

Lessons In The Catholic Faith

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A complete course of instructions requires thirty or thirty five days. If the priests give the lessons twice a week, three and one-half or four months of instructions will be required. Usually two priests work together; while one priest is instructing, the other priest is interviewing and helping individuals privately in an office outside of the classroom.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE INSTRUCTION IS THE REVIEW OF LESSONS
THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAUGHT. BE FAITHFUL TO IT.**

LESSONS IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH

FOREWARD

Lessons in the Catholic Faith is a re-print of the 1954 edition of United Book Service's *Instructions For Non-Catholics*. This book served as a catechetical aid throughout the Diocese of Chicago, particularly in preparing the non-Catholic for Baptism. The change in the title reflects the recent publisher's intent for this work: that all, especially those new to the Faith, may come to know the Roman Catholic Faith in all her traditional values using short, informative lessons.

This book was written as a combined effort of several parish priests of the Chicago Diocese. They saw a need for a manual that could lead the non-Catholic step-by-step to a knowledge of the Faith he was about to embrace, a knowledge based on love. Ultimately this study would bring him to a devout practice of his new-found religion, lasting, trustfully, until death.

Lessons in the Catholic Faith will serve to reacquaint a modern world with that Catholicism which, for centuries since the time of Jesus Christ, has helped to give sanctity to all who believe, follow and love His teachings and that of His Church. It will be of great benefit to all, catechumen and practicing Catholic alike.

This edition is the third printing of this time-honored volume. A new format as well as a new typeface have been chosen to make the book a little easier to read. While no substantial changes have been made to the content, a traditional "updating" has taken place in order to answer some of the questions of our modern age. We are sure the readers will find this new edition of great aid in furthering their Catholic instruction.

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS COURSE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This book contains the course of instructions given in many parishes in the City of Chicago. We hope it will help you. Though the book is rather simple, you will find that you will have to study it well in order to enjoy your instructions and profit from them.

BE REGULAR IN YOUR ATTENDANCE

Above all, come to each class the priest is giving for you. As you go through these instructions you will realize that there are no other lessons, no other activities so important as your religious instructions. Attend every class of instructions. A little child in the elementary school must go to school every day, five days a week. If he goes Monday and Tuesday and stays home Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, he certainly will not learn very much. You are asked to be regular at the school you are now attending — your instructions in religion. If you miss one or the other class you might be confused later on. One lesson is built upon another. The tenth or eleventh lesson, for example, cannot be understood without the first lesson, the second lesson, and all the lessons up to the tenth lesson.

ATTEND MASS REGULARLY TOO

Begin to attend Mass now. Consider your attendance at Mass on Sunday morning and the Holydays as part of this course of instructions. Come to Mass at any hour of the morning the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated at the Catholic Church in your area. If you so desire, you can go to early Mass; if you want to sleep on Sunday, attend a later Mass. Attendance at church on Sunday is the law of God. It is not something we Catholics make our people do just to make it difficult for them. The habit of going to church only when it pleases you is a serious sin. God's laws about Sunday worship are for all, not for Catholics only.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS TO INSTRUCTIONS TOO

While you are taking instructions bring some friends with you. Everyone is welcome. No one will try "to make them Catholics." We do not force people into the Catholic Church. As a matter of fact, you will see as you go on, that the priest is very cautious about admitting people into the Catholic Church. All are most welcome to become Catholic after the instructions are complete and if they have gone regularly to Mass; but even then the priest will accept only those who he thinks are ready and anxious to enter the Church.

ASK QUESTIONS WHENEVER YOU WANT TO DO SO

Whenever you do not understand something Father is explaining, ask him questions. Do not think you are slow to understand. The person who asks questions shows he is interested and makes the lesson easier for himself and for the priest. Do not be afraid; Father is glad to hear your questions, and he is anxious to give you the answers.

EACH CLASS LASTS ONE AND A HALF HOURS

Most priests arrange this work so that the class period is about one hour and a half. Half of this time is used to review past lessons. The other half of the time is used for explaining a new lesson.

THE MORE IMPORTANT PART OF THE CLASS IS THE REVIEW WORK

The review work is done by the priest asking questions of the entire class. The priest will ask very simple questions.

If you do not know the answers, do not worry. The priest will go over the matter so often that you cannot help but learn the answers as you go on. Cooperate with Father by studying the lessons at home.

HOW MANY DAYS OF INSTRUCTION IN ALL?

There will be thirty or thirty-five days of instruction. The whole period will be under four months if you come to instructions twice a week. Read this book and other good books the priest will recommend. At all times you may use your Bible at home to confirm various points the priest explains in the lessons.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

May God bless you now in your good endeavor. Pray daily that God may give you light to understand His teachings, and courage to live according to them. You may be sure that the priest who is instructing you will pray for you every day.

LESSON 1

RELIGION

"Religiousness shall keep and justify the heart: it shall give joy and gladness." (Ecclus. 1:18)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The twentieth century man has many false ideas about religion. Since you are embarking on a three or four month period of religious instructions, you must gain a true idea of religion. You will find religion the most interesting and most necessary subject you have ever studied. What you study will help you combat the errors of our time. It will make you a good citizen -- of our nation and of our heavenly homeland.

A. WHAT IS RELIGION?

Religion means quite simply: believing all God wants you to believe, and doing your duties to God, your neighbor, and to yourself.

B. RELIGION IS BELIEVING WHAT GOD TEACHES US

Religion teaches what God wants you to believe. If there is a God, He would tell you certain things. This is called *revelation*. You must believe not what you want to, but what God teaches you to believe. You cannot pick and choose God's teachings. In religion, you believe not because your mother told you to, or because the priest said something is so, but ultimately because God has revealed or told you to believe certain truths. It is what you know in your heart to be true based on God's revelation.

A man without religion is like a ship without a rudder; there is no direction to his life. He is not going any place. The most important things in life are learned only from the study of religion. Who are you? Are you just an animal, or more than an animal? Have you only a body, or do you have a soul too? Where are you going? Is the grave the end of it all? Will God really reward the good and punish the wicked? Or is it all nonsense? Is there really a heaven and a hell? Is there a set of rules from God? What are they? Every man wants the answers to these questions, and he wants proof of the answers. The answers are found in the study of religion. We shall give them to you in this course of instructions, and shall furnish proof in each instance.

C. RELIGION TEACHES YOU YOUR DUTIES TO GOD

You are not your own boss. You are dependent on God just as your children are dependent on you. You owe God honor, reverence and obedience because God gave you life. Through religion you learn your duties to God. You go to school to learn religion and your religious duties in the same way that you go to school to learn arithmetic, geography or any other subject. So now in taking these instructions you are going to school.

D. RELIGION ALSO TEACHES YOU YOUR DUTIES TO YOURSELF

It is important that you learn how to stay away from sin, how to obey God's laws, how to get into heaven and how to avoid hell. You are very important to God and to yourself. In this course of study you will learn the duties you have to yourself.

E. RELIGION TEACHES YOU YOUR DUTIES TO YOUR NEIGHBOR

God placed you on earth to live among others; therefore, it is necessary to learn your obligations to them. There is no such thing as a solitary human being. Because of your association with others, you have certain duties and obligations to them. When we do not fulfill these duties there is chaos in society. Religion teaches us these duties.

F. WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WORLD WITHOUT RELIGION?

You do not have to wait until the next world to see the result of religious ignorance, or of failure to live according to the teachings of religion. Look about any city. It is full of broken hearts and broken homes, divorces, unfaithful husbands, children neglected by their parents, young criminals.

Lack of knowledge about any necessary subject in life brings terrible unhappiness. If you do not know how to care for your health, you may soon be in physical pain and misery. If you do not take care of your life, if you do not know even the meaning of life, you will be in mental and physical misery. What is the great unhappiness of your life? Surely it is not the physical ills and sufferings to which everyone is subjected. Is it your marriage? Is it your husband? Is it one of your children? No matter what the difficulty is, it has come from ignorance of religion or from a lack of the practice of religion.

G. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE NEXT WORLD WITHOUT RELIGION?

If you do not learn the teachings of the God who created you nor live according to them, you will merit the curse of Christ on judgment day: *"Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)*

We shall have a whole lesson on Hell later in this book.

H. A WORD TO PARENTS

Parents sometimes have the mistaken notion that the Catholic school has a magic formula to make children good. They act as if the nun takes each child to the front of the room, waves a wand over the little one and says, "Now, you be good," and the child automatically becomes good. This is nonsense! The goodness you see in Catholic school children is due to religion.

The school is only an aid to the parents. The priests and sisters supervise the children five hours a day, while they are in *your* care nineteen hours. If you are careless, or ignorant of religion, your child is usually the same. The Catholic school is no substitute for parents. As a matter of fact, parents have a superior influence over their children. Place the parents on one side of the school hall, the nuns on the other, and the children in the center; then tell the children to choose either their parents or the nuns, whom would they choose? The parents, of course, because of their greater influence. This is nature. Children are influenced more by parents than by any other people.

Here is a true story. A young lad was about to be put to death in the County Jail in Chicago. The priest accompanied him on the sorrowful death march from the cell to the electric chair. As is the custom, the warden asked the poor condemned boy if he had anything to say before he died. The warden's question had a surprising reaction on the young fellow. He became red with rage at a time when every one thought he would have been full of sorrow, or fear, or despair. As he pointed to his parents he said, "My mother and father over there should be in this electric chair. They taught me nothing about God or religion, or of living a good life. I learned it all from the Chaplain, Father Sheil, when it was too late to live."

This was the beginning of the Catholic Youth Organization in Chicago under Bishop Bernard J. Shiel. However, no school, no youth organization, can make up for what the parents should do.

I. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU IN THIS WORLD IF YOU HAVE RELIGION?

When you have religion, you have peace of soul, and the contentment that comes from leading a good life according to the principles of faith. You have real happiness—a happiness you get from no other source.

Truly the psalmist says "*Much peace have they that love thy law: and to them there is no stumbling block.*" (*Psalms*. 118:65).

J. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU IN THE NEXT WORLD IF YOU HAVE RELIGION?

God Himself guarantees heaven:

Then shall the King say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (*Matthew* 25:34) "*That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.*" (*I Cor.* 2:9).

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is religion?
2. What happens in this world without religion?
3. What happens in the next world without religion?
4. What do you get out of religion in this world?

NOTES

LESSON 2

MASS

*"For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles:
and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation.
For my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachias 1:11)*

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The purpose of these instructions is not only to impart knowledge. The more important purpose is to instill a practice of the Christian faith. If you are serious about this course of religious instructions, you must start attending Mass every Sunday and Holyday of Obligation.

A. THE OBLIGATION OF WORSHIP ARISING FROM THE LIFE GOD HAS GIVEN YOU

You know you are made by God. God gave you life. God makes it possible for you at this very moment to breathe, to walk, to talk. God keeps that little organ, the heart, beating in your breast. He gives you food and clothing. Make a list of what God has given you. He gives you everything. You give yourself nothing. The point is that you must acknowledge that God gives you everything you have. You acknowledge it by your private prayers, but especially by worshipping God, both in private and in public. To worship means to acknowledge your total dependence on God. You must worship your God. You are indebted to God. You cannot repay Him for what he has given you, but you can and you must recognize and acknowledge what He has done.

B. THE OBLIGATION OF SUNDAY WORSHIP FROM THE LAW OF GOD

So that you will not forget Him, God Himself tells you in the First Commandment, "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before Me." Then more directly in the Third Commandment, God says to you: "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day." The obligation of worship on a particular day of the week we find in the Bible.

C. THE OBLIGATION OF SUNDAY WORSHIP FROM THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A PARENT

This section is addressed to parents. If you are not married yet, read it anyway, because some day with the help of God you hope to be married, and to become a mother or father.

Parents must worship God on Sunday if they want their children to be good. One of the reasons Priests and religious sacrifice their lives is to make your children good boys and girls. If parents fail to worship God on Sunday they are destroying one of the basic influences of the Catholic school system.

D. YOUR ANCESTORS WORSHIPPED GOD ON SUNDAY

Let us be practical about this matter of Sunday worship. Today many non-Catholics go to church when they please. Not so your good non-Catholic grandfather and grandmother. Sunday was the Lord's Day. The Lord came first on Sunday. They knew they had an obligation to go to church every Sunday. You have the same obligation before God. All the priest is asking you to do is to come back at least to this part of your ancestor's Christianity. Then you are on the road to practical Christianity.

E. LET US EXPLAIN THE OBLIGATION NOW

You probably know that all Catholics are seriously obliged to attend Mass every Sunday. God made all of us, and God made the same laws for all of us. There is not one set of God's laws for Catholics and another set for those who are not in the Catholic Church. Therefore, we insist that everyone who has any idea at all that he wants to be a Catholic must go to Mass. There are fifty-two Sundays and in the United States six Holydays of Obligation. Anyone who is serious about Christianity must assist at Mass on these days, even when busy at home. There are valid understandable excuses for not worshipping God publicly on these fifty-eight days. They will be explained when we explain the Third Commandment. For the present, try to understand that it is a serious sin to miss Mass without a serious excuse.

F. WHAT IS THE MASS?

The Mass today is the same as the Last Supper. The priest at Mass brings down upon the altar Our Lord, Jesus Christ, offers Him to God for our sins, and gives Him to the people in Holy Communion.

To explain the Mass, therefore, we must go back to the Last Supper. At the Last Supper there is Christ, the Son of God. He had come to unite us to Himself by His teachings and by His wonderful example of goodness. He had finished His public career. He had tried to unite heaven with earth. He had proved that He was the Son of God by His miracles. A great longing had filled the soul of Christ during the thirty-three years of His life. He wanted to unite us to Himself, to give us Himself, to make us like Him. To show this great longing to the Apostles and to us one final time he says, "*With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer.*" (Luke 22:15) It was the night before He was to suffer and to die for our sins.

Having given us His teachings and example, and about to give up His very life on the cross, He is still not satisfied with His work for us. He must give us His own Body and Blood at the Supper Table and in subsequent Masses, so that He will be united

to us and we will be united to Him forever. He looks down the long corridors of the years and sees how He can give Himself to all, even when He will have left the world. Christ then and there changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood and gave the Apostles the power to perform the same act.

“And taking bread, He gave thanks, broke and gave to them, saying ‘This is My Body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me.’”

“In like manner, the chalice also, after He had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you.” (Luke 22:19-20)

Christ did not say: *“Pretend this is My Body and Blood.” “Let us imagine it is My Body and Blood.” “Close your eyes and try to believe it is My Body and Blood.” “This represents My Body and Blood.”* He said none of these things. He said, *“This is My Body . . . This is My Blood.” (Matthew 26:26-28)* After Christ changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood there was no more bread and wine on the supper table. It was now His Body and Blood, not bread and wine.

Christ at the Last Supper offered the first Mass and gave us the most beautiful prayer there is, and the highest kind of worship we can give Almighty God.

G. CHRIST GAVE THE POWER TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES

After Christ changed the bread and wine into His Body and Blood, He gave this same power to the twelve Apostles. He said: *“Do this for a commemoration of me.” (Luke 22:19)*

With these words Christ gave the power and the command to the Apostles. In other words, Christ said: You do this action from now on — change bread and wine into My Body and Blood.

H. THE APOSTLES GAVE THE POWER TO OTHER BISHOPS AND PRIESTS

The Apostles offered Mass. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians in the Bible, we find St. Paul speaking of that offering. The successors of the Apostles have this same power today. These successors are the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. Your parish priest has the power to say Mass for the people. He received that power from the Sacrament of Holy Orders when the bishop ordained him. Only Catholic priests and bishops have this power.

How do you know when the sacred moment of consecration has arrived? After the altar boy has rung the bell, you will see the priest bend low over the altar. He says, *“This is My Body.”* Then the priest bends his knee to Christ whom he has in his hands, raises Jesus over his head for you to see and adore while the altar boy rings the bell again. Then the priest bends over the cup of wine and says: *“This is My Blood.”* He bends his knee to the floor once more, and raises over his head the cup containing Jesus Christ, as the altar boy again rings the bell. When the priest says these sacred words, Christ becomes present on the altar and offers Himself to God for us.

I. BE AT HOME IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Begin attending Mass every Sunday and Holyday of Obligation. Be at home in the Catholic Church. The priest and the people want you there. Christ wants you.

Don't worry about when to stand or sit. Just follow the congregation. There is one very simple rule to follow—do what everybody else does, but DO NOT receive Holy Communion.

Christ is there for you as well as for the Catholics who are present. Christ is there offering Himself to God for you in the most beautiful act of public worship there is. Christ is present on the altar praying for you, and helping you to understand the instructions you are receiving in the Catholic Church. At Mass you offer the most perfect and most powerful prayer you can offer and you are doing it with Christ and through Christ. This prayer cannot be refused by God the Father, because it is a prayer offered principally by His Son.

Anyone who wants to become a Catholic must assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every Sunday and Holyday of Obligation during the course of instructions. Ask your parish priest the hours of Masses on Sunday and on the six Holydays of the year.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is the Mass?
2. Who said the first Mass?
3. Where did your parish priest get the power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ?
4. Is it a sin to miss Mass?

LESSON 3

THE BIBLE AND TRADITION

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Most people who begin these instructions in religion love the Holy Bible. You should thank God that you, too, love the Bible. Throughout these instructions we will refer to the Bible and use it often to prove what we teach you.

In this instruction we will prove that what the Bible says must be accepted as the Word of God. We hope that this lesson will increase your love for the Bible.

In this lesson we will teach you another source of God's teachings — Tradition.

A GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a collection of books written under the inspiration of God.

God is the author of the Bible. For this reason the Bible is the greatest of all books. The men who wrote the words were only instruments in the Hand of God, something like the chalk is an instrument in your hand when you write on the blackboard. If I ask you, "Who is writing?" you answer immediately, "I am." The chalk is only an instrument in your hand. The chalk must be guided by you. So in a somewhat similar manner with the Bible: God is the author. The men were instruments in the Hand of God. God is the real author.

B. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE?

Christ, the Apostles, and the Catholic Church have always taught that the Bible had God as its author.

Christ Himself used the Bible as the Word of God; the Jews believed that the Bible was the Word of God, and Christ approved their belief.

Christ said to the Jewish people: *"Search the scriptures: for you think in them to have life everlasting. And the same are they that give testimony of me."* (John 5:39) See also Luke 24:27; John 10:31-36; Acts 4:25.

St. Peter tells us that the truths in the Bible came from God the Holy Ghost: *"For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time: but the holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost."* (2 Peter 1:21)

Down through the ages the Catholic Church has taught that God is the Author of the Bible.

For example, in the year 393 the Church officially declared the Bible to be the "divine Scriptures"; that means that God is the author. The Catholic Church has constantly repeated this teaching. In the year 1893 Pope Leo XIII taught: *"For, by supernatural power, He (God) so moved and impelled them (the human writers) to write. He was so present to them that the things which he ordered and those only, they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth."* (Pope Leo XIII—Nov. 18, 1893)

C. HOW MUCH OF THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD?

The whole Bible is from God. Therefore you cannot ignore the parts of the Bible you don't like.

For example, if the Bible says there is only one true Church made by God, you must accept this truth. If the Bible gives us definite laws about marriage and the married life, you must live according to those laws. You must accept everything contained in the Bible as the teaching of God Himself.

Everything in the Bible is true. There are no errors in the Bible because God is its author and God cannot deceive us.

D. THE CATHOLIC BIBLE

The Catholic Bible is the original and complete Bible. The Catholic Church has always insisted that we accept the whole Bible. The Bible used by Catholics today is the same Bible that has been preserved down through the ages by the Catholic Church.

Before the invention of printing priests and religious brothers in monasteries copied the Bible by hand and thus preserved it for mankind.

The Church has translated the Bible into various languages, so that everyone can read the Bible. Besides, she gives special spiritual favors to those who read the Bible.

The Catholic Church has set up the Biblical Commission under the Pope to preserve intact the Bible amidst the confusion of Bibles which are incomplete or have been changed. You can see why it is important to have the complete Bible and the original Bible, just as it was given to us by God. Besides guaranteeing that we have the complete and original Bible, the Biblical Commission helps us to understand difficult and obscure parts of the Bible. A Catholic Bible has the bishop's signature with the word *Imprimatur*. This means that the Catholic Church declares officially that this is the original and complete Bible.

E. THE PROTESTANT BIBLES

The so-called Protestant Bible leaves out seven whole books or sections of the complete Bible: Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus, First and Second Machabees as well as parts of Esther and Daniel. Incomplete Bibles were printed in the sixteenth century by various groups that left the Catholic Church. These new religious groups tampered with the ancient Bible. The King James version used by most Protestants in the United States is an incomplete Bible. Several well-known Protestant

scholars deplore the fact that the Protestant Bible commonly used in America is incomplete. Doctor Godspeed and Sir Frederick Kenyon, eminent Protestant biblical scholars, are most disturbed that the Protestant Bibles have omitted whole books of the original Bible. One Protestant group recently edited a Bible and called it "The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments." This finally gives the Protestant people the whole Bible—it contains the seven books which Catholics have always had.

F. MISUNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

The Bible contains no errors, because it is from God. But even though it contains no errors, men can still misunderstand it. Some draw high ideals and noble courage from this sacred book. But others misunderstand the Bible and get strange and even perverted notions of what they should do.

Because of these misunderstandings some people gouge out their eyes, others allow themselves to be stung by poisonous snakes; others refuse to fight a just war, because of literal interpretations of passages that are obviously symbolic and metaphorical.

G. PRIVATE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

People misunderstand the Bible because of the false principle of private interpretation. According to this principle the individual who reads the Bible is inspired by God so that he cannot make a mistake.

But this principle is utterly false. The Bible makes no such guarantee. Rather it warns us that some will twist it to their own destruction.

"As also in all his (Paul's) epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:16)

Many parts of the Bible are mysterious and difficult to understand. A priest studies the Bible for many years in the seminary; but even after these years of study, he must go to scripture scholars to find out the correct meaning of certain texts. And even scripture scholars, who spend a great part of their lives studying the Bible, find it difficult to understand certain sections.

Around the year 375 St. Jerome, a great scripture scholar and Catholic priest, translated the Bible into Latin. He became very angry with unlettered, unstable and foolish men who misread, misinterpreted, or misquoted the Bible.

"You cannot make your way into the Holy Scriptures without having someone to go before you and show you the road . . . The science of the scriptures is the only one which all persons indiscriminately claim as their own! This science the babbling old woman, the dotting old man, the wordy sophist take upon themselves. They tear it to tatters and teach before they themselves have learned.... Coming by chance to the study of the Scriptures... they fancy what they utter is the law of God, not deigning to learn what the prophets and the Apostles taught. Rather they accommodate to their interpretation the most incongruous passages as if this were something great instead of a faulty method of teaching, distorting sentences and forcing the reluctant scripture to their own whims." (Epistola 53 De Paulinum. n 7)

H. THE BIBLE NEEDS AN OFFICIAL TEACHER

Any difficult book requires a teacher. Without a teacher you cannot learn astronomy or calculus—you need more than a book. The Bible has many teachings which are difficult to understand and interpret. Therefore, the Bible needs an official teacher and interpreter appointed by Almighty God, Who is the author of the Bible. God has given us such a teacher and interpreter of the Bible—The Catholic Church.

I. TRADITION

There are many teachings of God which are not found in the Bible.

"But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John 21:25)

Tradition is a compilation of those teachings of God not written in the Bible. Some of God's teachings have been handed down by word of mouth since the time of the Apostles. These teachings of Tradition are just as true and authoritative as the explicit teachings of the Bible.

Our Lord wished many of His teachings to be brought to the world by word of mouth. Christ did not tell the Apostles to write books.

He told them to teach and preach: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Apostles carried on their work by ordaining priests.

"And when they had ordained to them priests in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed." (Acts 15:22)

The priests PREACHED. Neither Christ nor the Apostles intended to convert the world by distributing books.

All the teachings of Christ which you will learn in these instructions are found either in the Bible or in Tradition. Some of these truths cannot be found in the Bible, but only in Tradition. A good example of a truth found only in Tradition is the substitution of Sunday for Saturday as the Lord's Day. You cannot find this practice in the Bible; it comes only from Tradition.

LESSON 4 GOD AND THE BLESSED TRINITY

"I am the First, and I am the Last: and besides me there is no God. (Isaias 44:6)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The whole purpose of your life is to go to God. Religion teaches us the means by which we go to God, the means by which we give to God honor and service due Him as Creator, Master and Supreme Lord. Through religion you learn about God, how to love Him, and how to serve Him.

A. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "GOD"

By "God" we mean, the Supreme Being, the Creator of all things. We mean the one "who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all the things that are in them." (Psalm 145: 6) To create means to make something out of nothing. God is the creator of all things because He made all things out of nothing. A creature is anything created by God. Men, angels, animals, plants, chairs—all things except God—are creatures.

B. THERE IS A GOD

As you are walking, suppose that you find a watch on the sidewalk. You pick it up and look at it. You see that it gives you the correct time. You open it up and look at the wheels and springs which keep the watch running. You see that dozens of tiny cogs, wheels and springs are set up very accurately so that one wheel moves the other, so that one spring acts on another spring, so that one cog rotates another. What a marvelous and complicated piece of machinery. You know that you would not dare to take it all apart unless you knew how to repair watches. You know that you could not possibly put all the hundreds of pieces back together so that the watch would tell time again.

Imagine, that as you are thinking of all of this, a friend comes up and says to you: "Do you know who made that watch?" You might say: "I don't know his name. But I do know that it was someone who knew a lot more about watches than I do. He had a fine mind to be able to arrange hundreds of tiny pieces together, so that they give the correct time of the day. It took a lot of intelligence, planning and labor to plan that watch." Your friend looks at you and scoffs: "Why that watch made itself. No one planned it or designed it. No one made it. It just happened that way: the wheels and cogs came together by themselves." You would tell your friend that he was joking. How could any sane man talk such nonsense. Only a fool would say that the watch had no maker.

Now let us examine something billions of times larger and more complicated: the world in which we live. The earth turns around at the rate of one thousand miles an hour. If it turned at one hundred miles an hour, our days and nights would be ten times as long as now, and the hot sun would burn up the plants and trees during the long day. While in the long night any surviving sprout would freeze. Again, the sun has a temperature of 12,000 degrees (Fahrenheit) on its surface, and our earth is just far enough away so that this "Eternal Fire" warms us just enough and not too much. If the sun gave off only half its present radiation, we would freeze, if it gave half as much more, we would roast. If the crust of the earth had been only ten feet thicker, there would be no oxygen, without which animal life must die. If the ocean had been a few feet deeper, carbon dioxide and oxygen would have been absorbed and no plant life would exist.

The earth on which we live is only one of nine planets which travel around the sun as their center at tremendous speeds—thousands of times faster than the fastest jet plane. Each planet has its own path or orbit in which to travel about the sun. These planets—many of them much larger than our earth—have traveled in these paths for thousands of years, and they never stray out of their orbits, never collide with one another. They have moved at the very same speed for century after century—never slowing down, never speeding up. Did you know that our earth moves eighteen miles a second, 65,000 miles an hour. It travels 1,500,000 miles a day and moves at this very same speed day after day, year after year, century after century— never even a second off schedule?

As you can see, the watch is a simple toy compared to our world. Yet no one would admit that the watch did not have a maker. Then how can anyone say the order and harmony of the world in which we live is a mere accident—that the earth, the sun and the moon have no Maker. Common sense tells you that if a watch requires a maker, a world that is billions of times larger and more complicated must have a Maker. The Maker of our universe, and the one who preserves the order and harmony of that universe, is God.

Now you understand what David meant in the Book of Psalms when he said: "*The heavens show forth the glory of God: and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.*" (Psalms 18:2) "*Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: because he hath done wonderful things.*"

An atheist is one who denies that there is a God.

"*The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God.*" (Psalms 13:1) A man usually becomes an atheist either because he loves himself too much (pride) or because he gives in to his passions (sensuality). There are very few real atheists. Atheism, or denying God's existence, is a terrible sin.

C. GOD IS A SPIRIT

The Bible tells us: "God is a spirit." (John 4:24) Everything that exists is either material or spiritual. A material thing is something that you can see, touch, smell, or hear. A spiritual thing is real, but it is not material. Angels are spiritual beings. Your thoughts and your will are spiritual; you have never seen a thought on the movie screen because no one can take a picture of a thought; it is spiritual. Man is partly spiritual and partly material—he has a soul and a body. God is a spirit—He has no body; therefore you cannot see God.

D. GOD IS EVERYWHERE

God is everywhere. God is in the stars, the sun, the moon; God is in the earth, in this room; God is in the man next to you, in the food you eat, in the air you breathe. God is in your hair, your bones, your blood—God is in you. There is no place where God is not present. God is everywhere at the same time; you are always in his presence. "*Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I see from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there: if I descend into hell, thou art present.*" (Psalm 138:7,8)

E. GOD IS ALMIGHTY

To say that God is Almighty means that God can do all things. The magnificence of the things that God has created gives us an indication of the almighty power of God. He created the whole world through His almighty power speaking a simple word to have it come into being.

In the very first chapter of the Bible we read how God created the world and all that is in it: "God said: Be light made. And light was made.... Let there be a firmament.... Let the earth bring forth the green herb.... Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven . . ." and so forth. Nothing is difficult or impossible to God. He can create a million other worlds if He so chooses. He could, if He wished, destroy this world and all that is in it in an instant.

F. GOD KNOWS ALL THINGS

God knows all things, past, present, future, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions. St. Paul warns us, "*but all things are naked and open to his eyes*" (Hebrews 4:13)

G. GOD IS ETERNAL

When we say God is eternal we mean that God always was and always will be. God has no beginning. He will have no end. There was never a time when there was no God; God never began to exist; He always was.

"*Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed; from eternity and to eternity thou art God,*" says David in the 89th Psalm.

H. GOD IS ALL HOLY AND ALL JUST

God has all perfections without limit. But holiness is a perfection. Therefore God is all holy Himself.

Christ tells us to imitate the holiness of God: "*Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*" (Matt. 5: 48) Since God has every perfection, He is all just. Since God hates evil, He will reward the good and must punish the wicked in the next world.

I. GOD IS MERCIFUL

When we say that God is merciful, we mean that He pursues the sinner with His grace and receives him back with joy. God is all merciful because He is all good.

Christ told us that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance for his sins than there is over the ninety-nine just who do not need penance. But you should not tempt God to punish you by putting off your conversion.

J. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

God's loving care for us is called God's providence. God created every one of us; He keeps us in existence, and watches over us with loving care. If He were to forget you for an instant, you would be nothing; you would not simply die, you would not exist at all—neither body nor soul. In the midst of the problems and worries of your life, no matter how poor or insignificant you are, God loves you and watches over you with a father's care.

Christ tells us that God cares for us and that it is foolish for us to worry: "*Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or, What shall we drink: or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (Matthew 6:26-33) The good God watches over us; but sometimes He permits poverty, sickness, suffering and other trials to draw us back from sin, to punish us for our wrong doings, and to make us more like Christ by our suffering. Offer the sufferings of life to God to make up for your past sins.

K. THE BLESSED TRINITY

The Blessed Trinity is God. There is only one God, but there are three Persons in God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Christ clearly told us that there are three Persons in God when He told the Apostles to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19) God the Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity and is really God. God the Son is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity and is true God. God the Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity and is truly God. The three persons in the Blessed Trinity are equal. All three persons always existed and always will exist.

One of the Persons in God, the Second Person, Jesus Christ, became man and suffered and died for our sins.

The existence of three divine Persons in one God is a mystery. A mystery is a truth which the human mind cannot fully understand. Some of the truths of the Christian faith are mysteries. We believe these mysteries because God has told us to believe them. When we believe, we make an act of faith. Faith is believing what God has taught because God has made it known to us. We believe what God has taught because of His authority, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

For Lessons 3 & 4

1. Who is the Author of the Bible?
2. Is there any difference between the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible?
3. Does God guide the mind if everyone who reads the Bible so that the reader cannot read the Bible incorrectly?
4. Are all God's truths written in the Bible?
5. What is tradition?
6. How do we know there is a God?
7. Why can't you see God?
8. What is a spiritual thing?
9. Name some spiritual things?
10. Are spiritual things real?
11. What is the Blessed Trinity?

THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

By the soul of man we mean the principle of life in man, the principles of those actions which manifest him as a living, reasonable being. There is not much in revelation regarding this. However, there exists much about man being made up a creature of body and soul. Likewise, much has been taught by men that goes contrary to what Catholics believe about the soul.

In the early ages of Christianity, when men were trying to philosophize about the existence of evil in the world and the punishment men will receive for falling into evil, a certain group of people known as the Manicheans proposed the idea that man has two souls. They said that God made mankind with a good soul and an evil soul. It was the good soul that helped him to virtue and was attached to his spirit. The bad soul was responsible for sin and was attached to the material part of man. The good soul was held in bondage by the bad so that it was considered an act of virtue to commit suicide in order to free the good soul from the bondage of the body.

Likewise, the Arabian philosopher Averroes taught that while man had a body with bodily life, the mind of all men was one and the same Universal Mind. In other words, there was no individuality in men.

The Catholic Church tells us that there is in every man one supreme or dominant soul which makes him and his nature one. There cannot be two souls in man having war with each other. Neither is there a way to explain evil in life that takes away the responsibility man has for all his actions.

The soul of man is rational. It is the seat and principle of the actions of thought and will which are, by far, the highest actions of which a man is capable. These actions are individual and make each man unique.

Men have often pondered about the soul apart from God. This cannot be safely done. The Church is our true guide, and will save us from error.

NOTES

LESSON 5 PRAYER

"We ought always to pray" (Luke 1)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Unfortunately in this twentieth century the notion of prayer is unknown to many. Many people simply do not pray. We hope this lesson will move you to pray. As you study this lesson, resolve to say at least your morning and evening prayers on your knees each day.

A. OUR LORD PRAYED OFTEN

Christ prayed often and everywhere, in secret and in public. He often spent the whole night in prayer. (*Luke 6:12*)

Before choosing the Apostles (*Luke 12:13*), and before the Transfiguration Christ prayed (*Luke 9:28*). Christ prayed before performing miracles (*John 21:41-42*), at the Last Supper (*Matthew 26:36-44*), and on Calvary (*Luke 23-36*).

