resisting temptation.

When a mirror is dusty, it cannot reflect the image clearly; similarly the mirror of the soul, when dusty with venial sin, cannot reflect the light of grace and justice. God will not bestow his blessings and graces on one whose soul is disfigured by venial sin, as a distinguished personage is not expected to embrace a man who is disfigured by a skin disease.

4. Venial sin deprives us of heaven *for a time*.

If we die with venial sins on our souls, or without fully satisfying for them, we have to expiate for them in purgatory.

5. A great desire not to offend God in the least is the best *proof of love* and loyalty towards our heavenly Father.

Holy Scripture shows many instances of God's hatred for venial sin, which He punishes severely even on earth. For her curiosity, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt. "But I tell you, that of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36).

**How can we keep from committing sin?** --We can keep from committing sin by praying and by receiving the sacraments; by remembering that God is always with us; by recalling that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost; by keeping occupied with work or play; by promptly resisting the sources of sin within us; by avoiding the near occasions of sin.

1. *Prayer* and the *sacraments* protect us from sin. They are like a strong fortress against which the enemy strikes in vain, and within which the soul remains safe in the grace of God.

When the Apostles were in danger on the lake of Genessareth, they had recourse to prayer. We are ever in danger from sin while we live; let us build up around us a rampart of prayer. God will protect us, as He protected the Apostles; He will answer our prayer. The soul nourished by the sacraments is strong, and will not easily succumb to sin; as a healthy body does not easily succumb to disease.

2. Even good people fall into sins, frequently because they forget *God's presence*. Let us remember that the eye of God is always upon us, every single moment. Then, if we love Him, we would never sin, never insult His presence by sin.

If we had a distinguished personage before us, would we commit indecent acts? Would we steal, or use bad language? But is not God the most distinguished of all persons, and is He not always looking on us?

3. When we are in the state of grace, our body is the *temple* of the Holy Ghost.

God dwells in it as Jesus Christ lives in the tabernacle. If we remember this always, we shall be greatly helped in avoiding sin.

4. The most practical way of avoiding sin is to *keep occupied* with work or play. Man must do something; if he does not do something good, he will do something evil.

A busy instrument cannot be used in doing mischief. Robbers will hesitate to enter a house where the occupants are busy. If we are occupied in doing good, we have no time to sit idly and wag our tongues in gossip.

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## 24. Occasions and Sources of Sin



*Vice is easily formed, but requires great struggle to overcome it. The longer a man indulges in vice, the harder is the struggle. He becomes its slave. He is completely carried away by his passions. Only the great grace of God, coupled with a resolute will, can eradicate vice, once it is strongly rooted in a man's nature. This is one reason why we must be most careful to avoid sin, in order not to become victims of vice. If we are so unfortunate as to fall into sin, we must at once repent and resolve to avoid it in the future.*

**What are the near occasions of sin?** --The near occasions of sin are all persons, places, or things that may easily lead us into sin.

Most common occasions are:

1. ***Bad companions.*** One who provokes or leads us into sin is not our friend. We must stop going with that companion.

One rotten apple in a basket of good apples quickly rots the rest. The same is true of human beings. Sin is a contagious disease. If we do not wish to be infected, we must go far away from it.

2. **Dance halls.** Not every dance is sinful. But many dances are occasions of sin; and public dances without the presence of respectable adults are extremely dangerous. A safe rule to follow is never to go to any place where you would be ashamed to take your virtuous mother or sister.

In many dances, the women tend to dress with extravagance and immodesty, just to "follow the fashion". Sometimes, too, dances are an occasion for the taking of liberties, due to late hours, and the spirit of unrestrained pleasure.

3. **Bars and liquor saloons.** These are very proximate occasions of sin, leading to intemperance, and worse evils.

Those who frequent saloons are likely to be not only habitual drunkards, but constant gamblers, who neglect their homes and duties, become involved in disputes, and finally end badly even in the temporal sense.

4. **Obscene literature.** Bad newspapers and magazines are no less dangerous because their wickedness is often not apparent, many hiding their evil under the guise of cleverness, science, art, etc.

Bad periodicals gradually undermine faith and make one *insensitive to evil*. It is the duty of every Catholic to subscribe to a Catholic periodical, and never to favor a wicked press.

5. **Bad books.** Many novels are harmless; some are very helpful, but many are positively wicked. We must be very careful in the selection of the books we read. There are national book clubs under Catholic auspices. Among them may be mentioned the *Catholic Book Club*, and the *Pro Parvulis Book Club*, headquarters of both of which are in New York City.

These book clubs send members lists of books of merit according to literary standards, and not offensive to Catholic morals. They publish reviews of current fiction most useful for the general reader. We must remember that poisonous food will only kill the body, but poisonous reading kills the soul.

6. **Indecent pictures and shows.** Today many moving pictures and theatrical shows are not decent. We must be careful to choose only the good, those approved by the *National Legion of Decency*. This Legion, working under the hierarchy, each week issues a list giving the moral evaluation of current films; it reviews and classifies. It asks every Catholic to take a pledge not to patronize lewd pictures.

This pledge is nothing extraordinary for any decent person, Catholic or non-Catholic; it merely puts down clearly something that any upright person is obliged in conscience to do.

The Legion of Decency was formed in order to unite the laity with the hierarchy in a persistent drive to prevent the showing of lewd pictures. If every decent person kept away

from such obscene shows, the producers would surely make better pictures. Supply is according to the demand; we get what we ask for.

**How should we act towards occasions of sin?** --We should never seek, and always try to avoid, occasions of sin.

1. It is wrong voluntarily to *seek* the occasions of sin.

*"He that loveth the danger shall perish in it"* (Ecclus. 3:27). However, those who by their calling or other necessity are continually exposed to such dangerous occasions, as priests, officials, doctors, and others, must put their trust in God, Who will give them grace and protect them.

2. We must *avoid* occasions of sin as soon as we perceive them.

If one goes to the theatre and sees that the play is an indecent play, he must stand up and leave at once. Otherwise he commits a sin. He will fall into further sin, and commit besides the sin of not avoiding the occasion.

**What are the chief sources of actual sin?** --The chief sources of actual sin are: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth, and these are commonly called capital sins.

They are called *capital*, from the Latin *caput* (which means *head*), because they are the heads or sources of all sins. Thus they originate sins of luxury, gossip, excessive ambition, etc.

1. They are called capital sins, not because they are the greatest sins in themselves, but because they are the chief *reasons* why men commit sin. They are the *origin* of every sin, all other sins arising from them as from their fountainhead.

These sins are termed *deadly*, because they are either mortal of their own nature, or may easily become mortal. They may be mortal or venial according as the matter is serious or less serious.

2. These sins are called *vices*, because they produce permanent disorders in the soul. They are the seven *fatal diseases* of the soul, which end in death.

He who will be a friend of God must divest himself of these vices. Before we can plant the beautiful garden of virtues, we must root up the thorns and weeds growing out of these deadly sins.

**Does God punish sin?** --Yes, God punishes sin, partly in this life, but chiefly after death.

1. In this life sinners suffer from remorse of conscience, fear, and unhappiness. Their sin often brings upon them disease or death, the hatred and scorn of their fellow-men, and other temporal punishments. Even on earth, "*the wages of sin is death*".

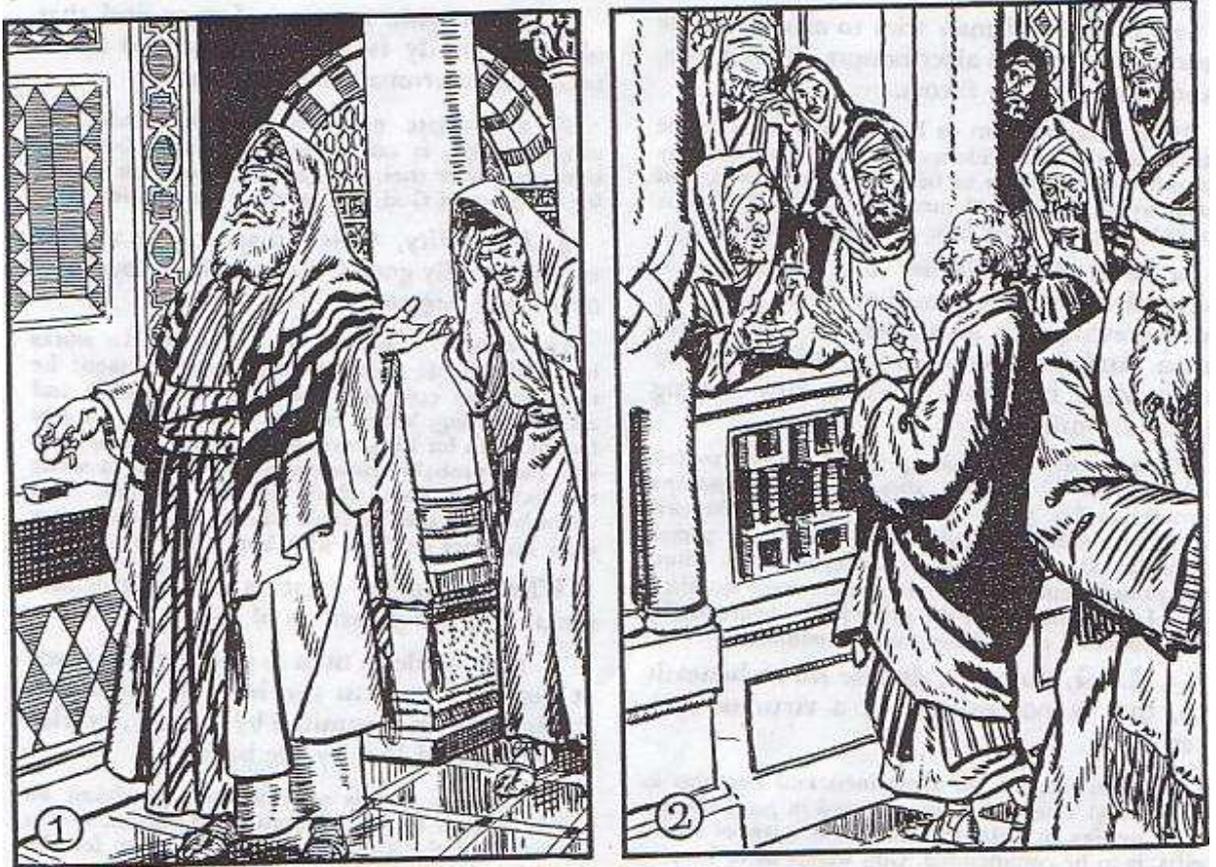
Thus a robber or murderer is ever *afraid* his crime will be detected. If it is discovered, he is sent to prison or to the electric chair.

2. The punishment of the sinner is fully meted out to him only *after death*. Then the unrepentant sinner is punished in hell. Justice is not always done in this world, where the wicked often prosper and the just are made to suffer.

On earth, God rewards the sinner for whatever good he may do. It is only in the next life that the evil he does is given its full and just punishment.

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## 25. Pride, Covetousness, Lust



*Pride makes one admire himself, in the belief that his excellence, imagined or real, is the result of his own worth. Our Lord condemned pride in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (1). Jesus said that the humble and repentant publican was justified in the eyes of God, while the proud Pharisee went home unjustified. Covetousness is one of the ugliest of sins. It was a sin of Judas. He loved money so much that he even betrayed Our Lord for thirty pieces of silver(2).*

**What is pride?** --Pride is an inordinate love of one's own excellence, an excessive self-esteem.

Our Lord is the best example of meekness and patience. Did He use His almighty power to punish those who did Him evil? For hours He hung meekly on the cross, until He died. Every day God is patient with sinners, giving them time to change their ways. God, the Supreme One, is not proud.

1. The proud man overestimates himself, and believes *himself the source* of his own excellence. The virtue of *humility*, which disposes us to acknowledge our limitations, is opposed to pride.

Some are proud of their appearance; others of their family, talents, position, money, and the virtues they *imagine*, they possess. Even if we do have excellent abilities or

possessions, we should not be proud of them, remembering that they all come from God. Instead, we should be humbly thankful, and see in what way we can make a return to God for such gifts. "Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 16:5).

2. Pride may be called the *mother of all vices*, for most sins can be traced to it. From pride arise ambition, vanity, presumption, disobedience, hypocrisy, obstinacy in sin.

"For pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions and it shall ruin him in the end" (Ecclus. 10:15). "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words, for from it all perdition took its beginning" (Tob. 4:14). Pride was the sin of our First Parents, who wanted to be as great as God. It was the sin of King Pharaoh; he was so proud that in spite of the miracles Moses worked, he refused to be convinced. For this God "hardened his heart" (Exod. 9:12); that is, God permitted him to close the window of his soul against the grace of the Holy Ghost, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected thee" (1 Kings 15:26).

3. The proud man tries to *attract notice* and praise, strives after honors, distinctions, and other worldly favors.

He is over-confident in himself, and despises the assistance of God. Pride was the sin of Lucifer. The proud man pretends to be greater than he is, and tries by all manner of means to attract the praise of others, even using false humility to do so.

4. God hates pride, and punishes it severely, He often punishes secret pride by withdrawing His assistance from the proud man. And deprived of God's aid, the proud man often falls into grievous sins leading to his humiliation.

"The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God" (Ecclus. 10:14). "God resists the proud" (1 Pet. 5:5). "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled" (Luke 14:11). Thus the proud King Herod was eaten up by worms and died. Thus, the proud Roman Empire fell and became nothing. Our Lord pointed out the pride in the heart of the Pharisee, and praised the humble publican.

5. If we, however, despise sin as beneath us, that is not pride, but a virtuous self respect.

A decent regard for cleanliness and neatness is not vanity. The ambition to exceed in good things, as in studies, in order to make the best use of God's gifts, is to be commended. God wishes us to be His *excellent children*. (See Chapter 44, on Humility, Liberality, Chastity)

**What is covetousness?** --Covetousness is the excessive love for, and seeking after, wealth and other worldly possessions.

1. Covetousness is also called avarice. A covetous person strives for more riches than he requires, and is *never content*, however much he already possesses.

He greedily clings to what he has, and is *stingy* and hates to give anything away. For money Judas betrayed the Lord. "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money; for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale" (Ecclus. 10:10). "Take heed and guard yourselves from all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

We meet with covetous persons among both rich and poor. Often among the rich there is money without avarice, and among the poor, avarice without money.

2. From covetousness arise hard-heartedness towards the poor, lying, cheating, usury, defrauding laborers of wages, and other sins.

"Those who seek to become rich fall into temptation and a snare . . . For covetousness is the root of all evils" (1 Tim. 6:9-10). It *destroys faith*, for the avaricious are so absorbed in money-getting that they have no time for their spiritual welfare.

3. To provide for one's future and that of one's family is praiseworthy. To *avoid waste and extravagance* is a virtue.

To accumulate even considerable wealth, by proper means, is not wrong. The rich, however, must remember their obligation to use their wealth for the glory of God, not for their own pride.

4. *Liberality*, which disposes us rightly to use worldly goods, is opposed to covetousness. (See Chapter 44, on Humility, Liberality, Chastity)

The avaricious man is very *foolish*. He works hard all his life and becomes hated by men: he earns besides eternal damnation after death and all *for nothing*. When he dies all he has are a few feet of earth for his grave; his money is left to heirs who most probably ridicule his miserliness or waste the money to gain which he lost his soul. "For when he shall die, he shall take nothing away; nor shall his glory descend with him" (Ps. 48:18).

**What is lust?** --Lust is the inordinate seeking of the pleasures of the flesh.

1. Lust defiles a man as no other sin does. It degrades man to the level of *the beast*. Pride is the sin committed by Lucifer, avarice by Judas, and lust by the brute.

Of all vices, lust is most severely *punished on earth*. It leads to loss of health and reason. It was the cause of the Deluge. It was the cause for the destruction with fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrha. "But immorality and every uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becomes saints" (Ephes. 5:3).

2. Those tempted to lust should remember that man was made to the image and *likeness of God*. Will they so rashly destroy that image, to make themselves like to beasts? In fact, beasts are better than lustful men, for beasts act in that manner from instinct; they have no soul like God.

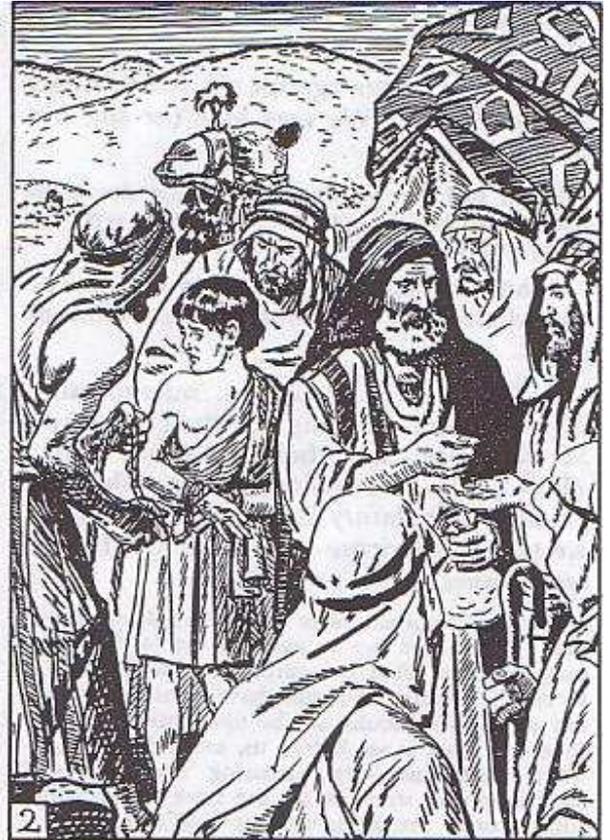
Impurity weakens the will and darkens the understanding. For this reason amendment is very difficult, and the sinner falls into many other sins. So Solomon, who yielded to lust, finally lost all his wisdom and turned to worship false gods.

3. From lust spring jealousy, hatred, murder, loss of faith, despair, instability, worldliness, selfishness, and other sins.

The consequences of lust are seen in the case of Henry VIII. It was the cause of his apostasy, and his apostasy dragged an entire nation into similar apostasy. "For know this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous one (for that is idolatry) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephes. 5:5) (See Chapter 44, on Humility, Liberality, Chastity)

4. Sodomy, or sins against purity by persons of the same sex, is a form of lust.
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## 26. Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth



*Our Lord showed how hateful gluttony is in the parable of the rich man, Dives, and the poor Lazarus (1). Dives was so greedy that he would not even give scraps to Lazarus, who sat at his gate. But when Dives died, he went to hell, while Lazarus went to heaven. The brothers of Joseph (2), were so envious of him that they sold him to some merchants going to Egypt. God rebuked their sin by blessing Joseph in Egypt, and causing him to be in a position to help his envious brothers later.*

**What is anger?** --Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure, combined with a desire to inflict punishment on the offender.

1. An angry man loses his *reason*. In anger a man will do what he afterwards regrets. From anger arise hatred, revenge, (quarreling, blasphemy, contumely, and murder. The virtues of patience and *meekness* are opposed to anger. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

Anger, or wrath, is a temporary madness. A man with this vice flies into a rage at every little thing. He always puts the blame of his anger on others, and even when he is alone he gets angry. "The wrath of man does not work the justice of God" (Jas. 1:20).

*Wilful murder*, one of the "sins that cry to heaven for vengeance," arises from anger.

When the first willful murder took place, and Cain killed his brother Abel, God said to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth" (Gen. 4:10).

2. He who indulges in anger injures his health, becomes hated, incurs damnation.

Many men have had a stroke of paralysis brought on by anger; some have even died. If anger is so hurtful to the body, how much more to the soul!

3. When we feel ourselves becoming angry, we should *never speak or act*, but try to calm ourselves by prayer.

St. Francis de Sales said: "I have made an agreement with my tongue never to utter a word while my heart is excited." "Let every man be slow to *speak* and slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19).

4. If we should be so unhappy as to have offended anyone by our anger, we should hasten to *apologize*.

"Do not let the sun go down upon your anger" (Ephes. 4:26)

5. A ***just anger*** against sin and injustice is praiseworthy. We may hate the sin, but not the sinner.

Christ had this just wrath when He drove the sellers from the Temple. Holy Scripture says, "Be angry and do not sin" (Ephes. 4:26).

**What is gluttony?** --Gluttony is an excessive desire for or indulgence in food or drink.

1. Gluttony is greediness, intemperance in eating and drinking. Of the gluttonous, St. Paul said that "their god is the belly" (Phil 3:19). We should not be either too *greedy* or too *dainty* about the nourishment we take. The virtue opposed to gluttony is *temperance*.

We should not eat more than we need to support life. "*We do not live to eat, but eat to live.*" We must not take what is injurious to health, even if its taste is pleasing. We must have regular hours for our meals. We should not be too particular about food, eat what is set before us, and not get angry when a dish is not very appetizing. The purpose of food is to give strength for the work we do while still on earth preparing for our final end.

2. Gluttony produces dullness of mind, laziness, and sensuality. The vice of *drunkenness* is a terrible evil, leading to worse sins. A man when drunk loses his reason, and often makes a fool of himself. If reason is the chief difference between man and the beast, why should one extinguish it by drunkenness?

"The sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14). "He who sows in his flesh, from the flesh also he will reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8). It is well for young people to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking till after they are twenty years of age. If they do this, the likelihood is that they will not contract vice. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

Note: Smoking is against the 5th commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." (RMO) Saint Maximilian Kolbe is the patron Saint of SUBSTANCE ABUSE which includes alcohol, tobacco, heroin, marijuana, crack, cocaine, and any other substances that are abused.

**What is envy?** --Envy is a bitter feeling at the excellence or good fortune of those who are better or happier, with a desire to rob them of what they have.

1. Envy *consists* in discontent or anger at the success of another, as though it were evil to oneself. It also consists in rejoicing over another's misfortune, as if it were a good to oneself.

Envy is against the commandment of God to love our neighbor. It is the mark of the *petty mind* and the *hard heart*. The devil envied Adam and Eve in Paradise; Cain envied Abel, whose offering was pleasing to God. Some are, so envious that they even envy the holiness of others, but without any desire or attempt at imitation. This was the case with the Pharisees, and their envy led them to plot the death of Jesus Christ.

2. Envy *leads* to calumny, gossip, detraction, hatred, scandal, and other sins. An envious man looks on everything with malice; as a result his envy does not even make himself happy, but destroys his peace of heart.

The sons of Jacob were envious of their brother Joseph because he was the favorite son. Their envy led them to sell him into Egypt. Often the envy in a man's heart causes him to be so soured on the world that he sells himself for nothing to the devil.

3. A form of envy, one of the greatest sins, is *envy at another's spiritual good*. This is a most diabolical sin; it shows that the sinner has closed his heart against the charity of God, and instead houses God's enemy, Satan. The virtue *opposed* to envy is charity, or brotherly love. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

**What is sloth?** --Sloth is the neglect of one's duties, spiritual or temporal, through laziness.

1. The rule of the universe is activity; life and movement may be found in all nature. The slothful man is the exception; and he by his laziness goes against nature.

"Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom" (Prov. 6:6). The slothful keep putting off doing anything till tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, which often never comes.

2. Many complain of *hard luck*, but often misfortunes come from laziness. The virtues of *diligence* and *zeal* are opposed to sloth.

Even on earth, most rewards go only to the industrious and energetic.

3. Spiritual sloth is called lukewarmness. It is also called tepidity.

The lukewarm person would like to have the rewards given by God, but will not move a finger to serve Him. As soon as it is necessary to exert himself, he shrinks from the effort. Great Sinners have been known to become great saints, but the lukewarm, never. Holy Scripture says: "I would that thou wert cold or hot. But because thou an lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth" (Apoc. 3:15,16).

4. Sloth leads to many sins; *idleness begets vice*. The lazy neglect good works.

If man has no useful occupation, his natural activity turns to all kinds of mischief. A busy person avoids many temptations. (See Chapter 45 on Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love)

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## 27. The Promise of the Redeemer

*(Second Article of the Apostles' Creed.)*



*Immediately after the Fall, God promised a Redeemer to Adam. He forgave man, although He had not forgiven the rebel angels. He was more merciful to man than to the angels. In making the promise, God spoke of the Blessed Virgin, who was to be the Saviour's Mother.*

**Did God abandon man after Adam fell into sin?** --God did not abandon man after Adam fell into sin, but promised to send into the world a Saviour to free man from his sins and to reopen to him the gates of heaven.

God could have abandoned man as a consequence of Adam's sin; then the human race would have suffered eternal separation from Him.

1. The promise was first made to *Adam* before God sent him out of Paradise. God said to the serpent who had tempted Eve: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. 3:15)

In this passage, the woman spoken of is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her seed is Our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Redeemer promised by God. God said that there would be complete enmity between Our Lord with His Mother on one side, and the devil with his followers on the other.

2. This promise was renewed several times *to the Patriarchs* of the Old Testament: to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Because Abraham remained true to the worship of God in the midst of idolatry, God led him to Canaan. As a reward for his obedience, God promised, "I will make of thee a great nation ... and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2,3). This promise was repeated twice.

The same promise "in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed" was repeated to Abraham's son Isaac, and to Isaac's son Jacob. Finally, hundreds of years later, God commanded the prophet Nathan to repeat to King David the very same promise, "He shall build a house to My name, and I will establish his kingdom forever" (2 Kings 7:13)

3. Later, God sent the Prophets. Through them He foretold many things about the Redeemer: about His birth, His Person, His sufferings, His death, and His final glory.

God enlightened the Prophets so that they could speak in His name to the Jews or Israelites' the descendants of Abraham. There were about seventy prophets, the last being Malachias, who lived some 450 years before Christ.

4. God chose the *Jews* as the people among whom the promised Saviour would live; for this reason we call the Jews the "chosen people". God prepared them for the coming of the Saviour: by heavy trials, by severe laws, by miracles, by prophecies.

The selection of the Jews did not mean rejection by God of the *other nations*. Every renewal of God's promise recalled blessings in which all were to share. Even among other nations there were just men, In Greece, Socrates spoke against the worship of idols. Holy Job lived in Arabia. The Magi were of the East. Vergil the poet prayed the *virgin-born* Son to come and reign over His people.

**Why did God wait thousands of years before sending the Redeemer?** --God wished men to realize the enormity of sin.

1. God wished men to see how low they could sink without His help. He wanted the world to *prepare* for the Redeemer.

Men became so *wicked* that God destroyed all in the Deluge, except Noe and his family. God permitted men to sink into the deepest *misery*, so that they might be roused to a longing for the promised Saviour. When the Saviour at last came, all nations were sunk in *idolatry* and wickedness except the Jews. Even among the Jews there was continuous dissension and sin.

2. From the time of Adam the true religion was *preserved* till the advent of the promised Saviour by the patriarchs, prophets and other holy men inspired by God to teach and lead his Chosen People.

In spite of the imperfection of the old religion, there was always *only one* true religion. It was but a shadow of the perfection that was to come, but was the true religion before Christ: the Jewish Faith.

**Who is the Saviour of all men?** --The Saviour of all men is Jesus Christ.

Men would know the Saviour by certain signs which God revealed through the Prophets.

1. Of His *advent* the Prophets spoke:

- a. The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, when the Jews were no longer free.

"And Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. 5:2). "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations" (Gen. 49:10)

- b. The Messiah was to be born of a virgin of the House of David.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Is. 7:14)

- c. The Messiah would be preceded by a precursor who would preach in the desert.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert the paths of our God" (Is 40:3).

- d. A new star was to announce the birth of the Messiah; He would be adored by kings from distant lands bringing Him gifts.

"A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a scepter shall spring up from Israel" (Numb. 24:17). "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts" (Ps. 71:10)

- e. Many children would be put to death at the time of His birth.

"A voice was heard on high of lamentation, or mourning, and weeping, of Rachel (representing the Jews) weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not" (Jer. 31:15).

2. Of the *person* of the Messiah the Prophets spoke: He was to be the Son of God. He would work great miracles, and teach the people. He would be King of a new kingdom, which was not to be destroyed, and was to include all nations.

"The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. 2:7).

"Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Is.

35:5-6). "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed ... and it shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

3. Of His *sufferings* the Prophets spoke:

He was to enter Jerusalem riding on an ass. He would be betrayed by one who ate at the same table with Him. He would be abandoned, mocked, beaten, spat upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, and given gall and vinegar to drink. Lots would be cast for His garments. His hands and feet would be pierced with nails. He would die between two evildoers.

4. All the *prophecies* were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is the Redeemer, the Saviour that God in His mercy had promised.

The angels announced Him as the Redeemer to the shepherds when He was born, and to St. Joseph in a vision. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (John 3:16)

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## 28. The God-Man



Throughout the centuries God sent prophets to predict different events and facts concerning the promised Saviour. Among the most important prophets were Jeremiah, Isaias, Daniel, and Ezechiel. Daniel predicted the exact time of the birth of the Redeemer. He said His kingdom would have no end, and would embrace all kingdoms. Isaias prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, would be both God and Man, and would die patiently and willingly like a lamb for our sins.

**What is the chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ?** --The chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ is that He is God made man.

1. Christ Himself said that He is God. The Jews understood His claim literally, and He was condemned to death for blasphemy, for *making Himself the Son of God*.

Christ said: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18). "And the high priest said to him, 'I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, 'Thou hast said it'" (Matt. 26:63). "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

2. **Christ** proved His claims by wonderful miracles, by prophecies, by His knowledge of all things, and by the holiness of His life.

These miracles Christ worked in His own name, not as His followers did, who worked *in the name of God*. He simply said: "I will, be thou made clean" (Matt. 8:3)

Christ Himself *appealed to His miracles* as a testimony of the truth of His doctrines and divinity, saying: "If you are not willing to believe me, believe the works" (John 10:38) . Christ *foretold* future events. Among other things, He predicted His passion, death, and resurrection, the treason of Judas and the perpetuity of His Church.

3. The *Apostles*, the followers of Christ Himself, plainly taught that Christ is God, and died in testimony of their faith.

St. John says: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." "And the Word was made Flesh." St. Paul writes: "In him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). St. Thomas openly professed the divinity of Christ when he said: "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). St. Peter said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

4. The *Church* teaches that Jesus Christ is God. Its teachings have spread throughout all nations, in spite of untold obstacles.

The Church has grown by the simplest of means, its spread ever accompanied by wonderful miracles, by which God designs to show forth the truth of the Church. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ is the foundation of the Christian religion.

5. Even the *enemies* of the Catholic Church have admitted their belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Napoleon, about to die, said: "I know men, but Jesus Christ was more than man. My men deserted me in the field when I was there leading them. Christ's army has been faithful for centuries. A Leader who has an army which functions though He is dead is not man."

**Why is Jesus Christ God?** --Jesus Christ is God because He is the only Son of God, having the same divine nature as His Father.

"And they all said, 'Art thou, then, the Son of God?' He answered, 'You yourselves say that I am' ' And they said, 'What further need have we of witness? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth'" (Luke 22:70-71)

1. Man after the Fall was unable to regain of himself his former holiness. He became like a sick man who could not arise from bed. He *needed Someone* to raise him up. Since the sin he had committed had been an offense against an Infinite God, the atonement needed had to be by an Infinite One, the Son of God Himself.

"God so loved the world that he gave his onlybegotten Son" (John 3:16). "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

2. Christ is called the "**Word**". Just as the thought in our minds finds expression in a word, so the Son of God dwelling in the bosom of His Father was shown to the world when the Word became man.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1: 1,14).

**Why is Jesus Christ man?** --Jesus Christ is man, because He is the Son of the Blessed Virgin, and has a body and soul like ours.

1. The birth of Jesus Christ is a fact of *history*. He was born of Mary, who was espoused to a carpenter named Joseph, who lived in Nazareth of Galilee.

The archangel Gabriel said to Mary, "The Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God."

2. Jesus Christ is *true man*, because He has a body and soul like ours. He derived His human nature from His mother.

History tells us of Jesus Christ, Who preached in and about Jerusalem over nineteen hundred years ago. Many records tell of His appearance, of His words, of His actions, of His teachings. Nobody doubted that Jesus Christ was a Man, for He could be seen and touched like other men. He lived and died Just as men of all times live and die.

**How can we prove that the religion God has revealed through Christ is worthy of belief?** --We can prove that the religion God has revealed through Christ is worthy of belief, because:

1. Jesus Christ, announcing Himself as the true Son of God, whose coming was foretold by the prophets, preached doctrines which He said all *must* believe.

If Christ is God, then the religion He established is true, and the Church He founded is the true Church. We can believe everything He says, even without understanding it, because God cannot err.

If Jesus Christ were not God, then Christianity would be a farce, and the sooner it were done away with the better. If Christ were not God, then He were an impostor who, by claiming divinity, had led billions into error for almost 2,000 years.

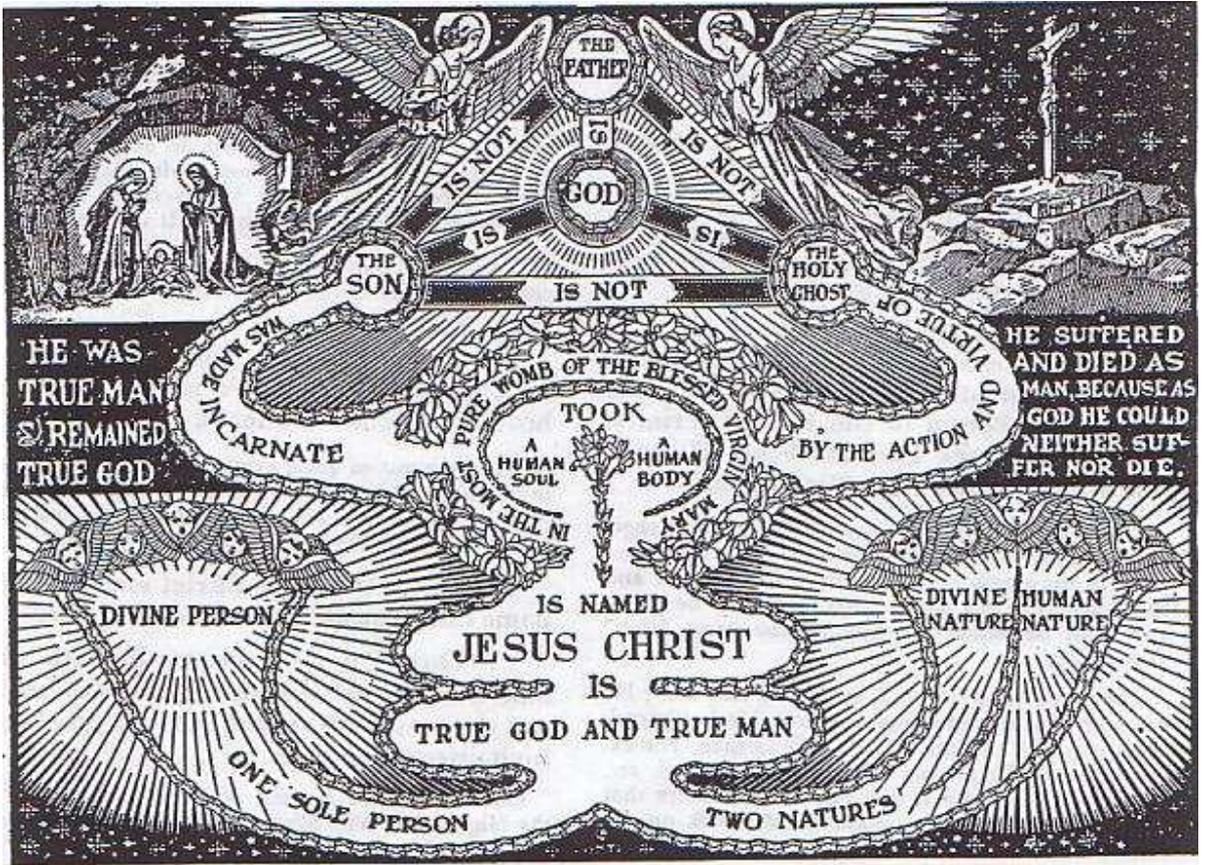
2. Christ worked wonderful *miracles*, which showed that the God of truth approved His teachings.

Christ worked so many miracles publicly that all flocked to Him to be cured. "But when John had heard in prison of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples to say to him, 'Art thou he who is to come, or shall we look for another?' And Jesus answering said to them, 'Go and report to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk,

the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:2-5)

- a. Christ performed miracles on inanimate objects, as when He changed water to wine, calmed the storm, multiplied loaves.
  - b. He healed in an instant the sick, the blind, the lame. He expelled devils.
  - c. He raised the dead to life; as the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Naim and Lazarus. Even His enemies acknowledged His miracles. The Pharisees planned to kill Lazarus, because the Jews believed in Jesus as a result of the miracle.
  - d. He worked miracles on His own Person, as in the Transfiguration, Resurrection, and Ascension.
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## 29. Our Lord Jesus Christ



*Our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true Man. As God, He is equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He is infinite, almighty, eternal. As man He has a body and soul like ours. Jesus Christ has two natures which cannot be separated, but which are distinct: the human, and the divine. But He is only one Person-the Divine Person. Jesus Christ is not a human Person.*

**Is Jesus Christ more than one Person?** --No, Jesus Christ is only one Person; and that Person is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Throughout the Gospels we can read about Jesus Christ as only one Person,-eating, sleeping, talking, and dying, as only one Person.

1. A "person" is a being that is intelligent and free, and *responsible* for his actions. We attribute to him whatever good or evil he does in the use of his human powers, because he owns or controls those powers.

I am a human person, and everything I do is done by a human person. But Christ is a *Divine Person*, since He is God. Whatever Jesus Christ did while He was on earth was of infinite dignity, since it was the work of a Divine Person.

2. Jesus Christ is Our Lord, the Son of God the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true Man. We call Him "**Our Lord**" because as God He is Lord and Master of all, and as our Saviour He redeemed us with His Blood.

Christ is our Creator, Redeemer, Lawgiver, Teacher, and judge. All these we mean when we say Our Lord. St. Paul says: "He is the Blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords ... to whom be honor and everlasting dominion. Amen" (1 Tim. 6: 15,16).

3. There is only **one Person**, the Divine Person, in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is *not* a human person. Everything in Him even as Man is divine and worthy of adoration.

When we adore the Sacred Heart, or the Precious Blood, we do not adore mere flesh, but the flesh united to the divinity. In Christ the human and the divine are inseparable.

**How many natures has Jesus Christ?** --Jesus Christ has two natures: the nature of God and the nature of man.

1. A "nature" is a substance that is complete in itself as a source of activity. It differs from "person" in that while "person" determines what an individual *is*, "nature" determines what an individual can *do*.

In Jesus Christ Our Lord there are two natures: His divine and His human nature. Therefore He could and did act as God; He could and did act as man, while all the time He was God the Son.

2. Because of His Divine nature, Christ is truly *God*; because of His human nature, He is truly *man*. In His Divine nature He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, the Eternal Word. He took His human nature from His Mother.

It was to the Blessed Virgin that the Archangel Gabriel announced: "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32).

Therefore Jesus Christ is both God and man; He has both Divine and human powers; He has knowledge, can will and act as God and as man. For example, with His human nature Jesus worked, ate, spoke, felt pain. But it was His divine nature that enabled Him to become transfigured, walk on the waters, raise the dead.

3. These *two natures* were united in a Divine Person Jesus Christ, the God-Man. They were intimately united, but they remained *distinct*. Neither was absorbed by the other. When iron and gold are welded into one solid mass, they continue to retain all their individual properties distinct from each other. The union of the divine and human natures in Christ is called the *hypostatic* union.

Christ is true God and true man; this is why we call Him God-Man. Beings obtain their nature from their origin; for this reason a child has a human nature, from its human parents. Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has His origin from God the Father, and hence He has a divine nature; moreover, as man He was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and thus His human nature. This is why Christ often referred to Himself indiscriminately as "Son of God" or "Son of Man".

4. As a consequence of these two natures, Christ had also two *wills*.

We can see this very clearly in His prayer in the Garden of Olives before His Passion. He said: "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." He was referring to His human will, for His divine will was surely the same as His Father's.

**What does the name Jesus mean?** --The name Jesus means Saviour or Redeemer.

1. Our Lord is called *Jesus* because He came to save men from sin, and to open the doors of heaven to them.

Before the birth of Our Lord, an angel appeared to St. Joseph and said: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Matt. 1:21). At the Annunciation the angel Gabriel had spoken the same words to Mary.

"After eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus" (Luke 2:21).

2. We should say the name of Our Lord with great *reverence*. We should bow our head every time we utter it.

"In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:10). The symbol IHS is composed of the first three letters of the name *Jesus* in Greek.

**What does the name Christ mean?** --The name Christ means "The Anointed One".

1. "Christ" is a Greek word, with the same meaning as "Messias". In the Old Law it was the custom to *anoint with oil* prophets, high priests, and kings.

Our Lord is the greatest of the Prophets. He is the High Priest Who offers Himself for all mankind. He is the King of angels and men. Therefore it is fitting that we should call Him *Christ*. He truly is the Anointed One.

2. We are called *Christians* because we are disciples of Christ. We believe in His teachings, and obey His commandments. The followers of Christ were first called *Christians* at Antioch.

NOTE: We are also called Christians because we are members of the Holy Roman Catholic Church in the same way that being a member of the Jones family is indispensable to being a "Jones." (RMO)

Those who deny the doctrines of Christ, especially His divinity, are not Christians. Unfortunately, many today are Christians only in name.

3. Jesus Christ was announced to the world through many *types*. By "types" we mean persons or actions which strongly suggested or foreshadowed Christ. "Types" are to the reality what a photograph is to the actual person; but for lack of the reality, types are a good substitute, to give an idea of the substance foreshadowed.

Some of the types of Jesus Christ were: the gentle and just Abel, who was murdered by his brother; Noe, who alone persevered and saved the human race from extinction by his justice; Isaac, who willingly carried the wood on which he was to have been sacrificed; Joseph, who was sold for a few pieces of silver, but later saved his brethren from death; Moses, who freed the Jews from slavery and led them to the Promised Land; David, who was born poor, did great deeds for his people, and became King.

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### 30. The Incarnation

*(Third Article of the Apostles' Creed.)*



*"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And when the angel had come to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.' When she had seen him she was troubled at his word, and kept pondering what manner of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus'" (Luke 1:26-31).*

**What is meant by the Incarnation?** --By the Incarnation is meant that the Son of God, retaining His Divine nature, took to Himself a human nature, that is, a body and soul like ours.

1. The Incarnation is the greatest act of humility possible. By it the Son of God, eternal, almighty, infinite, voluntarily took upon Himself human nature with its weaknesses. He

circumscribed Himself with a human body that would feel sickness and pain, and with a human soul that would cause Him agony.

Incarnation means "*becoming flesh*". Thus the Son of God took a human body and soul and united it to His divine Person. Without ceasing to be God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man at the same time. The divine nature of Christ is from all eternity. Only His *human nature* began at the Incarnation.

2. By virtue of the Incarnation Jesus Christ came to earth. This is a *mystery* which we can never fully understand, but must be content to honor and adore.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Christ as man was like us in all things except sin. He could not sin, because He is God. But in all other things He was like us: he had a human body, a human soul, a human will. Can we understand this with our reason? Hardly. As St. John Chrysostom said: "I know that the Son of God became man. but how, I do not know." God, Who produced the universe from nothing, also caused the Incarnation.

**How was the Son of God made man?** --The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Three persons of God cooperated in the Incarnation, but only the Second Person took on flesh: only He took to Himself a human nature.

1. The Incarnation is peculiarly the work of the *Blessed Trinity*. They formed a human soul and a human body, and these they united to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity: the result was Our Lord Jesus Christ, God-Man.

To the power of the Holy Ghost we attribute the Incarnation, because the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity peculiarly expresses the Spirit of Love: and the Incarnation is the supreme example of God's love for men.

2. It was fitting that God the Son should become incarnate, rather than the Father or the Holy Ghost; for the Son *proceeds* from the Father, and could be sent by Him.

God the Son then could, as the fruit of His Redemption, send God the Holy Ghost. Thus through the Son of God we became adopted sons of God.

**When was the Son of God conceived and made man?** --The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation Day, the day on which the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God.

1. In Nazareth of Galilee lived the Blessed Virgin Mary. One day the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and said: "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women*" (Luke 1:28).

Mary was surprised. The angel said: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus." This event is called the *Annunciation* commemorated by the feast on *March 25*.

2. Mary knew that the angel was sent by God. She answered: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word*" (Luke 1:38)

At these words of the Blessed Virgin, Jesus Christ became man in her womb, and the incarnation was accomplished.

3. The mystery of the Incarnation is commemorated daily by the *Angelus*, a prayer said by Catholics morning, noon, and night, at the ringing of the Angelus bell.

The Angelus bell is rung in a particular way: at the verse, it is sounded three times: a pause follows while the Hail Mary is recited. "This procedure is repeated three times for the three verses and three Hail Marys. Then follows continual ringing while the Prayer is said.

During the Easter time the prayer *Regina Coeli* (Queen of Heaven) is substituted for the Angelus. Those who do not know these prayers by heart, or who cannot read, may say five Hail Marys instead.

**Did Jesus Christ have human parents?** --Jesus Christ had a human mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, but He had no human father.

1. The Blessed Virgin was Christ's mother as man, but not as God.

However, the Blessed virgin is truly the Mother of God, because the humanity and divinity of her Son are inseparable. In a similar way we call our parents mother and father, although they only gave us our body, and not our soul.

2. Christ had no human father. The Blessed Virgin remained a virgin all her life. The conception of Our Lord is a great miracle and a mystery that we cannot understand. We can only accept it as true on the word of God, Who is almighty.

St. Joseph was the legal spouse of Mary, but both of them preserved their virginity, consecrating it to God. They always lived together as brother and sister. St. Joseph was only the guardian or foster father of Our Lord.

3. We should honor and love *Saint Joseph*, because Our Lord honored and loved him. Holy Scripture calls him a just man. He was a most *pure man*; and this is why God selected him as the virgin spouse of Mary, to care for her and the Child Jesus.

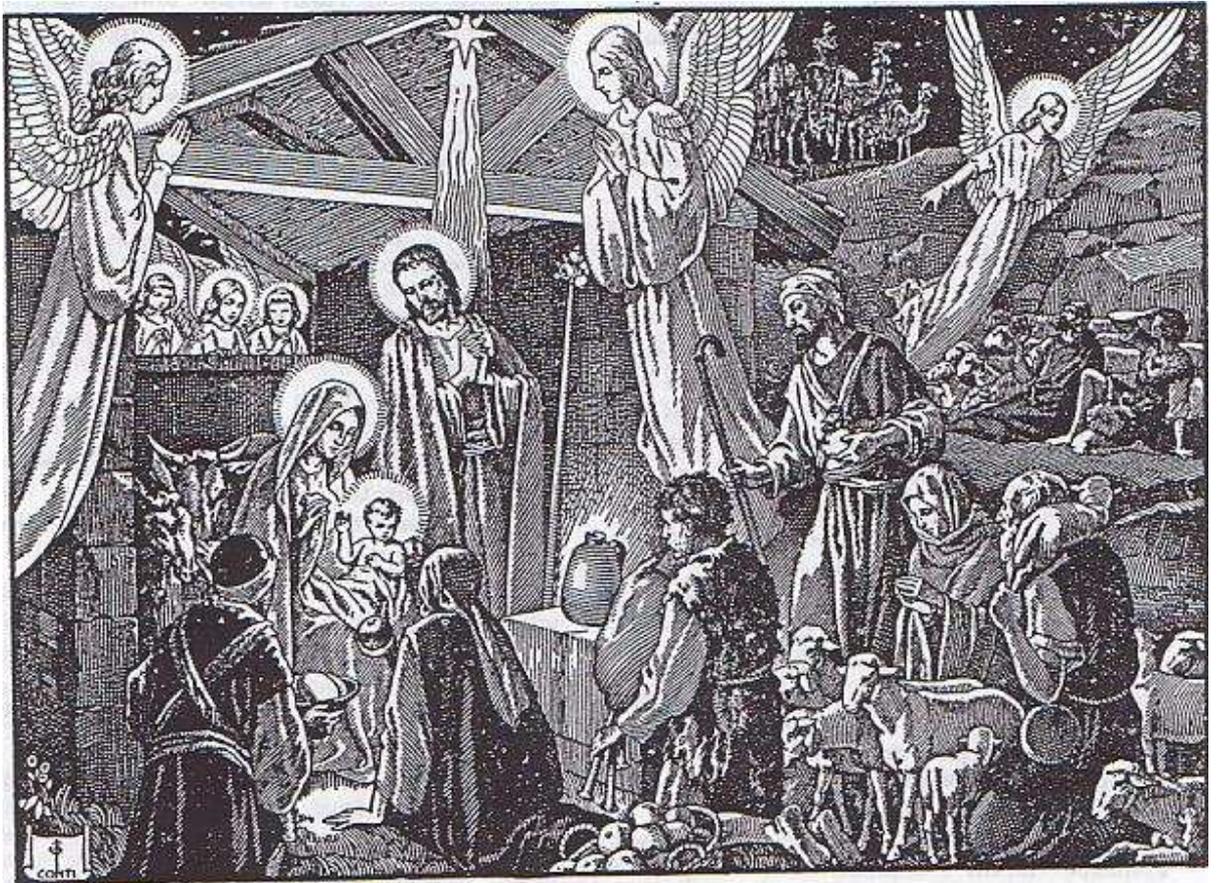
Jesus loved St. Joseph and obeyed his slightest wish. Mary even called Joseph the father of Jesus.

