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The English word liturgy comes from the Greek word leitourgia, which originally meant any civic work or service on behalf of the State. Christians adopted the word, giving it a religious significance, to denote the service and official worship offered to God by the Church. In early times, to be present at the liturgy meant to participate in the Eucharistic assembly of the faithful. The Eastern Orthodox Churches still speak of the Liturgy where we Catholics speak of the Mass; for we extend the term liturgy to other liturgical rites such as the administration of any of the sacraments and to the prescribed recitation of the Breviary or Divine Office in the name of the Church. Other religious practices in common, such as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Stations of the Cross, or services including scripture readings, the recitation of the rosary or of other prayers, and the singing of hymns, although sanctioned but not prescribed by the Church officially, are regarded as para-liturgical or extra-liturgical rites.

[397. Why did the Vatican Council deal with the Liturgy first?](#)

The Preparatory Commission had suggested many topics for discussion without indicating any particular order in which they should be taken. In the published Documents of the Council, those on the Church and on Divine Revelation rank first and second respectively, that on the Liturgy being third. But the preparatory material on the Liturgy was so complete while that on other subjects seemed to require more time that it seemed better to deal with the Liturgy first. Pope Paul VI later declared this to be providential since the Church exists primarily to promote the worship of God and the Liturgy is of first importance in her life, bringing out the meaning of total dedication to Him, not only among the faithful when present at it, but in all their everyday activities. The document was, therefore, an excellent preparation for later conciliar deliberations on renewal of the Church in all phases of her nature and of her impact upon the world today in which she has to exercise her mission.

[398. Following the Council's decisions, I and others find it disconcerting to have to adapt ourselves to the "new look" of the Mass.](#)

It would be surprising were it otherwise. A lifetime's mentality is not changed in a moment, above all in matters of worship and prayer which touched us so deeply. We older ones would have echoed Cardinal Newman's moving words: "Nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass, said as it is among us." But now stillness and silent reverence seem to have given way to bodily activities and vocal disturbances, and the Mass to have lost something of its dignity and awe-inspiring mysticism. I say that it seems like that; for the Mass is still essentially what it was; as Newman put it: "the greatest action that can be on earth . . . of consecration and of sacrifice." We must remember that in the liturgical rites of the Church there are unchangeable elements, but also others which are alterable according to their suitability or unsuitability in different ages. In the past lengthy additions had been made at different times to the ceremonies surrounding the Eucharist, while there remained vestiges of features which were given prominence in former periods but had since been pruned away almost out of recognition. The changes now made in no way imply that up till now all was wrong. They seek only to clarify and make more intelligible to our own generation what the Church's liturgical worship really means. Again, as regards the Mass, many who were present unthinkingly and passively before are now more aware of what is happening and more active participants in the great event; and we older ones must remember that the newer generation will not have our difficulties. What is new to us will not be new to them, but what they have always known. That thought, not to speak of accepting God's present will for ourselves, should help us to forego our own preferences in this matter and adapt ourselves as best we can to the new ways put before us.

[399. For many years in your weekly radio session you stood uncompromisingly for the Catholic Church as it was before the Second Vatican Council came along in 1962.](#)

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"QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH" - Book Title

- About the Author
- Author's Introduction - Dr Rumble, MSC

Since I commenced my sessions in 1928, that meant for a period covering thirty-four years. During those years I undertook to answer questions on religion in general, whether from biblical, historical, scientific or psychological points of view: and the Catholic religion in particular, clearing up misunderstandings concerning it, explaining its teachings, practices and disciplinary laws current at the time of speaking, giving the reasons for them and solving the difficulties of inquirers in regard to them. Naturally, during the past six years since the Council began, the wide publicity given to its proceedings has resulted in many problems being put to me, especially in relation to positions I had formerly maintained.

400. Can you now accept without reservations much now put forward in the guise of "liturgical reform"?

Unreservedly I uphold the obligation, binding upon myself as well as upon all other Catholics, of accepting the constitutional authority of the Vatican Council in any changes it has prescribed. That has nothing to do with one's personal likes and dislikes in regard to any particular change. It would be impossible, in fact, to devise any set form of public worship for all which will at once fit in with the tastes and moods of each and every individual participating in it. Likes and dislikes vary with different individuals. One thing, however, must be noted here. Changes officially authorised by the bishops of given areas in accordance with principles laid down by the Council and with the approbation of the Holy See constitute an authentic liturgical reform. It would be tendentious to speak of those as "put forward under the guise of liturgical reform." Only unauthorised changes could deserve that description. But no Catholics are obliged to reconcile themselves to those. All have the right to protest against them to their respective bishops, should they occur.

401. What is the meaning of the "Eastward" position adopted by the celebrant of the Eucharist?

Technically, the expression was used to designate the celebrant's facing away from the people when offering the Eucharist. One seldom hears the term mentioned today. It's origin is of interest. As the Church spread Westwards throughout Europe, in the early ceremonies of baptism adult converts would face the West as they renounced the paganism they had inherited and then turn to face towards Jerusalem in the East, whence Christ the "Light of the World" had arisen, in order to consecrate themselves to Him. About the eighth century the custom arose of building churches in an East-West direction, with the sanctuary at the East end of the church, so that the priest at the altar and the people in the body of the church would all be facing East towards the Holy Land during the celebration of Mass. Apart from the building of churches in such a way ♦ a custom not at any time universally observed ♦ the symbolism of both priest and people facing God during the Eucharistic Sacrifice dates back to about the third century. In the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers, insisting that the Last Supper was a meal rather than a sacrifice, substituted tables in the body of the church for altars in the sanctuary, and ruled that Ministers at "the breaking of bread" or communion service must face the people. Reactions of Catholics against this innovation were intensified, not so much because of the practice itself, as by the reasons given for it.

402. Since the Vatican Council, Catholic priests themselves face the people during Mass.

That is in no way to the exclusion of the sacrificial idea of the Mass. It is to bring home to all present, as "the priestly People of God", their close association with the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. History tells us that in the early Church all present gathered round an altar-table. The Eucharist, regarded as the sacrificial act of the whole Church (represented by those present) was celebrated by the chief representative, the bishop, who faced the people. The New Testament speaks both of the "altar" (Heb., 13:10) and of the "table of the Lord" (1 Cor., 10:21). Among the early Christians the word "altar" referred to the offering of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and the "Lord's Table" to their participation in it by receiving Holy Communion. The idea of the "Eastward" position of the celebrant, which arose in the West, did not apply in the earliest communities of Christians who already lived in the East. In the West it was, of course, thought fitting that when the priest spoke to the people he should face them, as in Scripture readings, preaching, giving Communion and the various salutations and blessings; but that when he spoke for them both he and the people should face the same way, addressing themselves to the Father through Christ, our Lord and Saviour and Mediator, who offers Himself in the Eucharistic Sacrifice on behalf of all, priest and people alike. That third century symbolic custom is variable without any detriment to the doctrine of the Eucharist as both Sacrifice and Sacrament; and the Vatican Council's Decree on the Sacred Liturgy enjoins bishops according to their local conditions to attend to "the shape and construction of altars," and to

the "dignity and safety of the place chosen for the Eucharistic Tabernacle" wherein the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Real Presence is reserved in our churches.

403. In the new rite the priest, when giving Communion, instead of saying the prayer: "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your soul unto everlasting life. Amen", simply makes the statement: "The Body of Christ", the communicant having to reply "Amen" before receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

That is true. The earliest form known for the giving of Communion, as recorded by St. Hippolyte of Rome (170-236 A.D.), was a statement by the priest: "The Bread of Heaven in Christ Jesus," to which the recipient replied: "Amen." Later, the statement became simply: "The Body of Christ." This form was still current in Milan when the present Pope Paul VI was Cardinal Archbishop of that city; so he at least, as all the Catholics there, was used to it.

404. Is not "Amen" an answer to a prayer, meaning "So be it"?

The word "Amen" is Hebrew, and among the Jews could be used as a noun, or as an adverb, or as a verb. In the Apocalypse we find it used as a noun. So, in 3:14, we read: "Thus saith the Amen," referring to Christ in His glory as "the True and the Reliable One." In the gospels we often find our Lord using it as an adverbial introduction to a solemn statement: "Amen, amen, I say unto you," meaning "Truly" or "Most certainly." After a prayer or a statement we find it used as a verb. After a prayer it means; "So be it," or "May God grant it;" after a statement, as after the Apostles' Creed, it means "I agree," or "I believe all that." In the early Church the simple statement of the priest when giving Communion "The Body of Christ" was meant as a profession of faith that the Blessed Sacrament is indeed the Body of Christ; and great importance was attached to the reply "Amen" by the recipient as an act of faith, meaning: "I believe it," or "That is my faith also." No doubt, throughout the Western Church generally, the change to a prayer by the priest when distributing Holy Communion was made for good reasons; but in these days of widespread driftage from Christianity ♦ some have called ours a "post-Christian era" ♦ the Church has thought it better to revert to the earlier profession of faith. Those receiving Communion, therefore, should regard their "Amen", not as a prayer meaning "So be it" ♦ for by the Consecration of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is already definitely a fact ♦ but as an act of faith, a profession of belief in that fact; the priest declaring it by the words "The Body of Christ," the communicant proclaiming his firm conviction of the truth of it before actually receiving the Blessed Sacrament. That, then, should be our intention in saying "Amen" immediately before our Lord gives Himself to us in Holy Communion.

405. If some learned scholar, who had no knowledge of Christianity beyond what he found in the "Didache", were to attend our Eucharistic liturgy today, would he have any idea of what was taking place?

The "Didache," a Greek word meaning "Teaching," is an ancient document having as its full title: "The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles." The author of it is unknown, but scholars date it from between 90 and 150 A.D. and have no doubt about its authenticity. It refers only briefly to the Eucharist, saying in chapter fourteen: "On the Lord's Day assemble and break bread and give thanks, after confessing your sins that your sacrifice may be pure. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: In every place and time, offer unto Me a pure sacrifice; for a great King am I, saith the Lord, and my Name is wonderful among the Gentiles." (Malachi, 1:11). That is all that the "Didache" tells us. But an almost equally early and more detailed account of the Mass is to be found in chapters 66 and 67 of St. Justin Martyr's "First Apology," or "Defence of Christians," addressed to the Emperor Antoninus. This was written in 150 A.D., shortly after the "Didache". It declares the Eucharistic Rite to consist of Scripture readings, sermon, consecration of the eucharistic elements, communion, and prayers of thanksgiving. There is no reason for thinking that the main liturgical structure of the Mass as described by St. Justin Martyr was newly-invented at that time. It went back to the Apostles, the last of whom, St. John, had died only fifty years before St. Justin wrote his account of the Christians' liturgical rite. One whose first acquaintance with Christian worship was through a study of his early account would be well aware of what has taken place in the Mass as celebrated ever since throughout the centuries until and including our own days.

406. Did any Pope ever define that the Mass is valid only if said in Latin?

Never. No particular language was prescribed by Christ or the Apostles for liturgical use. Our Lord Himself, when instituting the Eucharist spoke in Aramaic, not in Latin. In apostolic times, even as the New Testament itself was written in Greek, the currently spoken language, so also that same language began to be

widely used in Christian worship. Very early, Latin versions of the Mass existed side by side with the Greek ones; and as Christianity followed the Roman conquests of Europe the Latin Mass became the accepted form of the rite throughout Western Christendom. In Eastern Christendom, however, many other languages were adopted and have remained in use to this day, such as Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic and others; and the Catholic Church has always recognised as valid the Liturgy or Mass celebrated in these languages.

407. Did not the 16th century Council of Trent forbid the use of the vernacular in the celebrating of Mass?

The Council of Trent, in 1562, decreed that all Eastern Rite Churches which had preserved unity with Rome should continue using their own languages in the Mass. As regards Western Christendom, the Council contented itself with saying that it was not advisable for the Mass to be celebrated everywhere in the vernacular, and condemned the teaching that it must be only in the vernacular. This was because the 16th century Protestant reformers denied the Mass as a Sacrifice offered to God and any distinct priesthood ordained for the celebration of it. The reformers said the only Christian ministry was that of preaching the word of God and that the Lord's Supper was but a communion service, itself addressed to the people and like all else must be in the vernacular. Since they regarded doing away with Latin as a means towards doing away with the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is not surprising that the Council of Trent should have regarded the preservation of Latin as a means of safeguarding the Mass as the Church's central sacrificial form of worship. The Council, however, did not say that Latin must always be used. It did no more than reject the contention that the vernacular only should be everywhere employed throughout Western Christendom.

408. After the Council of Trent, were there any later papal rulings that the people should not have prayer-books containing vernacular translations of the Mass?

There were several such disciplinary rulings, to off-set the Protestant reformers' assertions that the only ministry was one of preaching the Word of God, which left room only for the use of the vernacular. As a protective measure against their denial that the Mass was an objective sacrificial act of worship offered to God, the Popes decreed that the Mass itself at least must not be translated into the vernacular for general use in French, German, English and other European languages. When elected in 1877, Pope Leo XIII, regarding the religious situation in Europe as no longer fluid, Catholics and Protestants being finally settled in their respective positions, abolished ecclesiastical disciplinary laws till then thought necessary. After that, missals for the people were printed containing vernacular translations side by side with the Latin text used by the officiating priest.