The Bible tells us that for all eternity Christ is praying for us in heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father; He continually makes intercession for us. Christ prayed so much in order to show us that we too need to pray. If prayer was necessary for Christ, how much more necessary it is for us!

B. OUR LORD COMMANDS US TO PRAY

Jesus Christ commands us to pray and tells us never to give up prayer:

"That we ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1)

"Watch ye: and pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Matthew 26:41)

"Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)

C. THE SAINTS TELL US THAT WE MUST PRAY

The saints tell us that Our Lord has already told us: "Without Me you can do nothing." St. Paul says the same thing: "*For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.*" (*Philippians 2:13*)

The Bible also tells us that we cannot think a good thought or even say the name of the Lord Jesus without God's help.

St. Augustine, the notorious sinner who became a great saint of God, tells us: "God grants the first graces without any cooperation on our part, such as vocation to the faith, or to repentance; but He grants the other graces only to those who pray."

St. John Chrysostom says: "As rain is necessary that plants may live and be refreshed so prayer is necessary for the nourishment of the life of the soul."

St. Thomas Aquinas, who had one of the most brilliant minds of all time, tells us: "After Baptism we need continual prayer in order to enter heaven." Therefore, neither these instructions nor being baptized will bring you to heaven. You must also pray, and pray often.

D. LET'S BE PRACTICAL

We can be sure that a man who goes on for years without praying commits a very serious sin. He sins because he does not give God the worship due to Him, and he runs the risk of losing his soul forever. It is also a sin to neglect prayer when prayer is absolutely necessary: in time of temptation, in danger of death, after committing mortal sin. (After you sin it is necessary to pray for sorrow and forgiveness.) Therefore, if you do not pray, you will lose your soul.

Some parents say that the Catholic school is wonderful because it teaches children to kneel down at home before the crucifix to pray. These parents are perhaps admitting that ordinarily they themselves do not pray. What a terrible admission! Please get down on your knees and pray at least in the morning and the evening. And if you are too old or too sick to kneel, pray sitting or standing. Don't say that you are too busy to save your soul!

E. WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is lifting the mind and heart to God. More simply, prayer is talking to God or conversing with Him. Forget about the pleasures of the world, forget about your anxieties, just talk to God and you are praying.

The purpose of prayer is: to adore God, to thank God, to ask God's pardon for your sins, and to ask God for the graces you need.

TO ADORE GOD. To adore God means that you acknowledge that God made you and that you depend on God for everything. When you pray this way you are adoring God.

TO THANK GOD. St. Paul says in the Bible, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (*I Cor. 4:7*) The only things that are really your own are your sins. Everything else has come to us from the hand of God. Some accuse us Americans of thanking God only once a year, on Thanksgiving Day. But every day should be Thanksgiving Day for a real Christian.

TO ASK GOD'S PARDON. If someone offends you, the least you expect is an apology to make up for the offense. Christ fasted forty days and forty nights in the desert to make up to God for your sins. His terrible agony in the garden was a prayer asking

God's pardon for your sins. He died on the cross to make up for our sins. Certainly you too must make up for your sins—you must ask God's pardon by prayer.

TO ASK GOD FOR HIS GRACES AND FAVORS. Everything good that you have received or will receive comes from God. But you cannot receive something unless God decides to give it to you. And often before He gives it to you, He wants you to ask for it by prayer.

F. WHEN YOU SHOULD PRAY

You should have more than a vague general resolution to pray always. Make a detailed practical resolution to pray at least at these times:

1. In the morning, offering the day to God, asking God's help for the trials and temptations you will meet during the day;
2. During the day, especially by saying grace before and after meals;
3. In temptation, by saying a short prayer and thus avoiding the temptation;
4. When in trouble, asking God to help you as Christ did when He was in trouble, "Being in agony He prayed the longer;"
5. Before going to bed, at night saying at least the Act of Contrition for your sins; you may die during the night.

G. TO WHOM YOU SHOULD PRAY

First of all pray directly to God, to Jesus Christ. It is also good to pray to the Saints, especially to the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Saints are in heaven; they are God's friends; God will not refuse them when they pray for you. Just as you might ask your mother to pray for you, so also you ask the Blessed Virgin and other Saints to pray for you. Some people who are disgusted with their own sins find it difficult to go directly to God; they may find it easier to pray to a Saint. If you have sinned often and seriously, pray to St. Augustine; before his conversion he was probably even worse than you are.

H. FOR WHOM YOU SHOULD PRAY

Besides praying for yourself, pray for your parents, friends, neighbors, those who are in authority, even for your enemies—for all men. Pray also for the dead; do not forget them.

The Bible tells us: "*It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.*" (2 Machabees 12:46) Therefore, it would be unholy and unwholesome to forget to pray for the dead.

I. GOD ALWAYS HEARS OUR PRAYERS

We know that God hears all your prayers.

Christ tells us: "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Luke 11:9-10)

But God sometimes does not give you what you ask for in your prayers. God is a good Father and knows what is best for you. God gives you what is good for you. Sometimes what you pray for, will not be good for you. For example, you may pray for good health; but God may know that if you had good health, you would lead a sinful life; so He will not give you the good health for which you ask. But no prayer is ever wasted; every prayer is heard. God will give you something even better than you sought.

J. ATTITUDES NECESSARY FOR PRAYER

You cannot expect God to hear your prayers if you are leading a bad life. Your prayers will be acceptable to God if you will give up your sins. God will always hear you when you pray for the grace to give up sinful habits.

You should pray with attention, with humility, with trust in God, and with perseverance.

ATTENTION. Keep your mind on God when you pray. Don't think about your plans, your worries, your business. Or if you can't get these off your mind, talk to God about them so long as you keep talking to God, you will be praying.

HUMILITY. When you pray, remember what Jesus tells us: "Without Me you can do nothing." Everything ultimately depends on God. When you pray always, be resigned to God's will; pray as Christ did in His agony in the garden; "Not My will, but Thine be done," and your prayer will be most pleasing to God.

TRUST IN GOD. If you do not trust in God completely, you cannot expect God to hear your prayer.

PERSEVERANCE. Sometimes God will not answer your prayer immediately. But keep on praying; He may wish to develop in you the habit of prayer. St. Monica prayed for thirty years that her son Augustine might be converted from his life of sin. Because she persevered in her prayer, she received much more than what she asked for—Augustine became a Saint! In the story of the troublesome friend who came at midnight to ask for bread, Our Lord tells us: "Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Luke 8)

K. CONCLUSION

We cannot stress this too much: resolve to say at least your morning and evening prayers on your knees every day.

As a part of this course of instructions you must learn by heart the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Act of Contrition, the Apostles' Creed and the Acts of Hope, Faith and Love. These prayers you can find in any Catholic prayer book and in the Appendix in the back of this book. In many instruction classes the priests lead you in saying the Rosary until you know how to use the beads.

LESSON 6 ANGELS

"Adore Him, all you His angels." (Psalms 96:7)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Everything in God's world is either material or spiritual. You must give up the notion that the only real things are material—things you can see and touch. Spiritual things are just as real as material things. Angels are spiritual beings.

Christ has told us that angels exist; therefore in order to be a Christian, you must believe that angels exist. We must believe what Christ tells us because it is God who tells us.

A. ANGELS ARE REAL

The creatures most like God are the angels. Angels are the most perfect images of God. They show forth His goodness, His majesty, and His glory. The angels are spirits; they are persons without bodies. To deny that angels exist because you cannot see them is the same as denying that you have thoughts because you cannot see your thoughts.

The number of angels is staggering. The stars visible in the summer skies are a mere handful compared with the number of the angels. All the men living in the world today are perhaps few in comparison with the army of heavenly spirits. It was not difficult for Almighty God to fill the heavens with large numbers of angels on the first Christmas night. The prophet Daniel gives us a hint of their number when he says: *"Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him."*

Angels are spirits: they do not grow or eat food or feel pain; they do not get sick, become old or die. Angels are neither men nor women, neither tall nor short, neither fat nor thin; they are not old or young, sick or healthy. Angels have no bodies—they are spirits. Don't worry about how an angel gets his clothes on over his huge wings—he has no wings, no clothes, no body!

And because angels are spirits they can travel from place to place faster than the fastest jet plane. An angel can go from Chicago to London in the time it takes you to think of Chicago and London.

Angels have tremendous knowledge. They received this knowledge directly from God when they were created. All that men have learned through patient study through the centuries, they know—and they know better than human beings will ever know. They know all the details of our world, not in a blurred fashion as we often do, but sharply, concretely, and thoroughly. Even though angels may not know the secrets of our hearts, they know a great deal about us from our actions. They can coax us to good or evil, they can threaten or frighten us.

The Bible speaks of angels more than three hundred times. The first angels mentioned in the Bible were those sent by God to keep Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden. We also read in the Old Testament that Almighty God sent an angel to accompany Tobias on a journey and another angel to protect Azarias and his companions.

"The Angel of the Lord went down with Azarias and his companions into the furnace. And he drove the flame of the fire out of the furnace." (Daniel 3:49)

The Gospels tell us that angels played an important part in the life of Christ. Before Our Lord was born we read that an angel was sent to Zachary to tell him that he was to be the father of John the Baptist. The angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to tell her that she was to be the mother of God.

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." (Luke 1:28)

On the first Christmas night an angel announced to the shepherds the coming of the Savior: *"Do not fear, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)*

Later, when Herod was trying to kill the infant Christ, an angel was sent to Joseph to warn him to take Jesus and Mary and go quickly into the land of Egypt. During Our Lord's life on earth angels formed His constant guard of honor. In the Garden of Gethsemani an angel comforted Our Lord in His agony; there, too, Our Lord reminded Peter that He had at His disposal thousands of angels.

B. THE ANGELS WERE CREATED TO SERVE AND PRAISE GOD IN HEAVEN

The first purpose for which God created the angels was to serve and praise Him in heaven.

In the Bible we read that "they (the angels) cried one to another, and said: *Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of his glory.*" (Isaias 8:3)

Again in the New Testament we read: *"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne." (Apocalypse 8:11)*

C. ANGELS ACT AS GOD'S MESSENGERS TO MEN

God often makes use of angels to act as His messengers to men. In fact the word "angel" means messenger. We have already seen that angels were sent as messengers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, the shepherds and others.

D. YOU HAVE A GUARDIAN ANGEL

God loves every person whom He has created. Even if a man does not know God or does not serve God, God still loves him. God loves you even if you are in serious sin. Because He loves you, He has sent to you and to every other human being a guardian angel. As soon as a baby is born God sends an angel to guard that baby.

Christ tells us: "See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10)

Your guardian angel stays with you to keep you from harm and to warn you of dangers to your soul. Even those in mortal sin have guardian angels—every adulterer, every murderer, every robber!

This is the official teaching of the Catholic Church about guardian angels: "To angels is committed by the providence of God the office of guarding the human race, and to be ready at hand with every man to protect him from any serious harm. For as parents appoint persons to guard their children if they have to travel on a dangerous road, and protect them from attack, so does our heavenly Father place over each of us in this our journey toward our heavenly country, angels to protect us by their aid and watchfulness, that we may escape the traps secretly laid for us by our enemies, and go safely on our journey along the road that leads directly to heaven."

As you begin to study the teachings of Christ, what a wonderful consolation it is to know that you have a guardian angel who helps you.

Every adult should learn this prayer to his guardian angel: "Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide." Teach your children this prayer too. Anyone who says this prayer regularly will get special help from God at the hour of death.

E. THE DEVIL

The devil is a real person. He is an angel — a bad angel. The Bible tells us: "*There was a great battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And they prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world.*" (Apocalypse 12:7-9)

The devil, (Satan, Lucifer) is a fallen angel. An angel is all intellect and all will, without a body. When God created the angels, He gave them great wisdom and power. Lucifer and the other evil angels rose up in rebellion against Almighty God and because of their sin they were hurled into hell forever. Thus the devils are really fallen angels.

"For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness." (Ephesians)

The devil has so deceived people that he gets them to think of him as a Halloween ghost. The devil is a real person. He has centuries of experience in evil. As soon as you get out of bed in the morning, before you get your shoes on, the devil is on the job. He may have a temptation custom-built just for you. He knows your temperament, your personality, your weakness, and he will work on you through his knowledge of you. He knows you better perhaps than you know yourself. He is an angel with wonderful knowledge and experience. He is powerful and crafty, and above all a liar, the father of lies.

See how he fooled Adam and Eve. He came in disguise, as a snake. He worked on a woman's curiosity and pride. He lied to them. He trapped them and got them to sin. He makes use of many agents too, to capture your soul. For example, he works through impure billboards, movies, and television shows, and worldly people. The devil will tell you not to go to Mass on Sunday. He will say to you: "What's the use of that silly rule about meat on Friday?" He will urge you to get some sinful pleasure out of life and forget religion. He will try you in a million ways.

"Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith." (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Always remember that your weapons against the scheming of the devil are more powerful than any weapons the devil has. You have many weapons to fight your battle—your prayers, your guardian angel, God's grace, Christ. Keep busy, keep away from temptation, pray, associate with good people. Get rid of ignorance by learning religion through regular attendance at your instructions.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

For Lessons 5 & 6

1. How do you know there is a God?
2. Why can't you see God?
3. What is a spiritual thing?
4. Name some spiritual things.
5. Are spiritual things real?
6. What is the Blessed Trinity?
7. Which of the Three Person in God is greatest?
8. Make the Sign of the Cross.
9. Recite the Act of Contrition and the Apostles Creed.
10. What are angels?
11. Are angels real?

LESSON 7

MAN

"Thou hast made him a little less than the angels." (Psalms 8:6)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

In the twentieth century our education, our amusements, our daily experience do not teach us the complete truth about man. Man is more than a body, more than an animal, he is also spiritual. In this lesson we will study the spiritual side of man—his soul. In the lesson on the Fifth Commandment we will study man's duties to his body.

A. WHAT IS MAN?

A man is a creature who has a body and a soul. No one denies that man has a body; but some claim that man does not have a soul.

B. YOU HAVE A SOUL

How do you know that you have a soul? Even though human beings are similar to the other things that God has created, they are different. Like a rock, man has height, size and weight; like a tree, he grows and takes nourishment; like a horse he feels and moves about. But the thing that makes man different is the soul, the spiritual part of man.

We know that a man has a spiritual side to him because he can perform spiritual actions. His spiritual actions are thinking and willing. You cannot take a thought out of a man and place it on the table to be examined; you cannot put a thought in a test tube. No one has ever seen or touched a man's will. Yet he certainly has a will—he uses it every time he makes a decision. This spiritual part of a man by which he thinks and wills is his soul.

The soul is just as real as a man's foot. Just as man performs actions with his feet, so he performs actions with his soul. He walks with his feet; he thinks and wills with his soul.

Where is your soul? In your head or in your heart? No! It is in your whole body—in every part of you that is alive. But you cannot see or feel it because it is completely spiritual.

When a human body is formed in the mother's womb, God creates the human soul and joins it to the tiny body in the womb. It remains joined to the body until God decides to separate it from the body. This separation is called death.

C. SHOULD YOU TAKE MORE CARE OF YOUR BODY OR YOUR SOUL?

Death is the separation of your body and soul. Death will certainly come. Suppose that you have a serious accident and die instantly. There is your body—broken and bloody, without life. It is buried in a grave where it will rot. From "worm food" it will turn to dust. Then you will ask yourself: "Why did I spend all my time on the body, forgetting that I had a soul?"

Ask yourself this question. How many times today did you remember that you have a soul? Most people spend 99% of their time and energy taking care of the body—from the first cup of coffee in the morning to the *Beautyrest* mattress at night. Think of all the cosmetics you or your wife has used! What a pile it would make! Millions of dollars are spent each year for cosmetics, reducers, muscle builders. Look at the ads in the newspaper, streetcars and buses- they tell you how to have beautiful teeth, good figure, strong muscles, nice hair, and how to avoid bad breath and body odor. Do any of them tell you to make your soul beautiful?

You should take more care of your soul because the soul will never die, while the body will rot in the grave.

D. THE SOUL WILL LIVE ON FOREVER

The soul cannot die. You cannot strangle it, cut it up, smother it, burn it. Worms cannot eat it. None of these things can be done because the soul is spiritual. When your soul leaves your body in death, you will leave everything behind—your body, your money, your friends, your television, your videos, your clothes. When you die your soul appears immediately before God. God will not ask how much money you had in the bank, how many friends you had, how important you were, how famous you were. God will ask only one question. What kind of care did you take of your soul?

E. THE REAL MEANING OF LIFE TO SAVE YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL

Life is serious. You were not born just to eat, sleep, work, marry, grow old and die. You were not made by God to search continually for pleasure, entertainment, money, fame. God placed you in this world to put you on trial for a short time. You were put in this world to know, love, and serve God, and to be happy with Him forever in the next world.

You have only one purpose in life, to save your soul. A light bulb has only one purpose, to give light. When it is burned out, you throw it in the ash can. It has lost its usefulness; it is no good any more. You have only one purpose for which God has made you, that is: to get to heaven. If you don't serve the purpose for which God made you, God throws you into the ash can called hell. You have lost your purpose; you are no good any more.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37)

When you die you may be the richest, most famous man in the world. Your death may make the headlines and the daily news

— you may have been a great success in the eyes of the world. But if you lose your soul you are a magnificent failure—a fool! Or again you may die without friends and money. You may be just “bed 23 in ward 62” of the County Hospital; there will be no reporters, no news bulletins. Your body will lie unclaimed in the morgue; it will be buried in an unmarked grave. You will be a failure in the eyes of the world. But if you save your soul, you are a tremendous success. You have fulfilled the purpose for which God made you. You will hear the summons, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matthew 25:34)

F. AFTER DEATH THE JUDGMENT

God will judge you twice—in a private judgment and in the public or general judgment.

Immediately after you die, the private judgment will take place. Imagine what it will be like. Your family will be crying at your death bed; but you will be alone with God. No one can help you then. By the way you have lived your life, you have determined whether you will go to heaven or to hell. Imagine yourself alone before God about to hear the eternal sentence.

The public or general judgment will take place at the end of the world in the presence of everyone who has ever lived. You will see all your friends and relatives. Christ will come seated on a throne amid the clouds. His angels will separate the good from the bad.

“And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty and all nations shall be gathered together before Him; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep, (the good people—those who die in the state of grace), on his right hand, but the goats (those who die in mortal sin) on his left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on his right hand: COME YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER, POSSESS YOU THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand DEPART FROM ME, YOU CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:31-34)

All of us will be there. Where will the angel place you? How are you living now? Those of you who are in serious sin, who continue in serious sin, who die in serious sin shall hear the words of Christ: “DEPART FROM ME, YOU CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE.”

G. THE RESURRECTION

At the end of the world God will reunite your body to your soul. The same body you have now will be united with your soul. Whether you are in heaven or in hell, you will then have your body.

You will not become an angel in the next world; you will still be a human being. You will have the same body and the same soul—you will not be someone else.

H. AVOID CHRIST’S CONDEMNATION AT THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

Study this instruction book; come to instructions regularly. Give up your serious sins. Live a good life; save yourself and your children from the terrible condemnation reserved for those who die in serious sin.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. A man is made up of how many parts?
2. Why did God make man?
3. How do you know you have a soul?
4. How long will the soul exist?
5. How long will the body exist?
6. Will the body and soul be reunited after death?

NOTES

LESSON 8

GRACE

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." (I Cor. 16:23)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

We hear so often of God's grace. We know that grace makes the soul so beautiful that the soul becomes like God and so delights God that it is most dearly loved by Him. It is adopted as His child and spouse and is elevated from earth to heaven. By grace the soul is received into the bosom of the eternal Father; and with Jesus Christ, the Divine Son, that soul participates in the very nature of God even while on this earth.

St. Thomas teaches that the whole world itself and all the world contains, is of far less value before God than the grace in a single soul. St. Augustine maintains that heaven, together with all the angels, cannot be compared to grace. St. John Chrysostom teaches that it is greater to revive a mortally wounded soul than a dead body. I am tempted, therefore, to say that this is the most important lesson in the whole series of instructions for a convert. Let me say, at least, that there is no lesson more important. No one can understand sin, heaven, hell, purgatory, the redemption and Sacraments without a clear understanding of grace. No one can understand Christianity itself without a clear understanding of grace. Christianity is a supernatural religion; therefore, you must be very sure that you understand this lesson. This is the lesson you must review every day from now until the end of your instructions.

A. GOD MADE YOU TO BRING YOU TO HEAVEN

God made you to know, love and serve Him in this world, so that you might share in His happiness in heaven. God made you to be happy with Him forever in heaven. This is the purpose, the reason why you are living. You were made ultimately for nothing else, neither riches, nor fame! If you don't fulfill this purpose in your life, you are a failure. You may die rich or famous, but if you don't get to heaven and share God's happiness, then you are the worst kind of a failure. You are just like a burned-out light bulb. You are good for nothing. So it is very important for you to know how to get to heaven. That's what we are going to teach in this lesson.

B. IF YOU ARE TO GET INTO HEAVEN A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE IS REQUIRED

If you are to get into heaven, something extra is needed even here below. You are not able to share in God's happiness in heaven if you remain a mere, ordinary human being here on earth. In order to share in the happiness of another, it is necessary to share in his very life. To share in God's happiness you must have the same kind of life that God has.

C. THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF LIFE

If we study for a few minutes the different kinds of life, from the lowest to the highest, we might get an idea of what it means for a man to have the kind of life God has. The lowest kind of natural life is plant life (a tree). A tree grows and reproduces,—that's about all! The next kind of life as we go from lower to higher is animal life (a dog). A dog can see, hear, smell feel, and move about. Let's go higher in the scale of life. A man (human being) has a higher kind of life than a dog. Man is an animal, but an animal with a spiritual soul. He can do everything a dog can do. Moreover, he can do spiritual things because he has a spiritual soul. He can think, choose to act or not to act. He can choose between good and evil. He has a life higher than the life of a brute animal. He has a spiritual life. Let's go up the scale of life into an even higher kind of life than a man has: angelic life. The life of angels. An angel's life is all spiritual. He has no body. But the highest kind of life is God's life. God's life is perfect. It is limitless, uncreated life. It never had a beginning—it shall have no end. It depends on nothing outside of itself. It is a life of perfect beauty and untold happiness.

D. THE BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S LIFE AND MAN'S LIFE

Man's life is created by God—it is limited. It had a beginning, it depends completely on God. It could not live without God. In fact, there is more difference between God's life and man's life than between a dog's life and a man's life. God's life is completely different. It is unlimited. It had no beginning, it depends on no one.

E. FOR A DOG TO ENJOY A BOOK, MOVIE OR TELEVISION, GOD WOULD HAVE TO GIVE IT A MAN'S LIFE

Let's talk about dogs for a minute. Can a dog enjoy a book, movie, radio or TV program? Can a dog enjoy a conversation? Why not?

Supposing God wanted a dog to enjoy the things a man enjoys? What would God have to do? The dog, if he remains a mere dog, cannot share in the happiness of man. He doesn't have the equipment (a soul). He has a lower kind of life than a man. So, God would have to raise the dog up to man's level. God would have to give the dog something that dogs naturally don't have. God would have to give that dog a sharing in man's life. The dog would still stay a dog, have a dog's kind of life, but it would now be able to share in man's happiness (books, TV). A new kind of life would be added to his dog's kind of life.

F. TO SHARE IN GOD'S HAPPINESS, A MAN MUST HAVE GOD'S LIFE

Why can't man, if he remains a mere man, share in God's happiness? Because man has a much lower kind of life than God; and God would have to raise man up from man's level to His own level. God would have to give man a sharing in His kind of life. This sharing in God's life is called grace. You now have two kinds of life in your soul: your own life plus a sharing in God's life. Grace is a new kind of life added to your soul.

"You may be made partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4) Grace makes you an adopted son of God. *"And if sons, heirs also."* (Romans 8:16-17) Through grace God dwells within you. *"We will come to Him and will make our abode with Him."* (John 14:23) Through grace you become a temple of God. *"Know you not that you are the temple of God."* (I Cor. 3:16) You are as it were a living church. *"Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you."* (I Cor. 6:19) That is why the angel Gabriel knelt down before Mary and said, *"Hail, full of grace."* (Luke 1:28)

How important you are! God reaches down, brings you up to His level and makes you like Himself. *"We shall be like him."* (I John 3:2). God could give you no greater gift than this.

G. YOU CANNOT GET INTO HEAVEN WITHOUT GRACE

Just as it has been impossible for a dog to share in man's happiness without having a sharing in man's life, so it is just as impossible for man to share in God's happiness without first sharing in God's life; that is, unless he has grace.

Remember the story of the wedding garment in the Gospel when the King (God) saw the man at the table without a wedding garment (grace). He called His servant (angel) to throw the man into the darkness outside (hell).

I cannot live underwater without special equipment (diving suit). I cannot live in a fiery furnace without special equipment (fireproof suit). I cannot live in heaven without special equipment (grace).

H. NO ONE HAS GRACE WHEN HE IS CREATED

All human beings come into this world without grace. Grace is put in later. A newborn baby does not have grace in his soul. The only human being created with grace (since Adam and Eve) was the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. We shall study this in a later lesson.

I. BAPTISM GIVES YOU GRACE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Jesus said: *"Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3). "Unless he be born again," that is, receive a new life, grace, be born spiritually, reborn, regenerated. Once you have the grace, you can make it grow in your soul. Holy Communion, the other Sacraments, prayer and good works all make it grow. This is important to know because, as we shall see in the lesson on heaven, the more grace I have in my soul when I die, the greater will be my capacity for happiness in heaven.

For example: two men die at the same time; one has a little bit of grace in his soul, the other has a lot of grace in his soul; the first man will not have as much happiness in heaven as the other man, because he does not have the same capacity for happiness. So, the important thing in life is to get grace in your soul before you die, and let the grace grow in your soul as much as you can before death.

J. A BIG SIN KILLS THE GRACE IN YOUR SOUL

Any big sin (impurity, missing Mass on Sunday, eating meat on Friday) kills the grace in your soul. A big sin does not kill the natural life of your soul, only the grace. But this death to grace is worse than any other kind of death. We shall study sin and see what it is in a later lesson. If you die with a big sin on your soul, you shall go to hell, because you have deliberately killed the grace in your soul.

K. GRACE IS SOMETHING SPIRITUAL

You can't see it, hear it, feel it, smell it, touch it, or taste it. It is just as spiritual as your soul, or as an angel or a thought. It can't be weighed, measured or cut up into pieces. No one can take it out of your soul but you yourself, and then only through a big sin. It is one treasure that cannot be stolen.

Let it be absolutely clear that you cannot feel grace in any way. A religious feeling, a good feeling, a religious experience does not in any way indicate the presence of grace in the soul. That "good feeling" may come from good digestion, or sleep or nice weather. That religious feeling or experience may come from hearing a beautiful hymn or sermon. Feelings come and go; one day you are up and the next day you are down. Does that mean that one day you have grace and the next day you do not? An old person dying of a painful disease may have plenty of grace but he may feel terrible. A person being baptized with the right intention is well assured from the promises of Christ that he is getting grace, but he may never have any religious feeling resulting from Baptism. On the other hand, a great sinner may be moved to tears upon hearing the organ in a church. All you know is that you get grace through Baptism; you make it grow through the other Sacraments; you lose it through a big sin.

L. UNBAPTIZED BABIES

No one can get into heaven without grace. All babies are conceived and born without grace. Babies have to be baptized to get grace. If a baby dies without having been baptized, it cannot go to heaven, because it has no grace. It does not however go to hell. A baby who dies without Baptism goes to Limbo. He will never get to heaven. Limbo is a place of natural happiness in

the next world. In Limbo there is no pain, sickness or sorrow. The happiness of Limbo, however, is strictly on man's level, whereas the happiness of heaven is on God's level. A baby who has not been raised to God's level through grace cannot share in God's happiness. But the happiness of Limbo is probably greater than any that can be experienced on this earth. The babies in Limbo never know about heaven and so they don't miss it.

God is not cruel or unjust in not allowing unbaptized babies to go to heaven, it is not God's fault. Grace is a pure gift on God's part; He does not have to give it to any one of us on our own conditions. He gives it through Baptism. Unbaptized adults do not go to Limbo, only unbaptized babies. An adult who, through his own fault, neglects to be baptized goes to hell. Before the coming of Jesus, an adult who died without a big sin on his soul went to the Limbo of the just [Abraham's bosom] (Luke 16:22). When Jesus died all the adults in Limbo learned of the liberation. When Jesus ascended into heaven, he took all those adults to heaven.

M. GRACE IS THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL

No amount of money can buy grace. Grace is worth more than all the riches of the world. It is the pearl of great price. Grace is true wealth; grace is your passport to heaven, the key to lasting happiness. Continue with your instructions so that you can learn more about grace, how to get it, how to make it grow in your soul, and how to keep from losing it. Nothing else in life really matters.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is grace?
2. Can you get to heaven without grace?
3. How do you usually receive grace for the first time?
4. How do you lose grace?
5. Can you see or feel grace in your soul?
6. What is heaven?
7. Who goes to heaven?
8. What is the big happiness in heaven?

THE KING AND THE FOOL

Many years ago there was a certain ruler who kept a fool in his house. It was a form of entertainment that many people did in those days. Now this ruler had given the fool a staff. He told him to keep it until he met someone who was a greater fool than he. Once he met that person, he should give the staff to that person.

A few years passed and the ruler became seriously ill. Many around him felt that he would soon die. In an effort to bring cheer to the ruler, the physician, along with friends and family, called in the fool.

The ruler appreciated their efforts. When the fool approached, the ruler told him he must shortly leave him.

"And where are you going?," asked the fool.

"To another world," replied the ruler.

"And when will you return? In a month?"

"No."

"In a year?"

"No."

"When, then?"

"Never. I shall never return. I shall be gone from this world forever."

"What provisions have you made for your journey?" continued the man known as the fool. "Have you looked ahead for your entertainment? Will you need me to come along?"

The ruler turned sad and replied, "No, I cannot take you where I am going, and I cannot plan ahead for my entertainment. It is not in my power to do this."

"What!" cried the fool. "No entertainment! None at all?"

The ruler shook his head.

A moment passed and then the fool said, "Here, take my staff. You are going to a dwelling place where you will be gone forever. You have made no orders for your entertainment in a land from which you can never leave. Take this staff, for although I am a fool, I have never been as guilty of folly as you are now as you prepare for your journey."

The ruler took the staff, and the fool departed from his presence. He had found a greater fool than himself.

LESSON 9 HEAVEN

"That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9).

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

In this lesson try to realize that heaven is real, that it is a place where God wants you to be perfectly happy with Him forever. In order to get into heaven you must give up your serious sins. Ask God to give you a burning desire for heaven.

A. BIBLICAL NAMES FOR HEAVEN

In the Bible heaven is also called Paradise, the Holy City, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

B. FALSE IDEAS ABOUT HEAVEN

Many people have false ideas about heaven. Heaven is not a place of sensual pleasure. In heaven you will not sit on a cloud and play a harp. Heaven is a place of perfect spiritual happiness.

C. CORRECT IDEAS ABOUT HEAVEN

In heaven you will be free from all pain and suffering and death. You will never be unhappy. In heaven your happiness will be perfect and unending.

D. THE GREATEST HAPPINESS IN HEAVEN IS SEEING GOD FACE TO FACE

The most important thing in heaven is seeing God face to face. This will bring you perfect happiness.

In this life you know *about* God; you do not know God. For example, you know *about* the President of the United States; but you do not know him. You know *about* George Washington, but you have never met the man. While you are on earth you know *about* God; you do not know him. In heaven you shall know God, see God, as He really is.

From the things God has made, we can learn much about God. If a mountain or the sunset is so beautiful, how much more beautiful is the God who made them. Perhaps you have been out in a storm and were afraid—you saw the tremendous power of nature. Yet how much more powerful must be the God who made the storm. The stars, the moon, and the earth are only footprints of God. From these things you have a little glimpse of what God is like. In heaven you shall see God face to face as He really is.

In heaven you shall see God. Now you see God only in an imperfect mirror—the mirror of creation. In heaven you shall see God face to face; you shall know God as He is in Himself.

Mothers, remember the day the nurse placed your first baby in your arms? You were burning with happiness. You remember also the happiness that was yours when you saw your child graduate from school. Some day you may have the happiness of seeing your son ordained a priest. Yet these are only fleeting moments of happiness, they pass by quickly and are gone. In heaven, the happiness of seeing God face to face will last forever. The happiness of every man, woman and child in the whole world all put together would not equal a split second of the happiness that shall be yours in heaven.

The Bible tells how St. Stephen was stoned to death for his faith in Jesus. In spite of his suffering, Stephen was very happy; the crowd could even see the happiness in his face. Why? Because St. Stephen was soon to see God. (*Acts 7:55*)

E. IN HEAVEN YOU SHALL LOVE GOD INTENSELY

In heaven your intense love for Almighty God will make you perfectly happy. It is difficult for us to understand the intensity and the wonder of our love of God in heaven. The only way we can begin to understand it is by comparing it with human love on earth. Human love is the strongest thing in the world.

Think of the love of a mother for her first-born baby. You can almost see her love pouring out on the child; all the money in the world could not move the mother to give up her child. Think of Mary's love for the Baby Jesus; when she leaned over her Baby for the first time and when she held the Baby Jesus in her arms, how intense was her love!

A mother will even risk her life for her child. If she were to come home and find fire engines in front of her home, she would try to run into the burning building to save her child. She would even struggle with the firemen trying to keep her back, so great is her love!

Consider how intensely a mother loves her soldier son. She prays for him while he is away. She will go down to the airport hours before the plane arrives, to meet him when he comes home. And when she sees him stepping off the plane, her heart rejoices with unspeakable love.

The presence of the one you love makes you happy; his absence makes you unhappy. The greatest happiness of a mother is reunion with her son. The greatest pain a husband and wife suffer is that of separation. There is an emptiness in your heart when you are separated from the one you love.