4. It seems that Saint Joseph was born in Bethlehem of Judea. But at the time of the Annunciation, he and Mary were living in *Nazareth* of Galilee. He was a carpenter. It appears that he died before the beginning of Christ's public life.

The memory of Saint Joseph was venerated from the very earliest centuries. In 1870 Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph Patron of the Church. He is also patron of a *happy death*. We should invoke his protection often. His feast, kept on *March 19*, has been celebrated since the 15th century.

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## 31. The Nativity



*"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds in the same district living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of God shone round about them, and they feared exceedingly. And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people; for there has been born to you today in the town of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord' "*

**When was Christ born?** --Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas Day, in Bethlehem, more than nineteen hundred years ago.

1. When Jesus Christ was born, the Jews were no longer independent. In 64 B.C. Pompey reduced their kingdom and subjected it to *Rome*.

Because the Jews were always plotting rebellion against Rome, the Jewish king was replaced by Herod, a Gentile, the first non-Jew to become king. Thus the scepter was "taken away from Juda", and the time predicted for the Messiah had arrived.

2. Today we *reckon* dates from the birth of Christ. This has been the continuous custom since the time of Charlemagne, although many rulers from the 5th century had adopted the practice.

However, there is an error of some four to six years. Generally, it is supposed, as a matter of *historical fact*, that Christ was born 7-5 B.C. An error in the calculation of dates in later centuries produced this anomaly.

3. *Bethlehem* is a little town in Judea, near the city of Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary went there in obedience to the Emperor at Rome, who had commanded all his subjects to register in the towns of their ancestors.

Joseph and Mary were both descended from King David, whose city was Bethlehem; this is why they went to register there. They tried to find a place to stay in even for only a night, but could find refuge nowhere. And so they sought shelter in a poor stable; there Jesus was born.

4. Jesus was born in a stable, a poor place. He *preferred* poverty and humiliation in order to suffer more for us.

He wished to show Himself a friend of the poor, and to teach that the best way to heaven is through *humility*, and *detachment* from worldly goods.

5. The Church celebrates the Nativity on **December 25**. The feast is called **Christmas**. On this day every priest is granted the privilege of saying three Masses: one in commemoration of Christ's eternal birth from God the Father; another in remembrance of His temporal birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and a third to recall His spiritual birth in the hearts of the faithful.

The word "Christmas" comes from *Christ* and *Mass*. The feast is so called because on that day the Mass commemorating the birth of Christ is said.

6. An angel appeared to shepherds and told them of the Nativity. A *star* led three Magi (Wise Men) to Bethlehem.

The shepherds represented the *poor*. The Magi represented the *rich*. All offered their gifts to the Infant Jesus. Our Lord does not look at the price of our gifts, but at the purity of our hearts.

The Church commemorates the adoration of the Magi on the Feast of the Epiphany, **January 6**. "Epiphany" means *manifestation*. In the persons of the Magi, who were not Jews, Our Lord was manifested to all nations of the earth, who were at the time lost in paganism. With the Magi, we are called to the Truth; the Old Testament was ended, and the world had entered upon a new Covenant with God. And if, like the Magi we offer Jesus Christ the gold of our love, the myrrh of self-sacrifice, and the incense of our prayers, we too shall be united with God.

7. Many churches and homes set up a crib at Christmas. This custom, although of very ancient origin, was popularized by St. Francis of Assisi.

In the year 1223, he visited Pope Honorius III and sought approval of his plans to make a scenic representation of the Nativity. Having obtained the Pope's consent, Francis left Rome, and arrived at Greccio on Christmas Eve. There in the church he constructed a crib, grouping around it images of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, of the shepherds, the ox, and the ass. At the midnight Mass St. Francis acted as deacon. After singing the words of the Gospel, "And they laid Him in a manger", he knelt down to meditate on the great gift of the Incarnation. And people around saw in his arms a Child, surrounded by a most brilliant light.

Since then the devotion to the crib has spread far and wide. The crib remains in church until the octave day of the Epiphany. At the proper time the images of the Three Kings and their retinue are added, making a daily advance towards the crib.

Most homes also set up a decorated Christmas tree. It is a reminder of the *tree* of the cross. The *boxes* of Christmas gifts remind us of the great Gift that God sent us.

*Santa Claus*, the jolly and beloved distributor of Christmas gifts, is an American adoption of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, of the fourth century. This Saint is popular in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, where he is made the secret purveyor of gifts to children on December 6, his feast day. The custom was brought to New York by the Dutch, quickly spread throughout the United States and became absorbed into the Christmas celebration.

**What incidents in Our Lord's life were closely connected with the Nativity?** --The following incidents in Our Lord's life were closely connected with the Nativity: the Circumcision, the Presentation, and the flight to Egypt.

1. The Child received the name Jesus when He was eight days old. He was *circumcised*, according to the custom of the Jews. At the Circumcision Jesus began His role of Mediator between God and man, shedding His blood for the first time for us.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "Therefore God . . . has bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9,10). "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you" (John 16:23). The feast of the Circumcision is celebrated on *New Year's Day*. Thus the Church teaches us to begin everything in the name of Jesus.

2. When Jesus was forty days old, His Mother *presented* Him in the Temple at Jerusalem. In imitation, though the rite is essentially different, mothers today after childbirth seek the blessing of the Church in a thanksgiving ceremony called "*churching*".

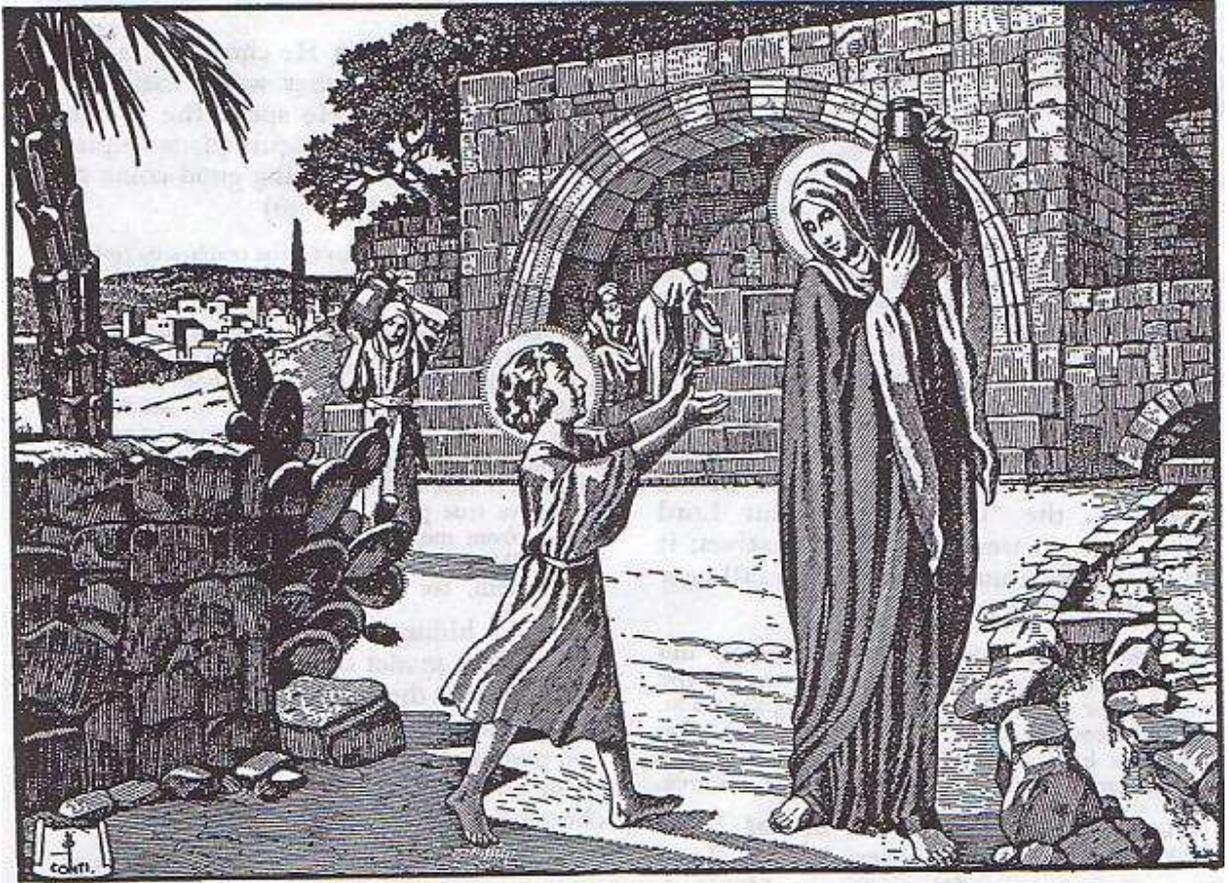
The feast of the Presentation is celebrated on *February 2*. It is also called the *purification* of the Blessed Virgin, or Candlemas Day. On this day candles are blessed and carried in procession, in memory of the words of holy Simeon, when Jesus was presented in the Temple. He said Our Lord was "a Light of revelation to the Gentiles".

3. Mary and Joseph took the Child Jesus to *Egypt* to save Him from King Herod, who wanted to kill Him.

An angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take the Child Jesus and His mother away to Egypt. They stayed in Egypt until the death of King Herod. Then an angel appeared to Joseph and bade him return to the land of the Jews.

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## 32. The Hidden Life of Jesus Christ



*After the finding in the Temple, Jesus returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth. There He lived with them, doing all He could to help His Mother and St. Joseph in their work. Jesus, God Himself, obeyed mortals, because He wanted to set us an example. He lived a life of obedience, humility, and poverty in Nazareth till He was about thirty years old, This hidden life teaches us, among other things, the value in the eyes of God, of prayer, humility and obedience.*

**How may the life of Jesus Christ be divided?** --The life of Jesus Christ may be divided into three parts: His childhood to the time when He was twelve years old; His hidden life, to the time when He started His teaching; and His public life, to the time of His death.

1. After the murder of the Holy Innocents, the Child Jesus lived in *Egypt* with His mother and St. Joseph until the death of Herod, then returned with them to the Holy Land.

An angel appeared to Joseph and said, "Arise, and take the Child and his Mother, and go into the land of Israel" (Matt. 2:20). Just as St. Joseph had obeyed without question when told to take the Child to Egypt, so now he obeyed, knowing that God Who watches over the birds of the air would watch over those given into his charge.

2. The Holy Family lived in *Nazareth*. From there, every year Mary and Joseph went to worship at the Temple of Jerusalem. When Jesus was twelve years old, He went along with His parents to celebrate the Pasch at Jerusalem. Then Mary and Joseph left the city to return to Nazareth, but Jesus remained behind without their knowledge.

"But thinking that he was in the caravan, they had come a day's journey before it occurred to them to look for him among their relatives and acquaintances. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him" (Luke 2:44-45) We can only imagine the distress of Mary and Joseph upon having lost Jesus, most precious to them, the Child that had been entrusted to their care. And what was their joy when after three days search they found Him in the Temple, in the midst of the wise men there, hearing and questioning them! Mary told how great had been her grief when she said, "Behold, thy father and I have been seeking thee sorrowing" (Luke 2:48). But Jesus replied, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)

Jesus dearly loved Mary and Joseph, but He did not hesitate to cause them pain and part from them, in order to obey His heavenly Father's will. In imitation of Him, many young people leave home and their dear parents, to enter the priesthood or a religious congregation, to serve God completely.

3. Some non-Catholic interpreters insist that Jesus had brothers, that He was not the only Son of Mary. Those spoken of in the Gospels as the "brethren" of Our Lord (Matt. 13:55), were His blood relatives; it was the practice among the Jews to call near relatives "brethren".

So Abraham called his nephew Lot in this manner: "Let there be no quarrel between me and thee.... for we are brethren" (Gen. 13:8). As St. John Chrysostom wrote, Our Lord on the cross would not have needed to commend His Mother to his Apostle John, if she had had other children.

**How long did the hidden life of Jesus Christ last?** --The hidden life of Jesus Christ lasted from His return to Nazareth at the age of twelve until He entered into public life, at the age of thirty.

1. Of this part of Christ's life all we directly read from Holy Scripture are two statements: "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.... And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men" (Luke 2:51, 52). In these two sentences is contained the history of *eighteen years* of the life of Jesus Christ, the God-Man.

In the Temple, at the early age of twelve, Jesus had proved His wisdom before the doctors of the law. As St. Luke writes, "And all who were listening to him were amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Luke 2:47). But did He continue after this unusual and favorable beginning; did He stay on to preach His doctrine? No; instead, He meekly followed His parents as a young child of that age, and went to live with them in obscurity in Nazareth.

2. The actions of Jesus Christ are intended for us as *examples* and instructions, as much as His words. As He said, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do" (John 13:15) The hidden life of Jesus is for us a perfect model of *humility*. He lived in poverty and lowliness: the Mother He chose was a poor woman; His foster-father was a carpenter; the town in which He spent the greatest part of His life was an obscure place despised by the Jews: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

By His hidden life Jesus Christ teaches us to learn holiness and wisdom before we presume to teach others. He teaches us, by living in obscurity, to fight against our vanity, which makes us desire to be doing only what seems great and important, which makes us desire to be praised and noticed. By His hidden life Our Lord teaches us to subdue our pride, to live day after day without impatience or complaint, unknown to the world, and even despised, if that is the will of God for us; then we shall have true peace of heart. And so Jesus said, "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). For long years of obscurity in Nazareth, He was just "a carpenter's son".

3. The hidden life of Jesus Christ is for us a perfect model of *obedience*: "And He was subject to them." The God of all created things, almighty and infinite, was subject to two poor and unknown mortals. He obeyed them in all things, promptly, constantly, cheerfully, and with great love.

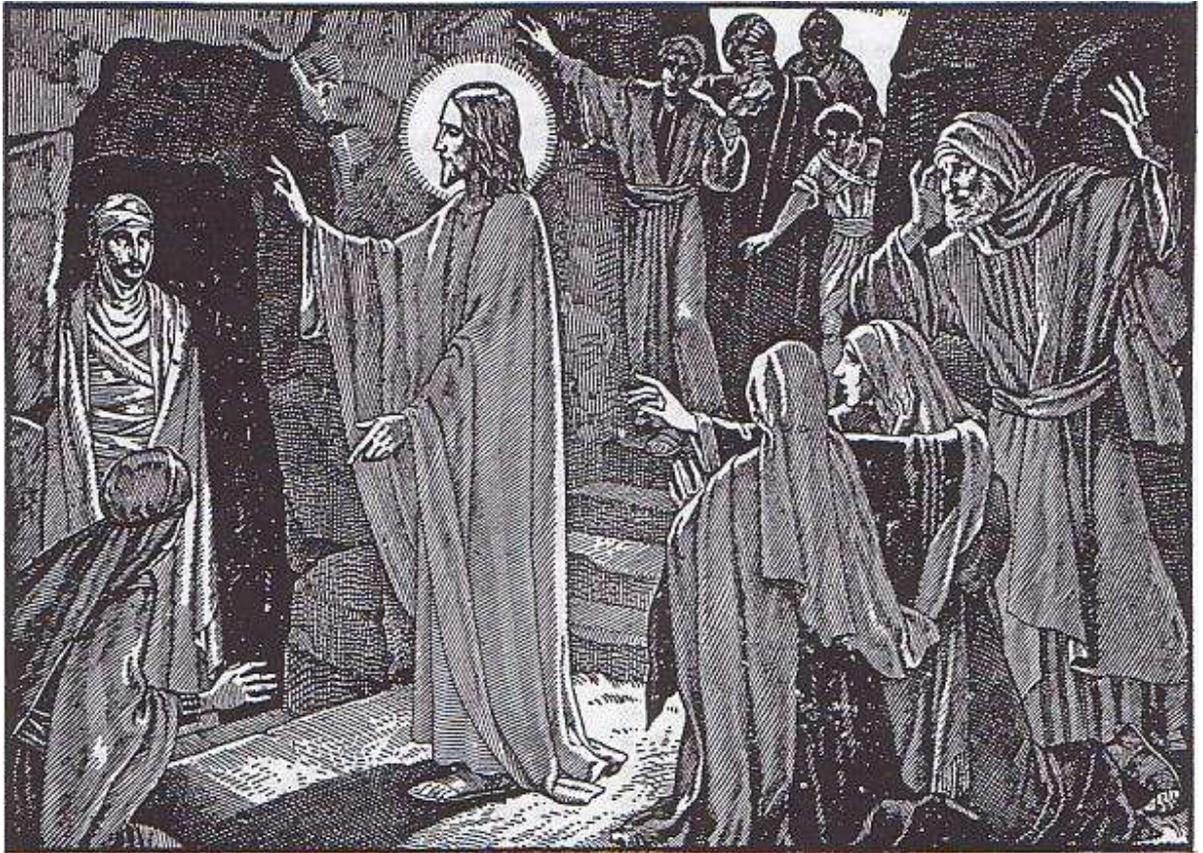
Let us model our obedience on this perfect pattern. Let us obey our superiors as representatives of God, giving them due respect and prompt obedience. When our parents command us, and we go about doing what they want, but with murmuring and without spirit, is that the obedience that the Child Jesus gave in Nazareth? When we have to do some unpleasant or difficult task, let us imitate Jesus in His very words: "Yes, Father, for such was thy good pleasure" (Matt. 11:26).

In this way our obedience will be like that of Jesus, supernatural; we shall obey human beings for the love of God; we shall really be obeying God Himself, in the persons of those He has placed over us. By the example of His hidden life our Lord set the principle for the religious life, particularly for that in *contemplative* orders.

4. Jesus "advanced in wisdom and grace before God and men." Although He possessed all wisdom and grace from the first moment of His mortal life, He manifested them only *gradually* and in a way that was in keeping with His years.

We can obtain much merit before God without doing any striking actions, by merely being humble and obedient in the place of life in which it has pleased God to put us. If Christ the Son of God, God Himself, was content to be humble, poor, and unknown, to do common tasks day by day for the greater part of His earthly life, is there any reason why we should be ever trying to exalt ourselves, to attract admiration, ever to feed our vanity?

### 33. The Public Life of Jesus Christ



*Our Lord spent the three years of His public life teaching, healing the sick, working miracles to prove His mission and Divinity. One of His most wonderful miracles was the raising of Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead and buried four days. But Jesus went to the sepulchre and ordered the stone closing it to be taken away. Then He cried: "Lazarus, come forth!" And Lazarus came forth from the grave. Because of this miracle, the Pharisees became more envious, and even planned to kill Lazarus, so as to make it appear that Jesus had not raised him from the dead.*

**When did Christ begin His public life?** --Christ began His public life when He was about thirty years old.

1. After spending long years in obscurity and humble toil, Jesus Christ next entered upon a period of activity, going about and teaching publicly. He left His home in Nazareth, and began His public life by an act of great humility: His *baptism* at the hands of St. John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

The mother of St. John the Baptist was St. Elizabeth, cousin of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. John lived a life of very rigorous penance in the desert, preparing himself for his role of forerunner or precursor of the Saviour. About two years before Christ started His public life, John the Baptist went out of the desert, and began to preach penance; he

baptized in the Jordan all those who believed in his teachings and wished to begin a new life.

St. John the Baptist was the *forerunner* or *precursor* of Christ. He spoke to the people of the coming Messiah, and pointed Jesus out to them as the "Lamb of God." He was put to death by Herod, because he reproved the ruler for his immoral life.

Jesus came to John to be baptized; immediately afterwards, as Our Lord came out of the river, the Holy Ghost came down upon Him in the form of a dove, and a Voice from heaven was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

2. After His baptism, Jesus went into the desert, where He *fasted* forty days and forty nights. This teaches us to look upon baptism as a call to penance, and to prepare for all kinds of activity by mortification and prayer.

The forty days of Lent are intended to commemorate the forty days' fast of Our Lord. Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday till midnight of Holy Saturday.

3. After Our Lord's long fast, the devil was permitted to *tempt* Him. Christ rebuked the devil, and angels came to minister to Him.

From this temptation of Our Lord we know that a temptation is not sinful. As long as we resist the devil, we are pleasing to God, however strong may be the temptation that assails us. "God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also give you a way out that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor.10:13).

**How long did Christ's public life last?** --Christ's public life lasted about three years, during which He went about preaching, teaching, and doing good.

1. Upon His return from His forty-day fast in the desert, Jesus called His *first disciples*. In a few days He performed His first miracle, changing water into wine at a marriage-feast in Cana, at the request of His Mother, although, as He told her, His time had not yet come.

Among the outstanding works of Jesus during the first year of His active life were: He drove sellers out of the Temple, saying they made it a "den of thieves". He cured the ruler's son, Peter's mother-in-law, the paralytic at the pool, the daughter of Jairus. He calmed the tempest.

2. Jesus began the second year of His public life by an act of utmost significance: He chose from the many that followed Him, "the Twelve", His twelve *Apostles*, Himself calling them Apostles. In the Sermon on the Mount He summarized His teachings; it is the law of love taking the place of the law of fear.

During the second year of His mission, Christ performed many miracles, among which were: the cure of the centurion's servant, of the widow's son at Naim; the first multiplication of the loaves; He walked on the water, and bade Peter walk on it, too. He forgave Mary Magdalen, and sent the Apostles on their mission. He began teaching in the form of parables, comparing what He wanted to teach with common things. Among His parables of this period were: the sower, the tares and wheat, the mustard seed, the pearl of great price.

3. In His *third* year of teaching, Jesus went to Galilee and Phoenicia, because in Judea where He had been teaching, the Pharisees for envy and jealousy sought to kill Him. In Phoenicia He gave in to the entreaties of a Gentile, a Canaanite, who persevered in asking Him to cure her daughter.

In Galilee Jesus cured a deaf-and-dumb man, using signs that the Church has adopted in its baptismal ceremonies; he performed the miracle of the second multiplication of the loaves. On Mount Thabor He was transfigured in the presence of Peter, James, and John. Among other cures were those of the ten lepers, and the man blind from birth. He promised the primacy over all to Peter, paid the tribute to Caesar, forgave the woman caught in adultery, sent out his seventy-two disciples on a mission, called the rich young man, instructed Mary and Martha, and was the guest of Zacheus. He told the parables of the unmerciful servant, the Good Samaritan, the lost sheep, the lost groat, the greater supper, the unjust steward, the prodigal son, Dives and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the publican, the laborers in the vineyard.

4. Finally, at the end of His public life, Jesus *raised Lazarus* from the dead. By this time the envy of the Pharisees was so great that they determined to bring about the death of Jesus; Judas came as a ready tool.

Magdalen anointed Our Lord, as He said, for His burial. He entered Jerusalem in triumph riding on an ass, with children waving palms and singing. He told the parable of the husbandmen and the heir, to show the Pharisees that He knew of their designs against Him. And last of all, He ate the Last Supper with His Apostles, there instituting the Holy Eucharist.

**What was Christ's aim in His public life?** --Christ's aim in His public life was to teach what God requires all to believe and practice, so that all may enter the kingdom of heaven.

1. For this purpose He gathered some seventy-two *disciples*, and from them chose twelve Apostles, to whom He gave special instruction and training. By them He established His Church, which was to carry on His work after His death, to continue teaching what He had openly and publicly taught.

He spoke to large crowds, sometimes numbering four or five thousand people, as when He multiplied the loaves and fishes. Christ taught in the simplest manner, so that all

might understand without difficulty. He used plain, homely words. He often used signs and parables, and illustrated His meaning by examples from nature and common life.

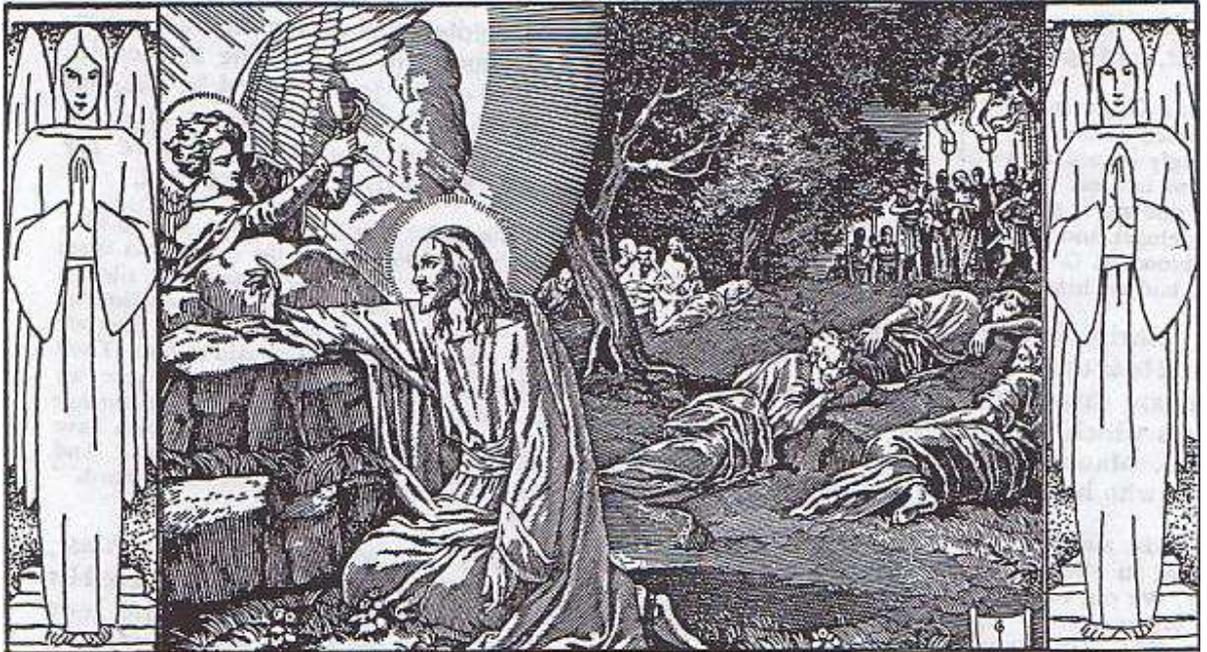
2. In the *doctrines* He taught, a leading idea is: "Seek first the kingdom of God."

He taught a new rule of faith, and gave new commandments. He taught the precept of love, even for our enemies. He revealed certain mysteries: such as those of the Blessed Trinity, of His own divinity, of the Last judgment. He instituted the seven sacraments.

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### 34. The Passion

(Fourth Article of the Apostles' Creed.)



After the Last Supper, Jesus went with His Apostles to the Garden of Gethsemani. And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wiltest" (Matt. 26:39). After praying three times the same prayer, Jesus said to His disciples: "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go. Behold, he who betrays Me is at hand" (Matt. 26:45-46). Judas had come.

**What important events marked the end of Our Lord's public life?** --The following events marked the end of Our Lord's public life: His solemn entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper He ate with His Apostles, and finally, His passion and death.

1. Jesus Christ entered *Jerusalem* in triumph, riding on an ass, with children waving palms and singing.

The Church commemorates the entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. On that day palms are blessed, and there is a procession, in memory of the palms that the joyous people waved at the entrance into Jerusalem of Our Lord. Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. The week following it is called *Holy Week*.

2. On the Thursday evening after His entry into Jerusalem, Jesus ate the *Paschal Supper* with His Apostles. We call it the Last Supper, for it was the last meal He ate before His death.

The Jews celebrated the feast of the Pasch in memory of their deliverance from Egypt. They had been saved by the blood of the paschal lamb.

3. After the Supper, Our Lord *washed the feet* of the Apostles. He did this to teach us humility.

In commemoration, the celebrant of Holy Thursday Mass today washes the feet of twelve men, after the Gospel.

4. After the washing of feet, Our Lord *instituted the Blessed Eucharist*, said the first Mass, and gave His Apostles their *first Holy Communion*.

**What is meant by the Redemption?** --By the Redemption is meant that Jesus Christ, as Redeemer of the whole human race, offered His sufferings and death to God as a fitting sacrifice in satisfaction for the sins of men, and regained for them the right to be children of God and heirs of heaven.

A *redeemer* is one who pays in order to get back something lost. He gives satisfaction, compensation for an offense or injury done another.

1. No creature could, of himself, make satisfaction for sin. Sin offends an infinite God, and therefore would need infinite satisfaction. Therefore Someone Infinite, Jesus Christ, had to offer that satisfaction.

Jesus Christ suffered and died as man; as God He could neither suffer nor die. He suffered excruciatingly in order to make full reparation for sin, and to impress on us the great evil of sin. Even only one sin is so abominable to God that not all the deluges and fires can wipe off the stain. Only the blood of God Himself can do so. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6).

2. Christ died for *all men*, without exception. He is the Redeemer of all men. Not all men are saved because *not all accept* the graces which Christ merited for us by His death. Many do not believe in Him. Of those who believe, many lead sinful lives.

"Christ also loved us and delivered himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:2). We can never realize fully that God died for us. We can never repay Him in this life or the next. The only way we can show our appreciation is to live according to His will.

**What were the chief sufferings of Christ?** --The chief sufferings of Christ were His bitter agony of soul, His bloody sweat, His cruel scourging, His crowning with thorns, His crucifixion, and His death on the cross.

Christ had often foretold His Passion. "For he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and having been killed, he will rise again on the third day'" (Mark 9:30). Again: "Behold, we

are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again" (Mark 10:33-34).

1. From the Last Supper, Christ went with His Apostles to the *Garden of Olives* to pray. There He was overwhelmed with sorrow and agony, so that He sweated blood.

Our Lord looked forward to His agony, saying to His Apostles, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father has commanded me. Arise, let us go from here" (John 14:31). In the Garden, Jesus felt so sad at the sins of men and at what would befall Him that He said, "My soul is sad even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). To His Father, He cried out in pain, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). In agony, "his sweat became as drops of blood, running down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44).

2. Jesus Christ was *betrayed* by Judas, seized by soldiers, led before the high priest, and condemned to death. The Sanhedrin, the council of the Jews, headed by Caiphas the high priest, condemned Jesus to death for the crime of blasphemy, because *He claimed to be Christ* the Son of God.

"Then the high priest, standing up, said to him, 'Dost thou make no answer to the things that these men prefer against thee?' But Jesus kept silence. And the high priest said to him, 'I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'Thou hast said it.' ... Then the high priest tore his garment, saying, 'He has blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?' And they answered and said, 'He is liable to death'" (Matt. 26:62-66)

Jesus Christ was led to *Pontius Pilate*, the Roman Governor of Judea, to have His sentence confirmed. At the time the Jews were forbidden by their Roman masters from putting anyone to death without the confirmation of the Governor. Pilate questioned Christ time and again, but had to say to His accusers: "I find no guilt in Him."

The Jewish Priests and Pharisees hated and persecuted Jesus because they expected the Messiah to be an earthly king. They were so wicked that in spite of the proofs of Christ's divinity, they would not believe a poor man could be the Messiah. They hated Jesus; He had rebuked them for their sins.

3. But Pilate wished to please the Jews, and had Jesus scourged, Jesus was bound to a pillar, His clothes torn off; strong men with whips, cords, and straps with iron spikes scourged Him, and the whole body of Our Lord was one great wound.

"And the soldiers, plaiting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head, and arrayed him in a purple cloak. And they kept coming to him and saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him. Pilate therefore again went outside and said to them, 'Behold, I bring him

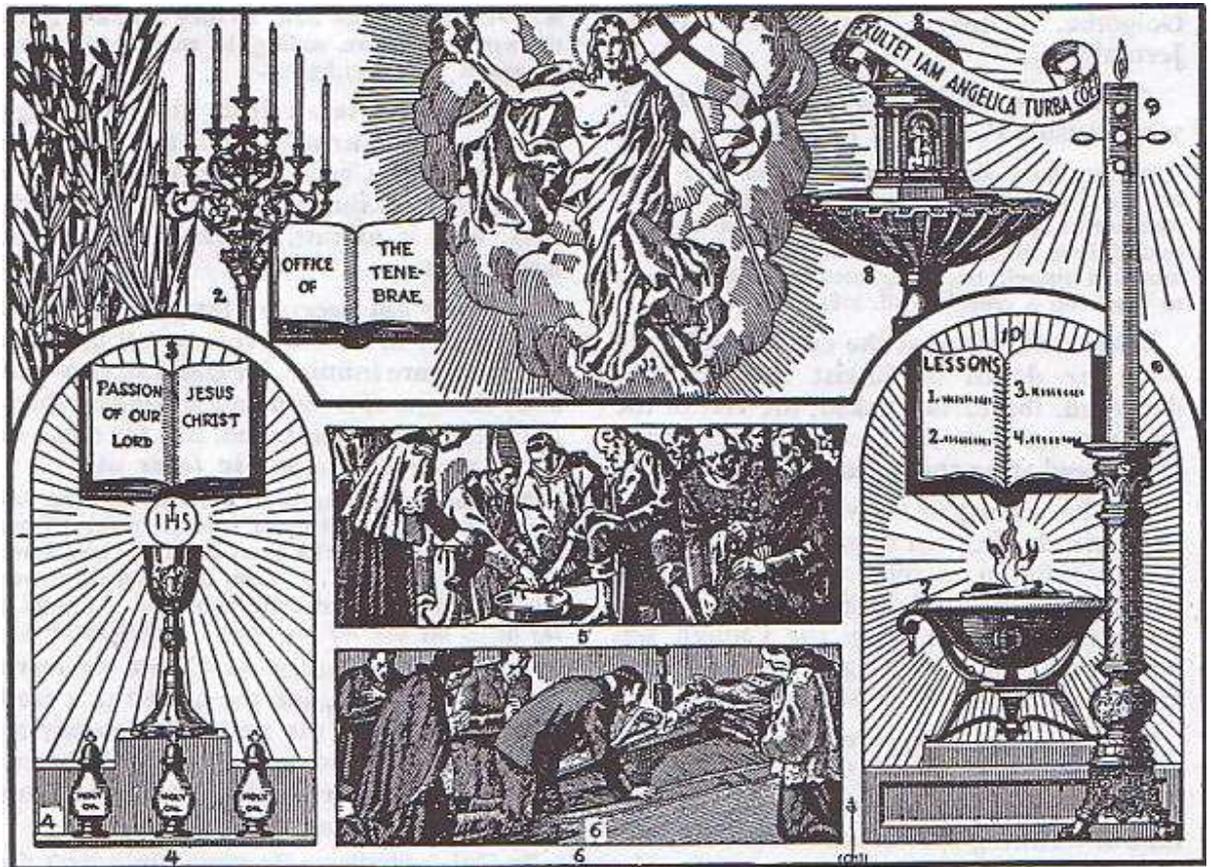
out to you, that you may know that I find no guilt in him.' Jesus therefore came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, 'Behold the man!'"

4. At last, fearing that if he did not permit Jesus to be put to death the Jews would accuse him before Caesar, Pilate gave in to the insistence of the Jews and delivered Him to them to be *crucified*.

Christ was made to carry His cross through the streets of Jerusalem to Mount Calvary. He was nailed to the cross about noon, dying three hours afterwards, crucified between two thieves.

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## 35. Calvary



*During Holy Week the Church lives again the passion and death of Christ. On the first day, Palm Sunday, the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is celebrated by the blessing of palms (1), followed by a solemn procession. At the Mass of this day, as on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, the story of the Passion (3) from each Evangelist is read. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week the Tenebrae are celebrated: the fifteen candles are put out one by one, to symbolize the flight of the disciples (2), and the death of Our Lord. On Holy Thursday morning a pontifical Mass is celebrated, in cathedrals only; at this the holy oils (4) are blessed. Commemorating the Last Supper at which the Holy Eucharist and the Priesthood were instituted, Holy Thursday Mass takes place in the evening, with the washing of feet (5) to commemorate Christ's washing of the Apostles' feet. At the Good Friday service, emphasis is given to the veneration of the cross (6). Holy Saturday services are held at night, beginning with the blessing of the new fire (7); from this the Paschal candle is lighted (9), a reminder of Christ, Light of the world. The five grains of incense imbedded in the candle remind us of His wounds. Four Lessons (10) are read; the baptismal water is blessed and taken to the font (8). The Mass commemorates, Our Lord's glorious Resurrection (11).*

**When did Christ die?** --Christ died on Good Friday.

During the three hours that Christ suffered on the cross, He spoke seven times. We call these the *seven words*:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
2. "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise."
3. "Woman, behold thy son.... Behold thy mother."
4. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
5. "I thirst."
6. "It is consummated."
7. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

**Where did Christ die?** --Christ died on Golgotha, a place outside the city of Jerusalem.

Christ was crucified on a hill called Calvary, outside the city of Jerusalem.

St. Augustine says that on the cross Our Lord bent His head to kiss us, extended His arms to embrace us, and opened His heart to love us. How thankful we should be to Christ for His love! "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8).

**What took place at the death of Christ?** --At the death of Christ the sun was darkened, the earth quaked, the veil of the Temple was rent, the rocks split, and many of the dead arose and appeared in Jerusalem.

1. The tearing of the veil of the Temple at the death of Christ marked the *end* of the Jewish religion as the true religion. This Jewish religion had been a figure of the True Church, and when the Church was established, was no longer needed: types and figures had to give way to *reality*.

The veil of the Temple concealed the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the Temple.

2. We must not, however, make the mistake of thinking that Christianity ended the moral laws-laws regarding good and evil that were taught by the Jewish religion. Christ came not to destroy, but to *perfect*, the Old Law.

The authority of the Temple and its officers was now placed in the Church established by Christ, in the hands of His Apostles. The ceremonial laws of the Jews relating to worship were abolished.

3. The Church commemorates the passion and death of Christ on ***Good Friday***. The solemn afternoon service consists of four parts, the veneration of the cross being the chief feature. All may receive Communion.

After the Holy Thursday ceremonies the altar was stripped; lights were put out, and bells silenced.

4. After His death, Our Lord's body was taken down from the cross and *laid in the grave* which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Then His disciples rolled up a great stone to close the tomb.

The chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we have remembered how that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Give orders, therefore, that the sepulchre be guarded until the third day, or else his disciples may come and steal him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead'; and the last imposture will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go, guard it as well as you know how.' So they went and made the sepulchre secure, scaling the stone, and setting the guard (Matt. 27:63-66)

**What do we learn from the sufferings and death of Christ?** --From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn God's love for man and the evil of sin, for which God, who is all-just, demands such great satisfaction.

1. It was not *necessary* for Jesus to suffer so intensely in order to redeem all men. As His merits are infinite, He could have wiped away the sins of a thousand worlds by shedding one drop of His blood. But He chose to suffer agonies because He *loves* us.

"Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep ... I am the good shepherd; and I know mine and mine know me. ... and I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10:11-15).

2. From the Passion of Christ we learn the *evil that sin is*, and the hatred that God bears it. We learn the necessity of satisfying for the malice and wickedness that is sin. Sin must be a horrible thing, to make Jesus Christ the God-man suffer so much.

By Christ's obedience He atoned for Adam's disobedience, for He was obedient unto death. "He was wounded for our iniquities; he was bruised for our sins" (Is. 53:5).

3. The sufferings of Christ, in addition, serve as an *example* for us, to strengthen us under trials.

Christ gave us an example of patience and strength. If we receive trials, we should accept them with resignation, in imitation of Our Lord, Who suffered so willingly for our sake. We can never have as much suffering as He did.

*Churches* are built in the form of a cross because within the sacrifice of the cross is reenacted. Within them we remember easily the events that took place that day long ago, when Jesus Christ, Son of God, for love of us suffered and died on the Cross.

Church spires lead us to "seek those things that are above" (Col. 3:1); they are surmounted by a cross, the symbol of our salvation; their bells call us to prayer, communion with God. The church interior is divided into three parts: the porch, where in former times those preparing for baptism and the penitents knelt; the nave, which is the central and main portion, for those attending the Holy Sacrifice; and the choir or sanctuary, where in former times the singers stayed, now reserved for the clergy, and separated from the nave by the communion rail.

## 36. The Resurrection

*(Fifth Article of the Apostles' Creed.)*



*"Now late in the night of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord come down from heaven, and drawing near rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment like snow. And for fear of him the guards were terrified, and became like dead men. But the angel spoke and said to the women, Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord was laid' " (Matt. 28:1-7).*

### **What do we mean when we say in the Apostles' Creed that Christ descended into hell?**

--When we say that Christ descended into hell, we mean that, after He died, the soul of Christ descended into a place or state of rest, called limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting for Him.

1. Christ did not go to the hell of the damned, but to the "hell" of the just. In Holy Scripture, it was called "Abraham's bosom". St. Peter called it "a prison". We call it *limbo*.

Among the souls in limbo were Adam, Eve, Abel, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Joseph, David, Isaias, Daniel, Job, Tobias, St. Joseph, and St. John the Baptist. They went to heaven at Our Lord's entrance upon His Ascension.

2. Christ went to limbo to announce to the souls waiting there the joyful news that He had reopened heaven to mankind.

"He was brought to life in the spirit, in which also he went and preached to those spirits that were in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19). The souls in limbo could not go to heaven, which had been closed by Adam's sin. It was only *reopened* to man by the death of Our Lord, by the Redemption. The souls in limbo *did not suffer pain*, but they longed for heaven. After the release of these souls from Limbo, and their entrance into heaven, this Limbo for the just souls ceased to exist.

While His soul was in limbo, Christ's body was in the holy sepulchre. When man dies, his soul is *separated* from the body. When Jesus died, His body and soul were separated, but His divinity remained united to both body and soul.

Christ's body did not corrupt in the tomb. It was in the holy sepulchre from Friday evening when He was buried, to Sunday morning, when He arose from the grave. This is why we say Christ rose on the third day, although He was in the grave for only three incomplete days.

**When did Christ rise from the dead?** --Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.

1. Christ had often *foretold* His resurrection.

He said of His own body; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Before entering Jerusalem He said to His Apostles that He would be put to death and "rise again on the third day" (Matt. 20:19). On the night of the Last Supper He said: "But after I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt. 26:32).

2. Even *His enemies knew* that He had predicted His resurrection. This is why they obtained Pilate's permission to seal the sepulchre and set guards to watch it.

They said to Pilate: "Sir, we have remembered how that deceiver said, while he was yet alive. '*After three days I will rise again*'" (Matt. 27:63).

3. Today the entire Christendom celebrates *Easter Sunday* in memory of the Resurrection. It is the Feast of feasts, commemorating the completion of our redemption by Christ.

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday following the first full moon of spring; the feast therefore is moveable, and can fall between March 22 and April 25, The Paschal season lasts till Trinity Sunday; till then the joyous *alleluia* resounds.

**Why did Christ remain on earth forty days after His Resurrection?** --Christ remained on earth forty days after His Resurrection to prove that He had truly risen from the dead, and to complete the instruction of the Apostles.

1. Christ's resurrection is an *undoubted fact* on which rests the Christian faith.

St. Paul says: "*If Christ has not risen, vain then is our preaching, vain too is your faith*" (1 Cor. 15:14). And according to St. John, an eyewitness: "Many other signs also Jesus worked in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:30-31)

2. In the first place, Christ *really died*. His death was witnessed by many, both friends and enemies. It was proved by the soldier who plunged his spear into His side. It was communicated officially to Pilate. His bones were not broken, because He was found already dead. His Mother and disciples would never have buried Him had they suspected the least chance of life.

Some unbelievers urge that Christ was dead only in appearance and after an interval recovered from His swoon and left the grave. The loss of blood following the scourging alone would have been enough to *cause death*, not to mention the wounds He received on the cross.

3. In the second place, Christ *really came to life*. On the first Easter morning He appeared to Mary Magdalen and the other women who sought Him at the sepulchre. Then He appeared to Peter. In the evening He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. At night He appeared to the assembled Apostles.

Nor were these witnesses easily deceived. The Apostles did not at first believe the women who told them the Lord had risen. They *would not even believe* their own senses, thinking the risen Saviour was a ghost. Christ had to call for something to eat, to prove that He was not a ghost. St. Thomas refused to believe the other ten Apostles, who had seen Christ first. He only believed when Our Lord appeared to him and bade him touch His wounds.

4. The Jews *bribed* the guards to say that while they were asleep, the disciples had stolen the body of Christ.

Such an act was made impossible by Christ's enemies themselves. They had *sealed and guarded* the tomb. "So they went and made the sepulchre secure, sealing the stone, and setting the guard" (Matt. 27:66). Even supposing the guards to have fallen asleep, the great stone which covered the sepulchre could not have been moved without waking some at least of the guards. Finally, it is a remarkable circumstance that the guards were not punished for this breach of duty.

5. Christ *really arose* from the dead. For forty days He appeared to many. He conversed, walked, and even ate with them. He spent much time instructing the Apostles.

One of His most important appearances was to *five hundred* disciples on a mountain in Galilee, when He gave the Apostles the command to go forth into the world and teach. The Evangelists have recorded nine apparitions: but it is evident from their writings (for example, Acts 1:3) that there were other and unrecorded occasions when Christ appeared. Countless of Christ's followers *laid down their lives* in testimony of the truth of the resurrection. "During forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

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### 37. The Ascension

*(Sixth Article of the Apostles' Creed.)*



*On Mount Olivet, a hill outside Jerusalem, forty days after His Resurrection, Our Lord spoke to the disciples, telling them how the Holy Ghost would descend upon them. "And when He had said this, he was lifted up before their eyes, and a cloud took him out of their sight, And while they were gazing up to heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white garments, and said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the some way as you have seen him going up to heaven' " (Acts 1:9-11).*

**Why did Christ rise from the dead?** --Christ rose from the dead to show that He is true God, and to teach us that we, too, shall rise from the dead.

1. The Resurrection is the most important of Christ's miracles. He Himself chose it as the most conclusive *proof* of His divine mission; the Apostles appealed to it to confirm their teachings. The fact of the Resurrection, by itself alone, proves Christ God.

Christ said repeatedly that He is the Son of God; He said He would rise again from the grave. He did rise, unaided, by His own almighty power; therefore He is as He said, the

Son of God. If He were an impostor, God would not have permitted Him to rise again. "But take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

2. Christ bore on His body the marks of the five wounds. The qualities of His risen body were:
  - a. *Agility*. It could go with the quickness of thought to all places.
  - b. *Subtlety* or spirituality. It was free from hunger, thirst, fatigue, and other needs. It could penetrate material substances.
  - c. *Clarity* or brightness. It shone with splendor.
  - d. *Impassibility*. It was immune to pain, disease, and death.
3. We are fortunate in having today for veneration a number of *relics* of the Passion.

The tablet with the inscription "I.N.R.I." is in the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Rome. One nail is said to have been thrown by St. Helena into the Adriatic to calm a storm; another is in the iron crown of the Lombards. Veronica's towel is in Rome. Part of the pillar of the scourging is at Rome, part in Jerusalem. The winding sheets are in Turin, and in Cadonin, France. Of the crown of thorns, part is in Paris, part in Toulouse. All these remind us of the time when "they entreated Him to let them touch but the tassel of His cloak" (Matt. 14:36).

**Will all men rise from the dead?** --All men will rise from the dead, but only those who have been faithful to Christ will share in His glory.

1. Like Christ, we, too, shall rise from the dead on the *Last Day*, and our bodies will be reunited with our souls.

"He who raised up Jesus will raise us up also with Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:14). "As Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

2. Those who have been faithful to Christ will be *rewarded* with the glory of heaven; those that have been unfaithful will be *punished* in the depths of hell.

"If you have risen with Christ, Seek the things that are above, ... not the things that are on earth." The rewards are given only to the faithful.

**When did Christ ascend into heaven?** --Christ ascended, body and soul, into heaven on Ascension day, forty days after His Resurrection.

1. The Ascension took place from the Mount of Olives. Christ's Apostles and disciples were present. It was *full daylight*.