409. As a Catholic I was taught that the celebration of Mass in Latin was a sign of the Church's unity.

Since the vast majority of Catholics belong to the Western or Latin Rite Church, it was. So, in 1947, Pope Pius XII said, in his Encyclical "Mediator Dei" on the Liturgy: "The use of the Latin language, as it prevails in the greater part of the Church, is a clear and beautiful sign of unity." I myself experienced that when returning by boat to Australia from Europe in 1926. At Sunday Mass on board, I preached a brief sermon in English, repeating it in French, and then in Italian. Even so, I did not reach all of the different nationalities present; but all felt at home with the Latin Mass, said as in their own countries. No one can deny that a uniform language for the Mass has its advantages, whatever may be its disadvantages. Pope Pius XII nevertheless, in his 1947 Encyclical, went on to say: "In many ceremonies, however, the use of the vernacular can be extremely valuable to the people; but only the Apostolic See can grant this." Sixteen years later, Pope Paul VI promulgated the Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Liturgy," which authorised extensive use of the vernacular in Catholic forms of liturgical worship.

410. In your book "Radio Replies", Vol. 1, speaking of the Latin Mass, you said it is not necessary for the people to follow the sense of the words used by the priest.

That first volume of my collected radio replies was published in 1934, over thirty years ago. But what I said then still holds good, in so far as the Mass is something "done" rather than something "said". When Cardinal Newman became a Catholic in 1845, missals containing English translations of the Mass were not available to the people. It was not until 1877 that Pope Leo XIII permitted those. Yet, in 1848, in his book "Loss and Gain," Cardinal Newman wrote of the Latin Mass and the devotion of the people: "To me nothing is so consoling as the Mass, said as it is among us. It is not a mere form of words. It is a great action ♦ the greatest action

that can be on earth. Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends. They are instruments of consecration, of sacrifice. We, all around, each in his place, with his own heart, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, with his own intentions, with his own prayers, watching what is going on, uniting in its consummation, take our part with God's priest ♦ out of these many minds rising one Eucharistic hymn, and the great action is the measure and the scope of it."

411. Does not the recent change to the vernacular undermine all the reasons you gave for using Latin in the Mass?

Not at all. The change was not from what was wrong to what is right, but from what was good to what is thought relatively better under conditions today. In April, 1966, after the Council had ended, Pope Paul VI insisted that Latin is still the official language of the Catholic Church, despite the new vernacular language. Not being commonly spoken, Latin is not subject to changes of meaning through popular usage. All official documents of the Church, whether doctrinal or legislative, are in Latin. At the Vatican Council of more than two thousand Catholic Bishops of different nationalities the question of substituting the vernacular for Latin in the Mass had itself to be discussed in Latin. The newly-revised rite for the Mass was drawn up and published in Latin, and to it all vernacular translations must conform. What the Second Vatican Council decided was that, while an abrupt change from Latin to the vernacular in the Liturgy at the time of the Protestant Reformation would have been unwise and liable to misinterpretation as approval of the position of the reformers who left the Church, it does not follow that what was inexpedient in the sixteenth century is not expedient in the twentieth century. Weighing advantages and disadvantages under present and very different circumstances, the Council decided that disadvantages were outweighed by the advantages of having the liturgical celebration of Mass and Sacraments adapted to the current languages and customs of different peoples throughout the world in their daily lives. Disadvantages, of course, are inevitable. A Catholic today, visiting a country the language of which he does not know, would not find the vernacular an advantage, however helpful it might be to local people. But he would be as aware as they themselves of what was being done, and would assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the dispositions described by Cardinal Newman, as in n.410 above.

412. Granted use of the vernacular, surely translations for public worship should be in the highest standards of English.

Literary tastes vary; and it was no small problem to provide an acceptable world-wide uniform English version of the Mass. Out of some 600 millions of Catholics in the world, over eighty millions are Englishspeaking; and the ideal would be that, wherever they might be, they would find the same official English translation in use. With this in mind, after the Vatican Council, the world's English-speaking Bishops set up an International Committee consisting of representatives of ten countries, with all their idiomatic differences of outlook. The ten countries, in alphabetical order, were Australia, Canada, England, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa and the United States of America. The road confronting the Committee was a difficult one. Some expressions conveyed, through local usages, entirely different meanings to, or awakened entirely different sentiments in representatives of various countries. On the whole, the resultant English version is as acceptable all round as one could reasonably expect it to be.

413. The Epistle at Mass is now called a "Lesson" or a "Reading", and we have to listen to it from a layman.

It was customary and convenient among us to speak simply of the Epistles and Gospels at Mass. Often, however, what we called the "Epistles" were passages from the Old Testament or from the Acts of the Apostles. In our own Catholic tradition there were books called "Lectionaries" containing lessons from Scripture to be read on different days. As for a layman reading lessons from Scripture at Mass, the Vatican Council in its "Constitution on the Liturgy," quoting St. Peter's words that the Christian people are "a royal priesthood" (I Pet., 2:9), called for the active participation of all the faithful in liturgical services, which "pertain to the whole body of the Church." There are functions which presuppose that the celebrant has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders; but that a member of the congregation should read a lesson from Scripture is a gesture associating both priest and people in the act of worship in which all are involved; and all present should appreciate it as such.

414. As regards music, do the new liturgical rules permit "folksinging" at Mass?

The Vatican Council's decree on "Liturgy," says, in n.116, that while Gregorian

chant is especially suitable, other kinds of sacred music are not excluded provided they accord with the spirit of the liturgy; that is, it must be music befitting divine worship. In n.120, the Council condemns music not "in accord with the dignity of the temple," or not "contributing to the edification of the faithful." We have had pressreports of eccentric behaviour at Mass and of the introduction of singing more appropriate to music-halls than to the atmosphere of reverence that should prevail in a church. These reports have come mainly from America, and they refer only to isolated instances. An opinion survey there among Catholics, involving over 40,000 interviews, found 89% opposed to such innovations with only 8% for them, and 3% undecided. There will always be an irresponsible minority ready to make concessions to the secular spirit of the age in order to appear "modern" or "with-it", as they say. The remedy for that is fidelity in a spirit of obedience to the provisions of the Council's Decree on the Liturgy ♦ a disciplinary willingness to be expected of every normally good Catholic.

415. Also, should hymns be introduced which, though beautiful in themselves, have until now been used only in Protestant churches?

I can only say that it is about time we borrowed some of their hymns, since they have borrowed so many of ours. The Anglican "English Hymnal" contains Catholic hymns written by St. Ambrose, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal Newman, G. K. Chesterton and others. There are no fewer than ten by Father Faber. In its preface, the "English Hymnal" rightly says that hymns representing the deepest Christian experience are our common heritage of devotion. Our own use of any good Christian hymns, no matter by whom written, puts into practice our Unity Secretariat's declaration that "Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments which are to be found among our separated brethren." There is surely no reason for disturbance over our acceptance of what "we should gladly acknowledge and esteem."

416. Did the Vatican Council make Sunday Mass-attendance voluntary instead of an obligation binding under pain of grave sin?

The Council made no change at all in that matter. Taking the law for granted, it stressed the importance of Sundays in the liturgical life of the Church and the right and the duty of all who have received the Sacrament of Baptism to participate in it. The law of the Church obliging attendance at Mass on Sundays remains binding in conscience; and there is no reason at all why the fulfilment of our conscientious duties should not also be a voluntary choice on our part. Every honest man not only feels an obligation in justice to pay his debts, but wants to do so.

417. Protestants feel that most Catholics go to Mass on Sundays only because they are bound under pain of sin to do so.

It is rash to judge the motives of others without asking them why they behave as they do. Your statement reminds me of an incident narrated by an Anglican clergyman named the Rev. Bede Frost. He was talking to one of his small congregation after a Sunday service and mentioned to her by contrast the number of Catholics ♦ he called them "Roman Catholics" ♦ who attended Mass so faithfully. "But," she said, "do they go because they are forced to do so or because they like going?" He replied: "If you realised that human nature is much the same in all people, you would not imagine that anyone could be 'forced' to go to church. These people, men and women alike, go from a sense of duty they owe to their Creator and like going for that very reason. They go because they recognise that among the duties their religion imposes upon them, this one of worship is paramount; no more to be neglected, to say the least . . . than paying the grocer what you owe him."

418. A good-living person who does not go to church is better than a hypocrite who goes to Mass without feeling like doing so at all.

Even if a Catholic did not feel like going to Mass, yet did violence to himself, rose above his feelings, and went to Mass from a sense of duty to God, he would not be a hypocrite. And even if a Catholic did attend Mass, not from any sense of duty to God, but solely from motives of hypocrisy, intending only to make other people think him better than he really was, the remedy surely would be, not to give up the good thing he was doing, attending Mass, but to rectify his wrong dispositions, banishing his motives of hypocrisy and substituting for them a genuine will to fulfil his duty to God regardless of what other people might think of him.

419. Did the Vatican Council have anything to say about image worship?

In its Constitution on the Liturgy, n.125, it said that "the practice of placing sacred images in churches for veneration by the faithful is to be firmly maintained." It

added the instruction that they should not be too numerous, nor placed in positions which over-emphasise devotion to them rather than to more essential aspects of liturgical worship. In other words, one must have a sense of due proportion in one's devotions.

420. Exodus 20:4-6 states that God forbids images of anything in heaven or earth to be made, and does not allow them to be worshipped.

Few passages of Scripture have been as misunderstood as that one, owing to a lack of knowledge of the Hebrew mentality and failure to allow for the different meanings of the word worship. The real sense of the commandment is that one must not make images in order to adore them as Gods. It forbids idolatry; that is all. For example, the very Book of Exodus itself, 25:18-20, commands the making of images of the two golden cherubs or angels to be placed above the ark of the covenant, facing one another. It was another matter, however, when the people of Israel made a golden calf to be their god and the object of idolatrous worship. Then they violated God's commandment and were condemned by Him (Exodus, 32:1-10). As for the word worship, some people on hearing it think only of adoration, forgetting that it has many meanings which do not imply adoration at all. When, in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer's marriage service, the bridegroom says to the bride: "With my body I thee worship," he certainly has no intention of offering her idolatrous adoration. Nor, when we address a magistrate in court as "Your Worship" do we intend that he is to be worshipped as God is to be worshipped. The word worship really comes from "worth-ship" and can have as many degrees of appreciation, respect or reverence as the degrees of "worth" we attach to persons, places or things. We need to use our common sense and also, perhaps, to have a sense of humour. No one takes seriously the boy who says of his girl: "I worship the ground she treads on;" or the girl who says: "I simply adore chocolates!" We must try to keep a balanced judgment in these matters.

421. Although Roman Catholics are taught to adore God alone, is there not a latent danger of idolatry even in relative degrees of devotion to religious images?

Such a danger may be imagined by others, but is in no way experienced by Catholics. Also, such an objection would be equally opposed to the Eastern Orthodox Churches as to the Catholic Church. An Anglican theologian, Dr. C. B. Moss, says it would equally be opposed to Anglicanism. In his book, "The Church of England and the Seventh Council," he shows that the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D. condemned the "Iconoclasts," or breakers of images or icons (the Greek term), and defined the right attitude to be adopted towards sacred images. He declares that the Church of England, together with the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, must accept the decisions of that eighth-century Council. Were his advice heeded, it would tend to break down to some extent the gap between the Church of England and the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches. In a book entitled "The Orthodox Church" a theologian of that Church, Sergius Bulgakov, writes, on p. 162: "In Protestantism, which perpetuates the tradition of the Iconoclasts, the veneration of icons (or images) is often held to be idolatry. This is because of a refusal to study the problem and to discover the true meaning of the icons."

422. I can understand icons or images in churches as reminders of Christ or of Mary or of the Saints; but not saying that sacred images are to be venerated.

It would be too little to regard them merely as reminders. They are sacred objects which do have a place in our worship in the broad sense of the word; and they are a means of grace to those who venerate them in a spirit of faith and piety. How they are a means of grace is explained differently by the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Vladimir Lossky, in his book "The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church," says that holy icons or images are mystically connected with those they represent and prolong their lives spiritually within the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, dispensing grace in their own way somewhat as the Sacraments do in another way. Catholic theologians explain things differently. The divinely-appointed visible and instrumental means of grace are the Sacraments. Other material helps, although not Sacraments, may be called by analogy "Sacramentals." But images do not make those they represent continue living among us, even mystically; nor are they direct sources of grace. Spiritual benefits gained by the faithful who venerate them are due to the intercessory power of the Church herself, a power made operative by her liturgical blessing of images, making them sacred religious objects. It should be evident that, according to both explanations, to the insight of faith sacred images have a religious value and influence which place them in another class altogether from merely civic paintings or statues of famous people having significance only in the natural or social order. To disfigure such merely secular representations would be vandalism, but not the

sacrilegious desecration through anti-religious motives which would attach to similar treatment of sacred images.

423. It seems that, in recent years, Rome has repudiated many of the Saints previously venerated by Catholics.

That cannot rightly be said. Rome's Vatican newspaper, "L'Osservatore Romano," justly complained that reports in the secular press of all countries had created "incredible misunderstandings" on this subject.