If we love human beings so much, how great and how intense will be our love for God when we see Him face to face in heaven!

All these examples of human love on earth give us only a vague idea of how wonderful will be our love for God in the next world.

F. "THOU HAST MADE US FOR THYSELF, O LORD, AND OUR HEARTS WILL ALWAYS BE RESTLESS UNTIL THEY REST IN THEE"

Why are you always restless? Why are you never satisfied with the things of this world? The reason is that you are not made for this world—you are made for God. You will never be satisfied until you are united with God in heaven. St. Augustine tried out many of the pleasures of the world. In searching for pleasure, he turned to every sin. St. Augustine finally came to this conclusion: "*Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts will always be restless until they rest in Thee.*"

King Solomon had so much wealth that he did not know what to do with it; but he was not happy. The drunkard looks for happiness in his bottle, and all he finds is a hangover. Others seek pleasure in sins of sex, but they are not really happy either. These people are looking for happiness; but they are all mixed up; they are looking for happiness in the wrong place—what they are really looking for is God. Complete satisfaction and complete happiness can be found only in God. Seeing God face to face and loving Him intensely is the only thing that will ever satisfy your craving for happiness.

By obtaining God's grace, by leading a good life, and by thus enjoying the peace of a good conscience, you can be happy here on earth. But even though this bit of happiness is wonderful and satisfying in its own way, it cannot be compared to the supreme and intense happiness of heaven.

G. ONLY GOD'S GRACE WILL GET YOU INTO HEAVEN

The only way you can get into heaven is by having God's grace in your soul. Grace, as we said, is *sharing in God's life*. Every human being is conceived in his mother's womb without grace; the only exception was the Blessed Virgin Mary. The whole purpose of your life is to obtain God's grace and thus to get to heaven.

You obtain God's grace by completing a full course of religious instructions, by being sorry for your sins, and by being baptized. You keep God's grace in your soul by living according to the teachings of Christ and by receiving His Sacraments.

H. WINNING HEAVEN MEANS SACRIFICE

The only thing that really counts in life is obtaining heaven. The purpose of these classes is to move you to be sorry for your sins, and to win grace for your soul. This will place you on the road to heaven.

For most people, obtaining heaven means real sacrifice. Everyone has to give up something big to get into heaven. Our Lord told the story of a merchant, a dealer in pearls. The merchant searched the whole world to find the most beautiful pearl, the pearl of great price. When he found it he discovered that he would have to give up all his other pearls in order to buy the pearl of great price. For a moment he was sad; but when he realized how much more valuable and more beautiful this pearl was in comparison with all his others; these he willingly sacrificed for the one of great price.

Heaven is that pearl of great price. You will have to give up much to purchase it.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What are some of the other names for Heaven?
2. What will be our greatest happiness in Heaven?
3. How intense will our love for God be in Heaven?
4. How important is grace to get to Heaven?
5. Is any sacrifice too great to gain Heaven?

NOTES

LESSON 10

ADAM AND EVE & ORIGINAL SIN

"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Unless you understand some things about grace, this lesson will mean nothing to you. Turn back to the lesson on grace and read it again. The purpose of this lesson is not to explain the origin of the human race; the purpose is rather to teach you that you came into this world without grace because of the sin of Adam and Eve and that you must make a real effort to obtain God's grace.

A. ADAM AND EVE WERE THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN

Adam and Eve were created by God Himself.

"So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them.... And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:1-7)

After God created Adam He created Eve.

"And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman." (Genesis 2:22)

For our first parents God made the Garden of Eden.

"And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure" for them. (Genesis 2:8)

God then made Adam and Eve husband and wife.

"Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." (Genesis 2:24)

The whole human race comes from Adam and Eve, our first parents.

Differences in race and peoples developed gradually through the long span of the centuries. In spite of minor differences, all peoples have the same fundamental capabilities and weaknesses; the human race is one! Science and the Bible both teach this.

Adam and Eve came into the world as adults. They never went through the formative years of childhood and adolescence.

We have never seen a person who was physically perfect; everyone born since Adam and Eve (except Christ) has some imperfection. But Adam and Eve were as physically perfect as any man or woman could be. They had no need for hospitals or physicians because they could not get sick. They were free from disease and pain and even death itself.

Unlike us, Adam and Eve did not have to go to school for many years to learn. God placed knowledge in their minds when He created them, so that they knew everything that was necessary for them to know.

Adam and Eve did not have to battle with their passions as we do. They had complete control over them. As a result, they were not tempted by their flesh as we are. Their body was perfectly subject to their mind and will.

If Adam and Eve had remained faithful to God, all these gifts of body and soul would have been given to their children and their children's children down through the ages. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, you and I would have been born into the world with grace; we would have been free from disease, pain and death; we would have perfect control over our bodily appetites.

B. THE BIG GIFT: GOD'S GRACE

Even if you were to forget everything else in this lesson, remember this: Adam and Eve were brought into the world with grace in their souls. This is the most important truth in this lesson.

Adam and Eve were creatures of earth; but they were also creatures of heaven because they had grace in their souls when they came forth from God's hand. They were to live here for a time sharing God's life of grace; then they were to go to heaven to see God face to face forever. According to God's plan, the children of Adam and Eve and all their descendants down even to the last man and woman were to be born with grace in their souls—if Adam had not sinned. Adam represented all of us, the whole human race. His actions were to bring to his children, to all of us, the life of grace or the life of sin.

C. ADAM AND EVE FALL INTO SIN

The Bible tells us how Adam and Eve fell into sin.

"Now the serpent . . . said to the woman: Why hath God commanded you that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? And the woman answered him, saying: Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise do eat: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die. And the serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat." (Genesis 3:1-6)

Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator in a serious matter. Because of this serious sin Adam and Eve lost for themselves and for all of us the special gifts God had given them—especially the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's grace.

The sin of Adam and Eve was a sin of disobedience. It was not a sin of fornication as some think; Adam and Eve were man

and wife. (Sexual pleasure does not come from this sin of Adam and Eve; the sexual desire is a holy thing created by God.)
The sin Adam committed is called Original Sin. Original Sin is the first sin, the sin that came with the origin or beginning of the human race.

D. THE PUNISHMENT

God told Adam and Eve that if they ate fruit from the forbidden tree, they would “die the death”—they would lose God’s life of grace in their souls. Therefore, when they sinned, they lost God’s life of grace in their souls. They lost grace not only for themselves but for the whole human race; all human beings are born without God’s grace. The minor gifts—complete control of their passions and freedom from disease, pain and death—were also taken away.

E. YOU ARE BORN WITHOUT GRACE

Because of the sin of Adam, all of us come into the world without grace. Adam lost grace not only for himself, but for all his descendants.

Remember that grace is a *gift*. God does not deprive us of something to which we have a right; He is not being unjust.

God’s grace comes to us through Baptism. Since we cannot get into heaven without grace, each of us without exception must be baptized.

Unbaptized babies go to Limbo, a place of natural happiness; but they will never see God. People who died before Christ came and who had fulfilled the law of God and had made an act of perfect love of God went to the Limbo of the Just, Abraham’s Bosom. There they awaited the coming of Christ and their entrance into heaven. Among those who went to the Limbo of the Just were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, St. Joseph and St. John the Baptist.

The life of grace in your soul begins through Baptism. The purpose of these lessons is to prepare you to obtain God’s grace through real Baptism. Be sure that you and your family are really baptized. To neglect your own Baptism or the Baptism of any of your children is a serious sin; if you neglect Baptism, Christ’s death on the cross becomes fruitless for you.

F. ONE PERSON, THE BLESSED VIRGIN, WAS CONCEIVED WITH GOD’S GRACE

The Blessed Virgin, the mother of Jesus Christ, was conceived in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, and from the first moment of conception her soul was filled with God’s grace. This is called her Immaculate Conception.

Thus the angel was able to say “Hail, full of GRACE, the Lord is with thee.” (Luke 1:28)

Just as you give your mother the best that you have, so also God gave His mother His greatest gift—the sharing in the life of God. Since the Blessed Virgin is the greatest of all the saints, you should pray to her often.

G. CHRIST’S DEATH ON THE CROSS BROUGHT GRACE BACK TO US

Christ’s death on the cross made up for Adam’s sin; it won back for the human race the grace which Adam had lost. Christ’s death made up not only for Adam’s sin, but also our personal sins—the sins of all the world. Christ set up Baptism as a means to give grace to each individual soul. It is not too late for you to obtain God’s grace in your soul.

H. YOU ARE WEAK. BEWARE OF TEMPTATION

Eve played with temptation and talked with the devil when she should have run away. You are worse off than Eve. You don’t have perfect control over your passions as Eve had. Because of original sin, man is weakened. Sins of adultery, drunkenness, selfishness, injustice toward man and God are so easy today. Though you can win back the grace which was lost by Adam, you can never get back the perfect control over your lower appetites. Every human being has a strong inclination to evil.

You must get sufficient control over your bodily appetites, so that you can lead a good Christian life. You gain control by prayer, fasting and abstinence, by receiving Holy Communion and the other Sacraments, and by staying away from everything that may lead you into sin. Do not trust yourself. Watch and pray.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. Who were Adam and Eve?
2. Adam and Eve lost something for them and us.
What is it?
3. What is their sin called?
4. Has anyone been born without original sin?

POPE PIUS IX AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

That Mary was conceived without sin was believed for centuries. To a Church that was troubled by persecution and at fear of being made a slave of her enemies, Pope Pius IX made a proposal to the bishops: it was time to proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. While all believed this dogma, they recommended against it for fear of the reaction of irreligious people. Pius IX said there was nothing to fear, for God would help them because they honored His Mother. Almost as if by proof, the moment the pope pronounced the words of the proclamation, the alabaster window above his throne shown with a great light and all were filled with new hope and courage. They knew Mary was stronger than all evil.

LESSON 11

MORTAL AND VENIAL SIN

"Amen, amen, I say unto you that whosoever commiteth sin is the servant of sin." (John. 8:34)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Because of the lack of religious instruction people today are confused about sin. Many do not realize what sin really is. Others cannot distinguish between small sins and large sins. In this lesson, then, you must learn what sin is. You must understand the difference between temptation and sin. You must know what a venial sin is and what a mortal sin is. You must remember a concrete list of mortal sins so that you will know what to avoid in your daily life. You must fix deep in your mind the necessity of doing penance daily to atone for your past sins.

A. WHAT IS SIN?

Sin is a willful disobedience of the law of God. The sinner chooses between the will of God and his own will, and chooses to please himself rather than God. The sinner violates the rights God has over him. Any thought, word, desire, or action forbidden by God is a sin.

In the twentieth century too many have the mistaken idea that only violation of government laws are sins. The only law many people know is the law of the government. Now some violations of the laws of the land may not be sins at all, for example, the parking laws. On the other hand many violations of the government laws are real sins because they are also violations of the law of God. A good example is murder.

B. TO BE GUILTY OF SIN—WHAT IS NECESSARY?

To be guilty of sin you must know you are violating a law of God, and deliberately and freely choose to violate that law. If, for example, in the past you did not know it was a sin not to attend church on Sunday it was not a sin. Now, however, it would be a sin for you, because you know of the law of Sunday worship from your instructions. Again, if you were unjustly forced by someone to do an action so that you had no free choice, it would not be a sin.

C. IS ONE SIN AS BAD AS ANOTHER?

All sins are not equally evil. There are two kinds of sin. A mortal sin, or a big sin, is a violation of an important and serious law of God. The Bible tells us of mortal or deadly sins.

The Bible tells us some sins are so serious that they keep a man out of heaven. These we call mortal sins. "Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God. Do not err: Neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers: Nor the effeminate nor liars with mankind nor thieves nor covetous nor drunkards nor railers nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

In the Bible (*Galatians 5:19-21*) we are told of the works of the flesh that keep one out of heaven.

Your own common sense too tells you that stealing a thousand dollars is a serious sin while stealing a dime is usually not a serious matter at all.

A venial sin is a violation of a small law of God. The matter is not serious; therefore the sin is not a mortal or serious sin.

Such sins as little acts of disobedience, small acts of uncharity, some neglect of prayer, being slightly late for Mass and the like are not serious sins.

D. MORTAL SIN KILLS THE GRACE IN YOUR SOUL

If the thing in itself is seriously evil; if the sinner clearly knows it is serious and then freely goes ahead and commits the sin, it is thereby a mortal sin.

When you commit a mortal sin:

- You turn against God. You become an enemy of God.
- You destroy the life of grace in your soul.
- You often suffer remorse of conscience, one of the most terrible sufferings here on earth.
- You may even suffer physical pain here on earth as a result of your sin. Examples: Drunkenness brings pain; impurity may bring venereal disease.
- If you die with mortal sin on your soul you go to hell.

E. CAN ALL YOUR TERRIBLE SINS BE FORGIVEN?

There is hope for all of us no matter how great the sins or how often committed. We have the inspired words of Isaiah in the Bible telling us of God's great mercy toward the sinner: "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool." (*Isaiah 1:18*)

(*Ezekiel 18:21*) tells us the same thing: "But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed and keep all my commandments and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die." In this passage penance means sorrow for the sin. Your sins can be forgiven only if you are sorry for them and quit the sins.

F. WHAT DOES VENIAL SIN DO TO YOUR SOUL?

Venial sin makes your soul less pleasing to God. It is the next worst thing to mortal sin. Although it does not destroy grace, it makes your will weaker so that you can more easily fall into mortal sin. However, no number of venial sins will ever add up to a mortal sin. Thus mortal sin is the most terrible of all the evils in the world.

If you die with venial sin you will go to purgatory. You must pay for every venial sin before you get into heaven. Nothing defiled can enter heaven.

G. TEMPTATION

A temptation is an attraction to commit a sin. In a temptation, first comes the suggestion of evil. Pleasure follows the suggestion of evil. Then there is either consent to the temptation or refusal to sin.

Temptation is not a sin. Resisting temptation is virtue. A million temptations do not make one sin; they make a million acts of virtue, by refusing to sin.

Let us give you an example. A drunkard receives a course of instructions in religion. During the course of instructions he gives up his habit of alcohol. He is baptized and enters the Church. Immediately after his Baptism he is tempted again and again, but never drinks any alcoholic beverage. Such a man has not sinned. Such a man is not worse for the temptation but more virtuous than before the temptation.

Everyone is tempted. Everyone has some temptation. Don't let the devil convince you that the temptation is a sin. *"But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured."* (James 6:12)

When tempted, say a short prayer; turn your mind away from the attraction whatever it is in your case; and keep away from the occasion of sin.

H. THE NEAR OCCASIONS OF SIN

An occasion of sin is any person, place or thing that may lead you into sin. A near occasion of sin is one that easily leads you into sin. The occasion is different for all of us. For one it is drink; for another it is unchastity; for another it is money.

We should pray with the sacred writer in the Bible: *"O Lord, Father, and God of my life . . . Take from me the greediness of the belly, and let not the lusts of the flesh take hold of me; and give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind."* (Ecclesiasticus 23:4-6)

It is important to know that to go to the person, place or thing that easily leads you into sin is a sin in itself.

I. WHAT GOD DOES FOR THE PERSON WHO IS TEMPTED TO SIN

When you are tempted God gives actual grace. This actual grace is a help from God which enlightens the mind and strengthens the will to do good and avoid evil. The darkness of temptation comes to the mind. God enlightens the mind to see how wrong and foolish the temptation is and God gives strength to your will to say no. *St. Paul when tempted, asked the Lord to destroy the temptation. God did not destroy the temptation but told St. Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee."* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Unfortunately, you can go and commit the sin even though you have many actual graces. You are still free! God will not force you. The choice is ultimately with you. If you sin it is entirely your fault. God gives everyone sufficient grace to resist the most trying temptations.

J. THE PRINCIPAL MORTAL SINS IN THE WORLD

We present to you this list of mortal sins so that you will know the following sins are serious. Since they are serious, your conversion to Christ demands that you give them up if you are guilty of any of them. The list in no way pretends to be a complete list of all mortal sins. Rather it is a list of the mortal sins that happen all too frequently today:

1. Missing Mass on Sunday or Holydays of Obligation.
2. Eating meat on Friday and other forbidden days.
3. Any sins against chastity; that is any use of the sex passion outside of marriage: adultery, fornication, masturbation, impure use of the eyes, impure dancing, petting, necking; even serious kissing is a mortal sin; impure or unchaste thoughts or desires deliberately entertained; sins against nature, such as homosexuality.
4. Gambling away the family money.
5. Stealing an expensive article.
6. Unnecessary manual work and/or shopping on Sunday.
7. Murder, or any other unjust killing or harming another.
8. Birth control of any form. For example: abortion, the use of condoms or other birth preventative devices, use of "the pill."

K. PREVENTING SIN IN YOUR LIFE

There are evil tendencies in every man which can lead him to sin. To lead a Christian life you must gain control over these evil tendencies or they will lead you into sin. All of your past sins can be traced to one or other of these evil inclinations in you. These sources of sin are: *Pride*—an exaggerated love of oneself. *Covetousness or greediness*—a sinful desire of obtaining the goods of this world. Covetousness can lead to stealing, fraud, and other sins against justice. *Lust*—a sinful desire for sex pleasure. *Anger*—an excessive or exaggerated desire for justice. *Gluttony*—an evil inclination toward too much food or drink causing sins

of intemperance. *Envy*—a sadness because of someone else's good fortune. *Sloth*—laziness or desire for too much rest. Which one of the above seven evil inclinations has led you into sin? That's the one you will have to conquer.

L. MAKING UP FOR YOUR PAST SINS

Penance means sorrow for sin. When a person realizes the number and seriousness of his sins, he wants to make up for them. The following are suggested as acts of penance:

- Doing faithfully the duties of your daily life, your duty as a father or mother, husband or wife.
- Offer to God in payment for your past sins all the pains and sufferings you must undergo —sick children, poverty, disappointment, bad weather, disagreeable neighbors, the unjust boss at work, and so forth.
- Fast and abstinence. There is a whole section on fast and abstinence in this book.
- Give money to the poor. "Redeem thou thy sins with alms," says the Bible (*Daniel 4:24*).
- Work directly against the evil tendency that led you into sin. If it was gluttony, give up alcoholic beverages; if it was lust, control your eyes and ears; if it was anger, make yourself meek like Christ, if it was covetousness, give money to the poor; if it was envy, practice love for your neighbor; if it was laziness (sloth), keep yourself busy all the time.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is a mortal sin?
2. Name some mortal sins.
3. What happens if you die in mortal sin?
4. Can all terrible sins be forgiven?
5. What is a venial sin?
6. Is a temptation a sin?

TEMPTATION AND THE YOUNG CHILD

A little girl, whose name was Agnes, had just reached her fifth birthday. Her mother invited friends to come for a dinner and celebration to honor the happy day.

Among the guests who came to the party was Agnes' godfather. They were very close and were always happy to be in each other's company. When the man entered the house, Agnes ran to meet him. He put into her hand a gold coin. As can well be imagined, Agnes was very happy to see the beautiful coin and to realize that it was her very own. She was so proud of it that she showed it to everyone who came to the house.

When the dinner and celebration had come to a close, the older people lingered about to visit with each other. Agnes helped to clean up after the party in her honor and went to the front of the house to play while the others talked. As she sat admiring her gold coin, a woman came by who lived in a different part of that town. She carried a large basket of fruit.

In the innocence of childhood, Agnes ran to the woman to show her shiny gift.

"Look," she said. "Look at the beautiful piece of money I have."

The woman took the coin and verified that it was gold.

"Yes, it is a beautiful coin," she said. But look at what I have. Here is a lovely red apple that is much larger and even more beautiful than the coin you have. Here, I will give you this large, red-cheeked apple for your little gold coin."

"Yes," the girl said. "I will gladly trade the large apple for the small coin."

When the woman received the money, she went away and was never seen in that part of town again.

Agnes, after admiring her large apple, ran to show it to her mother.

"Look, mother! Look at this beautiful apple."

"Where did you get this apple, Agnes?" her mother asked.

"Oh, a nice woman came by and gave it to me. She traded my small gold coin for this large red apple. Isn't it wonderful?"

When her mother heard this, she became very angry and her father gave her a severe scolding. But her godfather said to them, "Don't find fault with the child for what she has done. She didn't know the value of the money given her. It was quite natural for her to give the coin away for that beautiful apple, which she thought was more valuable."

The moral -- There are many who sell the endless joys of Heaven for the passing things of this world. Others take the pleasure of a moment over joys with God for all eternity. Both exchange the value of their souls for something much worse at the mere suggestion of the devil.

This little girl has given us a valuable lesson.

LESSON 12

MORTAL SIN IS THE GREATEST EVIL IN THE WORLD

"I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exodus 20:5)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Many people of the Twentieth Century have lost their horror of sin and even the very notion of sin. Mortal sin is so common today that you may be inclined to excuse those who commit it—perhaps even yourself. We must never be so accustomed to the sins of men that we lose the reality of how truly horrible they are.

In the preceding lesson, *Mortal and Venial Sin*, you learned about sin in a schoolroom fashion. In this lesson you should learn to fear and hate mortal sin, so that you will always avoid it. This is one of the first steps you must take in becoming a Catholic.

A. INTRODUCTION

Today the world tries to convince us that sin is something desirable. But really sin is ugly and repulsive. Suppose that someone offered you a piece of candy and told you that it had poison in it—you would not take it. The devil does exactly the same thing when he offers you the chance to commit a mortal sin. He asks you to commit the sin—to kill yourself spiritually by killing the life of grace in your soul.

Once there was a beautiful Italian girl named Maria Goretti. She was twelve years old. A boy in the town where she lived was very much in love with Maria. This boy tried to get her to commit sin with him. Maria Goretti was very angry. One day the evil youth lay in wait for her and attacked her. He threatened her with a knife. "I'd rather die than offend God," she said. She resisted him. He stabbed her twenty-eight times. Then he raped her. Maria was a very holy girl and so she forgave her murderer before she died. The murderer was seized by the police and sentenced to life imprisonment.

As time went on the people in the town in which Maria Goretti lived began to pray to her, because they knew she was a very holy girl. Her reputation for holiness was so widespread that even the Pope in Rome heard about her. The Holy Father received letters from the townspeople. He sent priests to investigate the holiness of Maria Goretti. In the investigation of Maria's holiness the chief witness was an old man, the man who had attacked Maria, he had been in prison all his life. He was bent with years; his life had wasted away in prison. After the investigation, the Catholic Church declared that Maria Goretti was in heaven; that she was a Saint of Almighty God. How beautiful was Maria Goretti's life because she stayed away from sin! She remained pure and chaste in this world; and now she enjoys perfect happiness in heaven. How ugly and unhappy was the life of the old man because he had given in to sin! For a few moments of sinful pleasure, look at the price he paid. Was it worth it?

Many men in the state prison are there because they committed acts which are also mortal sin. For a few moments of sinful pleasure, for the gratification of some desire, they spend their lives in prison. How foolish mortal sin is!

There is a prison in the next world from which there is no escape and no pardon. It is called hell. Some criminals on earth avoid prison, but no sinner who dies in mortal sin can avoid hell.

B. WHAT OTHER PEOPLE'S SINS DO TO YOU

A moment's consideration will show you that the sins of others have often made you unhappy. How many women are unhappy because their husbands have been unfaithful to them! How many broken hearts and broken homes have been caused by the sin of drunkenness! How many families are unhappy because of lack of support, because the father of the family has gambled away the family funds! How many homes are unhappy because the men do not accept their responsibility as husbands and fathers or the women neglect their duties as wives and mothers. They waste the family money or spend it foolishly, or they do not take care of their children!

Many parents are unhappy because of their children. Disrespectful children bring sadness to their fathers and mothers; disobedient children make their fathers and mothers unhappy. How many parents have had their dreams and hopes destroyed by a teen-age girl who ruined her reputation and that of her family in sin! Or by an unthinking young man who yields to the persuasions of other and takes drugs and/or abuses alcohol at a young age. How many people are ashamed of their own children! All of this unhappiness is caused by sin.

Entire neighborhoods in large cities are unsafe because of sin. People don't feel safe on the streets at night because of the sins of robbery, rape and drug abuse. These sins have propagated even more and cause repeated violence and thievery even to the smallest of towns!

C. YOUR OWN SINS MAKE YOU UNHAPPY

Perhaps God and religion have dropped out of your life, and you have made up your own rules for living. You have ignored God's rules for living, and this has brought you only unhappiness and bitterness.

Look back now. As you kneel down tonight before you say the Act of Contrition, go over your past life. Get away from the noise of the world, turn off the television or the radio; think of the sins you have committed—the secret sins, too. These sins have brought only bitterness and unhappiness. The biggest cause of unhappiness in your life has been serious sin.

D. WHAT SIN DID TO THE ANGELS

The fallen angels committed only one mortal sin. They refused to serve Almighty God. As a result God created hell, and cast them into it instantly. There was no second chance; they could not go to Confession; there was no way of receiving forgiveness. Lucifer, the "light bearer," became evilness itself, the father of lies, the seducer, Satan. The Bible tells us of Lucifer "falling as a star from heaven." From the highest of the angels, Lucifer became the lowest. For only one mortal sin he was condemned immediately by the justice of God.

E. WHAT SIN DID TO ADAM AND EVE AND THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE

Adam and Eve were born with grace in their souls. For Adam and Eve there was no sickness, no death. They had keen minds, strong wills. They were not tempted to sins of the flesh; they had perfect control over their lower passions. They did not have to suffer illness and temptation as we do.

Because they committed only one sin, all of us are born without grace. Not only did they lose grace, but they also lost all the other wonderful gifts that Almighty God had given them to pass on to the human race. Visit the local hospitals. Look at aisle after aisle of men suffering from terrible diseases; these diseases came into the world because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Visit the Veteran's Hospital; see hundreds of wounded soldiers suffering the effects of war. There would have been no war if Adam and Eve had not committed the first sin. There would be no need for a "March of Dimes," a cancer fund, or a heart fund.

Physical evil came into the world because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Because of one sin we are born without grace, subject to sickness, full of evil inclinations. Our minds and wills are weak; and in the end—the grave! These are the effects of one mortal sin.

F. WHAT SIN DID TO CHRIST

Because of our sins, Christ suffered the agony in the garden. He was betrayed by Judas. He was scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked by the soldiers. He was rejected by the people in favor of Barabbas; He was nailed to the cross; and suffered the cruel death of a criminal. **CHRIST SUFFERED ALL OF THESE THINGS FOR YOUR MORTAL SINS.** How terrible is sin!

In imagination let us go off to the little clearing where Christ is praying. He has just finished His last Supper; He is about to go through His terrible agony in the garden. He is lying flat upon the ground. You see His fists clenched because of His pain. His body shakes and the veins in His head stand out because of His horror for sin. Suddenly the blood oozes out all over His forehead, His arms, His whole body—He is sweating blood! The sight is repulsive and sickening. What makes Him suffer so? Your sins—and the sins of the whole human race.

Consider the betrayal of Judas. Judas, whom Our Lord had chosen as His Apostle, betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver! Like Judas, you betray Christ every time you commit a mortal sin; you betray Him not for thirty pieces of silver, but for some rotten sin.

Go to the dungeon of Pilate. You see a whip lashing down on a Man's back: finally you see the flesh break open and the red blood trickle down. Who is suffering all of this? It is your dearest friend, Jesus Christ. You push in closer to see who is whipping Our Lord—the man with the whip is you! You scourge Jesus Christ every time you commit a serious sin.

See the soldiers making a crown of thorns. How would you like to have a hundred needles pressing into your skull? That is what Our Lord suffered from the crown of thorns. That is what your mortal sin did to Him.

The soldiers stretch Jesus upon the cross; they drive huge nails into His hands and feet. For three hours He writhes in agony upon the cross until He dies. Was it the Roman soldiers who put Him there? It was you! Everytime you commit a mortal sin, you crucify Jesus Christ again. How ugly and repulsive is mortal sin. For your little pleasure, you have caused Our Lord to suffer all of this.

G. BE ALARMED ABOUT YOUR SINS, BUT NOT DISCOURAGED

After this lesson you should be very much concerned, very much alarmed about your sins. Remember that death comes like a thief in the night. If you die with mortal sin on your soul, you will go to hell. If you have committed mortal sins in the past, they are still on your soul unless you have had them forgiven. Where would you go if you died tonight?

But don't be discouraged because of your sins. Discouragement is a temptation from the devil. There is something more powerful than all your terrible sins, there is something that can cleanse them all away—it is the death of Jesus Christ. No one ever committed so many sins that he could not be forgiven. "*If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson they shall be white as wool.*" (Isaiah 1:18) Remember Our Lord's story of the prodigal son: just as the father forgave the prodigal son, so Our Lord will forgive you. And remember His story of the lost sheep: "There is greater joy in Heaven upon one sinner who does penance than on the ninety-nine that need not penance."

You must be sorry for your sins. Don't say that you will do it later. *Now is the time.* You may never take these instructions again. Be sorry for your sins and promise God that you will never commit them again. Kneel down tonight and say the Act of Contrition from your heart. Even if you feel you cannot give up some terrible sin, kneel down and ask Our Lord to help you give it up. No one's life was ever so mixed up that God could not straighten it out.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. How was Hell created?
2. Are we responsible for the sufferings of Jesus Christ?
3. Why is discouragement a temptation from the devil?

LESSON 13

FAST AND ABSTINENCE

"Now therefore saith the Lord: Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and weeping and in mourning." (Joel 2)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

In the previous lesson you learned of the enormity of sin. You realize now the necessity of doing penance for your sins. There are many works of penance you can do. We present fast and abstinence to you because this is a penance imposed under pain of sin on all Catholics. It is not just a custom like wearing a hat or not wearing a hat in church. The Catholic Church follows the warning of Our Lord: *"Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish."* (Luke 13:3); and she obliges us under pain of mortal sin to fast and abstain. Be sure to understand the obligation of fast and abstinence.

A. FAST AND ABSTINENCE ARE NECESSARY TO SAVE YOUR SOUL

In the first lessons we asked you, "Of what should you take more care—your soul or your body?" And you saw that it was reasonable to give more effort to the care of your soul.

What leads you into sin? It is usually your body. Frequently enough the sinner is one who has too much love for his own body, too much love of sensuous pleasure, too much love of drink. This is the age of the senses; the soul is almost forgotten. In America we have many things to please our senses, but very little for the good of our souls. We Americans have clean, comfortable homes. We have every sort of soap and beautifier for the body—for men and women alike! We have luxurious sports cars, whose motors purr like contented kittens. We have the finest in alcoholic drinks.

We cater to the tastes of our children by giving them lots of ice cream and candy and they grow up always wanting to satisfy their senses. Someone said, perhaps rightly, that Americans dig their graves with their teeth. This is the age of the senses.

What does the Bible tell us? In the Bible St. Paul says:

"I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps having preached to others I myself should become a castaway." Saint Paul, who said this, was a bishop; he was afraid of losing heaven if he did not chastise his body. The Bible warns us that the sensual man does not perceive the spiritual truths of God: "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him: and he cannot understand." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Christ Himself fasted for our sins: *"And Jesus . . . was led by the spirit into the desert for the space of forty days, and was tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry." (Luke 4:1-2)*

According to St. Matthew's Gospel, chapters sixteen and seventeen, Our Lord taught the Apostles about fasting and penance. Christ told them that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients, scribes and chief priests, and be put to death. But St. Peter objected. He wanted glory and pleasure. Our Lord warned the twelve Apostles on that occasion: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Then Our Lord brought them up to the mountain and He was transfigured before them (Matthew 17). When they came down from the mountain a man fell on his knees before Our Lord and said to Him: "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic and suffereth much: for he falleth often into the fire, and often into the water; and I brought him to Thy disciples and they could not cure him." Christ cast the devil out of the boy. The Apostles went secretly to Christ and asked Our Lord why they could not cast out the devil. Our Lord's reply was, "But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." (Matthew 17:20).

Fasting and abstinence obtain for us special favors from God. The great men and women of the Old and New Testament fasted and prayed to obtain favors from God for the people. Moses, Samson, Elias, Daniel, Judith, Esther, St. John the Baptist and St. Paul fasted to get God's grace for the people. By fast and abstinence you make up the punishment due to your sins so that you will not have to suffer so long in purgatory. Fasting and abstinence lifts your mind from earthly things, so that you can put it on heavenly things. Fast and abstinence can prevent diseases caused by eating or drinking too much—ask any physician. Therefore, the laws of fasting and abstinence in the Catholic Church are not just peculiar customs. They are necessary aids to help us lead a good Christian life.

B. THE LAWS OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE OBLIGE YOU UNDER PAIN OF SERIOUS SIN

The Catholic Church has the power to make laws which we must obey. This power comes from Jesus Christ Himself.

Christ told the Church: *"Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven."* (Matthew 18:18) When the Church says we must do something under pain of mortal sin, it is a mortal sin to disobey. With the power of Jesus Christ the Church obliges us to obey these laws. Please pay close attention today so that you will understand these laws.

C. THE LAW OF FASTING

The law of fasting means that on certain days an adult is permitted only one full meal with meat, two small meals without meat, and no solids between meals. You may drink liquids such as coffee, milk, soft drinks and so forth between meals. The two small meals put together must not exceed the amount of food taken at the main meal. All Catholics over 21 years of age and not yet 59, who are not sick, pregnant or nursing a baby, or who are not excused by some other very serious reason, are obliged to fast.

When must you fast? You are obliged to fast every day in Lent except Sundays, on December 7 (in the USA), December 24, on the day before Pentecost Sunday and on the Ember Days. Your parish priest will remind you of these days during the year in the Sunday announcements. You can also look to your yearly calendar for the fast and abstinence days.

D. THE LAW OF ABSTINENCE

The law of abstinence means that on certain days you are not allowed to eat meat. By "meat", the Church means the flesh of any warm-blooded animal or bird, and the soups and gravies made from such flesh. You are permitted to eat sea food: lobsters, turtles, crabs, oysters, frogs, and so forth. Eggs, spaghetti, macaroni and similar dishes are not meat. Chicken, turkey or any fowl is considered meat.