He gave His followers His last instructions. Then He raised His hands and blessed them. He told them to preach the Gospel to all nations, and promised to be with them to the end of the world.

2. While all looked on, He was *raised up*, by *His own power*, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

"Now he led them out towards Bethany, and... was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51).

3. The disciples *returned* to Jerusalem with great joy. Their Master had returned to heaven in glory, and His arrival there had opened to His followers the heavenly gates.

He had earned for men infinite grace, so that they were now able to attain the friendship of God Himself. Christ the King had gone home to prepare a place for men in heaven (John 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:7). We celebrate the feast of the Ascension forty days after Easter, on *Ascension Thursday*.

**What do we mean when we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty?** --When we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, we mean that Our Lord as God is equal to the Father, and that as man He shares above all the saints in the glory of His Father, and exercises for all eternity the supreme authority of a King over all creatures.

1. Christ as God is *equal* to the Father in all things. But even as man Christ is only next to God. Of Himself, Christ has dominion over all creation, his authority resting on the union of His divine and human natures in the Person of the Son of God.

He is *above* all the angels and saints. To Sit at the right hand of anybody is a mark of honor from that person. "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 109:1,2).

2. Christ ascended into heaven in order:
  - a. To enter into the *glory* He had merited.
  - b. To send down the *Holy Ghost* on His Church.
  - c. To be our *intercessor* with the Father.
  - d. To *prepare* a place for us in heaven.

**What do we mean when we say that Christ will come from thence to judge the living and the dead?** --When we say that Christ will come from thence to judge the living and the dead, we mean that on the last day Our Lord will come to pronounce a sentence of eternal reward or of eternal punishment on every one who has ever lived in this world. (*Seventh Article of the Apostles' Creed: see Chapter 81 on General Judgment*)

1. Jesus Christ will be our Supreme Judge because He is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Apoc. 17:14).

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will render to everyone according to his conduct" (Matt. 16:27).

2. Christ's teaching has changed the face of the earth. One poor young man, teaching for three years in the hills and valleys of Galilee, and dying a shameful death, has brought light, love, peace, and hope into men's lives, even the lowliest.

Before Christ the world was the abode of sin and vice, idolatry, polygamy, divorce, and slavery. However, the world today, although reformed by Christianity, is far from perfect. This is because many refuse to obey the teachings of Christ. It is our duty to make Christ *better known and loved*, so that all may "*seek first the kingdom of God.*"

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## 38. The Holy Ghost

*(Eighth Article of the Apostles' Creed.)*



*"And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak" (Acts 2:1-4).*

**Who is the Holy Ghost?** --The Holy Ghost is God and the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

1. Christ often spoke of the Holy Ghost.

One of the most solemn occasions was when He Charged the Apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

2. On certain occasions, the Holy Ghost appeared in *visible form*. When Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove. On Pentecost, the

Holy Ghost descended with a mighty rushing wind, and rested over the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

These signs are symbolic of the action of the Holy Ghost. The form of a dove symbolizes the *gentleness* with which the Holy Spirit works in our souls. The rush of wind represents the *strengthening* of the will. The fire represents *zeal*, fervor, and the illumination of the mind.

3. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

This does not mean that the Holy Ghost began to exist later in time than the Father and the Son. He proceeded from them from all eternity; He is to them as warmth is to fire, existing and proceeding at the same time. There can be no fire without warmth; if there were an eternal fire, there would be an eternal warmth. So since there are the eternal Father and Son, there is the eternal Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the eternal, mutual love that the Father and Son bear each other; but instead of being mere feeling, He is a Person, a Being, God.

4. The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, because He is God.

True God as the Father and the Son are, the Holy Ghost is eternal, all-knowing, almighty. The Third Person is called *Holy Spirit*, from the Latin word *spiritus*, a breath. He was breathed forth by the Father and the Son. In English we also call Him *Holy Ghost*. Other names used to refer to the Holy Ghost are: Advocate, Paraclete, Consoler, Comforter, Substantial Love, Spirit of Truth, etc.

**What does the Holy Ghost do for the salvation of mankind?** --The Holy Ghost dwells in the Church as the source of its life, and sanctifies souls through the gift of grace.

1. Although all Divine works depend on all Three Persons, we attribute the work of sanctification to God the Holy Ghost, because He is the oneness of love of the Father and the Son, and the sanctification of man by grace reveals that boundless love.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

2. After Baptism, we have the Holy Ghost in our hearts and He remains with us as long as we have *no mortal sin* on our souls. This is the gift of "sanctifying grace".

Then we say that the Spirit of God dwells in us. We should therefore treat our body with great reverence, for it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost is given in a very special manner in the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders.

3. The Holy Ghost is the *source* of the life of the Church. He consoles, guides, and imparts strength to it, as Christ promised.

"The Church was filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31). "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth" (John 16:12-13).

**When was the dwelling of the Holy Ghost first visibly manifested in the Church?** --

The dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church was first visibly manifested on Pentecost Sunday, when He came down upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

After the Ascension, the Apostles together with the blessed Virgin and disciples, men and women, numbering about 120 persons, gathered in the Cenacle, the upper room in Jerusalem where the Last Supper had been taken. There they spent the time in prayer, awaiting the fulfillment of Our Lord's promise: "Wait here in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

1. Jesus had *promised* to send the Holy Ghost to the Apostles. He said at the Last Supper: "It is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7) . On Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension, the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles and disciples.

On Pentecost three thousand members were baptized after the preaching of St. Peter. Many believed, because the Apostles had the "gift of tongues" that is, they spoke in one language, but those of different races who listened heard what was said in their own different languages.

2. We celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost today as ***Pentecost Sunday***, ten days after Ascension Thursday, fifty days after Easter. *Pentecost* means *fifty*.

The *nine days* in the Cenacle while the Apostles and disciples waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit were spent in prayer, the *first novena* in the Church. "All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). In imitation of that first novena, it is our custom today to make novenas especially in preparation for great feasts. We also make novenas of petition or thanksgiving.

**How long will the Holy Ghost dwell in the Church?** --The Holy Ghost will dwell in the Church until the end of time.

"I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17)

1. The Holy Ghost watches over the Church, *protecting* it from destruction. From the beginning the Church spread very rapidly. At the death of the Apostles, in spite of persecutions, it was known in all parts of the then civilized world. Thence it has spread to the ends of the earth.

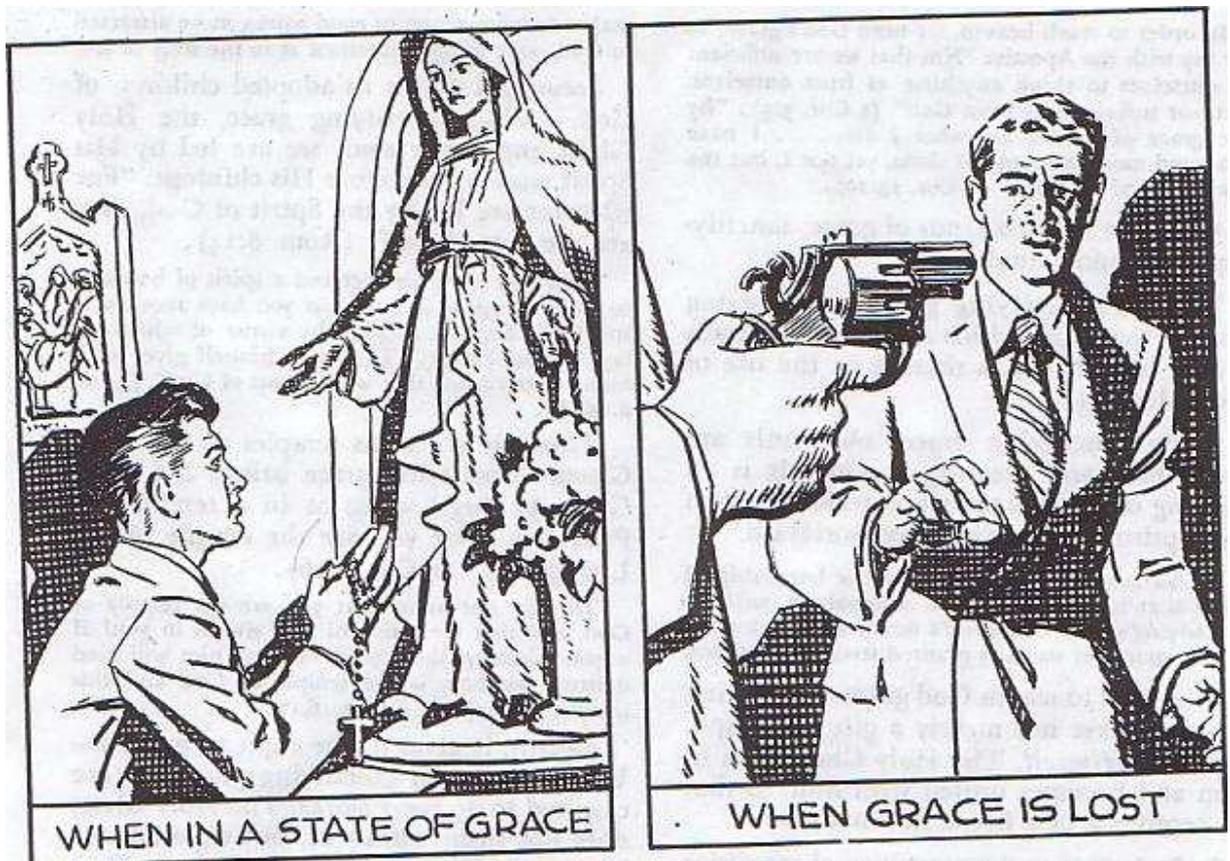
St. Paul could say: "Yes, indeed, their voice has gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18).

2. The Holy Ghost gave *testimony* of Christ, and strengthened the Apostles to give testimony of Christ.

Our Lord said, "But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me. And you also bear witness" (John 15:26,27). By His descent, the Holy Ghost proved that all Jesus Christ had said and done was true, that He was indeed the Son of God. After the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles gave testimony of Christ by going all over the world, (Acts 1:8), preaching and suffering for Christ, meeting death joyfully (Acts 5:41; Rom. 8:18) , saying, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."

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### 39. Sanctifying Grace



*A soul in the state of grace is very beautiful in the sight of God. Then we are friends and children of God and heirs of heaven; then we are like the very angels. We must always try to avoid sin. But when the soul has lost the grace of God by mortal sin, nothing on earth can be uglier in God's sight. If we are so careful about our personal appearance before mortals, how much more should we be careful about the appearance of our immortal soul, that God may be pleased with us.*

**What is grace?** --Grace is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation.

1. Grace is a favor, *a free gift*, granted to us though we have no claim to it. God grants us graces because He is good, not because we *deserve* them. God grants us graces for the sake of His Son, Who died on the cross to earn for us these graces; we men can never merit these graces.

"All have sinned and have need of the glory of God. They are justified *freely* by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ" (Rom. 3:23-24).

2. The **Holy Ghost** dispenses the graces of God merited by Our Lord Jesus Christ; He bestows and perfects what is already earned, and acts as the channel of grace.

In a similar manner the sun does not make the plants, but develops what is already planted; without the sun plants would die and be useless to man.

3. The *supernatural* is that which is beyond natural Powers. It is of two kinds:
  - a. When the fact is beyond natural powers in the manner of occurrence: as when a blind man instantly can see; and
  - b. When the fact fundamentally and entirely surpasses all powers of the natural order: as when God imparts a part of His life to man through the gift of sanctifying grace.
4. The assistance of the Holy Ghost is *necessary*. Without the help of the graces that He dispenses, with merely natural powers, we cannot do the least work to merit salvation. Without God, we are nothing.

In order to reach heaven, we need God's grace; so we say with the Apostle: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5) ; "By the grace of God I am what I am. . . . I have laboured more than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

5. There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying grace and actual grace.

**What is sanctifying grace?** --Sanctifying grace is that grace which confers on our souls a new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself.

1. By sanctifying grace, our souls are made holy and pleasing to God. It is an *abiding* or *permanent* grace, which we gain by baptism, and lose only by mortal sin.

By Adam's sin all mankind lost the friendship of God; that is, we are born in original sin, *without* sanctifying grace. Our Lord's death won back sanctifying grace for us; it is granted freely at Baptism.

2. A soul to whom God grants sanctifying grace receives not merely a gift from God, but *God Himself*. The Holy Ghost lives in him and becomes united with him, so that he receives a new life, a new nature.

St. Paul refers to this acquisition of sanctifying grace as the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new. It is as if an old and worn man were suddenly to become a handsome young man full of the vigor of life. The beauty of a soul in the state of sanctifying grace is too great for human eyes to bear. As a child said, when asked how his soul would look immediately after his confirmation, if it could be photographed, "Why, it would look like God!"

**What are the chief effects of sanctifying grace?** --The chief effects of sanctifying grace are:

*First*, it makes us holy and pleasing to God.-When we are in possession of sanctifying grace, we are *free* from mortal sin; the two cannot dwell together. The fire of the Holy Ghost sears away all that God abhors, so that we acquire God's friendship.

However, although free from mortal sin, we do not: with sanctifying grace, become free from the remains of sin. So even saints feel the human inclination to sin, against which the struggle is lifelong, and from which we should gain merit. This human frailty is imbedded in our flesh, and is present in our souls as a result of original sin.

Sanctifying grace, however, although it does not cure us of the weakness of the flesh, strengthens our will, so that for us the war against sin becomes easier. The charity accompanying sanctifying grace makes us more prone to good works, more attracted to God, with minds illumined as to the folly of sin.

*Second*, it makes us adopted children of God. - With sanctifying grace, the Holy Ghost *enters* our soul; we are led by His Spirit, and are therefore His children: "For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

"Now you have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God" (Rom. 8:15-16).

*Third*, it makes us temples of the Holy Ghost.-Sanctifying grace brings the Holy Ghost to dwell in us as in a *temple*. St. Paul says, "For you are the temple of the Living God" (2 Cor. 6: 16).

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy; for holy is the temple of God and this temple you are" (1 Cor. 3: 16,17)

*Fourth*, it gives us the right to heaven. When we are in sanctifying grace, we are inspired to do *good works*. The Holy Ghost does not sleep within us, but expands our heart with His grace, and urges our will to do good. And as we are adopted children of God, such actions become meritorious for heaven.

If we are children of God, we are at the same time heirs, and therefore have a right to His Kingdom. "We are the sons of God. But if we are sons, we are heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16-17)

**Why is sanctifying grace necessary for salvation?** --Sanctifying grace is necessary for salvation because it is the supernatural life, which alone enables us to attain the supernatural happiness of heaven.

The presence of God in the soul gives it life. When the Holy Ghost is dwelling in the soul, it is enabled to know and love God, to do supernatural works. Speaking of the "gift of God", Our Lord said it "shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life

everlasting" (John 4:14). Without sanctifying grace, the soul is without God; and without God, the soul becomes the devil's.

One cannot gain any merit for heaven as long as he is not in sanctifying grace, what is termed "*in the state of grace*". For without sanctifying grace one is an enemy of God, and cannot enter His kingdom.

Mortal sin makes the soul displeasing to God, and thus deprives it of sanctifying grace.

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## 40. Actual Grace



*The case of Saul of Tarsus is one of the most wonderful instances of cooperation with God's grace. Saul of Tarsus was one of the most active persecutors of the early Christians. On the way to Damascus to arrest Christians, Saul was struck down by a brilliant light, and heard a voice say: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" And Jesus answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou art persecuting. Saul immediately grasped at grace, and asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" From then on he turned his back on his former life, and belonged completely to Christ, till as the incomparable Apostle Paul he was martyred in Rome.*

**What is actual grace?** --Actual grace is a supernatural help of God which enlightens our mind and strengthens our will to do good and to avoid evil.

By actual grace the Holy Ghost shows us the emptiness in themselves of earthly things. He makes us see our own sins, and the true goal of life. By it we can perform a virtuous act or reject a temptation.

Actual grace is *transient*; that is, it is given to us only when we need it, to perform a good act, or to overcome a temptation.

An example of the wonderful action of the Holy Ghost in enlightening the mind and strengthening the will is the First Pentecost. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the

Apostles were ignorant and afraid; after His descent, His grace made them wise and fearless men, going forth to preach Christ everywhere, ready to die for their faith.

1. God gives us always *sufficient grace* to be saved. A true Christian should view his whole life in the light of grace. All God's gifts granted for man's salvation are graces.

A good family, a good education,-these are graces. But even sickness and hardships are God's graces, and may be the steps by which to ascend to heaven. And God grants graces to protect us against temptation, never suffering us to be tempted beyond our strength. If we do our part, avoid the occasions of sin, and cooperate with His graces, we shall win.

**Is actual grace necessary for all who have attained the use of reason?** --Actual grace is necessary for all who have attained the use of reason, because without it we cannot long resist the power of temptation, nor perform other actions which merit a reward in heaven.

We *all need* actual grace. Sinners need it to rise from sin. The just need it to persevere in good. Without grace, we fall into sin.

Herod was offered actual grace when he heard of the birth of the Messiah from the three wise men; but Herod rejected the grace, and added to his sins.

1. Grace is given to *all men*, although not in equal amounts. Some receive more, some less. Some ordinary graces are granted to all men; certain extraordinary graces are granted to chosen ones.

God is *free* to bestow His gifts as He likes. The Blessed Virgin received more than other mortals. Christians receive more than pagans. Those in the state of grace are likely to receive more than those in the state of mortal sin. In a way, our graces depend also on *our dispositions*. If we are faithful in corresponding with what we get, we receive more abundantly. Often our carelessness and indifference turn away God's graces from us. We reject Him who only wishes to make us saints, whose "delight is to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8:31).

**What are the principal ways of obtaining grace?** --The principal ways of obtaining grace are prayer and the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

The sacraments of Baptism and Penance give grace to those not possessing it; the other sacraments increase grace in those already in the state of grace.

1. Actual grace is obtained by *good works*. It is especially obtained by the use of *means* offered by the Church, such as hearing Mass, sermons, etc., and receiving the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist, which contains God, the Source of Grace.

Although we cannot merit grace by our good works, still our good works can beg God for us, to give us grace. Good works are necessary, for God will not save us without our cooperation.

Actual grace is made to *act* through various means: through sermons, reading of good books, illness and death, advice of superiors and friends, good example, etc.

The first converts at Pentecost were moved by the preaching of the Apostles. St. Ignatius of Loyola was moved by the reading of the lives of the saints; St. Francis of Assisi, during an illness; St. Francis Borgia, upon seeing the corpse of Queen Isabella. Often God sends us sufferings as a means by which the Holy Ghost may speak to us.

**Can we resist the grace of God?** --Unfortunately, we can resist the grace of God, for our will is free, and God does not force us to accept His grace.

1. Grace *does not force* us. It leaves us free to choose between good and evil. The Holy Ghost guides and enlightens, but we can still close our eyes to His grace. If we cooperate, we gain other graces.

As Christ said, "For to him who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance" (Matt. 13:12). He who persists in rejecting the gift of God's grace and refuses to be converted will die in his sin and will be forever excluded from the sight of God. "From him who does not have, even that which he seems to have shall be taken away. But as for the unprofitable servant, cast him forth into the darkness outside, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:29-30). Would it not be an insult to a king if he keeps offering gifts to one of his people, and these gifts are despised?

2. We should be on the lookout for the graces of God, ready to *accept* them as soon as they are offered. The action of the Holy Ghost on the individual soul is not continuous in particular graces; we must be ready when He comes with special gifts.

Some receive only one summons to the banquet. In the desert, the Israelites who rose late found the manna melted away. There are times of special grace for the Christian, such as Lent, a retreat, etc.

**How can we make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward?** --We can make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward by doing them for the love of God, and by keeping ourselves in the state of grace.

1. God grants us the *right* to a heavenly reward for the most ordinary good actions in the supernatural order, provided we are in the state of grace. God does not ask us to do extraordinary things. If we do the most ordinary tasks of the day, like cooking, studying, doing small chores, carpentry work, sewing, and such, in a spirit of love and obedience to Him, our acts will deserve merit before God's eyes.

God does not expect all of us to be great scientists saving thousands of lives each day, great discoverers, great lawyers, great statesmen. Does God need our help? All He wants is our love; and this we can give in the most ordinary daily actions. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God."

2. By mortal sin one loses the *merit* he has gained from his good actions. It is necessary that he regain that state of grace before he can regain that merit.

To regain God's friendship, we must be sorry for our sins, make a good confession, and resolve never to displease Him again. Then He will give us back the gift of His grace and love, and the merit of all our good works.

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## 41. The Theological Virtues



*Faith is the foundation of all virtue, for by it God makes Himself known to men. As St. Paul says, "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen. . . . And without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11 :1,6). It is this supernatural faith that the Chanaanite woman proved, when she persevered in begging Jesus to cure her daughter. Having tested her, He said, "O woman, great is thy faith. Let it be done to thee as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28).*

**What are the chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace?** --The chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace are the three theological virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. Good qualities or inclinations, whether natural or supernatural, are generally referred to as "*virtues*". Virtue is a habit that inclines us to whatever is good.

A single good act does not constitute virtue. For instance, one does not have the virtue of faith if one believes in Christ only once a week.

2. Supernatural virtues enter the soul with sanctifying grace, imparted by the Holy Ghost in the *Sacraments* of Baptism and Penance. With sanctifying grace the soul acquires the supernatural light of faith and hope, and burns with the fire of charity.

These virtues render us capable of being good and doing good for the love and service of God, to act for instead of against Him.

We are not to suppose however that sanctifying grace makes us perfect in the practice of virtue. It gives us the *power* and the *inclination* to be good and do good, but to have perfection we must frequently exercise our virtues. We are given the power, but if we do not use it, it remains dormant; similarly, we are given legs to use for walking, but if we refuse to walk, the power is dormant. Virtue is a *habit* acquired by repeated good acts.

3. *Natural virtue* enables us to perform good natural acts; it deals directly with things human. *Supernatural virtue* enables us to perform good acts from a supernatural motive, for the glory of God.

If we are temperate in food and drink because we wish to preserve our health, we have a natural virtue; we act according to reason.

4. Natural virtues *compared* to supernatural ones are like a photograph compared to the living original. It is only supernatural virtues that will profit us unto life everlasting, since it is only those whose object and life is God.

**What are the three theological virtues?** --The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

1. These virtues are called theological, from the Greek term *theos* (meaning God) , because their object is God.

An appropriate symbol for the theological virtues is a living tree. Faith is the root, hope the trunk, and charity the fruit. The root and trunk are valueless if they do not find completion in the fruit. The common *symbols* depicting these three virtues are: the cross for faith, the anchor for hope, and the burning heart for charity.

2. He who possesses these three virtues has *all other virtues* in some degree. Without them, he cannot possess any other supernatural virtue nor reach heaven.

We should make *acts* of these virtues every day. We can say very briefly: "O my God, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee. To Thee be honor, praise, and glory forever."

**What is faith?** --Faith is the virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths God has revealed, on the word of God revealing them, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

"Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen" (Heb. 11:1). "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

1. Faith is *belief* in a truth on the word of another, though that truth be not fully understood.

In a trial, the judge believes the testimony of a witness known to be an honest man. When a fact is so obvious as "it is dark at midnight," no belief is needed; that is *known* and fully understood.

2. Divine faith is belief in a truth or mystery known only because *God* revealed it. It is *grace* that helps us to attain faith and to persevere in it, to take God's word for whatever He has revealed.

Faith is *supernatural* because we cannot by ourselves acquire it. It is a gift of God. It is, however, increased by prayer and continual exercise; the apostles prayed to the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5)

3. Without faith, it is *impossible* to be saved.

We must not cease praying for increase of faith, for it is necessary for salvation. "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Matt. 16:16). "Without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

4. Our faith must be *firm* and *complete*; that is, both certain and all-encompassing.

If we are doubtful on any matters of faith, considering opposite viewpoints as possibly true, then we deny God's authority. If we accept some truths, and deny others, then that is denying God altogether.

**What is hope?** --Hope is the virtue by which we firmly trust that God, Who is all-powerful and faithful to His promises, will in His mercy give us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it.

1. God *promised* to give man eternal life, and the means to obtain it. In this promise is our hope.

"He that putteth his trust in me shall inherit the land, and shall possess my holy mount" (Is. 57:13).

2. Hope is *necessary* for salvation. Our hope must be firmly founded in God, Who Promised to give us the means for salvation.

Such firm hope, however, would not exclude reasonable fear of the loss of our soul. Very often we fall far short of the proper use of the means of salvation granted us.

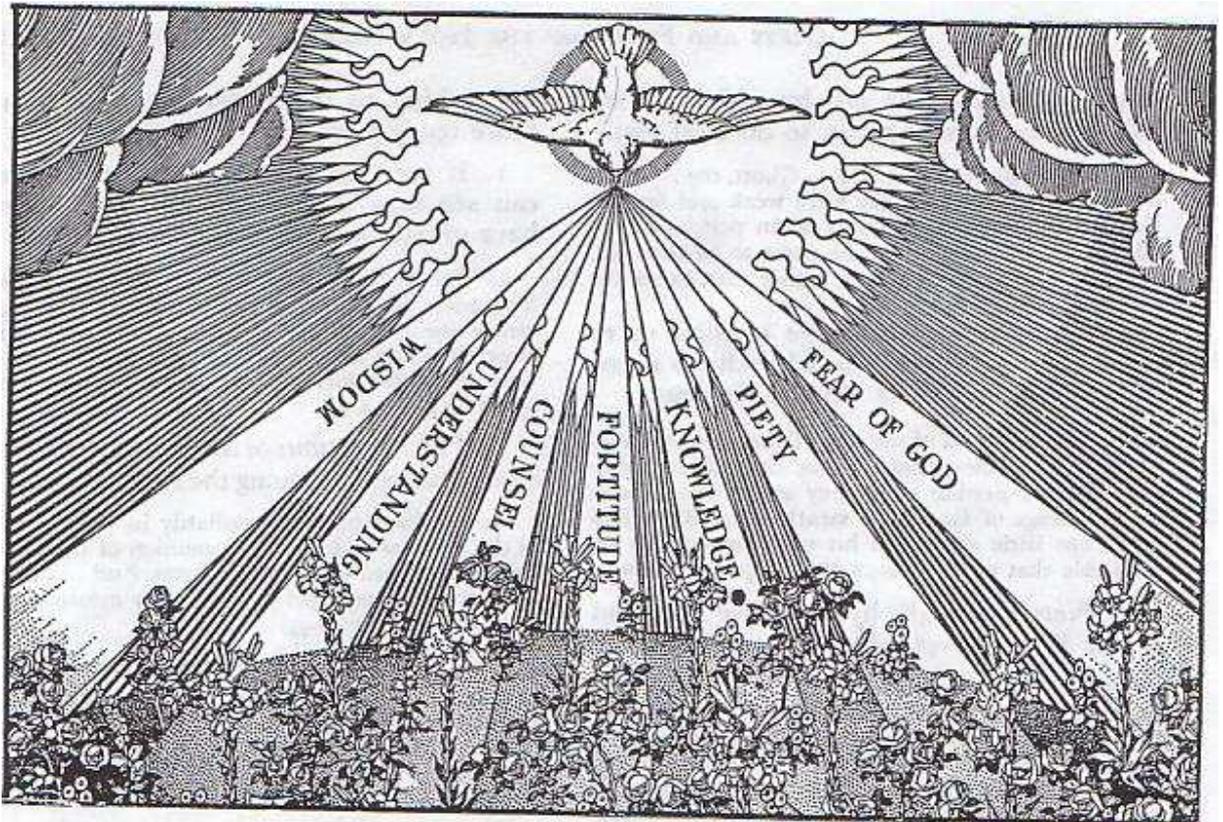
**What is charity?** --Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves, for the love of God.

1. Charity is the queen of virtues. It *unites* God and man perfectly in love. It also unites man and man, for the love of God.

To love God above all things, we must be willing to renounce all created things rather than offend Him by sin. We should often speak to God in acts of love, opening our hearts to Him.

2. In heaven faith and hope will cease; for we cannot need faith for what we already know; nor can we desire what we already possess. But for all eternity we shall have charity: we can love God *forever*.
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## 42. Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Ghost



*In the picture the Holy Ghost is represented by a dove. It was in that form that the Holy Ghost showed Himself visibly when St. John baptized Jesus. The dove symbolizes gentleness and peace. The Holy Ghost dispenses the graces of God. However, the Holy Ghost produces nothing beyond what Jesus Christ merited. The merits of Our Lord are infinite, for He is God. The Holy Ghost merely perfects, the works of Christ. In a somewhat similar way, the sun shining on a field does not sow new seed; it merely develops what has been sown, making it bloom and bear fruit*

**. Which are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost?** --The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

The gifts are infused in our souls with sanctifying grace. With God the Holy Ghost come sanctifying grace, and inseparably, His gifts.

1. *Wisdom* is that gift by which we recognize the emptiness of earthly things. By it we come to regard God and spiritual things as of the highest good. Without the gift of wisdom we are indifferent to spiritual matters, avoiding all mortification.

The best example of the effects of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the Apostles, who after receiving the Holy Ghost became penetrated with His graces.

2. *Understanding* is that gift by which we are enabled to recognize the true Catholic teaching, and to detect false doctrines. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, they did not understand the divine mysteries Christ revealed to them, often interpreting His words materially.

Saint Clement Hofbauer began his studies late in life, and had just enough instruction in theology to be ordained. But he was often consulted by high officials of the Church on matters of doctrine, because he had the gift of understanding to an extraordinary degree.

3. The gift of *counsel* helps us to discover the will of God under difficult circumstances.

Before they received the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were inconstant in their thoughts, desires, and actions, at one time full of high zeal, at other times despairing and weak. But Christ promised them the gift of counsel, saying: "Do not be anxious how or wherewith you shall defend yourselves; or what you shall say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you" (Luke 12:11-12).

4. *Fortitude* is the gift by which we are strengthened under trials, to do God's will.

Before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were of good will, but they were weak and fearful. For instance, when Jesus was taken prisoner, they all fled. St. John Nepomucene chose to be tortured, and finally cast into the river, rather than break the seal of the confessional.

5. The gift of *knowledge* enables us to grasp the teaching of the Church, to know God and Jesus Christ Whom He sent.

Before the advent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were ignorant men who did not care for intellectual pursuits; neither were they expert in holiness or the things of God. The saintly Cure d'Ars had made but little study, yet his sermons were so remarkable that even Bishops were eager to listen.

6. *Piety* is that gift by which we love God as our Father, ever striving to do His will.

Before the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles loved Jesus, but more for their own sakes rather than His, more for the reward He promised than for love of Him. But after Pentecost, what a change! They were ready to suffer death just because they loved Jesus and wished to declare Him everywhere.

7. The *fear of the Lord* makes us dread sin as the greatest of all evils, and enables us to quell fear of man and human respect.

Eleazer, the old Jewish scribe, chose death rather than offend God by eating, or even pretending to eat, forbidden meats (2 Mach. 6).

8. Besides these seven gifts, the Holy Ghost also grants certain extraordinary gifts, which are given only on rare occasions and to selected persons. Such extraordinary graces are granted principally not for the benefit of the recipient, but of others. They were common during the early days of the Church, and helped in its rapid spread. Among them are the gift of tongues, of miracles, of visions, and of prophecy. The Apostles received the gift of tongues on Pentecost, so that although they spoke to a crowd of different nationalities and languages, everybody understood what was said.

The Apostles also possessed the gift of miracles, curing the sick, driving out evil spirits, raising the dead to life. Many saints have been blessed with the gift of miracles. The prophets before the coming of Christ foretold future events. A number of the saints have been granted the gift of visions and ecstasies, though this is rare; good examples are St. Francis of Assisi, who received the stigmata of Our Lord's wounds, and St. Catherine of Siena.

**How do the gifts of the Holy Ghost help us?** The gifts of the Holy Ghost help us by making us more alert to discern and more ready to do the will of God.

1. If we look with discerning eyes, we can see how the gifts of the Holy Ghost have greatly *helped* the world at large.

As the psalmist sang: "Thou shalt send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created: and thou shalt renew the face of the earth" (Ps. 103:30). "And hope does not disappoint, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5).

2. The *operations* of the Holy Ghost were easily discernible among the early Christians.

"And they continued, steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. And ... many wonders also and signs were done by means of the apostles" (Acts 2:42-43).

3. The difference between the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost consists in this: the virtues enable us to do what our *reason* directs; the gifts make us follow the *inspirations* of the Holy Ghost.

**Which are some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost?** --Some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the fruits of the Holy Ghost and the beatitudes.

**Which are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost?** --The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity.

1. These twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are good habits performed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They make us happy and contented, and help us to be pleasing to both God and man.

With the fruits of the Holy Ghost it becomes easier for us to persevere in the union with God by the practice of virtue; our heart inclines with charity towards God and our neighbor, and finds it almost *natural* to be detached from the world.

2. With the gift of sanctifying grace and its accompanying theological virtues, gifts of the Holy Ghost, and their effects, the Christian soul may be said to possess sanctity, to be in the state of Christian perfection.

Sanctity is the fervent surrender of one's self to God and the practice of virtue. It does not require extraordinary works. The Blessed Mother of God the most holy of mortals, never performed any extraordinary works to excite worldly admiration. "*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*"

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### 43. Moral Virtues



*The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity furnish a strong basis for all other virtues. The cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, are the foundation of all moral virtues. The theological virtues define our relations with God; the moral virtues define our relations with ourselves and our fellowmen. If we have these virtues, we are on the way to perfection.*

**Are there any other virtues besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity?** --Besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, there are other virtues, called moral virtues.

1. These virtues are called moral virtues because they dispose us to lead *moral*, or good lives, by aiding us to treat persons and things in the right way, that is, according to the will of God. Moral virtues are opposed to the capital sins.

For example, *humility* is opposed to pride; *liberality* is opposed to avarice; *chastity* is opposed to lust; *meekness* and *patience* are opposed to anger; *temperance* is opposed to gluttony; *brotherly love* is opposed to envy; and *zeal* and *diligence* in what is good are opposed to sloth.

2. Moral virtues are an outgrowth and *completion* of the theological virtues. The theological virtues perfect our interior being; the moral virtues perfect our *exterior*. If we sincerely strive after these virtues, we are on the road to perfection.

The theological virtues affect our relations with God; the moral virtues affect our relations with our neighbor and our own selves. For example, faith makes us believe in the existence of God. Temperance makes us regulate our appetites.

**Which are the chief moral virtues?** --The chief moral virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; these are called cardinal virtues.

All other moral virtues spring from the cardinal virtues. These are called *cardinal* from *cardo*, the Latin word for *hinge*, because all our moral actions turn on them as a door turns upon its hinges. All other moral virtues depend on them.

**How do prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance dispose us to lead good lives?** -- Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance dispose us to lead good lives, as indicated below:

1. *Prudence* disposes us in all circumstances to form right judgments about what we must do or not do.-It teaches us when and how to act in matters relating to our eternal salvation. Prudence perfects the intelligence, which is the power of forming judgments; for this virtue, knowledge and experience are important.

Prudence shows us how to leave earthly things in order to earn riches for eternity. It is the eye of the soul, for it tells us what is good and what is evil. It is like a compass that directs our course in life. It is opposed to worldly wisdom. "Be prudent therefore and watchful in prayers" (1 Pet. 4:7). Prudence is a virtue of the understanding.

2. *Justice* disposes us to give everyone what belongs to him.-It teaches us to give what is due to God and to man. It makes us willing to live according to the commandments. Justice perfects the will and safeguards the rights of man: his right to life, freedom, honor, good name, sanctity of the home, and external possessions.

The just man is an upright man. He gives to every one his due: he gives God worship; the authorities, obedience; his subordinates, rewards and punishments; and his equals, brotherly love. "Render to all men whatever is their due; tribute to whom tribute is due; taxes to whom taxes are due; fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7).

3. *Fortitude* disposes us to do what is good in spite of any difficulty.-It gives us strength to do good and avoid evil in spite of all obstacles and afflictions.

We possess fortitude when we are not hindered by ridicule, threats, or persecution from doing what is right; when we are ready, if necessary, to suffer death. The greatest

fortitude is shown by *bearing great suffering* rather than undertaking great works. No saint was ever a coward. The martyrs had fortitude.

4. *Temperance* disposes us to control our desires and to use rightly the things which please our senses.-It regulates our judgment and passions, so that we may make use of temporal things only in so far as they are necessary for our eternal salvation. We have temperance when we eat and drink only what is necessary to sustain life, preserve health, and fulfill our duties.

We should strive to be like St. Francis of Sales, who said: "I desire very little, and that little I desire but little." However, temperance does not consist in refusing or denying ourselves what is necessary, thus unfitting ourselves for good works.

**Which are some of the other moral virtues?** --*Filial piety* and *patriotism*, which dispose us to honor, love, and respect our parents and our country. It is, however, no virtue but a sin if we are so prejudiced in favor of our parents that we find no good in others; or if we are so "patriotic" that we see no good in other nations.

The division and mutual antagonisms of nations and peoples in which certain ones profess to find themselves as "superior" can certainly not please God; from them come war and revenge. God is Father of all nations and peoples, without exception.

1. *Obedience*, which disposes us to do the will of our superiors. Obedience consists not only in *doing* what is commanded by our superior, but in being *willing to do* what is commanded. One who grumbles and murmurs while doing what his mother asks him to do is not obedient.

Obedience is a virtue only when one subjects his will to that of another for God's sake, not for material or natural motives. Christ is the model of obedience, for He obeyed completely and lovingly, even to the death of the Cross. "An obedient man shall speak of victory" (Prov. 21:28).

2. *Veracity*, which disposes us to tell the truth.

We should always be truthful, as children of God, Who is Truth itself. Veracity, however, does not require us to reveal secrets, or to reply to questions about which the questioner has no right to ask. In cases such as these, we should either remain silent, or return an evasive answer. "Wherefore, put away lying, and speak truth each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25).

3. *Patience*, which disposes us to bear up under trials and difficulties.

In sickness and ill fortune, in the difficulties of our occupations, in our weaknesses, let us have serenity of mind, for the love of God: "And bear fruit in patience" (Luke 8:15). "Be patient in tribulation, persevering in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

*Besides these, there are many other moral virtues. **Religion** is the highest moral virtue, since it disposes us to offer to God the worship that is due Him.*

Religion is classed under the virtue of justice.

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#### 44. Humility, Liberality, Chastity



*At a very early age St. Agnes had such a high regard for the virtue of chastity that she vowed her virginity to God. The Roman authorities, who were persecuting the infant Church, tried to make this child offer incense to the idols, but she refused. Seeing her firmness, the persecutors tried to win her by flattery. She was only thirteen years old, beautiful and wealthy; they offered to marry her to the son of a high official in Rome. But she answered that she was consecrated to her Heavenly Bridegroom. She suffered torture and meekly laid her head on the execution block.*

**What is humility?** --Humility is that moral virtue which disposes us to appreciate and acknowledge our true position with respect to God and our fellowmen.

Jesus Christ often praised and recommended humility. "Unless you turn, and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). He always answered the prayers of the humble, as of the centurion (Matt. 8:11). "If any man wishes to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:34)

1. The humble man acknowledges God as the *source* of all the excellent things he may possess. He recognizes his limitations, his own nothingness, and the uselessness of all earthly things without God.

Compared to God, what are we? All things pass away; only God is eternal. These simple truths will help us keep humble; without God we are nothing. Let us practice the behest of Our Lord. "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29).

2. The humble man knows that earthly things are of value only if they *lead* us to God. His detachment from all things worldly frees him from all human fear.

In order to become humble, let us think often of the majesty and grandeur of God. Let us contemplate His works, beside which ours would be nothing. Above all, let us remember that without God we would not even exist. Do we feel proud of our wealth? Tomorrow a fire, a business depression, may wipe it off completely. Are we proud of our appearance? An accident, some sickness, would make it as if it had never been. Are we proud of our intelligence? Amnesia would take it all away.

3. The humble man has his best, *model* in the Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ, Who humbled Himself out of love for men.

"Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). The Son of God humbled Himself when He came down to earth as man. He came as a poor man, in the eyes of the world the son of a carpenter. His companions were simple fishermen. He associated with the humble, with sinners even. At the Last Supper He washed the feet of His apostles. He was put to death on the cross, the manner of death then most despised.

4. Our Lord continually urged us to humility; as when He said, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11).

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican Christ exalted humility; as also He did when, taking a little child, He said, "Whoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4). And again He said, after preaching to His disciples, "When you have done everything that was commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17: 10)

5. Humility is *opposed* both to pride and to excessive and affected self-abjection.

To be humble, a man does not need to belittle his abilities. St. Thomas Aquinas says: That a person should recognize and appreciate his own good qualities is not sin." (See Chapter 25 on Pride, Covetousness, Lust)

**What is liberality?** --Liberality is that moral virtue, related to the cardinal virtue of justice, which finds expression in generosity towards our fellowmen, disposing us to use material goods rightly.

1. Ordinarily the term is taken with reference to *material* goods; but in a broader sense it also is with respect to spiritual and intellectual gifts.

Liberality consists in giving, for the love of God, generous help to those in need. Our Lord said, in urging us to do works of mercy, that what is given to the poor is given to Him. Liberality does not depend on the amount given, but in the spirit. A poor man can be very liberal; whereas a rich man who gives millions, but does so only in order to get praised does not have the virtue of generosity.

2. Liberality is *opposed* to covetousness.

With liberality we become willing for the love of God to help out those in material need. This virtue does not depend on the amount or material value of the gift, but in the goodness of the heart with which it is given. (See Chapter 25 on Pride, Covetousness, Lust)

**What is chastity?** --Chastity is that moral virtue which disposes us to be pure in soul and body.

Those who keep themselves pure in soul and body are like angels on earth. It was the chaste Apostle John to whom Christ gave the privilege of leaning on His breast at the Last Supper; it was to him that He entrusted His Virgin Mother.

1. *Chastity*, opposed to lust, disposes us to preserve the mind and body from everything that is impure. Chastity is purity. It is termed the *angelic virtue*, because it makes men resemble the angels in heaven.

Chastity gives health to the soul and light to the understanding; it aids wisdom and develops strength of character. Judith, a weak woman, had the courage to go into the enemy camp, and returned with the head of Holofernes; of her Holy Scripture says, "Thou hast done manfully and thy heart hath been strengthened, because thou hast loved chastity" (Judith 15:11). Thousands of martyrs died in defense of this virtue of holy chastity.

2. For the *unmarried*, chastity forbids indulgence of the sexual appetite; for the married, it regulates the use of that appetite in accordance with the dictates of right reason. It is wrong to suppose that chastity is not a virtue for *the married*. God requires chastity from everyone, in all states of life. A chaste marriage is the basis of the Christian family.

Not all saints are virgins. God requires chastity to be practiced by all, in accordance with the state of life that each has embraced. It may be either absolute (for the unmarried), or relative (for the married).

3. The mere knowledge of facts does not destroy our chastity. It is wilful consent and yielding to impurity that sullies chastity of mind and body.

Jesus Christ, Our Lady, St. Joseph, and other saints surely knew the facts of sex; but such knowledge did not spoil their spotless chastity.

4. Let us be careful of the *company* we keep, and avoid all occasions of sin to preserve virtue of chastity. Let us form the habit of *temperance* in all things, so as to strengthen our self-control. We should often have recourse to prayer and the sacraments, receiving these frequently. "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 16). (See Chapter 25 on Pride, Covetousness, Lust)

Let us have a special devotion to the *Blessed Virgin*, and ask her daily to preserve us in chastity. The following prayer has in many cases been found efficacious in imploring the Blessed Virgin to preserve one's chastity:

"My Queen, my Mother! I give myself entirely to thee; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me as thy property and possession."

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## 45. Meekness, Abstinence, Zeal, Brotherly Love



As an example of true zeal we have the Apostle of the Indies, the Patron of Catholic Missions, St. Francis Xavier. Born of a noble family of Navarre, a descendant of kings, he was brought up for a career of earthly power and glory. But he met St. Ignatius, and decided to become a soldier for Christ. Inflamed with zeal, wishing only to reap rich harvests for God, he went through India, Malaya, and Japan planting the seed of the Faith, converting innumerable heathen to Christ. In Japan so fruitful was his apostolate that a generation after him the Christian population still totalled 400,000 souls. He is Protector of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

**What is meekness?** --Meekness is that moral virtue which disposes us to control anger when offended, and resentment when rebuked.

Meekness however must be distinguished from *pusillanimity*, which is weakness of spirit, and cowardliness.

1. Meekness is *patience* between man and man. It is related to the cardinal virtue of temperance, and is *opposed* to the sin of anger. The patient man keeps calm in the midst of the vicissitudes of life; he preserves his cheerfulness for the *love of God*.

The motive is important. If we are calm and patient only because we hope to be admired or because we thereby wish to avoid temporal trouble, by indifference, then we do not practice virtue. Virtue is the result of love for God, doing things for His sake, because it is His law or desire. "By your patience you will win your souls" (Luke 21:19).

2. We must endure with serenity *all trials*, not merely a part of them, in order to be truly patient.

For instance, some are patient with sickness, but keep lamenting their being a burden to others on its account. Some are patient with others, but have no patience with themselves: for example, they feel irritated if they fall back into old sins. Such persons are not truly patient and meek; they show traces of pride, believing themselves too good to relapse into old sins. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 16:21).

3. The patient and meek man shows no anger when wrong is done him. He is a peacemaker at heart. However, although we should forgive and forget wrongs for the sake of peace, we must not give in to sin just to avoid opposing others; this would be sinful. Let us keep the peace with all when there is no good reason to break it; this should be our policy.

Our Lord is the best example of meekness and patience. Did He use His almighty power to punish those who did Him evil? For hours He hung meekly on the cross, until He died. Every day God is patient with sinners, giving them time to change their ways.

4. The meek man is master of his own self; he has self-control, and will find it easy to control others. He has peace of mind and will attain heaven, the home of the meek of heart. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

Let us gaze at Jesus Crucified; He is the supreme example of meekness, the Lamb of God: "And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim" (Jer. 11:19). Indeed, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth" (Matt. 5:4) -the land of the hearts of their fellowmen. As St. Francis de Sales practically said, "One catches more flies with an ounce of honey than with tons of vinegar."

**What is abstinence?** --Abstinence is that moral virtue, related to the cardinal virtue of temperance, which keeps within bounds use of and pleasure in foods or drink.

This general sense is to be understood as different from the particularized sense of "abstinence" during certain days, such as Fridays of Lent.

1. A temperate man eats only what he needs, does not fully satisfy his appetite, and is not dainty about the kind of food he eats. The virtue of abstinence is *opposed* to the sin of gluttony.

One who is moderate in eating will be moderate also in many other things, and will escape numerous evils and sins. He always remembers the words of Our Lord: "Not in bread alone doth man live."

2. Temperance is a boon to both soul and body. It improves the health and strengthens the mind. It increases holiness, and aids towards the attainment of eternal life with God.

A temperate man is like a person who travels light. He can move quickly and reach his destination, heaven, more easily. He is not like those who miss every train on account of the numerous bundles to be counted and carried and taken care of during a journey. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

**What virtues are opposed to sloth?** --The virtues of diligence and zeal are opposed to sloth.

1. From the days of Adam work has been laid as an *obligation* on men. God said to Adam: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, until thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken" (Gen. 3:19)

All men must work, whether mentally or bodily. The Apostle said: If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). Our Lord worked all His life, and chose working people for His Mother and foster-father. Diligence in labor is a shield against temptation, for thieves do not break into a house full of busy people.

2. In opposition to spiritual sloth, we have zeal. It consists in fervor for our salvation and for that of others, out of love of God. It manifests itself in the propagation of the faith, the sanctification of souls, and making God better known. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

The zealous man talks to God as often as he can in prayer; he does not forget his religious duties. He loses no opportunity in doing good works, and cheerfully makes sacrifices for the love of God. All his works and sufferings he offers to God, for his own salvation as well as for that of others. He works hard, remembering that "The kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force" (Matt. 11: 12).

**What is brotherly love?** --Brotherly love is charity towards our fellowmen, our brothers in Christ. (See Chapter 26 on Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth)

Our Lord said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). And St. John exhorts: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. ... He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8).