424. What did the Vatican Council decree concerning devotion to Saints?

Simply that it must continue. But it said that in the Calendar of the universal Church feast days should be listed for celebration in the whole Church only of those saints who were of universal significance. Different countries, dioceses, or Religious Orders could draw up their own particular liturgical calendars listing days dedicated to those canonised Saints who were of special interest to themselves. The purpose of the Council was to leave more room in the General Calendar for emphasising the basic features of the work of our redemption, all Sundays being regarded as commemorations of the Resurrection of Christ; and the three main seasons of the liturgical year, Advent-Christmas; Lent-Easter-Pentecost; and the rest of the year between Pentecost and Advent devoted to recalling all that the mystery of Christ's redemptive life and work means for us.

425. Newspapers reported that, in the revision of the Calendar, over two hundred Saints have been demoted.

The omission of feast-days in their honour from the General Calendar of the Church does not mean that they have been demoted. They remain Saints who have been canonised by the Church, as entitled as ever to our esteem and devotion. The celebration of some particular feast-days, however, instead of being world-wide, will be a matter of choice for particular places or communities according to their own special and local interests.

426. Why does Good Friday occur at different times each year instead of having a fixed date like Christmas, on 25th December?

Good Friday, the day of Christ's death, is calculated according to the Jewish Calendar which did not have the months we derive from the Gregorian Calendar. The Jews measured their year from the revolutions of the moon round the earth; we measure ours from the revolutions of the earth round the sun. Theirs is called a "Lunar Year;" ours a "Solar Year." As the times do not coincide, a given day in the Jewish year does not fall on the same date each year according to our Calendar. The Gospel of St. John, 19:14, tells us that Christ was crucified on the eve of the Jewish Feast of the Passover, which would have been Friday, the 14th day of the Jewish month called Nisan, the date being determined from the Paschal Full Moon. Owing to differences between the Calendars, 14 Nisan can fall anywhere between our 21 March and 25 April. So, according to our Calendar the crucifixion could have occurred either in March or April, as the case may be.

427. Is there any particular reason for having Holy Week and Easter movable each year?

The Church here adheres to the Jewish Calendar in order to stress the Christian conviction that in Christ the Old Testament promises of a Redeemer to come were fulfilled. Exodus 12:5 tells us that the Israelites, on the occasion of their redemption from Egypt, had to slay "a lamb without blemish." Christians see that lamb as a type of the true "Lamb of God" who died for our redemption on Calvary. In St. Luke's Gospel, 24:25-27, we read our Lord's words to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: "O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and so enter into His glory? And beginning with Moses and the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." However, despite the religious significance of linking Holy Week with the time of the celebration of the Passover by Jewish people according to their own Calendar, many civic authorities and some religious groups of Christians have advocated the assignment of Easter Sunday to a fixed date each year according to our Calendar, instead of its being retained as a movable feast. Admitting the force of the civic reasons for this proposal, the Vatican Council declared that the Catholic Church would not object to the change provided it met with the agreement of all other Christian Churches. The Council made it clear, then, that the matter was one, not for unilateral decision, but for all professing Christian Churches acting together.

428. Why do Christians attend church on Sunday rather than on Saturday,

the original Sabbath?

There is no formal decree in the New Testament imposing Sunday observance as an obligation. But the New Testament does tell us that from the beginning Christians met for their assemblies on the first day of the week, which was called "the Lord's Day," in honour of the resurrection of Christ. (Acts, 20:7; 1 Cor., 16:2; Rev., 1:10). This apostolic custom was later made an ecclesiastical law by various Councils of the Church in different localities until, after the conversion of Constantine in 312 A.D. and the end of the era of persecutions, this ecclesiastical law was extended to the universal Church.

429. The Apostles still attended the synagogues on the Jewish Sabbath. Acts 13:46; 17:2-3.

They did not do so as an acknowledgment that the Jewish Sabbath Law was still in force. It was because they knew the Jews would be assembled there and they went there to preach Christ and the New Testament dispensation to them. St. Paul, in Rom., 6:14, stressed that Christians are not under the Jewish Law, but under the new dispensation of grace. In 2 Cor., 3:7-11, he wrote that the Old Law "engraven upon stones" has been "made void" and "done away." He told the Colossians (2:16), "Let no man judge you . . . in respect of the sabbaths;" and he denounced those Galatians who held the Jewish laws to be still of obligation. (Gal., 4:10-10).

430. Where in the Bible did Christ authorise any change from Saturday to Sunday?

Let us begin with the Old Testament prediction of Jeremiah, the prophet: "Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers." Jer., 31:32. The New Testament, explaining these words, says: "In speaking of a new covenant, he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." Heb., 8:13. Now Christ, at the Last Supper, said: "This is my blood of the new covenant." Mk., 14:24. That new covenant was not according to the old covenant which had included the obligation of sabbath observance. That Christ prepared the way for abolishing that obligation is evident from the fact that, when the Pharisees accused His disciples of violating the Sabbath, he defended those disciples and went even further by saying: "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Matt., 12:8. He there asserted such complete authority over the Sabbath that He could abolish it altogether. Again, when a man asked what he must do to be saved, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. When the man asked which, Jesus gave him a list of the commandments, leaving out any reference to observing the Sabbath Day. You will find the list in Matt., 19:18-19; Mk., 10:19; and Lk., 18:20. Finally, Christ said to His Church, in the persons of the Apostles: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound in heaven also." Matt., 18:18. In other words, under the New Covenant, in this as in so much else, He left it to His Church to make any further arrangements for the guidance of the faithful ♦ arrangements for the making of which it was enough for the Apostles to say later on, as they did: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." Acts, 15:28. If a person rejects this authority of the Church and accepts only what is expressly taught in the New Testament itself on the subject, he could prove no obligation to observe any particular day at all.

431. As regards Sacraments, if God's grace is given only through the sacramental system, what becomes of the millions who have never heard of them?

The same principles apply here as in nn. 238-239 above. Our Lord can act independently of the Sacraments, granting necessary graces to people of goodwill who through no fault of their own have never heard of them. Such graces would, of course, derive from Christ, since He alone is the Saviour of mankind. As a matter of fact, Christ is really the "First Sacrament" ♦ a sacrament being defined as a divinely instituted visible means of invisible grace. We can even say that Christ, as God-incarnate, is the only Sacrament, the seven Sacraments He instituted being but extensions of His sacramental activities. Those seven Sacraments are of great value. They are in keeping with human nature, fit in with life, offer certainty of the reception of grace, give peace of mind and heart, and socially both express and strengthen our bond of unity in the visible Church. Still, Christ Himself is not tied to these seven Sacraments, although we who know of them are bound by them and to seek through them the graces they are intended to give. In a sense every grace, even when granted independently of the Sacraments, is "sacramental" in so far as it derives from Christ, the supreme "Sacrament" or visible means of grace, on whom all other Sacraments depend.

432. When did Christ institute the Sacrament of Baptism?

At the very beginning of His public ministry, when He Himself received baptism at the hands of John the Baptist (Matt., 3:13). This was not because He needed to be sanctified in such a way but, as the early Fathers expressed it, because it was fitting that He Himself should sanctify the waters which later were to be basic in the initial rite proper to the New Covenant He had come to establish. His action has been compared to the sun rising, not to get light, but to give it ☀ our own baptism enabling us to enter in to what He gives.

433. Did Christ Himself declare baptism to be necessary?

Undoubtedly. The concluding words of St. Matthew's Gospel: "Go, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt., 28:19) certainly embody an express command given by Christ. So St. Peter, in his first sermon on Pentecost Sunday, said to the deeply impressed bystanders: "Be baptised, every one of you . . . for the promise is to you and your children." Acts 2:38-39. The account continues that those baptised "were added to the Church." We must remember that man is not only an individual; he is also a social being. And the Church was established by Christ as a sacramental visible society to convey to her individual members invisible effects of grace and salvation. Baptism is, in keeping with this, an external sign or symbol, sharing the twofold character of the Church, making members of it and conveying to recipients necessary interior graces. When we read of God's miraculous provision for the baptising of St. Paul by the sending of Ananias (Acts 9:17-18), and also of the travelling Ethiopian official by the sending of Philip (Acts 8:26-38), we are surely left in no doubt about the necessity of baptism.

434. The words of Jesus to Nicodemus (Jn., 3:1-5) suggest the need of Spirit-baptism only; i.e., that of being born again into a life of grace higher than the kind of life obtained by one's natural birth.

Many have tried to exclude the visible, sacramental rite of waterbaptism as a necessary requirement. But that does violence to the very purpose of St. John's account. St. John presupposed, of course, already known references to water-baptism, as in St. Paul's words to Titus, written over thirty years earlier, that Christ "saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Tit., 3:5. Here, as the Congregationalist biblical scholar, Dr. C. H. Dodd, points out in his great work "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel," p. 311, John's intention was to link the ideas of water and spirit in baptism by Jesus, as contrasted with the water-only rite of John the Baptist, spoken of in 1:33. "The whole implication," writes Dr. C. H. Dodd, "is that the water-baptism of Jesus is also baptism in the Spirit." On p. 402, quoting Jn., 3:5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," he says that "water is the instrument of regeneration." There is no room for doubt that Jesus meant a new and visible initial rite of the New Covenant as contrasted with the Old Covenant.

435. Paul tells us, in Romans 5:1, that we are justified "by faith".

Those words were not intended to exclude the necessity of baptism. The Sacrament of Baptism and the Christian Faith so involve one another that the one presupposes the other. In Gal., 3:26, 27, therefore, St. Paul combines both, saying: "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ." St. Paul, certainly, would not agree that baptism is not necessary. We must allow for the fact that, taking it for granted that both baptism and faith are necessary, he at times ascribes the same effects to either of them, namely, our regeneration, our newness of life, and our becoming children of God.

436. Why did Paul think it enough to say: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"?

That is in 2 Cor., 5:17. St. Paul did not think it enough. He was dealing with only one aspect of the Christian life. In 1 Cor., 12:13, he had explained that we all become one body in Christ through baptism. In Rom., 6:4 also he explained that through baptism we rise to newness of life in the risen Christ. To Titus, 3:5, he wrote that we are saved by "the washing of regeneration," that is, by our baptismal re-birth which carries with it "the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

437. What is Catholic teaching about complete immersion in water as the method of baptising?

The Catholic Church holds that it is one valid method, but not the only valid

method. It does strikingly exemplify the Pauline symbolism of burial and resurrection with Christ. But pouring water upon the forehead of the candidate for baptism also symbolises the still deeper truth that one must be washed from sin and rendered a new creature by grace. For "the wages of sin is death, but the grace of God life everlasting in Christ Jesus." Rom., 6:23. The New Testament nowhere prescribes that baptism must be by immersion. John, the precursor of Christ, baptised by immersion in the River Jordan; but that was twenty miles away from Jerusalem. In Jerusalem itself it would have been practically impossible to immerse in water the 3,000 persons converted and baptised on the day of Pentecost. Nor should a dying patient in a hospital who asks for baptism be refused the Sacrament on the ground that he or she cannot be removed from the sick-bed in order to be totally immersed in a bathful of water. Only those who do not understand the necessity and essentials of baptism, and think of it as a kind of optional ordinance, would say "by immersion or not at all!"

438. Mark, 16:16, says: "He who believes and is baptised". Does not that exclude the baptism of infants who cannot be called "believers"?

To draw that conclusion would mean reading into the text more than it contains. The first preaching of the Gospel was necessarily addressed to adult listeners who were called upon to accept it. The question as to whether they could accept it on behalf of themselves and their children was not touched upon. That would arise later.

439. Where in the New Testament is infant baptism even suggested?

We must take total and not partial views. All life is larger than the individual who gets it. A child born into civil society is registered as a member of it, inheriting its opportunities of material and cultural development. Religiously, as Israel of old constituted the People of God, so the Christian Church is put before us as the new People of God. And as circumcision among the Jews admitted infants as participants in the Old Covenant, so St. Paul likens baptism to circumcision (Col., 2:11) as initiation into the New Covenant. Again, the Acts of the Apostles gives instances of entire households being received into the Church. Thus the jailer, converted by his prisoners Paul and Silas, "was baptised with all his family" (Acts 16:23). There is no reason to suppose that the family included no young children. Christian parents, in having their children baptised, at least exemplify the spirit of our Lord's words: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Matt., 19:14. St. Mark, 10:14, shows little children capable of receiving divine grace by the special blessing our Lord Himself bestowed upon them.

440. When Christ said that unless one be "born again" He surely meant unless one experiences a spiritual new birth.

It is true that infants cannot yet consciously believe and respond to the baptismal grace they have received. They will later. The Sacrament of Baptism confers grace, God acting and man responding. The grace can anticipate and prepare for the later response. In the meantime, the faith of the Community or of the Church suffices for the child who has become a living member of it by baptism. Also ♦ a fact often overlooked ♦ is that, as St. Paul puts it, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." Rom., 8:26. The Holy Spirit is responsible for much activity within our souls at all stages of our lives of which we are quite unconscious. An infant's first consciousness of "new birth" dawns when parents teach children their first simple prayers, religious experience accompanying them.