Every Catholic over seven years of age who has the use of reason is obliged to abstain from meat on ALL FRIDAYS of the year, the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception (for USA), December 24, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Saturday. Partial abstinence is observed on Ember Wednesday, Ember Saturday and the Vigil of Pentecost.

E. THE LAWS ARE NOT DIFFICULT

When you become a Catholic, you will realize that the Church is a kind mother. These laws of fast and abstinence are not difficult, but they bind under pain of serious sin. It is just as serious a sin to eat meat on Friday or not to fast on days of fasting, as it is to miss Mass on Sunday. If you think you should be excused from the laws of fast and abstinence, talk to the priest who is in charge of you. Have a Catholic calendar in your home, so that you can know the days on which to fast and abstain. Pay attention to the announcements made by the priest on Sunday; he will warn you when these days come. If a Catholic disobeys the easy laws of God's Church regarding fasting, abstinence or Mass on Sunday, he is apt to disobey the harder laws of God. A good Catholic may sin out of weakness in other things, but he will not deliberately disobey the laws explained to you today. We ask you to fast and abstain during the time of your instructions; it is part of your Christian training.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. Why is fast and abstinence necessary?
2. Is it a sin to violate the laws of fast and abstinence?
3. What is meant by fasting?
4. When must you fast?
5. What is abstinence?
6. On what days must you abstain from meat?

THE SEVEN ANGELS

A poor man lay dying, whom the thought of his past life filled with sadness, and he prayed that God would forgive him his many sins, and show him mercy when he called him to the Judgment Seat. Seven angels, clad in garments that shone like the sun, stood around him

"Who are you, O beautiful spirits of God, and why do you come here?" he said.

The first answered, "I was hungry and you gave me eat."

The second one said, "I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink."

The third continued, "I was naked, and you clothed me."

The fourth: "I was a stranger, and you took me in."

The fifth: "I was in prison, and you visited me."

The sixth: "I was sick, and you came to comfort me."

The seventh: "When I was dead, you buried me."

The dying man now remembered the good works he had done to the poor, and the heavens above him seemed to open. Jesus, Himself, appeared surrounded by His holy angels. With His gentle voice, which is the joy of the elect, He said, "Whatever you have done unto these, the least of My brethren, you have done unto Me. Come now and receive the reward which I have prepared for you."

At these words, the holy man breathed his last, and the seven angels bore his soul with them to Heaven.

LESSON 14

HELL

"Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire." (Matthew 25:41)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

St. Theresa was a very holy nun, a saint. She said that when she was tempted to sin, she knelt down in her little room in the convent and prayed before a crucifix; and if that did not conquer the temptation she meditated on hell. If St. Theresa needed to think about hell, certainly you need to think about hell. In these instructions such a lesson brings many people to their senses. Study this lesson prayerfully; then in the quiet of your parish church think about your life and about hell.

A. WHAT IS HELL?

Hell is a place of punishment in the next world; there the souls of those who die in mortal sin are condemned to suffer forever with the devils. Hell is different from purgatory: one will never get out of hell. Only those who die in mortal sin go there—but one mortal sin is enough to send you there. Your life on earth is a time of trial. After death there is no second chance, if at the moment of death you have chosen sin, your choice is final.

B. PROOF FROM THE BIBLE THAT HELL EXISTS

The Bible often speaks of the punishment of hell. Christ spoke of hell more than fifty times. *"And fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)*

"If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither: and they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire: and he burneth." (John 15:6)

"And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of His power: in a flame of fire, giving vengeance to them who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

And the unprofitable servant, cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There, shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth . . . Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just, into life everlasting." (Matthew 25:30, 41, 46)

"And he opened the bottomless pit: and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit." (Apocalypse)

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire." (Apocalypse 20:15)

C. PROOF FROM COMMON SENSE THAT THERE IS A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT IN THE NEXT WORLD

Common sense tells us that if God makes serious laws and binds us under pain of mortal sin, He must reward those who obey and punish those who disobey these serious laws. If there were no reward for obeying a law and no punishment for disobeying a law, people would pay no attention to that law. Many evil people in the world are never punished for their sins while they are alive. Therefore, they must be punished for their sins after death.

History shows that almost all races and peoples have believed in a place of punishment after death.

D. HELL IS REAL

Today the devil has persuaded many people to think of hell as a joke; some put hell and the devil in the same class as Halloween ghosts. Hell is no joke, but a terrible reality for the souls suffering there now. Whether you like it or not, there is such a place as hell, just as there is cancer, aids, war and death—whether you like it or not. People don't like to believe in hell; they try to forget it, so that they can sin more easily. But God has told us that hell exists, a million denials cannot destroy hell.

E. WHERE IS HELL?

Hell is a real place. The Bible does not tell us exactly where it is. The Bible calls it a bottomless pit.

"And he (the angel) opened the bottomless pit: and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit." (Apocalypse 9:2) Perhaps hell is in the center of the earth.

F. THE PAINS OF HELL

God has told us what the pains of hell are:

1. Separation from God and homesickness for your true home, heaven, and your Father, God.
2. Torture by fire.
3. Terrible remorse when you realize that you are in hell because of your own negligence and sin.
4. Companionship with the devils and evil people with whom you would have been ashamed to associate on earth.
5. All of these terrible pains will last forever.

G. SEPARATION FROM GOD

We are made for God. After death, the soul rushes to God with irresistible force, like an airplane falling to earth, like a piece of metal drawn to a strong magnet. But the soul in mortal sin is immediately judged by God and instantly repelled and cast into hell.

"Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41) A soul condemned to hell will always be separated from its Maker, but it will always burn with the futile desire to be united with Him. For all eternity it will suffer a gnawing hunger that can never be satisfied, a maddening thirst that can never be quenched, an emptiness that can never be filled.

The greatest loss man can feel on this earth is being separated from a loved one. Think of the empty feeling, the pain of loneliness, of separation, when you see a loved one lowered in the grave. But this is only a faint hint of the loss you will suffer at being separated from God, the Author and Source of all love, if you die in mortal sin. The pain of loss you feel at the death of a loved one is softened by time and by the thought that you will meet your loved one again in the next world. But the pain of the loss of God will never be softened.

H. TORTURE BY FIRE

There is *real* fire in hell. It is different from the fire on earth which tortures only the body. The fire of hell also tortures the soul.

Jesus often spoke of fire in hell: *"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished."* (Mark 9:43)

He tells us the story of Lazarus and the rich man: *"And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom: And he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you, there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither."* (Luke 16:22-26)

Imagine the sharp pain when a match burns your little finger. Fire causes the worst pain even in this life. But in hell you will be "salted with fire." To preserve meat it was often soaked in a barrel of brine until the salt has permeated every last fibre of the meat. In a similar way the fire of hell will not torture just the outside of your body but every last fibre of your being. *You will be plunged into a "pool of fire."* (Apocalypse 20:15) You will be buried in fire. *"And fire shall devour them."* (Psalm 20:10)

How long could you hold your finger over a match flame? Five seconds? But the fire in hell will burn you *forever*. *"Their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched."* (Isaias 66:24) "Everlasting Fire", the Bible calls it. The fire of hell burns without consuming. *"He shall be punished for all that he did, and yet shall not be consumed: according to the multitude of his devices so also shall he suffer."* (Job 20:18)

Death is a merciful escape from torture, especially from the torture of fire. But from the fire of hell there is no escape; there is no death; there is no end to the torture.

I. REMORSE (REGRET)

The Bible describes the remorse of the damned in hell as "the worm that dieth not." You could have saved your soul; you had a million chances to be happy forever with God. How stupid to have chosen this confusion and torture. What a terrible price to pay for a few moments of sinful pleasure. You thought you had plenty of time. How often you were reminded of sudden death. Truly, you are a fool. How you hate yourself! If only you could stop existing. Thoughts as these will afflict the *lost* soul!

J. COMPANIONSHIP WITH THE DEVILS AND THE DAMNED

Who will be with you in hell? Murderers, thieves, adulterers, drunkards, prostitutes, the scum of the earth, steeped in the filth of their sins. They make fun of you for being such a fool and how you hate them; their jeering, screeching voices remind you of your stupidity. There is no love in hell, only hate, and there you are in the midst of all their hatred.

Now you see Satan in all his ugliness for the first time; the leader you served in life is now your master in hell. You freely choose this loathsome creature instead of Jesus; what a fool he has made of you. He promised you riches, power, pleasure. Now you stand before him empty handed. How he tricked you! How he mocks you! How you hate him!

K. HELL WILL LAST FOREVER

You might be able to stand all the pains of hell if you knew that sometime they would end. But, they will last *forever*. You hear the words still ringing in your ears over and over again: "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire."

L. THINK OFTEN OF HELL

Truly hell is *"A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth."* (Job 10:22) It is a vast chaos of eternal night. You were not made for this confusion and disorder, pain and terror. You were made for God. In hell how keenly will you realize that you were made for God! Even more keenly will you realize that you can never have God.

Realize that it is possible for you to go to hell. One mortal sin can send you there. Be concerned and alarmed about the sins on your soul. Keep coming to these classes to learn how to get rid of your sins, how to avoid going to hell. Say the Act of Contrition every evening.

M. BUT DON'T BE DISCOURAGED

No one's life was ever so mixed up that it could not be straightened out. Talk to one of the priests who is giving these instructions. He will help you.

**QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW
OF THIS LESSON**

- 1. What are the principle pains of hell?
- 2. Who goes to hell?
- 3. How long is a person in hell?
- 4. What is remorse?

WHAT THEN?

A young man went one day to St. Philip Neri, and entered into long details about the study of the law. The young man had just begun his studies and he needed some advice. He spoke to the saint about the course he planned to take. He wanted to finish his studies with the degree of doctor. He went through all he wanted to do by that time, explaining each detail with a sense of eagerness.

St. Philip Neri looked at him as he finished and said, "And then . . .?"

"Then," replied the young man, caught up in his own enthusiasm, "then I will represent people, plead their causes, successfully, I hope."

"And then . . . ?" the saint added.

"And then people will begin to speak about me in high regard and I will have a good reputation."

"And then . . . ?", added the saint, smiling.

"And then -- and then, oh, I will live at my own ease and be very happy."

"And what then . . . ?"

"Well, then I will end my life by dying," finished the student.

"And then," the saint continued, raising his voice a little to add emphasis, "and then, what will you do when your own trial comes, when you shall be the accused, Satan will be the accuser, and Almighty God will be your judge."

The young man, who didn't expect the conversation to go this way, hung his head and began to silently consider this situation. After a few minutes he left the room.

A short time later, the young man gave up his studies of law, and embarked upon a life that was dedicated to the service of God. He did this, he told all who asked, so that he could devote as much time as possible to the study of the answer to "And what then . . .?"

NOTES

LESSON 15 PURGATORY

"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." (2 Machabees 12:46)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Christianity would not make sense without purgatory. But many deny the doctrine of purgatory because they do not understand it. From this lesson you should get a clear understanding of what purgatory is.

A. WHAT IS PURGATORY?

Purgatory is a place of temporary punishment in the next world. The word "purgatory" means cleansing. In purgatory we are cleansed from our venial sins and the punishment due for all of our other forgiven sins. You do not remain in purgatory forever as you do in hell. After your soul is cleansed in purgatory, you go to heaven.

B. WHO GOES TO PURGATORY?

Those people go to purgatory who die in the state of grace, but who have venial sins on their souls or who have not completed the punishment still due to forgiven sin. The "punishment still due to sin" means that even though God forgives all sins of a person who is truly sorry, He still demands that the person be punished, either in this life or in the next. For example, a boy breaks his mother's cookie jar. His mother forgives him because he is sorry for it. But if she is a wise mother, in order to discourage him from doing it again, she will make him pay for it out of his allowance. So also God is a wise Father: He threatens us with the punishment of purgatory to discourage us from sinning again and to make us pay for our sins.

C. PROOF FROM THE BIBLE THAT PURGATORY EXISTS

The Bible tells us clearly that there is a place of temporary punishment for sin after death.

"Every man's work shall be manifest. For the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in him. And the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

The best proof perhaps is from the Old Testament, the story of Judas Machabaeus, (2 Machabees 12:39-46). Judas Machabaeus was commander of the Hebrew army. The Jews had a bloody battle with Idumeaites. After the battle Judas Machabaeus sent his officers to prepare the dead for burial. Under the coats of the dead soldiers they found trinkets stolen from the pagan temple at Jamnia. This was a venial sin. The rest of the army prayed to God to forgive the dead soldiers. Judas took up a collection of 12,000 drachmas (about \$8,200.00) which he sent to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead. *"And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.) It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." (2 Machabees 12:43-46)*

The Bible tells us that these soldiers were punished by God for small sins before they entered heaven.

D. PROOF FROM THE ANCIENT TEACHING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THAT PURGATORY EXISTS

Tradition and the constant teaching and practice of the Church proves that there is a purgatory. Early Christian writers of the second and third centuries spoke of praying for the dead.

For example, Tertullian, who lived about 200 A.D., said: "The faithful widow prays for the soul of her husband and begs for his repose."

Prayers written on the walls of ancient underground cemeteries in Rome prove the same belief.

Prayers for the dead are a very ancient practice in the Catholic Church, Catholics have *always* believed in praying for their dead.

E. PROOF FROM COMMON SENSE THAT PURGATORY EXISTS

Only people who die in mortal sin go to hell. But no one can enter heaven with even the smallest sin. *"There shall not enter into it anything defiled or that worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they that are written in the book of life of the lamb." (Apocalypse 21:27)* So there must be a place in the next world where a soul with venial sin can go; where small sins can be cleansed from the soul.

We have a natural desire to help our dead; we can do this if they are in purgatory. What a great consolation to reach beyond the grave and help our dear ones! Go to a Catholic wake. All the people kneel down and pray to help the dead person. His soul is still living. What a wonderful thing to be able to help him! Go to a non-Catholic wake. There is no kneeling bench, no crucifix, no prayer, no understanding of death. A religion which teaches that prayer for the dead is wrong is cruel to the souls of the departed. What a pity that these non-Catholics have been deprived of the true teaching of God!

F. THE PUNISHMENT OF PURGATORY

The principal punishment of purgatory is the fact of not seeing God face to face until the time of punishment is over. During all this time the soul in purgatory keenly feels the desire to see God. The other pain of purgatory is (probably) real fire. St. Augustine, who lived in the fifth century, said: "The fire of purgatory is more terrible than all that man can suffer in this life"

G. THE LENGTH OF THE PUNISHMENT IN PURGATORY

The length of time you must spend in purgatory depends on the number and seriousness of the sins for which you must make amends.

For example, you steal a nickel and I steal a dime; we both die with the sin on our souls. I will probably spend more time in purgatory than you. "Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." (Matthew 5:26) The soul goes to heaven after its release from purgatory.

H. PRAY FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

You should pray for the souls in purgatory in order to shorten their suffering there. Besides your personal prayers, have Masses offered for them and do charitable works in the name of Jesus Christ. Judas Machabaeus sets us an example; he had sacrifice offered for the souls of his dead soldiers.

"And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection." (2 Machabees 12:43)

All Souls' Day, November 2nd, is a special day set aside by the Church for prayers and Masses to be offered for all souls in purgatory. But you should pray every day for those souls, especially for your relatives and friends. For centuries special prayers for the dead have been included in the Mass; and so today each time a priest offers Mass, he prays for the dead.

I. YOU CAN AVOID PURGATORY

You can avoid purgatory by guarding against the smallest sins and faults, and by doing penance for your past sins. You can do penance by patiently accepting trials and hardships, by doing things you don't like to do, and by giving up things you like. However *"Be not without fear about death and add not sin upon sin." (Ecclesiasticus)*

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is purgatory?
2. Is purgatory different than hell?
3. Who goes to purgatory?
4. Does the Bible tell us that there is a place called purgatory?
5. Is it wrong to pray for the dead?

CONDEMNATION AT A CIVIL TRIBUNAL

Once when young, said a zealous missionary, I was present in court as the sentence of death was about to be pronounced on a man accused of murder, and I will never forget it.

The prisoner was standing as the final sentence was about to be delivered. Standing, perhaps, was not the proper term. He could hardly stay straight since his legs could barely support him. He trembled so much that he had to support himself with the railing that was in front of him. Perspiration was streaming down his face, and the violence of his shaking was obvious to all.

As the judge spoke the final sentence, the prisoner was seized with extreme convulsions. He shouted that he did not deserve death, and that he would not die. He was led away by the court officers and eventually put to death.

Such a scene is indeed a very frightful one. But instead of human judges, picture to yourself the infinite God, who needs no witnesses, who will show you no mercy, and who is about to pass sentence on your soul. It is a sentence from which there is no appeal, a sentence that takes effect at once, and a sentence that will last forever.

Imagine the hardened sinner who stands before this Judge. It is not a short life he forfeits for his crimes, but eternal happiness with God and His angels and saints. Even the judgment of one who will be condemned to Purgatory is a frightening scene because the soul will still have to suffer terribly. The only hope that lays before him is that one day, in God's time, he will be released.

May we never have to await the Final Judgment in such terrible fear. Let us live our life here as we should, preparing for the time we will next meet our Judge.

LESSON 16

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

"For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (John 3:16)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The best way to learn about the life of Jesus Christ is to read the four Gospels. In a book of this size it is impossible to give an adequate account of His life and teachings. In instruction classes some priests use the motion picture *The King of Kings* or *Jesus of Nazareth* or *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, but that too is not sufficient. You simply must read the life of Christ in the Gospels. All we will attempt to do in this lesson is give a short sketch of the life of Christ.

A. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ was born in a stable at Bethlehem in Palestine some 1900 years ago. (This date is very important because in the study of Christianity you must go back to its Founder, Jesus Christ, who lived more than 1900 years ago.) Christ was a Jew, born of a Jewish maiden, the Virgin Mary. His mother was a virgin before, during, and after His birth. Christ, having no human father, had St. Joseph as His foster-father. The shepherds, the angels, and the Magi, wise men from the East, visited Jesus at Bethlehem.

B. CHRIST LIVED AT NAZARETH

Christ spent His boyhood in the small town of Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. We hear nothing about Him after this until He was twelve years of age. St. Luke tells us about His visit to the temple in Jerusalem at the age of twelve where He instructed the learned Jewish theologians. After this, we hear nothing about Christ until He begins His public life.

C. CHRIST'S PUBLIC LIFE

When Christ was thirty years of age, He began His "public life," that is, the period of His life in which He taught the principles of a good life. His miracles, His teaching, and His foundation of the Church took place after He was thirty years old. He was crucified at the age of thirty-three. For a full account of Christ's public life read the Gospels.

D. CHRIST'S HOLINESS

Christ practiced all the difficult virtues that He taught to others. He lived a life of continual prayer, lowliness, poverty, kindness and purity.

E. CHRIST'S MIRACLES

All the miracles of Jesus are not recorded in the Gospels: *But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written.*" (John 21:25)

The Gospel record tells us that Christ delivered at least seven people from the devil and performed at least fifteen miraculous cures. He brought three people back from the dead; and ten times He exercised His miraculous powers over the forces of nature. In all, some forty miracles are explicitly mentioned in the gospel accounts.

F. CHRIST'S PROPHECIES

A prophecy is the detailed foretelling of a future event which cannot be naturally foreseen. Christ foretold His suffering and death on the cross, His denial by Peter, His betrayal by Judas, His resurrection, the coming of the Holy Ghost, the persecution of His followers.

G. CHRIST PREPARES FOR HIS SUFFERING AND HIS DEATH

Christ entered Jerusalem in triumph on the back of a donkey on Palm Sunday, but His enemies were conspiring against Him to put Him to death. Christ gave us His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter.

H. CHRIST'S SUFFERING AND DEATH

On Holy Thursday night, Christ suffered a terrible sweating of blood in the Garden of Olives. There He was arrested by His enemies and brought before Annas and Caiphas, the high priests. All the Apostles left Him. Peter denied knowing Him, while Judas betrayed Him. Christ was brought before Pilate, the Roman governor, then Herod, the local governor, and back again to Pilate. He suffered the Roman scourging, crowned with thorns and unjustly condemned to death. On Good Friday He was blasphemed by His enemies and by an unthinking mob. He hung on the cross for three long hours, offering His life for our sins.

I. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD

On Easter Sunday Christ came out of the tomb, glorious and immortal. After His resurrection Christ appeared to the Holy Women, to Mary Magdalene, to St. Peter and the apostles, to St. Thomas, and to more than five hundred of the believers.

LESSON 17

JESUS CHRIST IS TRUE GOD

"My Lord and My God." (John 20:28)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Jesus Christ is true God; Jesus Christ is really GOD. He is not some sort of inferior god. He is equal to God the Father in all things. He has existed from all eternity with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. He is God just as truly as God the Father and God the Holy Ghost are God. This lesson is very important; it is a key lesson in the whole series. If Jesus Christ is God — and He is — then everything He teaches is the teaching of God Almighty. It follows that the Church He founded is the only true Church and the Sacraments which He gives us make us share in the life of God. If you accept this fact that Jesus Christ is God, you must accept Christ's teachings and Christ's only true Church.

A. CHRIST DID WHAT ONLY GOD CAN DO: THEREFORE HE IS GOD

Let us pretend that we are in the Holy Land more than 1900 years ago, the time of Jesus Christ. We have heard much about Christ; we wish to see Him. Let us imagine that we are standing on a street corner in Jerusalem. We ask the people many questions about Christ. One person tells us that he has been cured of cancer; another says that he was cured of leprosy; another says that his aunt was healed by Jesus Christ. The people on the corner tell us that Jesus has performed many other miracles. As we are talking, the crowd begins to shout, "Here He comes now!" We turn and we see Jesus Christ coming down the street. He is a man almost six feet in height; He is a Jew and has ordinary Jewish features. The people bring the sick from their homes on to the lawns and sidewalks. As Christ walks down the street, He is talking with a group of men accompanying Him. With hardly any effort on His part. He touches some of the sick, some He blesses, and on some only His shadow falls. **MANY ARE CURED INSTANTLY!** We are filled with awe and amazement. Who is this man?

Finally, Christ comes to the corner where we are standing. We have come a long way to see Him, so we eagerly push our way into the crowd. We are determined to find out who this man is. As we follow Christ down the street, more of the sick, the blind, and the lame are brought out on the sidewalk. **MOST ARE CURED INSTANTLY** by His touch, or by His blessing, or by His shadow. A woman with an issue of blood tries to push her way into the crowd; the crowd shoves her back, but she is determined. We inquire about this woman and find that she has suffered from this illness for many years; she has spent most of her money on physicians without success. Finally, she gets close to Our Lord, but she cannot gain His attention, so she reaches down and touches the hem of His garment. And she is cured!

With Christ and His followers we reach the city gates. In those days there were walls around every city; the people in one city did not trust the people in the next city. We pass through the city gates into the countryside. In the distance we see a crowd of people coming toward us; we are alarmed; they may be robbers—the countryside is infested with them. But as they come closer, we see that it is a funeral procession. The principal mourner is an old lady; she is crying bitterly. We learn that she is a widow from the town of Naim, and she is weeping because her only son has died. He had been a good son, the only support for his elderly mother, and now she could not be consoled. Christ walks towards the body; it is being carried on a sort of stretcher (not in a casket) to be buried in a cave. Again we are filled with wonder and awe and expectation. What will Christ do? He takes the hand of the dead youth, and life seems to leap from Christ's hand into the corpse. The boy sits up, very much alive. Startled by His power, we draw back and watch the widow of Naim joyfully embrace and kiss her son. She is so happy that she does not remember to thank Jesus; but He does not care. He smiles and we go on in silence. Everyone is thinking and praying over what he has just seen. Who is this Man? We are afraid.

As we walk along with Christ, foot-runners come to Him bringing a message. But He pays no attention to the message; He seems indifferent. After He reads the message, He throws it on the ground; we pick it up. The message is this: "Come quickly, Lazarus is very sick." It is signed "Mary and Martha." Mary and Martha and Lazarus were dear friends of Christ. Since one of them was sick, it would be expected that He would come to them. After we follow Our Lord for several more hours, a foot-runner comes with a new message: "Lazarus is dead." Christ turns to us and says "*Lazarus . . . sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.*" (John 11:11) We are puzzled.

The crowd following Christ comes to a sea. We get into boats about the size of modern life boats; each one holds about thirty people and has four or five pairs of oars. We get into a boat with Christ. Our Lord sits in the back seat and soon falls asleep. When we are about half way across the sea a great storm comes up; soon the waves are ten or fifteen feet high; lightning darts across the sky and the thunder crashes; the women cry in fear. The boat is tossed about like a little cork, and the men try to bail out the water. Finally, one of the Apostles crawls to the back of the boat where Jesus Christ is sleeping. He cries out, "Lord, save us, we perish!" Our Lord awakes, rubs the sleep from His eyes and says, "Why are you fearful, oh you of little faith?" And to the storm He says three words: "Peace, be still." And suddenly the sea becomes calm. The thunder clouds pass, and the sun breaks through. We row on in silence; everyone is thinking about what Our Lord has just done.

When we reach the other side of the lake, we leave our boats and travel some distance to the town of Bethany where Mary and Martha live. When Martha learns that Our Lord has arrived she says to Jesus, "Lord, if You had only been here, my brother would not have died." Then her sister, Mary, comes up to Christ and utters the same reverent complaint, "Lord, if You had been

here, my brother would not have died." Even the people who stand about are saying: "Could not He that opened the eyes of the men born blind, have caused that this man should not die?" Then Christ Himself begins to cry with human grief. He asks Mary and Martha where Lazarus is buried. But they do not want Him to open the tomb because Lazarus has been buried for four days. But Christ insists, and several men remove the stone from the entrance of the tomb. Christ stands before the tomb and says three words: "Lazarus, come forth!" Again we are struck with fear: Lazarus, the dead man, walks out of the tomb.

Now ask yourself these questions. Who alone can cure illness in His own name and by His own power? Who alone has absolute control over the sea and over all the forces of nature? Who alone has power over life and death? Only God! With St. Thomas the Apostle we must say to Christ: "My Lord and My God." (John 20:28) Jesus Christ is truly God, equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost in all things.

The incidents related in this narrative actually happened and can be found in the gospel.

B. CHRIST AROSE FROM THE DEAD: THE STRONGEST PROOF THAT HE IS GOD

Several times during His life Christ told both His friends and His enemies that He would rise from the dead to prove that He was God. And on Easter morning He did arise from the dead. Everyone knows that no mere man can come back from the dead by his own power. By His resurrection from the dead, Christ proved that He was God.

St. Paul tells us that the miracle of the resurrection is the foundation of our faith: "And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain: and your faith is also vain." (I Cor. 15:14)

C. CHRIST SAID THAT HE IS GOD

When on trial for His life, Christ was asked one question which determined whether He would live or die: "Are you the Son of the Living God?" He replied: "I am." And He was condemned to death because of blasphemy—because of a crime by which a man claims to be God.

Jesus Christ was either insane or a liar or God. The beauty and harmony of His doctrine proves that He was not insane. And He was not a liar. He was the most holy of men. Even His enemies could find no sin in Him. Therefore He must be God.

D. CHRIST IS ALSO REAL MAN

Besides being God, Jesus Christ is also real man—not a sort of man, not someone who took on only the appearance of man. He is real man, born of a woman, with a body and soul like ours. He knew what it meant to be hungry and thirsty, to be tired, to suffer pain.

Jesus Christ is both man and God. He is the man-God. Do not be confused. Christ is God for all eternity: He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He always was, is, and will be God. But Christ became man in time; He was born of the Virgin Mary on a Christmas day, more than nineteen hundred years ago; and as man He ascended into heaven. And there He now reigns forever as God and man.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

for Lessons 16 & 17

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. Who was His mother?
3. Was St. Joseph Christ's father?
4. When was Christ born?
5. What did Christ suffer for our sins?
6. On what day did Christ die?
7. On what day did Christ arise from the dead?
8. Prove that Christ is God.
9. Is Jesus Christ real man?

NOTES

LESSON 18

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH

*“And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.
And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)*

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

First of all, you will notice that your priest instructor will spend at least three days on the lessons on the Church. You will not be a genuine Catholic without a thorough understanding of the Church. A new Catholic may not know all the details of the Catholic religion, but he can still be a practical Catholic, but if he doesn't understand what the Church is, he cannot be a practical Catholic; he will not keep his faith. The importance of all these lessons on the Church cannot be emphasized too much.

A. THE RELIGIOUS AMERICA

A sincere man who has gone this far with us in studying religion looks about him now and wants a sure guide to heaven. He has studied grace, heaven, hell, sin, and some other important teachings of Christianity. He wants to accept Christ and His teachings. But as he looks about him he will find several hundred different kinds of Christian religious sects. Some unthinking friend might tell him that they are all the same or that they all have the same teachings of Jesus Christ. Common sense will tell you that this is utter nonsense. They are not all the same, they are different. If they were all the same, there would be only one Church, not 259 or 500! All these churches disagree on important teachings of Our Lord. Some teach that Baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation; others say that Baptism isn't necessary. They disagree on abortion, euthanasia, devotion to the Blessed Mother, the Holy Eucharist, confession, heaven, hell, drinking, gambling — yes even on God and on Christ. They have various beliefs and various definitions of God Himself. That is why there are so many churches. People or organizations who teach opposite doctrines are not going in the same direction; they are going in opposite directions!

B. YOUR OBLIGATION IS TO FIND THE TRUTH

Christ suffered a terrible agony and death to get you to heaven. But in order to get to heaven you must find the truth which Christ taught, you have an obligation before the God Who created you to find this truth. Therefore, it is necessary that you learn about God's teachings, God's grace, and God's rule over your life. God does not want you to go on blindly saying that all religions are the same. Religions which teach opposite doctrines cannot both teach the truth.

C. LET'S LOOK IN THE BIBLE—CHRIST MADE ONE CHURCH, NOT MANY CHURCHES

Read about the life and teaching of Christ in the Gospels. Christ's truth and Christ's grace were for all men through the centuries; God's grace must be put in the souls of men until the end of the world; men's sins must be forgiven as long as the world exists. But Christ Himself was going back to heaven. He had to leave behind Him an organization with all His powers: the power to teach, the power to give His grace, and the power to rule men's lives according to His laws. Therefore, one of the first things Christ did in His public life was to choose the twelve Apostles. He gave these twelve Apostles His work to do.

“As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.” (John 20:21)

Christ actually told the Apostles that His teachings were to be spread through their ministry to all nations even to the end of the world. *“Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

Christ also said that His Church was to last to the end of the world.

“And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18) Therefore, on Peter and the other Apostles Christ founded a Church that was to teach, govern, and sanctify (give grace) to all men until the end of the world. Christ called this organization HIS CHURCH. When He made Peter the head of it, He called it HIS CHURCH. Christ definitely set up a Church. This is in the Bible. He made one Church, not many churches. Christ said “my church”—not “my churches.” To find the teachings, the authority, and the grace of Jesus Christ you must find HIS CHURCH, the one He founded, the one that was to last “. . . even to the consummation of the world;” the one against which “. . . the gates of hell shall not prevail.”

D. WHICH THEN IS THE CHURCH RECORDED IN THE BIBLE?

The only Church that could possibly be the Church that Our Lord started is a Church 1900 years old. How can you find out which church is 1900 years old? Consult a history professor in any college; go to a library and look at a history book or an encyclopedia. The fact that the Catholic Church is 1900 years old is simple history admitted by all historians. The Catholic Church is the ancient Church, the one Christ set up. The Catholic Church, 1900 years old, is the only Church which has authority from Christ to teach us, to give God's grace to us, and to govern us. Let me quote to you just one eminent historian who was never a member of the Catholic Church. This noted historian, Macauley, says: “There is not, and there never was on the earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the

two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian Amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. (Supreme Pontiff means Pope). That line we trace back in an unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth century and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extended till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the papacy; the Republic of Venice is gone; the papacy remains not in decay, not as a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and is still confronting hostile Kings with the same spirit with which it confronted Attila . . .

"She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments (churches) that now exist in the world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the Temple of Mecea. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on the broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

Among educated people the age of the Catholic Church is beyond argument. No Protestant who broke away from the Catholic Church ever claimed that the Catholic Church was not the ancient church! The Catholic Church is the only Church made by Christ. It is the only Church which can give us God's teachings, God's grace, and which has the power to help us to the Kingdom of Heaven. The only Church that Christ gave to the world to teach us, to sanctify us, and to govern us is the Catholic Church.

E. THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

The religious muddle we have today—and it is a muddle—started fifteen hundred years after Our Lord started the one true Church, the Catholic Church. An easy way to remember the date of the foundation of the Protestant churches is to recall the year that Columbus discovered America—1492.

Imagine that you are in Spain the year that Columbus sailed for America. It is Sunday morning and you want to go to church. Out on the street you ask the policeman where you can find a Baptist Church or a Lutheran, or an Episcopalian, or a Methodist Church. The policeman would look at you in amazement. He never heard the words *Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, or Methodist*. He would not know what you were asking about. These churches did not exist - there were no Protestant churches; they were started shortly after Columbus discovered America. In 1520, twenty-eight years after Columbus discovered America, Reverend Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, refused to accept teachings of Christ taught by the Catholic Church, and so he became the first Protestant. He fought with the authorities of the Catholic Church and obstinately refused to obey the Church's God-given authority. He broke away from the Catholic Church and started his own church, the Lutheran Church. In 1534, Henry VIII, King of England, wanted to put away his wife and marry again. The Catholic Church could not permit him to do so because he already had a wife. Henry ousted the Catholic Church from England, set up in its place his own false church, and married as often as he liked. Henry VIII made himself pope of the Episcopalian Church. John Calvin started the Presbyterian church in 1560 in Switzerland. Calvin abolished Mass and other things which Christ gave the Catholic Church.

All the other larger Protestant churches came directly or indirectly from these three: the Lutheran, the Episcopalian, and the Presbyterian churches. The Baptist Church is an offshoot of the Lutheran Church; it was started in 1659 by John Smith. The Methodist Church split off from the Episcopalians in 1739; it was started by John Wesley.