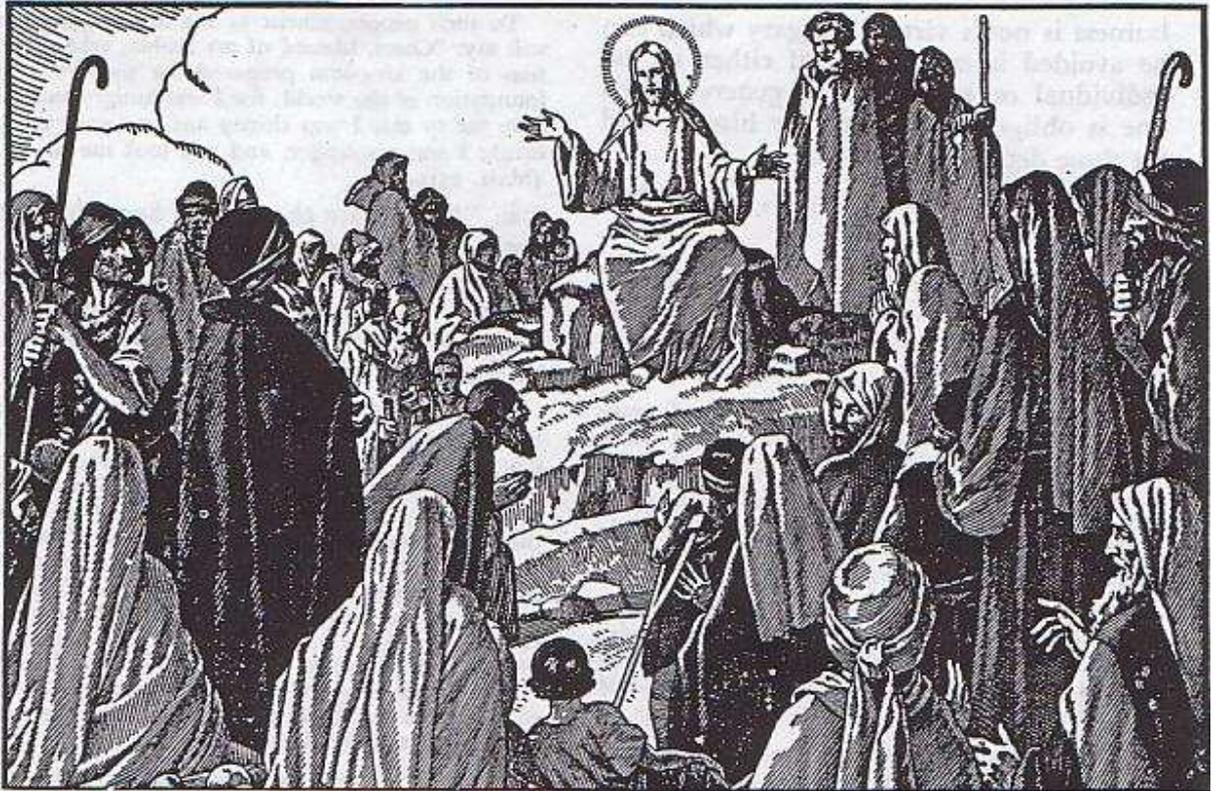
Love and envy cannot live in the same heart. Our Lord says: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 13:35) ; and He

commands: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you" (Mat. 5:44)

If God commands us to love even our enemies, how much more should we love those who have done us no harm, and avoid envying them! Let us remember that the mark of the Christian is love for his fellow-men; all that we do to others, whether for good or ill, we really do to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when we feel the temptation to envy, let us banish it at once by praying for the person, and try our best to do all the good we can to him. In this way we follow Christ our Master.

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## 46. The Eight Beatitudes



*And opening his mouth he taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:1-10). These are the beatitudes; they are thus called, because they bring us happiness on earth as well as in heaven.*

**Which are the eight beatitudes?** --The eight beatitudes are:

- *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*
  - a. The poor in *spirit* are those who, however great their wealth, dignity, learning, etc., acknowledge that in God's sight they are poor, and realize that their riches come from God. They are detached in heart and mind from worldly possessions, for love of God. Even in this life they are at peace, a foretaste of heaven.

Thus a rich man may in fact be poor in spirit, if he is not attached to his wealth, but spends it freely for good causes, and is willing to be parted from it at God's will. On the other hand a poor man is not truly poor in spirit, if he is not resigned to his poverty, but envies the rich, if he is poor against his will, or prides himself on some quality of his.

- b. In general, the poor in this world's *goods* are also poor in spirit. They are saved from temptations into which the wealthy fall. This is one reason for seeking poverty voluntarily, according to Christ's counsel.

Our Lord often emphasized the difficulty of salvation when one is rich: "But woe to you rich! for you are now having your comfort" (Luke 6:24). "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, ... and come, follow me" (Matt. 19:21). "With difficulty will a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23)

- c. We are, however, expected to be industrious. *Pauperism* which is the result of laziness is not a virtue. Beggary which can be avoided is not beneficial either to the individual or to society in general. Each one is obliged to provide for himself and for those dependent on him.

- "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth."

- a. The meek are those who bear patiently all the contradictions of life, looking upon them as happening through God's Will or by His permission.

The meek shall have peace of heart and peace of life, loved and respected by all, and at death will "possess the earth" of the living, heaven.

- b. Those are also meek who, though of a naturally fiery disposition, master their anger, impatience, or desires for revenge.

The meek man does not get angry or curse or seek revenge. He forgives his enemies, and even wins them by gentle words. He imitates Christ, Who said: "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11: 29).

- "*Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*" Here the reference is to spiritual sorrow, grief for sin, one's own sins or the sins of others. It includes a longing amidst the sorrows of life for the joys and peace of heaven.

Mourning for sin is not sadness, for it is not incompatible with spiritual joy. Those who are most penitent feel most gladness upon their release from sin. But to sinners who do not mourn, these words of Our Lord should bring salutary fear: "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:25).

- "*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.*" This refers to those who ardently desire the things of God, truth and perfect virtue, as well as to those who try to become better, more humble and pure, more closely united with God.

*Spiritual hunger and thirst* is the craving for growth in holiness, a desire to be more pleasing to God, to make daily progress in doing His will. Even in this life they shall taste the joy of divine consolations; in heaven they shall enjoy the full abundance of heavenly bliss.

- *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* The merciful are those who practice the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, who help others not from human or natural motives simply, but from supernatural ones, from faith, from love of God.

To such people, Christ at the day of judgment will say: "Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in ..." (Matt. 25:34-35).

- *"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God."* Only those who are not in habitual sin are clean of heart, and possess virtue. They will be rewarded with the vision of God in heaven; and even on earth by the great light given them.

There are several *degrees* of purity of heart: to the first degree belong those who are free from mortal sin; to the second belong those who are free from deliberate venial sin and all affection for sin; to the third degree belong those who are free from the least ill-regulated affection; to the fourth belong those who are free from the almost imperceptible stains that delay a soul's entrance into God's home; and to the last degree belong those Christians of such purity of life and thought, of such perfection of zeal and intention, that they habitually live for God alone, that they are perfectly united with Him, so that when they close their eyes in death they will fly straight into the Heart of God.

- *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."* Men who love peace and preserve it in themselves and among others are beloved by God.

We should also try to reconcile those who are not on good terms with each other. This is a superior degree of the second beatitude.

- *"Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Those are blessed who suffer for Christ, religion, or some Christian virtue. They will receive an eternal reward.

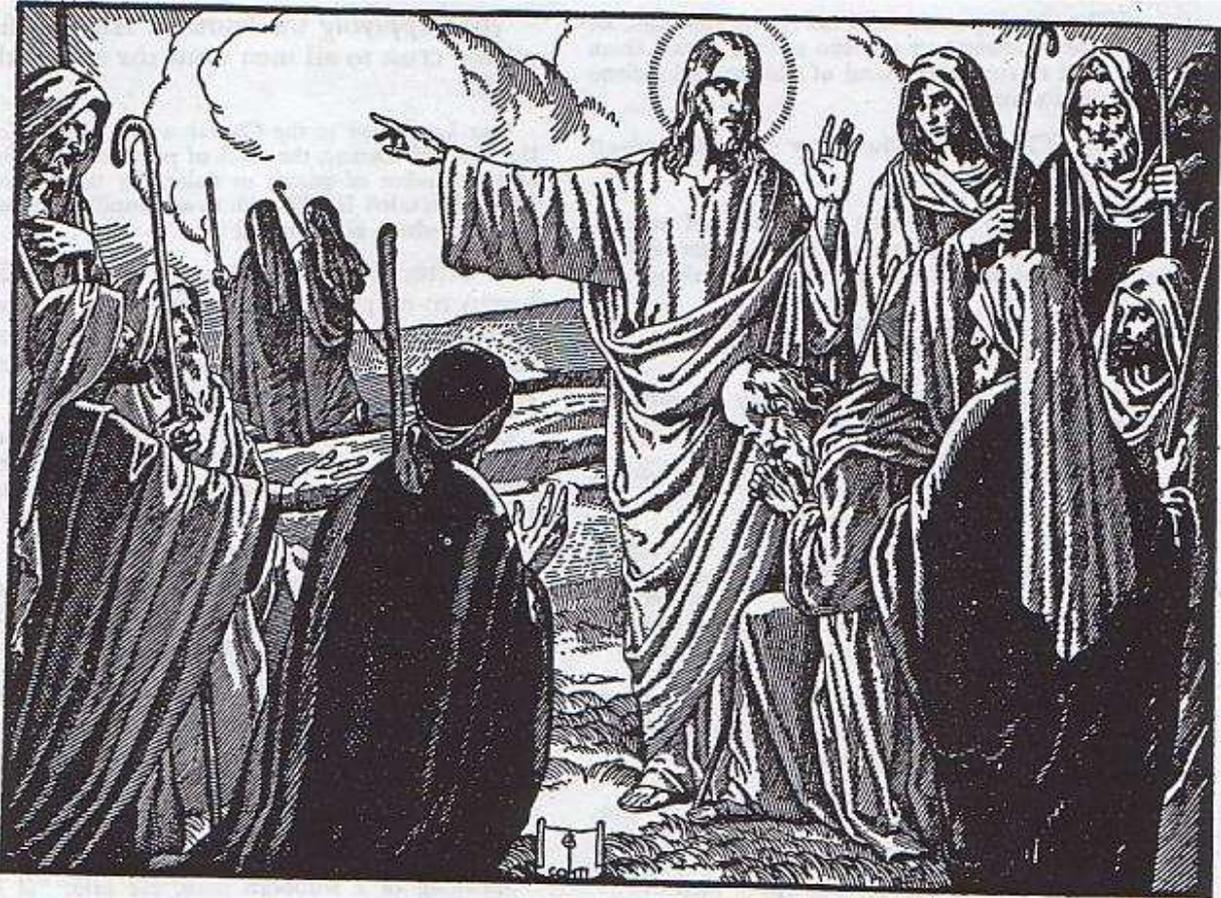
Those who faithfully observe the entire law of God and defend the cause of His Church, procure His glory and save souls. In this world those who are active in preserving the rights of the Church are often ridiculed and persecuted; they will be especially blessed.

Our Lord preached the Eight Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon He taught something new in the world. Where people had always striven for riches, honors, and pleasures, Christ praised the poor, the humble, the suffering.

If we practice faithfully the doctrine of the eight beatitudes, we shall find the true path of perfection and be happy besides on earth. ***The Beatitudes contain in substance the law of God and all evangelical perfection.***

## 47. Foundation of the Church

*(Ninth Article of the Apostles' Creed.)*



*From among His disciples Our Lord chose twelve Apostles, and gave them special training. He sent them forth to teach His doctrines, saying, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." The Apostles were the foundation of the True Church. Christ gave them all power and authority, saying, "He who hears you hears me: he who rejects you rejects me."*

**Did Jesus Christ found a Church?** --Yes; all history, religious and non-religious, including the Bible, clearly proves that Jesus Christ founded a Church.

1. After teaching *publicly* what He required all to believe and practice, thereby announcing the main doctrines of His Church, Christ gathered a number of *disciples*. From them He chose twelve, to whom He gave special instruction and training.

The term "a kingdom", by which Our Lord used to refer to His Church, implies organized authority. And He said to the special men He had chosen, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). He did not teach the disciples for themselves alone, but

to be the foundation of His Church. God did not come to save only a few disciples, but all men.

2. Christ said to the men He had chosen: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21), bidding them go and preach the doctrines He had taught. He sent them to all nations, promising salvation to those that should believe, and *threatening condemnation* to those refusing to believe.

"He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). God is just; He would not have threatened condemnation to unbelievers unless He had furnished the means whereby they could believe. His Church is this means; all men **must** join it.

3. Not only did the men chosen by Christ have authority; He gave them *extraordinary powers*, particularly the twelve special men, the Apostles.

"Then having summoned his twelve disciples, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every kind of disease and infirmity" (Matt. 10:1).

- a. They had power to sanctify, when Christ bade them:

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

- b. They had power to forgive sin, when Christ said to them:

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John 20:23).

- c. They had power to rule when Christ said:

"He who hears you hears me; and he who rejects you rejects me; and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Luke 10:16). And: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

- d. They had power to offer sacrifice, when at the Last Supper Christ, after instituting the Eucharist, bade them:

"Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

4. After training the disciples and Apostles to form the organization of His Church, Christ chose Simon Peter, and made him the Chief. Simon, whose name Christ changed to Peter, was the Head of the Church.

On Simon Christ promised to build His Church, saying: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. 16:18). After the Resurrection He confirmed Peter's

authority over the Church, saying to him: "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

5. Finally, He promised to remain for all time with the Church He established.

If the death of Our Lord were to do good only to a few persons then living in Judea, its merits would have been very limited. But it could do good to future generations only if there were an organization with authority to carry on His teachings and preserve them from all change. This is His Church.

**Why did Jesus Christ found the Church?** --Jesus Christ founded the Church to bring all men to eternal salvation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ established the Church in order to lead men to heaven by:

- a. *Continuing* His teaching and example; and
- b. *Applying* the fruits of His Sacrifice on the cross to all men until the end of the world.

Our Lord gave to the Church a three-fold office: the office of teacher, the office of priest or sanctifier, and the office of pastor or ruler. By these offices Christ intended His Church to accomplish the purpose for which He founded it.

2. After *Pentecost Sunday* the Apostles began to carry out their mission of making disciples of all nations. Through them and their successors this mission continues and will continue to the end of the world.

On the first Pentecost about three thousand were received into the Church after St. Peter's sermon. They were the first members converted and baptized since the Ascension of Our Lord.

**Was the Church founded by Christ a visible organization?** --The Church founded by Christ was a visible organization, with certain distinguishing marks.

1. No one can deny that Jesus Christ gathered disciples, and out of them chose twelve Apostles, to whom He gave special instruction and orders. He formed them as the *foundation* of His organization; was this not visible?

Speaking of a stubborn man, He said: "If he refuse to hear even the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen" (Matt. 18:17). And He promised his disciples: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. 18:18). Surely something must be visible to bind and loose, to be heard and obeyed. And Christ referred to this visible organization as a city set on a mountain, that cannot be hidden (Matt. 5:14).

2. From the very beginning the Apostles exercised their authority and powers; these were signs of a very visible organization. They did not advise; they *directed*, as superiors, and *decided*, as judges.

Thus St. Paul excommunicated the sinful Corinthian; and he commanded the Hebrews: "Obey your superiors, and be subject to them" (Heb. 13: 17).

3. The Apostles and Fathers condemned *schism*. This fact implies a visible organization; for how can there be schism against an invisible body?

St. Paul urged the Corinthians: "By the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ ... that there be no dissensions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10). And St. Cyprian in the third century wrote: "Whoever is separated from the Church is separated from the promises of Christ ... One cannot have God as a Father who has not the Church as his mother."

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## 48. The Apostles: First Bishops of the Church

**To whom did Christ give the power to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the members of His Church?** --Christ gave the power to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the members of His Church to the Apostles, the first bishops of the Church.

1. ***St. Peter*** was the first Head. After a miraculous escape from prison in Jerusalem, he founded his See in Antioch; here the followers of Christ were first called *Christians*. Peter made frequent missionary journeys through Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Asia Minor, and probably even Greece. He finally fixed his See at Rome.

St. Peter presided at the Council of the Apostles in Jerusalem in the year 50 A. D. At the same time that St. Paul was beheaded, St. Peter was crucified head downwards, on Vatican Hill, Rome, 67 A. D.

2. ***St. John***, the Beloved Disciple, lived at Ephesus and governed the Church in Asia Minor.

In the time of Trajan he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, but was miraculously preserved. Later he was banished to Patmos, where he had the revelations which we call the Apocalypse. He died at the age of about 100 years, the last of the Apostles, and the only one who did not die a martyr's death. He left his Gospel and Epistles.

3. ***St. James the Greater***, St. John's brother, labored in Judea, and according to tradition, travelled as far as Spain.

He was the first of the Apostles to be martyred being beheaded in Jerusalem in the year 44, by Herod Agrippa.

4. ***St. Matthew*** preached among the Ethiopians, Persians, and Parthians, and was martyred in Parthia. He wrote the first of the four Gospels.

***St. James the Less*** was Bishop of Jerusalem. He was cast down from the pinnacle of the Temple in 63 A. D. He left one Epistle.

***St. Andrew***, St. Peter's brother, preached along the lower Danube, and was crucified in Greece.

***St. Thomas*** preached in Persia, Medea, and went as far as India. He was martyred in India, pierced with a lance at the command of the king.

***St. Philip*** preached in Phrygia and Scythia, and was crucified at Hieropolis.

***St. Bartholomew*** preached in India, Arabia, and Assyria. He was flayed and crucified in Armenia.

***St. Simon*** preached in North Africa, and was martyred in Persia.

*St. Jude* preached in Syria, and was martyred in Persia. He wrote the "Catholic Epistle".

*St. Matthias*, chosen to take the place of Judas, preached in Ethiopia, and was martyred in Sebastopolis.

5. *St. Paul* was converted miraculously (Acts 9) in the year 34. He of all the Apostles labored the most abundantly. He wrote many Epistles.

He is called the Apostle of the Gentiles, because he carried the Gospel to the pagan world. He travelled extensively and successively to Seleucia, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Miletus, and finally Rome. From Rome he went to Spain and the East, then returned to Rome, where he was martyred in 67 A. D.

**Did Christ intend that this power should be exercised by the Apostles alone?** --No, Christ intended that this power should be exercised also by their successors, the bishops of the Church.

1. The Apostles first preached in Judea on the very first Christian Pentecost. Then they *dispersed* throughout the different countries of the then known world. Everywhere they preached, baptized, and ruled the Christian communities. They were the first bishops of the Church.

"As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21).

2. The Apostles chose men to assist them, imparting to them *greater* or *less* powers. Before leaving a place, they chose a successor with full powers (Acts 14:22).

Those who received only a small part of the powers of the Apostles were called *deacons*. Those given greater power were the *priests*. Those appointed successors to rule in the place of the Apostles were the *bishops*.

3. Christ had given the Apostles full powers to choose *successors*, when He gave them the powers His Father had given Him (John 20:21)

It was His wish that the Apostles should have successors to continue the Church, which He said would last till the end of the world (Matt. 28:20). Without successors to the Apostles, the Church would have no rulers, and being unorganized would never have lasted.

## Apostolicity of Catholic Doctrines

(Adapted from Cardinal Gibbons, "Faith of Our Fathers")

APOSTOLIC CHURCH	CATHOLIC CHURCH	PROTESTANT CHURCHES
<p>1. Our Saviour gave pre-eminence to <i>Peter</i> over the other Apostles: "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19). "Strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).</p>	<p>1. The Catholic Church gives the primacy of honor and jurisdiction to Peter and to his successors.</p>	<p>1. Other Christian communions deny Peter's supremacy over the other Apostles.</p>
<p>2. The Apostolic Church claimed to be <i>infallible</i> in her teachings. "When you heard and received from us the word of God, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but, as it truly is, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13).</p>	<p>2. The Catholic Church alone, of all the Christian communions, claims to exercise the prerogative of infallibility in her teaching. Her ministers always speak from the pulpit as having authority, and the faithful receive with implicit confidence what the Church teaches, without once questioning her veracity.</p>	<p>2. Protestant churches repudiate the claim of infallibility, denying that such a gift is possessed by any teachers of religion. The ministers advance opinions as embodying their private interpretation of the Bible. Their hearers are expected to draw their own conclusions from the Bible.</p>
<p>3. Our Saviour enjoined and prescribed rules for <i>fasting</i>: "When thou dost fast, anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen by men to fast" (Matt. 6:17). The Apostles fasted before engaging in sacred functions: "They ministered to the Lord, and fasted." "When they had appointed presbyters for them in each church, with prayer and fasting, they commended them to the Lord" (Acts</p>	<p>3. The Church prescribes fasting to the faithful at stated seasons, particularly during Lent. A Catholic Priest is always fasting when he officiates at the altar. He breaks his fast only after he says Mass. When Bishops ordain Priests they are always fasting, as well as the candidates for ordination.</p>	<p>3. Protestants have no law prescribing fasts, though some may fast from private devotion. They even try to ridicule fasting. Neither candidates for ordination, nor the ministers who ordain them are ever required to fast on such occasions.</p>

14:22).		
4. St. Peter and St. John <i>confirmed</i> the newly baptized in Samaria. "They laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17)	4. Every Catholic Bishop, as a successor of the Apostles, likewise imposes hands on baptized persons in the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which they receive the Holy Ghost.	4. No denomination performs the ceremony of imposing hands except Episcopalians, and even they do not recognize Confirmation as a Sacrament.
5. Our Saviour and His Apostles taught that the <i>Eucharist</i> is the Body and Blood of Christ: "Take and eat; this is my body ... All of you drink of this, for this is my blood" (Matt. 26:28). "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ? And the bread that we break is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (1 Cor. 10:16).	5. The Catholic Church teaches, with our Lord and His Apostles, that the Eucharist is truly and indeed the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.	5. The Protestant churches; condemn the doctrine of the Real Presence as idolatrous, and say that, in partaking of the communion, we receive only a memorial of Christ.
6. The Apostles were empowered by our Saviour to <i>forgive sins</i> : "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John 20:23). "God," says St. Paul, "hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 7:10,11)	6. The Bishops and Priests of the Catholic Church, as the inheritors of Apostolic prerogatives, profess to exercise the ministry of reconciliation and to forgive sins in the name of Christ.	6. Protestants affirm on the contrary, that God delegates to no man the power of pardoning sin.
7. Regarding the <i>sick</i> , St. James gave this instruction: "Is any one among you sick? Let him bring in the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14).	7. One of the most ordinary duties of a Catholic Priest is to anoint the sick in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. If a man is sick among us he is careful to call in the Priest of the Church that he may anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.	7. No such sacrament as that of anointing the sick is practiced by any Protestant denomination, notwithstanding the Apostle's injunction.

<p>8. Of <i>marriage</i> our Saviour said: "Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if the wife puts away her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:11,12). And again St. Paul said: "To those who are married, not I, but the Lord commands that a wife is not to depart from her husband, and if she departs, that she is to remain unmarried ... And let not a husband put away his wife" (1 Cor. 7:10,11).</p>	<p>8. Literally following the Apostle's injunction, the Catholic Church forbids the husband and wife to separate from one another; or, if they separate, neither of them can marry again during the life of the other.</p>	<p>8. The Protestant churches, as is well known, have so far relaxed this law of the Gospel as to allow divorced persons to remarry, during the lifetime of those they have divorced.</p>
<p>9. Our Lord recommended not only by word but by His example, to souls aiming at perfection, the state of perpetual <i>chastity</i>. St. Paul also exhorted the Corinthians by counsel and his own example to the same angelic virtue: "He who gives his virgin in marriage does well, and he who does not give her does better" (1 Cor. 7:38).</p>	<p>9. Like the Apostle and his Master, the Catholic clergy bind themselves to a life of perpetual chastity. The members of our religious communities for men and women voluntarily consecrate their chastity to God.</p>	<p>9. All the ministers of other denominations are permitted to marry. And far from inculcating the Apostolic counsel of celibacy to any of their flock, they more than insinuate that the virtue of perpetual chastity, though recommended by St. Paul, is impracticable.</p>

## 49. The Primacy of Peter



*When Our Lord said to Peter, "And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," He clearly meant: "I will give you supreme authority over My Church. You shall be My representative." The true test of loyalty to Christ is not only to believe in Him and worship Him, but to honor and obey the representatives He has chosen. Our Lord chose St. Peter as His Vicar. It is rebellion against Christ to say to Him: "I will worship You, but I will not recognize Your representative." This is what Christians do, who deny the authority of the successor of Peter.*

**Did Christ give special power in His Church to any one of the Apostles?** --Christ gave special power in His Church to Peter, by making him the head of the Apostles and the chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church.

1. When *Simon*, led by his brother Andrew, first met Christ, Our Lord said to him: "Thou art Simon, the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas" (John 1:42).

Christ spoke in Aramaic, and the original Cephas, or "Kepha" means stone or rock, which we interpret **Peter**. Our Lord must have some special purpose for having Simon's name changed, particularly as the word Kepha was never used as a proper name then.

2. When, at Caesarea Philippi, Peter made the memorable confession of faith in the name of the Apostles: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," Christ *promised* to make Peter the head of His Church (Matt. 16:17-20).

In reply Our Lord said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I

will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

- a. Our Lord changed Simon's *name* to Peter, which means Rock.

He said that He would make Peter the Rock on which His Church should be founded. As the foundation of a building holds up, supports, and preserves the building, so Peter was to hold the same office for Christ's Church.

- b. Our Lord. promised to Peter *the keys* of the kingdom of heaven. In ancient as well as modern times, keys are a symbol of authority. He who lawfully carries the key to a building has the right himself of entering and of admitting or excluding others.

Our Lord said to all the Apostles, "Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). But to *Peter alone* did Our Lord address these words: "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

3. Christ, after the Resurrection, fulfilled His promise, and *appointed* Peter head of the Church (John 21:15-17)

On the Lake of Gennesareth, "Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, dost thou love me more than these do?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, dost thou love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He said to him, "*Feed my lambs.*" A third time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, dost thou love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him for the third time, "Dost thou love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," He said to him, "*Feed my sheep.*"

By this Christ entrusted to Peter the whole flock, thus making him the head shepherd. The "lambs" (the weak and tender portion of the flock) are the faithful, and the "sheep" (those that nourish the lambs) are the pastors, bishops and priests.

The sheep of Christ are those who submit to Him, the Good Shepherd (John 10: 14). Never did Christ say to any other Apostle: Feed My whole flock. As the shepherd is responsible for the flock, he is given authority comparable to his responsibility.

4. Christ also conferred on Peter *special marks* of distinction not conferred on the other Apostles. He gave him a new name. He chose him as a companion on the most solemn occasions. After the Resurrection, He appeared to Peter first, before showing Himself to the other Apostles.

The Lord said: "Simon ... I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32)

As with every well-regulated society, the Church needed a *visible head*; Christ appointed St. Peter visible head of the Church. The city has its mayor, the state its governor, the nation its President. At the head of every government is a president or king. Even in the family, the father is the head. Every corporation has a head.

The Church is a *visible society*; that is, it is composed of human beings. It needs a head as well as any other organization. Christ is always its invisible, Head, but it needs a visible head to take His place among men.

**Did Peter actually exercise his primacy?** --Yes, Peter actually exercised his primacy, and the other Apostles and the disciples recognized him as the head of the Church.

1. Peter's name always stands *first* in the lists of Apostles; Iscariot's is always last.

St. Matthew even calls Peter the "first Apostle." But he was neither first in age nor in election, for Our Lord had called Andrew; his elder brother, before him. He must therefore have been first in honor and authority.

2. It was Peter that *proposed* the election of another to take the place of Judas.

In obedience to Peter's advice, the Apostles put forward two among the disciples to choose from; and after praying, they chose Matthias (Acts 1:21-26).

3. It was Peter that preached the first *sermon* on the day of Pentecost.

The Holy Ghost had descended on the Apostles; they spoke so that each person present (and there were many nationalities in the crowd) heard his own language being spoken. The people were amazed; and Peter spoke (Acts 2:14-36).

4. It was Peter that admitted the first *converts* from Judaism (Acts 2:38-41), as well as from paganism (Acts 10:5).

"And he (Peter) ordered them (the Gentiles) baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:48). This was a thing unheard of, that the Jews, "of the Faith", should consort with "heathen"; but Peter broke all bonds.

5. Peter worked the first *miracle*.

He gave a man lame from birth the power to walk (Acts 3:6-8).

6. Peter meted out the first *punishment*.

Ananias (and later his wife Sapphira) had lied and cheated; and having been rebuked by Peter, fell down dead (Acts 5: 1-6).

7. Peter *cast out* the heretic Simon Magus.

This heretic had wanted to purchase the power of the Apostles of bringing down the Holy Ghost on those on whom they laid hands (Acts 8:19-20).

8. Peter made the first visitation of the churches (Acts 31-32).
9. In the first Council at Jerusalem, there was much disputing, but when Peter spoke, all submitted (Acts 15:7-12).

"After a long debate, Peter got up and said, ... 'But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus' ... Then the whole meeting quieted down" (Acts 15:7, 11-12).

10. After his conversion, St. Paul presented himself to Peter (Gal. 1: 18) .
11. Of the early churches established by the Apostles, the Church of Rome was the highest in rank. It was the See of Peter.



## 50. Marks of the True Church



*The True Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The Church that possesses all the shining marks which Our Lord gave is the Church of God, the True Church. Any church that lacks even one of these marks is an imitation, a false church, and not the one founded by Our Lord. The True Church must possess all these marks. It is the Church which Christ commanded all to hear and obey.*

**Did Christ establish many Churches?** --Christ established only one Church, to continue till the end of time.

1. As God is one, He established *one Church*, which He commanded all men to obey and to follow in the way of salvation.

God is essentially one. He is Truth itself. How can He say to one group of men that there are three Persons in one God, and to another that there is only one Person? How can He say to one body that the Holy Eucharist is Himself, and to another that it is mere bread? God *cannot contradict Himself*. "He who hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16). "There shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

2. Christ never referred to His Churches, but to His *Church*. Christ chose *only one Head* for His Church. Peter could not have been the Head of conflicting churches.

Christ said: "And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Christ did not say: "Upon this rock I will build My Churches," it was clearly not His intention to establish various conflicting churches.

3. Christ, even in His prayers, spoke of *unity* among His followers. There would evidently be no unity if He had founded many churches.

Immediately before His passion, He prayed: "Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).

**Is there any way by which we can distinguish the Church that Christ founded from all other churches?** --We can distinguish the Church founded by Christ from all other churches by the marks or signs that Our Lord gave to it.

A *mark* is a sign by which something may be distinguished from all others of the same kind. By its marks we can recognize the True Church as the one founded by Jesus Christ, distinguishing it from all other churches, however similar.

4. It is important that we know which is the Church established by Christ, in order that we may *obey* it, as God commands. Then shall we also be certain what to believe and do in order to be saved; the Church, that True Church, will be our guide to heaven.

We must distinguish the True Church from false churches, because today there are many imitations of the Church founded by Christ.

5. The True Church must be that which Christ *personally founded*, and the Apostles propagated. It must have existed continuously since the time of Christ. It must teach in their entirety *all the doctrines* commanded by the Divine Founder while He was still on earth; and all its members must profess those fundamental doctrines. It must be a *visible organization*, discernible and discoverable, evidently existing, with clear marks or signs distinguishing it as the True Church.

It was through a common bond of faith that the faithful throughout the world were, to be united in one body, the Church, their heritage from the Son of God. Our Lord therefore before His Ascension made the necessary provision so that all men might from thenceforth *recognize* the Church which He established, and which He commanded all to join.

**What are the chief marks of the True Church?** --The chief marks of the True Church are four: It is one, holy, catholic or universal, and apostolic.

1. Christ intended His Church to be *One*; therefore the True Church must be One. Its members must be *united* in doctrine, in worship, and in government. Christ said:

"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24). "There shall be one fold and one Shepherd" (John 10:16).

2. Christ intended His Church to be Holy; therefore the True Church must be *Holy*. It must teach a *holy doctrine* in faith and morals, because its Founder is holy. It must provide the means for its members to lead a holy life.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ... Therefore, by their fruits you will know them" (Matt. 7:15-17,20).

Christ promised His Church the gift of miracles, a sign of holiness: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he also shall do, and greater than these he shall do" (John 14:12). He said: "You therefore are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is Perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

3. Christ intended His Church to be universal, that is, catholic; and therefore the True Church must be Universal, or *Catholic*. It must be for all peoples of every nation and for all times and teach the same faith *everywhere*. Christ commanded His disciples:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "You shall be witnesses for me ... even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

4. Christ intended His Church to be propagated by His Apostles; and therefore the True Church must be *Apostolic*. It must be the Church propagated by the Apostles. Its rulers must derive their office and authority by lawful succession from the Apostles. It must hold intact the *doctrine* and traditions of the Apostles, to whom Christ gave authority to teach.

It was Christ Himself, and no one else, Who chose His Apostles and disciples, and commanded them to teach His doctrines to all the world. St. Paul says: "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a Gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8). St. Paul himself refers to the Church as "built upon the foundation of the Apostles" (Eph. 2:20).

**Which Church possesses the marks of the Church established by Christ, and therefore must be the True Church?** --The Catholic Church possesses the marks of the Church established by Christ; the Catholic Church is the True Church.

The Catholic Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic in the way Our Lord Jesus Christ wanted His Church to be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

## 51. The One True Church

Principal Christian Religious Bodies in the U.S.

NAME	PLACE OF ORIGIN	FOUNDER	YEAR
CATHOLIC CHURCH	JERUSALEM	JESUS CHRIST	33
Eastern Orthodox (19 bodies)	Near East	Schism from Catholic Church	1054
Lutheran (21 bodies)	Germany	Martin Luther	1517
Mennonite (15 bodies)	Switzerland	Grebel, Mantz, Blaurock	1525
Protestant Episcopal	England	Henry VIII	1534
Presbyterian (10 bodies)	Scotland	John Knox	1560
Congregational	England	Robert Browne	1583
Bapist (24 bodies)	Amsterdam	John Smyth	1600
Unitarian	London	John Biddle	1645
Friends or Ouakers (4 bodies)	England	George Fox	1647
Reformed Churches (4 bodies)	Holland	Assembly	17th c.
Baptist, German (4 bodies)	Germany	A. Mack	1708
Methodist (22 bodies)	England	John and Charles Wesley	1739

Universalists	New Jersey	John Murray	1770
United Brethren (2 bodies)	Maryland	Otterbein and Boehm	1800
Evangelical	Pennsylvania	Jacob Albright	1803
Churches of Christ	Kentucky	Thos. and Alex. Campbell	1827
Latter-Day Saints (7 bodies)	New York	Joseph Smith	1830
Adventist (5 bodies)	New York	William Miller	1831
Salvation Army	England	William Booth	1865
Christian Scientists	Massachusetts	Mary Baker Eddy	1879
Assemblies of God	Arkansas	General Meeting	1914
Church of the Nazarene	U.S.	Union at General Assembly	1919
Evangelical, Reformed	Ohio	Union at General Assembly	1934

*There are over 200 different Protestant bodies existing in the United States alone. In the above list a few of the best-known are enumerated, in comparison with the Catholic Church. This comparative list indicates this fact: none of these denominations can ever become the True Church founded by Christ, Son of God. It is well known that many heretics, at the hour of death, return to the Catholic Church. But what Catholic at that hour has ever denied his religion to seek admission into a sect? As the heretic Melancthon wrote to his Catholic mother: "The Protestant is the best faith to live in, but the Catholic Faith is the best one to die in."*

**What is the Church?** --The Church is the congregation of all baptized persons united in the same true faith, the same sacrifice, and the same sacraments, under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him.

1. Even considering it only as a visible society, the Church is a *perfect* religious *body*.

All members are subject to the same religious authority, possess identical religious doctrines, live a common religious life, and use the same means of grace, the sacraments.

2. The Church is divided into the "*teaching Church*" and the "*hearing Church*"; for each Christ laid down powers and duties.

The priests, with their bishops and the Pope, compose the "teaching Church"; the faithful, who believe and obey, and are admitted into membership through the Sacrament of Baptism, compose the "hearing Church".

**How is the Church enabled to lead men to salvation?** --The Church is enabled to lead men to salvation by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who gives it life.

1. God the Father and God the Son sent the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost *enables* the Church to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the faithful in the name of Christ.

The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles to enlighten, strengthen, and sanctify them, so that they could preach the Gospel and spread the Church all over the world. On the Feast of Pentecost, in remembrance of God the Holy Ghost, we celebrate a mystery which is forever renewed in the Church and in our souls: the mystery of the indwelling of God, the reign of the law of love which succeeded the law of bondage and fear (Rom. 8: 15).

2. The Holy Ghost *guides the rulers* of the Church, especially the Pope, and helps them in their duties.

Before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles had been timid and afraid. After His coming they went forth to teach, whatever hardships came; they remembered and understood all the teaching of Christ.

3. The Holy Ghost *preserves the Church* from all error in its teaching; in times of danger, He raises up able defenders of its doctrines.

St. Athanasius defended the Church in the time of the Arian heretics; Pope Gregory VII during a period of great disorder; St. Dominic, during the time of the Albigenses; and St. Ignatius of Loyola, after the Protestant outbreak.

4. The Holy Ghost *raises up Saints* in the Church throughout all generations.

The members of the Church strive to imitate its Divine Founder, and in all countries and all times it has produced saints, canonized and uncanonized, martyrs, confessors, hidden souls that burn with the love of God and their fellowmen.

**Are not all religions the same?** --No for truth and error are not the same; faith and unbelief are not the same.

1. God is not divided. He revealed *only one* religion. We either believe that religion, or do not believe it. There is no middle way. "*He who is not with me is against me*" (Matt. 12:30)

Anything that is not the *whole truth* is not truth. Christ said: "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me" (John 14:6).

No one will assert that glass is as good as diamonds, nor that brass is as good as gold. No one claims that an imitation is just as good as the authentic thing. More unreasonable than would it be to claim that a religion established by a man is as good as that founded by the Incarnate God.

2. From the very beginning of mankind there has been *one true religion*. From Adam to the coming of Christ this religion was preserved by the patriarchs, prophets, and others chosen by God to keep the knowledge of the promised Redeemer intact.

Before the coming of Christ, this true religion was not universal, but limited to one people, the Jews, the "chosen people." All other nations had degenerated and worshipped idols, false gods. In spite of the imperfections of the old religion preserved among the Jews; it was always the true religion, the one true religion. It foreshadowed the coming of the perfect religion, that established by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who then abrogated the Jewish Faith, the Old Law, in favor of the New Faith, the New Law.

3. It is *absurd* to suppose that God does not care whether men denounce His Son as an impostor and blasphemer, or worship Him as God.

Why should Christ, and after Him the Apostles, and after them a long line of believers, have suffered so much and resisted persecution so firmly, if it were of no importance what a man believed? The Apostle said, "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)

**How can we prove that the only true Church of Christ is the Catholic Church?** --We can prove that the only true Church of Christ is the Catholic Church, because:

1. *Only* the Catholic Church possesses the marks of the Church established by Christ; that is, Unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. (See Chapter 73 on The Gates of Hell)

As a matter of fact, only the Catholic Church claims to have all these four marks of the True Church, the marks so evidently set by Christ.

2. The *history* of the Catholic Church gives evidence of miraculous strength, permanence, and unchangeableness, so showing the world that it is under the special protection of God. The Catholic Church has proved itself indestructible for *almost two thousand years*,

against every variety and number of formidable enemies. The Church suffered from persecution and outside attacks, and from schism and heresy within its own ranks, yet still lives.

In spite of corruption and persecution, in spite of the combined forces of error and evil, the Catholic Church has continued to live and to carry out its purpose, as its Founder promised. The indestructibility of the Church, as has been proved by history, is alone enough to mark it as divine. God alone could have preserved it so long. The Church is the only institution which has proved itself *an exception to the law of decay and death*. It has watched the birth and decay of every government on earth for almost 2000 years. After every attack against it, it rises, the Bride of Christ, ever fresh and fair.

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## 52. The Catholic Church: Unity and Holiness



*The Catholic Church is One, because it has one Divine Founder, God Himself, Who cannot be divided. All its members hear and obey the voice of their Shepherd. The Catholic Church is Holy, because it imitates its Holy Founder, the Incarnate Son of God. Its members strive for holiness, aided by divine sacraments instituted by Christ Himself.*

**Why is the Catholic Church one?** --The Catholic Church is one because all its members, according to the will of Christ, profess the same faith, have the same sacrifice and sacraments, and are united under one and the same visible head, the Pope.

1. They have *unity* in doctrine, worship, and government. They have "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." There has never been any other society, religion, or government whose members are so closely united.

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24). "Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are" (John 17: 11).

2. There are about 425 million Catholics united in *doctrine*. This unity is evident and admitted by all. All Catholics every where believe each and every article of faith

proclaimed by the Church. Wherever a Catholic goes throughout the world, he will find his home in the Catholic Church. There he will find his brethren in Christ all believing as he does. If he deliberately denies even one article of faith of the Church, he ceases to belong to it.

International Eucharistic Congresses, held in different countries, in different parts of the world, every other year, are a good proof of the unity of the Church. In such Congresses the faithful from all nations-African, American, -Australian, Chinese, English, Filipino, French, German, Indian, Irish, Japanese, Russian, Spaniard,-one and all bow down in adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the most Holy Eucharist.

3. All Catholics today hold the same faith that Catholics *in the past* held.

The same Gospel of peace that Jesus Christ preached in Judea, the same that St. Peter preached in Antioch and Rome, the same that St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and the Ephesians, the same that apostles of all nations have been preaching for the last 1900 years, is preached today and taught in the Catholic Church throughout the world, from January to December-"Jesus Christ yesterday, and today, and the same forever" (Heb. 13:8).

4. The Catholic Church is one in *worship*. All members make use of the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and receive the same sacraments. Although rites vary, the essentials of worship laid down by Christ form the foundation of all. Certain ceremonies have been appointed by the Church, to show more clearly in outward form the spiritual significance of whatever act is being done, and to increase the devotion of those who are present or take part in the religious acts.

The ritual varies in various places, certain ancient rituals from the early days of the Church being preserved. But in general the Roman ritual, the one followed by the diocese of Rome, is the one followed. The change of ritual does not change the *substance* of the religious act, which is preserved in its entirety.

5. All Catholics are united in *government*.

Everywhere the faithful obey their pastors, the pastors obey the bishops, and the bishops obey the Pope. The Catholic Church is truly "one fold and one Shepherd", its unity standing out unequalled in all history.

**Why is the Catholic Church holy?** --The Catholic Church is holy because it was founded by Jesus Christ, who is all-holy, and because it teaches, according to the will of Christ, holy doctrines, and provides the means of leading a holy life, thereby giving holy members to every age.

St. Peter called the Christians of his time "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Pet. 2:9).

1. The *Founder* of the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ, is holy. The Church exhorts its children to imitate its Divine Founder.

No founder of any other church is as holy as Jesus Christ, Son of God. And among the children of the Church we may mention as examples of holiness the canonized Saints.

2. The Catholic Church teaches the highest and holiest doctrine ever presented to any people, a *standard* of perfection. The same precepts delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, the same warnings uttered by the prophets in Judea, the same sublime lessons taught by Our Lord: these the Church teaches from year to year.

The Church teaches its children to know, love, and serve God, and thus to become saints. It urges on them the truth: "What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). It exhorts them to *imitate Christ*.

3. The Catholic Church provides powerful *means* for holiness, in prayer and the Sacraments. By the Sacraments a Catholic receives abundant graces. One who is faithful in the reception of the Sacraments will never fail to live a righteous life and die a happy death.

Every Catholic is obliged to his morning and night prayers, and to resort to prayer in every necessity and temptation, as well as to prayer of thanksgiving. He is required under pain of sin to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

4. The Catholic Church produces holy members in its *saints* and *martyrs*. In every age and country the Church is the Mother of saints, martyrs, confessors, and holy men and women who live in Christ. We do not, however, maintain that all Catholics are holy. Unfortunately, some do not live up to the teachings of the Church; that will be their condemnation.

We must remember that even among the Apostles there was one Judas. Our Lord Himself taught in the parable of the wheat and the cockle that the good and the bad will grow up side by side in His Church.

5. The Catholic Church still has the gift of miracles. Christ promised His Church the gift of miracles, a sign of holiness. "He who believes in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these he shall do" (John 14:12).

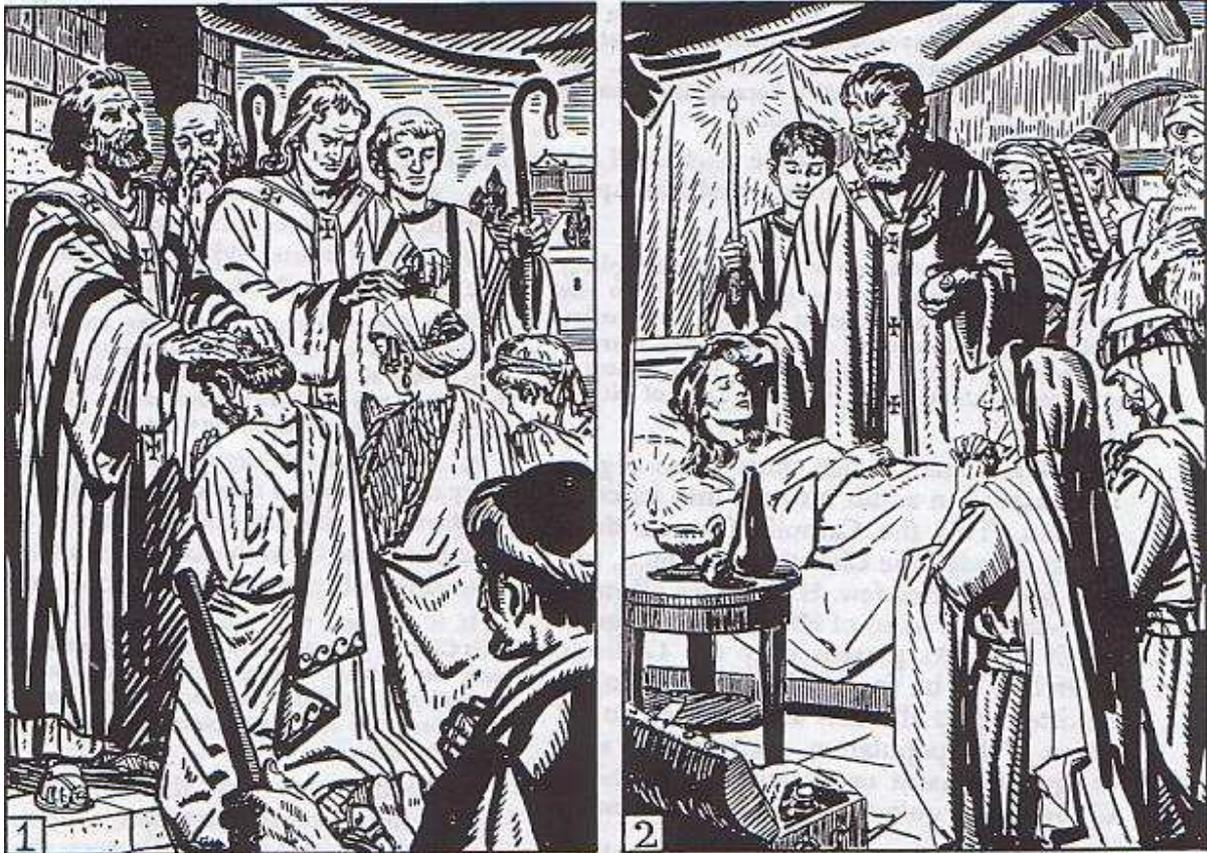
Each holy soul proposed for canonization must have worked two miracles before beatification, and two more before canonization. We constantly read of miracles at Lourdes and other shrines. The cures at Lourdes are declared genuine by a board of physicians, many of whom are non-Catholic.

6. The Catholic Church carries on numberless *works of holiness*. It is the great Mother of Mercy and Charity to the helpless.

It instructs children in school, cares for the poor, the sick, the lepers, the deaf, blind, dumb, the old, the orphaned and abandoned. It engages in all kinds of missionary and charitable activity.

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### 53. The Catholic Church: Catholicity and Apostolicity



*The apostolicity of the Church receives additional proof from the fact that today it still administers the very same seven sacraments administered by the Apostles. Non-Catholic churches have abandoned most of the sacraments, but the Catholic Church preserves and administers them all. Among the sacraments thus preserved are (1) Confirmation, and (2) Extreme Unction. St. Peter and St. John administered the first (Acts 8:14-17). St. James wrote about the second (Jas. 5:14,15).*

**Why is the Church catholic or universal?** --The Catholic Church is catholic or universal because, destined to last for all time, it never fails to fulfill the divine commandment to teach all nations all the truths revealed by God.