441. Some parents have children christened, but bring them up completely indifferent to all religion in practice.

That raises another question. It does not affect the principle of infant baptism; it concerns the wisdom of the indiscriminate baptising of all infants. No difficulty arises where there is reasonable assurance of the Christian upbringing of the child. The Church demands such assurances, and does not permit the baptism of infants where it is certain that they will be deprived of all Christian instruction and formation. In doubt, however, the benefit of the doubt must be given to the child whose future spiritual welfare is involved and who, in God's providence, may quite well make good despite all obstacles ♦ as has so often happened.

442. Is there any evidence of infant baptism having been practised in apostolic times?

There is clear evidence in the case of St. Polycarp, who died as a martyr in 167

A.D. He said that for eighty-six years he had been a Christian, which could mean only that he had been baptised as an infant, in about 80 A.D. when St. John the Apostle was still living. St. Irenaeus, who was born about 130 A.D., says that he knew Polycarp personally, and that Polycarp had been a disciple of St. John the Apostle. Polycarp was in fact a contemporary of St. John's for nearly twenty years. A critical study of Polycarp's case has recently been published by the Protestant scholar Joachim Jeremias in his book: "Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries" (1960). He says the conclusion is inevitable that Polycarp had been a Christian during the whole of his life from infancy; and on p. 52 of his book writes: "It is important that the Gospel of John says clearly and unmistakably that the new beginning described by Jesus as indispensable is given through baptism 'of water and of the Spirit'."

443. 1 read of one parish (in France) where infants are presented in the church as an initiation rite without baptism, the Sacrament being postponed till the age of ten, when the child after due instruction will know what it means.

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That we have not been told by Holy Scripture, nor has the Church any authoritative teaching concerning their fate. But this does not dispense us from complying with the positive precept of Christ by administering baptism as far as it is within our power to do so. Meantime, although we cannot hope to comprehend the mysteries of God's providence, we are free to think out for ourselves the implications of so much as He has revealed. The problem here consists in reconciling the declaration of Scripture that "God wills all men to be saved" (1 Tim., 2:4) ♦ which presupposes in adults a responsible choice ♦ and the absence of necessary baptism in the case of infants who are incapable of a responsible choice. If no one can go to heaven without baptism ♦ at least by a "baptism of desire" in the case of those who have attained to the use of reason ♦ and no one can go to hell except through personally committed and unrepented sins, theologians thought to solve the problem of infants dying without baptism by postulating an intermediate state for them called Limbo.

445. Could you explain to me the Catholic theory of Limbo?

The word comes from the Latin term "limbus", meaning a bordering- place. Limbo was chosen as a technical theological name for the hypothetical intermediate state for unbaptised infants which would involve their being neither in heaven nor in hell. Theologians depicted this state ♦ the Church has defined nothing on the subject ♦ as one of natural happiness, despite the absence of a gratuitous supernatural and heavenly happiness forfeited by original sin and normally made possible again by the Sacrament of Baptism. Theologians argued that the souls of unbaptised infants would be granted a natural eternal happiness. If they lacked a super-added mysterious and heavenly happiness made possible only by the redeeming grace of Christ, it would be the lack of something to which they were not naturally adapted, which they had never experienced, could not imagine, and would not miss. They would be in another order of things than those usually thought of as being states of salvation or perdition. From the viewpoint of God's justice, it was pointed out that a child born in exile of a father deported from his country for personal misbehaviour could not call its own existence in exile unjust. That, of course, concerns the problem from our standpoint, for those in Limbo would not think of it. Some modern Catholic theologians, however, are hesitant about the Limbo solution, preferring to hold that God may have ways in His infinite goodness of providing the full happiness of heaven for unbaptised infants, ways which are quite unknown to us. Definite proof that God does make such provisions for them is not possible and therefore all care must be taken as far as we are concerned to see that infants in danger of death are not permitted to die unbaptised. Should they unfortunately do so, it is at least allowable to hope ♦ we cannot know ♦ that they have entered Heaven rather than Limbo.

446. Where did the Roman Catholic Church get the Sacrament of Confirmation?

It could only be from Christ Himself, for the Church has never claimed the power to institute a Sacrament. Christ, having instituted the Sacrament of Baptism, often spoke of His future and further bestowal of the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a solemn confirmation of the Church as a whole; but Christ must have instituted the rite of communicating the Spirit by the laying on of hands during the forty days He spent instructing the Apostles (Acts

1:3), since immediately after Pentecost they employed that rite. The Apostles claimed, not to be innovators, but "ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God." I Cor., 4:1. So Peter and John went to Samaria to lay their hands on those who, through the preaching of Philip the deacon, had only been baptised; and through the apostolic confirmation-rite there resulted a special bestowal of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). Without the unessential and temporary phenomena which accompanied its origin, the Sacrament of Confirmation, to intensify and strengthen the Christian commitment of those already baptised, has continued as a liturgical rite in the Church, normally administered by a Bishop as a successor of the Apostles.

447. Is it not against the New Testament to set up a class of priests distinct from the laity, to offer sacrifice and to mediate on their behalf?

Surely not; for the Catholic Church, with over 600 million members, and for that matter the Eastern Orthodox Churches with over 200 million members, acknowledge the obligation according to the will of Christ of maintaining a succession of priests distinct from the laity and fitted by the Sacrament of Holy Orders for the duties of their ministry in the Church. Christ Himself chose His twelve apostles, setting them apart and giving them various special powers, as those of ruling the Church, saying "whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven" (Matt., 18:18); of offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice, saying at the Last Supper: "Do this in commemoration of me" (Lk., 22:19; I Cor., 11:24); of teaching the Faith, saying: "Teach all nations" (Matt., 28:19-20); and of forgiving the sins of men, saying: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven" (Jn., 20:21-23). All these are distinctly priestly duties; and Acts 14:23 tells us how, in order to have these duties continued, the Apostles "appointed elders with prayer and fasting in every church." Undoubtedly the appointing of elders with religious rites of prayer and fasting meant the ordaining of priests.

448. Does not the New Covenant instituted by Christ make all His followers a chosen generation and a royal priesthood, as the Apostle Peter taught?

St. Peter, in 1 Pet., 2:9, applies in a fuller and truer sense to Christians as forming the New Israel or People of God titles formerly used of the Old Israel as an elect, holy and priestly nation. And the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) particularly stressed that all baptised members of the Church as the Body of Christ, He Himself being the Head, share in His Priesthood. But just as in Israel of old a distinct Levitical priesthood was not excluded, nor is a distinct and Christian priesthood under the New Covenant. So we have the fact that Timothy and Titus, for example, who already had that measure of priestly character proper to all who have been incorporated as members of Christ's mystical body, the Church, by their baptism, needing to be ordained by a special rite to a degree of priesthood distinct from and above that possessed by the faithful in general. To Timothy St. Paul wrote: "Neglect not the grace which is in you . . . given with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood . . . ; stir up the grace of God which is in you by the imposition of my hands." (I Tim., 4:14; 2 Tim., 1:6). To Titus (1:5) he wrote: "For this reason I left you in Crete . . . that you should ordain priests in every city as I also appointed you."

449. Despite the prohibition: "Call no man your father upon the earth" (Matt., 23:9), priests are addressed as "father".

In reading the Bible it is necessary to consider not merely words, but what is meant by the words. Christ added, after the words you quote, "for one is your father who is in heaven." He was simply emphasising the supreme Fatherhood of God; and the sense is that no earthly father must ever be regarded as coming before God in one's allegiance. If the words were to be taken in their strictly literal significance you would impose upon them, a son would not be permitted to call his own parent "father". A similar example of this idiomatic Hebrew way of putting things occurred when a man addressed Christ as "good," saying "good master." To that Christ replied: "Why do you call me good? One is good, God." Matt., 19:17. Our Lord did not mean that it was wrong to call Him good. He could challenge His worst enemies: "Which of you can accuse me of sin?" What He did intend was to drive home the lesson that God is the supreme source of all good and that nothing should be regarded as good except dependency upon and subordinately to Him. It only remains to point out that St. Paul did not hesitate to write to the Corinthians: "You have not many fathers; but by the gospel I have begotten you in Christ." I Cor., 4:15. He knew quite well that in thus calling himself their spiritual father in Christ he was not violating any biblical prohibition.

450. We Protestants, obeying the gospel and not man-made traditions, call our clergy "Mister", not "Father".

A difficulty remains. In English the word "Mister" is merely an alternative for the

word "Master." Yet, after saying "Call no man father," Christ added: "Neither be called masters." Incidentally, during the two World Wars, military chaplains, Catholics and Protestants alike, were addressed as "padre", which is simply the Italian word for "father." No Protestant chaplains complained about being addressed as "padre", on the ground that the Bible says: "Call no man your father upon earth." But the way in which priests are addressed is quite secondary to the real question as to whether there is in the Christian religion a Sacrament of Holy Orders conferring a distinct priesthood upon those who receive that Sacrament. There is no room for doubt that, at the Last Supper, Christ bestowed upon His chosen apostles a special participation in His own priesthood when He commanded them: "Do this in commemoration of me."

451. Where was Mary, the Mother of Christ, during the celebration of the Last Supper?

Although her home was in Nazareth, it is quite certain that she was in Jerusalem at the time, for on the next day, Friday, as all four evangelists tell us, she with a group of other women stood on Calvary, watching our Lord die on the cross. On the night before He died, our Lord celebrated the Last Supper with His apostles only, instituting the Holy Eucharist and ordaining them as priests. Had He wished, He could have invited and had His mother also there with the apostles. Quite evidently, then, He did not will that; and the reason could well be a clear manifestation of His intention to ordain the apostles only as priests, restricting the sacrament of priestly ordination to men, so that not even His own mother could be permitted to receive it. Both the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have always regarded His action as constituting a rule from which they are not free to depart; namely, that men only may, or even validly can be ordained as priests.

452. Is it not believed that the highest power granted to priests is that of consecrating the Eucharist?

That is our Catholic conviction; for Christ gave us His Real Presence in the Eucharist to be the Church's liturgical, sacrificial offering continued through the ages, and an abiding sacramental means of grace, both for our salvation and sanctification. So the Second Vatican Council declared the Eucharist to be "the basis and the centre" of our lives as members of the Church.

453. You take literally the Lord's words when, at the Last Supper, He said of the bread: "This is my body", and of the wine: "This is my blood".

We do. Accounts of the institution of the Eucharist are contained in the first three gospels, those of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is often forgotten, however, that about 55 A.D., some ten years before any of the gospels was available, St. Paul had written to the Corinthians that he had "received of the Lord," that is, independently of the written gospel accounts, a knowledge of what had occurred at the Last Supper and of its significance; and he left no room for doubt about his conviction that in the Eucharist the bread becomes the very Body of Christ, and the wine His Blood. So he wrote, in I Cor., 10:11, "The bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" And even more strongly, in I Cor., 11:27, he wrote: "Whoever eats or drinks unworthily is guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord."

454. If one takes "This is my body" literally, should we not hold, to be consistent, that when Christ said: "I am the door" (Jn., 10:9) he meant a literal door?

The cases are very different. In the latter instance, He begins with the personal pronoun "I", and none of His listeners would have understood Him to be declaring Himself to be literally a door. The symbolism was quite evident. As by a door one enters a house, so through Him entry into heaven becomes possible. "By me," He said, "if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved." When instituting the Eucharist, however, He did not begin with the personal pronoun "I". He took bread and used of it the demonstrative pronoun "this." But the bread He was holding bore no resemblance to His body, to provide a basis for a symbolical meaning.

455. Why does not John's gospel even bother mentioning the institution of the Eucharist?

St. John wrote his Gospel about 100 A.D. The accounts given by the other three evangelists had by then been in use from between twenty to thirty years and were already familiar to his readers. He therefore described Christ's promise, twelve months before the Last Supper, to do what St. Paul and the already existent Gospels declare He did do. In John 6:52 we read Christ's words: "The bread that I

will give is my flesh for the life of the world." In verses 61 and 67, St. John tells us that many of His disciples till then protested: "This saying is hard and who can hear it?" and that they abandoned Him. Had our Lord meant His provocative words only as a figure of speech, He could have said so in a word and removed their difficulty. But He did not do that, and even allowed many of His disciples to desert Him rather than unsay what He had said. The Anglican biblical scholar, Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, in his book, "The Fourth Gospel," comments here that Christ left no room for a spiritualising interpretation. A real physical eating is involved, but one that is intelligible only by a mysterious yet real presence of His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. What our Lord did do, rather than unsay His words, was to turn to the twelve Apostles and ask: "Will you also go away?" ♦ as much as to say: "You may go if you like, but I am going to do precisely what I have said." St. Peter thereupon expressed the faith of the twelve, who no more understood the mystery of it all than the deserters: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." At the Last Supper, when our Lord fulfilled His promise, saying of the bread: "This is my body," the apostles knew He was speaking as literally as when He allowed those to go who had not faith enough to leave it to Him to fulfil the mysterious declaration that He would literally give them His flesh to eat. And the conviction of the apostles has been that of Catholics all through the centuries even as it remains their conviction today.

456. Catholics speak of the Real Presence of Christ in their churches as if He were absent from us other Christians meeting in our own churches to worship Him.