This unfortunate division continues even today. There are at least 259 different churches which call themselves Christian—all claim to teach what Christ taught, yet all disagree among themselves. You can find some religion to suit any easy-going idea of Christianity, even an insane or ignoble idea of Christianity. Laughable, isn't it? Only God has the right to start a religion. God made a Church, one Church. Men made the other churches. These are false churches because they are man-made. Think of it this way. Suppose your parish priest got in a quarrel with the bishop or the Pope. How wrong this priest would be if he broke away from the Catholic Church, and changed some of the teachings of Jesus Christ and led some of the congregation into a new church founded by himself. This is the way that every Protestant church started! There is only one Church made by Jesus Christ. There is only one true Church. Christ made only one Church to give us His teachings, His grace, and to govern us under His law to lead us to our eternal salvation. It is the Catholic Church. You cannot take a chance on any man-made churches, because this is a matter of your eternal salvation.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. Is one automatically saved by the death of Jesus?
2. Can someone save his soul simply by reading the Bible?
3. Are not all religions the same?
4. How many churches did Our Lord found?
5. What church do we find recorded in the Bible?
6. How do we know that the Catholic Church is the oldest church?
7. Do other religions admit that the Catholic Church is the oldest church?
8. When did the Protestant churches come into existence?

LESSON 19

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS AUTHORITY

"And if he will not hear the church: let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (Matthew 18:17)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

It is the authority of the Church that will help you to follow Christ when everything else seems to fail. Temptations will come, your prayers will seem useless; your past training in Christian living will seem inadequate. If there is question of doubt, of serious doubt about your religion, the teaching authority of the Church will keep you close to Christ. If a problem of Christian morality arises, the authority of the Church to govern you will keep you from throwing away your life on sin. Or if the difficulty is human weakness, the Church's authority to give you God's grace will ultimately conquer, and bring you to Almighty God. You must understand this lesson on the authority of the Church. Study it slowly and carefully.

A. AUTHORITY

From our experience we are all familiar with authority. Authority is the power one person has over another, so that he can give commands, which the other must obey.

We have always lived under authority. From our earliest memories we can recall being under the authority of our mother and father. As we grew older we came to know and obey the authority of the federal and state government, the courts and the police.

B. IN ANY GROUP LACK OF AUTHORITY MEANS CHAOS

Authority is not only good, it is necessary! Without authority you can have no order, no decent living, no happiness. Just imagine what Chicago would be like without the authority of a police force. Think of the United States without a President. If by chance there were no President, no government, no authority in the United States, the people themselves would choose some man or group of men who would have authority to rule, otherwise we would live in constant fear of being attacked, robbed, murdered. We would be at the mercy of wicked men.

All authority comes ultimately from God for the good of those who are governed, not for the honor of those in authority. For example, we don't elect a President to make him great and respected, but to make ourselves happy and secure, for it is the President's job to enforce the laws which have been made for the happiness and security of all.

Freedom from authority is bad. If you free yourself from the laws of health and hygiene, you will become diseased and ill. When you liberated yourself from the authority of the Ten Commandments you became evil and, as a result, unhappy. Freedom from the authority of Christ does not bring happiness and well-being—it leads only to misery.

C. DO YOU WANT A CHURCH WITH OR WITHOUT AUTHORITY?

How many times have you heard a non-Catholic friend say, "At our church they teach us this, but I do what I want?" In so many words this person says that he recognizes no religious authority over himself. Unfortunately many non-Catholic religions teach that you should free yourself from all religious authority; and thus by their own teaching they are destroying themselves and all religion.

Just suppose that your child came home from school and told you that there was no authority, no punishment for wrong doing in the school, that there was no principal, no teachers whom the child would have to obey. What would you do? You would take your child out of that school immediately. Now, religion is just as important as school. As a matter of fact, religion is more important. Religion with no authority, no discipline, no head, is a weak religion. You need religion to teach you, to give you grace, to govern you, and thus to help you win heaven. But a weak religion cannot do this for you.

A weak religion without proper authority is also a scandal and keeps people from wishing to practice religion. Without proper authority, the head of each sect makes up his own rules as he goes along. The life style of the adherents to this sect becomes anything but the balanced way of life that the Catholic Church presents to people. When many around see and hear what is preached by the followers of such "religions", they choose not to be religious themselves.

Christ was not weak, Christ's Church is not weak. The Church rules the Catholic people with authority; and that authority is from God.

The Catholic Church teaches us what Christ taught. It teaches with authority, and therefore we must receive and obey these teachings. The Catholic Church does not depend upon public opinion to determine what Christ did or did not teach or to decide what is right and wrong. The Church has God's truth and it teaches this truth to the people — God determines what the Church will teach, not the people.

Moreover, the Catholic Church gives God's grace to men; it has received the means to give this grace from God Himself. The Catholic Church governs its people with authority. Catholics must and do obey the Church.

Do you want a religion with no authority? Then don't become a Catholic. If you want a religion with authority; it is the Catholic religion. But note this well: the Catholic Church will influence your life only if you accept the Church as God's representative with authority from God Himself.

D. JESUS CHRIST HAS SUPREME AUTHORITY OVER OUR SOULS

Jesus Christ has supreme authority over us. *"All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18)*

He proved His authority by proving to us that He is God. A Christian worthy of the name accepts Christ the Man-God as his Lord and Master Who has supreme authority over him. This means that the Christian must believe what Christ teaches, get grace the way Christ tells him to get grace, and obey Christ in all things.

E. JESUS CHRIST GAVE HIS AUTHORITY TO THE APOSTLES

Christ knew He would leave the world. So He gave His authority to teach, to give grace (to sanctify), and to govern souls (to rule) to the twelve Apostles.

THE AUTHORITY TO TEACH: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20)

THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE GRACE: "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me . . . This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood which shall be shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20) "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John 20:23) (In a long series of lessons on the Sacraments we will teach you the other ways of giving grace which the Church has received from Christ.)

THE AUTHORITY TO GOVERN: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven." (Matthew 18:18)

Christ did not give His authority to everyone who heard and believed His teachings. Not to every Tom, Dick and Harry, but only to the twelve Apostles and to their successors did Christ give this authority to teach, to give grace and to govern.

F. THE APOSTLES GAVE CHRIST'S AUTHORITY TO OTHER BISHOPS AND PRIESTS

The Apostles were the first bishops. After Judas left the Church, the Apostles chose Matthias to take his place. To spread the Church the Apostles ordained bishops and priests.

St. Paul was a bishop; he received his powers from the Apostles.

The Bible tells that the Apostles ordained priests: *"And when they had ordained to them priests in every church . . . they commended them to the Lord . . ." (Acts 14:22)*

G. HOW THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH IS EXERCISED

THE AUTHORITY TO TEACH: The Church teaches what Jesus taught, and she insists that all people accept these teachings. The Pope watches over the world and points out in authoritative letters and decrees the teachings of Christ. Under the Pope are bishops and priests who teach the doctrines of Christ in thousands of churches and schools throughout the world.

THE AUTHORITY TO SANCTIFY: The Church gives grace to people through the Sacraments. The Catholic Church makes us share in God's life in Baptism. It feeds us with the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion and fortifies us with strength of soul in Confirmation. It grants forgiveness of sins in Confession, grace to the sick in Extreme Unction, marriage strength in the Sacrament of Matrimony, priestly grace in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. We shall study all these Sacraments in later lessons.

THE AUTHORITY TO RULE: From the very beginning of the Catholic Church the Apostles used their power to make laws which would help men lead a good Christian life. (See: *1 Cor 7:12-13; 1 Cor 5:3*) Thus the Church makes many laws that are not found in the Bible. For example, the Church forbids eating meat on Friday as a serious sin - it binds us with laws of fast and abstinence during Lent; it enforces the law of Sunday worship with the penalty of serious sin. For Catholics it commands marriage before a priest.

In serious matters, the Church punishes us for disobedience. The bishops, the real successors of the Apostles, use this authority which Christ gave His Church to punish notorious sinners.

A few recent examples will make this clear. Those who adhere to the theories of atheistic Communism are excommunicated from the Church. This is not an economic theory of government; it is a diabolical attempt to wipe out religion from the face of the earth. No Catholic can belong to such an organization in good conscience.

A priest of Boston was forbidden by the bishop to use his priestly powers and was later excommunicated by the Pope because he taught error in religion. (The priest insisted on teaching the error that all Protestants necessarily go to hell.)

The Church is not offensive or domineering in her exercise of authority. The greater the authority a man has in the Church, the more Christ-like and kind you will usually find him to be. The Pope, the bishops and priests share in Christ's love for sinners; they use their authority only for the benefit of souls.

Seldom do Catholics complain about their treatment by the Church. Many try to live a more perfect life than the bare commandments of the Church require.

H. CHRIST GAVE PETER SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

When Christ established His Church, He made Peter, one of the Apostles, the head of the whole Church.

"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matthew 16:18-19)

Thus Christ made Peter the rock or foundation of the Church which all the power of hell can never push over. Such was the strength of the authority Christ gave to Peter. Christ gave Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the power to bind and loose on earth; in other words He gave Peter supreme authority in His Church. Christ could not have stated more forcefully that Peter was to be the head of the Church. With these words Jesus made Peter the first Pope.

I. ST. PETER'S AUTHORITY DID NOT DIE WITH ST. PETER

St. Peter's authority did not end with his death. Christ wanted His teachings, His grace, His commands to be brought to all men of all times. Christ set up a Church which would last forever, which even hell would not destroy. But if the Church was to last forever, when Peter died his supreme authority had to be handed down to another man. The Apostles understood this—that the Church was to last forever and that it would always have a supreme head. And so when Peter died, Linus was elected the second Pope; Cletus became the third, and so forth. Thus the supreme authority in religion has been handed down through the history of Christianity; there has always been a Pope. Just as there is a list of the Presidents of the United States, so there is an unbroken list of Popes for almost 2000 years—from the time of St. Peter." The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs." (Macauley)

J. THE POWERS OF THE POPE

The Pope is the real representative of Christ on this earth. He is the highest teaching authority in religion. When he teaches in his official capacity as head of God's Church a doctrine of faith or morality, he cannot make a mistake because he is guided by the Holy Ghost. This is called papal infallibility.

The Pope is the highest ruling authority in religion. He has the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." All must obey him in matters of religion. The Pope has supreme authority over Christ's Sacraments and other means of grace that the Church possesses. For all the reasons listed above the Pope is called the Holy Father, Sovereign Pontiff, Roman Pontiff, His Holiness, the Vicar or Representative of Jesus Christ. The Pope's position in the Church is called the Holy See, the Apostolic See, the Chair of Peter.

K. THE HISTORY OF THE POPES

The name of each Pope and the years in which he reigned can be found in books of history. There have been Popes of many nations and races. The Popes have lived in the city of Rome in Italy during the whole history of the Church, about 1900 years. At one time, however, for about 200 years, some bishops of Rome, of French nationality, lived at Avignon in France. Forty Popes died martyrs for the faith. It is true that some Popes lead scandalous lives. But, considering that there have been over 260 Popes, the number of men who brought dishonor on the Papacy is small indeed.

L. BISHOPS AND PASTORS

After Peter was made supreme head of the Catholic Church by Christ, he sent the Apostles to the various parts of the world. The Apostles were bishops. In time the world was divided into dioceses and parishes. A bishop is under the Pope; he has authority and responsibility for the souls in his particular area, called a diocese.

Under the bishops are pastors. The pastor is in charge of an area called a parish. Under the pastor are assistant pastors, called curates, who help the pastor in caring for the souls in his parish.

Thus you have this marvelous organization of the Church. It has existed for centuries. The Pope is in supreme command; under the Pope are the various bishops and under the bishops are the pastors.

M. THE CHURCH UNDER THE POPE CAN NEVER BE DESTROYED

Christ promised in clear and unmistakable words that His Church would not be destroyed. *"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:18) Even the devil in hell cannot stop the Church.

Christ promised also, that He would be with the Church even to the end of the world; this also means that the Church can never be destroyed.

Certainly the "gates of hell," the power of Satan, has tried to destroy the Catholic Church. At its very beginning, the Jewish high-priests tried to crush it. From the founding of the Church until the year 313 the Roman Empire cruelly persecuted the Church. Heresies have crept into the Church in an effort to force it to change the teachings of Jesus Christ.

And so through the course of history powerful kings and nations have fought the Catholic Church. Just after 1492 various religious leaders founded their own churches and tried to split Christianity and draw people away from the true Church. The devil planted lies about the Catholic Church in various groups of people; just consider some of the lies you have heard. (The Catholic Church is against the government; or nuns are locked in convents and other nonsensical lies.) In many countries the Masons have tried to destroy the Church; in the United States it is the Ku Klux Klan and militant Protestantism that is working hard to that end. Today it is the Communists, the Moslems, and many irreligious forces who rebel against what the Catholic Church teaches.

Recalling all this, the non-Catholic historian presents the result of these furious attacks. "She (the Catholic Church) saw the commencement of all the ecclesiastical establishments (churches) that now exist in the world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all". What has preserved the Catholic Church from destruction? The Holy Ghost working through the Pope.

N. WHEN YOU BECOME A CATHOLIC, YOU PLACE YOURSELF UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS

To place yourself under the authority of the Catholic Church means that you recognize the Catholic Church as the only Church established by God in the world.

You promise to obey the Church in all matters of religion. Therefore you must believe *what* the Church believes in the way that the Church believes. You must worship God as the Church worships God. You must obey all the laws of the Church, for you recognize the Church's power to make laws over you—even laws which are not directly given by God. (Examples: not eating meat on Friday, marriage before a priest, and so forth.)

Placing yourself under the authority of the Catholic Church means that you recognize the Pope, the bishops and pastors as the actual successors of the Apostles—according to their office they have the same power that Christ gave to the twelve Apostles. You must obey them in your belief and in your actions.

You have nothing to fear in becoming a Catholic, in submitting your life to the authority of the Church. Seldom does the Church punish anyone, and then only with a spiritual punishment such as the reciting of some prayers. You will find that the Church is a kind mother who is always willing to help you, teach you, give you her spiritual remedies, and thus strengthen your weak will.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is authority?
2. What happens in any group without authority?
3. Does Jesus Christ have supreme authority over our souls?
4. What authority does the Catholic Church have?
5. Where does your pastor get his authority?
6. Where does the bishop get his authority?
7. Where does this authority start?
8. Who has the highest authority in the Catholic Church?
9. Who was the first pope?
10. Who made Peter the head of the Church?
11. Prove this from the Bible.
12. Can the Catholic Church be destroyed?

NAPOLÉON'S CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

Napoleon, the great post-revolutionary leader of France, was a baptized Catholic. However, Napoleon did terrible things to the Catholic Church to force a compliance by the pope to his wishes. The pope, Pius VI, resisted him, and even ordered Catholics not to obey him. This only added to Napoleon's fury. He sent his armies to Rome to kidnap the pope and bring him back to France to force the pope's hand. Even this did nothing to move the pope and his resolve. In fact, for laying violent hands on the Sovereign Pontiff, Napoleon and his armies were excommunicated.

Napoleon pretended not to be bothered by the excommunication. In fact, he openly despised it. When the pope pronounced the excommunication against the unfortunate ruler, Napoleon went into a fit of rage. He said, "Does the Pope imagine that his excommunication will make the weapons fall from the hands of my soldiers?" Little did he realize that his challenge would soon become truth.

History records that the period of time following Napoleon's excommunication was not favorable to the French dictator. In an effort to rally his troops and to conquer even greater territories, Napoleon prepared a campaign against Russia. Against the advice of all his military strategists, he ordered his troops to march on Moscow in the dead of winter. The French defeat was so complete that not only did they lose the will to fight, but even the arms with which to fight. In fulfillment of Napoleon's own prophecy, the weapons fell from his soldiers' cold hands and they could not take them up in battle again. His army limped back to Paris in defeat, and Napoleon's period of rule soon came to an end.

Thus ends the life of one who challenges the authority of the pope.

NOTES

LESSON 20

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS ONE

"One body and one Spirit . . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Ephesians 4:4-5)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

If you consider the unity and the other distinctive qualities of the Catholic Church you will be awed by the splendor and the beauty of the Church. And God willing, this splendor and beauty will draw you to that Church.

A. THE UNITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

When we say the Catholic Church is one or united, we mean that all the Catholics all over the world believe the same teachings, obey the same laws, receive the same Sacraments to keep them holy, and are all united under the authority of the Pope, the bishops, and their pastors.

B. CHRIST PRAYED FOR THIS UNITY WHEN HE FOUNDED HIS CHURCH

"And not for them only (the Apostles) do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (John 17:20-21) Christ also said that there would be one faith, one Baptism — not many kinds of Christian faith. Christ commanded that we all believe the one true Faith taught by His Church: *"He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despises you, despises Me." (Luke 11:16)* St. Paul told the people that if an angel would preach another faith they should not believe the angel: *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." (Galatians 1:8)*

C. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS ONE OR PERFECTLY UNITED

The Catholic Church is one and the same all over the world. For example, suppose that your son in the army goes from Chicago to New York. In New York are the same Church, the same Sacraments, the same powers of the priest; everything is the same as in Chicago. He gets on a ship. On board the ship is the same Church. He goes to a foreign land. The priest says Mass; there are the same Mass, the same confessionals, the same teachings from the pulpit, and so forth. The six hundred million members of the Church all over the world, though differing in race or nationality, all have the same truths, worship God in the same way, and have the same rules or commandments under the government of the Pope and the bishops. This fact of history would overwhelm anyone with an open mind. Governments have come and gone, empires have fallen, churches have preached their false doctrines and have been forgotten. Only the Catholic Church is one and undivided through 1900 years.

D. THE DISUNITY AMONG PROTESTANTS

We are accustomed to use the word "Protestant" as if there were some unity in belief and practice among them. But almost every Protestant church is broken up into a number of sects or bodies. You cannot really speak of the Lutheran Church: there are many. You cannot speak of the Methodist Church or the Baptist Church, because there are many different Methodist churches and many different Baptist churches. Here is a partial list: there are twenty different kinds of Lutheran churches; ten different kinds of Presbyterian churches; twenty-one different kinds of Baptist churches; twenty-one different kinds of Methodist churches, six different kinds of Adventists; four different kinds of Quakers, a multitude of Mormons, and so forth.

All churches outside of the Catholic Church are hopelessly split into disunity. At times some of the churches try to unite. But they always fail because they cannot agree on the teachings of Christ. For a time several large Protestant churches seemed to be approaching some sort of agreement. Then they came to shocking disagreement. The question was—Who is Christ? Is He God or man? It is easy to see why there can never be any unity among Protestants. They do not even know Who Our Lord really is!

E. SOME GOOD ADVICE FROM A NON-CATHOLIC

There is terrible disunity and contradiction in the churches which unfortunately separated themselves from *"One body and one Spirit . . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4-5)*, from the Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. *"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)*

In view of this disunity and contradiction, Professor J. Middleton Murray, a non-Catholic critic, gives some good advice: *"Christianity is the great Church and nothing else is Christianity. To call anything else Christianity is to plunge into confusion and chaos; and it is an insult to Christianity. Christianity is a great thing, not a little one; one thing, not many things; a rich thing, not a poor thing; a majestic thing, not a thing of shreds and patches. Christianity is Christianity at its noblest, truest and most comprehensive, and that is the Catholic Church. If you desire to be a Christian, join it. It will make no demands upon you that are more fearful than the demands made upon you by any peddling form of Christianity. It asks no greater sacrifice than Little Bethel or the Church of England; and it does not insult your intelligence by inviting you to become a member of a contradiction in terms."*

LESSON 21

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS UNIVERSAL OR CATHOLIC

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The universality of the Catholic Church is such a stupendous fact that it simply cannot be overlooked. Yet it is something that is often missed by the non-Catholic when he is taking instructions. If he overlooks this striking universality of Christ's Church, he misses some of the appreciation of the Church, which he should have. This appreciation of the universality of the Church will make you a better Catholic. Many non-Catholics do not understand that Christ wanted His Church to be worldwide.

When the non-Catholic joins a Protestant church, it is usually the one little church which he happens to meet and join at some time during his life; even though he may move away he still returns to that same little church.

In order to remain a practical Catholic, the new convert should realize what the universality or *catholicity* of the Catholic Church means in his life. When the convert leaves the parish of his conversion he moves into another parish. In the Catholic Church he does not simply join a parish, he joins the Catholic Church, a worldwide organization, which is God's true Church. The new convert must learn to attend the Catholic parish of his neighborhood, wherever he may be.

A. WHAT DOES CATHOLIC MEAN?

The word *catholic* is simply an adjective meaning universal, worldwide. When we say that the Catholic Church is catholic or universal we mean that it is for all people of all nations and all times.

In the words of St. Cyril in the 4th century: "She is called catholic by all her enemies, as well as by her own children. Heretics and schismatics can call the Church by no other name than catholic: for they would not be understood, unless they use the name by which the Church is known to the whole world." (St. Augustine *De Vera Religione*)

B. WHEN THE NAME CATHOLIC WAS FIRST USED

The adjective "catholic" was probably used for the first time to designate the ancient Church of Christ by St Ignatius of Antioch in the year 110.

"Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (Ad Smyr. 8:2).

In speaking of the Church that Christ founded, the Bible does not use the word "Catholic". For that matter the Bible does not use the word "Christian" either. Christ did not use any particular adjective to designate His Church because He set up only one Church. In time small sects or religions began to spring up and call themselves Christ's church. As a result, the bishops had to decide on an adjective to designate Christ's Church and to separate it from the other churches.

C. WHY IS CHRIST'S CHURCH CALLED CATHOLIC?

Christ's ancient Church is called Catholic because it is the Church for all the people, of all nations, of all times, and because it teaches all the doctrines of Jesus Christ. *The Church followed the command of Christ: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations." (Matthew 28:19)*

The Church was started by Jesus Christ in Palestine. Soon it spread to Italy and throughout the world. It taught each nation and race to give up its sins and accept Christ and His Church.

The universality of the Catholic Church is best brought home to us by the huge number of its members. The membership of the Catholic Church outnumbers the membership of every other religion. In fact she is greater than all of the other Christian religions put together.

The American Encyclopedia gives the following figures: Catholic 800,000,000; Protestants 394,000,000; Eastern Schismatics 188,000,000. Her huge membership points to the catholicity or the universality of the Catholic Church. She is the faith of all the nations. Carl Adam, a Catholic writer, explains it well for us: "The Church is not one society or one Church alongside the others, nor is she a Church among men; she is the Church of men, the Church of mankind."

D. THIS IS THE SIGN THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

In the Old Testament God's Church was represented as the Church to be blessed by all the nations of the earth, the Church that was to have the Gentiles for inheritance, the Church that would rule from sea to sea, the Church that would make God's Name great among the Gentiles from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the sun. The Church was spoken of as a great mountain that would fill the whole world, the heavenly kingdom established by God. There is no other church that answers this description except the Roman Catholic Church. She actually is blessed by all the nations of the earth; she has converted large numbers of the Gentiles; she spiritually rules the peoples from sea to sea, and certainly she has made the Name of God great among the Gentiles. The Catholic Church is an international Church, not a national one. Wherever you go, whether in Europe, America, Africa, Asia or Australia, you'll find the Catholic Church. Everywhere she teaches the same doctrines that are taught to you in the United States. Everywhere she is ruled by the same Pope.

Most other churches are confined to one or two nations or to nations who speak the same language. Some man-made religions

have branches in different countries but they are really different bodies or different religions, because they have changed their doctrines and have different teachings.

The Roman Catholic Church is the same Church throughout the world. It's a real miracle that there should be such an organization which has endured since the time of Jesus Christ.

E. IN BECOMING A CATHOLIC YOU GAIN THESE ADVANTAGES

As a Catholic you will have the same faith as the early martyrs who gave their lives for Christ. You will have the same faith as the Emperors Constantine and Charlemagne, as King Alfred the Great of England and Louis of France; you will have the same faith as the ancient Christians of North Africa under their great bishop, St. Augustine. You will share the faith of the good Catholic people with whom you rub elbows at work. You will have the same faith which has made so many people throughout the world stable, clean-living Christians and good citizens of their country.

F. EARLY CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS IN THE UNITED STATES

Many of the early explorers who came from Europe to America were Catholics, especially the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the French. These explorers came not merely for the sake of gold and trade; they came to bring the true faith of Jesus Christ to the Indians, and thus the first religion to be preached to the natives of our country was the Catholic religion.

Many of the large cities of our country have Catholic names, such as St. Louis and St. Paul; Los Angeles means the angels; San Francisco means St. Francis, Santa Barbara means St. Barbara, Santa Fe means Holy Faith, Corpus Christi means the Body of Christ. St. Augustine in Florida is named after the great St. Augustine, the Catholic bishop. The early Catholic explorers and missionaries gave these names to the newly discovered parts of our country.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 20 & 21

1. What do we mean when we say that the Catholic Church is one?
2. When Jesus prayed for His Apostles, what special prayer did He say for them?
3. Can we recognize the unity of the Catholic Church if we travel from city to city?
4. Do the Protestant churches possess the same unity as the Catholic Church?
5. What does the word "catholic" mean?
6. When was the word "catholic" first used to describe Christ's Church?
7. What advantage do members of the Catholic Church share?
8. What influence did the Catholic Church have in the beginnings of our country?

THE MAP OF THE WORLD

In a certain school a teacher had prepared for his pupils a large map of the world on which were shown all the countries of the earth. He had marked with a red cross every nation on the globe where the Catholic Church could be found. The pupils saw at a glance that it was everywhere, even in the lands of perpetual snow. Pagans kingdoms, too, had the influence of the Catholic Church. In fact, there was scarcely an island in all the oceans that did not have a red cross on it.

"See, students," the teacher remarked, "these crosses on the map tell you where you will find the Catholic Church. Go to any of these places you choose and you will find the same Church you have at home, the same truths taught, the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered, the same Sacraments administered, and all obeying the same head of the Church, the Pope. Truly there is no greater blessing than to be a member of the one, true Church!"

NOTES

LESSON 22

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS HOLY

"Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it . . . not having spot or wrinkle . . . but . . . holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENTS

In religion you look for holiness. In fact the purpose of religion is holiness. Christ's Church, the Catholic Church, is and always has been very holy.

A. IN RELIGION YOU MUST HAVE THE BEST. YOU CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE.

If you were to go to a hospital for an important and dangerous operation you would not pick a surgeon who was incapable of taking good care of you, or a hospital that was just "fair". You would want nothing but the best. If you were choosing a school for your child, you would not choose a school that did not teach the children or did only a "fair" job at teaching them. In choosing a church you don't want one that is only "fair," one that will only help you a little; you want a church that will help you to the holiness necessary to save your immortal soul. You want a guarantee from God Himself that the Church will lead you to holiness. If you're satisfied with anything less than this, you're taking a big chance.

B. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS HOLY

The Catholic Church is holy because its Founder, Jesus Christ, is holy, because it teaches a holy doctrine, because it gives its members what is needed to lead a holy life, because thousands of its members from every walk of life, and every race, and every period of its history have become Saints.

The Bible tells us that Christ's Church would be "holy and without blemish." *"Christ also loved the church and delivered Himself up for it: That He might sanctify it.... That He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* (Eph. 5:25-27) The Catholic Church is holy from its very beginning. Before the world was created, the Blessed Trinity thought about the Catholic Church and planned it. God the Father sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, to set up (found, establish) the Catholic Church. The Church does not depend primarily on its members, even on its clergy, for its holiness. Jesus Christ made it holy; and He keeps it holy. The Catholic Church teaches the holy doctrine of Christ. It must and does teach what Christ taught—even when men and governments object to these teachings, even when some of her own foolish children complain. We have the guarantee of Christ Himself that the Church will teach His Holy Doctrine: "Going therefore . . . and I will be with you . . ." and so forth. The Church teaches the importance of your soul; it teaches you the pitfalls of life; it gives you God's Commandments and their application to your daily life.

No one who has investigated the teaching of the Catholic Church has ever found any part of it that was not holy. The Catholic Church is holy because it not only insists that you lead a holy life, but it also gives you what you need to live a holy life. The Church has a vast storehouse of God's grace at its disposal; after you have learned what Christ taught the Church opens up his vast storehouse of God's grace for your benefit. You are already familiar with one source of God's grace from assisting at Mass; there you kneel before Christ Who offers Himself for you. Later you will learn about all the Sacraments, sources of God's grace, which are given you for your help and salvation. Among the Sacraments which the Church will give you are Baptism, which makes you a son of God, Confirmation, which gives you the grace to be a strong Christian, and Holy Communion, which is the Body and Blood of Christ Himself, spiritual food for the soul. The Church can forgive your sins - she can sanctify your married life and give you special graces and helps when you are dying. These Sacraments, the sources of God's grace, you will study in the later lessons in this book.

You can see Christ Himself in the ordinary daily work of the Catholic Church. Through your priest Christ preaches and forgives sins. Imitating Christ's life of prayer and penance are the monastic orders who spend day and night in prayer and fasting for us sinners. Hundreds of thousands of nuns and religious brothers devote their lives to the sick, the poor, and the outcast; they labor in Catholic hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages, and asylums. These nuns and brothers receive no salary for their work. Every policeman knows where to bring an abandoned baby — to the Catholic orphanage. A parish priest knows how to help his aged parishioner whose family has deserted him; he calls the Little Sisters of the Poor. In your own parish you can see the nuns and priests sacrificing themselves and giving up the pleasures of the world for the children in the school and for the families of the parish. Here are a few figures which will show you the active holiness of the Catholic Church. In one year in mission areas alone, the Catholic Church maintained 31,410 hospitals and clinics, administered 35,000,000 treatments, operated 1,846 orphanages which cared for 109,601 homeless children. The Church maintained 409 homes for destitute old people where 14,089 were given beds, clothing and housing. It staffed 121 leper hospitals and cared for 13,625 lepers. And it enrolled 2,022,058 pupils free of charge in 34,743 Catholic schools. No one who looks around can fail to see the life of Christ relived in the Catholic Church.

The holiness of the Church is manifested in the lives of the saints. A saint is a person who was so extraordinarily holy that the Church, after a long investigation, proclaimed him to be in Heaven. Space prohibits even a partial list of the names of the

Saints. There were Saints from every walk of life, people who learned their sanctity from the Church and who drank from the spiritual fountains of grace which Christ gave to the Church. In the Catholic Church you have many aids to keep you good: all the teachings of Christ, the good example of many other fine Catholics, the Mass, the reception of Our Lord Himself in Holy Communion, and many other helps that we shall explain later.

C. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS NOT TOO HOLY FOR YOU

Today most people know the Catholic Church is holy: but many people think it is too holy. The burden is not too great; too much is not required of you. You will receive the grace to lead the holy Catholic life expected of you. Christ assures you, "My grace is sufficient for you."

It's a wonderful consolation to know that in living the teachings of the Catholic Church and in following the good example of Catholics you will lead a holy life. You cannot follow the teachings of the Catholic Church and be bad. Even if you make the mistakes of sinning, you can come back and be holy once more by following God's Church.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. Why do you look for holiness in a religion?
2. What do we mean when we say that the Catholic Church is holy?
3. How can the Catholic Church make us holy?
4. How can the Catholic Church help us share in the happiness of the saints?

THE NATURAL LAW

The natural law is the eternal law of God as it is impressed upon man's reason. It is the dictate of our created reason prescribing what or what not to do. When God created man He endowed him with a free will. He also laid down certain unchangeable laws of human nature whereby free will is regulated and restrained according to the dictates of natural reason.. St. Paul refers to this law when he says: "*For when the Gentiles, who have not the Law, do by nature those things that are of the law; these having not the law, are a law to themselves: who show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts between themselves accusing, or also defending one another*" (Romans 2:14-15).

The primary principles of the natural law dictate that we should worship God, that we should live honestly, should hurt nobody, and should render to everyone his due. Certain secondary principles can be deduced from these, such as the worship of God on Sunday and other principles in the Ten Commandments.

The natural law was promulgated for the human race from the beginning by the revelation made to our first parents: "*God made man of the earth, and made him after His own image . . . He created him with a helpmate like to himself: He gave him counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, and ears and a heart to devise, and He filled him with the knowledge of understanding. He created in them the science of the spirit, He filled their heart with wisdom, and showed them both good and evil . . . Moreover, He gave them instructions, and the law of life for an inheritance. He made an everlasting covenant with them, and showed them His justice and judgments, and their ears heard His glorious voice, and He said to them: Beware of all iniquity. And He gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbor.*" (Eccles. 17)

Practically speaking, no one can be invincibly ignorant (that is, ignorant without moral fault) of the first principles of the natural law. They are clearly impressed on the mind of everyone. As to the secondary principles, it is possible for some to be ignorant of what is to be observed if the person is illiterate or inexperienced. However, unless there be mental deficiency, no one can be ignorant of them for long.

The natural law is a necessary law affecting only those things which are of their own nature good or bad. They cannot be changed nor can they be dispensed from. Not even God would change these laws since it would be a contradiction to suppose that God would set eternal laws in motion and then change them by a whim. God does not act on whims, nor is He changeable.

The study of the natural law is important in our age, especially as we apply certain secondary principles regarding the evils of abortion, sodomy, the observance of civil laws and so forth. Be sure to study it well.

NOTES

LESSON 23

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CANNOT TEACH ERROR

"The gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Knowledge that the Church cannot teach error in matters of Faith and morals will keep you from falling away from the Church when temptations against Faith assault you. The Bible, even your prayers may at times seem to fail you. Now during this time of instruction if you understand that the Church cannot be in error you have a strong bulwark against future temptations against Faith and morals. If you do not understand this lesson, you can easily fall away; and there may be little hope that you will ever come back to the Church.

A. WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CANNOT TEACH ERROR

When I say the Catholic Church cannot teach error, I mean that when God's only true Church, the Catholic Church, teaches religion to the people, it cannot teach error. The reason for this is that God Himself guides His Church so that His Church will never teach error. Therefore, if I follow the teaching of the Catholic Church I can be absolutely sure that I will not be led into error by accepting this teaching.