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

1. The very name of the Church is *Catholic*, that is, *universal*. Even its critics admit that it is catholic. It has existed in all ages since the time of Christ, and teaches *all peoples* of every nation the same faith.

It was St. Ignatius (50-107 A.D.) appointed Bishop of Antioch by Saint Peter, who first used the Greek word *Katholicos*, meaning "universal," when referring to the Church founded by Christ; this he did in order to distinguish the True Church, already being preached throughout the world, from heretical churches that had arisen.

In the fourth century certain sectarians protested against the True Church, yet still called themselves Christians. And so Catholics began to call themselves "Catholic." In that same century St. Augustine said: "All heretics wish to call themselves *Catholics*; yet if you ask any of them to direct you to a Catholic church, he will not direct you to his own!"

*Wherever* we go, whether in Europe, America, Africa, Asia, or Australia, we shall find the Catholic Church established. Everywhere it teaches the *same doctrines* taught in the United States; everywhere it is ruled by the same Head recognized in the United States: the Pope.

When we say the Church is *Catholic* or universal, we understand that wherever it exists it must have the mark of unity. Otherwise it would not be the same body, but many separate bodies. Some heretical churches have branches in different countries, but they are really different bodies, because they change doctrines under different conditions.

2. The Church everywhere teaches *all the doctrines* that Christ commanded His Apostles to teach.

In the Catholic Church is fulfilled the prophecy of Malachy: "From the rising of the sun to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. 1:11).

3. The True Church must be so organized that it can admit *all men* into its communion. This the Catholic Church does. Christ founded the Church for all men, not only for a selected few, He died for all men, and wishes the fruits of His death to do good to all men. At present only the Catholic Church is to be found all over the world, ministering to all races and peoples, to all classes of the population, poor or rich, wise or ignorant, saint or sinner. The Catholic Church is the only *Church for Everyman*.

Most denominations are national; all are localized. For example: in Germany the Kaiser used to be the head of the Lutheran Church; in Russia the Czar used to be head of the Russian Church. The Queen of England is head of the Anglican Church.

1. **Why is the Catholic Church apostolic?** --The Catholic Church is apostolic because it was founded by Christ on the Apostles, and, according to His divine will, has always been governed by their lawful successors.

Apostolicity is easily proved by the *facts of history*. If a church cannot trace back its history lawfully in an unbroken line step by step to the Apostles, it is not the True Church.

2. Pope Pius XII, our present Pope, is the *direct successor* of St. Peter.

He is the lawful successor of the Pope who preceded him; and thus each Pope lawfully succeeded the one before him, until we reach St. Peter, the first Pope, chosen by Christ Himself.

3. All the sees founded by the Apostles perished or were interrupted, *except the See of Peter alone*. Where Peter is, there is the True Church founded by Our Lord.

Those denominations that broke away from the Church thus lost their connection with the Apostles. They were all begun by individuals who could never have had any authority from either Christ or the Apostles. Most of them came some 1500 years too late.

4. Non-Catholic denominations claim that they did not begin new churches, but merely "*reformed*" the old one. In answer we ask, Did the True Church exist at the time of the founding of these new churches, or not?

If it did not, then Christ's promise to be with His Church always had failed; His Church had died, and no human reform could possibly have resurrected it. If it did exist, then those who invented *new doctrines* were not reforming it, but founding new churches.

5. In the same way, the Church derives all its holy orders, doctrines, and mission *from the Apostles*. It is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles," of which Christ is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). It holds intact the *doctrine* and traditions of the Apostles, to whom Christ gave authority to teach.

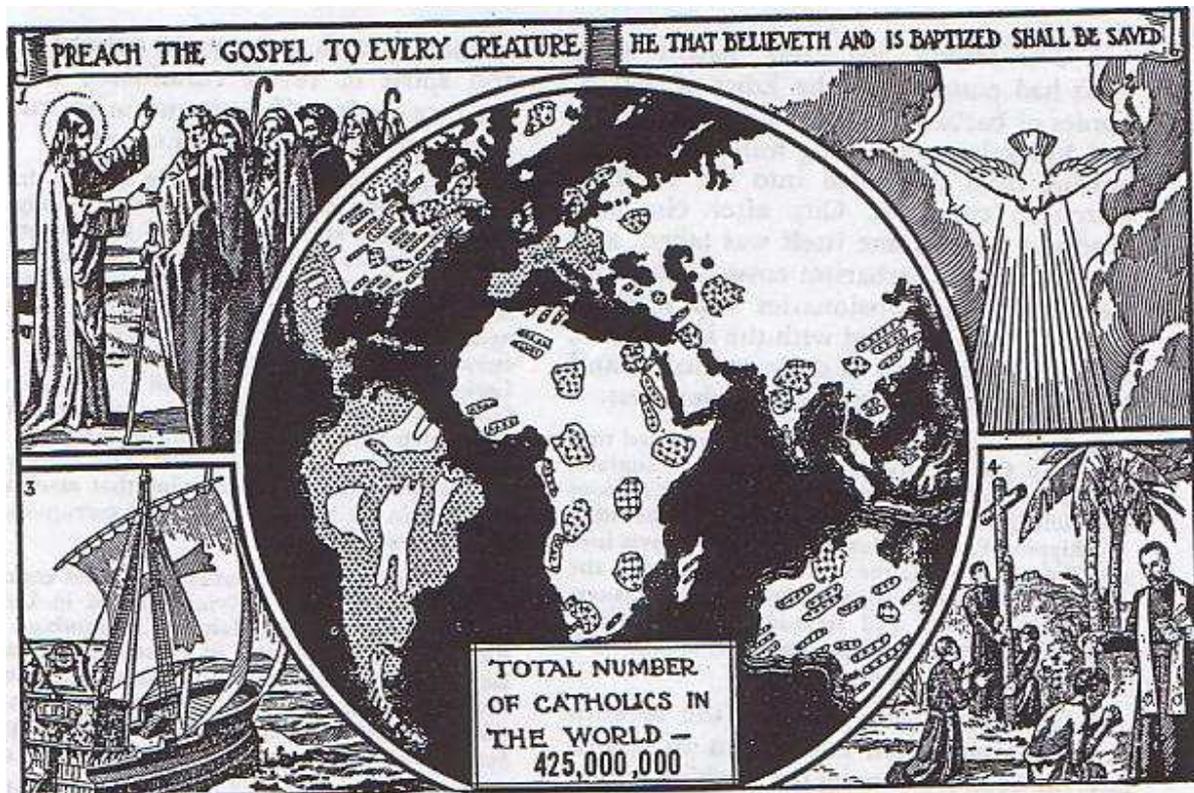
St. Paul says: "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema!" (Gal. 1:8). A church which at any time denies an apostolic doctrine, discards the sacrament of Holy Orders, or breaks away from obedience to the Pope, ceases to be apostolic. It becomes a dead branch broken off from the parent vine which is Christ Himself: "I am the vine: you are the branches" (John 15:5).

Catholics Do *Not* Believe:

That the Pope is God and can do no wrong;  
That anybody or anything may be worshipped or adored besides the True God;  
That the Blessed Virgin is equal to God;  
That images may be worshipped;  
That indulgences give permission to commit sin;  
That a Mass can be bought;  
That forgiveness of sin can be bought;  
That sin can be forgiven without true sorrow;

That scapulars, medals, crucifixes, and other sacramentals can give graces without proper dispositions on the part of the user;  
That non-Catholics will all be damned;  
That all Catholics will go to heaven;  
That the Bible is the only rule of faith;  
That anybody may interpret the Bible;  
That Our Lord Jesus Christ established many Churches;  
That outward piety is profitable without charity of the spirit;  
That all religions are the same.

## 54. The Living Church



*In spite of all kinds of persecutions, the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, has continued to spread all over the world. It has obeyed strictly the command of Our Lord to the Apostles: "Go and make disciples of all nations." Everywhere men have listened to its voice, believing the warning of Christ, "He that believeth not shall be condemned."*

**Give a short summary of the history of the Church for the almost two thousand years of its existence** --The following is a brief summary:

- *The first 400 years.* The Apostles dispersed to different countries in order to carry out Christ's command to teach. The Apostles baptized, preached, and ruled in various countries to which they were sent. They appointed bishops and priests to rule and minister to the faithful.

In spite of sufferings and persecutions they persevered, until finally they sealed their faith by martyrdom. Peter and Paul were especially interested in the conversion of the Roman Empire, the mightiest and also most wicked empire of ancient days.

The morals of the Romans were extremely debased; the evil was spreading from the Imperial City of Rome throughout the vast empire. In Rome alone some 30,000 different "gods" and "goddesses" were worshipped, many of them for their very immorality. So close was the union of the pagan religion and the empire that to attack the religion was to be considered a traitor to Rome. For this reason the full force of the empire was set against the new religion of the

Christians. But the Fisherman did not falter: Peter battled with all his might. He and Paul were both martyred; but others rose to continue the battle for Christ, which lasted for nearly 300 years.

Persecution followed upon persecution, numbering ten unsurpassed in ferocity. The severest were those under Nero (64-68) and Diocletian (303-305). The latter condemned to death some two million Christians. But the more they were persecuted, the faster they increased. Tertullian says: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity."

At last, in 313 A.D., the banners of Christianity were flung out in victory; peace was granted by the Edict of Milan. Later, Constantine the Great made Christianity the State religion (324 A. D.) He was led to this step when he conquered in battle after seeing in the heavens a luminous cross with the words *In hoc signo vinces* (In this sign thou shalt conquer). His saintly mother, St. Helena, had also a great influence on his conversion.

- *The second 400 years.* Before sixty years had passed after the Edict of Milan, hordes of barbarian Huns, Goths, Vandals, and Visigoths, numbering millions, started moving from the north into the civilized European countries. City after city surrendered until Rome itself was taken, and the darkness of barbarism covered the continent. But the missionaries and teachers of the Church mingled with the barbarians, returned with them to their countries, and brought light once more out of darkness.

St. Patrick was sent to Ireland, and converted that nation to Christianity. St. Augustine in England and St. Boniface in Germany changed those nations into followers of the cross of Christ. The idol worshipping Franks followed their king Clovis into the Christian fold. At the end of four centuries, the cruel and savage barbarians of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, England, and Ireland were Christians, civilized, progressive, settled in peaceful cities, building churches, carrying on trade.

- *The third 400 years.* In the seventh century Mohammed had begun to propagate his doctrines among the Arabian tribes. His was a conversion by the sword: a great part of Asia, North Africa, Spain, and the islands of the Mediterranean were overrun and conquered to Mohammed's Allah. At last Mohammedanism broke into France.

In a memorable nine-day battle in 732 A. D., the French Christians under Charles Martel defeated the Mohammedans at Tours, and thus stopped their incursions into France. But in the next century the Mohammedans entered and sacked Rome itself, even St. Peter's. However, the Church carried on and finally repelled the invader.

The fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Mohammedans in the eleventh century gave impetus to the Crusades, during which Christian armies went to free the Holy Places from the infidels. There were seven Crusades in all, from 1095 A.D., to 1254 A.D. Among the outstanding leaders we may mention: Godfrey de Bouillon, Frederick Barbarossa, Richard the Lionhearted, and St. Louis of France.

- *The fourth 400 years.* The Christian rulers of Europe, upon becoming more powerful, began to look with envy on the Pope's authority, and to encroach upon it. Although the Crusades had had

good effects, too much interest in material preparations caused a relaxation in spiritual life; heresy often attacked the Church. Berengarius denied the Real Presence; followed the Greek schism, the Albigensian heresy, and the heresies of Wycliff and Huss, who denied the authority of the Church. Finally, in the sixteenth century, the general laxness and spirit of revolt culminated in open defiance against Church authority, and the Protestant Revolt swept Europe.

An Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, in 1517 made an open attack on the doctrine of Indulgences. When he was effectively refuted by Doctor John Eck in a public argument, Luther became enraged, and more active in propagating his errors. Because his doctrines appealed to human vanity and weakness, he attracted many followers. The princes, who envied the papal authority, threw in their lot with Luther. The Bible was declared the only rule of faith, so, that no one would any longer be dependent on Church authority, but could interpret the word of God as he pleased for himself. The vicious were readily won over by the doctrine that man cannot prevent sin on account of natural corruption and the absence of free will.

Revolt spread from Germany to other countries. In Switzerland John Calvin followed in Luther's footsteps, and began Calvinism. In Scotland John Knox was the propagator of Protestantism. In England, Henry VIII's desire to change wives was the immediate cause for the establishment of the Anglican Church. Denmark, Holland, Norway, and Sweden were all swept into heresy by their rulers.

But out of the pains of the Protestant revolt, the Church came forth stronger and purified. In the meantime, *newly discovered* countries were converted. The Portuguese and Spaniards were the pioneers in this missionary enterprise. The discoveries of new lands, to which Catholic missionaries went, resulted in the gain of more millions for the Church than had been lost in Protestantism.

- *The last 400 years.* Many in Europe returned to the Church; more were gained in the Americas. Protestantism has continued to attack the Church; the paganism bred from the spirit of laxity and revolt is another enemy. Open warfare goes on in Russia and satellite countries. Still the Church continues to grow, the greatest single religious body in history.

In 1954 missionaries of Mother Church can be found in *the most remote* portions of the globe, working patiently to bring souls to Christ. They go where no other foreigners would go. At present there are about 30,000 priests, 12,000 lay brothers, and 60,000 Sisters working in the foreign missions. The missions are supervised and supported by the Societies for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood (see Chapter 191 on Propagation of the Faith)

At present the Church has a membership of about 425,000,000 in all parts of the world. They are under the direction of some 420,000 priests, 2,200 Prelates, and one Head, the Pope. They form the greatest body having a single religious faith. The different Protestant denominations number about two hundred million all together. The schismatic Eastern Christians total about 150 millions.

## 55. The Catholic Eastern Church; Rites



*The essential acts of the Liturgy are three: the prayers of the priesthood in the Divine Office (represented by the first angel), the Mass (represented by the second angel), and the sacraments (represented by the third angel). The term "rite" is sometimes used to refer to the liturgy according to some definite custom and language. "Rite" may also designate in a narrow sense some particular liturgical ceremony; in this way we have the "rite of Baptism", etc.*

**What is the Catholic Eastern Church?** --It is that part of the Church in the East which, although using liturgies and rites differing from those of the Latin (or Western) Church centered at Rome, subscribe to the same doctrines, and recognize the same Sovereign Pontiff, thus belonging to the same Universal and True Church.

The Catholic Eastern Church includes the following: Byzantines, Syrians, Copts, Ethiopians, Chaldeans, Armenians, Malabarese, and Maronites.

1. At the beginning of the *fourth century* there was one Church, one in doctrine as well as in obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff, the Bishop of Rome. Even then, however, there was no uniformity in observances, ceremonies, rites.

Our Lord had sent the Apostles to different parts, and their followers had stuck to the doctrines, but had varied the observances and rites, in accordance with the particular inclinations of the people in the region. The languages used were naturally extremely varied; the Mass was the same Sacrifice instituted by Our Lord (in Aramaic), but it must have been said in quite a variety of languages.

2. Then political dissension within the Roman Empire led to its division into East and West. Religious organization, following *political developments*, led to the separation of first the Greek, then the Russian Orthodox Church. (See Chapter 71 on Schism and Heresy)

These schismatical churches denied the authority of the Pope, who lived in the West as Bishop of Rome. Otherwise they continued to practice the True Religion just as Christ and the Apostles had taught. They administered the sacraments, celebrated Mass, and followed other observances.

3. Within the Catholic Eastern Church, only the Maronite Church has never been in schism. With the passing of the centuries, those in schism divided and subdivided. Then, chiefly since the 16th and, 17th centuries, most of them *returned to the unity* of the True Church.

The Catholic Eastern Church continues to use different rites and observances, some of which even antedated those of Rome, as having been there, long before the schisms. Thus today the groups in the Eastern Church have their own discipline and customs, the most notable of which is that with them Mass (called "Holy Liturgy") is said in the language peculiar to the church in which it is being said: whether Slavonic, Rumanian, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Greek, Coptic, Ethiopic, or Georgian.

Other differences of practice are: administration of the Holy Eucharist to the faithful in both forms of bread and wine, the use of leavened bread for Holy Mass, Baptism by immersion, bowing from the waist with a sweep of the arm instead of a genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament.

4. Groups in the Eastern Church are chiefly those under the jurisdiction of the *Patriarchs* of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. In the fifth century there were five patriarchates: these four composing the Eastern Church, and the Patriarchate of Rome alone in the West.

In those days there were clear-cut geographical divisions of patriarchates; an Eastern Catholic was born within the limits of his patriarchate. Today one belongs to his rite wherever he goes, and his children inherit his rite. In the United States there are two dioceses of Eastern Catholics: one of Philadelphia (Ukranian Greek) to which some 316,800 Catholics belong; and another of Pittsburgh (composed of Russians, Hungars, and Croats) , to which some 315,200 Catholics belong. If Canada is included, almost a million among us are of the Eastern Church.

5. The Catholic Eastern Church is a living proof of the universality of the Catholic Church. The *matter* (including the doctrines, faith and morals) is unchanging; but the *manner* (including rubrics and rites, custom and practice, the externals) may change. The Church organization is malleable; but the fundamentals and essentials, the doctrines, are unchanging anywhere.

Thus Catholics under the Patriarchate of Rome in the United States have only six holydays of obligation; the Ukranian Catholic here has to observe twenty holydays of

obligation. His Christmas, though also December 25th, falls on our January 7th, because he uses a different calendar. In the Eastern Churches, the married clergy can be found as often as the celibate, because married men can be ordained and retain their wives. If the wife of a married priest dies, he cannot remarry; a bachelor who is ordained cannot marry later. Bishops are required to be either widowers or single.

Unity of religion does not mean uniformity of rite. Even in the Latin Church under the Patriarch of Rome, there are variations, all dating no later than the fourteenth century. As Pope Benedict XIV said: "Eastern Christians should be Catholics; they do not need to become Latins." External may vary; but the core is one.

**What is liturgy, and what is rite?** --Liturgy comprises a public act intended for the worship of God; rite is the manner of observing the act.

At present, however, the two terms are used indiscriminately and interchangeably. Strictly speaking, "liturgy" now refers to the rite of Holy Mass.

1. The *Roman Rite* is for all practical purposes the universal rite used in the Western Church. In it Latin is used.

During the period of persecutions, and on account of the difficulty of communication, variety in practices was the natural and common thing. When the Church became better organized, practices became more uniform. In the Latin Church rites practically became uniform in 1570 with the publication of the Roman Missal; even today a few variations remain.

2. The *Byzantine Rite*, after the Roman, is the most widely-used in the Church, being found in Russia, Greece, the Balkans, and south Italy. Greek is the language principally employed, but Georgian, Slavonic, and Roumanian are likewise used.

The Orthodox Eastern Church belongs to this rite. Originally, it was of Constantinople; it is based on the rite of St. James of Jerusalem, and was reformed by St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom. Modified for use in Russia, this Rite is termed *Ruthenian*.

3. Other Asian Rites are: the *Antiochean*, *Chaldean*, and *Armenian*; in their entirety or modified, they are employed in the East.

The *Antiochean* Rite is the source of many derived rites; it traces its origin to St. James of Jerusalem. The Syrians, Chaldeans, Malabarese, and Maronites use derivations. The *Chaldean* Rite is used by the Chaldeans and Malabarese. Syriac is the principal language used in both these rites. The *Armenian* Rite is in use among Armenians, found in the Levant, Italy, and Austria. The Armenian tongue is used. It is the Greek Liturgy of St. Basil.

4. In African Catholic churches, the principal rite used is the Alexandrian. This is called the "Liturgy of St. Mark"; but the original has been greatly modified. The *Coptic* and *Ethiopian* Churches use it.

The Catholic *Copts* are under the Patriarch of Alexandria, living in Cairo. Old Coptic and Arabic are the languages used in their liturgy: The *Ethiopian* Church uses a version of the Liturgy of St. Mark; it is as a whole the same as that of the Copts.

The ceremonies of these Rites may indeed seem strange to us of the Latin Rite. But the bishops and priests are real bishops and priests, though vested differently; the Mass and Sacraments are genuine, though performed with an unknown ritual. The Church in the East is the same Church in the West, the same founded by Jesus Christ, the One True Catholic Church.



## 56. The Bishop of Rome



*It is Christ's will that we should reverence His ministers as Himself. This is why Catholics pay the greatest reverence to Christ's Vicar, the Pope, their universal Father. On this account the title "His Holiness" is given him. Out of respect for his office, the Holy Father is given privileges not granted to other bishops. As a temporal sovereign he has a Court and guards. He has a standard and sea. He has ambassadors. On solemn occasions he is carried in the papal chair called sedia gestatoria.*

### **Did Christ intend that the special power of chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church should be exercised by Peter alone?**

--Christ did not intend that the special power of chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church should be exercised by Peter alone, but intended that this power should be passed down to his successor, the Pope, Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ on earth, and the visible Head of the Church.

1. St. Peter lived for a short time at Antioch; then he went to Rome and there fixed his official residence *permanently*. It was there, and as Bishop of Rome, that he died as a martyr some twenty years later.

The Church was not to die with Peter. Therefore his official rank and dignity and powers were to be handed on to his successors from generation to generation. In the same way, successors to a civil office acquire all the powers attached to the office.

2. Thus the Bishop of Rome, the lawful successor of St. Peter, is *what Peter was*, Vicar of Christ and visible head of the Church. Christ is the true and invisible Head of the Church. But its visible head is the Bishop of Rome, our Holy Father the Pope, because he is the successor of St. Peter.

No one but the Bishop of Rome has ever *claimed* supreme authority over the whole Church. Therefore, either he is St. Peter's successor, or St. Peter has no successor, and the promise of Christ had failed.

3. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all Christendom has been *disputed* because of the perversity of men and the power of evil. It has been denied by *unruly sons*. The very fact that it was disputed shows that it existed.

In the same way even the authority of God Himself has been questioned; His very existence has been denied. From the beginning, too, parental authority has been defied. The authority of lawful rulers has ever been attacked. The denials, defiance, and attacks have not destroyed the existence of such authority. *Does God die* because men deny His existence? "The fool said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 52).

**Has the Bishop of Rome always been looked upon as the head of the Church?** --Yes, the Bishop of Rome has from Apostolic times been looked upon as the universal head of the Church.

1. From earliest times the titles "high priest" and "bishop of bishops" have been given to the Bishop of Rome. *Appeals* were made to him, and *disputes* were settled by him.

The third successor of St. Peter was Pope St. Clement. A dispute in the Church at Corinth was referred to him for decision. He wrote letters of remonstrance and admonition to the Corinthians, and they submitted to his correction. At that time, very near Corinth the Apostle John was still living. Why did the Corinthians, instead of appealing to faraway Rome and Clement, not refer their trouble, to the Apostle John, Bishop of Ephesus? Evidently because Rome's authority was universal, while that of Ephesus was local.

There were numerous cases of *appeal* throughout the long history of the Church; all were referred to Rome.

In the fifth century when Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus in the East, was deposed, he appealed to Pope Leo, and the Pope ordered him reinstated. The Pope was everywhere recognized as head of the Church not only in the West, but in the East, up to the great schism of the ninth century.

2. With one voice the *Fathers* of the Church pay homage to the Bishop of Rome as their superior.

All of them recognized the Pope as Supreme Head. St. Ambrose said in the fourth century: "*Where Peter is, there is the Church.*"

3. General *councils* were not held without the presence of the Bishop of Rome or his representative. No council was accepted as universal or general unless its acts received the approval of the Bishop of Rome.

At the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, the Pope's letter was read to the assemblage of bishops, and they cried with one voice: "Peter has spoken by Leo; let him be anathema who believes otherwise!" As late as the year 1439, in the council of Florence, the Greeks who wished to return to the Church acknowledged the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.

4. Every nation *converted from paganism* has received the faith from missionaries specially sent by the Pope, or by bishops acknowledging the Pope as their Head.

St. Patrick was sent by Pope Celestine to Ireland. St. Palladius was sent by the same Pope to Scotland. St. Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory to England. St. Remigius went to France under the protection of the See of Rome. St. Boniface was sent by Pope Gregory II to Germany and Bavaria. And so on.

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## PONTIFICAL DECORATIONS

The Holy See confers various titles, orders, decorations, and other *honors* on certain persons, usually lay people, who in some special manner have distinguished themselves in furthering the well-being of humanity and of the Church. They, are listed here in the order of importance.

The *Supreme Order of Christ* was started by Pope John XXII in 1319. Today it is the supreme pontifical Order of knighthood, conferred only on very rare occasions.

The *Order of the Golden Spur* follows the Order of Christ as a pontifical decoration. It has one class of 100 knights, and is awarded only to those who have furthered the cause of the Church by outstanding deeds. It is bestowed also to non-Catholics.

The *Order of Pius IX* has three classes, Knights of the Grand Cross, Commanders, and Knights. It is awarded also to non-Catholics.

The *Order of St. Gregory the Great* was founded by Pope Gregory XVI in 1831. It has two divisions, civil and military, each of which is divided into three classes: Knights of the Grand Cross, Commanders, and Knights.

The *Order of St. Sylvester*, instituted in 1841, like the Order of St. Gregory, has three classes of knights.

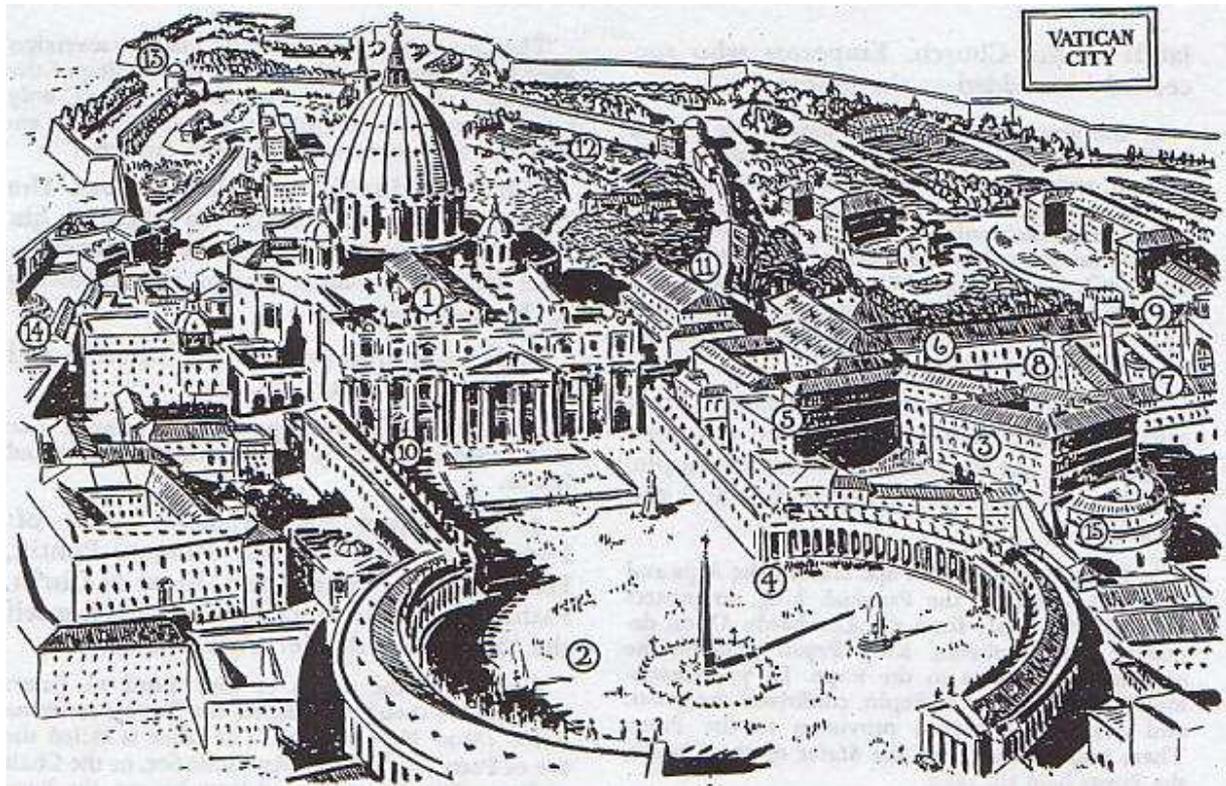
The *Order of the Holy Sepulchre* is considered one of the oldest of pontifical honors; it is today highly prized in Europe. It has been bestowed on kings and nobles, on heads of

republics, on persons outstanding in arts, letters, and sciences, on those who in special manner have served the Church. Unlike other orders, this is bestowed besides on clerics and women.

The medal "*Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*" was instituted by Leo XIII, that great "Pope of the Workingman" in 1888. It is awarded in recognition of special services to the Church and the Pope. The "*Benemerenti*" medal was instituted in 1832 by Gregory XVI, of two classes, civil and military, in recognition of outstanding daring or courage.

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## 57. Powers of the Pope



1. Basilica of St. Peter; 2. Plaza of St. Peter; 3. The Vatican (10,246 rooms); 4. Bronze door; 5. Courtyard of Damascus; 6. Vatican Library; 7. Vatican Museum; 8. Courtyard of Belvedere; 9. Courtyard of Pines; 10. Door leading to Libraries; 11. Sistine Chapel; 12. Vatican Gardens; 13. Observatory; 14. Campo Santo; 15. Quarters of the Swiss Guards. In 1929 Pope Pius XI and King Victor Emmanuel III signed a formal agreement, by which the Pope regained temporal sovereignty over the City of the Vatican. That is the smallest independent state in all Christendom. But in it the Roman Pontiff is supreme, free from all human dictation. Catholics from all over the world at any time, in war or at peace, can have free access to their universal Father, because of this independence.

**What are the chief powers of the Pope?** --The Pope has supreme and complete power and jurisdiction to decide questions of faith and morals and to arrange the discipline of the universal Church.

1. The power of the Pope *extends* over every single church, every single bishop and pastor, every one of the faithful.

He may appoint and depose bishops, call councils, make and unmake laws, send missionaries, confer distinctions, privileges, and dispensations, and reserve sins to his own tribunal.

2. The Pope is the supreme *judge*; to him belongs the last appeal in all cases.

The Pope is the "teacher of all Christians", the "chief shepherd of the shepherds and their flocks". "Peter, standing up with the Eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them ..." (Acts 2:14). The word "Pope" is derived from the Latin term *papa*, which means "Father".

3. The Pope is *independent* of every temporal sovereign and of every spiritual power. He is responsible only to God.

**What is the temporal power of the Pope?** --The temporal power of the Pope is his power to rule an independent state as sovereign, free and independent from other earthly sovereigns.

The vastness of the Church and the greatness of its responsibilities towards its millions of members require that it should be able to communicate with them unhampered by any national government, free of foreign interference.

1. When Constantine the Great was converted at the beginning of the fourth century, he gave large grants of money and lands to the Church. Emperors who succeeded him added to the grants.

In the year 327 Constantine moved the seat of his Empire to Constantinople. Rome was abandoned to itself, and became the prey of successive hordes of barbarians. The Roman people came to look up to the Popes as their only governors and protectors. In fact it was Pope Leo the Great who saved Rome from Attila the "Scourge of God", and from Genseric the Vandal. Thus abandoned by the emperors, little by little the people of central Italy became bound more strongly to the Popes.

2. In 754 the Lombards invaded Italy and threatened Rome. The Pope appealed urgently to the Emperor in Constantinople, but he was indifferent, neglectful, and did nothing.

In this emergency, the Pope crossed the Alps and appealed to Pepin, the Frankish king, to protect the people in Italy from the Lombards. Upon defeating the Lombards, King Pepin granted the conquered provinces to the Pope. In 774 Charlemagne, the successor of Pepin, confirmed the grant, and donated additional provinces to the Pope. These possessions, called the *States of the Church*, the Popes held till 1859.

3. In 1859 all the States of the Church, except Rome, were seized by the armies of Victor Emmanuel II, leader of the movement for the unification of Italy.

In 1870 Rome itself was taken, and made capital of Italy, and the Pope became virtually a prisoner in his own palace.

4. In 1929 the *Lateran Treaty* signed between the Holy See and the crown of Italy recognized the Pope's temporal power and his sovereignty over the City of the Vatican, by a formal concordat between the Pope and the crown of Italy.

The City of the Vatican is the smallest sovereign state in the world. At the time of the signing of the Lateran Treaty, it had a population of 532, only 250 of whom were resident. It is almost entirely enclosed by high walls, and comprises 110 acres.

**What exclusive privileges does the Bishop of Rome enjoy, to signify his supremacy as Head of the Church?** --The Bishop of Rome enjoys the following exclusive privileges:

1. He has *precedence* of jurisdiction and honor over all other bishops.

The Bishop of Rome's jurisdiction extends over all Christendom. He is first in both authority and honor.

2. He enjoys the exclusive *titles* of: Pope, Sovereign Pontiff, Roman Pontiff, Holy Father, His Holiness, Vicar of Christ, Father of Christendom. But he calls himself the "Servant of the Servants of God."

Because of the words of Our Lord to Peter: "Blessed art thou," we address the Pope *Beatissime Pater* (Most Holy Father). The office is called the See of Peter, Holy See, or Apostolic See, or the Chair of Peter. The Pope is called from his see, the Pope of Rome, and the Catholic Church under him is often called the Roman Catholic Church.

3. He assumes a *new name* upon his election, as St. Peter was given a new name by Our Lord. From the tenth century, it has been the custom to choose the name from those of previous Popes, St. Peter's being excepted out of reverence.

He wears the *tiara*, a triple crown, the symbol of his preeminence in the threefold office of Teacher, Priest, and Pastor. He wears a cassock of white silk, uses white silk shoes, and a crosier mounted by a cross. He issues medals, confers knighthood. He sends ambassadors. He has a gold-and-white standard.

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## Consistories

The College of Cardinals is the Senate of the Pope. As principal advisers and helpers, the cardinals assist the Holy Father in the government of the Church. After the Supreme Pontiff, the cardinals have the highest dignity in our Holy Mother Church.

Consistories are assemblies of cardinals presided over by the Pope. There are three kinds: (1) secret, with only the Pope and cardinals present; (2) public, attended by other prelates and lay spectators; (3) semipublic, attended by bishops and patriarchs. At the secret consistory, the Pope delivers an allocution on religious and moral conditions throughout the world; sometimes seeks the opinion of the cardinals on the creation of new cardinals, gives the cardinal's ring, appoints bishops, archbishops and patriarchs, makes ecclesiastical transfers, divides or unites dioceses, and asks for a vote on a proposed

canonization. At the public consistory, the Pope bestows the red hat, hears the causes of beatifications and canonizations. At the semi-public consistory the propriety of a proposed canonization is decided.

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## 58. The Roman Curia

**What is the Roman Curia?** --It is the organization of various bodies to which the Pope has delegated the exercise of his jurisdiction.

Almost all the heads of the bodies in the Roman Curia are cardinals.

The Roman Curia is the papal court; it is the core of the government of the Church. The Holy Father possesses complete and absolute power over the government of the Church; but it is not possible for him to exercise his authority personally and directly over every detail in the worldwide Church. A great deal of the jurisdiction has therefore been delegated to the Roman Curia, which at present consists of:

- a. Twelve ***Congregations***, namely: Of the Holy Office, of the Consistory, for the Oriental Church, of the Sacraments, of the Council, of Religious, for the Propagation of the Faith, of Sacred Rites, of Ceremonies, of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, of Seminaries and Universities, and of the Basilica of St. Peter.
- b. Three ***Tribunals***, namely: Sacred Penitentiary, Sacred Roman Rota, and Apostolic Signature.
- c. Five ***Offices***, namely: Apostolic Chancery, Apostolic Datary, Apostolic Camera, Secretariate of State, and Secretariate of Briefs to Princes and Latin Letters.

**What in general are the duties of the twelve Congregations of the Roman Curia?** -- Their duties are summarized below:

1. The *Congregation of the Holy Office* guards Catholic doctrine in faith and morals, protects sacramental dogma, acts on heresy and heretics, decides matters related to the condemnation of books, the doctrine of indulgences, new prayers and devotions.

Unlike all other Congregations, it has judicial, as well as administrative powers. The importance of this sacred congregation is shown by the fact that the Holy Father Himself is its Prefect, acting with a Cardinal-Secretary. This, the Consistorial Congregation, and that for the Oriental Church are the only administrative Departments thus personally headed by the Pope himself. All other congregations have cardinal-prefects, and the tribunals and offices have cardinal or other prelates at their head.

2. The *Consistorial Congregation* prepares subjects of discussion at the papal consistories, where the College of Cardinals with the Pope deliberate on important matters. It judges the competency of all the Congregations with the exception of that of the Holy Office.

It is this Congregation through which the Pope nominates bishops and other high officials, after inquiring into their qualifications; it forms new dioceses, provinces, etc. that are not under the Propagation of the Faith or of the Congregation for the Oriental Church, and looks after their preservation.

3. The *Congregation for the Oriental Church* takes care of all matters related to the Eastern Church. (See Chapter 55 on The Catholic Eastern Church: Rites)
4. The *Congregation of the Sacraments* looks after the external regulations of the seven sacraments, ordains decrees and grants dispensations; it has charge of matters related to the validity of Orders or Matrimony.
5. The *Congregation of the Council* has supervision over secular clergy and laymen, including parish priests, religious associations (even those under religious) , taxes, etc.; it has charge of episcopal conferences. It deals with matters related to the observance of the laws of the Church.
6. The *Congregation of Religious* has authority over matters related to all religious, including lay members of Third Orders; it takes up their government, discipline, and privileges, and supervises their property and studies.
7. The *Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith* has charge of all matters related to the missions; missionary societies and seminaries are under its jurisdiction.
8. The *Congregation of Sacred Rites* acts upon matters pertaining to rites and ceremonies; it considers the beatification and canonization of departed holy souls; it bestows insignia and marks of honor.
9. The *Congregation of Ceremonies* has control of ceremonies in the papal chapel and court, and of functions performed by cardinals outside of the papal chapel; it judges matters of precedence of cardinals and legates.
10. The *Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs* has charge of matters related to civil laws and governments; its prefect is the Cardinal Secretary of State. Whenever a settlement is necessary in conjunction with civil authority, this Congregation has charge of the formation and division of dioceses, the appointment of bishops and other prelates, etc.
11. The *Congregation of Seminaries and Universities* supervises seminaries and universities, even those under religious orders, inquiring not only into government, but also into curricula; it establishes standards and confers academic degrees.
12. The *Congregation of the Basilica of St. Peter* looks after the upkeep of that Basilica.

**What is the jurisdiction of each of the three Tribunals of the Curia?** --The Jurisdiction of each of the three Tribunals of the Curia may be summarized thus:

1. The *Sacred Penitentiary* judges all cases involving conscience, whether sacramental or not, and all cases concerning the granting and use of indulgences, outside of the rights of the Holy Office on the subject of dogmatic doctrine.
2. The *Sacred Roman Rota* has charge of matters involving judicial procedure, outside of the rights of the Holy Office and the Congregation of Sacred Rites.
3. The *Apostolic Signature* is the supreme court of the Roman Curia. It has charge of all appeals, and settles all cases regarding jurisdiction of inferior tribunals.

**Summarize briefly the duties of the five Offices of the Roman Curia.** --This is a brief summary:

- a. The *Apostolic Chancery* sends out Apostolic Letters and Bulls on matters of major importance.

- b. The *Apostolic Datary* takes care of the appointment of candidates to benefices, and their due taxation.
- c. The *Apostolic Camera* has charge over all temporal goods and rights of the Holy See, especially when the See is vacant. It corresponds to the Treasury of the Church. Its head, the *camerlengo* assumes the regency upon the death of a Pope, and makes arrangements for the *election*.
- d. The *Secretariate of State* prepares matters for the consideration of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. The Cardinal-Secretary of State may be said to be the *Prime Minister* of the Pope.
- e. The *Secretariate of Briefs* to Princes and Latin Letters transcribes into Latin all acts of the Pope that he endorses to it.

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## The Papal Elections

When the Dean of the College of Cardinals publicly announces the death of the Pope, all the cardinals throughout the world are convoked to a solemn conclave, for the election of a new Supreme Pontiff. The conclave is held within fifteen to eighteen days after the death of the Holy Father.

If all the cardinals are present on the fifteenth day after the death of the Pope, then the conclave begins. If not all the cardinals are present, the conclave is postponed until the eighteenth day. Then the cardinals, after celebrating Holy Mass, gather in the Sistine Chapel, for the elections. And until they have made a choice, they remain in seclusion within a part of the Vatican, reserved for them.

Any male Catholic of whatever country or race, even a layman, may be elected Pope. Should a layman be chosen, he would have to be ordained priest and consecrated bishop, before he may assume the duties of his office. To be validly the Supreme Pontiff, the elected one is required to accept the office. The Pope is elected for life; however, if he wishes, he may resign, and a new Pope would then be elected.

The voting by the cardinals is done on specially-printed ballots. A two-thirds majority plus one is required to elect. Two ballots are taken every morning and evening until a selection is made. As long as no choice is made, the ballots are burned with damp straw; the heavy black smoke coming out from the chimney is a sign to the public usually assembled in the plaza outside that no decision has been reached. But when a candidate receives a two-thirds majority plus one, then he is elected, and the ballots are burned without the damp straw. Light smoke issuing from the chimney notifies the eager public that they have a new Holy Father.

## 59. The Hierarchy



*The Church is a closely organized and united society, including the hierarchy and the faithful. All members render loving obedience to the infallible Vicar of Christ. The Pope does not rule as a proud monarch, but as a Father, the representative of God; as a good Shepherd, solicitous for each member of the great flock. The unquestioning obedience of the faithful is responsible for the wonderful unity among the members of the Church throughout the world. There are about four hundred twenty-five million Catholics, all submitting to the hierarchy, at the head of which is the Pope.*

**What is the hierarchy?** --The hierarchy is the organization in successive grades of the ruling powers of the Church.

1. The hierarchy is the "teaching Church," the *ruling body* composed of the priests with their bishops and the Pope above all. It is an army of leaders having care and control of the holy and sacred things of the Church.

Under this army of the "teaching Church" is the "hearing Church--the faithful, the laity.

2. The members of the hierarchy differ in two ways: in the *power of orders*, and in the *power of jurisdiction*.

The power of orders is given by the sacrament of ordination, It is the power to sanctify, a *permanent spiritual power* that no earthly authority can take away. The power of jurisdiction is given by a superior, to enable a subject to exercise his spiritual authority lawfully. This power may be *limited and revoked* by legitimate authority.

**How do the members of the hierarchy differ in their power of orders?** --The members of the hierarchy are divided into three classes with different power of orders: deacons, priests, and bishops.

This order of rank and power has been in force in the Church *from the time of the Apostles*. These three classes were foreshadowed in the high priest, priests, and Levites of the Old Law. They also had counterparts in Our Lord, the Apostles, and the disciples. Our Lord gave full powers to the twelve Apostles, but only limited power to the disciples.

1. *Deacons* can baptize, preach, and give Holy Communion.

The Apostles ordained the first deacons. The deacons were appointed by the Apostles to distribute alms and were consecrated by the laying on of hands accompanied by prayers (Acts 6:6).

2. *Priests* have higher orders than deacons. They can offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance. They can administer all sacraments except those of Confirmation and Holy Orders. With special faculties they may even administer Confirmation, in the Catholic Eastern Rites priests administer Confirmation immediately after Baptism.

Priests were prefigured in the seventy-two disciples of Our Lord. The word "priest" is derived from the Greek *presbyter*, which means "the elder" a term used by the first converted Jews.

3. *Bishops* have full power of orders; they are the *successors* of the Apostles. A bishop administers all the sacraments; he alone administers Holy Orders. He consecrates holy oils, churches, chalices, etc.

Archbishops, primates, patriarchs, and even the Pope himself have no fuller power of *orders* than a bishop of a missionary diocese.

**How do the members of the hierarchy differ in the power of jurisdiction?** --The members of the hierarchy are divided into many ranks according to the power of jurisdiction, the chief ranks being those of Pope, bishops, and parish priests.

These differences of rank and power are necessary for the proper government of the Church just as there are differences of rank and power in the civil government. Without them the Church would be a society without organization.

1. In organization the Church is like a vast *army*; the **Pope**, its visible head, is commander-in-chief of this army. He has jurisdiction and supreme and sovereign power and authority over the entire Church. He is formally addressed "Your Holiness."

This is how one can easily find the True Church: "Where Peter is, there is the Church." To show the variety and extent of the interests of the Church, in 1953 at the Vatican there are diplomatic representatives from forty-four nations.

2. The **Cardinals** are the Pope's advisers and assistants; they are his ministers. He appoints them, and the number is not to exceed seventy. Together they form the *Apostolic or Sacred College*; it is this body that, in solemn conclave, chooses a new Pope when the See falls vacant.

The cardinals form the various congregations or committees in the Papal court, such as the Congregations of the Religious, of Rites, of the Sacraments, etc. In the past many cardinals only had the orders of deacon. The cardinals are distinguished by a red hat and mantle, as a sign that they will be loyal to the Pope at the cost of their blood. A cardinal is addressed "Your Eminence."

3. **Nuncios, internuncios, legates, and apostolic delegates** are representatives or ambassadors of the Pope to different countries, courts, or occasions.

Minor representatives of the Holy See, sent for some special purposes to different places, are termed *Apostolic Visitors*. In the United States we have an Apostolic Delegate. Besides the ordinary powers he has as Apostolic Delegate, the Holy See has delegated to him extraordinary powers.

4. A patriarch is a bishop, successor of the Apostles, who holds the highest rank after the Pope, in jurisdiction. **Patriarchs** are *independent* of any ecclesiastical authority save that of the Pope, who is not only Patriarch of Rome, but Sovereign Pontiff, successor of Peter.

A patriarch ordains all the bishops of his patriarchate, summons synods, legislates on fasting and abstinence, reception of the sacraments, liturgy and ritual, and other observances. At present there are only five major or Greater Patriarchs; those of Rome, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria. The title "Patriarch" is however given as an honorary title to archbishops of certain places.

5. **Archbishops, bishops, and vicars-apostolic** possess varying jurisdictions. They rule over archdioceses, dioceses, vicariates.

An archbishop and bishop are entitled "Most Reverend," and formally addressed "Your Excellency." The term **Primate** is now only an honorary title; formerly a Primate exercised jurisdiction over whole countries or several provinces.

Ordinarily an *abbot* is the superior of an abbey of Benedictines, Cistercians, or other monks. He is elected for life, and has complete authority in the abbey in accordance with the rules of his order.

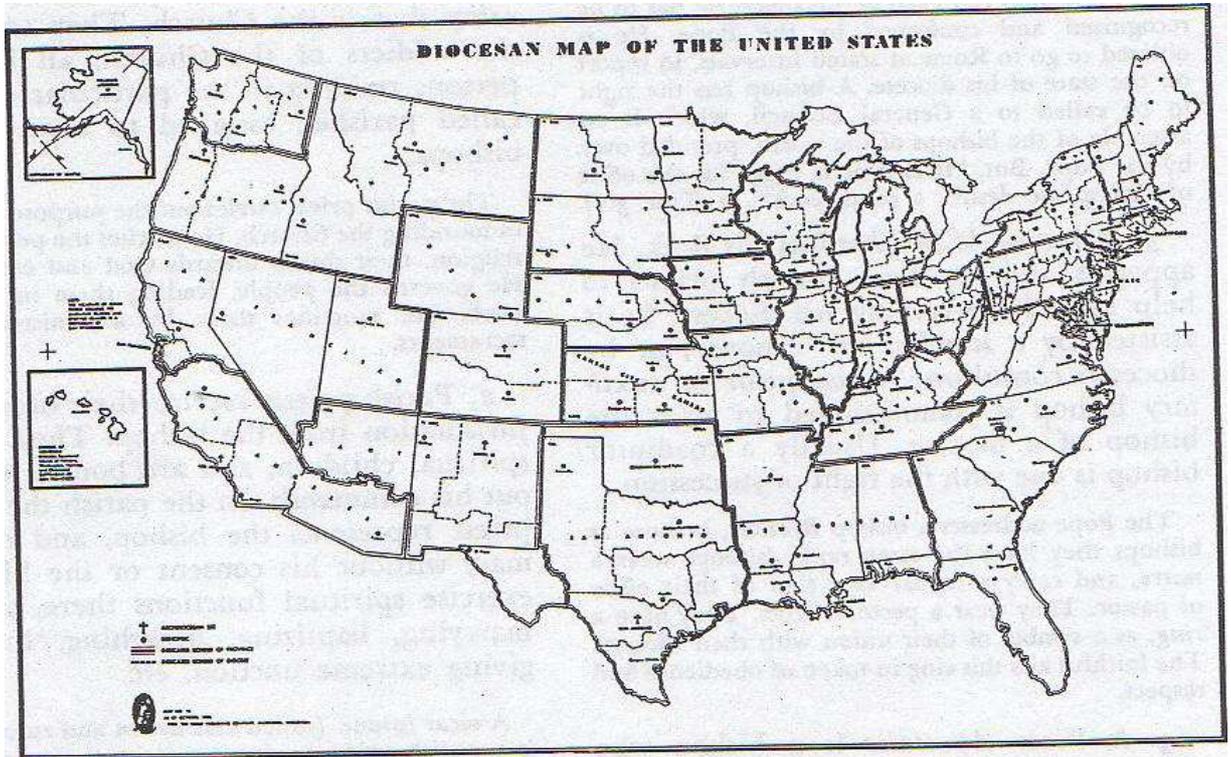
Today the title "abbot" is also granted as a sign of honor; the benefice is some extinct foundation.