Such an impression would be based upon a misunderstanding. When Catholics speak of the "Real Presence" of Christ in their churches they are using the expression as a particular technical term referring to the sacramental presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist which is reserved or kept in a tabernacle on or near the altar, and which is for them an object of special devotion. So they speak of "visits to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament." There are, however, many different and real ways in which our Lord can be present to all who sincerely believe in Him and seek to serve Him. Spiritually, He is present to the souls of all individuals who are united with Him in faith and love, wherever they may be. Similarly, He is present in a special way among groups of individuals who gather together for common worship and prayer because of their love of Him, according to their sincere convictions as to what their religious practices should be. This spiritual presence is real, not unreal or non-existent; and in this sense all good Christians in whatever churches they assemble may rightly claim that Christ is spiritually present in their midst. But in addition to such a spiritual presence, Catholics claim to have in their churches the "Real Eucharistic Presence" of Christ, or the abiding presence of Himself personally, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Blessed Sacrament. Those who do not believe in the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist do not have His actual presence in their midst in that particular way.

457. Catholics say that Christ is present in the Eucharist by "transubstantiation". What exactly is meant by that?

The big word should not worry us. We speak easily of a "Trans- Continental Railway" which enables us to cross over from one end of a continent to another. That, however, is only by way of illustration, not intended as an explanation. For in the Eucharist there is not merely a crossing over from one substance to another, but the changing of the very substance of the bread into the substance of our Lord's body. But this doctrine has nothing to do with "substance" as we ordinarily use the word. If we say that soap is a slippery substance, we are thinking of the whole thing as our senses perceive it. If it is dry, it is not slippery; if wet, it is. And we can imagine other kinds of qualities, size, shape, colour, weight, etc. Reason, however, tells us that these variable characteristics cannot be identical with the abiding reality which has them. This abiding reality is the substantial being of the thing, as contrasted with its external appearances. We can conceive or think of this underlying reality, although we cannot imagine it. And in transubstantiation it is this inner underlying reality or very being of the bread which is converted into the Body of Christ, all external appearances of the bread remaining as they were and still the object of our sense-perceptions. If this interior substantial change did not take place, then our Lord's words: "This is my body," would not be really verified in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist as our Faith requires us to believe. Abbot Vonier, in his "Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist," says that the change is due to a hidden act of God deep down in the abyss of being where His omnipotence is supreme - an act "absolutely indispensable" for a true change by sacramental consecration.

458. That such a change can really happen does not seem possible.

As surely as our Lord changed water into wine during the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee (Jn., 2:1-11), so also He changes the substance of bread into the substance

of His Body in the Eucharist at the moment of consecration. The only difference between the two cases is that the Cana miracle was obvious to the senses of the people there, whereas in the Eucharist only the underlying basic reality of the bread is changed, its outward appearances remaining as before. We know of the change, therefore, not by sight, but by faith in our Lord's words: "This is my Body." The Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches are at one on this matter. Thus the Orthodox Metropolitan Philaret, in his "Longer Catechism," says that the manner in which the change is brought about is understood only by God, but "this much is signified, that the bread truly, really and substantially becomes the true Body of the Lord." That simply repeats our own Catholic doctrine. The three adverbs used are important. The word "truly" means not by way of a mere sign or symbol; the word "really" means in actual and objective fact, not merely because we subjectively think of Christ as there and find that "meaningful for us;" and the word "substantially" means that the Blessed Sacrament contains in its mysterious way the same human Body of Christ that was born of the Virgin Mary. It is not a matter, therefore, of a merely virtual presence, our Lord acting by means of the Eucharist only as if it were His Body, although in reality it is not. The Eucharist is Jesus Himself, sacramentally present.

459. Pope Paul VI described the Eucharist as "The Mystery of Faith". But the doctrine of transubstantiation, instead of leaving it unexplained, tries to do away with the mystery.

Such is not really the case. As Cardinal Newman put it in his book "Via Media," Christ is present, not according to the natural manner of bodies, but sacramentally. His presence is substantial, but is an absolute mystery, not against our reason but against our imagination; and it must be accepted by faith. Our faith is in the divine power of Christ to do what He said He would do. It was in this spirit of faith that the fourth century St. Ambrose, in his treatise on the Sacraments (390 A.D.), wrote: "At the consecration, the priest no longer uses his own words, but the words of Christ. Therefore the word of Christ consecrates this Sacrament. What is the word of Christ? That whereby all things were made. The Lord commanded and every creature was produced. You see, then, how effective is the word of Christ. If, therefore, such power belongs to the word of the Lord Jesus that things which were not began to be, how much more is it effective that things previously existing should be changed into something else?"

460. What is to be gained by insisting on transubstantiation?

The integrity of our faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Meantime, the doctrine avoids two extremes; the one of imagining Christ's Body to be in the Eucharist in a merely natural way, which is excluded by the fact that the observable qualities of the bread remain after the consecration; the other of imagining that the Eucharist is in no true sense Christ's Body at all. The mysterious truth remains that, while other Sacraments confer grace, the Eucharist both confers grace and also contains the very Author of grace, Christ Himself.

461. Would not the appearances of bread remaining after consecration be a veil hiding the presence of Christ, rather than a sacramental sign declaring it.

We are not meant to have a sign declaring the bodily presence of Christ. The sign-value of the appearances of bread is of what the Eucharistic Body of Christ does for those who receive it as the very food of supernatural and spiritual life. After all, the first great Sacrament was Christ Himself, the Incarnation of the Divine Life in our midst to bestow salvation upon us; and His visible humanity was both a veil hiding His Divinity, yet a sign of the salvation He came to accomplish for us. When Philip said to him: "Lord, show us the Father," Jesus replied: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" Jn., 14:10. Faith was needed for that. In the same way, faith is needed in the actual presence of Christ in the Eucharist. But the form of bread, the symbol of food, under which He gives Himself to us is a sacramental sign of the grace He promised when He said: "I am the bread of life . . . he that eateth me, the same shall also live by me." Jn., 6:48, 58.

462. Without the bread itself being changed, would it not be enough to speak of a change of "sign-reality", which would be a real change at least of significance?

That would not adequately express, but would be a rejection of Catholic doctrine. All the Sacraments equally have "sign-reality" ♦ that is, a reality in the intentional order of meaning and purpose ♦ or they would simply not be Sacraments. A Sacrament is essentially an external, visible action instituted by Christ as a sign

and instrumental cause of invisible grace. There is neither more nor less "sign-reality" as such in the Eucharist than in the other Sacraments. What we have to ask, apart altogether from the aspect of "sign-reality", is whether a change occurs in the very materials used for the Eucharist which is not to be found in the other Sacraments. The answer is yes. Something happens to the bread used for the Sacrament of the Eucharist which does not happen, for example, to the water used for the Sacrament of Baptism. Both Sacraments have "sign-reality", or reality as signs. But while the water used for Baptism remains water, the eucharistic bread is changed by divine power at the consecration into a wholly different reality as far as its underlying and substantial principle of being is concerned. The substance of the bread is converted into the very substance of the Body of Christ, and He Himself becomes wholly and sacramentally present in the Sacred Host, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. If that change did not occur, if the bread of the Eucharist remained merely bread as the water in Baptism remains merely water, then I would admit the charge of "idolatry of the wafer" — a charge made of old by those who had no understanding of the doctrine of the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. It is a mere play on words to suggest that a change in "sign-reality" or, as it has been called "transignification" or "transfinilization", would be enough, without "transubstantiation", to account for the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist according to the requirements of our Catholic Faith. It is simply a failure of nerve on the part of a few ultra-modern Catholic theologians, capitulating to modern unbelieving philosophers, who suggest that a "change of significance or meaning" or a "change of purpose" would be enough, without any real change in the bread at all.

463. Could not a basis of unity for us all be provided by the Elizabethan quatrain:

"Christ was the Word that spake it;
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the Word did make it,
That we believe and take it."

Unity could not be based on ambiguity in so serious a matter. "What the Word did make it" is the problem. Catholics would say: "What the Word did make it (namely, by converting the very reality of the bread into the substance of His Body by transubstantiation), that we believe and take it." Others, not sharing their faith, would say: "What the Word did make it (provided one does not hold that He made it into His very Body by transubstantiation), that we believe and take it." So we are left where we were. We are dealing, of course, with a divinely-revealed mystery, above ordinary human understanding. In the Eucharist, there is a divinely-wrought change of the basic reality of the bread into that of the very Body of Christ. The Eastern Orthodox Churches agree with the Catholic Church in this matter; for an actually real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist beyond mere symbolism is not possible otherwise.

464. What is the difference between "sacramental" presence and "physical" presence?

If by "physical" presence one means presence in a natural way, as our Lord was bodily present, visibly and tangibly, when on earth, then His "sacramental" presence must differ from that. But if by "physical" one means really and objectively present even though in another and mysterious way proper to the Eucharist, then our Lord's "sacramental" presence is a "physical" presence. We grant that this mysterious sacramental physical presence can be known only by faith, based on His own declaration that He would thus give Himself to us in the Eucharist. He is not there merely because we believe Him to be there; we believe precisely because we have His word for it that He is there.

465. When Christ partook of the Last Supper, did He consume Himself?

He both received Himself and gave Himself, stressing the intimate sacramental bond of union with Himself created by Holy Communion. So He said: "With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you." Lk., 22:15. But here again, it is our imagination which causes difficulty. For while our Lord received the visible Sacrament He had instituted and which retained the external dimensions and qualities of bread, He had already changed its underlying and invisible substance into the substance of His body, independently of all spatial relationships. No reception of any new substance within Himself was, therefore, involved. I admit the mystery for our human minds in all this; but one who has faith in the Divinity of Christ has already accepted an overwhelming mystery. Think of the mystery involved when Christ said: "Philip, he who sees me, sees the Father!" Jn., 14:9. No element of mystery justifies our rejecting the real, substantial and objective truth of our Lord's declaration: "This is my body," where the Holy Eucharist is concerned.

466. How can our Lord be really present in all the millions of consecrated Sacred Hosts throughout the world?

He could not, were it a question of His being present in a merely natural way. Even a consecrated Host, retaining as it does the visible and tangible dimensions of the external qualities natural to bread, could not be in two places at once. Before one receives Communion, the particular Host one receives was in the ciborium; after Communion, it is no longer in the ciborium. Yet our Lord is really present in as many places at once as there are consecrated Hosts throughout the world. To us this is bound to be mysterious. As Abbot Vonier puts it: "The sacramental sphere is an unknown world with a well-known Inhabitant." Our Lord's real presence can only be by a divinely-wrought change of the underlying reality of the bread into the reality of His Body wherever the Blessed Sacrament exists. Perhaps a helpful although quite inadequate image of what occurs can be found in the fact that the voice of a Caruso can be recorded and the records distributed in tens of thousands, enabling his voice to be heard in tens of thousands of different places at once. We could say that, in a somewhat similar fashion, our Lord has recorded, not His voice, but Himself in a sacramental way, to remain with us on our altars, to offer Himself in the Sacrifice of the Mass for us, and to give Himself to us in Holy Communion in all places and throughout all centuries.

467. How can it be lawful to adore even a consecrated wafer and sing hymns to the "Sacrament Divine"?

As regards the external qualities or appearances of the bread which remain unchanged even after consecration, if we thought of those separately and in isolation from all else that the Holy Eucharist involves, then, although they would still deserve our reverence because of the sacred functions God wills them to fulfil, adoration of them would be out of the question. But no Catholic dreams of thinking of them in such a state of separation and isolation. The Catholic has in mind the whole sacramental reality. The external qualities or appearances of the consecrated wafer, visible before our eyes, are thought of only as related to the Body of Christ into which the previously existing substance of the bread has been converted, and to the Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ which are necessarily and inseparably associated with His Body. It is Christ, therefore, sacramentally present in the Eucharist, whom we adore and worship there. In this sense, the Holy Eucharist is the "Sacrament Divine," making the Living Christ mysteriously present in our midst, and deserving of all the adoration and worship, gratitude and love of which we are capable.

468. When you speak of the Sacrifice of the Mass, what does the word "Mass" mean in itself?

It is traditionally used to mean the Eucharistic Sacrifice associated with the Lord's Supper in so far as it involves the continued offering of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. In itself, however, the word "Mass" was derived from the declaration "Ite, missa est" at the end of the Latin rite for the celebration of the Eucharist. The Latin phrase means simply: "Go, it is the dismissal"; that is, "Go, for we have completed our act of worship offered to God." About the fourth century A.D. St. Ambrose applied the word to the rite itself, speaking of celebrating the "Missa;" and the word has remained to this day simply as "Mass," with a sense far beyond its original meaning.

469. How do you explain Hebrews 10:11. "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering many times the same sacrifices which can never take away sin"?

The reference is, not to Christian times, but to the Old Law and the animal sacrifices offered by the Jewish priests in accordance with the Mosaic Dispensation. These sacrifices symbolised man's need of atoning for sin, but could not of themselves be effective. As with the rest of the Jewish religion, the Aaronic priesthood and the Temple sacrifices were but a shadow "of things to come." Heb., 10:1. Earlier, in chapter seven, St. Paul explained how the Jewish Law and its priesthood had ceased with the coming of Christ to be the Eternal Priest, not according to the priesthood of Aaron, but (as predicted in Ps. 110) according to the Order of Melchisedech, which was independent of and prior to the Levitical priesthood.