B. GOD HAD TO SEE TO IT THAT HIS CHURCH WOULD NOT TEACH ERROR

"Who (God) will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) God demands that we believe His teaching under penalty of hell. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16)*

God therefore had to provide that the Church that He made to bring His teaching to all people would be protected from teaching error. Without a church that cannot teach error, we could never get Christ's true teaching in its fullness.

C. GOD DID TELL US THAT HIS CHURCH COULD NOT TEACH US ERROR

Christ promised that He would be with the Church when the Church teaches. *"Going therefore, teach ye all nations.... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20)*

He promised He would be with the Church in teaching. If Christ is with the Church in teaching, the Church cannot teach error! Christ also promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. *"And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)*

Christ said His Church, the one He made, is like a city built upon a rock and is so strong that not even hell can push it over. That certainly means at least that it will do what it is supposed to do, teach people the truth.

The Church is also called "the pillar and the ground of the truth."

D. THE SAME TEACHING YOU GET NOW IS THE TEACHING GIVEN AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

The Church, guided by God, has always taught what it is teaching today. It cannot change its teachings. It gives the same teaching in every nation, and every century of history. The other religions change the teaching of Christ. Some, now, teach that Jesus is not God or that the Bible is not inspired by God. Even though Christ clearly condemned divorce in the Bible, some religions allow divorce. Some Christian religions allow birth control, but the true religion of Jesus Christ does not.

E. A CATHOLIC MUST OBEY THE CHURCH IN ALL MATTERS OF RELIGION

Catholics bow their heads in assent to the teachings of the Church even when we cannot understand some of them or live according to them. Even though the whole world be wrong, the Church alone will be right when it gives Christ's teaching. A Catholic cannot pick and choose from the teachings of Christ. He must accept what the Church teaches, because the Church cannot be in error. The Church is somewhat like the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court tells us what the Constitution teaches. The Church decides any disputes about the teachings of Christ, and the Church cannot make a mistake in its decision.

F. TO BE A CATHOLIC IS A WONDERFUL CONSOLATION IN LIFE

A Catholic usually has no serious doubts and difficulties about religion. He does not have to enter into fruitless arguments about religion because he knows that he has found God's only true Church; he knows that the true Church cannot and does not teach error. In the modern world with its controversies about marriage and family life, its problems of having teenagers find the right goals in life, its problems in education, its problems about the very meaning of life itself, the Catholic stands firm with peace of mind and singleness of purpose. He has the correct answers to the important problems of life because he has received the answers from God's Church. The answers are clear; the teachings are unmistakable. Sometimes the Catholic scrub woman is more educated than the university professor who was not wise enough to look into the Bible, find Christ's Church, and follow its teachings.

LESSON 24

POPULAR AMERICAN SLOGANS AND OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AND THE CATHOLIC FAITH

"But because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." (Apocalypse 3:16)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

All the teachings of Christ that you have studied or will study in this book are apparently in danger, unless we address several popular American errors. If we baptize you while you possess these errors, you will have the Catholic faith mixed with religious indifference. Religious indifference is the modern cancer eating away not only religious belief but intelligence and reason also.

A. ALL RELIGIONS TEACH THE SAME CHRISTIAN TRUTHS

You often hear that all religions teach the same Christian truths. That is not true. They disagree on major teachings of Our Lord. For example: the necessity of Baptism, euthanasia (mercy-killing), abortion, birth control, devotion to our Blessed Mother, confession, heaven, hell, sin, God, Holy Communion and a multitude of other doctrines. Christ died to give us truth, grace, and a certain guide to moral living. It is our duty before God to find the truth for which Christ died.

B. ALL RELIGIONS ARE GOOD

There is perhaps some good in every religion. A large part of it is a natural goodness that is found in most men and magnified by some religious teachings. However, a religion simply is not good in the eyes of God unless it is founded by God, has all of God's teachings and has what is necessary to lead all people to a holy life and to heaven.

If a school were correct in its teaching of arithmetic but wrong in its teaching of geography and spelling, it would not be a good school. So with the man-made religions. There is some goodness in them, but some goodness is not enough to bring anybody to heaven.

C. IT DOES NOT MATTER TO WHAT CHURCH YOU BELONG

How often you hear this sentence—it does not matter to what church you belong. It makes all the difference in the world! The only church you should join is one made by God and one that will lead to heaven. Unfortunately, the man-made religions are not made by God and cannot lead anybody to heaven.

With the knowledge you now have of the true religion established by God, you should not judge those who, through no fault of their own, know and practice some false religion. A person in a man-made, false religion, can save his soul if he does not know, through no fault of his own, the true Faith, and if in spite of that he leads a good life and dies in God's grace. If your mother or grandmother led a good life without being a full-fledged member of God's only true Church, God will bring that person to heaven (if she did not happen to know the true Church through no fault of her own). For you it is probably different now. If you understand the Catholic Church is the only true Church, you cannot save your soul outside of the Catholic Church.

The pitiful thing about those in a false church is that they do not have the wonderful means of grace, the Sacraments, that Christ gave the Catholic Church. They find it far more difficult to save their immortal souls.

You should pray for all non-Catholics and should do all in your power prudently to bring them to instruction. Theirs too can be the joy that belongs to us who have God's true religion and its blessings. Many of them will receive the teachings of Christ in the Catholic Church if someone will only invite them to instructions.

D. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE, IT IS HOW YOU ACT

How many times thoughtless people peddle this statement—it does not matter what you believe, it is how you act. The answer should be evident to anyone. Your belief determines your actions. Hitler believed it was all right to kill Jews; so he committed mass murders. The communists believe that killing priests and nuns is all right, so they kill innocent people. A burgler believes the world owes him a living, and so he takes your money and property. *Belief is terribly important.* A Catholic believes in the whole Bible, in the sanctity of marriage, in the Commandments, in all the teachings of Christ, and thus, because of his beliefs, he leads a happy and a holy life here and hereafter. If it does not make any difference what you believe, Jesus Christ is a perfect fool. *Christ said, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations.... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)* Christ also told us that we must believe all of His teachings to avoid hell. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16)* In these words Our Lord certainly tells us that we must obtain and believe ALL of His teachings.

E. CONCLUSION: THE ABOVE STATEMENTS CAN LEAD MEN AWAY FROM GOD AND SALVATION

All the errors listed above lead too many ordinary men to say, "Religion is a babble of voices contradicting one another. If the clergymen in these religions cannot figure it out, I'll just make my own religion, my own code of belief and action. Let's forget religion." So this man "tailors" his own religion. He "waters down" religion to practically no belief and very little morality. His religion is just as right or wrong as the false churches started by men who created the babble of voices.

LESSON 25

GOOD AND BAD REASONS FOR BECOMING A CATHOLIC

"The prudent man doth all things with counsel." (Prov. 13:16)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

This is a most important lesson. Do not be deceived by the fact that you come regularly to instructions, that you are interested, that you like the teachings of the Church. You now must evaluate your motives better. You must distinguish between liking the Church and accepting the Church as the only true Church and absolute teacher in faith and morals. This involves disapproving of your former religion as a false religion. Be fair with yourself and be fair with the Catholic Church. We want you in the Catholic Church, but we want you to come in such a way that you won't leave the Church later on. And we do not want you to be one third Catholic, one third Protestant, and one third indifferentist.

A. THESE REASONS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT FOR JOINING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Priests giving instructions find people trying to enter the Catholic Church for very shallow reasons, such as: I like it. My wife is a Catholic, I should be. My child is in Catholic school and wants to be a Catholic. I have no religion. This seems to be a very good religion. Such reasons are not sufficient for taking so big a step. Becoming a Catholic is a privilege of grace, not just joining another organization.

B. THE ONLY SUFFICIENT REASON

There is only one sufficient reason for becoming a Catholic: I am convinced that the Catholic Church is the only True Church and that I cannot save my soul outside of the Catholic Church. If your mind is not this, do not become a Catholic at this time. Pray and study more before you make a decision to join the Catholic Church.

C. BECOMING A CATHOLIC IS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS STEPS OF YOUR LIFE

Becoming a Catholic is one of the most serious steps of your life. Before Baptism, in the presence of Jesus Christ in the parish Church, you take a *Profession of Faith* under oath. In the Profession of Faith you reject all false religious beliefs, and you swear that you believe everything the Catholic Church believes, principally everything you have been taught in this course of instructions. You swear to keep the Catholic faith until the last breath of your life and to strive that those under you shall be taught and shall profess the same Catholic faith.

In the Profession of Faith you place yourself under the authority of the Catholic Church in all matters of religion. You accept the Pope as the true successor of St. Peter and swear true obedience to Our Holy Father. You bind yourself to all the laws of the Catholic Church, for example, the laws of fast and abstinence, and the law of attendance at Mass on Sunday.

In the Profession of Faith you also bind yourself to Catholic worship, namely that you will worship God only in the way the Catholic Church does and that you reject all false kinds of worship. This means you cannot worship in a Protestant church any more.

D. IF YOU ARE NOT TOTALLY CONVINCED, WAIT

If you are not convinced that the Catholic Church is 100 per cent correct and that all other religions are false, do not become a Catholic. If you have not broken off all connections with a Protestant church, do not become a Catholic now. You can become a Catholic later. If you are keeping illicit company, do not join. If you have been careless about Mass attendance since you began these instructions, defer your Baptism for a while or at least tell the priest the whole story why you have thus acted. The whole matter of becoming a Catholic or of deferring your entrance into the Church until later can be determined only with the advice and experience of a priest. You should see your parish priest at least three or four times during the course of the instructions to discuss your motives and your knowledge of the faith with him.

E. ON THE OTHER HAND

Do not wait for your husband or wife; you can and should be a Catholic without waiting for your partner. Everyone has his own soul to save. If you are convinced that the Catholic Church is the only True Church you commit a serious sin by not joining that Church. Your Protestant mother or father will be judged by God on his or her knowledge of God and religion. You will be judged on your knowledge. Your Protestant parents, if they are in heaven, are praying to God that you will do the right thing for yourself and join the Catholic Church, so that you will have the benefits they did not have while they were on earth.

F. IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO PLACE YOURSELF UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Reason tells you to place yourself under God's authority. The Church was made by God. The Church is a kindly mother; she is never tyrannical. Every one needs a sure guide to get him to heaven; and this guide is the Catholic Church. The authority in the Church is from Jesus Christ, God Himself.

G. BY BECOMING A CATHOLIC YOU WILL MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY

You have all the teachings of Christ, not just a few of them as you had before you took these instructions. All of these teachings are given to you by the Church which cannot make an error in teaching you. You have the religion your mother and father, your grandmother and grandfather in the next world want you to have. You have a certain guide to the Bible. There is no more doubt about your Baptism. The Ancient Church puts her seal upon your Baptism. There is no original sin, no personal sin left on your soul. All is washed away with certainty. Your Baptism is recorded in books of the Catholic Church. You receive the real Christ in Holy Communion and not an imitation of the Body and Blood of Christ. You can have your sins forgiven in Confession if you fall into sin. The bishop will give you Confirmation that gives you strength to be a good Christian and a good Catholic. Your children will receive the Sacrament of Matrimony that gives them the grace to have a happy marriage. You will get the special Sacrament made by Christ for the dying. You can always be proud, happy and contented that you have the true faith of Christ and not an imitation. The Catholic Church is the ancient Mother of all of us, and is waiting for those who have been cheated of divine truth to investigate her and come back to the harbor of truth and the unity of faith where there is one fold and one shepherd, one God, one Lord, one faith, one teaching of Christ. The Catholic Church prays for those who left her and for those who through errors of history and through prejudice and misrepresentation, never knew the True Church.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 23, 24 and 25

1. Why is it important for religion to be free from error?
2. Prove that the Catholic Church cannot teach error.
3. Why must a Catholic obey all that the Church teaches?
4. What is indifferentism?
5. Does it matter to which religion a person belongs?
6. Why?
7. Why is it important that we act as we believe?
8. Can you save your soul outside the catholic Church?
9. Why do you want to become a Catholic?

ST. JOHN VIANNEY AND THE PROTESTANT

St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars, once gave a medal to a Protestant who visited him. The visitor exclaimed, "Dear sir, you have given a medal to one who is a heretic, at least I am a heretic from your point of view. But although we are not of the same religion, I hope we shall both be one day in Heaven."

The holy priest took the gentleman's hand in his own, and giving him a look which seemed to reach to the very depths of his soul, he answered him, "Alas, my friend, we cannot be together in Heaven unless we have begun to live so in this world. Death makes no change in that. As the tree falls, so shall it lie. Jesus Christ has said, *He who does not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican*, And He said again, *There shall be one fold and one shepherd*, and He made St. Peter the chief shepherd of His flock."

In a voice full of sweetness, the saint added, "My dear friend, there are not two ways of serving Jesus Christ; there can be only one good way, and that is to serve Him as He Himself wishes to be served."

Saying this, the priest left the visitor. But these words sank deeply into his heart. He renounced the errors in which he was raised and became a fervent Catholic.

NOTES

LESSON 26

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

"Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God." (2 Cor. 3:5)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

We are beginning an entirely new section in our lessons. This whole section on the Sacraments cannot be understood unless you first understand something about grace. Therefore it is necessary for you to go back to the lesson on grace and study it thoroughly.

Non-Catholics sometimes see a priest administering some of the Sacraments. Non-Catholics think the priest is simply saying some prayers or going through some rites made by the Catholic Church. This is a false idea of the Sacraments as we shall see in this lesson.

A. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

You have not been put here on earth by Almighty God to grow rich or famous; you have been put here on earth to win God's grace and get to heaven. **YOU CAN'T GET INTO HEAVEN BY YOUR OWN POWER.** God tells us how we are to get His grace and thus get to heaven. After we have learned the means by which God gives us His grace, we must use those means.

B. CHRIST DIED TO GIVE US GRACE

Adam lost grace for the whole human race by his sin, original sin. God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to bring grace back to the world. Christ died on the cross to bring that grace back to us. The purpose of His death on the cross was to regain grace for mankind.

C. CHRIST GIVES EACH MAN GRACE THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS

Christ died to bring every man to heaven. The problem before us in this lesson is: What means did Christ provide to give grace to each individual? He gave us the Sacraments. Sacraments are the things that bring Christ's grace to each individual soul. A Sacrament is an external thing, an external sign, made by Jesus Christ to give grace. It is an external thing, that is something you can see, feel or touch. The pouring of water in Baptism, for example, is something that you can see, feel and touch. This pouring of water of Baptism joined with the words of Baptism gives grace to the soul.

A Sacrament is an external sign that indicates that we are receiving grace. Grace is something that is spiritual. No one can see grace; no one can feel grace. The only way you can be reasonably sure that you have the grace is by receiving the Sacraments. When the priest gives a person Holy Communion, the Holy Communion gives him the grace and on Christ's word assures him that he is getting the grace. Just as an electric light switch in a room tells me that I can illuminate a room if I turn on the switch, so the sacraments tell me that I will get grace if I use them rightly. So when I make use of the Sacrament, the sign of grace, I automatically get grace when I am disposed for it. Just as the light switch will not turn on the light if there is something blocking the wires, so also the Sacrament will not give grace if you put something in the way. For example, if you go up to be baptized only to please your wife in an empty gesture, your intention is bad and you will not get grace; you also commit a sacrilege. A sacrilege is an abuse of a sacred thing.

D. EACH SACRAMENT HAS A DIFFERENT PURPOSE

Each one of the seven Sacraments has a different purpose. Each gives a grace that you can get from no other Sacrament. They accompany a man during his life from the cradle to the grave. There is a Sacrament for every important stage and every big difficulty in your life.

<i>The Sacrament</i>	<i>Time in Life</i>	<i>Difficulty in Life</i>	<i>What the Sacrament Does For You</i>
<i>Baptism</i>	Birth	No grace	Makes you a Christian, gives you grace to live up to the demands of a Christian life.
<i>Confirmation</i>	When you grow up	Temptations	Gives you grace to be a strong Christian.
<i>Holy Communion</i>	All through life	Trying to love God	Gives special grace to love Christ ardently
<i>Confession</i>	You commit sin	You lose grace	Returns grace and gives the special grace to overcome your sins and be a good Christian
<i>Holy Orders</i>	You want to be a priest	You need a special grace to be a good priest	Makes you a priest, gives you the grace to be a good priest
<i>Matrimony</i>	You want to marry	You need the grace to be a good husband (wife)	Gives you the grace to be a good husband or wife
<i>Extreme Unction</i>	When in danger of death	The last chance of the devil to make you sin	Gives you the grace to die a holy death

Each Sacrament gives a special grace that you can get from no other Sacrament. If a young man wants to get married, the Sacrament of Holy Orders wouldn't do him any good, because he wants the grace to be a good husband, not to be a good priest. When a man is in danger of death he doesn't receive the Sacrament of Matrimony; he needs the Sacrament meant for those in danger of death, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

In the following lessons we shall go through each of the Sacraments and explain them to you.

Besides the special grace that each Sacrament gives, namely, the grace needed for the particular state or difficulty in life, each Sacrament also gives an increase of the sharing in the life of God.

E. THE SACRAMENTS ALWAYS GIVE GRACE

The Sacraments automatically give grace. They do not depend upon you or upon the priest who is giving you the Sacrament. They depend only upon Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ made the Sacraments and He made them to give us grace. If you place no obstacles in the way, you automatically get the grace.

F. NON-CATHOLICS ARE CHEATED

People have been receiving Sacraments in the Catholic Church for more than 1900 years. Our Lord made Sacraments to give us grace, to help us through the trials and difficulties of life. Men need the Sacraments desperately. It is most difficult to go through life without them.

Christ died to give you these Sacraments. They are the ordinary means of God's grace. Christ pours out His grace upon the whole world through the Sacraments. Priests and people in persecuted countries die rather than give up the Sacraments.

Perhaps you are trying to lead a good life without the ordinary means of God's grace. Perhaps your married life would have been much different if you had had the Sacrament of Marriage. Perhaps you would be leading a much better life with the help of the Sacrament of Confession; Confession is a Sacrament made by Christ to free you from your sins and get you back on your feet again. It is too bad that many people die every day in hospitals without the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Every Catholic knows that Jesus Christ made this Sacrament to help dying people, yet so many non-Catholics die without it

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is a Sacrament
2. Who made the Sacraments?
3. Where did the Sacraments get the power to confer grace?
4. Name the seven Sacraments.

HOW OLD ARE THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS?

One of the principal truths of the seven Sacraments is that they were instituted by Jesus Christ to confer the graces we need. They are essential elements of the New Covenant; they are the channels of grace won for us by the death of Jesus on Calvary. As such, the Sacraments that give supernatural grace are as old as the first ages of Christianity having come from Jesus Himself. While all the ceremonial ritual with which we are familiar was instituted by the Apostles and their successors, the essential rites of each sacrament was given to us by Jesus Himself.

Were there Sacraments in Old Testament times? If we understand the Sacraments as has just been described, then, no, there were no Sacraments before their institution by Jesus Christ. However, if we refer to a sacrament as an outward sign to convey a certain mystery of God's working with men and prefiguring the supernatural Sacraments of Christianity, then, yes there were such natural sacraments in the time of the Prophets.

Circumcision, the baptism of penance by John the Baptist, sin offerings for the forgiveness of men's sins -- these and more were necessary rituals of old that the Chosen People were to partake of for eternal salvation. While each of these did not possess the supernatural gifts of grace won by Jesus on the hill of Calvary, they did produce a natural (actual) grace for those of the Old Covenant which, in prefiguration of the Sacraments of the New Law, helped all who received the ability to save their souls.

While those under the Old Law could enjoy the benefits of God's help, they could not receive the supernatural grace to be a child of God, to have sins completely forgiven and to receive the Body and Blood of the Son of God. We have much to be grateful for in having been born in the time that we are.

NOTES

LESSON 27 BAPTISM

"Do penance: and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins." (Acts 2:38)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

You cannot understand this new section on the Sacraments without an understanding of grace. Therefore we ask you once more to go back and review thoroughly the lesson on grace. Christianity is not a natural religion; it is supernatural, because its principal purpose is to bring you to heaven which is a supernatural place. No one can get into heaven without grace. You get grace through the Sacraments. Usually a man first receives God's grace through the Sacrament of Baptism.

A. GRACE

God made you to bring you to heaven. This is the purpose, the reason for your life. Ultimately you are made for nothing else, neither riches, nor fame, nor good health, nor pleasure. You cannot get into heaven without God's grace. If you go through life without God's grace, your life is a failure. We have studied all these truths in previous lessons; I hope that you understand them.

Grace is a *sharing in the life of God*. Through grace God raises man from man's level to God's level. Through grace, a new kind of life is added to your soul.

You become ". . . partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4)

Grace makes you an adopted son of God: "we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also." (Rom. 8:16-17)

Through grace God dwells within you: "and we will come to him and will make our abode with him." (John 14:23)

When you receive God's grace you are made a temple of God: "Know you not that you are the temple of God." (1 Cor. 3:16)

B. THE LIFE OF GRACE IS GIVEN TO YOU BY BAPTISM

Let us suppose that your mother is very old; she is eighty-seven. She is home with a complication of diseases — arthritis, cancer, and a weak heart. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could have a priest visit your home, say some prayers over her, or perform some religious ceremony which would make her young once more! One of the greatest gifts God could give would be to bring your mother back to the fine health she had thirty or forty years ago! Man's most treasured human possession is his health, his life. Most men will sacrifice riches, honors, and pleasures, and will undergo the most painful medical operations if they can prolong their lives for even a few years by so doing. The most dreadful punishment that the law can inflict on a criminal is to deprive him of his life. Life is the greatest human gift that God can give.

Your parish priest cannot give life back to your old, infirm mother. But suppose that a man full of sin should come to the priest, a man who has on his soul every crime known to the human race. The priest can give life to the soul of that man, the life of grace, no matter how many or how great the man's sins are. Through Baptism your parish priest can wash away all the terrible sins and crimes of that man. Your priest can make him a child of God; he can make him share in God's life and assure him of a place in heaven if he dies immediately after he is baptized. What a wonderful gift Baptism is! A father brings his new born baby to the parish church on Sunday to have the baby baptized. As the priest says "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," he pours water over the head of the baby. That baby now has a sharing in the life of God; he is a child of God and an heir of the kingdom of heaven. The priest's guardian angel, the father's guardian angel, and the baby's guardian angel bow in reverence to that baby. The baby is now like his Creator; the baby is like God Himself!

C. EVERYONE MUST BE BAPTIZED

Everyone who is born into the world is born without God's grace (except the Blessed Virgin Mary). An unbaptized person who is leading a very good life cannot get into heaven! It is possible to get into heaven without some of the other Sacraments like Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Marriage, but it is absolutely impossible to get into heaven without Baptism. It is a serious sin to neglect your Baptism or the Baptism of anyone under your charge. The Catholic Church teaches that Baptism is absolutely necessary because Christ, our Blessed Lord taught us so.

"Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16) The command of Our Lord to the Catholic Church was: *"Teach ye all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 8:18)* Christ is very definite and clear on the necessity of Baptism: *"Amen, amen, I say to thee unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)*

God gave His grace to Adam and Eve: but Adam lost grace for himself and for the whole human race by his sin. Since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone born into the world is born without God's grace.

"But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared . . . He saved us by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost. Whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that, being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting." (Tit. 3:4-7)

Jesus Christ came to earth and died on the cross in order to give us grace. He has taught us that grace is given to each individual soul through the Sacrament of Baptism, and that it is absolutely necessary for all persons to be baptized. There is no other way

for us to get God's grace. We do not discuss in this book the question of people in pagan lands who do not know about Baptism; you know about it—therefore, you must be baptized. (Martyrdom or an act of perfect love of God would take the place of Baptism if Baptism were impossible to obtain).

D. WHEN YOU ENTER THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WE BAPTIZE YOU OVER AGAIN

Because Baptism is so absolutely necessary to get you to heaven, the Catholic Church does not take a chance on your Baptism in another church. Perhaps your Protestant Baptism was a real Baptism; perhaps it was not. At any rate it is most difficult for the priest to determine whether it was real or not. Usually a priest will baptize a person over again so that he can be sure that the person is baptized. Once you have been baptized by a Catholic priest, there will be no doubt about your Baptism.

E. HOW TO GET BAPTIZED

Our Lord taught the Apostles and the priests, who carry on their work, to teach the people first and then to baptize them. Therefore, in the Catholic Church we insist that you take a full course of religious instructions. At the end of the course the priest will examine you to see if you are prepared for Baptism. And if you have the right intention he will baptize you.

To have a "right intention" means that you understand the teachings of Christ, that you understand that the Catholic Church is the only true Church, it also means that you promise to break away from all false religions, to be a good Catholic, to give up any habits of serious sin. When you are baptized you also take the name of a saint. The name of a saint is given so that you might imitate the life of that saint; the name is also given so that you will have a saint who will pray particularly for you before the throne of God. When you are baptized it is also required that you have a good Catholic godfather and godmother, called sponsors. The godfather and godmother have the duty of helping new converts lead a good life especially during their first months in the Catholic Church. Converts in particular need very good Catholics as their godfathers and godmothers.

F. BAPTISM WITHOUT A PRIEST

The Sacrament of Baptism ordinarily must be administered by a priest. However a priest is not absolutely necessary. In case of necessity anyone can and should baptize. In the case of a dying baby all you need to do is pour water on the head of the baby while you say: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." In the case of an adult, who is dying and who is still conscious, ask him whether he wants to be baptized and whether he is sorry for his sins. Find out if he believes in God, if he believes that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked, if he believes that Christ died for his sins, if he believes in the three Persons in God. He must know at least these truths before he is baptized. If the dying adult is unconscious, baptize him conditionally. To baptize him conditionally pour the water on his head and say: "If you are sorry for your sins and want Baptism, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

G. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICIALLY TEACHES YOU THE METHODS OF BAPTISM

The Catholic Church alone has the authority to teach us religion and decide disputes about religious matters. The Catholic Church teaches that there are two different ways of baptizing a person:

(1) You may baptize him by pouring water on his head as you say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (2) You may immerse him in water as you say the words of Baptism. If you have the intention of doing what Christ wanted, the person will be baptized whether you pour water or immerse him in water.

The Church has baptized by immersion and by pouring water on the head of the person; either way is all right. The Bible tells us that while Peter was in prison he baptized the jailer and his family. There was no river flowing through the prison; Peter must have poured water on the heads of the people he was baptizing, at least while he was in prison.

H. CONCLUSION—GET BAPTIZED

Death comes like a thief in the night. You cannot be sure whether you will be alive or dead tomorrow. Look at your soul for a minute; perhaps you have never committed a serious sin during your lifetime; but if you do not have God's grace in your soul you cannot get into heaven; there is no other way of getting grace in your soul except by Baptism. This is the way Christ wanted it to be. Christ's death for you was in vain if you are not baptized.

Or maybe you are the person who says to Almighty God, "Wait a while longer God; I'm not sure that I want to give up serious sin." God might not wait. Why should God wait? And why should you wait? You know that you will have to give up the sin sooner or later. *Do it now.* Finish the instructions; talk it over with your priest; get baptized. It is a most serious sin to neglect your Baptism.

Babies should be baptized a week or two after their birth. It is a serious sin for parents to neglect the Baptism of their children. Almighty God gave you your child, so that you might lead your child into heaven. It is absolutely impossible for your child to get into heaven without Baptism. Pay no attention to people who say, "Wait until the child grows up and then let him choose for himself." Do you let the child grow up before you decide to give him something to eat? Do you wait until the child is an adult before you decide to send him to school? You are the child's parents, and you are supposed to show him what is right by doing what is right yourself. The child is made for heaven just as anyone else; Our Lord told the Church to *baptize everyone*.

Say an Act of Contrition for your sins before you go to sleep tonight. Study your religion more carefully now and prepare yourself for Baptism.

LESSON 28

CONFIRMATION

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and strengthen me with a perfect spirit." (Psalm 50:14)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The first few months after your Catholic Baptism, your first confession and first Holy Communion, you will be thrilled with your possession of the true faith and the spiritual security that is yours as a member of the Catholic Church. Your faith is founded on conviction and on God's grace. However, you might find it very difficult to lead a good Catholic life some months or years after your conversion. For your protection, God has given you a very special Sacrament, the Sacrament of Confirmation, which you are now going to study. Be sure to receive this Sacrament from the bishop when he comes to your parish.

A. YOUR CONDITION AFTER BAPTISM IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

You have the grace of God. You are a child of God. You are an heir to the kingdom of God. You share in the life of God. You have peace of conscience, and all the happiness of a Catholic life. After Baptism, however, you are not too strong. You have all your old habits to fight. The world and its allurements beckon to you. The sting of the flesh bothers you. Satan is fighting against you more than ever before. You must be loyal, watchful, brave. It is not easy to be a good Catholic. Because you are still only a "baby" Christian, the life of grace is weak. Therefore you need special grace to be strong.

B. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION GIVES YOU THE GRACE TO BE A GOOD CATHOLIC

Confirmation is a special Sacrament made just for this purpose: to give you the grace to be a strong Christian and a soldier of Christ. Even the twelve Apostles had to be strengthened after their Baptism. The Apostles were not only weak, but cowardly. When Our Lord was captured by His enemies, they hid in an upper room because they were afraid. Christ was killed on Calvary. The Apostles feared that they might be next. They spent nine days in prayer (a novena), begging God to help them, to protect them, to strengthen them. God answered their prayer.

C. THE HOLY GHOST CAME TO THE APOSTLES

The Holy Ghost came into the souls of the Apostles to make them strong.

"And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming: and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire: and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost: and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak." (Acts 2:1-4)

D. THE MARVELOUS CHANGE IN THE APOSTLES

A marvelous change came to the souls of the Apostles. They were changed from weak to brave men. They no longer cared about danger to their bodies. They went forth and preached to the enemies of Christ. They were so full of zeal to preach Christ that some people thought they were drunk on that day of Pentecost.

Peter scolded the people and bade them: "Do penance: and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:88)

That day three thousand were instructed and baptized. They made more Christians, more priests, more bishops. They spread the Church through the world.

E. THE APOSTLES NOT ONLY HAD BEEN CONFIRMED (MADE STRONG) BUT THEY ALSO HAD POWER TO CONFIRM OTHERS

The Scriptures tell how the Apostles went about giving Confirmation to those who were "only baptized".

"Now, when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For he was not as yet come upon any of them. but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them: and they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts 8:14-17)

Saint Paul went to Ephesus to confirm the people: The disciples at Ephesus were baptized "And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them: and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." (Acts 19:6)

In the Catholic Church we have always had from the earliest times this wonderful Sacrament. Saint Cyprian, a bishop in the third century, tells us this: ". . . they who are baptized . . . are presented to the bishops . . . and by our prayer and imposition of hands they receive the Holy Ghost and are perfected with the seal of the Lord."

Saint Jerome in the fourth century says: "The imposition of hands should be performed over baptized persons and the Holy Ghost thus invoked . . . were there no Scriptural authority at hand, the consent of the whole world in this regard would have the force of law." (Dial. adv. Lucifer) Today the bishops, as successors of the Apostles, have this same power.

F. THE WONDERFUL CARE OF CHRIST FOR YOU

God has led you to the Catholic Church (and school). God has given you the opportunity to receive a course in religious instructions. You have seen perhaps how foolish and evil your life has been. You have been led by the kindness of the priests and sisters whom God put here to help you. God wants you. God gives you the grace to give up sin. You have been baptized, but you are terribly weak. The Church is like a loving mother. She gives you Baptism, the Body and Blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sin, and now, a special Sacrament to enable you to be a good Catholic, a Sacrament to make you strong.

A child receives the Sacrament of Confirmation when he needs it most, at about ten or eleven years of age. Shortly after this the temptations come, and the child needs special grace to help him conquer sex temptations, the lure of the flesh, and the bad example of worldly people all around him. Just as the Apostles were made strong by special grace, so you and your children receive new and extraordinary graces from Confirmation which makes you strong.

G. YOU RECEIVE THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

The special gifts of the Holy Ghost are strengthened in Confirmation. These gifts are: *Wisdom*— a desire for things of God. This gift directs your whole life for God. *Understanding* — helps you to know more clearly the mysteries of faith. *Counsel* — perfects your judgment. *Knowledge* — enlightens your mind. *Fortitude* — strengthens you to do the will of God in all things. *Fear of the Lord* — makes you fear to lose the love of God. *Piety* — enables you to love God as a Father.

H. THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST

The fruits of the Holy Ghost are the good works which you perform by the power of the Holy Ghost whom you have received. These are: *Charity* — the works of charity. *Joy* — the satisfaction that comes from living right. *Peace* — the contentment that comes from your victory over evil. *Patience* — the strength to bear with the failings of others. *Benignity* — the works you do because of divine love. *Faith* — works performed from your belief in God. *Modesty, continency, chastity* — God's aids to you to live a modest and pure life.

I. HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR CONFIRMATION

Some weeks or months after your Baptism, you will have to prepare yourself for Confirmation. To receive Confirmation, you must be a baptized Catholic, free from mortal sin and well instructed. You must have a sponsor, a person of the same sex as yourself, but not the same person you had at Baptism. You must also take the name of another Saint besides the name you received at Baptism.

J. THE WONDERFUL NIGHT OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is the occasion of a big celebration in every parish church. The church is beautifully decorated and clergy from all the neighboring parishes are here to honor the bishop and the Sacrament he will give this night.

The bishop extends his hands over all the people he is confirming while he asks the Holy Ghost to come into their souls. He then anoints their foreheads with the holy oil in the form of a cross and says: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Oil is used on athletes to make them strong and agile; the oil of Confirmation makes your soul strong and agile by the special grace it gives. The bishop gives you a blow on the cheek as he says, "Peace be with thee." The blow is to remind you that you are a soldier of Christ and should be ready to suffer for Christ.