6. A *monsignor* is one who for some special merit has been raised above the ranks of the ordinary clergy, and thus joins the prelates; the title is honorary.

The term *Monsignor* is often used in addressing different degrees of prelates. But of the Monsignori proper there are several ranks: protonotaries apostolic, domestic prelates, etc. These are addressed "Right Reverend"; lower ranks, "Very Reverend."

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## 60. Bishops and Priests



The above map shows the different ecclesiastical divisions in the United States. There are 26 ecclesiastical provinces and 106 dioceses, with four cardinals, 29 archbishops, and 168 bishops. Of the U. S. population (including possessions) of 151,354,404 people, 31,648,424 are Catholic, almost 21%, the largest of the religious bodies in the country. For this Catholic population there are at present 45,451 diocesan and religious priests, 8,691 Brothers, and 154,055 Sisters. We have a total of 12,105 Catholic educational institutions, including 250 colleges and universities, 455 seminaries, 2,366 high schools, and 9,034 elementary schools. Including public-school children in special classes, 5,900,569 children are receiving religious instruction under 123,015 teachers, of whom 7,886 are priests in full-time staff. Of Catholic news publications there are 572, with a circulation of about 19,700,000. Of institutions for social work, there are: 290 homes for the aged, 332 orphan asylums, 177 protective institutions, and 922 hospitals.

-From *The Official Catholic Directory*, 1954

**What jurisdiction has a bishop?** --A bishop rules over that part of the Church, an organized territory called a bishopric, diocese, or see, assigned to him by the Pope.

The word "bishop" is a translation from the Greek *episcopos*, which means "overseer," a term first applied during apostolic times. To Titus St. Paul wrote, "For this reason I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set right anything that is defective and shouldst appoint presbyters in every city" (Tit. 1:5).

1. The bishops are the *major-generals* in the vast army of the Church. They command the different divisions of that army, subject to the authority of the commander-in-chief, the Bishop of Rome. Under their jurisdiction are the parish priests in charge of parishes.

As the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, so the other bishops are the direct successors of the other Apostles. Bishops are called "princes of the Church." To them Our Lord spoke: "He who hears you hears Me." They and their vicars general are termed *ordinaries* because they have ordinary, or immediate, jurisdiction over the diocese

2. A bishop *administers* the temporal possessions of his diocese, and gives an account of their administration to the Pope. He provides for the education and training of candidates for the priesthood, and the religious education of his whole flock. He gives faculties to hear confessions, censors books on religious subjects, and has many other powers for the proper administration of his diocese. A bishop is supreme in his diocese, but he is *subject* in all things to the Pope, who appoints him.

The Pope grants their jurisdiction to bishops; before a bishop can exercise his office, he has to be recognized and confirmed by the Pope. He is obliged to go to Rome at stated intervals, to report on the state of his diocese. A bishop has the right to be called to a General Council, which is an assembly of the bishops of the world, presided over by the Pope. But, "If anyone is eager for the office of bishop, he desires a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1)

3. A bishop is *shepherd* of his flock. He appoints and supervises parish priests to help him. In governing his diocese, he is assisted by a number of "canons", or by diocesan consultors. A *coadjutor* or *auxiliary* bishop is commissioned to assist the bishop of a diocese. Usually a coadjutor bishop is one with the right of succession.

The Pope addresses a bishop *Brother*, because as bishops they have the same rank. Bishops wear a *mitre*, and carry a *crozier* as a sign of their office of pastor. They wear a pectoral cross. They have a *ring*, as a symbol of their union with their diocese. The faithful kiss this ring in token of obedience and respect.

4. A *Vicar Apostolic* is a bishop who rules over a territory that is not yet fully organized, called a *Vicariate Apostolic*.

When the territory is first organized, it is usually placed under the care of a priest, and not a bishop. This priest is called a *Prefect Apostolic* and his territory is an *Apostolic Prefecture*.

5. A *titular Bishop* or *Archbishop* is one who bears the title of a diocese, but has no jurisdiction over it. Nuncios, apostolic delegates, coadjutor and auxiliary bishops, and vicars apostolic are generally titular.

Titular bishops and archbishops have no actual sees; they are given the titles of certain sees that previously existed, but that have since disappeared in the reorganization of

jurisdictions, or because of the inroads of Mohammedanism, heresy, or paganism. The names of the sees are kept intact, and awarded to those whom the Holy See wishes to raise to the rank of bishops, and given special work.

6. An *Archbishop* or *Metropolitan* is a bishop who has certain powers of jurisdiction granted by the Pope over neighboring dioceses composing his province.

Archbishops wear a *pallium*, a white strip of wool, on the shoulders, as a symbol of gentleness. They act as first judges of appeal from a decision of their *suffragan* bishops.

**Who assist the bishops in the care of souls?** --The priests, especially parish priests, assist the bishops in the care of souls.

1. Parish priests are *captains* in the great army that is the Church. They command the soldiers of the Church, all baptized persons residing in the particular districts, called parishes, assigned to them by the bishops.

The parish priest carries out the purpose of Christ in founding the Church. He teaches the people their religion, their duties towards God and each other. He governs the people, leading them in Catholic work. He sanctifies them by administering the sacraments.

2. Parish priests *receive* their orders and jurisdiction from the bishop. They are his spiritual children, and are bound to carry out his commands. In the parish the parish priest represents the bishop, and no one may, without his consent or the bishop's, exercise spiritual functions there, such as marrying, baptizing, preaching, burying, giving extreme unction, etc.

A *vicar forane* (called also *urban* and *rural dean*) is a parish priest having supervisory power in the name of the bishop over neighboring parishes. A *vicar-general* is the chief among the officers of a diocese. Parish priests of large districts have priests helping them, called *curates* or *assistants*.

3. The *duties* of parish priests are many, varied, and of great responsibility. Like all priests, they are pledged to lifelong celibacy. Daily they must recite the Breviary, the priests' book, which cannot be read under less than an hour's time.

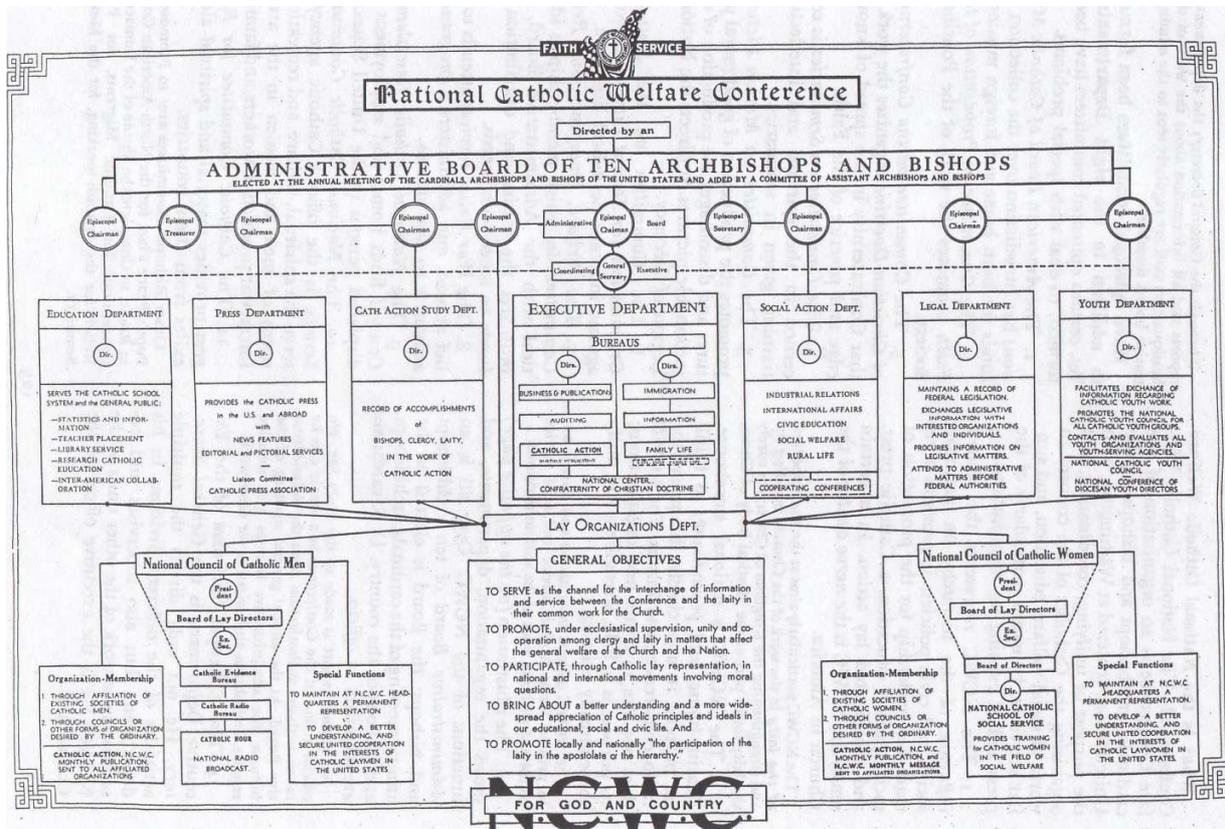
On account of these heavy responsibilities all Catholics have the obligation to pray for their priests, and to help them as much as possible, especially that they may continue in the love of God, and be enlightened by the Holy Ghost.

A parish priest and his curates have to visit the sick of the parish any time of the day or night, whenever there is a call. He has to give the last sacraments to the dying, however contagious or repellent the disease of such persons might be. He has to hear confessions hour after hour; he has to fast as long as the Masses he is scheduled to say have not been said. He must renounce the world with all its worldly amusements for the love of God. As shepherd of his flock, he is responsible to God for the souls of those committed to his

charge; and on the day of judgment, he has to render a strict account of his stewardship over them.

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## 61. The National Catholic Welfare Conference



**What is the National Catholic Welfare Conference?** --The National Catholic Welfare Conference is an organization of the cardinals, archbishops and bishops of the United States, centered at Washington, with the purpose of unifying, coordinating, and organizing the Catholics of the country in works of social welfare, education, and similar activities, by means particularly of the press and of existing lay organizations.

1. The NCWC represents the *united influence* of the hierarchy on national, social, and civic policies; it provides a remarkable leadership for the promotion of social justice, education, a Catholic press, and coordinated lay action. In a certain sense, the NCWC is the *nerve center* of the Church in America.

The NCWC particularly aims at the *participation of the laity* in the work of the Church, building up and strengthening the Kingdom of Christ; for surely the laity forms part of the Mystical Body of Christ.

2. The NCWC is national storehouse, clearing-house, and *powerhouse*; to fulfill its purpose it uses chiefly the press, the radio, conferences, and forums. The NCWC does not aim to create new organizations; its purpose is to help, strengthen, and unify those already existing.

The NCWC collects information and puts it out in printed form; it gives advice and field service connected with the work of the various divisions.

The illustration (above) shows the organization, departments, and functions of the NCWC. Over all is an *Administrative Board* of ten archbishops and bishops; the Board is elected at the annual meeting of the cardinals, archbishops and bishops of the country. U.S. cardinals are members *ex officio*.

An annual report is made to the Holy See. No official action of the Conference as a whole can be taken without authorization from the Administrative Board. At the annual general meeting of the bishops, the administrative bishops give detailed reports, and obtain authorization for their work.

3. The Episcopal Chairman of the Executive Department is the *General Secretary*. He not only directs the multiple activities of the different divisions in his department, but also supervises and coordinates the work of the other units of the NCWC. He is the executive officer of the Conference.

Through the General Secretary the departmental reports and all information about the work of the headquarters staff are regularly sent to the administrative board members.

**Have episcopal committees been formed in addition to the eight Departments?** --  
Yes, certain episcopal committees have been formed, to deal with special problems.

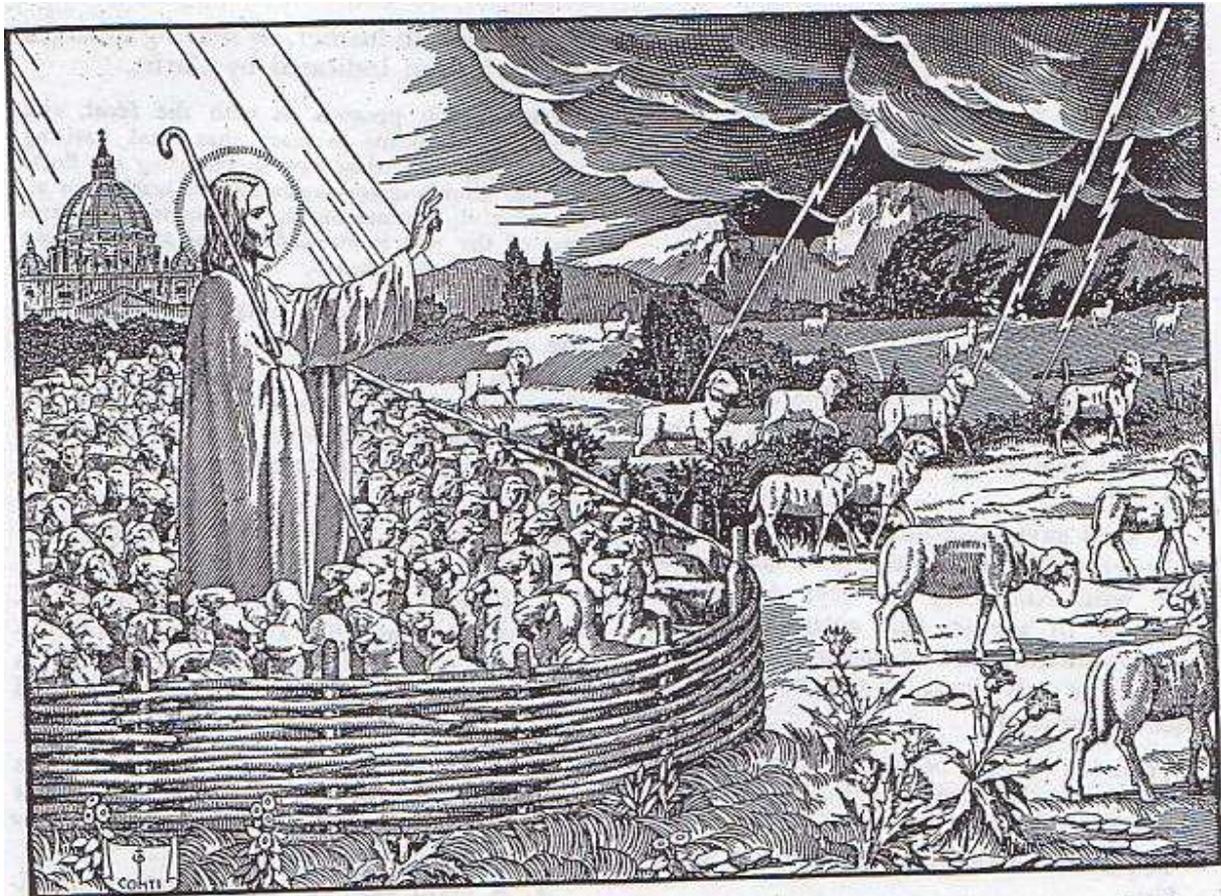
1. The *American Board of Catholic Missions* has jurisdiction over the collection of funds for both home and foreign missions.
2. The *Committee on Propagation of the Faith* promotes the work of the Pontifical Society.
3. The *Committee on the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine* organizes the work of that Confraternity in the spread of knowledge and practice of the Faith.
4. The *Committee on Seminaries* is concerned in the spiritual and intellectual training given in seminaries.
5. The *Committee on Motion Pictures* promotes the production of good moral pictures and discourages the production of objectionable pictures. It directs the National Legion of Decency.
6. The *Committee on the National Organization for Decent Literature* works against indecent periodical literature,
7. The *Welfare, Emergency, and Relief Committee*, in which membership is identical with the Administrative Board, coordinates the raising and distribution of funds to meet relief needs.
8. The *War Relief Services* attends to relief abroad, and administers a program of assistance to war victims.
9. The *National Catholic Resettlement Council* finds homes and employment for displaced persons in the United States.
10. The *National Catholic Community Service* is the official Catholic agency to serve the spiritual, welfare, and recreational needs of men and women in the armed forces, war production workers, and families.

11. The *Catholic Committee for Refugees* provides material and spiritual aid to exiles from their countries.

Other Bishops Committees are: to Promote the Pope's Peace Plan, for the North American College in Rome, to Complete the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, for Catholic Migrants, for Polish Relief, for the Spanish-speaking, for the Mexican Seminary.

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## 62. The Laity



*"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, even as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:14-16). All those not baptized are sheep of Christ that have not yet heard His voice. They must also be brought into the Church. Protestants are sheep that have left the fold of Christ. They must return to the Church, if they would hear the voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd, Who lovingly calls them to His True Church.*

**Who are the laity of the Church?** --The. laity of the Church are all its members who do not belong to the clerical or to the religious state.

1. *All members* of the Church, whether clerical, religious, or lay, are termed "the faithful." After Baptism we join the ranks.

The laity must remember that they are *part of the Church*. They must understand that when anyone speaks of the "Church" they are included, as we include the heart and mind of a man with his soul when we speak of him. ***The Church is you and I.***

2. The *clerical state* includes all priests and aspirants to the priesthood who have received tonsure. Students of seminaries are aspirants to the priesthood.

"Tonsure" is the rite by which a layman is initiated into the clerical state. The bishop, or any delegated prelate, cuts the candidate's hair in some prescribed form, and invests him with a surplice.

3. The *religious state* includes those who are members of religious orders or congregations, bound by either temporary or perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, obedience.

Aspirants, postulants, and novices are preparing to embrace the religious state.

**Do Catholic Sinners continue to belong to the Church?** --Yes.

1. Unless one cuts himself off by heresy, apostasy, or excommunication, a Catholic sinner continues to be a member of the Church. Those in mortal sin are called "dead members", for their soul dead in sin.

Indeed the Church is the Church of Saints; but the greatest part of its activities has to be for sinners. Perhaps we may say, without fear of contradiction, that most of the members of the Church are sinners. We all fall away from the ideal, at some time or other; then the Church calls, to bring us back.

2. Until we attain heavenly bliss, there will always be the *darkness of sin*, the pain of evil. Christ Himself spoke of bad fish with the good, of cockle among the wheat.

Of the sheep in the fold, one wanders out. But Our Lord longs for the wanderer, let us help bring him back.

3. God gave Catholics the grace of their holy religion. But He also gave them their free will. And they are *free to choose*: whether to act in full accordance with His commands and counsels, or whether to practice only a part, or whether to violate those commands.

There is a wide gap between belief and practice; it is that gap that divides Catholics into *practical* and *nominal Catholics*.

**Must the faithful think and act alike?** --No.

1. The faithful must *believe* in all the doctrines entrusted by Christ to His Church, and *act* in accordance with those doctrines; but these pertain to the field of *faith and morals*, not to other matters. Therefore there is no question about "thinking and acting alike," among the 425,000,000 Catholics in the world.

Each Catholic is an individual. He must believe that Jesus Christ is God; but with one of his Catholic friends he may differ concerning the best political party to join. He must not

deny his Church, but he may argue with the parish priest about who should be one's favorite Saints.

2. The Church is for no particular class, whether millionaires, or laborers, scientists or children; the Church is classless, and for *all classes*, for all men. These cannot all act and think in one uniform pattern.

The different classes among Catholics arise from causes apart from the Church, such as racial, cultural, and social causes. But anywhere and everywhere one can be a good Catholic.

3. Good Catholics believe alike in *this*: that they are members of a divinely-established Church, the well-being of which it is their duty to further, by striving to attain the perfection indicated by Christ.

The Church presents us with the *ideal*, and provides the means to reach that ideal, inviting and urging us, feeding and shepherding the flock. But the Church does not *guarantee* salvation for all the faithful; because among its doctrines the freedom of the will is as fundamental as the divine authority of the Church.

**How can the laity help the Church in the care of souls?** --The laity can help the Church in the care of souls by leading lives that will reflect credit on the Church, and by cooperating with their bishops and priests, especially through Catholic Action.

"Even so, let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

1. A good Catholic makes serious *efforts* to save his soul. He keeps the commandments of God and the Church. He receives the sacraments. He does all things prescribed by Christ through the Church.

Therefore, he must *know his religion*. He must not be ignorant of Christian doctrine, for by it he learns how to save his soul. By it he learns what to believe, and what to do.

2. A good Catholic *obeys* his ecclesiastical superiors in spiritual matters, and gives them due respect. He sees in his lawful superiors Christ's representatives on earth.

He is loyal to the Church in word and deed. He does not criticise it, or make derogatory remark about it. Even if his priests may have faults, he tries his best not to bring them and the Church into contempt. If the faults are public and grievous, he may bring the matter to the attention of lawful authority, but always with great prudence.

3. According to his means, he *contributes* towards the support of the Church.

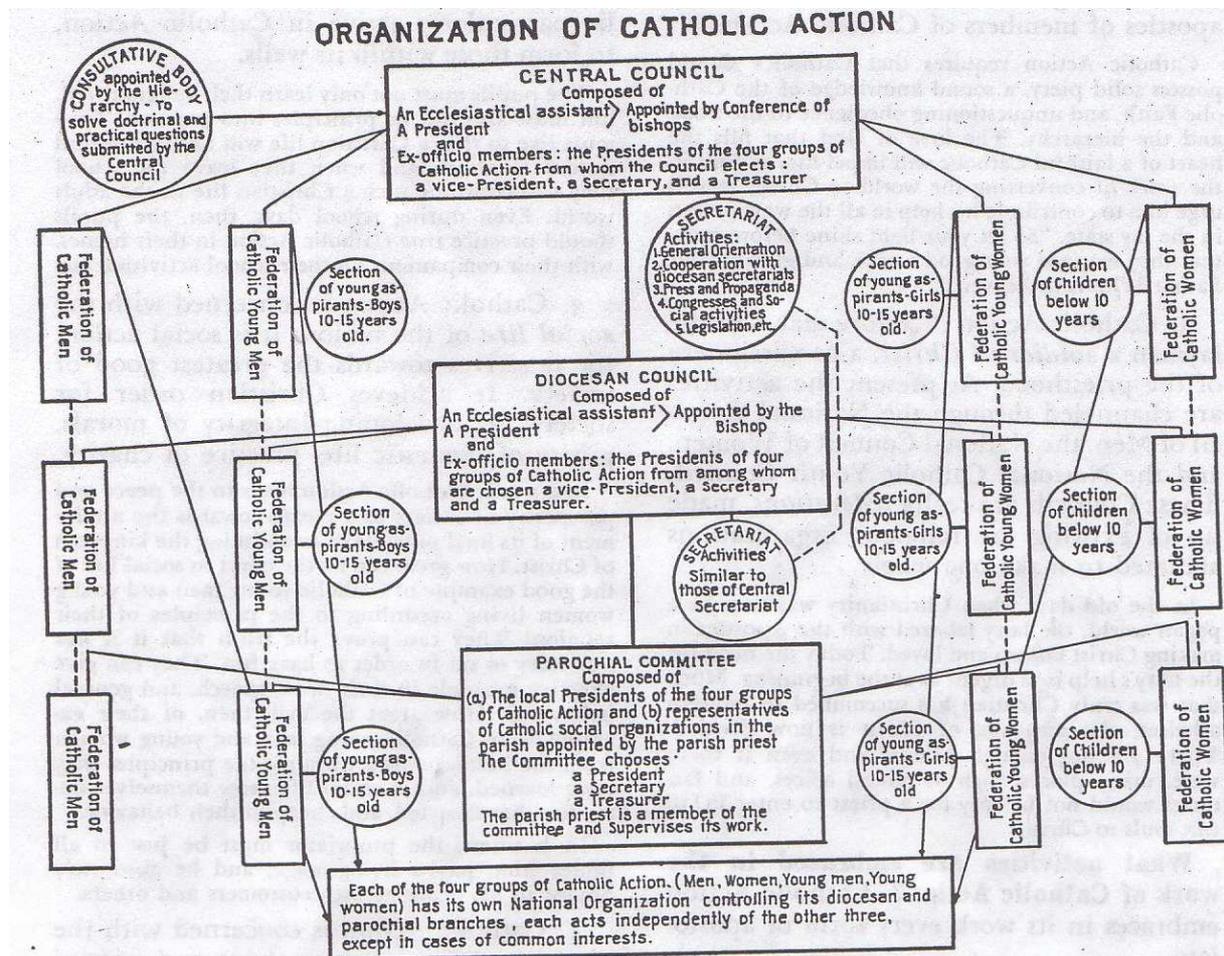
This is a serious obligation which too many Catholics neglect. The Church needs support as much as the civil government. *It cannot subsist on air.* Religion makes no progress where Catholics are so indifferent as to begrudge their material support.

4. A good Catholic has before him a *wide scope of activity* if he wishes to participate in the work of the Church; there are no barriers between man and God.

Should a Catholic be moved by a spirit of reform, he need not cut himself off from the Church by founding a new sect. He busies himself within the Fold of the Church, taking active steps to attain the reform he desires. For always there is *need of reform* in practices and current conditions, though *never* in fundamental doctrine.

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## 63. Catholic Action



The diagram above outlines a complete plan of Catholic Action organization in accordance with the directions of Pope Pius XI. The Holy Father did not intend organization to be accomplished in exactly this manner; his instructions were only directive. In general, Catholic Action in our country is thus organized; in every parish the pastor is the center and director of all Catholic activities. However, it is evident that the hierarchy, by means of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, aims to coordinate the activities of the different religious organizations, into a united Catholic Action.

**What is Catholic Action?** --Catholic Action is the participation of the organized Catholic laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy, for the purpose of winning or of bringing back souls to Christ.

The National Catholic Welfare Conference (see Chapter 61 on The National Catholic Welfare Conference) does not change one fundamental fact: that in each diocese all organizations and activities are dependent on and responsible to the bishop.

1. Catholic Action is the service and apostolate of the *laity*, commandeered by the episcopate. It must be dependent on and perfectly obedient to the hierarchy; there can be no Catholic Action without an episcopal commission.

Since it is a participation, it must depend on the whole; that is, on the hierarchy of Pope, bishops, and priests, to whom Jesus Christ gave the mission to save souls for Him. Catholic Action seeks to establish the reign of Christ, to restore all things in Christ, to spread Catholic principles in every field of life,-in other words, to Christianize the world.

2. Catholic Action is *religion in action*, the result of a living faith. It implies, therefore, personal sanctification, although not directly aimed at it. From this personal sanctification arise works for the salvation of our neighbor, works that make lay apostles of members of Catholic Action.

Catholic Action requires that Catholics should possess solid piety, a sound knowledge of the Catholic Faith, and unquestioning obedience to the Pope and the hierarchy. The love of God that fills the heart of a faithful Catholic will impel him to join in the work of converting the world to Christ; it will urge him to contribute his help in all the ways he can in the lay state. "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven."

3. Catholic Action therefore makes of the layman a *soldier of Christ*, a co-missionary of the priesthood. At present the activities are channeled through the National Council of Men, the National Council of Women, and the National Catholic Youth Council. These Councils are really *federations*, made up of existing lay religious organizations affiliated to make one whole.

In the old days when Christianity was new in a pagan world, the laity labored with the Apostles in making Christ known and loved. Today the need for the laity's help is as urgent as at the beginning. Much that was truly Christian has succumbed to modern atheism; the kingdom of Christ is now divided. There are not enough priests; and even if there were, many places, such as mines, offices, and factories would not be easy for a priest to enter in, to win souls to Christ.

**What activities are embraced in the work of Catholic Action?** --Catholic Action embraces in its work every form of apostolate.

Catholic Action takes into account different aspects of the life of man, the most important of which are the home, school, social, business, and civil life. Catholic Action gives people a complete shaping, not only religious and moral, but social and specialized, according to their condition in life. It helps them solve problems of life in a Christian way.

1. Catholic Action is concerned with the *home*, because the home makes or unmakes the individual and nation. Catholic Action is exercised there when the members do all they can to keep the family united and happy, one in the service of God.

Efforts should be made to make the home a joyful place to stay in, so that the members may find their home the most interesting place to go to. Every home should be

consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Only good books and newspapers must be admitted into the Catholic home.

2. Catholic Action is concerned with the *school*, which, especially in these days, influences the minds and hearts of the young so deeply. Many modern parents think they have done their duty when they send their children to school; and so the school must be particularly active in Catholic Action, to form those within its walls.

The pupils must not only learn their religion well, but must also put its principles into practice. They must live so that a Christian life will become second nature to them, and when they leave the school they will continue such a Christian life in the adult world. Even during school days, then, the pupils should practice true Catholic Action in their homes, with their companions, in their school activities, etc.

3. Catholic Action is concerned with the *social life* of the nation; it is social action, for it strives towards the greatest good of society. It achieves Christian order for society, by developing integrity of morals, purity of domestic life, practice of charity.

In a word, Catholic Action leads to the peace and prosperity of society as a means towards the attainment of its final purpose of establishing the kingdom of Christ. How great can be the effect in social life of the good example of Catholic young men and young women living according to the principles of their religion! They can prove the truth that it is *not* necessary to sin in order to have fun. They can give effective example in their dress, speech, and general behaviour. How great the evil, then, of their example when Catholic young men and young women from the best schools act against the principles they have learned, and in social life show themselves immodest, hardhearted, and cheap in their behavior.

In business, the proprietor must be just to all under him, pay a living wage, and be absolutely honest in his dealings with customers and others.

4. Catholic Action is concerned with the *civil life*; however, it is *above and beyond* partisan politics. It does not engage in political squabbles.

Catholic Action is for a supernatural end, but it cannot be divorced from civil society, since it is concerned with souls who are members of the civil society. It permits what the Church permits; each member may belong to whatever lawful political party he may choose, provided he acts according to Christian principles. The voter must vote only for honest and capable officials. The official, in turn, must think only of the spiritual and material good of the body he is serving, and forget selfish ends.

5. There is *variety* in the works of Catholic Action, and in the means it uses to effect its ends. This variety is according to necessities of time and place.

One place may demand the teaching of catechism; another, the support of the parochial school; another, the defense of the Church's rights against unjust and unlawful

impositions of civil officials; another, vigilance over the press and the moving pictures; another, the education of the working classes. In many places, all or most of these necessities, with others, ought to be met. This is why an organization of well-trained laity is imperative.

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## 64. Church and State



Once the Pharisees asked Our Lord: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Our Lord asked for a coin and then inquired, 'Whose image and inscription does it bear?'" They answered, "Caesar's." And Our Lord said, "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Thus we are taught to give both the State and the Church what is due to each, in accordance with the end that each pursues.

**What are the spheres of the Church and of the State?** --The spheres of the Church and of the State are defined and dictated by each one's respective purpose.

Both the Church and the State derive their just powers *from God*. All rights and duties on earth come to us ultimately from God through the Divine Law, either natural or positive. As Leo VIII said, "The Almighty has appointed the charge of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, the other over human things."

1. The Church is a complete and perfect spiritual society whose purpose is to sanctify men and lead them to eternal happiness with God in heaven. In *spiritual* matters, therefore, it has absolute and exclusive powers.

The sphere of the Church is the supernatural and eternal; it includes everything relating to spiritual and moral affairs, matters affecting man's eternal salvation: for example, the worship of God, preaching of the Gospel, decision of what is morally right and morally wrong, government of its members, restriction of such rights as will endanger their eternal welfare, education of the clergy, religious education of its members, etc,

2. The State is also a society, but its purpose is limited to the promotion of man's temporal welfare. In purely *temporal* and *political* matters, the State is supreme. The Church does not prefer one form of civil government to another, provided it does not conflict with Catholic teaching.

The sphere of the State includes such purely temporal matters as a choice of a form of government, the development of agriculture, industries and trade, collection of taxes, restriction of certain civil and political rights (such as the right of suffrage, of bearing arms, etc.) , the enforcement of law and order, etc.

3. Since both Church and State were established for the good of men, they cannot be totally separated without evil consequences. Even when a complete separation is advisable, it should *never mean the antagonism* of the State against the Church.

Man and the State, even in the realm of politics and temporal matters, are under God's law, both revealed and natural, the Law that is above all mankind, of whatever race. Man has *no right* to make his own laws without regard for the law of God. "It is the Church, not the State, that is to be man's guide to heaven" (*Leo XIII*). The State is even bound to protect the Church in the exercise of its functions; this is because the State must protect the rights of its citizens, and of these rights the religious ones are of utmost importance.

4. Although primarily concerned with spiritual matters, the Church evidently is entitled to certain *temporal aids*, in order to be able to pursue its mission effectively.

It must build churches and seminaries, collect revenue, conduct schools for the proper religious training of its members, etc.

5. The State, as representing the collective will of the people, cannot be made *god*, as is done in communism and fascism.

Then man becomes grossly material, bound by rods of his own fashioning, helpless and gone mad, because he cannot conquer the world.

**What is the contribution of the Catholic Church to American democracy?** --In general we may say that the fundamentals of American democracy were derived from traditional thought and philosophy; and since these, being of Western Europe, were essentially Catholic, therefore our democracy had its roots in the Catholic Church.

1. The philosophical *principles* of the Declaration of Independence show such a remarkable similarity to traditional Catholic philosophy as to have been derived from it. Most particularly have these principles been inherited from two outstanding Catholic theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621). These principles are inflexible against Communism as well as Plutocracy, State Socialism as well as extreme Individualism.

Some principles so derived are: the equality of man in nature and essence, the function of government to care for the common good, the consent of the governed as a requirement for power of rulers, the right of people to change governments, etc.

2. Not only did our democracy get rooted in Catholic principles; today Catholic thought *continues to nourish* that democracy.

For this reason the Church insists on the sanctity of marriage, of the family; the Church instructs her children in loyalty to the State.

3. In the founding of our Republic, Catholic aid also came into the realm of *deeds*. Many Catholics took part in the war for independence not only by actual fighting, but by contributing money, services, and other resources. And we must not forget that France, a Catholic nation, sent four fleets, besides money and soldiers. Poland and Spain, Catholic countries, also gave aid.

Well did our First President say to Catholics: "I presume that your fellow citizens ... will not forget the patriotic part you took in the accomplishment of our Revolution and the establishment of our government."

**What should be the attitude of the Catholic citizen towards the State?** --The Catholic citizen is bound in conscience to obey the State, provided faith and morals are not endangered thereby.

1. The State is not the master, but the servant, of the citizens. The inherent *rights of individuals*, and particularly of parents, cannot be usurped by the State.

For instance, parents, not the State, have the natural right to educate their children. The State should merely supervise and facilitate education, but should not enact laws contrary to the obligations of parents to give their children a religious education.

2. After the Revolution, for a considerable period, Catholic schools together with schools of other denominations received government support. Then gradually, laws were passed forbidding such support.

Our schools are benefiting, however, under the National School Lunch Act of 1946; Congress regularly appropriates money to implement this free school lunch program. Our colleges may secure loans at favorable interest rates under legislation adopted by the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Indirectly our colleges benefit from the GI Bill of Rights, since legislation authorizing the extension of educational benefits to veterans does not discriminate with respect to schools; a veteran may select any approved school. In addition to assistance to schools, our hospitals are receiving substantial construction grants under the terms of the Hill-Burton Law.

3. In questions of right and wrong, what should rule is *not the majority, but the right*, even if it is upheld by the smallest of minorities.

## 65. Services of the Church to the State

**Of what benefit is the Church to the State?** --The Church is essential for the welfare of the State, for it upholds the government, directs its members to obey just laws, prevents crimes, incites to the practice of civic virtues, encourages to noble endeavour, and unites different nations in one brotherhood.

1. There is *no better citizen* than a good Catholic. He obeys the State because his religion teaches him that all lawful authority comes from God.

Who can be a more law-abiding citizen than one who looks upon civil officials as *superiors* that God Himself bids him obey? Plutarch says that religion is a better protection for a city than its walls.

2. The Church teaches its children to make *sacrifices for the common good*. Thus it trains unselfish, thrifty, and industrious members of the State. A man with no religion seldom, makes, a good citizen. He is liable to try always to get as much as he can even at the expense of others. A man without religion generally ends without any morality whatever.

The prisons are in general peopled, not by practising members of the Church, but by people who neglected religion. Only God knows the number of those who have been turned from the paths of sin and crime on account of their connection with the Church.

3. The Church not only prevents crimes, but incites to *works of charity*.

It teaches the merit of works of mercy. From its teachings bud forth orphanages, schools, hospitals, social service, etc.

4. The greatest statesmen and patriots have recognized the *necessity of religion* in the State. Without religion among its citizens, the State would soon collapse. The Catholic Church teaches the best religion, the one taught by God Himself.

Washington said: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties-of men and citizens." Machiavelli wrote: "The surest sign of ruin in a State is the neglect of religion." Napoleon himself confessed that no nation could endure without religion.

5. By a common profession of faith, a common membership in the same body, and by the commandment of charity, the Church binds different nations in *one brotherhood*, the brotherhood of men, children of one God. Such a feeling of brotherhood would help greatly towards eliminating sectional and racial prejudices and strife.

Is it not a historical fact that national quarrels and wars have increased since the division of Christendom into sects? Today the term "brotherhood of men" seems to be a mere figure of speech in which most people have no faith.

**What has the Church actually accomplished for the State during the over nineteen hundred years of its existence?** --The history of all civilized nations gives ample testimony to the valuable services of the Church to civil government during a period of over nineteen hundred years.

1. The greatest accomplishment of the Church was the *Christianization of Europe*. From thence we have derived whatever we today call "civilization". If we compare the truly Christian civilization with pagan life and culture, we can see the greatness of the service the Church has rendered the State.

Ignorance and immorality are usually partners; for this reason the Church eagerly promotes culture. The Church looks upon the world as coming from the hand of God; therefore the Church is interested in science.

2. The Church has always striven to provide schools for the *education* of the young; it founded great universities.

From the very beginning, the missions, parishes, monasteries, and cathedrals had schools. No less than 80 universities were built in the days when the Pope was supreme in Christendom; of these many still exist, though under different control. The encouragement given by the Popes advanced education, medicine, surgery, literature, chemistry, mathematics, and other sciences. Numerous religious orders and congregations have from earliest times devoted themselves to education.

3. The Church *preserved the great works* of ancient heathen philosophers and historians, saving them from destruction for future ages.
4. In the Middle Ages, before the invention of printing, monks patiently and carefully copied and transcribed the ancient works. Their zeal for learning built up great libraries and museums. The most profound and prolific authors were Catholic.

So great a *patron of art* and architecture is the Church that a saying became current: "There is no art outside the Catholic Church." Practically all the world's classic painters have been members of the Church, and were supported in their work by the Popes. We need only mention Raphael, da Vinci, and Michelangelo.

To this day thousands of tourists every year gaze in wonder at the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages, which stand unsurpassed. The Popes encouraged musicians like Palestrina. Plain chant, or Gregorian music, comes to us from St. Ambrose and St. Gregory the Great. The noblest musical works are products of the genius of sons of the Church, of whom we need mention only Gounod, Haydn, Mozart, Verdi.

5. Priests and monks, not to mention lay members of the Church, have contributed some of the *greatest discoveries* to human knowledge.

In physical science, the deacon Gioja discovered the magnet and compass; the Jesuit Kircher experimented with the first burning glass; the canon Copernicus taught his famous system; the Jesuit Cavaliere worked out the components of white light; the Jesuit Secchi made fruitful studies concerning sunspots; the Franciscan Berthold Schwarz discovered gunpowder. Other scientific works by priests and monks: the Dominican Spina discovered the use of spectacles; the Benedictine Pontius invented a method of teaching deaf-mutes; the Dominican Calandoni invented a typesetter to take the place of the compositor; the monk Veit discovered the scale and rules of harmony in music. Pope Gregory XIII reformed the calendar.

6. The Church helped establish free and *stable governments*; it civilized the barbarians. Through the Benedictines, Cistercians, and Trappists, it reclaimed whole tracts of waste lands. The Church cared for the poor, the sick, the orphaned, the old and helpless. It opened hospitals, ransomed captives, and freed slaves. Pope Innocent III is known as "Father of Hospitals".

Who but the Church insisted on the *dignity* of the soul of even the poorest slave in an age when class distinctions were rampant? Who but the Church rescued *woman* from degradation, and formed that beautiful institution, the Christian family? The Church stood for the *liberties* of the people against the encroachments of tyrants. It has ever stood for the *poor* against the oppressions of the rich. It has stood for the maintenance of *authority* against the violence of rebellious subjects. The whole history of *Christian civilization* has the mark of the Church.

### Eminent Catholics

The pages of history are filled with the names of Catholics outstanding in literature, science, art, progress, and learning of every description. The following is only a partial list of those who were known alike for their devotion to the Catholic Faith and their contributions to art and science.

**Astronomy:** Cassini, Clavius, Copernicus, DeVico, Galileo, Gassendi, La Place, Piazzzi, Secchi, Wallingfurt.

**Biology:** Bernard, Carnoy, Detussien, Fabre, Latrelle, O'Dwyer, Schwann, Windle.

**Botany:** Cesalpinus, Mendel, Charles and Louis Tulasne.

**Chemistry:** Agricola, Becquerel, Chevreul, Despretz, Dumas, Haüy, Lavoisier, Paracelsus, Pasteur, Schwarz, Valentine, Van Helmont.

**Electricity:** Ampere, Carre, Casselli, Cerobotani, Coulomb, Faucault, Galvani, Glynn, Gordon, Gramme, Nollet, Marconi, Plante, Volta.

**Geology:** Collona, Delauny, Harey, Muller, Spada, Stensen.

**Mathematics:** Borgo, Boscovitch, Cauchy, Charles, Ferrari, Monge, Planudes, Sestini, Vieta.

**Mechanics:** Boselli, Burke, Castelli, Charpentier, Jouffrey, Mariotte, Pascal.

**Music:** Bellini, Elgar, Gounod, Haydn, Mascagni, Mozart, Palestrina, Perosi, Verdi.

**Medicine:** Avenbrugger, Columbus, De Chauliac, Fabricius, Lancist, Morgagni, Muller, Murphy, Pasteur, Santorio, Theodoric, Vesalius.

**Navigation and Exploration:** Balboa, Butler, Cabot, Columbus, De Soto, Cortes, Durer, Hennepin, Magellan, Marco Polo, Marquette, Orellana, Ponce de Leon, Santa Cruz.

**Painting and Sculpture:** Fra Angelico, Bernini, Canova, Correggio, Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Murillo, Raphael, Rubens, Andrea del Sarto, Titian, Velasquez.

**Physics:** Babinet, Bacon, Biot, Dulong, Fresnel, Fizeau, Grimaldi, Malus, Mollet, Plateau, Regnalt, Schwann, Zamboni.

**Printing:** Guttenberg, Mergenthaler.

**Warfare:** Barry, Castellan, Foch, Joffre, Petain, Sobieski.



## 66. Authority of the Church

**What are the chief attributes of the Catholic Church?** --The chief attributes of the Catholic Church are authority, infallibility, and indefectibility.

An *attribute* is any quality or characteristic. Virtues as well as faults are attributes.

**What is meant by the authority of the Catholic Church?** --By the authority of the Catholic Church is meant that the Pope and the bishops, as the lawful successors of the Apostles, have power from Christ Himself to teach, to sanctify, and to govern the faithful in spiritual matters.

Authority is the power one person has over another, such that he can exact obedience justly. Thus rulers have authority over subjects; parents over their children; teachers, over pupils, etc.

1. Christ appointed the Church to *teach* whatever He, taught: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. . . . *teaching* them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19)

Christ taught, as in the Sermon on the Mount.

2. Christ appointed the Church to *sanctify* the faithful, by administering the means of grace to its members.

Christ dispensed the means of grace, as when He forgave Mary Magdalen, gave His flesh and blood at the Last Supper, and blessed little children.

3. Christ appointed the Church to *govern* with authority and jurisdiction.

Christ was the pastor or ruler of men. He gave commandments, sent the disciples on missions, instructed them, reprov'd the Pharisees.

**Did Christ give the Church full authority?** --Christ gave the Church full authority and power, saying, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21).

As a father who goes away on a journey leaves all his power and authority to the mother, so Christ upon leaving the earth gave to His Church full power and authority to carry on His work. "He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you, rejects me" (Luke 10:16).

The authority of the Church is *not restricted* to matters of doctrine and belief, but to whatever is necessary for the good of the Church and its members.

Thus the Church lays down laws concerning fasting and abstinence, keeping of Sundays and holydays, worship, and administration of the sacraments.

The members of the Church *must observe* whatever laws and regulations it makes. Authority in some form is necessary for every organization; without it members could not be directed to their common purpose.

Every society lays down rules for its members. Those who do not wish to keep them are excluded from it. Without authority the Church could not fulfill its divine purpose. The denominations that broke from the unity of the Church denied its authority. Having no head to obey, they split and resplit into hundreds of churches.

**How does the Church exercise her authority to teach, to sanctify, and to govern the faithful?** --The Church exercises her authority to teach, to sanctify, and to govern the faithful by various means, among them being:

1. *Teaching* by sermons and by religious classes in schools and parishes.

Today the Church *teaches* by preaching, by deciding controversies, and by condemning wrong teaching. Parish churches have sermons in the Masses of Sundays and holydays of obligation. Every Catholic school prescribes the study of religion in every class. Every parish holds catechetical classes.

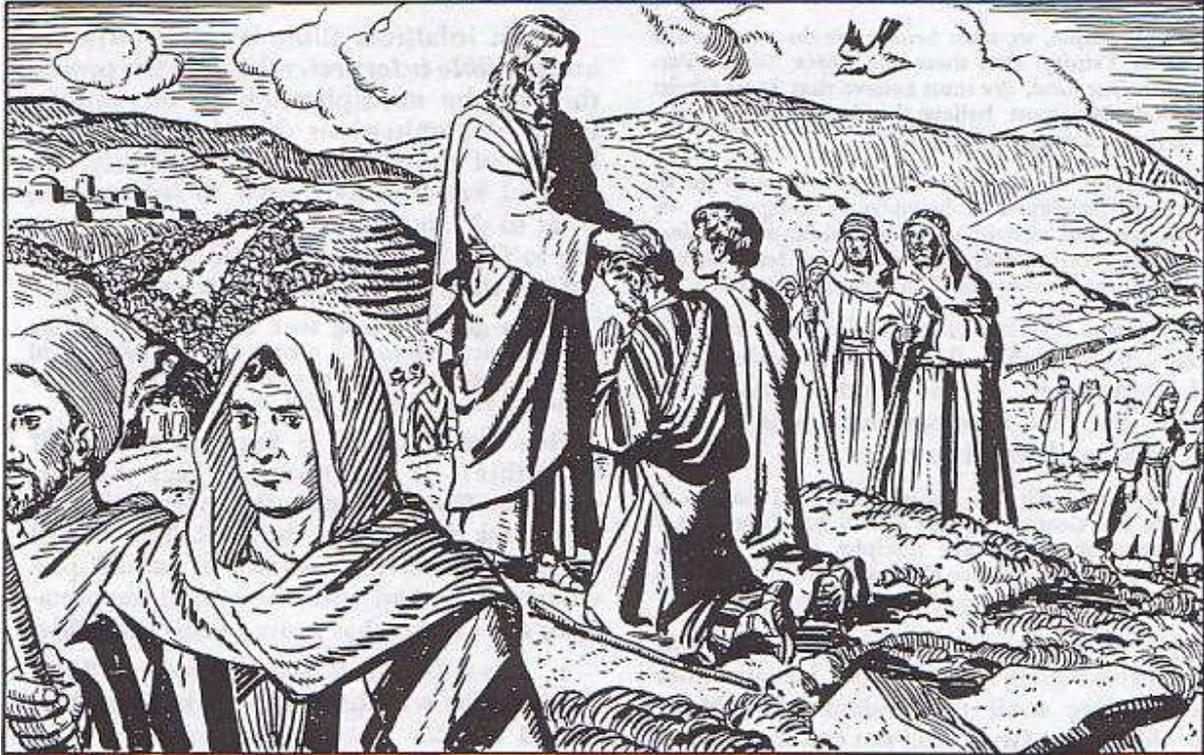
2. *Sanctifying* by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by the sacraments, by blessings, and by special devotions held in the churches.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted by Our Lord Himself, is the great act of worship of the Church, the source of grace to sanctify the faithful. The sacraments are means of grace by which we obtain help to become more holy children of God.