470. Is not the Eucharist a divinely-instituted sign of Christ's offering of Himself to the Father on Calvary, which He never needs to repeat?

Christ's actual death on Calvary can never be repeated: "Risen, He dies no more." Rom., 6:9. But to fulfil His priesthood according to the Order of Melchisedech, who offered sacrifice in bread and wine (Gen., 14:18), Christ at the Last Supper gave

Himself in the Eucharist, saying of the bread: "This is my body which is given for you;" and of the wine: "This is my blood which shall be shed for you;" adding: "Do this in commemoration of me." Lk., 22:19. St. Paul explains that, as often as this is done, "you shall show the death of the Lord until He come." I Cor., 11:26. So Christ gave the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood on Calvary to all ages sacramentally as the central liturgical act of worship proper to the New Law. You rightly call the Eucharist a divinely-instituted sign of Christ's death on Calvary. It is, however, more than that, for a sign as such, however full of meaning, is not the reality; nor is a mere commemoration a presence. But Christ left Himself in the Eucharist and offers Himself in the Mass, thus actualising Calvary in the "here and now" by a representation of it. As Pope Pius XII said, in his Encyclical "Mediator Dei" (1947): "The commemorative showing forth of His death on Calvary is repeated in each and every Sacrifice of the Altar because, through the signs of separation (i.e., the separate ritual consecrations first of the bread and then of the wine), Jesus Christ is signified or shown in the state of a Victim." Thus, in the Catholic Mass, is fulfilled the prediction of the Old Testament prophet Malachi, in a far fuller sense than he could have realised: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." Mai., 1:11.

471. Catholics quote Malachi 1:11, interpreting his words to suit themselves.

Malachi envisaged a universal and pure offering to replace the inadequate Jewish sacrifices. This could be realised only in the future Messianic Age. No rites existing then, whether of pagan sacrifices offered among the Gentiles, or of exiled Jews dispersed among them, answered to the description given by the prophet Malachi. The early Christian Fathers, St. Justin, Tertullian and St. Irenaeus, regarded his words as predicting the Christian Eucharistic Sacrifice; and the fact remains that the Mass, a clean oblation without the shedding of blood, is today a world-wide sacrificial offering from the rising to the setting of the sun. Nothing else could be said to fulfil Malachi's prophecy.

472. Is not the Holy Communion Service meant only to remind us of Christ's offering on the Cross, so that we can unite our self-offering with His?

The Anglican Dr. Griffiths Thomas, in his "Principles of Theology," explains it in that way. He says that the Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament, but not a Sacrifice. Anglicans, he writes, offer the "commemoration of a sacrifice," whereas Rome offers a "commemorative sacrifice." We Catholics agree with his description of our position, which is also that of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. For us, the Mass or Liturgy is not only a reminder of Calvary, but a mysterious bringing of it into the present. It is a daily sacrifice, substantially the same as that of the Cross in so far as the Body and Blood of Christ are really present, although Christ offers these in a symbolical and mystical way. So Pope Pius XII, in his Encyclical "Mediator Dei" (1947), said: "Attention must be given again and again to the fact that the Eucharistic Sacrifice of its own nature is the immolation of the Divine Victim without actual blood-shedding which is shown in a mystical manner by the separation of the sacred species and the offering of them to the Eternal Father."

473. We Anglicans say in our Communion Service: "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto Thee." How does that differ from Roman Catholic doctrine?

There is a tremendous difference between offering ourselves as a sacrificial gift to God, and offering the very Body and Blood of Christ in what Sergius Bulgakov, in "The Orthodox Church," p. 134, defines as "the offering of a bloodless sacrifice having the power of Calvary, and which is offered for the living and the dead." By means of the Eucharist Christ provided, not only a memorial of a Calvary in the long ago, but for the enduring presence of His Sacrifice. Those present at the Mass or Liturgy do, of course, offer in union with it themselves and the sacrifices of their daily lives. These can add nothing to the Unique Sacrifice of the Lord; but He deigns to associate them with His, not to give any greater value to His own, but to give value to theirs. The main fact remains that it is Christ Himself who is the essential offering to God during the Mass, as our Mediator and Saviour, really present in the Holy Eucharist.

474. Do members of other Churches who gather round the Lord's Table to celebrate the Last Supper as a memorial service only and not as a sacrificial rite really meet Christ there, or not?

The Vatican Council, in its "Decree on Ecumenism," makes clear our Catholic recognition that members of those various Churches who participate in their

particular forms of celebrating the Lord's Supper, even though they do not have the same belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist as the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, receive spiritual blessings because of their faith and reverence in fulfilling what they believe to be the will of Christ. But from the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox point of view, a fundamental aspect of the Eucharist is lacking in such Communion Services precisely because that Real presence of Christ in the Eucharist itself is missing which consecration by a validly-ordained priesthood can alone bring about; and Holy Communion is not received in the same and sacramental sense as it is in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. We believe 💎 and regret 💎 that in such Churches much less is received than our Lord really intended communicants to have. Of course, as long as others sincerely believe their present position to be adequate, they themselves will be contented with religious rites as understood and celebrated in their Churches. Our desire for them is only one of greater blessings than they at present realise to be possible.

475. Catholics believe that priests can forgive the sins of those who confess them.

That is true. It is clear that Christ bestowed this sacramental power upon the apostles when He said to them: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." After which He breathed upon them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit . . . Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you retain, they are retained." Jn., 20:23.

476. When Jesus is said to have given this power, not only the apostles, but other disciples were present also.

St. John says simply that "the disciples were gathered together." We must remember, however, that the apostles were disciples with a difference, for not all disciples were apostles. The apostles were the twelve chosen from among the disciples, to be especially commissioned for our Lord's special purposes. That St. John had the apostles only in mind as recipients of the power to forgive sin is clear from his saying expressly in 20:24, "now Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came." St. Thomas would, of course, have received the power even though not present on the occasion, because Jesus, in a graphic and striking way, was illustrating the powers conferred upon those of the apostolic group who had received priestly ordination at the Last Supper with their commission to celebrate the Eucharist.

477. How do we know definitely that the power was given only to the apostles, and not to all the disciples then present?

From other passages in Scripture, theological principles, and the official teachings of the Church. Elsewhere in Scripture, as in Jn., 17:12, 18, we find that the special mission was confided to the apostles only. Of them, Christ said: "As you (Father) have sent me into the world, I also have sent them." That declaration He repeats as a formula before conferring the power to forgive sin, which indicates that, in the presence of others who may have been present, He was dealing with the specially "sent" ones, namely, the apostles only. Again, the power of forgiving or retaining sins was obviously a particular application of the general powers of teaching, ruling and sanctifying contained in the commission, given firstly to St. Peter alone (Matt., 16:19) and then to all the apostles (Matt., 18:18): "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." These passages make it sufficiently clear that the power of forgiving sin was a priestly power communicated originally to the apostles only.

478. Is James 5:16: "Confess therefore your sins to one another", taken as proof of sacramental confession on the ground that confession to those who are not priests would be useless?

Apart from sacramental confession, the admission of one's faults in general to others as an exercise of humility, or a mutual acceptance of blame in the interests of reconciliation by two parties at variance with each other, would not be entirely useless. Some people, however, have imprudently interpreted the text as meaning a public and detailed declaration of their sins. Dr. Frank Buchman's "Oxford Groups," with their public "sharing," made that mistake, soon discovering it both harmful to individuals parading their infidelities and a source of scandal to others. But in the restricted sense I have mentioned the practice could be useful.

479. My "Jerusalem Bible" notes that from the text in St. James "nothing special may be deduced about sacramental confession".

Few Catholic theologians quote the text as evidence for the Sacrament of Confession. The appeal is rather to the powers of binding and loosing. (Matt., 16:19 and 18:18), and to the direct declaration of Christ: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." Jn., 20: 22-23. Strangely enough, the French Protestant Max Thurian argues in his book "Confession" (S.C.M. Press, 1958), that, in view of the whole context, the words of St. James can refer only to sacramental confession to a member of the ecclesiastical ministry of the Church. He rules out a merely fraternal admission of guilt as quite inadequate.

480. The "Jerusalem Bible" note seems to admit the non-Catholic doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

Catholics as well as non-Catholics teach the priesthood of all believers. St. Peter, addressing all Christians, says they must regard themselves as "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God." I Pet., 2:5; that is, by lives of virtue which will indeed be to the praise and glory of God. But this does not exclude a further and distinct ministerial priesthood, given through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, with sacred powers of offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice and forgiving sins. Those who reject the Sacrament of Confession, however, do not in fact appeal to the priesthood of all believers from this point of view. They deny priestly absolution of any kind, insisting that God alone can forgive sins and that even He cannot delegate power to do so in His name to any human beings at all. Yet St. Paul declared, on behalf of the apostles: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself . . . (and) entrusting to us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor., 5:18- 19. Nowhere is that ministry so directly exercised as in the forgiving of sin in the Sacrament of Penance or Confession.

481. If non-Catholics are really sorry for their sins, will not God forgive them without their having to go to confession?

If they are truly and sufficiently repentant, yes; for God knows how to make allowances for those who, through no fault of their own, do not realise that there is such a thing as the Sacrament of Confession appointed by Him as the means of obtaining forgiveness. The supposition is that such people are indeed sorry for their sins as violations of God's will and are determined to do His will in the future to the best of their ability. Such a determination, if sincere, would include the will to confess their sins if they thought God willed them to do so; and God takes the will for the deed because the only reason why they do not confess their sins is that they are unaware of such an obligation. Catholics, who know God wills us to confess our sins, include in their sorrow the will to confess them as part of their renewed will to do God's will, and they confess them as soon as an opportunity presents itself.

482. If so, what advantage is there in going to confession?

Apart from advantages, there is the duty, once we know of it, to confess all serious sins. But over and above the fulfilling of an obligation to make use of the Sacrament which our Lord certainly did not institute unnecessarily, confession is the source of extra and special blessings of its very nature. The preparation for confession demands an exercise of faith and humility; and a self-examination which helps us to know ourselves better. Also, the sacramental absolution supplies for our defective dispositions, makes us the more sure our sins are forgiven, gives special graces to help us avoid similar faults in the future, and provides an opportunity of obtaining spiritual advice and guidance. Confession is definitely a help towards a holier and more spiritual life in our efforts to know, love and serve God.

483. Did not the Second Vatican Council decide that public confession of sins should replace private auricular confession in the administration of the Sacrament of Penance?

In no way at all. It made one statement and one recommendation on this subject. In its "Constitution on the Church" it stated that in the Sacrament of Penance the faithful obtain God's forgiveness of their sins and are reconciled with the Church which they have injured by those sins. The point here is that by our sins we offend God, do harm to our own souls, and afflict the Church of which we are members. Just as in any bodily sickness it is the body that is sick in one of its members and the whole body puts all its resources towards the healing of any local disorder, so the Church, as the mystical Body of Christ to which we belong, has its part to play in the forgiving of sin. In every sin, three are injured, our Lord, the Church, and our own soul. All three share in our restoration to a state of grace; our Lord by forgiving, the Church by administering the Sacrament of Penance through which He forgives, and ourselves by contrition and confession. So much for the Council's statement. The Council's recommendation, in its "Constitution on the Liturgy," n.72, said that the rite of the Sacrament of Penance should be revised so as to

bring out better its nature and effects. It did not say how it should be revised, leaving that to further consideration and later decisions. After the Council had concluded, some Bishops have approved public liturgical penitential ceremonies as a preparation associated with, but not replacing the Sacrament of Penance. These ceremonies consist of introductory prayers; a discourse on the nature of the Sacrament, on the evil of sin and its ravages in today's permissive society, and on our own share in the general moral collapse by our own sins or at least by neglect of positive efforts to remedy things. Then follows a general admission of our share of guilt and expression of our sorrow for it; the officiating priest offering a prayer to God for His forgiveness of all present at the liturgical function. When this public ceremony has ended, opportunities are provided by priests in attendance for those who wish to receive the Sacrament of Penance by a specific confession of their sins privately in order to receive sacramental absolution in the usual way. The liturgical preparatory rites are occasional only, being declared particularly suitable during Lent, Retreats, or parochial missions. There is no obligation to attend them; and they in no way interfere with or dispense us from the regular practice of private and personal confession of sins according to normal custom. Much confusion has arisen from descriptions of the preparatory liturgical rite as a "public celebration of the Sacrament of Penance." The rite is in no way sacramental confession itself, nor is sacramental absolution given during it.

484. Among the Sacraments, Catholics include even marriage.

If it be between two baptised Christians, that is so. In the merely natural order, marriage is a contract in which a man and a woman, free to enter into it, give themselves to each other exclusively and permanently until death dissolves their partnership. Where baptised Christians are concerned, the New Testament declares that marriage has also a religious and supernatural significance. St. Paul, in Ephesians, 5:21-33, says that it reflects the union between Christ and His Church; and that its duties are to be fulfilled "out of reverence for Christ." In other words, marriage between baptised Christians is a sacred rite and undoubtedly a source of appropriate and necessary grace to the parties, who administer the Sacrament to each other even as they enter into their permanently-binding contract.