K. DO YOU HAVE TO BE CONFIRMED TO GET TO HEAVEN?

God did not say you must be confirmed in order to save your soul. This Sacrament is not like Baptism which is absolutely necessary for salvation. But without Confirmation, the grace in your soul could wither away like a hot-house flower exposed to the weather; you could become a weak Christian; you might even give up the true faith and the Church. You will be terribly tempted by your past habits, by the pagan, careless world around you; you will be inclined at times to miss Mass, to eat meat on Friday, to violate God's laws on marriage and chastity. At times it will be very difficult to keep grace in your soul and remain in the Church. Therefore, you need every help God has given you. For these reasons, it is usually a sin to neglect to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

L. PRACTICAL POINTS YOU MUST KNOW

Ask the priest when Confirmation will be given in your parish. There will be some special classes in preparation for this Sacrament. Be sure to be there for these special classes.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 27 & 28

1. What does Baptism do for your soul?
2. Can one enter Heaven without Baptism?
3. How soon after a child is born should he be baptized?
4. What does Confirmation do for you?
5. Who gives Confirmation?
6. Is it absolutely necessary to be confirmed?

LESSON 29

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND HOLY COMMUNION

"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. 9 15)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

We priests must be very careful that the people understand that the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus Christ. Even after people have assisted at Mass for some time, they will sometimes say in their examination that Christ is only figuratively on the altar, or that Holy Communion is bread and wine *and* Christ. A person who does not understand that the Blessed Sacrament is really and truly the Body and Blood of Jesus is not prepared to enter the Church. Therefore, we priests make every effort to explain in very simple and definite words this important truth of Christianity.

A. THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IS THE REAL BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

The Blessed Sacrament is not bread and wine. The priest actually changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at the altar when he says Mass. After the priest says the words of consecration, there is no more bread and wine on the altar. The *appearances* of bread and wine remain even after the bread and wine have been changed into Christ's Body and Blood.

B. WHY IS IT CALLED "THE BLESSED SACRAMENT"?

This particular Sacrament is called the BLESSED Sacrament because it is the most blessed of all the Sacraments. It is Jesus Christ, God Himself. It is also called the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of the Altar.

C. CHRIST WANTED BREAD AND WINE CHANGED INTO HIS BODY AND BLOOD; CHRIST WANTED ALL MEN TO EAT AND DRINK THAT BODY AND BLOOD

The sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel shows very clearly that Jesus Christ meant the Blessed Sacrament to be His real Body and Blood. Anyone who reads this chapter of St. John's Gospel will be perfectly convinced of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament on our altar. In this chapter Our Lord gives the following sermon to the Jews:

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert: and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying: How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me: and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever." (John 6:48-59)

The Jews went away—they refused to believe. They knew that Christ meant that they should eat His real Body and Blood; they did not understand how this was possible, therefore they went away. If Our Lord thought the Jews had misunderstood His words He would have called them back and explained what He really meant. But He did not call them back; He let them go.

In this part of the Bible which you have just read, Christ repeats over and over again that you must eat His flesh and blood to have life in your soul; that in this way you will *live* in Him and He will *live* in you; that if you do not eat His flesh and blood you will not have *life* in your soul; that this is the way you will *live* by Him; that this is the way you will *live forever*. Christ is saying very definitely that the Blessed Sacrament, or Holy Communion, is His real Body and Blood.

D. CHRIST CHANGED BREAD AND WINE INTO HIS BODY AND BLOOD AT THE LAST SUPPER

Christ changed bread and wine into His own Body and Blood at the Last Supper—the night before He died (the evening of Holy Thursday, the night before Good Friday). (See Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20.)

Christ said at the supper table: "This is My Body . . . This is My Blood." Christ did *not* say "Pretend it is My Body," or "Believe it is My Body," or "It looks like My Body." No!—Christ said: "This is My Body . . . This is My Blood."

E. CHRIST GAVE THIS POWER TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES

From Christ the Apostles received the power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood. Christ told the Apostles to do the same thing; namely, to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

He said this in very direct words: "Do this for a commemoration of me." (Luke 22:19)

The power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood has been passed down through the centuries from the Apostles to bishops, and from bishops to priests for the last 2000 years. In the man-made religions the clergymen do not have this power. St Paul tells of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in the Catholic Church of his day after Christ had gone back to heaven. *"The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?" (1 Cor. 10:16)*

St. Paul also says, "You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils: You cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of the devil." (I Cor. 10:21)

In the eleventh chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul again speaks of the presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament: "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." (I Cor. 11:27-29)

We have always had the Body and Blood of Christ in the Catholic Church.

F. THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND HOLY COMMUNION

The Blessed Sacrament is the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine. Holy Communion is the receiving of this Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The Mass is the offering or the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to God.

G. OUR LORD'S GREAT LOVE FOR US — SHOWN PARTICULARLY IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND IN HOLY COMMUNION

God's love for us poor human beings is the real answer to all the problems of life and eternity. The relation between God and man, the purpose of our life, and our heavenly goal can be explained only through God's love for man.

So far in these instructions you have learned what Christ wants you to do: you must give up your sins; you must obtain God's grace; you must battle against the evil inclinations within you and outside of you, in order to keep God's grace; you must live in union with Christ now in order to be united with Him forever in heaven.

But how can you do this? Christ does not simply lay down difficult laws for us; He gives us many helps. Christ came to this world as a man to show us how to live. Christ still lives with us in the world through His real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Who but God could think of such a wonderful way of helping us! In the tabernacle of every Catholic Church in Chicago, in the United States, in the world, Jesus Christ is living just as truly as He lived in Jerusalem 1900 years ago. Through the centuries Christ has lived in the tabernacle, like a prisoner, because He loves you. He is very interested in you; He wants to talk over your problems with you; He wants to give you the help you need to give up sin, to fight against evil inclinations, to live in union with Him. Visit Him frequently in the church; tell Him about your difficulties; ask His help.

What is even more wonderful, God actually gives Himself to us in Holy Communion. Could you ever imagine that God would give Himself to you while you are still here on earth? Yet that is just what Our Lord does in Holy Communion.

CHRIST GIVES YOU HOLY COMMUNION TO UNITE HIMSELF TO YOU. Love requires union. Christ loves you as no one else has ever loved you. He even gave His life for you! Christ unites Himself to you in Holy Communion while you are still here on earth! This is very clear from His own words: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me: and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. (John 6:57-58)

CHRIST INCREASES THE LIFE OF GRACE IN YOU THROUGH HOLY COMMUNION. God created you so that you could share in the happiness of Christ for all eternity. Grace gives you a share in the life of God; grace makes you like Christ. This life of the soul, the life of grace, grows in your soul through Holy Communion. Through Holy Communion the life of grace so grows that you will live forever, sharing in God's life.

CHRIST LESSENS YOUR EVIL INCLINATIONS THROUGH HOLY COMMUNION. Every man has evil inclinations which he must fight against, all the days of his life. Yet a Christian must live by Christ. Our Lord tells us that the way to live by Him is through Holy Communion. "As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." (John 6:58) There is no vicious habit that cannot be lessened and even conquered by frequent and fervent Holy Communion.

CHRIST PROMISES YOU EVERLASTING LIFE THROUGH HOLY COMMUNION. His own words are very clear: "This is the bread . . . that if any man eat of it, he may not die . . . If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever . . . He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day." (John 6:50-55)

CHRIST PREPARES YOU FOR A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION THROUGH RECEIVING HIM IN HOLY COMMUNION. Man is made to stay here on this earth for only a few short years. The real purpose of his creation is to bring him to heaven. You are receiving these instructions and studying this book ultimately for only one purpose — to get to heaven. Christ promises you very directly that for receiving Holy Communion He will bring you, body and soul, into heaven: "I will raise him up in the last day." (John 6:55)

H. A WORTHY PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

To receive Holy Communion you must be a baptized Catholic; you must have no mortal sin on your soul since your last good confession; and you must observe the laws of fasting.

You must fast from all solid foods (and alcoholic beverages) for three hours before receiving Holy Communion and from all liquid nourishment for one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water does not break the fast.

If there is a venial sin on your soul make an Act of Contrition and receive Holy Communion; venial sin does not keep you from the worthy reception of Our Lord in Holy Communion.

Try to receive Holy Communion at least every Sunday. It is not necessary to go to confession each time as long as you have not committed a serious sin since your last good confession. The law of the Church requires confession only once a year; but good Catholics try to go to confession at least once a month.

I. SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNION

If you receive Holy Communion while you have a mortal sin on your soul or after you have broken your fast before Communion, you commit a terrible sin called a sacrilege. A sacrilege is the abuse of any sacred person, place or thing. Sacrilege rarely happens. But be careful. Never, never go to Holy Communion after breaking your fast or with a mortal sin on your soul.

J. YOU MUST RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR

You must receive Our Lord in Holy Communion during the Easter season, that is the time extending from the sixth Sunday before Easter until the eighth Sunday after Easter. This duty to receive is called your *Easter Duty*. It is a mortal sin to neglect your Easter Duty.

We might note here that this law is made for the negligent Catholics, not the good Catholics. We hope you will receive Holy Communion at least once a week after you have become a Catholic.

K. YOUR THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Stay in the church at least for a little while after receiving Our Lord. His Body is present within you for about ten or fifteen minutes after you have received Him. Adore God, thank Him, love Him, ask for His help.

L. CALL THE PRIEST TO SICK CATHOLICS

The priest brings Holy Communion to the homes of people who are ill. If you are sick for a month or longer or if you know of a Catholic who is sick for a month or longer you should call the priest. This does not mean that you have to be dangerously ill. It simply means that you are unable to get to church because of your sickness. Parish priests regularly bring Holy Communion to sick people every morning.

M. NON-CATHOLICS ARE CHEATED AGAIN

Non-Catholics have only an imitation of the Body and Blood of Christ. The only Church that could possibly have power over the Body and Blood of Our Lord is a Church that is over 1900 years old. This power is only in the Church begun by Christ. But all the churches which are not Catholic were not begun by Christ, but were begun by ordinary men hundreds of years after Christ started the Catholic Church; therefore the ministers in these other churches do not have the power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

You cannot for long keep the life of grace in your soul without Holy Communion. Our Lord wants you to receive Holy Communion frequently. The Catholic School keeps children good by frequent Holy Communion, not by some imaginary magic teaching formula that the nuns have. It is a sad thing to see Catholic children in our school at confession and Holy Communion and the other children (the non Catholics) just looking on. We want all the parents and all the children to have what Christ has given us priests to give to all of you.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is the Blessed Sacrament?
2. When did Jesus Christ make this Sacrament?
3. Where does your parish priest receive the power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus?
4. Can any man-made religion give you Holy Communion?
5. What is necessary to receive Holy Communion?
6. What does "fasting" mean?
7. What is Easter Duty?

JUST HOW MUCH DO WE PROFIT FROM EACH COMMUNION?

A story is told to demonstrate how one can profit more than another from receiving Holy Communion, even though both are in the state of grace.

Two children went with tin cans to a river to gather water. One child brought back a great deal more water than the other, yet each of the cans was full. What was the reason? It was because the one child had a much larger can than the other.

Two people receive Holy Communion, but one comes back enriched with more blessings of soul than other. Why? Because the one person made a better preparation for Holy Communion than the other. The one had enlarged his heart by faith and by love more so than the other.

The more we prepare our hearts for Holy Communion the greater spiritual benefit will we reap.

LESSON 30

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

"From from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation. For My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachias 1:11)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the great act of Christian worship. In order to understand the Mass, you must understand what a sacrifice is. Once you know the meaning of sacrifice and the part it plays in man's life, you will begin to love the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and realize why it is so pleasing to God.

A. WHAT IS A SACRIFICE?

When you want to show your love for somebody, what do you do? You give a gift. When you want to show somebody how sorry you are for having offended him, what do you do? You give him a gift. When you want to express your gratitude for a favor, what do you do? You give a gift. We do the same thing with God. When we want to tell Him of our love, our sorrow, or our gratitude we give Him a gift. Sacrifice is simply the offering of a gift to God. It is the offering of a gift to God by a priest and the destruction of the gift; the purpose of sacrifice is to show our total dependence on God. Sacrifice then, is essentially the giving of a gift to God.

Abel's gift was a lamb. He wanted to thank God for his prosperity. Abel killed the lamb to make sure that no human could use it, for he had already given it to God in sacrifice. Noah's gift to God was a steer to thank God for saving him and his family from the deluge. Noah and Abel offered these animals to God to show their total dependence upon God and they destroyed the gifts so that no human being could use them. They had already given them to God.

B. RELIGIONS HAVE ALWAYS HAD PRIESTS AND SACRIFICE

Except for the Protestant religions of the last few hundred years every religion true or false, has offered sacrifice to God. The very idea of sacrifice is ingrained in the human mind; a man feels that he must offer of his best goods to God to thank Him, to adore Him, to ask His pardon, and to seek His favor. Because men have always looked upon the offering of sacrifice as so important in their lives, certain men have been designated to offer such sacrifices. These men are called priests. A priest is a man who offers sacrifice to God for man.

In the Old Testament a whole book of the Bible, Leviticus, has to do with the Jewish sacrifices and the Jewish priesthood. The Jewish priest offered to God sheep, oxen, cattle, doves, and sometimes even grain from the field.

C. THE MASS IS A PERFECT SACRIFICE BECAUSE IN THE MASS A PERFECT GIFT IS OFFERED

St. Paul tells us that: *"It is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away."* (Hebrews 10:4) These ancient sacrifices of animals did not sufficiently express man's sorrow, his love or his gratitude. Christ arranged His religion so that all of us could offer up the most perfect sacrifice. In the Catholic Church we actually offer up Jesus Christ Himself — not goats, oxen, or lambs.

D. CHRIST OFFERED THE PERFECT SACRIFICE

Christ offered the perfect gift to God on the cross: He offered Himself. Because Christ is God, this was the most perfect sacrifice that could be offered.

Christ did the same thing at the Last Supper too. He offered Himself, a perfect gift, a perfect sacrifice, to Almighty God. The gift He offered was His own Body and Blood. Jesus Christ Himself was the priest. The destruction of the gift was the separate consecration of the bread and wine into His Body and Blood. This was the first Mass ever offered. It was offered by the Son of God Himself. He offered the same gift (Himself) that He offered on the cross. The sacrifice at the Last Supper was the same as that of the cross except that there were no blood and tears. This was an unbloody sacrifice.

E. JESUS GAVE THE POWER OF SAYING MASS TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Christ told the Apostles to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass when he said: "Do this in commemoration of Me." The Apostles passed the power on to other bishops and priests, who, in turn have passed this power to others in the Catholic Church for over 1900 years.

We read in the Bible of the Apostles and their successors saying Mass: *1 Cor 10:16; 1 Cor 10:21; 1 Cor 11:27; Acts 2:41; Acts 20:7; Luke 24:30; Acts 13:1.*

F. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE SACRIFICE HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE MASS?

All the priest would really have to do to say Mass would be to say the words of consecration: "This is My Body. This is My Blood," over the bread and wine. The Church has added many beautiful prayers to this ceremony; many of the prayers are taken from the Bible.

If there were a persecution and the priests were in hiding, they would not have to say all the prayers of the Mass because these added prayers are not really required to have the sacrifice.

When the priest says, "This is My Body, This is My Blood," there is no more bread and wine upon the altar; it is now the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

The priest bends over the bread and says the words of consecration; he genuflects, raises Our Lord for your adoration, and genuflects again. Then he bends over the chalice and says the words of consecration and elevates the chalice for your adoration while the altar boy rings the bell for the third time at Mass. This part of the Mass is called the Consecration.

G. MASS IS THE MOST PERFECT PRAYER YOU CAN OFFER

Mass is the most perfect prayer you can offer because it is not just your own prayer; it is a prayer of the most perfect Person on earth, Jesus Christ. It is the prayer of God, Jesus Christ, offering Himself to God for you.

Your feelings are not important. It is not necessary to "enjoy" Mass. You are in the church to offer a sacrifice to God; and through the Mass the most perfect sacrifice is offered to God.

H. YOU MUST ASSIST AT MASS EVERY SUNDAY AND HOLYDAY

At the end of the instructions if you have been missing Mass, the priest will ask you to wait two or three months before he will let you join the Catholic Church. Your attendance at Mass is a minimum requirement for Baptism. It is one of the more easy obligations you assume in becoming a Catholic. It is also necessary to assist at Mass on the six Holydays of the year. These will be announced to you at your parish church during the year.

I. DAILY MASS

The parish priest usually says Mass every day of the year. Many good Catholics go to Mass daily, but there is no obligation to do so; however, it is the most perfect way to begin your day if you can attend. At least, receive Holy Communion whenever you go to Mass.

J. MASS FOR THE DEAD

Mass is also offered for the dead. Have Masses said for your dead friends and family members. It is a custom among Catholics to bring spiritual bouquets to the wake of a dead friend or relative. The spiritual bouquet is a card filled out by your parish priest stating that Mass will be said for the deceased person at your request.

K. THE OFFERING OF MONEY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

Why is money offered for the celebration of Mass? This is one of the ways of supporting the priest. The Bible approves of the priest obtaining support in this way. *"Know you not that they who work in the holy place eat the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel."* (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What is Mass?
2. What is a sacrifice?
3. Who offered the first Mass?
4. Where did your pastor get this power?

HOW THE SAINTS ASSISTED AT HOLY MASS

Though he was the Chancellor of England and had many duties for which he was responsible, St. Thomas More made it a point to attend Mass each day. One day while at Mass a message was brought to him that the king required his presence immediately. "A little patience," replied the saint, "I have not yet completed my homage to a higher Sovereign, and I must await the end of this Divine audience."

St. Louis, King of France, assisted at two, sometimes three Masses each day. Some of his courtiers complained about the amount of time he spent in church. They thought that he should devote more time to the affairs of state rather than being engaged in prayer. To them he replied, "See how far the care of these men goes! I am sure that if I devoted to recreational pleasures or to some other frivolous amusements the time I spend at Mass, I would not hear the slightest word of blame from them."

LESSON 31 CONFESSION

"He that hideth his sins shall not prosper: but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. 28:13)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

When Christ started His Church He gave it the power to forgive sins. Today the Catholic priest has this same power. People confess their sins to the priest, and the priest actually forgives the sins.

A. COULD CHRIST FORGIVE SINS?

Could Christ forgive sins? The answer is very evident — of course he could forgive sins. Jesus Christ is the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, true God.

B. CHRIST DID FORGIVE SINS

Anyone who has read the life of Our Lord in the gospel knows that Christ forgave sins. He forgave the sins of Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was a terrible sinner. Not only did Christ forgive her sins, but He gave her the grace to be a Saint. In fact Mary Magdalene was at the foot of the cross with Mary, the Mother of Christ, when Christ gave His life for our salvation. Christ forgave the sins of the paralyzed man who had asked to be cured.

"But that you may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay: and he went away to his own house, glorifying God." (Luke 5:24-25) To the good thief on the cross who asked Our Lord's help, all Christ had to say was: *"This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke 6 23:43)* Christ forgave the sins of St. Peter.

Many of Our Lord's enemies were shocked because Christ forgave sins. Christ was born to forgive sins; He died to forgive our sins.

One of the main purposes of religion is to help us out of our sins. No one wants to guess whether his sins are forgiven or not; everyone wants to be sure that they are forgiven. Every sinner desires a new start in life; he wants assurance from Christ that his sins are actually forgiven, so that he does not have to go through life worrying about hell because of his past serious sins.

C. CHRIST COULD GIVE THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS TO MEN

How wonderful it would be if Jesus Christ were in our local stadium tonight to give a sermon. After the sermon you would want to go to him privately to have your sins forgiven. You would ask Him for a few moments alone, so that you could tell Him you were sorry for your sins and beg for another chance to lead a good life. But Christ did not plan to forgive our sins by remaining on earth with us.

D. CHRIST GAVE THE APOSTLES THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS

The power to forgive sins was given to men. It is Easter Sunday night. The Apostles are gathered in the room of the Last Supper. Suddenly Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, walks through the door. Imagine the surprise and amazement of the twelve Apostles. Christ says to them, *"Peace be to you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."* (John 20:21-23)

"WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN THEM!" These words mean that Christ gave the twelve Apostles the power to forgive sins. "PEACE" means peace of soul. "AS THE FATHER HATH SENT ME" means that God the Father sent Christ to forgive sins. "I ALSO SEND YOU" means that Christ sends the twelve Apostles, His Church, to forgive our sins.

"WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL RETAIN" means that whose sins you shall not forgive are not forgiven. (For example, a priest could not forgive the sins of a person who was not really sorry for his sins.)

E. CHRIST WANTED THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS PASSED ON TO OTHERS

The Apostles gave the power to forgive sins to other bishops and priests; these handed down the power to forgive sins in an unbroken line from the time of Christ until today; the individual priest receives the power to forgive sins from the Sacrament of Holy Orders given by the bishop. Christ wanted the Apostles and bishops to hand down this power because He established the Church and gave the Sacraments for all people unto the end of the world.

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20)

F. CONFESSION IS NOT DIFFICULT

A person in difficulty wants to talk over his troubles with someone else in order to obtain relief.

For example, a husband may "gripe" to his wife about the boss. A man will confide his troubles to his friend. Sometimes a murderer will even turn himself over to the police to get relief of conscience. The greatest relief in the world for a troubled conscience is the confessional. Remember that the priest does not know you. The confessional is built in such a way that the priest cannot see you.

Perhaps you think: "But what will the priest think of me?" He will think only this about you: "Here is a good person; he is really sorry for his sins." You can go to any priest in any parish. It is not necessary to go to your pastor.

You will almost jump for joy to get rid of the worst illness you have ever had — your sins. People go insane worrying about sins. Get rid of them in confession!

Who was ever sad because of a painless operation that made him well?

Just as the surgeon's business is healing the diseases of the body, so the priest's business is healing the diseases of the soul, namely, sin.

The priest knows all about sin; for many years he has studied the different kinds of sin. The same sins that you confess he has heard from others in confession.

Don't be afraid; the priest will not be angry. You have not injured the priest by your sin; you have injured God and run the risk of ruining your whole life. So stop thinking about the priest; think about yourself.

G. THE PRIEST HIMSELF FORGIVES THE SINS

This is an important point for converts and for people who are taking instructions in the Catholic Church. The priest does not have to ask God to forgive your sins. The priest himself has the power to do so in Christ's name. Your sins are forgiven by the priest just the same as if you knelt before Jesus Christ and told them to Christ Himself. "*Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*" (John 20:23)

H. ANSWER TO THE OBJECTION: "I WOULD RATHER GO DIRECTLY TO GOD FOR FORGIVENESS."

A person who says that only God can forgive sins doesn't believe the Bible; the Bible directly tells us that God gave this power to men. God could forgive you directly if He wanted to; but He does not want to. You can't just go to God and feel that He has forgiven your sins; in fact, going to God directly is a fine way to stay in sin. Why doesn't God want us to go directly to Him? No one is a judge in his own case; we would be too easy on ourselves. We need a judge, a human judge, here on earth to help us with difficult problems of conscience. God wants you to have this help; He wants people to be guided by their priests.

For example, if a married man is keeping company with another woman, the priest will correct him. Or if a Catholic steals your purse, he will be obliged to give it back; but who is there to oblige the non-Catholic? Then, too, without confession you will not avoid the things that lead you into sin.

I. FINAL PLEA

You are foolish to remain in your sins. What if you were to die today? Everyone needs confession — nuns, priests, even the Pope. How much more do you need it — you who live in the midst of the sins of the world. Consider the dangers of the world, the trickery of the devil who leads you step by step into sin. The urge of your own flesh tempts you to sin. Confession alone will save you from sin and keep the life of grace in your soul.

It is a beautiful thing to see a mother and father and all their children at confession on Saturday trying to keep themselves stainless before God. You cannot raise your children to be good Christians without the monthly check-up and the grace of confession. The Catholic school will not make your children good without confession.

"And He said: A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country: and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine abroad into a far country: and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger! I will arise and will go to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising up, he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe and put it on him: and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat and make merry: Because this my son was dead and is come to life again, was lost and is found. And they began to be merry." (Luke 15:11-24) Maybe you have squandered all that God has given you in living riotously. Maybe you are the prodigal son. Come back through confession so that God the Father can say of you, "*Because this my son was dead and is come to life again, was lost and is found.*" (Luke 15:24)

LESSON 32

HOW TO MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity." (1 John 1:9)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

This second lesson on Confession is equally as important as the first lesson. It is often very difficult to get a new convert to the Church to make a *complete* confession. The new convert does not seem to realize the importance of examining his conscience very well before his first confession and telling the *number of times* he committed each sin.

A. WHAT TO DO BEFORE ENTERING THE CONFESSIONAL

Each time you go to confession it is very necessary to examine your conscience. This is especially true of your first confession. Before confession, ask God to help you remember your sins. Then examine your conscience. Try to remember how often you have committed each sin since your last good confession.

Be sure to tell Almighty God that you are sorry for all these sins.

B. WHAT TO DO IN THE CONFESSIONAL

Wait until the priest opens the little window. Then say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned, it is one week (or one month, or whatever length of time it is) since my last confession. These are my sins." Name the sins and tell how many times you have committed each one.

After telling the priest all your sins, and how many times you have committed each one, you should say, "I am heartily sorry for these sins, and all the sins in my past life, especially for . . ." Here name some sins you have already confessed in past confessions. The priest will then ask you some questions and give you some good advice; listen carefully.

While the priest is saying the words of forgiveness, "I forgive you all your sins," say the Act of Contrition.

Thank the priest for his help and his absolution and leave the confessional.

C. WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU LEAVE THE CONFESSIONAL

Go into a quiet place in the Church and say your penance (the prayers the priest gave you to say). Thank God from the bottom of your heart for forgiving your sins and promise Him that you will stay away from these sins in the future.

D. SORROW FOR SINS

Your sorrow for sins must be in your heart, not only on your lips; you must be sorry for all your mortal sins, not just for some of them. Your sorrow must be a sorrow for offending God, not a sorrow for offending man, or a sorrow prompted by man's punishment. It must be greater than the sorrow you experienced for any earthly loss, but tears or any other display of emotion is not necessary.

Sorrow for sin is called *perfect* when it is a sorrow for offending God Who is so good. It is called *imperfect* when it is prompted by fear of hell with which God punishes unrepentant sinners. Imperfect sorrow is sufficient in confession, but try to make your sorrow perfect.

Sincere sorrow for sin is a sorrow which makes us avoid not only mortal sin, but any person, place or thing that leads you into mortal sin (near occasions of sin). If your sorrow is real, your confession will be humble; you will tell your sins honestly and truthfully as you know them, and you will tell the number and kind of sins.

E. IF YOU CANNOT REMEMBER THE NUMBER OF YOUR SINS

You must tell all of your mortal sins in confession as far as you can remember them. In your first confession it might be impossible for you to remember the exact number of your sins. If you cannot remember the number, tell how many times a day, or week, or month you committed the sins, or how long the habit or practice of the particular sin lasted.

F. WHAT IS A BAD CONFESSION?

A bad confession is one in which the person deliberately conceals a mortal sin. Such a confession is a sacrilege (an abuse of the sacred power of forgiving sin). A sacrilegious confession is a rare thing; most people are very sincere and truthful in the confessional. If a person makes a sacrilegious confession, he must confess this fact, and repeat all his sins since his last good confession.

For example, if in 1990 a person willfully concealed a mortal sin in confession, all his confessions and Holy Communions are sacrilegious until he makes a good confession in which he tells of his sacrilegious act. If a person forgets to confess a mortal sin in confession, his confession is not sacrilegious. All that is necessary is that he tells this particular mortal sin in a future confession whenever he thinks of it.

G. AFTER CONFESSION DO PENANCE FOR YOUR SINS

In the Sacrament of Penance (Confession), God gives his priest the power to bring sinners back into the state of grace and to prevent them from falling into the abyss of hell. However, after confession some temporal punishment due to sin generally remains, and some of this punishment is taken away in the penance (prayers) the priest gives you to say. You should perform other acts of penance also so that you can make up for the temporal punishment due to sin and to avoid a long stay in purgatory. The Church suggests to us these forms of penance: prayer, fasting, giving alms in the Name of Christ, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the patient sufferings of the ills of life, and the gaining of indulgences.

H. WHAT IS AN INDULGENCE?

An indulgence is the taking away of all or part of the temporal punishment due to sin. The Catholic Church has the power to take away not only sin, but also the temporal punishment due to sin.

Christ gave the Church this power when He said to Peter, "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matthew 16:19)

You can gain an indulgence by reading the Bible, saying the Rosary, making the Stations of the Cross, reciting Litanies, using Holy Water and using blessed medals or statues, and several ways listed in Catholic prayer books. Indulgences may be gained also for the poor souls in Purgatory.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 31 & 32

1. Prove from the Bible that Christ gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles.
2. Can your parish priest actually forgive sins?
3. Does the priest merely pray that your sins are forgiven?
4. How many times a year must you go to confession?
5. How often does a good Catholic go to confession?

THE PEASANT'S CONFESSION

St. Vincent de Paul was one day called to prepare a peasant for death. To all his neighbors this man was very devout. However, through neglect or through ignorance, the poor man had his conscience loaded with several mortal sins. He had not confessed them, perhaps through a false sense of shame. Even though he had made many unworthy and sacrilegious confessions, the peasant flattered himself that he would be saved all the same.

St. Vincent de Paul was about to begin hearing the man's sins and thought he should urge him to make a general confession -- a special confession in which a person's past life is reviewed and sins are once again confessed to purify the soul. The sick man was encouraged by the mildness of the saint. He prepared himself well and at length declared all his sins, even the secret ones he had hidden for years. He was blessed with a courage he had never experienced before. The sincerity was followed by an inexpressible consolation. The penitent found himself unburdened of an enormous weight, and he died in peace.

While we marvel at the good fortune of this peasant to prepare for death in the presence of a saint, we cannot presume that our fate will be the same. Let us take care to make every confession the best we can, keeping our soul ever ready for death.

NOTES

LESSON 33

HOLY ORDERS AND THE PRIESTHOOD

"And when they had ordained to them priests in every church . . . they commended them to the Lord." (Acts 14:22)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Jesus Christ established the Catholic priesthood Himself. Christ gives us His teachings and His grace through the priests. Therefore the priest and the priesthood are an essential part of the Catholic Church. Bishops and priests have accomplished the spread of Christianity throughout the world by following the command of Christ: *"Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20) You notice also the great reverence that Catholic people have for priests; we hope that you will gain some of that reverence from the study of this lesson.

A. THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is a Sacrament which makes a man a priest of God and gives him the grace to perform his priestly duties. This Sacrament, like all the Sacraments, was made by Jesus Christ Himself.

B. PRIESTS

A priest is a man who primarily offers sacrifice to God for the sins of the people. There have always been priests both in the true religion and in false religions even in pagan religions. Why? Because people have always felt the need of having someone to offer sacrifice to Almighty God for their sins. Priests also have other duties; we shall learn of all the priestly duties as we go on with the lesson.

C. THERE WERE PRIESTS IN THE JEWISH RELIGION

The entire book of Leviticus in the Bible deals with Jewish priests and the offering of sacrifice to Almighty God. The priesthood was an essential part of the Jewish religion. Moses was a priest; Almighty God appointed Aaron and his sons to be priests.

D. JESUS CHRIST WAS A PRIEST

A priest is one who offers sacrifice to God. On the cross Jesus Christ offered to God the most perfect sacrifice, His very life. Therefore, Jesus Christ is a priest. St. Paul in his Epistles to the Hebrews tells us Christ is a priest: *"It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people."* (Hebrew 2:17) The whole purpose of Christ's Incarnation was to offer sacrifice for our sins; this showed that Christ was a priest.

E. PRIESTS IN THE CHRISTIAN PART OF THE BIBLE

For the benefit of any reader who might be under the erroneous opinion that priests sprang up in the course of time long after Christ went back to heaven, we will just quote a few parts of the New Testament so that you will be convinced that Christ Himself established the priesthood and Christian priests. *"And when they had ordained to them priests in every church . . . they commended them to the Lord."* (Acts 14:22) St Paul, a bishop, writing to Timothy whom he had made a bishop, tells Timothy to be careful about ordaining priests: *"Impose not hands lightly upon any man."* (1 Timothy 5:22)

St. Paul also writing to Timothy tells him to be a good bishop and a good priest because he has the grace from the Sacrament of Holy Orders: *"Neglect not the grace that is in thee: which was given thee . . . with imposition of the hands of the priesthood."* (1 Timothy 4:14) The New Testament also tells us what to do when somebody is sick: *"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."* (James 5:14)

If you read the Acts of the Apostles you will find that one of the principal duties of the Apostles was to go to towns and ordain priests for every church. In the Acts of the Apostles and in other books of the Bible you will find that the Apostles gave other men the power to be bishops and priests.

F. CHRIST ESTABLISHED THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD

A priest is one who offers sacrifice to God. Our Lord gave the Apostles the power to offer sacrifice at the Last Supper when He told them: *"Do this in commemoration of Me."* By these words Our Lord told them to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. The twelve Apostles were the first Catholic priests and bishops; they were ordained to the priesthood by Christ Himself. In the Acts of the Apostles and in other parts of the scripture you will find that the Apostles gave other men the power to be bishops and priests, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

G. YOUR PARISH PRIEST HAS POWER WHICH CHRIST GAVE TO THE APOSTLES

Catholic bishops and priests alone have the powers that Christ gave the twelve Apostles. Your parish priest has the power

to offer Christ in Holy Mass: *"Do this for a commemoration of me."* (Luke 22:19) He has the power to forgive your sins: *"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."* (John 20:23)

The priest has the power to preach the gospel: *"Going therefore, teach ye all nations."* (Matthew 28:19)

Only the priest can give you the Body and Blood of Christ: *"Do this for a commemoration of me."* (Luke 22:19)

Only the priest can give you the grace that comes with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: *"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church."* (James 5:14)

If the priest is not present at the marriage of a Catholic, the marriage is null and void. The priest also has the power to bless people and things. Besides the powers named above, the bishop has the power to give the Sacrament of Confirmation and to give the Sacrament of Holy Orders; a priest cannot give these two Sacraments.