3. *Governing* by the commandments of the Church, by other laws ordered from time to time as need arises, and from the general control by bishops in the dioceses.

In her capacity as ruler, the Church makes regulations forbidding what is dangerous or sinful, as when she prohibits the reading of dangerous books and magazines. All members of the Church are under a strict obligation to obey her laws and regulations; disobedience to the Church is disobedience to Him Who authorized her rule, Jesus Christ, God.

## 67. Infallibility of the Church



*The Church cannot teach error, because it was founded by Christ, God Himself. He sent forth His Apostles with full powers to preach His Gospel. He said, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21). "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever. . . . But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you" (John 14:16,26).*

**What is meant by the infallibility of the Catholic Church?** --By the infallibility of the Catholic Church is meant that the Church, by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, cannot err when it teaches or believes a doctrine of faith and morals.

Christ promised: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and teach all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, *I am with you all days*, even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20). If Christ is with the Church all days, it cannot err in teaching; it cannot lead men away from God.

1. "Infallibility" is often distorted by enemies of the Church to mean "impeccability", and therefore derided. ***Infallibility*** is freedom from ***error***; ***impeccability*** is freedom from ***sin***. In an institution established by God for the salvation of men, error in doctrine is unthinkable.

Every teacher in the Church, from the Pope down to the humblest priest, like all of the faithful, is capable of falling into sin. But in the Catholic Church, because of the promise of Infallibility, the Holy Ghost cannot permit the purity of a single *doctrine* to be stained.

2. Jesus Christ ***promised*** to preserve the Church from error. If His prediction and promises were false, then He would not be God, since God cannot lie. Christ said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell *shall not prevail* against it." If therefore the Church falls into error, the gates of hell certainly would prevail against it.

Christ promised: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Advocate to *dwell with you forever ... He will teach you all the truth*" (John 14). If the Church can err, then the Holy Ghost cannot abide in it and Christ has failed to keep His promise—a thing absolutely impossible.

3. A doctrine of faith is something we must *believe* in order to be saved. A doctrine of morals is something we must do in order to be saved.

For example, we must believe the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: that there are Three Divine Persons in One God. We must believe that Jesus Christ is God. We must believe in the Blessed Virgin Mary's immaculate conception.

Of things we must do are these: we must go to Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation; we must fast and abstain when our bishops so order; we must receive Holy Communion at least once a year. We must obey the Ten Commandments.

4. Jesus Christ ***commanded*** all men to *listen* to and *obey* the Church, under pain of damnation. If His Church can teach error, then He is responsible for the error, by commanding all to obey.

Jesus sent forth His Apostles with full powers to preach His Gospel: "*As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*" - "Make disciples of all nations teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." - "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

- a. Christ said: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 16). A just God could not command men under penalty of damnation to believe what is false. So the teaching of the Church must be infallibly true.

He said: "You shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Since it was physically impossible for the Apostles to preach to the whole world, the mission must have been intended also for their successors to the end of time, our Catholic Bishops and priests.

- b. Christ said: "If he refuse to hear even the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (Matt. 18:17) "He who hears you hears me; and he who rejects you rejects me; and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Luke 10:16).

He said, "And whoever does not receive you, or listen to your words-go forth outside that house or town, and shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that town" (Matt. 10:14-16).

5. No Christian denies that the *Apostles* were infallible. In fact, in the first century, they were the only authority in the Church. The Bible was not completed till the end of that century, not within reach of all.

But God loves the Christians of today as much as He did the primitive Christians. We have as much need of unerring teachers as they. The Apostolic Church of the 20th century must therefore be as infallible as the Apostolic Church.

6. An infallible Bible is no use without an *infallible interpreter*. History has proved this, in the multiplication of the innumerable denominations that deny the infallibility of the Church. By infallibility, the faithful know exactly what to believe and what to do in order that they may be pleasing to God and save their souls. They have surety; they need suffer no doctrinal doubt.

It is a great blessing that, in the midst of the everchanging views of men and the conflict of human opinion, there is one voice crying out in unerring tones: "*Thus saith the Lord.*"

**Has the Church in fact proved itself infallible?** --It is a historical fact that the Catholic Church, from the twentieth century back to the first, has not once ceased to teach a doctrine on faith or morals previously held, and with the same interpretation; the Church has proved itself infallible.

1. It is a *historical fact* that not one Pope, whatever he was in his private life, has ever taught error.

"The Scribes and the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, that they command you, observe and do. But do not act according to their works." By obeying the Pope, every Christian can live as Christ commanded, in any age.

2. True, some high rulers of the Church have gravely sinned. Nevertheless, enemies of the Church have exaggerated even the lack of impeccability. In the long line of Popes the vast majority led virtuous lives. Many of them are honored as Saints and martyrs. The enemies of the Church can bring charges against only five or six Popes: Most of the charges are calumnies or exaggerations. But even if the charges were true, they prove nothing against *infallibility*.

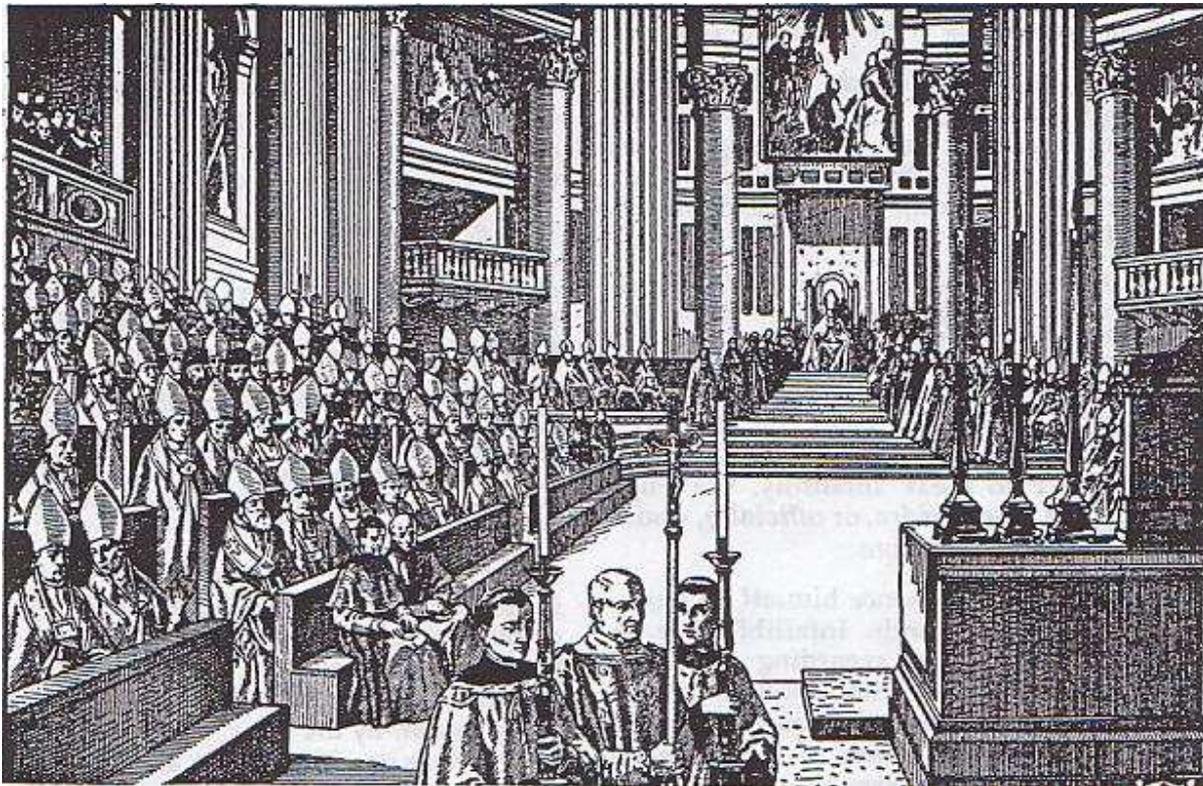
Of the Sovereign Pontiffs that have succeeded Peter, 84 are canonized *Saints*, of whom 32 were martyrs. However holy the Pope, he regularly goes to *confession* to a priest. No Pope ever considers himself above the laws of the Church and of God.

3. The Church *cannot change* its teachings on faith and morals. But it may restate the doctrines more clearly and completely. Year after year the Church proclaims the same *unchanging* doctrines. Her doctrines need *no reform*, for they are of Divine origin, the work of the Incarnate God.

No Pope or general Council in almost two thousand years has annulled or revoked a single decree of faith or morals enacted by a previous Pope or Council. ***This is history.***

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## 68. Sphere of Infallibility



*Since the time of Christ, from the first council of the Apostles in Jerusalem in the year 50, to the last Vatican Council in 1870, there have been held in all twenty-one general or ecumenical councils. The Vatican Council, shown above, declared the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope.*

**When does the Church teach infallibly?** --The Church teaches infallibly when it defines, through the Pope alone, as the teacher of all Christians, or through the Pope and the bishops, a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by all the faithful.

The Church, as the representative or substitute of Jesus Christ on earth, is infallible, and speaks with His own words: "This is why I was born, and why I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37).

1. When the Church makes an infallible pronouncement, we are not to suppose that a new doctrine is being introduced. For instance, when the Holy Father in 1854 defined the Blessed Virgin's Immaculate Conception as an article of faith, the infallible definition was not a proclamation of a new doctrine, but was merely an announcement of an article of faith *true from the very beginning*, and publicly defined only in order to make the dogma clear to all and to be believed as part of the deposit of faith left to the Church.

Another example is the definition of the Holy Father's infallibility, made in 1870 by the Vatican Council. The dogma was true from the very beginning, and had been universally held. But as in recent times many objections were being made against it, the Bishops in

the Vatican Council thought it best, in order to make clear the stand of the Church, to make an infallible definition.

2. The Church makes infallible *pronouncements* on doctrines of faith and morals, on their interpretation, on the Bible and Tradition, and the interpretation of any part or parts of these. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin was an interpretation of a long-standing Tradition in the Church.

The Church also pronounces on the truth or falsity of opinions, teachings, customs, etc., with relation to fundamental doctrines. Another subject on which the Church makes infallible declarations is in the canonization of Saints. All whom the Church has raised to the glory of the altar by a *solemn* canonization are undoubtedly now in heaven, enjoying eternal bliss in the presence of God.

**When does the Church teach infallibly through the Pope alone?** --The Church teaches infallibly through the Pope alone, when he speaks officially (*ex cathedra*) as the Supreme Head, for the entire universal Church.

As the Pope has authority over the Church, he could not err in his *official* teaching without leading the Church into error. As Our Lord said to Peter, the first Pope: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

In order to speak infallibly, the Pope must speak *ex-cathedra*, or *officially*, under the following conditions:

1. He must pronounce himself on a subject of faith or morals. Infallibility is restricted to questions regarding *faith and morals*. The Church pronounces on natural sciences and on legislation only when the perversity of men makes of them instruments for opposing revealed truths.

If the Pope should make judgments on mathematics or civil governments, he is as liable to error as any other man with the same experience. Letters to kings and other rulers are not infallible pronouncements. However, we should hold the Pope's opinions on any subject with great respect, on account of his position and experience.

2. He must speak as the Vicar of Christ, in his office as Pope, and *to the whole Church*, to all the faithful throughout the world. In his capacity as private teacher, for example, in his encyclical letters, he is as any other teacher of the Church.

Should the Pope, like Benedict XIV, write a treatise on Canon Law, his book would be written in a private capacity, and liable to error, just as the books of other theologians. We accept, not on faith, but in obedience to his authority, out of respect for his experience and wisdom.

3. He must make clear by certain words his intention to speak *ex-cathedra*. These words are most often used: "We proclaim," "we define," etc.

The Pope's infallible decrees are termed "doctrinal," since they involve doctrine. From the earliest days of the Church, the infallibility of the Pope has been acknowledged. In the year 417 the Holy See condemned the Pelagian errors; St. Augustine cried out the famous words, "Rome has spoken; the cause is ended!" The Council of Florence in 1439 called the Pope "the Father and Teacher of Christians."

**When does the Church teach infallibly through the Pope and the bishops?** --The Church teaches infallibly through the Pope and the bishops when convened in a general (or ecumenical) council. [when they INTEND to teach infallibly(RMO)]

1. A General Council is an assembly convened by the Holy See, of all the bishops of the world, and others entitled to vote. It represents the teaching body of the Church, and must be infallible.

In the year 50 the Apostles held the first General Council in Jerusalem. Its decisions were proclaimed as coming from God, the final decree beginning with these words: "For the Holy Spirit and we have decided to lay no further burden upon you" (Acts 15:28)

2. Over a General Council, the Pope or his legate *presides*; a representative number of bishops and others entitled to vote, such as cardinals, abbots, and generals of certain religious orders, must be present. Upon *confirmation* by the Pope, a General Council's decrees are binding on all Christians.

It must be understood that the decrees of a General Council have no binding authority until confirmed by the Pope. There is *no appeal* from the Pope to a General Council.

3. A unanimous vote is *not necessary* for an infallible decision of a general council; a great majority is sufficient.

The most notable of the General Councils so far held following the Council of Jerusalem have been: (1) the Council of Nicea, in the year 325, which pronounced against the heresy of Arius; (2) the Council of Ephesus, in the year 425, which declared Mary the Mother of God; (3) the Council of Nicea, in 787, which declared the veneration of images as lawful and profitable; (4) the Council of Trent, 1545-1563, which declared against the heresies of Luther; (5) the Council of the Vatican, 1870, which defined as an article of faith the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope.

4. Even when the bishops are not gathered together in one place, they form the teaching body of the Church, *united with the Pope*. Therefore their voice must be infallible, otherwise the universal Church would be led into error. For the same reason as above, the daily ordinary uniform teaching of the Church in every place in the whole World is infallibly true.

"Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

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## 69. Indefectibility of the Church



*The Catholic Church will endure to the end of time, for it is founded on a rock. The powers of evil will beat in vain against it. They will break themselves and perish, but the Church will remain, indefectible. The testimony of almost two thousand years proves the perpetuity of the Church. Nothing that malice and envy could invent; nothing that the world, the flesh; and the devil could do have been left untried in the past 1900 years. Still the Church is with us, exactly as Christ founded it, and stronger than ever.*

**What is meant by the indefectibility of the Catholic Church?** --By the indefectibility of the Catholic Church is meant that the Church, as Christ founded it, will last until the end of time.

The Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that Christ "shall be king over the house of Jacob *forever*; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33)

1. Christ meant His Church to endure to the end of the world. It is to be indestructible and unchanging,-to possess *indefectibility*. Christ, God Himself, could scarcely have come, and with such incredible pain and labor have founded a Church which would die with the Apostles.

He came *to save all men*. Those to live in future ages needed salvation as much as the people of Apostolic times.

2. Christ said to Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell *shall not prevail against it*" (Matt. 16:18). By the "*gates of hell*", He meant all the power of the devil—all kinds of attacks, physical violence as well as false teaching.

Christ promises here that the Church would be assailed always, but never overcome. This promise of Our Lord has been *proved* for almost 2000 years by the facts of history. Not one of the persecutors of the Church has prevailed over it. On the contrary, many of them have come to a fearful end. There will always be Popes, bishops, and laity, to Compose the Church; the truths taught by Our Lord will always be found in His Church.

3. After telling His Apostles to teach, all nations, Christ said: "Behold, I am with you all days, even *unto the consummation* of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

As the Apostles were not to live to the end of the world, Christ must have been addressing them as representatives of a perpetual Church.

4. The Apostles themselves understood Christ to mean that His Church should endure. After organizing Christian communities, they appointed *successors* in their place, to live after them and carry on the Church.

The Apostles instructed these successors to ordain in turn other bishops and priests. All these acts were *to assure the perpetuity* of the Church.

5. Christ intended the Church to remain *as He founded it*, to preserve the whole of what He taught, and the shining marks which He gave it in the beginning. If the Church lost any of the qualities that God gave it, it could not be said to be indefectible, because it would not be the same institution. Indefectibility implies *unchangeability*.

Our Lord promised to abide by the Church, to assist it, and to send the Holy Ghost to remain in it. God does not change: "Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

6. Because of its indefectibility the truths revealed by God will *always be taught* in the Catholic Church. St. Ambrose said: "The Church is like the moon; it may wane, but never be destroyed; it may be darkened, but it can never disappear."

St. Anselm said that the bark of the Church may be swept by the waves, but it can never sink, because Christ is there. When the Church is in greatest need, Christ comes to its help by miracles, or by raising up saintly men to strengthen and purify it. It is the bark of Peter; when the storm threatens to sink it, the Lord awakens from His sleep, and commands the winds and the waves into calm: "Peace; be still!"

**Has the Catholic Church actually proved itself indefectible?** --The Catholic Church has, throughout its long history, proved itself indefectible, against all kinds of attack from within and without, against every persecution and every heresy and schism.

As its Founder was persecuted, so the Catholic Church has been and ever will be persecuted. "You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake" (Matt. 10:18). "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake" (Matt. 10:22). "No disciple is above his teacher, nor is the servant above his master" (Matt. 10:24).

"They will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues" (Mark 13:9). "They will arrest you, and persecute you" (Luke 21:12).

1. The Church survived *three hundred years* of incredible persecution under pagan Rome. Of the 33 Popes that ruled before the Edict of Milan, 30 died as martyrs. That mighty Empire, with its colossal strength, before whose standard the nations quailed, could not kill the infant Church or stop its progress. In a short time the Popes were ruling where the imperial Caesars had issued edicts against the Christian Church.

The Roman Empire waged ten fierce persecutions against the Church, but could not destroy it. In the year 313 the Emperor Constantine was converted, and granted the Church freedom by the Edict of Milan.

2. Then for *two centuries* hordes of barbarians swept upon civilized Europe, destroying the old Roman Empire. The Church not only survived, but converted and civilized the barbarians.

God's ever-watchful providence brought about the conversion of the Frankish king Clovis, with a great number of his warriors. This was the beginning of the firm establishment of the Church in the Frankish kingdom, although missionaries had gone there from the first century. In the eighth century St. Boniface converted Middle and Northern Germany, until then the home of violent paganism.

3. For *nine centuries* Mohammedanism threatened Christian civilization. It was the Church under the Popes that urged the nations to league against Mohammedanism.

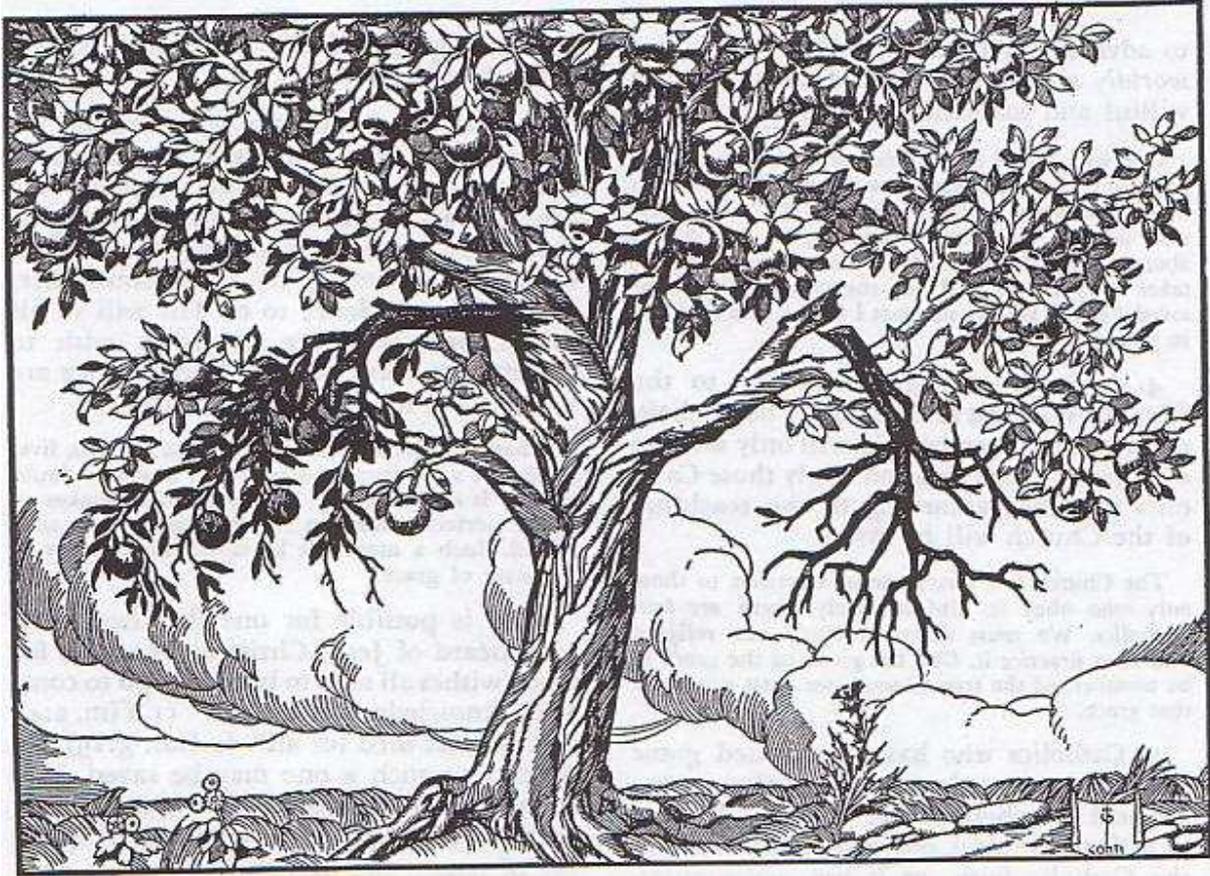
In the sixteenth century the Mohammedan menace was removed.

4. Not only non-Christians, but its own *rebellious* children have persecuted the Church. From the beginning heresy has attacked it from within. And *still* the Church *lives*, greater than ever, changeless, indefectible.

The long history of the Catholic Church is attended by schism and heresy, but each attack has only strengthened it. It has continued to live and spread in spite of everything and everybody.

5. The Church is the *Bride of Christ*, cast into prison, starved, thrown to the beasts, trampled underfoot, hacked, tortured, crucified, and burned. But this fair Bride emerges from it all in the bloom and freshness of youth, serene, calm, immortal.

## 70. Salvation and the Catholic Church



*Christ said: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain on the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and they shall burn" (John 15:4-6). Time has continually proved the truth of what Christ predicted about schisms and their divisions. This is the reason for the fact that they change so often and finally disappear: they are branches broken from the tree, and must wither as He said.*

**What do we mean when we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation?"** --When we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation", we mean that those who through their own grave fault do not know that the Catholic Church is the true Church, or knowing it, refuse to join it, cannot be saved.

1. All are obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved. Christ said: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of *water* and the Spirit, he cannot enter into, the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

The Catholic Church is founded on the Apostles, to whom Our Lord gave the commission to baptize; by Baptism one is made a member of the Church. If then Baptism is *indispensable*, the Church must be indispensable.

2. Christ did not die for a part of, but for *all mankind*. He did not leave His legacy the Church for the benefit of a few, but for all. Our Lord said: "He who hears you hears me; and he who rejects you rejects me" (Luke 10:16).

Since God commanded all to be members of His Church, those who *deliberately disobey* His command will not be saved. Whoever, through his own fault, remains outside of the Catholic Church, will be lost eternally.

3. One who, knowing the Catholic Church to be the true one, *leaves it or does not join it* because he wants to make a good marriage, to advance his business, or for some other *worldly motive*, will not be saved. He is a willful and malicious unbeliever.

One who leaves the Church or does not enter it because of human respect, or because its doctrines require *personal sacrifices*, will not be saved. One who belongs to another church and has doubts about the truth or falsity of his own church, but *takes no pains* to find out the truth will not be saved. "If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sin."

4. It is *not enough to belong* to the Church. We must also live up to our beliefs, otherwise our membership will only work to our greater condemnation. Only those Catholics who live according to the teachings of the Church will be saved.

The Church is a guarantee of salvation to those only who obey it. Unfortunately, there are bad Catholics. We must therefore *study* our religion and then *practice it*. God has given us the grace to be members of the true Church; we must not waste that grace.

5. Catholics who have committed *grave sins* such as murder, arson, adultery, etc., are still members of the Church. As long as a Catholic *does not deny* a doctrine of the Catholic faith, or is not excommunicated, he is a member of the Church.

Catholics in grave sin are called *dead members*, for their soul is dead in mortal sin. Nevertheless they remain members, and have the privilege of receiving the sacraments to wash away their sins. Christ Himself predicted that in the Church there would be bad people with the good, cockle among the wheat. Mother Church is a good mother that patiently awaits the return of her sinful children, and does not exclude them from her gifts.

6. An *excommunicate* is one who has been cut off from membership in the Church for some serious sin against faith. He is excluded from the sacraments, from Catholic burial, and from being prayed for in the public prayers of the Church. In order to become once more a member of good standing in the Church, an excommunicate has to obtain the absolution of the bishop.

Catholics who join Masonry, or marry before a non Catholic minister, are *automatically* excommunicated, if they knew the serious nature of their action.<sup>1</sup>

**Can they be saved who remain outside the Catholic Church<sup>2</sup> because they do not know it is the true Church?** --They who remain outside the Catholic Church<sup>3</sup> through no grave fault of their own, and do not know it is the true Church, can be saved by making use of the graces which God gives them.<sup>4</sup>

1. God condemns no man except for grave sin. Therefore He will not condemn those who *through no fault of their own* are unaware of His command to belong to the True Church, provided they serve Him faithfully according to their conscience, have a sincere desire to do His will in all things, and therefore *implicitly* wish to become members of His Church. They are members of the Church, in *desire*.

A *baptized Protestant*, of Protestant parents, lives all his life a Protestant without ever having a doubt that he is in the wrong. Before death he makes an act of perfect contrition for the sins he has committed. Such a man will be saved, for he dies in the state of grace. It is possible for one that has never even heard of Jesus Christ to be saved, for God "wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4) and "Christ died for all" (2 Cor. 5: 15). In order that such a one may be saved, it is required that he observe the *natural law*; with the help of God; everyone having the use of reason can do that.

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Some revisions have been made to this 1956 edition watering down the Catholic Doctrine: "Outside the Church there is no Salvation." Some clarifications need to be made. The use of the word "outside" refers to those who are in the state of Invincible Ignorance of the Church and Invincibly Ignorant of the Doctrine: "Outside the Church there is no salvation". These invincibly ignorant souls, who cooperate with all the graces God sends them are implicitly INSIDE the Catholic Church. Invincible ignorance is quite rare considering the great availability of the truths of the Catholic Faith in today's information age.(RMO)

<sup>2</sup> Not official members of the Church, but Invincibly Ignorant of the Church and obey the *natural law* through the use of their reason, are implicitly INSIDE the Church(RMO)

<sup>3</sup> Not official members, but Invincibly Ignorant of the Church are implicitly INSIDE the Church(RMO)

<sup>4</sup> NOTE: TECHNICALLY, NO ONE CAN BE SAVED WHO IS OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. INVINCIBLY IGNORANT SOULS, WHO COOPERATE WITH ALL THE GRACES GOD SENDS THEM, WHO ARE INVINCIBLY IGNORANT OF THE CHURCH ARE IMPLICITLY INSIDE THE CHURCH. Honestly, in today's information age, the typical Invincibly Ignorant soul would have to be a native on a primitive island. Most people know the Catholic Church's basic Doctrines. After all, Protestants protest many Catholic Doctrines so they are very familiar with Catholic Doctrines.(RMO)

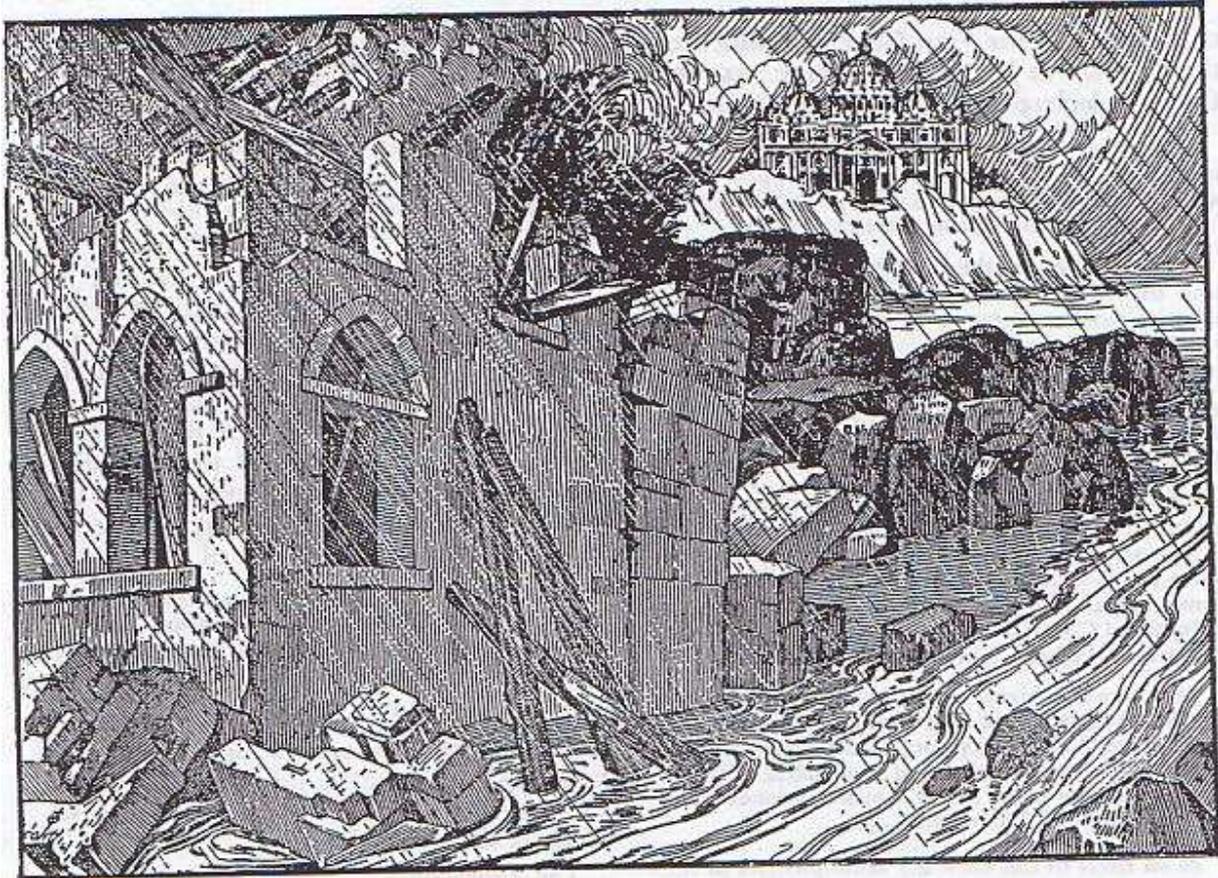
Whoever then obeys the *natural law* will be enlightened by God, at some time in his life, with the grace with which he can make an act of Divine faith. If he makes good use of this grace and firmly believes whatever God has revealed, he will receive the further graces with which he can make the acts of hope, repentance, and charity that must precede before God will bestow on his soul sanctifying grace, with which he can merit eternal life.

2. The fact that it is possible for those outside the Church to be saved should not make us lose sight of the *great disadvantages* they are under, as compared with Catholics who live in the full light of Divine revelation. Such persons have not the infallible Church to guide them in what they are to believe and do in order to serve God. They have to live without the Sacraments, Holy Mass, and Holy Communion, and the other countless sources of grace which the Church supplies for the sanctification of its children, those professed Catholics who are members of the body of the visible Church.

These disadvantages should make us Catholics realize more fully the many reasons we have for humbly thanking God for the priceless blessings we have received without any claim or merit of our own. They should also spur us on to give Him a more worthy service, and help spread our Faith.

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## 71. Schism and Heresy



*Our Lord said; "Everyone therefore who hears these my words and acts upon them, shall be likened to a wise man who built his house on rock. And the rain fell, and the floods come, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it was founded on rock. And everyone who hears these my words and does not act upon them, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house on sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and was utterly ruined" (Matt. 7:24-27). Non-Catholic churches are the "house upon sand"; they rise up and fall. The Catholic Church is the "house upon rock"; it will last forever.*

**What is schism; and what is heresy?** --Schism is the refusal to submit to the authority of the Pope; heresy is the formal denial or doubt by a baptized person of any revealed truth of the Catholic Faith.

***Apostasy*** is the total rejection of his Faith by a baptized Christian. With heresy and schism, and supported by persecution, it has caused divisions in the True Church, and the rise of other churches.

1. *Christ* predicted divisions in the Church, and the rise of other churches. From the time of the Apostles new denominations have sprung up, and have divided and subdivided, to

form other denominations. With other churches that are non-Christian, the Christian denominations have opposed the Apostolic Church.

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect" (Matt. 24:24)

2. After some time, separated as it is from the authority of the Pope, a schismatical church is led into errors in *doctrine*. Today schismatical churches deny the infallibility of the Pope.

**What were the most important schisms and heresies that have tried to destroy the Church?** --Of the numerous schisms and heresies, the following may be mentioned:

1. Arius was a priest of Alexandria who taught that Jesus Christ was not God. The *heresy of Arius* spread rapidly, and was supported by the Roman emperors. He was condemned by the First General Council of the Church at Nicea, in the year 325; the Council declared the divinity of Christ.

In a few centuries the Arian sect was divided and swept away by other errors. Today we know Arius only by name: he has passed on, but the Church he fought still lives, upholding Christ's divinity.

Another heretic of the early days was **Macedonius**, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. His theories were condemned by the Council of Constantinople in the year 381.

In the fifth century **Pelagius** denied original sin, and declared grace not necessary for salvation. The doctrines were condemned by the synods of Milevi and Carthage, and the decision ratified by the Pope.

**Nestorius**, Bishop of Constantinople, in the fifth century taught the doctrine that Jesus Christ was two persons: a man and God the Son; only the man Jesus was born of Mary and died on the cross. As a consequence the Nestorians rejected the title "Mother of God" for the Blessed Virgin. The Third Council in Ephesus, 431, condemned the heresies.

As a form of extreme reaction from Nestorianism, the **Monophysites**, held that Jesus Christ had only one nature, his divinity totally engulfing his humanity. *Dioscoros*, Patriarch of Alexandria, was the chief propagator of the heresy, which was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

In an effort to call back the Monophysites to the Church, the heresy of **Monothelism** arose. The chief doctrine was that Christ had a single will; the heresy was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 681.

In the year 727, the Greek emperor Leo forbade all veneration to images on the ground that such veneration was idolatry. The heresy spread, and mobs entered churches to break images, to burn and destroy priceless works of art. Great harm was done to the people

and their faith, before this heresy, called **Iconoclasm** (image-breaking) , died out. The Council of Nicea in 787 defined the true doctrine of the Church.

2. The *greatest* schism suffered by the Christian Church was that of the East, resulting in the establishment of the Orthodox Eastern Church. The Eastern emperors, desiring more power in the Church, tried to make the patriarchs of Constantinople independent of Rome. Finally, Photius, with the support of the emperor, held a council of Eastern bishops in the year 867, and broke from Rome.

The cause of the schism was not doctrinal, but rather political and material, -jealousy between the East and the West. It has resulted in the separation from Rome of 145 million people with valid priesthood and sacraments. In the United States there are a number of schismatical churches, among them the Greek Orthodox, and the Russian Church.

- a. After minor schisms and misunderstandings between East and West in 1054 there was a final break by Cerularius, patriarch of Constantinople, continuing today.

Today the Orthodox Eastern Church remains in schism, but does not spread. It is a withered branch, having cut itself off from the parent tree.

- b. The Orthodox Eastern Church denies the Catholic dogma that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. It also teaches that the souls of the just will not attain complete happiness till the end of the world, when they will be joined to their bodies; and that the souls of the wicked will not suffer complete torture in hell until that last day. These are heresies against the doctrines of the Church.

Thus it can be seen that today the Orthodox Eastern Church is not merely schismatical, but truly heretical; for it holds primary doctrines in a different light. But it has valid orders. (See Chapter 55 on The Catholic Eastern Church; Rites)

3. In the 12th century *Albigensianism* arose in southern France. It upheld dualism: two opposing creative principles, the good creating the spiritual world, and the evil creating the material world.

The Albigenses went to excesses, recommending suicide, forbidding marriage, asserting that Our Lord did not have a human body, denying the resurrection of the body. The heresy was condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215.

4. As an offshoot of Albigensianism, *Waldensianism* spread throughout Spain, Lombardy, Bohemia, and neighboring countries. The heresy continued until the outbreak of Protestantism, when it merged with this.

The Waldenses denied the existence of Purgatory, combatted indulgences, asserted that laymen could preach and absolve, oaths were unlawful, sinful priests had no valid power of ministry, etc.

But out of evil God has often drawn good. Each schism and heresy has led to profound study in the Church, study of Scholars to discover the correct interpretation of doctrine under dispute. In this way light came from darkness. As wise St. Augustine said: "Those who err in doctrine only serve to show forth more clearly the soundness of those who believe aright."

5. In the fourteenth century, *Wycliff* in England taught that the Bible was the sole rule of faith, that there was no freedom of the will, that confession was useless, that the Pope had no primacy.

Adopting the theories of *Wycliff*, *Huss* in Bohemia spread the errors. Political considerations complicated the heresy; fighting broke out, lasting years.

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## 72. Protestant Churches



*Upon Martin Luther's refusal to retract his declarations on the teachings of the Church, he was excommunicated. But Luther proudly tore up the papal bull of excommunication, and burned it. The fire that incident started has not yet burned down.*

**Who are Protestants?** --In general, Protestants are adherents of the religious organizations that broke off from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, or of any religious body formed from them.

1. The term "*Protestant*" was first given to those who protested against the decree of the second Diet of Speyer in 1529. Later the term was applied to all reformers, all opposing the doctrines of the Church.

Even today the term is included in the new formula of the Declaration of Faith that the ruler of England must make at the coronation, saying: "I declare that I am a faithful Protestant."

2. In the sixteenth century the *Protestant revolt* took place, this beginning of a multitude of heresies, this sad event that has divided Christendom for centuries. Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk of Erfurt, taking offense at what he believed was a lack of appreciation for him at Rome, combated the teaching of the Church on indulgences, in the year 1517.

The Pope commanded Luther to retract his teachings upon his refusal, he was excommunicated, in 1520. His heretical teachings spread like wildfire over Germany, occasioning religious wars; peace came only with the Peace of Augsburg, in 1555.

- a. The Council of Trent met (1545-1563) to set forth in a clear manner the errors of the Protestants, by explaining the *true doctrine* of the Church on those points. At that time, religious training had relaxed; many did not know the true doctrines.

Among the errors of Luther were these: that there is no supreme teaching power in the Church; that temporal rulers have the right to interfere in ecclesiastical matters; that the Bible is the sole guide to faith: that every man should interpret the Bible according to his own mind; that faith is sufficient for salvation; that the priesthood does not imprint a special character on the soul of a man, and that everybody is or can be a priest, as a result; that Penance is not a sacrament, but a mere invention of the Church; that the Mass gives no special grace; that there is no purgatory, etc.

- b. In the beginning, Protestantism spread rapidly. Whole countries, led by their rulers, adopted its doctrines. In Switzerland Zwingli and Calvin, and in England Henry VIII, about this time increased the defections from the Church. But soon there were other kinds of Protestantism.

Today the divisions and subdivisions of Protestantism are too well known to need comment. Great numbers of Protestants are returning to the faith of their fathers. Meanwhile, as the divisions subdivide, the Church continues to grow.

**How may Protestant denominations be grouped?** --Protestant denominations may be placed into three groups:

***First***, those requiring that a church be able to trace its *origin* to apostolic times. They believe in a priesthood established by Christ, and commanded to offer sacrifice and administer the sacraments. The High Church Episcopalians belong to this group.

Unfortunately the High Church Episcopalians deny a fact: their succession of bishops was cut when they separated from the Catholic Church, and so they have *no valid orders*. Hence they cannot have any sacraments except Baptism and Matrimony. The Anglican orders were declared invalid under Pope Leo XIII in 1896, after the question of their validity had been thoroughly examined.

***Second***, those that do not believe in the theory of "all religions are the same," but do not have an organized hierarchy. They insist on their own brand of Protestantism, requiring prospective members to study their doctrines. They consider *Holy Scripture* as the only rule of faith and of life. Some of them accept the Apostles' Creed, and teach justification by faith alone.

Lutherans, and some bodies of Methodist and Episcopal churches belong to this group.

*Third*, those that declare Christ their personal Saviour, and believe in Baptism as indispensable; although some bodies do not hold the latter doctrine. Every Christian, according to them, must be a member of some church, on account of the *practical* benefits from church membership, from organized religion. But, one church is just as good as another.

To this group most of the bodies of Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, and Congregationalists belong.

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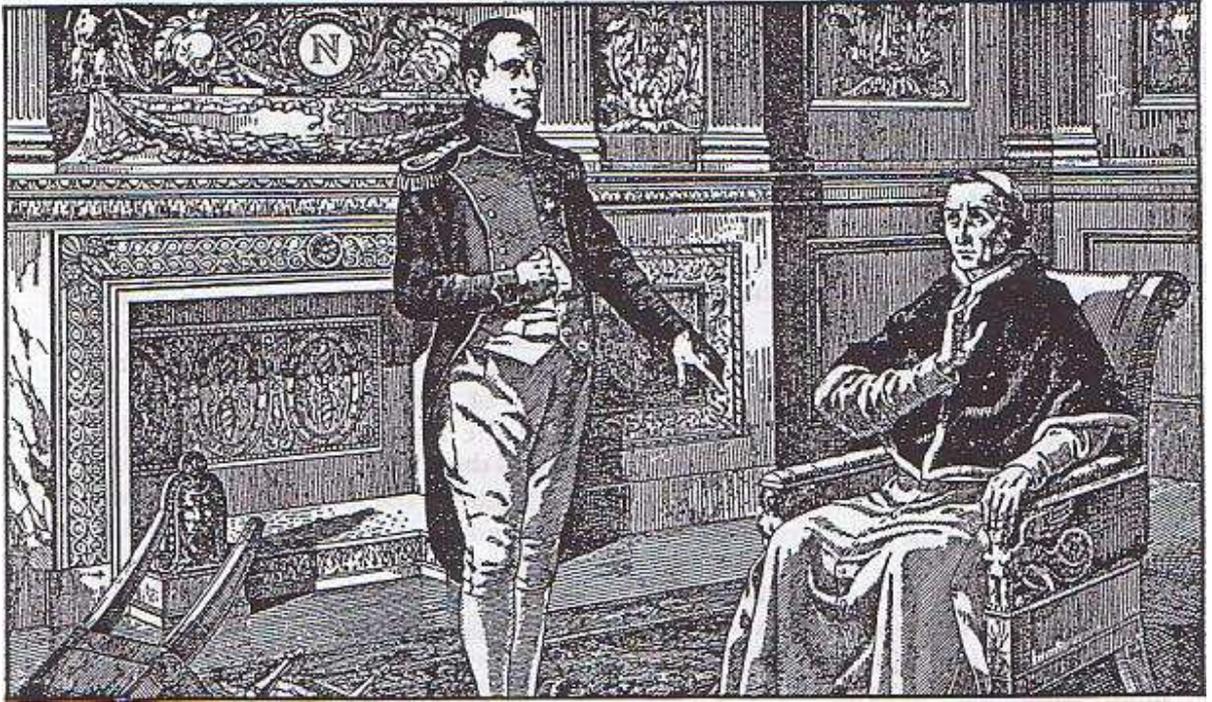
### The Church for Everyman

It is often said that the Catholic Church is the Church of the ignorant. Perhaps; but below is a partial list of the many brilliant literary people who in recent times have been *converted into the Catholic Church* in adult life, with their eyes wide open.

The Catholic Church is the Church of the ignorant; it is the Church of the wise. The Catholic Church is the Church for Everyman, whatever his race, color, economic condition, education,-for in the Church "there is not 'Gentile and Jew', 'circumcised and uncircumcised' ... 'slave and freeman'; but Christ is all things and in all" (Col. 3:11). Christ came to redeem all men; the Church is His Living Voice, His Mystical Body. Let us *obey*.

Achmed Abdullah, Maurice Baring, Edwin Harrison Barker, Anita Bartle, Robert Hugh Benson, Eugene Bishop, Katherine Bregy, Heywood Broun, Orestes Brownson, Dom Bede Camm, Cecil Chesterton, G. K. Chesterton, Isabel Clarke, Paul Claudel, Ethel Cook, Dr. Herbert E. Cory, F. Marion Crawford, A. A. Curtis, Dorothy Day, Christopher Dawson, Selden P. Delany, Mary Angela Dickens, Enid Dinnis, Owen Francis Dudley, Richard Lynn Edsal, Ethel Cook Elliot, Francis Perry Elliot, R. Willoughby Ferrier, Henry Jones Ford, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, Henry Dymoke Gasson, Sir Philip Gibbs, Eric Gil, David Goldstein, Morris Gordon, William Hard, Henry Harland, Joel Chandler Harris, Msgr. Edward Hawks, Rose Hawthorne, Carlton J. H. Hayes, Ross Hoffman, Christopher Hollis, Bishop Duane G. Hunt, Charles P. Hunt, Henry Jenner, Johannes Jorgensen, Vernon Johnson, Frances Parkinson Keyes, Joyce Kilmer, Clare Boothe Luce, Thomas Merton, George Parsons Lathrop, Shane Leslie, D. B. Wynham Lewis, Helen Landreth, Theophilus Lewis, Arnold Lunn, Compton Mackenzie, Lucas Malet, Horace Mann, C. C. Martindale, Jacques Maritain, Bruce Marshall, Theodore Maynard, Charles W. Myers, Alice Meynell, John Moody, Anne Nichols, Meredith Nicholson, Alfred Noyes, Dr. William Orchard, Giovanni Papini, Coventry Patmore, C. Kegan Paul, John Howard Payne, Max Pemberton, Alexandra Rachmanova, Mrs. Victor Rickard, Ruth Reed, Daniel Sargent, Adeline Sergeant, Lady Eleanor Smith, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Frank H. Spearman, Cynthia Stockley, Charles W. Stoddard, John L. Stoddard, John Swinnerton, "Guy Thorne", Ivar Tidestrom, Sigrid Undset, Aubrey de Vere, Dr. Frederick Wagner, "Artemus Ward," Evelyn Waugh, Sir Bertram Windle, Norman Wise, Cuthbert Wright, Fulton Oursler, etc.

### 73. The Gates of Hell



*In the castle of Fontainebleau Napoleon forced the Pope to give up the States of the Church, promising an annual income of two million francs. In the same castle Napoleon was himself later forced to sign an abdication and was promised a yearly income of the same amount. When the Pope excommunicated Napoleon, he answered that the words of an old man would not make the arms drop from the hands of his soldiers. In the Russian campaign, because of the intense cold, this actually happened. He kept Pius VII prisoner for five years; he himself was later a prisoner for seven years. Four days after ordering the union of the States of the Church with France, he lost the battles of Aspern and Erlingen.*

**What was the end of the leaders of persecution, schism, and heresy?** --Many of the leaders of persecution, schism, and heresy came to a bad end.

1. Of the first persecutors, several died violent deaths. The death of Judas is the *type* for his imitators. It is related that:

*Herod*, the murderer of the Holy Innocents, died in unspeakable tortures.

*Herod*, the murderer of James the Apostle, was devoured by worms.

2. Of the persecutors in Rome, *Nero* was deposed, and in despair stabbed himself.

3. *Domitian* was assassinated.

*Hadrian* became insane.

*Marcus Aurelius*, despondent over the ingratitude of his only son, starved himself to death.

*Septimus Severus*, whose life had been attempted by his only son, died in despair.

*Decius* died miserably in a swamp, during a battle.

*Valerian* was flayed alive by the Persians.

*Maxentius* was drowned in the Tiber.