485. If marriage is a Sacrament, why does the Church admit the right of the State's intervention in a matter purely of God's concern?

It is necessary here to recall certain basic principles. Firstly, marriage may attain to the dignity of a Christian Sacrament, possible only between two baptised Christians, or it may remain at the level of a merely natural matrimonial contract. Secondly, since the persons entering upon a marriage, whether they be Christians or non-Christians, are equally members of the State, forming a new domestic unit within civil society calculated to provide new members of civil society, the State is justified in intervening with special regulations for the control of marriage, whether of Christians or non-Christians, refusing to regard it as a merely private arrangement only to the parties who decide to marry. Thirdly, since God Himself, and not the State, instituted marriage in the first place, incidental laws enacted by the State for the general good of society will be valid in themselves only provided they do not violate God's laws. Where marriage between two baptised persons is concerned, then as a Christian Sacrament it is brought within the sphere also of the legislative authority of the Catholic Church; and any laws she makes concerning its validity are acknowledged by her members, who will necessarily regard as of no effect any laws of the State which are contrary to hers.

486. The State permits divorce and remarriage; and if, as the gospels tell us, we must "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," we must recognise civil law.

The precept you quote is qualified by the further words: "And to God the things that are God's." As for the State permitting remarriage after divorce from an already existing valid marriage, the State itself does not compel any citizen to take advantage of that law. The State claims that it is not able to say what is or is not God's law in this matter; that it is concerned only with civil legislation that it thinks good for peaceful and orderly government, and that if anyone conscientiously believes the divorce legislation to be opposed to God's law, he is free to follow his conscience and refuse to seek a divorce with the intention of marrying again. Nor is such a refusal considered even by the State as disobeying any law of the State.

487. What if, even in a marriage between two baptised Catholics, one party lapses from the faith and obtains a civil divorce?

The State does not pretend, even to a lapsed Catholic who has recourse to civil law for such a purpose, that it is dissolving the bond of the first and valid

sacramental marriage in the sight of God. It simply says: "If you get a civil divorce, you will not be regarded as any longer married as far as civil law is concerned; and if you marry again, you will not be legally guilty of bigamy." That is all. If such a Catholic later developed religious scruples, the State would adopt much the same attitude as the Jewish rulers who replied, when Judas came to them saying: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood," "What is that to us? Look you to it." Matt., 27:4. What God thinks of it is a matter for the Catholic's own conscience.

488. In speaking of divorce, why do you regularly quote only Mark's gospel?

Usually, but not always, I do so because the one quotation from St. Mark's gospel does full justice to the teaching of Christ. Before any of the gospels as we have them had appeared, St. Paul wrote in I Cor., 7:10, 11, "To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commands that the wife depart not from her husband; or if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled with her husband." St. Mark, in his gospel, 10:11, omitting reference to separation without remarriage, contented himself with recording Christ's absolute prohibition of a further marriage while an already contracted marriage still existed. "Whosoever," he wrote, "shall put away his wife and marry another, commits adultery." St. Luke, 16:18, gives the same unqualified version of our Lord's words as St. Mark.

489. Matthew 19:9 says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery."

Those words must be understood in the light of St. Paul's explanation of Christ's teaching. The sense would then be: "Whosoever shall put away his wife ♦ I am not speaking of separation for infidelity without remarriage ♦ but whosoever shall put away his wife and marry again, commits adultery." If Christ did intend to permit remarriage after divorce in the case of a partner's infidelity, are we to suppose that St. Paul, St. Mark and St. Luke, who certainly knew what His teaching was, deliberately suppressed a permission He gave, making His teaching absolute in a way He did not intend? Again, although according to Papias St. Matthew wrote an earlier collection of the Lord's sayings in Hebrew, the full Greek Matthew as we have it in our New Testament gives evident signs that the writer of it had the already existent gospel of St. Mark before him and made use of it. Are we to say that he tampered with the teaching in St. Mark, deliberately modifying it because he personally thought it too extreme? That supposition has only to be stated to be at once rejected. Thirdly, and in any case, the writer of St. Matthew's Greek gospel knew quite well that the saying of Christ even as he recorded it was an absolute prohibition, for he added the exclamation of the apostles that it would "be better not to marry at all", if marriages were so final and absolute a commitment. (Matt., 19:10).

490. Should not allowance be made for Matthew's exceptive clause?

It is a parenthesis allowing for the possibility of separation without remarriage in exceptional cases, not an exceptive clause as regards the prohibition of divorce and remarriage. Take the position. We have three sources, St. Paul, St. Mark and St. Luke, saying the identically same thing as regards the essential indissolubility of marriage. The fourth passage, that in St. Matthew, can be interpreted fully in harmony with their teaching, combining the two ideas of no marriage after divorce, but possible separation without remarriage, as St. Paul explained it in I Cor., 7:10. It is the sense of the four passages thus harmonised which has been constantly maintained through the centuries, as it is still maintained, by the Catholic Church, her only motive being the necessity of fidelity to the teaching of Christ. What other motive could she possibly have, when making things easier ♦ could she do so ♦ would greatly contribute towards her popular appeal!

491. What biblical authority is there for the Sacrament Catholics acknowledge as Extreme Unction?

St. James, in his Epistle, 5:14f., says that the sick should be anointed with oil by the priests of the Church "in the name of the Lord," and that if the sick person "be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." The Second Vatican Council, in its "Constitution on the Liturgy," n.73, said that this Sacrament would be more fittingly described as simply "Anointing of the Sick" than as "Extreme Unction," since it is not meant only for the actually dying, but also for those in any serious illness carrying with it a likelihood of fatal consequences, even though these may or may not occur.

492. If a priest administered the Last Rites to a person killed suddenly in an accident, what effect could an anointing of his dead body have on his soul?

But real death (that is, involving the actual separation of the soul from the body) does not necessarily occur when life seems to us to have come to an end. The

three essential functions which keep life going are those of the heart, lungs, and brain controlling the whole nervous system. Should one of these fail temporarily, the others may go on, so that the patient may be revived from "apparent" death. A heart that has stopped beating may be started again by massage. The lungs of a suffocated person may be made to breathe again. A haemorrhage of the brain may be healed. As a matter of fact, however probable or even morally certain death may be, there are no absolute signs of it until actual decomposition of bodily tissues sets in. In what is called a "sudden death" of an otherwise healthy person, "real" death may not occur until several hours afterwards. Death from extreme old age or from a long-standing incurable disease probably leaves no room for an interval between apparent and real death, since the whole organism has been steadily deteriorating. As absolute certainty about the actual moment of real death is not possible, the presumption in practice must be that the soul has not separated from the body immediately after "apparent" death, allowance being made for several hours after a sudden death by accident when all physical bodily cells and tissues were full of health and vitality, but for a much shorter period when death has resulted from a lingering illness, with a lowered general condition of bodily well-being.

493. [he victim of such an accident would be unconscious, in any case.](#)

Even so, if he is only "apparently" and not "really" dead, his soul would still be present and the Sacraments of the Church could result in his salvation should he be in a spiritual state dependent upon their help; that is, subject to the guilt of sins of which he is to some extent repentant yet not sufficiently so without the Sacraments to obtain forgiveness of them. We must remember that the Sacraments are instrumental means instituted by Christ to cause grace in the souls of those who do not by positive acts of bad will resist their influence. They have their own work to do over and above what we ourselves can do. Our Lord instituted them precisely to supply for our own insufficiency. As regards the case of an accident victim, a priest would give him the benefit of any doubt in the matter and administer the Last Sacraments conditionally, intending them to be effective if the man is capable of benefiting by them. And if he is capable, as God would know him to be even though he be unconscious, then the Sacraments restore his soul to a state of grace, forgiving his sins and effecting his eternal salvation.

494. [Many are repelled by the whole of the Catholic sacramental system, preferring simply a religion of the spirit.](#)

They do not make sufficient allowance for the two-fold psychosomatic nature of man. Man is not a disembodied spirit and a disembodied religion, one not adapted to his complete nature, cannot meet his real needs. Christianity is itself based on God's gift of His own Son as the "Word made flesh"; that is, as visibly incarnate, coming to us in our own nature as He created it in order to re-create it in grace. The visible Sacraments were instituted by Christ Himself to prolong the effects of His Incarnation, to be visible means of grace lifting the flesh to the realms of the Spirit. There have been many attempts to follow other ways, based on an assumed direct experience of and guidance by the "Inner Light" of the Holy Spirit independently of all organised churches, ordained ministries, formal liturgies and sacraments. All such experiments by-pass an immense amount of teaching in Scripture, under-estimate the needs of human psychology, and lead to a subjectivism taking refuge in religious emotions regardless of other and necessary aspects of Christianity as Christ, who gave it to us, meant it to be. And they quite ignore the lessons of history.

495. [Did not God say through the prophet Joel \(2:23-32\): "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance as the Lord has said"?](#)

St. Peter, in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts, 2:16-21), declared Joel's prophecy to be then fulfilled as a manifest sign that the Messianic Era had then commenced; in other words, that Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour, the answer to Israel's hopes (see nn. 153-155 above). But while the striking events which occurred on the day of Pentecost were exceptional, the basic New Testament teaching is that the Holy Spirit is the source of divine life within the Church and within the souls of all faithful members of it, not merely for a privileged few. So St. Paul tells us that not all can expect to be prophets, or have the gift of tongues, or other extraordinary and exceptional endowments; and that, not desiring such things, we should "be zealous for the better gifts" (I Cor., 12:31), adding that there remain "faith, hope and charity, the greatest of these being charity" (I Cor., 13:13), which is "poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us" (Rom., 5:5). This teaching, however, concerns only one aspect of our religion, not the whole of it. Partial views are not enough.

496. A Pentecostal friend constantly quotes Mark, 16:17-20, where Christ promised as signs to follow believers the casting out of devils, speaking in tongues, immunity from snake-bite and poisons they might drink, and the healing of the sick by laying on hands.

That was a promise enumerating, not all, but a few typical signs of divine power which would accompany the first preaching of the gospel. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul give instances showing that the promised signs did in fact occur. But it must be noted that the promise did not say that such signs would follow always and necessarily as often as any believer decided for himself when they should happen and what they should be. Their occasional occurrence depended entirely on God as He saw fit to grant them, some through some persons, other through others. So Hebrews, 2:4, says that God was "bearing them witness by signs and wonders and various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will."

497. Surely Christ meant the promises He made!

He meant them as a general reference to some of the powers which would sometimes manifest themselves in His Church. There were other kinds, in fact, than those He did mention, such as the restoration to life of the dead woman, Tabitha, through the prayer of St. Peter (Acts, 9:40). It is a mistake, however, to think that anyone at any time can do any of the things listed, just because he has read of them in Scripture. Innumerable follies have resulted from imaginative people making such literal applications to themselves. An instance of that is that of the Pentecostal "snake-cults" in Kentucky and adjacent States in U.S.A., members of which, on the strength of the prediction that "they shall take up serpents," fondled poisonous snakes, regarding immunity from harm as a sign of holiness, and death as due to insufficient faith. There were so many casualties that State laws had even as late as 1947 to prohibit such eccentric religious practices.

498. Must He not have thought the promised signs and wonders of great importance?

Such as did occur, when they occurred, served an important purpose at the time. But Christ's own attitude in this matter should put us on our guard against extravagant ideas. He Himself was no exhibitionist. He refused to perform miracles for the sake of miracles. When the devil, quoting Scripture, challenged Him to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, He refused, saying simply: "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When Pilate sent Christ to Herod, Lk., 23:8 tells us that Herod was glad as he hoped to see a sign wrought in his presence. But Christ refused to pander to the curiosity of Herod. There is a revealing remark in the Fourth Gospel about St. John the Baptist. He was indeed a man sent by God with an extraordinary mission and of outstanding holiness. Yet we are told: "John indeed did no miracle." (Jn., 10:41). It would be a great mistake were we to think of the Holy Spirit as a kind of wonder-working force at our disposal for the sake of external display, rather than as dwelling silently and unostentatiously within our souls and influencing us in our efforts at daily living according to the requirements of Christian virtue.

499. St. Mark gives no hint that the promise was limited to any particular period.

That is true, if we abstract from the particular signs and wonders mentioned, and understand the promise of many remarkable interventions of divine power on behalf of the Church throughout the centuries. In every age such manifestations of God's power are possible, whether through chosen individuals or through groups of individuals. The Second Vatican Council, therefore, in its document on the "Constitution of the Church," said: "Special graces are granted among the faithful for the building up of the Church." It added, however; "But these gifts are not to be rashly sought after, and judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who preside over the Church." Certain it is that such gratuitous or "charismatic" gifts as they are called are not self-chosen, nor the result of conditioning oneself psychologically for them. Any apparent gifts got that way would not be truly supernatural and from the Holy Spirit, but counterfeit.