*Diocletian* died from a loathsome disease.

*Julian* the Apostate was struck down by a lance on the field of battle, and died crying: "Galilean, Thou hast conquered!"

4. The case of *Napoleon* is instructive.

Drunk with power, Napoleon seized Rome in 1808, declaring himself the "successor of Charlemagne". He banished Cardinals and bishops, and carrying off Pope Pius VII, held him prisoner in Savona. Enemies of the Church exulted: "The Papacy is ended! The Emperor has devoured the Pope!" They forgot the divine promise to Peter: "***The gates of hell shall not prevail!***"; on that promise was based the ancient saying: "Who eats of the Pope dies like a beast." On the same day that Napoleon died in exile at St. Helena, Pope Pius VII was celebrating his own feast day in Rome.

5. *Heretics* and *schismatics* have shared the same fate. Arius burst asunder during a triumphal procession. Voltaire died in despair. The Greek Schismatics fell under the Turkish yoke in 1453, on Pentecost, the feast of that Holy Ghost about whom they had expressed doubts.

Truly history has shown the truth of the words of Holy Scripture; "***It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God***" (Heb. 10:31).

**Why can no other church except the Catholic Church be the True Church of Christ?**

--No other church except the Catholic Church can be the True Church of Christ, because no other church possesses the marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.

Truth cannot change; hence the constantly changing doctrines of non-Catholic churches can not be true. They also differ in their *government*. Some recognize the temporal ruler as their spiritual head. Others have ministers whom they call bishops, deacons, elders. The majority reject such titles.

1. There are hundreds of churches and Christian denominations, each *different* from the others; they do not possess the mark of *unity*. They differ in even the essentials of faith. They cannot agree, and keep dividing and subdividing year by year. Their only similarity appears to be their opposition to the Catholic Church.

Such churches are multiplying. In the United States there are over two hundred religious bodies. They arise, then pass away, to give place to other denominations. Realizing the great handicap of disunity, efforts have been made by various groups of churches to organize. General councils and conferences of different bodies have been held; but there is no vital result for unity. This is of course because, though agreement may be general concerning matters such as social work, beneficent societies, and the like, no agreement can be found in the essentials of faith and doctrine. This is the result of free interpretation of the Bible, and the repudiation of Peter's successor, Vicar of Christ.

2. The denominations and their founders are not *holy* in the same sense or degree as the Catholic Church and its Founder are holy. Many non-Catholics are upright and good because they have retained many doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church.

Many founders of non-Catholic churches were far from holy. *Luther*, the founder of Protestantism was an apostate friar, who married a nun who had left her convent and turned against her vows. During his life he taught contradictory doctrines, some of them immoral. *Henry VIII*, the founder of Anglicanism, married five women successively, after divorcing his lawful wife; he had two put to death.

No denomination is *catholic*, or universal. These non-Catholic churches are everywhere, but are different everywhere.

A regional or *national* Church cannot be the true Church, since it cannot teach all nations, as Christ commanded.

No heretical Christian denomination is *apostolic*. The Protestant churches are some 1500 years later than the Church founded on the Rock of Peter.

Not even their teachings come down from the Apostles. Their ministers cannot trace their succession from the Apostles. Not one teaches *all* the doctrines of the Apostles. How then could they be the Church founded by Christ?

**What should be the attitude of Catholics towards those who do not belong to the True Church?** --Catholics should observe an attitude of understanding towards them, because the majority of those who do not belong to the True Church are in good faith.

1. Catholic teachings are not easy to *understand* at first sight; many Catholic practices require *sacrifice*. Towards such a religion there is bound to be prejudice.

To be obliged to go to Mass every Sunday under pain of mortal sin; to have to confess to a priest, who is another human being like ourselves; to condemn divorce and birth control; to observe fasts and abstinence;-these are not easy doctrines.

No wonder in looking for relief, man often, however unconsciously, seeks motives for not accepting the Church that commands its members to obey such precepts, to accept such doctrines.

When Our Lord first announced the institution of the Holy Eucharist, many of the disciples said, "This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?" (John 6:62). And they no longer went with Jesus.

2. Catholics should above all try to give *good example*; nothing is more effective in the eyes of non-Catholics than the exemplary lives led by good Catholics.

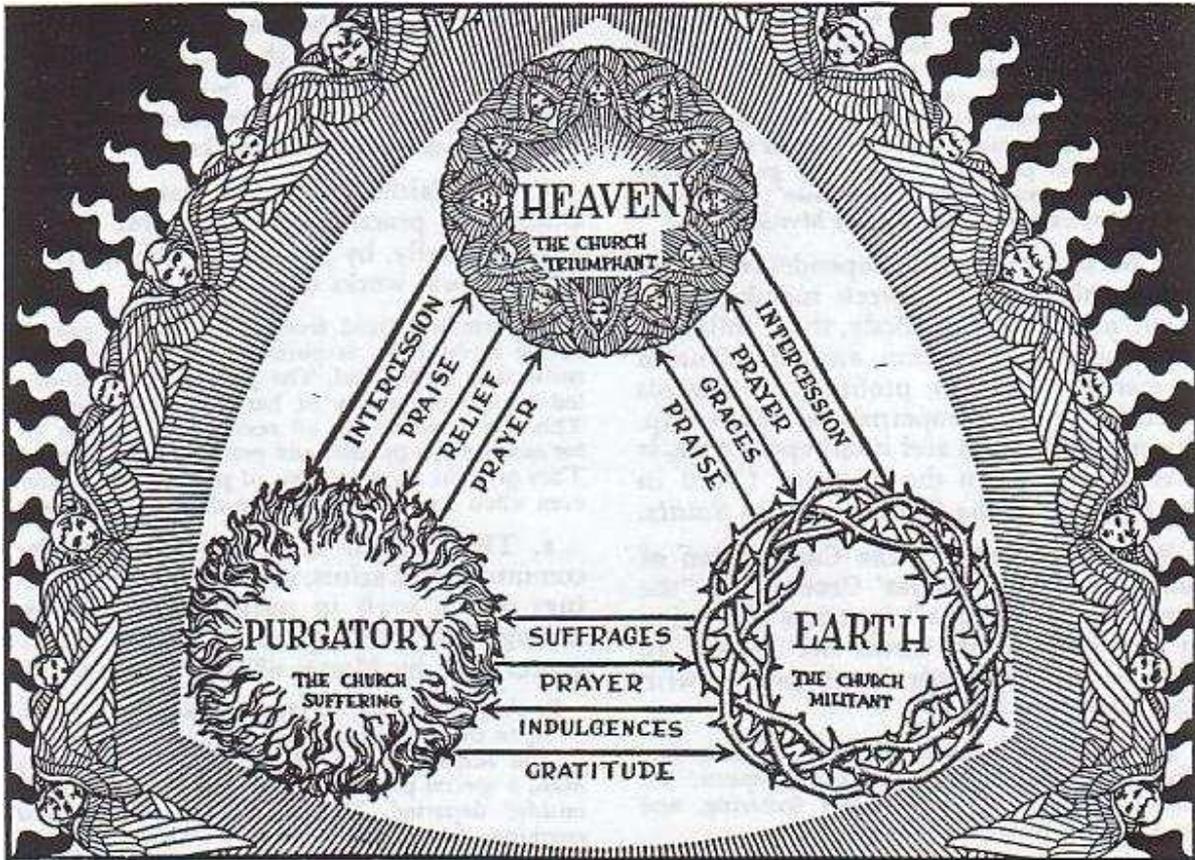
"Behave yourselves honorably among the pagans; that, whereas they slander you as evildoers, they may through observing you by reason of your good works glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12). Catholics should often pray for the conversion of those outside the Church, praying with the Good Shepherd for only one Fold.

3. While avoiding useless discussions that generally end in bitter quarrels, Catholics should try to show the beauty, the *truth* of the Catholic Church.

In our friendly discussions with non-Catholics we should not be always on the defensive, but should try to see whether they can trace the origin of the authority of their ministers to the Apostles, whether their church can be proved the True Church by the possession of the four marks. Often our non-Catholic friends criticise the Catholic Church on account of some devotional practices like holy water, candles, etc., as if such practices belonged to the essentials of faith.

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## 74. One Body in Christ: Communion of Saints



*The illustration shows the continuous communication in the three portions of the Church spiritually united in Jesus Christ. The members on earth send up prayers to the angels and saints for themselves and for the poor souls in purgatory. They in turn are helped by the intercession of the saints and angels, and by the graces obtained thereby. The poor souls pray for the members on earth.*

**Why is the Catholic Church called the Mystical Body of Christ?** --The Catholic Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ, because its members are united by supernatural bonds with one another and with Christ, their Head, thus resembling the members and head of the living human body.

1. The term "Mystical Body of Christ" is derived from St. Paul's metaphor: "*He is the head of his **body**, the Church*" (Col. 1:18) . Again: "You are the body of Christ, member for member" (1 Cor. 12:27). "We, the many, are one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5).

Jesus Himself used a similar symbol: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither" (John 15:5-6).

2. In the Mystical Body, Christ as Head wills *to be helped* by His Body. Thus He rules the Church, but does so indirectly, through the hierarchy, human authority.

In a similar manner the human head, to live, has need of the rest of the body. The hierarchy is the material on which is formed the Image of Christ, God. The acts, ceremonies, ritual, liturgy of the Church,-all these are outward signs of the inward reality of the union of the members with one another and with their Head, Christ; they are visible manifestations of a common supernatural life in the Godhead.

3. Among the members of the Mystical Body of Christ there exists an *interdependence*; so that although each one has his own individual function, yet he does not live for himself alone, but for the entire Body. Every good he does perfects the Body, of which he is a part.

Similarly, the eye, or the foot, or the arm of a man is useless existing alone and apart from the rest of his body. Here is an example of the interdependence among members of the Church: Suppose a Catholic prays to recover from a grievous illness, and he does not recover; there is no evident answer to his prayers. Yet, do they go to waste? God lets no good work "go to waste"; the merits of the prayers are not lost for the Mystical Body.

4. Because of the interdependence among the members, and between members and Head, of the Mystical Body, there follows a continuous *contribution and distribution* of merits and graces, profiting all towards eternal life. This supernatural fellowship, this mystical union and interdependence, is presented to us in the Apostles' Creed in the doctrine of the *Communion of Saints*.

**What is meant by "the Communion of Saints" in the Apostles' Creed?** --By "the Communion of Saints" is meant the union of the faithful on earth, the blessed in heaven, and the souls in purgatory, with Christ as their Head.

There is *only one* Mystical Body, only one Church. But this Church has three aspects: the Church Triumphant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Militant.

1. The saints and angels in heaven compose the *Church triumphant*, because they have gained the crown of victory. The souls in purgatory compose the *Church suffering*, because they still have to expiate for their sins before they can enter heaven. The faithful on earth compose the *Church militant*, because they have to struggle ceaselessly against the enemies of their souls.

The Church triumphant, the Church suffering and the Church militant compose *one Church united in Christ*, members of a body whose head is Christ: "So we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).

2. All the members of the Church are of *one family*, and share in the spiritual treasures of the Church. However, not all members of the Church Militant fully enjoy the benefits of the communion of saints, but only those in a state of grace.

"Dead members" do not lose all the benefits of the communion of saints, for the Church prays publicly for them, and particular members in the state of grace often send up petitions for them. Thus they may receive the grace to repent and recover sanctifying grace. Hence a Catholic who still belongs to the Church, although a great sinner, may have more hope of being converted than one who cuts himself off from the Church.

**How do the members of the Communion of Saints help one another?** --The members of the Communion of Saints help one another by prayer and intercession, and by the merits of their good works.

1. The faithful on earth can *help one another* by practicing supernatural charity and, especially, by performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

St. Peter was freed from prison by the prayers of the faithful. St. Stephen's prayer obtained the conversion of St. Paul. The prayers of St. Monica led to the conversion of her son, St. Augustine. This is why today, on all occasions, Catholics ask for each other's prayers, and pray for those in need. They give the *spiritual alms* of prayers continually, even when they cannot perform the corporal works.

2. The faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, can *relieve* the sufferings of the souls in purgatory by prayer, fasting, and other good works, by indulgences, and by Masses offered for them.

St. Augustine says: "Prayer is the key by which we open the gates of heaven to the suffering souls." In the Memento after the consecration at every Mass, a special petition is made for the souls of the faithful departed. The poor souls *cannot merit* anything; they depend upon their brothers in Christ on earth and in heaven to help them attain their eternal home as soon as possible.

3. The souls in purgatory *pray* to the angels and saints, and *pray for the living*.

They cannot merit anything, either for themselves or for the living, but they *intercede* for us.

4. Through the communion of saints, the *blessed in heaven* can help those in purgatory and on earth by praying for them. The faithful on earth should *honor* the blessed in heaven and pray to them, because they are worthy of honor and as friends of God will help the faithful on earth.

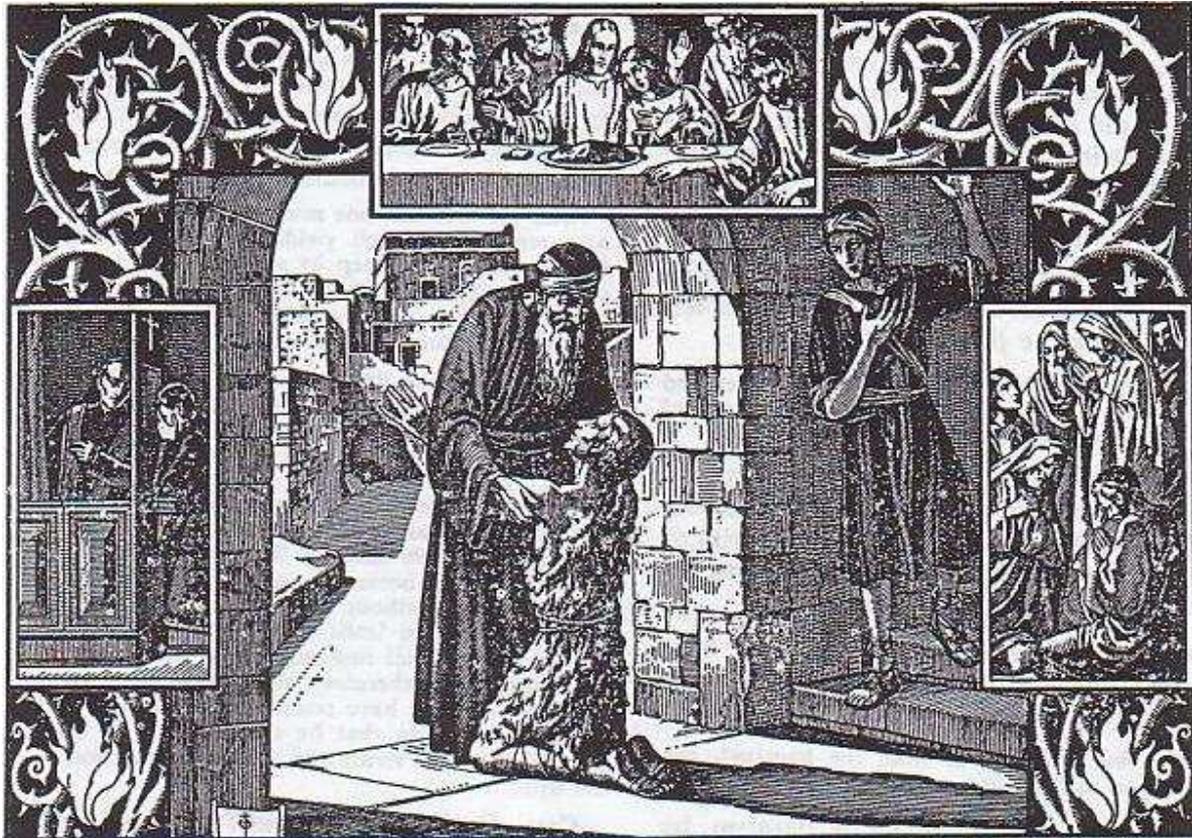
This is why we pray to the saints and angels that they may intercede for us before God, Whom they see face to face. "Rendering thanks to God the Father, who has made us worthy to share the lot of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).

5. The doctrine of the communion of saints is one of the most *consoling* dogmas of the Church. When our loved ones die, they are not separated from us forever. Whether in heaven or purgatory, they still love us and pray for us.

We should be happy to call saints and angels our brothers. We should implore their intercession, not only for ourselves, but also for our other brothers, the poor souls in purgatory.

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## 75. The Forgiveness of Sins



*Christ taught about the forgiveness of sins in the parable of the Prodigal Son (1). He instituted the Sacrament of Penance for the forgiveness of sins when He said to the Apostles: (4) "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."*

**What is meant in the Apostles' Creed by "the forgiveness of sins"?** --By "the forgiveness of sins" in the Apostles' Creed is meant that God has given to the Church, through Jesus Christ, the power to forgive sins, no matter how great or how many they are, if sinners truly repent.

1. In the Old Law, sins were forgiven through the merits of the Redeemer *that was to come*. In the New Law they are forgiven through the merits of the Redeemer *Who has come*.

Pointing to Christ, St. John the Baptist said: "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

2. We can obtain forgiveness of sin, because *Christ the Redeemer* merited forgiveness for us by His death. The Church has power to remit sins through the merits of Jesus Christ, "in whom we have our redemption, the remission of our sins" (Col. 1:14).

During life, Christ actually forgave sin. For example, He forgave Mary Magdalen, the paralytic, and the good thief. In curing the paralytic, He said, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins -then he said to the paralytic - "Arise, take up thy pallet and go to thy house" (Matt. 9:6).

3. Christ *gave to His Apostles and disciples* and their successors power to forgive sins. He said: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23).

This power to forgive sins was not given to the Apostles alone, since men of later ages would need forgiveness as much as men of Apostolic times. The power, therefore, must also remain in the successors of the Apostles.

4. It is true, as the enemies of the Church assert, that man cannot forgive sins. Man, by his own individual power, can never forgive the smallest sin. But he can forgive all sins, with the power and authority God gave him, as minister of God, *acting in God's place*. Or is God limited because man is sinful? "These things I write to you in order that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just" (1 John 2:1).

From the very beginning the Church has exercised this power, through the sacraments of Penance and Baptism, and even through Extreme Unction.

**How may sins be remitted or forgiven?** --Sins may be remitted or forgiven by various means, according to the kind and gravity of the sin: by Baptism, by Penance, and by good works.

1. *Original sin* is remitted through Baptism. When we are baptized, we become children of God, and heirs of heaven.

None but children of God, the baptized, can have a pass to God's eternal home.

2. *Actual sin* is remitted by Baptism, by Penance, by Extreme Unction, and by good works. Such good works are: prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds.

Good works cannot remit grave or mortal sin; they can only dispose a person to the state of mind which leads him to the Sacrament of Penance.

3. The guilt of forgiven sins *never returns*. Once forgiven, a sin is forgiven forever. If after our sins have been forgiven we commit a new sin, or sins like the ones already forgiven, we are guilty of new sins.

A man tells five lies. He repents and confessing his sin, obtains forgiveness. After a month he tells five lies again. He is guilty of having told only five lies, not ten.

**What is vice?** --Vice is a habit of sin formed by repeated acts of sin.

1. One who makes a *practice* of stealing has the vice of theft. One who *habitually* drinks to intoxication has the vice of drunkenness. One who *frequently* sins against chastity has the vice of impurity.

If one commits robbery and ever after avoids that sin, he has committed the mortal sin of robbery, but he has no vice. Similarly one may be completely intoxicated once, but if he resolves never again to drink, and sticks to his resolution, he has no vice.

2. A vice is *easily acquired*. This is one reason why we must be very careful not to commit sin. If we should be so unhappy as to fall into sin, we must at once cut off the possibility of forming vice by contrition, penance, and a resolution not to sin again.

After the first fall, one more readily yields to the next temptation. Each yielding *weakens the will* for the next. Thus step by step one who starts a sin will soon find himself the slave of a vicious habit. "*He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little*" (Ecclus 19:1).

3. A vice is easy to break off in the *beginning*, difficult to break when fully formed, but always capable of being overcome by a resolute will with God's grace.

It is easy enough to uproot a very young tree. But when it has grown into a mighty tree, it becomes extremely difficult. The vice having been firmly formed, it becomes a necessity and is impossible to break without extraordinary grace. This impossibility often leads many vicious persons to despair and to final impenitence. But God can do all things. One therefore who has contracted a habit of sin must have recourse to God, who will strengthen him, so that he can conquer his vice, by patient acts of virtue and a constant exertion of the will.

**Can all sins be forgiven?** --Yes, all sins, however great, can be forgiven, through the infinite merits of Christ, Who is God.

The repentant sinner is told in Scripture: "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow" (Is. 1:17)

1. God is always ready to forgive our sins, no matter how great or how many they are, if we are truly sorry for them. No actual sin can be forgiven without *sorrow* and *repentance* on the part of the sinner.

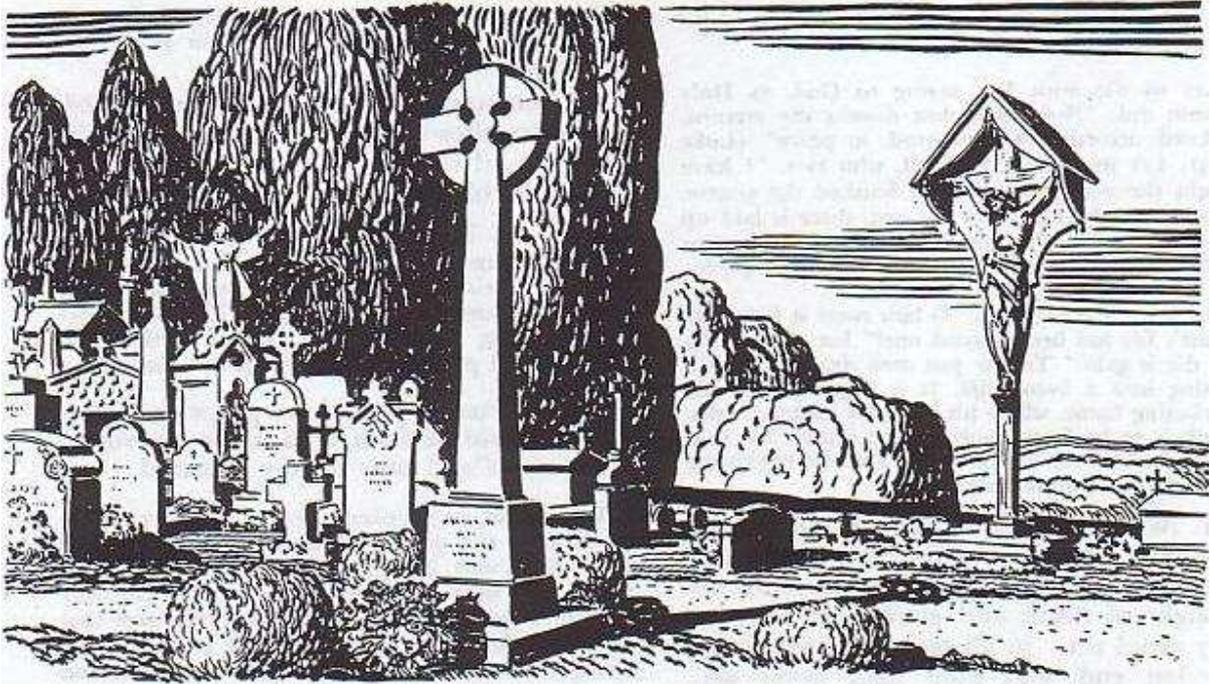
Our Lord said: "I say to you that, even so, there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance" (Luke 15:7).

2. The sin against the Holy Ghost which Christ warned us would not be forgiven in heaven or on earth is *persistent impenitence*, the sin of one who rejects conversion and dies in mortal sin. One guilty of this sin can never obtain forgiveness of God, because at the hour of death he continues to thrust God away from him.

A man mortally wounded cannot have any hope of cure if he not only refuses to listen to his doctors, but shuts his mouth against all medicines, and kicks away all medical instruments and help. Even Judas would have been pardoned if he had asked for forgiveness and made a sincere act of contrition before his death.

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## 76. Death



*Respect for the dead requires that cemeteries be properly kept. We should remember that the bodies of the buried will one day rise again to join immortal souls and live forever with God. Respect for the dead would also advise us to give up the recent fad of dolling up corpses, painting their faces to make them seem alive, as if they were prepared for some flighty show.*

**What happens at death?** --At death the soul is separated from the body.

1. The soul is judged by God, and rewarded with heaven, punished with hell, or sent for a time to be cleansed in purgatory. The body begins to corrupt and returns to the dust from which it came.

St. Peter spoke of the body as a tabernacle for the soul: "the putting off of my tabernacle is at hand" (2 Pet. 1:14). At death, "the dust returns to its earth, from whence it came, and the spirit returns to God, Who gave it" (Eccles. 12:7). The only exceptions have been the bodies of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, which rose to join their souls, and are now in heaven.

2. All men *must die*, because death is a consequence of original sin. "Therefore as through one man sin entered into this world and through sin death, and thus death has passed into all men" (Rom. 5: 12) .

By their sin our first parents lost the immortality of the body, for God condemned them to die. "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:19). Even Jesus Christ and His Mother submitted to death.

3. *No one knows* when, where, or how he will die. All we know is that we shall die, and that when our hour strikes, nobody can take our place.

God has mercifully hidden from us the hour of our death. If we knew when we should die, we might be overcome by fear when the moment approached. Some, besides, might lead sinful lives in the hope of repenting just before their death.

4. We must therefore always be *ready* to die. Death comes "as a thief in the night", when we least expect it. We must live as if every moment were the last of life, always ready to appear before our Divine judge.

"Therefore you must also be ready, because at an hour that you do not expect, the Son of Man will come" (Matt. 24:44).

**How should we prepare for death?** --We should prepare for death by leading a good life, avoiding sin, and doing good.

1. We must keep in God's grace and love, so that when the Angel of Death comes, we may *welcome him* as one who takes us home to see the face of our loving Father. The good do not fear death.

Let us die with joy, saying to God, as Holy Simeon did: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace" (Luke 2:29). Let us imitate St. Paul, who says, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will give to me in that day" (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

St. Augustine exclaims: "O how sweet it is to die, if one's life has been a good one!" For such as he, "to die is gain." To the just man death is only a passing into a *better life*. It is a journey to his everlasting home, where his heavenly Father dwells. Death is to be feared only by the sinner, for it is the end of his earthly pleasures, and the beginning of his eternal punishment.

2. As a man lives, so he dies. Holy Scripture says: "*As the tree falls, the trunk will lie*" (Eccl. 11:3). We should often recall the thought of death and eternity so that we may avoid sin. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclus. 7:40). Those who put off reforming their lives in the hope of a death-bed repentance are like a traveler who starts packing when the train whistles for departure.

Let us picture the death of a just man, one who all his life has done good and avoided evil. He has often seen people taken away suddenly, when they least expected it, and made up his mind to be always ready to die and face his judge. He has hoped he would, at the end of his life, die with the Last Sacraments, a priest, and his family by his side. But his obligations have taken him into the wilderness; there he is dying, with only the guide at his side. But he is at peace, and a smile is on his lips, for he is ready to die: being

always in the state of grace, he is ready to meet his judge anywhere, any time. He knows the judge will smile, too, and welcome him as a good son, a friend.

3. We should also have our *temporal affairs* in order when we die. This is why adults should make a *will* in order that no confusion may arise as to the disposition of their property after their death. A sudden death is not to be desired, for then we may not be able to put in order our spiritual and temporal affairs.

This is why in the Litanies we pray: "From a sudden and unprovided death, deliver us, O Lord!"

**What are cemeteries?** --Cemeteries are the burial grounds for the dead.

1. The word "cemetery" comes from the Greek, and means *sleeping-place*; there the bodies of the dead sleep till Judgment Day.

It is the custom to engrave the letters R. I. P. (*Requiescat in pace*. May he rest in peace) on headstones.

2. Cemeteries are solemnly consecrated. Catholics should be buried in a Catholic cemetery, if there is one; at least the grave should be blessed.

Some day the bodies of the just will rise in glory, and unite with their souls in heaven; is it befitting their high destiny to bury them like animals in unconsecrated ground? The bodies are buried facing the east, as a symbol of the hope the deceased placed in Christ, Light of the soul.

3. Cemeteries should be properly kept. They should be such as to invite everyone to go there and pray for the departed.

We should go regularly to the cemetery to see to it that the graves of our beloved dead are clean and well kept, and to pray for them. If when they were alive we liked to visit them, why shouldn't we continue to visit them even now that they are dead? Such visits would attest to our living faith in the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. It is true the souls of the dead are not in their graves, but the bodies there will some day be inhabited again by the souls. Our prayers in the presence of the bodies are the proof of our love for our dear dead.

4. Apostates, heretics, schismatics, the excommunicated, suicides, duellists, Masons, and public sinners, are not permitted to be buried in a consecrated Catholic cemetery.

The refusal of the Church to give Christian burial to her bad children does not mean that she sentences them to damnation: judgment of the dead is in the hands of God. It is merely a *public expression* of her condemnation of sin, and a disciplinary measure so that her other children may avoid falling into such sins. Non-Catholics are not permitted burial in a Catholic cemetery, because since they did not belong to the Church during life,

there is no reason for including them in the burial grounds for members of the Church, at death.

5. The Church forbids *cremation* not because it is in itself wrong or contrary to divine Law, but because it is in opposition to the Jewish and Christian tradition. In cases of great pestilences, when it is impossible to bury the dead in time to prevent wider spread, the Church permits cremation.

Cremation has been advocated by anti-Christians with the express purpose of destroying belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. The Fathers of the Church defended the custom of burial, by reason of the resurrection of the body, and the respect due it as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The day may come when the Church may grant permission for cremation.

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## 77. Particular Judgment



Complete justice will not be done in this life, but in the next. Then everything will be weighed in the balance of God's justice, and punished or rewarded. If on earth we have obeyed the commandments of God and of the Church we shall be given an eternal reward in heaven (1). If we have obeyed all the commandments, but die with unforgiven venial sin, or without having satisfied for forgiven mortal sin, we shall be sent to purgatory (2). Alas for us if we die with even one mortal sin! For then we shall be banished from the sight of God and suffer torments in hell forever (3).

**What is the judgment called which will be passed on each one of us immediately after death?** --The judgment which will be passed on each one of us immediately after death is called the particular judgment.

The existence of the particular judgment can be deduced from the parable of Dives and Lazarus; a soul is shown rewarded immediately after death.

1. As soon as each soul leaves the body at death it undergoes the Particular judgment, at which its eternal destiny is decided. "We must all be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ." "It is appointed unto men to die once, but after this comes the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "Every one of us will render an account for himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Let us remember that even while the relatives gather around the bed of the departed one, even while his body is still warm, the particular judgment is gone through and finished; the judgment is passed, and the soul gone to his reward or punishment. If we remember this, we shall be more fervent in praying for the dead, in helping others die a happy death, so that without fear they may meet God at the judgment.

2. Jesus Christ is the **Judge** at the Particular Judgment. Before Him each soul must stand. The soul will stand in the awesome presence of God the Son, to **give an account** of its whole life: of every thought, word, act, and omission.

"Neither does the Father judge any man, but all judgment he has given to the Son" (John 5:22).

3. A man's whole life will be spread before him like a great picture. He will remember everything, although he might have forgotten much at the moment of death. How he will wish then that he had done only good! We are not to suppose that the soul will go to heaven before Christ to be judged. God enlightens each soul in such a manner that it fully knows Christ has passed a true judgment on it.

"Of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). The judgment will embrace even the good which has been neglected: a strict account will have to be rendered of the use we made of the talents and graces given to us. Even good actions badly performed will come under scrutiny, careless communions, hasty confessions, etc. Only then shall we know the exactness with which God sees and measures every act, word, and even intention in our deepest thought.

4. The good and the evil that the soul has done will be weighed in the balance of God's justice. Then the sentence will be passed by Jesus Christ alone, without the intervention of witnesses. This sentence is final and will never be reversed. The soul will learn the sentence, the reasons for it, and its absolute justice.

"But of every one to whom much has been given, much will be required; and of him to whom they have entrusted much, they will demand the more" (Luke 12:48).

**What are the rewards or punishments appointed for men after the particular judgment?** --The rewards or punishments appointed for men after the particular judgment are heaven, purgatory, or hell.

"With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you" (Matt. 7:2). As we have loved God and our fellow-men during life, so we shall be given the proper reward or punishment.

1. He who dies in his *baptismal innocence*, or after having fully satisfied for all the sins he committed, will be sent at once to **heaven**.

The just will enter into everlasting life (Matt. 25:46). Only those souls enter heaven who are free from all sin, and from the penalty due to sins which have been forgiven. Nothing defiled can enter heaven (Apoc. 21:27).

2. He who dies in the state of grace, but is in venial sin, or has not fully atoned for the temporal punishment due his forgiven sins, will be sent for a time to *purgatory*.

The souls in purgatory are saints, because they are sure of going to heaven. In purgatory they cannot commit any more sin, not even the slightest. They only long for God.

3. He who dies in *mortal sin*, even if only with one single mortal sin, will be sent at once to *hell*.

For the hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm: and as a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind: and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by" (Wis. 5:15). By mortal sin a man cuts himself off from God. It is really *he himself that sends himself to hell*. God's desire would be to see all His creatures with Him in heaven.

**How should we prepare for the judgment?** --We should prepare for the judgment by being most careful to lead a good life and die a happy death.

1. We should do *all the good* we can, so that God may forgive the evil we may do. We should not only obey carefully all the Commandments of God and the Church, but do good works in prayer and alms-deeds, practicing charity for the love of God.

How can we be careless about a matter of such importance, when we are absolutely certain of being judged by God! "For what shall I do, when God shall rise to judge?" (Job 31:14).

2. We should do voluntary works of penance, for love of God, in expiation of any sins we may have the misfortune to commit.

The "**Imitation of Christ**" says on this topic: "In all things look to the end, and how thou wilt stand before the strict Judge, from Whom there is nothing hid; Who takes no bribes, and receives no excuses, but will judge that which is just. ... Be, therefore, now solicitous for thy sins, that in the day of judgment thou mayest be in security with the blessed. ... Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence, and the proud fear on every side. Then it will appear that he was wise in this world, who for Christ's sake learned to be a fool and despised. ... Then shall the flesh that was afflicted exult more than if it had always fared in delights. ... Then a pure and good conscience shall bring more joy than learned philosophy. Then shall the contempt of riches far outweigh all treasures of the children of earth. ... Learn to suffer now in little things, that thou mayest be delivered from more grievous sufferings. ... All is vanity except to love and serve God alone" (*Bk. I, chap. 24*).

3. We should never go to sleep without being *prepared* never to awake on earth again, but in the presence of our judge.

Let us examine our conscience every day, make acts of contrition for our sins, confess them, and resolve to avoid them in the future.

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## 78. Existence of Purgatory



*Both reason and faith tell us that there is a middle ground of expiation, where the soul is cleansed from all stain of sin before it can enter the glory of heaven. "There shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Apoc. 21:27). Christ said, "Amen, I say to thee, thou will not come out from it until thou hast paid the last penny" (Matt. 5:26). Even persons who deny the existence of purgatory instinctively pray for their loved ones who have died. This would be great inconsistency if their reason did not tell them that their prayers would do the dead good. Prayers are useless for those in heaven or hell.*

**What is purgatory?** --Purgatory is a place of temporary punishment for those who die in the state of grace, but are guilty of venial sin, or have not fully satisfied for the temporal punishment due to their sins.

1. Purgatory is *a middle state* where souls destined for heaven are detained and purified. Souls in purgatory *cannot help themselves*, for their time for meriting is past. But they can be helped by the faithful on earth, by prayers and other good works.

In some places, at eight o'clock at night, the church bells sound, to admonish the faithful to pray for the souls in purgatory. This hour is in commemoration of Christ's prayer in the garden. We should then kneel and pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and the *Requiem aeternam*: "Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them," etc.

2. Belief in the utility of *praying for the dead* automatically includes belief in the existence of purgatory. If there were no purgatory, it would be useless to pray for the dead, because saints in heaven need no help, and those in hell are beyond aid.

And we can be sure there will be no more purgatory after the General judgment; because the reason for its existence will have passed.

3. Purgatory is a place of *temporary punishment* for those who have died in venial sin, or who have not fully satisfied God's justice for mortal sins already forgiven.
  - a. A boy steals an apple from a stall in the market; this is a venial sin punishable in purgatory. Some argue that God is a good God, and will not punish such slight sins with the pains of purgatory. We must remember, nevertheless, that the judgments of God are different from those of men, as His holiness is far above human holiness.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts." Let us reverence God's holiness and justice, as we have loving confidence in His mercy.

- b. A man commits a cruel murder. This is a mortal sin which, unrepented and unconfessed, will send him to hell.

The man repents, confesses, and obtains absolution for his sin; the guilt therefore is removed. But justice requires that he make up for the evil he has done; this atonement takes place in purgatory, unless he makes full satisfaction before death.

4. The doctrine of purgatory is eminently consoling to the human heart. It consoles us when our loved ones die. Purgatory is a bond of union making us realize that death is *not an eternal separation* for the just, but only a loss of their bodily presence.

Purgatory gives us an assurance that we are still in touch with our beloved dead. We are consoled by the knowledge that we can still help them with prayer, as in life we so helped them.

**Is the doctrine of the existence of purgatory reasonable?** --The doctrine of the existence of Purgatory is not only reasonable, but its negation is eminently contrary to reason; it is taught in Holy Scripture, and has been taught by the Church from the very beginning.

1. The doctrine of a middle state of purgation is taught *in the Old Testament*, and was firmly believed in by the Hebrews.

After a battle, Judas Machabeus ordered prayers and sacrifices offered up for his slain comrades. "And making a gathering, he sent twelve drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning

the resurrection. For, if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Mach. 12:43-46).

2. When *Our Lord* came on earth, He purified the Jewish Church of all those human changes that with the years had crept into its usages and beliefs. But He never reproved anyone for belief in a middle state of purgation, or prayers for the dead.

On the contrary, Christ more than once implied the existence of purgatory. He said "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this world, or in the world to come" (Matt. 12:32). When Our Lord said that a sin will not be forgiven in the next life, He left us to conclude that some sins will be thus forgiven. But in the next life, sins cannot be forgiven in heaven: "There shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Apoc. 21:27). Neither can sins be forgiven in hell, for out of hell there is no redemption. They must therefore be forgiven in a middle state, Purgatory.

3. Belief in the existence of Purgatory is a continuous and solemn teaching of *the Church*. From St. Paul, the early Fathers, the Doctors of the Church, on through the ages, the Church has taught the existence of Purgatory, and the correlated doctrine of the usefulness of praying for the dead.

From the beginning Christians prayed for the dead at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The oldest books used at Mass contain prayers for the dead.

The doctrine of Purgatory was given solemn definition by the Council of Trent as follows: "There is a purgatory, and the souls there detained are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the most acceptable, sacrifice of the altar."

This dogmatic definition contains three points of faith that all Catholics are compelled to believe: (a) that there is a purgatory; (b) that after death souls suffer there for their sins; (c) that the living can extend assistance to such souls.

4. *Reason* demands belief in the existence of purgatory. If a man dies with some slight stain on his soul, a sin of impatience, or an idle word, is he fit to enter heaven? God's sanctity forbids it: "There shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Apoc. 21:27) . But must such a soul be consigned to hell? God's mercy and justice forbid it.

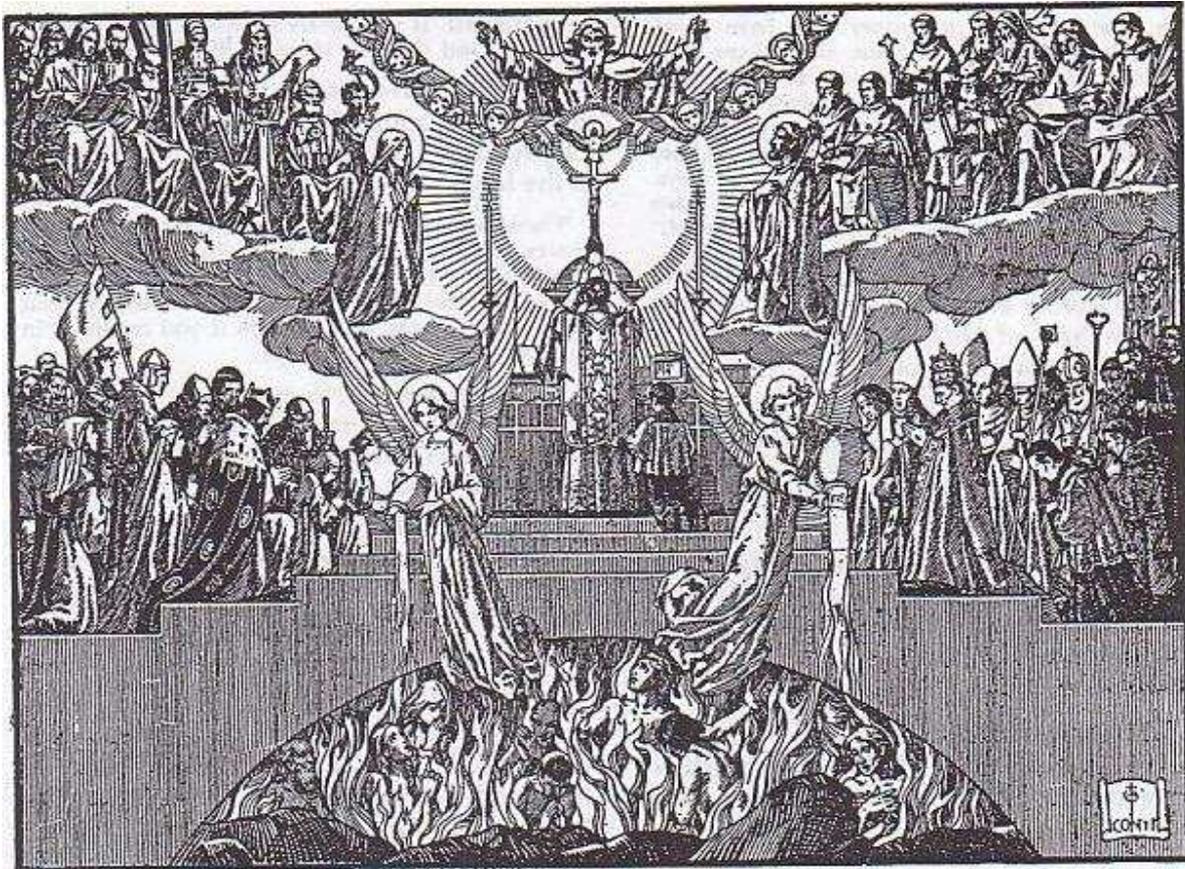
Therefore reason concludes the existence of a middle and temporary state of expiation, where the soul is cleansed from all stain of sin before it can be admitted into the perfect holiness and bliss of heaven. "Amen, I say to thee, thou wilt not come out from it until thou hast paid the last penny" (Matt. 5:26).

5. Among nearly all peoples there has persisted a belief that souls must undergo some sort of purification after death. This would point to the doctrine of purgatory.

The Greek story of Prometheus implies a place of purgation. The Egyptians and others believed in the transmigration of souls. Legends and myths of all nations, as well as burial customs, indicate belief in the possibility of helping the dead.

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## 79. Souls in Purgatory



*We should be generous in helping the poor souls in purgatory, who long for God. The best thing we can do for them is to have Masses offered for them. The Church puts no limit to the time during which we may pray or offer Masses for the suffering souls in purgatory. If we cannot have a Mass said, we should at least hear Masses for our dear departed. If God so willed, a single Mass could release all the souls in purgatory. We should offer Masses especially on All Souls' Day and on the anniversaries of death of our relatives and friends.*

**What pains do the souls in purgatory suffer?** --The souls in purgatory suffer from a great longing to be united to God, and from other great pains:

1. Their *chief pain* is the deprivation of the Beatific Vision, the vision of God in the glory of heaven. This temporary deprivation is a most severe punishment, because the poor souls already have a full knowledge of what they are missing.

"As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God! my soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (Ps. 41:2,3).

2. The general tradition of the Church is that they also *suffer* acutely in other ways.

St. Augustine believes that the sufferings of the poor souls are greater than the sufferings of all the martyrs. St. Thomas believes the least pain there is greater than the greatest on earth.

3. The *greatness* and the *duration* of a soul's sufferings in purgatory vary according to the gravity of the sins committed. One who has lived a long life of sin, but is saved from hell only by a deathbed repentance, will stay in the purging fires of purgatory longer, and suffer there more intensely than a child, who has committed only the venial sins of an ordinary child.

That some souls stay long in purgatory is implied by the fact that the Church puts no limit to the offering of Masses for the dead; some foundations have been going on for centuries, offered for the repose of certain souls. St. Augustine believes that those stay longest in purgatory who have loved the goods of earth more. Some saints have held that certain holy souls in purgatory suffer no pain except their exclusion from the vision of God. Practically all are agreed that in purgatory the souls suffer most in those things in which they sinned most; as the "Imitation of Christ" says: "In what things a man hath most sinned, in those things shall he be most grievously tormented."

4. The poor souls, however, have much *to console* them. They are certain of salvation and the love of God. They are free from temptation: they cannot commit the slightest sin, even of impatience.

They have no worry, anxiety, or distress of mind, for they are sure of deliverance. They are comforted by the prayers of the angels and saints, and of the people on earth.

**Will all the souls in purgatory go to heaven?** --All the souls in purgatory will go to heaven some day; they will stay in purgatory only as long as they have not atoned for all their sins.

1. The poor souls *cannot help themselves*, for their time for meriting was ended at their death. They cannot therefore merit anything to satisfy for their sins.

This is why we who can still merit by our good works should give some of them as suffrage for the poor souls, so that they may soon be delivered from their prison. We have the special obligation of helping with our prayers and sacrifices the Souls of our dead relatives, friends, and benefactors.

2. Although they cannot merit anything for themselves, the poor souls *intercede* for us with their prayers to God.

Thus if we help them they repay us by their intercession. No one who has a devotion to the holy souls in purgatory has ever asked for their intercession in vain.

**In what ways can we help the poor souls in purgatory?** --We can help the poor souls in purgatory by Masses, by prayers, and by other good works.

1. *Masses.* The Holy Sacrifice is the greatest help we can offer, because its effect depends on itself, and not on the piety of the priest who offers it. Whenever possible, *Gregorian Masses* should be offered; these consist of thirty Masses celebrated on consecutive days for some deceased person.

If we cannot have a Mass said, we should at least hear Mass for our dear departed. A Mass has infinite merit, for it is the sacrifice of Our Lord Himself. It will surely avail our dead to offer for them God the Son Himself in Holy Mass.

2. *Prayers.* We should pray with devotion for the poor souls. God does not regard the length of the prayer or the words so much as the love in the heart of the one who prays.

There are special prayers enriched with indulgences, applicable to the souls in purgatory. We should also receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist for the poor souls. "Know ye that the Lord will hear your prayers if you continue in perseverance" (Judith 4:11).

3. *Alms-giving.* No pompous funeral or profusion of flowers is of any avail for the poor souls in purgatory. As St. John Chrysostom says, "Not by weeping, but by prayer and almsgiving are the dead relieved."

It is better to give to charity the money spent on idle and worldly show, which cannot help the poor souls. Instead of sending costly wreaths to the family of a dead friend, it is an excellent custom instead to have Masses offered for his soul.

*The Heroic Act.* By this Act a person surrenders, in behalf of the souls in purgatory, all the satisfaction made to God by his good works, including whatever satisfaction may be offered for him by others during his life and after.

The Heroic Act is enriched with precious favors. One who makes the Act may gain a plenary indulgence applicable only to the dead: (1) on any day that he receives Holy Communion, if he has made his confession, visited a church or public oratory, and prayed for the intentions of the Holy Father; (2) on any Monday-or, if impediment arises, on the following Sunday-if he attend Mass in supplication for the faithful departed, visit a church or public oratory, and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

It is an error to suppose that one who gives up his merits, or offers prayers and good works for the poor souls, thereby loses something for himself. Prayer confers a blessing not only on those prayed for, but also on him who prays. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

4. We should not, however, rely too much on the prayers and sacrifices that our relatives may offer for us after our death. Even granting that they will remember us often and fervently in prayers, it is nevertheless true that works offered in suffrage for souls avail them only to a limited extent.

God gives more value to little voluntary penance done here on earth than to disciplines offered for that soul after death. As a Saint aptly said, "One Mass devoutly heard during life is worth more than a great sum left for the celebration of a hundred Masses after death."

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