500. Such gifts of the Spirit should be as operative now as in apostolic times.

Nowhere did Christ promise that the particular, occasional, astonishing and varied phenomena of Christianity's initial years would be an equally prominent feature of Church life. Were that to be the case, God's providence for His Church would have been very different from that revealed by the actual history of the Church through

all the centuries subsequent to the apostolic age. Even such an early writer as St. John Chrysostom, in the fourth century, commenting on the infrequency in his time of signs and wonders similar to those which were so prominent in the earliest days of the Church, explained that, as a seedling needs more care than a grown plant, so God made a special provision for the Church in its infancy which was no longer necessary once it had taken root and could grow without extraordinary interventions on its behalf. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit Himself has become less operative in the Church. In the New Testament itself there is evidence of an altered activity from that in the miraculous charismatic beginnings to that of safeguarding and transmitting the faith through a guided hierarchical teaching and ruling authority, as in Acts, 20:28, where St. Paul admonished the bishops, given ruling authority in the Church by the Holy Spirit, to take heed to themselves and to the whole flock entrusted to their care. It may have been less striking, but it was certainly not a less impressive activity of the Holy Spirit which made "the Church of the Living God the mainstay and pillar of truth," as St. Paul described it in I Tim., 3:15.

501. My Pentecostal friend told me that by "baptism in the Holy Spirit" one becomes a "born-again" Christian.

The New Testament restricts the expression "born again" to the Sacrament of Baptism. So our Lord said: "Unless one be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Jn., 3:5. St. Paul, therefore, wrote to Titus (3:5) that God in His mercy "saved us by the cleansing waters of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit." It is true that Acts, 1:5 tells us our Lord (in accordance with His promise in Jn., 14:16) said to His disciples prophetically of Pentecost: "John indeed baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." But there He did not use the expression "born again," and was using the word baptised in a transferred sense, intending a strengthening or confirmation of the Church, which He had already founded, in its mission by a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. After Pentecost, individuals received this further communication of the Spirit to confirm them in their baptismal grace by a sacramental rite with the laying on of hands, as we read in Acts, 8:12-17 of the Samaritans baptised by Philip the deacon and confirmed in the Holy Spirit by the apostles Peter and John.

502. I am told that, by its very name, only a Pentecostal Church can be the right one.

That overlooks the fact that on the day of Pentecost there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon an already existing Church, not to create a new Church. Much earlier Christ had called His twelve apostles, training them Himself and founding His Church upon them. To them He gave teaching, ruling and sanctifying powers, promising that the Holy Spirit would come upon them to confirm them in their apostolate, and His whole Church with them. It is simply to omit whole areas of New Testament teaching to imagine that the Church is primarily a charismatic or pentecostal movement. Primarily, the Church is a divinely organised society having three bonds of unity, the Faith taught by Christ, the Sacraments instituted by Him, and acknowledgment of the authority or jurisdiction of the Apostles and their successors in virtue of the Office Christ entrusted to them.

503. I read in "Time" magazine, March 29, 1963, that the practice of "glossolalia" or "speaking in tongues", was spreading throughout America among Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists, as well as among Pentecostals.

Reports from many other sources corroborate that; but one is left with serious misgivings about such an innovation. One Episcopalian clergyman, of Seattle, U.S.A., said he had greatly increased congregations since the introduction of glossolalia, the people finding it a thrilling experience. But a question arises concerning the value of that religiously. The motives are suspect when thrill-seeking people attend a church who would not be there for the sake of worshipping God but who are eager for their own self-centred entertainment. Also, an exponent of the art of "speaking in tongues" said the recipe is: "Put your vocal chords in motion, making unintelligible sounds, and rely on God to take them over." If so, the initiative does not rest with the Holy Spirit, but with the people who decide to "speak in tongues." The phenomenon would be a self-induced one and could not rightly be likened to that which occurred on the day of Pentecost when those who spoke did so "as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts, 2:4.

504. If the Holy Spirit is not responsible for such outbreaks of glossolalia, how can they be accounted for?

They can quite well be merely an abnormal psychological and natural

phenomenon, due to emotional tensions often ♦ although not necessarily ♦ associated with religion. Thus a psychiatrist recently described the rock-'n'-roll frenzy as a "communicable disease." We know from group psychology that a crowd becomes irrational as soon as it is emotionally charged. There is no reason why the same aberration should not occur in an atmosphere of religious excitement. In the Greek pagan religions it was quite usual for pent-up feelings to express themselves in unintelligible outcries, a torrent of unmeaning sounds, yet so varied and modulated as to seem like a regular language. The "New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture" (n.630h) says that this "was certainly a feature of manifestations of religious fervour in the Hellenistic world," and suggests that the "indiscriminate ecstatic 'speaking with tongues' which Paul deprecates at Corinth (I Cor., 12-14) is a legacy brought by these recent converts from the religious services of their pagan past." There is a law of mental unity in groups, the members of which can be worked up to a conditioned state, contagious of its very nature, and it cannot be taken for granted that the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues" is necessarily due to the influence of the Holy Spirit, however sincerely religious the people may be who thus meet together for the sake of such exotic mutual experiences.

505. Has the Catholic Church in post-apostolic times ever encouraged public "speaking in tongues"?

Her liturgical rites in their very earliest forms made no provision for it at all. The phenomenon, however initially useful for the growth of the infant Church, had for all practical purposes ceased by the first half of the second century. It is noteworthy that St. John's Gospel, written long after the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul, and so rich in its teachings about the Holy Spirit, presents that Holy Spirit, as Rudolf Schnackenburg stresses in his book "New Testament Theology Today," p. 96, not as the source of prophetic and ecstatic gifts, but as the inner principle of life, continuing and perfecting the Lord's work of salvation and sanctification. Although through subsequent centuries there have been occasional individual mystics who have manifested involuntarily an ability to speak in strange languages, usually when in a state of rapture, no disorderly epidemic of public "tonguespeaking" has arisen in the Catholic Church; and, as with all abnormal phenomena, the ecclesiastical authorities would be very slow to admit such a practice as supernatural in origin, exhausting every possible natural explanation first.

506. Surely the Church has had the experience of special interventions of the Holy Spirit throughout her history?

She has had such experiences, but experiences also of false claims to guidance by the Holy Spirit. About 170 A.D. the notorious Montanus incited his followers in Phrygia to cultivate "speaking in tongues," and claimed that they were Spirit-filled, their unintelligible praying and singing being signs of the truth of his sect. The Catholic Church responded by condemning Montanism as a fraudulent heresy. In the 13th century the Cistercian Abbot Joachim of Fiore, a holy man personally, died, leaving in writing his doctrine that there were three ages of history; that of the Father, till the end of the Old Testament dispensation; that of the Son, covering the New Testament dispensation of grace through the institutional and hierarchical Christian Church during forty-two generations of thirty years each; and that of the Holy Spirit, to commence in 1260 A.D. with the purely "Spiritual Church." Abbot Joachim died in 1202; but his prophecy captivated the imagination of many later disciples, such as the Fraticelli and the "Spiritual Franciscans," who, going beyond anything Joachim had said, declared both the Old and New Testaments superseded, and that they were "Joachim's new order of spiritual men," commissioned by the Holy Spirit to preach "The Eternal Gospel," even in defiance of ecclesiastical authorities. The Church reacted by condemning the writings of Joachim (although not Joachim himself) during the Lateran Council in 1215; the revolutionary movement of his disciples was outlawed by Pope Alexander IV in 1256, after fifty years of religious disturbances. In the 17th century the Jansenist heresy arose, making claims to a special guidance by the Holy Spirit and to extraordinary phenomena in confirmation of it, causing confusion and distress among many of the faithful for well over a hundred years in Belgium, Holland, Germany, France and Italy, despite several condemnations by the Church. There is an axiom worth recalling that those who learn nothing from mistakes in past history are destined to repeat them.

507. Acceptance of the Holy Spirit's charismatic gifts could constitute the new ecumenical bond of unity among all professing Christians.

There is no evidence in the New Testament that even in apostolic times possession of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit constituted the bond of unity among Christians. On the contrary, the very exercise of such gifts by those who received them ♦ and not all did ♦ was subject to the unifying authority of the apostles. Christ had sent His apostles to teach all nations (Matt., 28:20), having given them the power of

ruling and sanctifying the faithful (Matt., 18:18). Acts, 20:28, records St. Paul's admonition to the bishops assembled at Ephesus that they should fulfil the duties the Holy Spirit had imposed upon them to rule the Church of God. To Titus, 1:5, St. Paul wrote: "For this cause I left you in Crete, to set things in order and ordain priests in every city." Similarly, he wrote to Timothy, whom he had ordained as a bishop, saying: "These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth." (2 Tim., 4:12); and to Christians generally: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them; for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls." Heb., 13:7. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit which promoted the growth of the early Church were in the Church, for the Church, and subject in their exercise to the ordinary ministerial authority of the Church.

508. The American "National Catholic Reporter", May 17, 1967, under the heading: "People Having a Good Time Praying", described some new "Catholic Pentecostals" in U.S.A., saying they experience the same "baptism in the Spirit" as Protestant

The title of the article is not encouraging, for "having a good time" is suspect as a motive for taking up any new forms of religious worship. From a Catholic point of view, an additional reason for uneasiness arises from the fact that the excited Catholic originators of the movement quite irregularly attended a Protestant Pentecostal prayermeeting, in order to receive at the hands of its leaders a so-called "baptism in the Spirit" and the power to "speak in tongues." There are no sound reasons for believing these endowments to be genuinely charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. In any case, the practices these enthusiastic Catholics have adopted form no part of the official liturgy of the Catholic Church; and however widespread this new epidemic may become, it will prove ephemeral and but a temporary episode in her history.

509. These new "Catholic Pentecostals" profess firm adherence to the Catholic Church in all her doctrine, worship and disciplinary authority, and especially fidelity to the Mass and the Sacraments.

That is rather off-set by the way in which the movement began, and by statements of participants in it that, despite such professions of fidelity, the practice of their religion had left them with an "inner emptiness" until they experienced the excitement of their "Pentecostal Prayer Meetings." Also, although it is now nearly three years since the Second Vatican Council ended, Pope Paul VI has regularly complained that declarations of loyalty to its decisions have only too often been accompanied by departures from its spirit and its actual decrees. As for Catholic principles of the spiritual life, the Saints are unanimous in declaring that extraordinary gifts are neither to be sought nor even desired; that such gifts are not necessarily signs of holiness; and that self-deception can only too easily attribute them to the Holy Spirit. The difference between genuine spirituality and that of the mere ecstatic is that the latter simply exploits the subconscious self. It is better to live by a deep interior spirit of supernatural faith without "fire-works" ♦ the faith which is "the substance of things to be hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen" (Heb., 11:1); and which merits our Lord's tribute: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." (Jn., 20:29). St. Paul summed things up sensibly in his programme: "Renouncing irreligion and worldly desires, live soberly, justly and godly in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." Titus, 2:12.

510. When warning us against false prophets, did not Christ say: "By their fruits you will know them"? Matt., 7:10.

He did not say that we would immediately know false prophets by their fruits, for the fruits of their teachings and practices may manifest their real nature only in the long run. In Matt., 24:24, He says that "false Christs and false prophets will arise to deceive, if possible, even the elect." If they are false Christs, they will at first appear to be good; somehow they will look like Christ, or they would deceive nobody. Therein lies the danger. Error lives on the partial truth it contains. Its evil effects will betray it eventually. Also, our Lord was concerned, not so much with the personal moral character of those claiming to have a message from God, as with the disastrous results of their doctrines and guidance. The personal character of the Cistercian Abbot Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202) is admitted by all biographers to have been above reproach; yet his prediction of the "Age of the Holy Spirit," to begin in 1260 A.D., led his disciples sadly astray, with deplorable results. Jansenism, from 1640 onwards, for over 150 years, deceived many bishops, priests, nuns and laity in several countries, claiming the approval of the Holy Spirit through falsely reported miracles at the tomb of the Jansenist deacon, Francois De Paris, who died in 1727. Looking back now we realise that erroneous teachings and practices will, not at once and to everyone, but finally and at least to a majority in the Church, betray their true nature by the fruits they produce.

511. Newspapers report that "Catholic Pentecostals" are rapidly forming numerous groups throughout the United States.

That may well be; nor would it be surprising if the movement spread beyond the United States to other countries. It is too early yet (1968) to foresee its future developments. Everywhere there are to be found impressionable people, attracted by the promise of extraordinary experiences forming them into a kind of "spiritual elite," and lifting them far above the principles and practices the ordinary faithful have been taught by their Catholic religion. But the sense of novelty wears off; feelings and moods are variable; the movement may prove not to have lived up to expectations; and loss of interest may result in the fading away of yet another religious experiment which will take its place in the pages of forgotten history as so many such experiments in the past. Personally, I would regard as immeasurably safer and more valuable such less ostentatious charisms as that bestowed by the Holy Spirit on a Frederic Ozanam, impelling him in 1833 to found the St. Vincent de Paul Society consisting of laymen anonymously devoted to personal service of the poor and destitute, seeking no benefit to themselves except the privilege of serving them, or rather of serving Christ in them ♦ a Society exemplifying religion "pure and undefiled before God," as St. James puts it, and which to this day is a source of grace to the members themselves and of so much edification both within and far beyond the confines of the Catholic Church.

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