H. THE DIGNITY OF PRIESTS

Not only Catholics, but most people show reverence for a priest. They realize that he is dedicated to Almighty God in a very special way. The dignity of the priest is higher than any earthly dignity; he has powers that not even the President of the United States has. He can forgive your sins just as Christ forgave them. He can give you the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ just as Christ Himself gave His Body and Blood to the Apostles on the night of the Last Supper. He can give Christ's teachings to you because he knows them thoroughly and has the authority of Christ's Church behind him. Not even the Blessed Virgin Mary possessed the powers your parish priest possesses. All the rights, duties and powers of the priests were given by Christ to the twelve Apostles; from them they were handed down to the bishops and priests of the Church.

You should respect the priest for the powers he has. You should help him in his work in your parish by cooperating with him in the organization and formation of parish societies, by obtaining people for the instruction class in religion, by helping about the church building, and by doing anything else your pastor wants you to do in the parish. The priests of your parish have the tremendous responsibility of caring for all the souls in their district. To do their important job right, they need your help.

I. RELIGIOUS AND DIOCESAN PRIESTS

Most parish priests are diocesan or secular priests. They do not belong to a religious order in the Catholic Church. Other priests belong to religious orders — Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Redemptorists, Carmelites and many others. Priests of religious orders are bound to the rule of their order and are usually trained for special work in the Church. Some are devoted to preaching; others to teaching; others to prayer and penance for us sinners. All of these are true priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

J. VOWS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

All priests have a vow (or solemn promise) of chastity. In imitation of Our Lord they give themselves entirely to the work of Christ and His Church, sacrificing even marriage for this work.

"I write not these things to confound you: but I admonish you as my dearest children. For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus by the gospel, I have begotten you." (1 Cor. 4:14-15) Besides the vow of chastity, priests in religious orders have two other vows: namely the vow of poverty by which they cannot own any of this world's goods, and the vow of obedience by which they are obliged to obey their superiors under pain of sin. Priests give their lives for you; and as a partial return for what they are doing for you, you should pray for them every day.

K. WHY THE PRIEST IS CALLED FATHER

A father is one who gives life to a son. A priest gives the life of grace to his sons, the members of his parish. "Father" is a word of respect and love given to the Catholic priest by the people. The very word itself shows the trust and reverence they have for their parish priest. The Bible forbids us to give any man the reverence and respect which we give to God the Father; but it does not forbid us to call anyone father, otherwise it would be a sin for a son to call his male parent "father".

L. WHY PRIESTS DO NOT MARRY

A priest follows the example of Christ closely because he has the powers of Jesus Christ Himself. Christ did not marry. A single life is a very holy life and it is recommended by the Bible. *"But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue, even as I."* (1 Cor. 7-8)

The priest belongs to all the families of his parish but he is a member of none. The priest is your friend and counselor. There is no man who is more interested in you and your troubles and the very salvation of your soul than your parish priest.

M. CHRIST NEEDS MORE PRIESTS

The priest must be a man who is outstanding in holiness of life and in Christian learning. Therefore, every man who aspires to the priesthood must spend a life of holiness and study for six years or more in a seminary. While the man is in the seminary, the bishop learns whether the man has excellent character and holiness and sufficient learning to be a priest. If the candidate is approved, the bishop calls him to the priesthood and ordains him, giving him the wonderful powers of Christ. If your son thinks that he wants to be a priest, encourage him and speak to your parish priest about it. Priests are needed in the world. Only about one-third of the world is Christian — largely because there are not enough priests. Brothers and nuns also give their lives to Christ, although they do not receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. However, it is a very important vocation as well.

LESSON 34

GOD MADE MARRIAGE

"Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." (Hebrews 13:4)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Marriage difficulties are the biggest reason why new Catholics fall away from the Church. Sometimes these difficulties start with a poor understanding of the state and Sacrament of Marriage. Unfortunately, too many Americans have no code of marriage morality except the lax laws of the government. In this first lesson on marriage you will learn one important thing: **GOD MADE MARRIAGE AND THE LAWS OF MARRIAGE**. You must convince yourself that your principles of marriage from now on will be the laws of God and not the laws of man. You will not be a Christian unless you clearly realize that the marriage morality of many people around you is very wrong. After you study this lesson, you must destroy any false ideas you have about divorce and other evils.

A. INTRODUCTION

Suppose tonight as you kneel down to say your night prayers an angel appears to you. The angel tells you God is going to give you a great power, the power of giving life back to the dead. How carefully you would have to use this power!

B. THE POWER OF PARENTHOOD

God has actually given you a greater power: the power of giving life for the first time, the power of becoming a parent. Husband and wife cooperate with God in the creation of a new person. They share in the same power by which God created the world.

C. PARENTHOOD IS A SACRED POWER

There is nothing dirty or shameful about the sexual power in man. It becomes dirty and shameful — sinful — when misused or abused. This sacred power gave us the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her mother and father performed the sacred marriage act and the result of that act was the conception of the Virgin Mary.

D. GOD MADE MARRIAGE. GOVERNMENTS DID NOT MAKE MARRIAGE

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them husband and wife. *"Male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:27-28)*

There were no lawyers or judges then. **MARRIAGE WAS NOT MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT**. We must go to God to learn about marriage and the laws of marriage.

E. THE FIRST PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE IS CHILDREN

The Bible says the first and main purpose of marriage is children. *"Increase and multiply." (Genesis 1:28) "I will, therefore, that the younger should marry, bear children, be mistresses of families." (1 Timothy 5:14)*

Common sense teaches the same truth — the purpose of marriage is children. There is a difference in the male and the female body. The man's body is tall and strong so that he can protect his family and provide food, clothing and shelter. The woman's body is delicate and made to bear and nurse children.

There is a difference in the male and female nature. The man's nature is colder more logical. The woman is more gentle, more sympathetic, patient, emotional. She needs these qualities to raise her children. She is made to be a mother. A man by his nature could not equal the generosity and self sacrifice for children that a woman has as a mother.

F. THE SECOND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE IS MUTUAL LOVE AND HELP OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

The Bible teaches us that the second purpose of marriage is mutual love and help. *"And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone, let us make him a help like unto himself. . . for Adam there was not found a helper like himself. . . and the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam." (Genesis 2:18-20-22)* Common sense teaches us that the second purpose of marriage is mutual love and help. In a way a man is incomplete without a wife. It is more difficult for him to stand failure; he is more easily discouraged; a man needs sympathy, understanding, and encouragement. And a wife can best give these to her husband. In a way, a woman too is incomplete without a husband; she finds it hard to bear loneliness; she needs affection, attention, and companionship; she needs someone on whom to depend.

Man and woman find their completion in marriage. Notice how an old couple depend on one another.

G. THE REASON FOR SEX PLEASURE

The God-given purpose of the sex pleasure is primarily to attract husband and wife to have children. There are difficulties in having children — the expense, the restriction of your freedom, and the need of patience. God placed a very great pleasure in the very organs by which children are conceived. As God knew that people wouldn't eat if everything tasted like cardboard, so He placed a great pleasure in the organs with which we eat in order to attract us to eat. Sex pleasure exists first of all to attract

husband and wife to continue the life of the human race, just as pleasure of taste exists first of all to attract us to continue the life of the body. The secondary or minor purpose of the sex pleasure is to foster and deepen mutual love between husband and wife. The pleasure experienced comes as a secondary purpose for marriage. If a man and woman place the pleasure of sex before the responsibilities of the sexual act, then they re-arrange the plan of God, placing the wrong purpose for sex in the first place. When this is done, then the couple can easily justify any method of birth control -- even abortion -- because they place pleasure ahead of responsibility.

H. THE RIGHT USE OF SEX

Only a husband and wife who are validly married may use the power of sex. All use of sex outside of marriage is a mortal sin, because the reason for sex is so sacred, namely to attract husband and wife to bring new life into the world.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest: which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, . . . they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5: 19-21)

I. ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN

God created only one wife for Adam and only one husband for Eve. This was to be the model marriage for all time. If God wanted to create a dozen wives for Adam, He could have done so, but it did not fit into the nature of man as created by God. Note that when God made the laws for marriage, there were no courts, no lawyers, just God and Adam and Eve. Marriage and the laws of marriage come from God, not from the Government. The natural law and the laws of the Church are God's laws concerning marriage. All Catholics are bound to observe them.

J. UNTIL DEATH

Husband and wife are married until death. No words of a priest could be so clear and definite as the words of the Bible.

"A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband die she is at liberty. Let her marry to whom she will: only in the Lord." (I Corinthians 7:39)

"But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife. And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder . . . Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mark 10:6-12)

"For the woman that hath an husband, whilst her husband liveth is bound to the law. Therefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress, if she be with another man: but if her husband be dead, she is delivered from the law of her husband; so that she is not an adulteress, if she be with another man." (Romans 7:2-3)

"But to them that are married, not I, but the Lord, commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife." (I Corinthians 10:11)

God wants husbands and wives to stay together until death, because a mother cannot raise her children properly without a husband's help and support. One of the greatest evils afflicting society today is the division of families due to divorce.

Animals mature quickly; the instinct for animal parents to stay together until they are about twenty-one years old to take care of themselves. Human children are not able to live apart from their parents until they are about twenty-one years old. That means that human parents have to stay together for at least twenty or thirty years. By that time, they are fifty or sixty years old — and this is a lifetime. To make sure that they would stay together that long God made a law that they must stay together until death.

K. GOD MADE NO EXCEPTIONS

God does not permit even childless couples to break the marriage bond, because He knew that if He made only one exception people would find all kinds of excuses. God made no exception because He knew that if couples entered marriage with the idea that they could separate if the marriage didn't work out, they wouldn't try to solve their difficulties. Experience proves this.

L. GOD'S LAWS ARE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

God made His laws for the common good of all men. But every law sometimes causes hardship for an individual, for example—speed laws. So also God's laws on marriage cause hardship for some couples. But remember that God did not make these laws blindly; He foresaw the difficulties they would cause for some couples; still He had His own good reasons for making His marriage laws binding on these couples too. He made these laws and demands that they be obeyed.

M. GOD'S RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

This is God's recipe for happiness in marriage: the first purpose of marriage is children; the second purpose is mutual love and help. Sex pleasure is made for these two purposes. One man and one woman until death is the law, add plenty of prayer, common sense and unselfishness to your married life. If you follow God's recipe, you can expect the greatest measure of happiness possible on this earth. If you do not follow God's law, you have a mess.

N. THE CONDITION OF MARRIAGE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

For the most part the beauty and holiness of marriage was destroyed because man changed God's plan to suit his own selfish desires. Sexual pleasure was worshipped; children were not wanted; mothers often killed their unborn babies; babies were left on garbage piles to die of exposure. And the police could not put the parents in jail for these crimes.

The woman was her husband's slave, a plaything, someone to satisfy his sexual desires, someone to take care of any children that might be born. Women were bought and sold like cattle. A husband could exchange his wife for another, could kill her if he wanted to do so and the police could not put him in jail.

O. BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION OF MARRIAGE CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

A Saviour was needed badly. The Bible tells us of the terrible condition of marriage before Christ came. *"They became vain in their thoughts. And their foolish heart was darkened . . . Wherefore, God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness: to dishonor their own bodies among themselves . . . God delivered them up to shameful affections. For their women have changed the natural use into that use which is against nature. And, in like manner, the men also, leaving the natural use of the women, have burned in their lusts, one towards another: men with men, working that which is filthy and receiving in themselves the recompense which was due to their error."* (Romans 1:21-24-26-27)

P. CHRIST BROUGHT BACK GOD'S PLAN

The sacredness of marriage was restored by the God-man Jesus Christ. Christ condemned those who broke God's laws on marriage. He raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. He placed marriage on the same level as Baptism, Holy Communion and the other Sacraments. He made marriage a source of grace.

Q. WHAT JESUS CHRIST DID FOR THE FAMILY

Christ held up His own Family as the model. He made Mary the model of all Christian women, wives, and mothers. He made Joseph the model of all Christian men, husbands, and fathers. Jesus was the model of all Christian children. The Apostles preached this model to the pagans. The Catholic Church changed the sex attitudes and habits of nations, and gained a great victory over the evil lusts of the flesh. Families following these Christian examples contribute the greatest benefits to society.

R. THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY CAME WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church gave the world the Christian family. Real happiness came to all who followed God's plan. A husband loved and respected his wife. He supported his family and gave good example to his children. His wife could trust him when he was away from home. The Christian wife was a woman respected and loved by all, a queen in her household. She took care of her husband and her children. The children of the Christian family respected the authority of their parents; they obeyed their parents as Jesus obeyed Mary and Joseph. The nations of the world bowed to the laws of Christ and became Catholic, they accepted God's plan for marriage. This is the history of Christian marriage until the sixteenth century.

S. HENRY VIII

Henry VIII, King of England, was Catholic and married a Catholic. He asked the Pope to let him divorce his wife and marry Anne Boleyn. The Pope told him this was impossible. Henry broke away from the Catholic Church and started his own church. He made himself head of the new church. Then he granted himself a divorce and married Anne.

T. DIVORCE COMES TO THE U.S.A.

Various unchristian influences in the United States have made it possible for an American to get a decree of divorce from the civil courts. Many Americans are now reared in an atmosphere that approves divorce and remarriage after divorce. Actually the Government and the civil courts have no power to break a valid marriage. A valid marriage contract binds man and wife even after a civil court grants a decree of divorce. God made marriage and the laws of marriage.

U. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ALONE STANDS FOR THE SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE

Because of God's law, the Pope couldn't give Henry VIII a divorce even though he foresaw that all of England would go Protestant. The Church cannot back down on God's laws even to let you enter the Church. It's very difficult to convince Americans that divorce, birth control, and so forth, are wrong, and that God's laws on marriage must be obeyed.

V. THE CONDITION OF MARRIAGE TODAY

Now marriage is almost as it was before the coming of Jesus. Divorce is accepted as normal. Marry as often as you want; there is no shame to it—but really it is legalized adultery. From divorce come thousands of broken homes. Another evil accepted today is birth control. People want the pleasure of sex, but not children. Children are too much trouble, too expensive. People want costly vacations, expensive cars, electronic conveniences, liquor, and so forth. They want to be free from care and responsibility. And abortion, the killing of an unborn child, is cold-blooded murder. Just think of the large number of abortions in this country! Even when performed legally by doctors, they are legalized murder.

Today pregnancy is often considered shameful. Motherhood the crowning glory of women, is laughed at, sneered at, considered ignorant. Large families are often the subject of jokes. Even unfaithfulness does not produce shame. Consider your own reaction to the adultery of movie stars. Pagan morality describes the marriage conduct of many Americans. This is to say nothing of the moral shame to be found in unmarried couples living together as well as the laxity in our opinions regarding homosexuality.

On the other hand we have millions of fine people living up to the laws of God. Practical Catholics marry once and remain married for life. There are many, many families who remain together unaffected by divorce.

W. THE FUTURE OF THE U.S.A.

The foundation of a nation is the family. When the foundation is weak, the whole structure falls. Family life in America is gradually being destroyed, because of divorce, separation and other pagan practices. Even though today we are the greatest nation on earth, three hundred years from now we might not even exist; just as Rome fell, we also may fall like a house built on sand because our foundation was weak.

X. YOUR MARRIAGE

Perhaps your life has been "fouled up" by a wrecked marriage. If so, don't quit coming to these instructions. Let us pick up the pieces and try to patch up your life. Don't try to make a decision on your marriage case; you haven't had the training. Let the priest in charge of you try to figure it out for you. Tell him the whole story.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 33 & 34

1. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
2. What is a priest?
3. Was Jesus Christ a priest?
4. Who were the first Catholic priests?
5. What are the principal powers your parish priest has?
6. Who made marriage?
7. Who made the laws and purpose of marriage?
8. What are the purposes of marriage?
9. What are the two principal laws of marriage?

EXAMPLE OF PRUDENCE

A story comes from the annals of a parish about a young woman preparing for marriage.

Susan was on the point of contracting a brilliant marriage when she learned that her intended husband not only did not approach the Sacraments, but even allowed himself, at times, to ridicule religion. She turned to God in prayer for guidance. Feeling sure she knew the will of God, she announced to her family that the marriage would not take place.

She hastened to return the valuable presents she had received, and all the efforts of her friends to make her change her mind were of no use.

When all had settled down, she met another man. He had little fortune but great virtue. She married him within due time, and her marriage proved to be a most happy one.

NOTES

LESSON 35

THE SINS AGAINST MARRIAGE

"For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust . . . over them the devil hath power." (Tobias 6:17)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Too many converts to the Catholic Faith have sought out unlawful separations, even divorces. Some in good faith even practice birth control. The reason is that they did not understand these sins when they received instructions. Every sin talked about in this lesson is a mortal sin. Please understand your Christian obligations before you enter the Catholic Church!

You must speak with a priest about your particular obligations before you become a Catholic. He wants to examine with you your marriage status and explain to you your obligations. He will tell you whether your marriage is valid or invalid. Are you separated or divorced from your spouse? Tell the priest so that he can explain your obligations to you. Are you keeping company now? Be sure to tell Father and find out if it is all right or all wrong to go on with your company keeping. Was your married partner ever married to another? Were you ever married before?

Were you or was your partner a Catholic before you married? Are you getting along well with your wife (husband), or are you contemplating a separation? These are most important matters that you must bring to the attention of the priest privately. Everything you tell him will be kept in strict confidence.

A. REFUSING THE MARRIAGE DUTY

The marriage duty means that a married person is obliged to give intercourse to his (or her) partner whenever it is reasonably asked for (if the marriage is valid of course). It is usually a mortal sin to refuse when the request is reasonable. To refuse the marriage debt is in many cases just as serious as adultery. It is a sin against justice because the married partner has a right to intercourse. You gave him (her) this right on your wedding day. The Bible clearly teaches this duty:

"Let the husband render the debt to his wife: and the wife also in like manner to the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body: but the husband. And like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body: but the wife. Defraud not one another, except, perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer, and return together again, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency". (I Cor. 7:3-5)

The refusal gives rise to other sins or severe temptations, for example to adultery, self-abuse, separation, divorce, anger, and drunkenness. Sometimes a married person has a right to refuse the marriage duty, for example when the person asking is drunk or insane, when the husband is guilty of non-support, when there is a case of sickness or when there is danger to the unborn child.

However, a married person should not be always insisting on his (her) rights but should be thoughtful of the other person. A marriage, to be successful, must be based on self-sacrifice and mutual love and esteem.

God intended that both husband and wife should get complete satisfaction from intercourse. If you have a difficulty, see a good Catholic doctor. Intercourse is a holy action between husband and wife, made by God for a very holy purpose, the conception of children.

B. ADULTERY

Adultery is sexual intercourse which a married person has with someone to whom he (or she) is not married. Fornication is intercourse between two unmarried persons. Both adultery and fornication are *mortal sins*, but adultery is worse because besides being a sin against God, it is also a sin against your married partner. It is a sin against justice as well as a sin against chastity. Read what that Bible says. Because a great number of people commit adultery doesn't make it all right. God tells us in the Bible that adultery is wrong.

"Fornicators and adulterers God will punish." (Heb. 13:4) "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Ex. 20:14) "Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God." (I Cor. 6:9-10)

Adultery was punished by death in the Old Testament: *"If any man commit adultery with the wife of another and defile his neighbor's wife: let them be put to death both the adulterer and the adulteress." (Lev. 20:10) "He that is an adulterer, for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul." (Prov. 6:32)*

C. UNLAWFUL SEPARATION

It is a mortal sin to separate from your wife or husband without permission of the Church. It is a mortal sin for three reasons:

(1) God clearly forbids it: *"But to them that are married, not I, but the Lord, commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife." (I Cor 7:10-11)*

(2) To separate means to refuse the marriage duty. This puts a person in danger of adultery or some other sin against chastity.

(3) The children are the ones who suffer most from a separation. Separation is permitted only for a very serious reason and only with the permission of the bishop.

A separated person is not allowed to keep company with another person. A separated person is just as much married as if he

(she) were living with his (her) spouse. (Invalidly married couples, however, must separate until the marriage is made valid, if that is possible.) On your wedding day you promised to stay together for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, *until death*.

If you have trouble in your married life, come to the rectory and talk it over with one of the priests. You can prevent separation by facing your problems as an adult. In most cases separation is not the solution.

Only the Church can grant a separation. The case must go to the matrimonial court of the Catholic Church. You must not separate on your own authority, or just after a decision of a civil court. Don't go to a lawyer. See the parish priest!

A Catholic will be in serious trouble in the Catholic Church if he seeks a divorce through lawyers and the civil courts without bringing his case to the Separation Court of the Catholic Church!

D. DIVORCE

There is no such thing as a divorce which allows remarriage. It is very clear in the Bible that God does not recognize divorce. *"A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband die, she is at liberty: Let her marry to whom she will: only in the Lord."* (I Cor 7:39)

"What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder . . . Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mark 10:9-11-12)

"For the woman that hath a husband, whilst he liveth is bound to the law. But if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Therefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress, if she be with another man: but if her husband be dead, she is delivered from the law of her husband, so that she is not an adulteress if she be with another man" . (Rom. 7:2-3)

Divorce and remarriage is a mortal sin because it is clearly against the law of God. A divorced person is not even permitted to keep company with another.

Here we are speaking only of valid marriages, not invalid marriages. But do not judge whether your marriage is valid or not; talk to the priest who is giving you instructions. Remember that no law court can break a valid marriage.

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

When you seek a civil divorce with the intent to remarry, you are wasting your money because God has *never* given anyone authority to break a marriage.

Let's consider the case of a very good wife and mother. She has many children. She has a drunken husband who beats her, runs around with other women perhaps and does not support the family. Suppose that she meets a fine man who would be a wonderful husband and father; yet not even in this case does God make an exception. Even if your partner is in an insane asylum, or if he marries again — you cannot marry again.

Why is God so strict? God knew that if he made one exception the lid would be off. He knew that couples would enter marriage with their fingers crossed, knowing that there was an "out" if something went wrong. They wouldn't face their problems as adults, but would run away from them in divorce. Experience shows that divorce, instead of solving a problem, opens the door to greater problems: children are the ones who suffer. Few men want to marry a divorced woman with children. It is difficult for children to be raised in a single parent home. It takes great vigilance, insight and love to be both father and mother to children of such a home. All too often juvenile delinquency comes from broken homes.

Divorce with the intent to remarry makes a mockery of the sacredness of marriage. The marriage promises are empty words among people with no religion. It makes of marriage nothing more than a contract that promises a monogamous relationship. Each partner promises only one sex partner. But such a marriage lasts only as long as the "magic" does. Even the use of "pre-nuptial agreements" is wrong because it anticipates the possibility of divorce. Divorce has left a trail of broken hearts and homes in its wake. The possibility of divorce leads to unfaithfulness, suspicion, jealousy, anxiety, and an uncertain future.

The main thing: divorce is against *God's Law*. Please remember God didn't make two sets of laws, one for Catholics and one for non-Catholics. Everyone must obey God's laws—Protestants and Catholics.

E. BIRTH CONTROL

Birth Control is doing anything before, during or immediately after sexual intercourse to keep a woman from becoming pregnant. The use of male withdrawal, condoms, diaphragms, spermicidal jellies, medicines, birth control and/or abortion pills, is always a mortal sin. It is a violation of the natural law to prevent birth. The primary purpose of the sexual powers is to co-create with God a child. The secondary purpose for sex is the pleasure it brings. By resorting to birth control a couple reverses the purposes for sex putting pleasure ahead of responsibility -- a very selfish motive.

The wife may douche only one hour after intercourse. To do so before that time is a mortal sin, because it is the same as birth control.

Birth control is never allowed for health, money, or any other reason. Even if doctors warn about the health dangers of future pregnancy, there can be no justification to practice birth control. The Bible clearly forbids it:

"Judas therefore said to Onan, his son: Go into thy brother's wife and marry her, that thou mayest raise seed to thy brother. He knowing that the children should not be his, when he went into his brother's wife, spilled his seed upon the ground, lest children should be born in his brother's name. And therefore the Lord slew him because he did a detestable thing." Birth Control leads

to promiscuity, adultery, suspicion, and jealousy. It causes love to grow cold.

Sterility is an issue today. A couple might say, "We'll wait until we have more money." But any doctor knows that the longer they wait the less chance they have of becoming parents, and the more difficult it becomes for the wife to give birth. Too many couples realize too late that in cheating God they rob themselves of one of life's greatest treasures — children.

Birth control is a selfish sin; people who practice it want the pleasure of marriage but not the burden of children. They want the material benefits their money will buy by not having children. They look forward to advancing their careers rather than adding to their joy by having children. If you practice birth control you can expect a lonely old age. Just ask any elderly couple with many children and grandchildren what their happiest days were and are.

If lack of money or poor health make it difficult for you to have children, then this is the cross Jesus wants you to carry — self-control. But remember with each cross, He gives you the strength to carry it.

F. ABORTION

Abortion is willfully causing the death of an unborn baby in any way. It is always a mortal sin. It is never allowed in any case whatsoever, not even to save the mother's life. The unborn baby is a human being and has the right to life. God has given no one the right to take away its life. To do so is murder, no matter what the doctor or some other atheistic scientists might say. You read in the newspaper of people killing little children. To kill an innocent child is a horrible crime. But there is no difference between this and abortion — both are murder. Worst of all, the baby dies without Baptism and cannot go to heaven. Abortion is worse than murdering an adult. The adult at least had a chance to get to heaven. The baby does not get this chance.

Excommunication from the Church is the penalty for any Catholic who knowingly and willingly causes or helps cause an abortion. Excommunication means that he cannot receive the Sacraments; he cannot have a Catholic funeral. In most dioceses, abortion is called a "reserved" sin. It will take special permission by the priest from his bishop to forgive this sin.

An excommunicated person can get back into the Church if he is truly sorry for having committed the crime and if he is sincerely promises not to do it again. The ordinary priest cannot take away the excommunication but must get special power from the bishop. Expectant mothers should be very careful about signing papers in the hospital. If you think the surgeon is suggesting an abortion, phone for a priest.

G. STERILIZATION

Sterilization is the sin of making the reproductive organs unfruitful — that is, making it impossible for the wife to become pregnant or for the husband's sperm not to come forth during sex. For the woman, it is usually done by tying or cutting the Fallopian tubes or seminal vesicles, or by removing the womb or ovaries. For the man, it is a surgical method of stopping the flow of sperm.

Sterilization with the intent prevent birth is always a mortal sin. Women having abdominal operations should tell the doctor not to tie the tubes because some non-Catholic doctors do this as a matter of course. Don't let the doctor talk you into being sterilized by describing what will happen if you are not sterilized. If you have already been sterilized, you must be sorry for the sin, but you don't have to be operated on again to have the surgery reversed.

H. CONCLUSION

If you have committed any of these sins, then tell God how sorry you are for them. Do not be discouraged and say you can't be a Catholic because you have been married more than once or because you have sinned in any other way. Speak to the priest who has charge of you; you will find him kind and sympathetic.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. Is it alright for unmarried people to have sex outside of marriage?
2. What is adultery?
3. What is fornication?
4. Is it a sin to refuse your married partner sexual intercourse?
5. Is it permissible for a Protestant to receive a divorce?
6. Should a separated or divorced person date others?
7. Is it a sin to leave your spouse?
8. Is a separation ever allowed?
9. Is birth control ever permitted?
10. Is abortion allowed to save the mother's life?

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETY

This lesson is very important. The sanctity of marriage is attacked on every side. For the good of society, all who are married must understand God's laws regarding the rights and privileges of so sacred a state. When a society refuses to acknowledge God's laws about marriage and family life, then that society is doomed to destruction.

No amount of science and its research figures can make matters that are against God's law and the natural law approved and "legal" in God's sight. Moral laws are not based on the selfishness of man in serving God. Don't ever allow your understanding of the sacredness of marriage to be distorted by the influence of the news and daytime television and radio programs.

LESSON 36

THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

"Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us: and let us grow old both together in health." (Tobias 8:10)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Try to learn in this lesson of the beautiful state of earthly happiness that can be yours by making your marriage a truly Christian marriage. As you study the lesson, have your children in mind too. You have spent many years in sacrificing yourself for their happiness. Realize that their future happiness can come only from correct ideas about a Christian marriage. Learn what the Christian marriage is, and start preparing yourself and your children now so that your marriage and your children's marriages will be holy and happy.

A. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Marriage is a Sacrament made by Our Lord Jesus Christ to make the lawful union of a Christian man and woman holy. Marriage was always a sacred union, but not always a Sacrament. It was raised to the dignity of a Sacrament by Jesus Christ. The Sacrament of Marriage makes grace grow in the soul, like the other Sacraments. It gives husband and wife special helps, special graces, to perform their duties as married people and to overcome the difficulties of their married life.

Only baptized persons can receive this Sacrament. To receive it worthily, you must have no mortal sin on your soul. To receive Matrimony in the state of mortal sin is another mortal sin, a sacrilege. (The sacrilege does not make the marriage invalid.)

B. A CATHOLIC MUST BE MARRIED BEFORE A CATHOLIC PRIEST

A Catholic *must* be married in the presence of a Catholic priest and two Catholic witnesses. A Catholic must be married in this way no matter whom he is marrying — Protestant, Jew, or Moslem. A marriage before anyone but a priest is no marriage at all — it is a *mortal sin!* It sets up a *state* of mortal sin. The couple is *not married*; they are not husband and wife, they have no right to live together, and, they are living in sin. The children born of such a union are illegitimate.

A marriage ceremony by a Catholic before a Protestant minister is not only a mortal sin, but *excommunication* from the Church is incurred. An ordinary priest cannot remove the excommunication but must get special power from the bishop. Catholic parents should insist that their children get married by the priest. Catholics should have nothing to do with a marriage outside the Church.

Catholics are never allowed to take part in an invalid wedding, either as members of the wedding party or as spectators. You are never allowed to be bridesmaid or best man at a Protestant wedding even if bride and groom are both Protestant. You may be a spectator if both are Protestants and no scandal is given by your presence.

Marriages of non-Catholics among themselves are valid and therefore cannot be broken provided that all the laws of God concerning marriage are observed. You don't have to be married all over again when you become Catholic, if your marriage was valid from the start. The priest in charge of you will tell you if yours is valid. You cannot marry a non-Catholic who is separated or divorced, because he was not married before a priest. Non-Catholics do not have to be married before a priest.

C. SOME OTHER LAWS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholics are forbidden to marry close relatives: first or second cousins, uncles, aunts, nieces, or nephews. All the children must be baptized and educated in the Catholic religion.

D. MIXED MARRIAGES

By a "mixed" marriage we mean a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. A mixed marriage is forbidden by the Church. Experience shows that mixed marriages are the greatest source of loss of the Catholic faith or loss of the practice of Christian morality. Moreover a mixed marriage is not very practical. Any great difference between the couple (age, education, wealth) always causes serious difficulty. Difference in religious beliefs brings arguments on important matters, such as divorce, Sunday Mass, meat on Friday, Catholic education.

Mixed marriages are forbidden in the Old Testament: *"Neither shalt thou make marriages with them. Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son: For she will turn away thy son from following Me, that he may rather serve strange gods: and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled, and will quickly destroy thee."* (Deuteronomy 7:3-4. See also Josue 23:12 and Malathias 2:11)

E. PERMISSION FOR A MIXED MARRIAGE

Only the bishop can give permission for a mixed marriage and he can give it only for a very serious reason. Such a reason occurs, for example, if the non-Catholic is taking instructions and he gives good reason for well-founded hope that he will be a good Catholic. When the bishop tolerates marriage with a non-Catholic, the non-Catholic must sign promises that he will not interfere with the Catholic's practice of religion, that he will see to it that all the children are baptized and are brought up as Catholics, that he will observe all the laws of God and of the Catholic Church concerning marriage, and that he will not have any other ceremony after the marriage before the priest.

F. IN A MIXED MARRIAGE, THE NON-CATHOLIC SHOULD TAKE INSTRUCTIONS

The average non-Catholic knows nothing about religion or morality because very few Protestant churches give religious instructions. The Catholic party has a serious obligation in charity to procure the conversion of the non-Catholic party by prayer and good example. The first step in this direction is to bring the non-Catholic to instructions before the marriage takes place.

Bring the non-Catholic up to the priest three or four months *before* the wedding so that he (or she) can take instruction. The non-Catholic is most generous before the wedding, so let him (or her) while he (or she) is generous. Tell him (her) that he (she) does not have to become a Catholic, but must learn about heaven, hell, grace, marriage and all the other Christian beliefs and laws. While he (she) is under instructions, pray for him (her).

G. PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Have the correct attitude toward marriage. Look upon it as a very holy union. It was founded by God and was raised to the dignity of a Sacrament by Jesus Christ. Have the *correct purpose* in seeking marriage. Look forward to having children and founding a Christian home. Marry for a selfish reason (money, beauty, fame, pleasure) and you won't find happiness in marriage. Genuine happiness is attained only by completely generous souls who are ready to sacrifice their preference in all things.

Pray every day for a happy marriage because most probably you will save or lose your souls because of the kind of marriage you contract.

Study what marriage is and its duties and obligations because knowledge of these things does not come naturally. Marriage, like any other career, needs special preparation and instruction. Attend a Catholic marriage forum or Pre-Cana Conference and receive marriage instructions from your parish priest. Leading a *truly Christian* life is the best preparation. Go to Confession and Communion often and regularly; observe the sixth commandment strictly and pray. Follow the advice of your parents and parish priest.

H. DO NOT MARRY TOO YOUNG!

Immaturity (not being grown up) is one of the big causes of unhappiness in marriage. Court records show that youthful marriages generally do not last. Perhaps in times past young adults in their teens could withstand the responsibilities of marriage. Times have changed. Today a boy or girl under twenty-one may be capable of having children but are not usually developed enough mentally to accept the responsibilities of married life.

I. CHOOSING A PARTNER

Choose the right partner and your marriage will be a happy one. Choose a partner who is a good Catholic, one who is regular at Mass, Communion and Confession. He (she) must be really serious about having children and founding a home. Be sure he (she) is not selfish or immature. Does he (she) have any serious bad habits such as drinking, flirting, impurity? Is he (she) sincere, truthful and dependable?

J. MAKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE PRIEST FOR THE MARRIAGE

If you are marrying a Catholic, it is necessary to inform your parish priest at least one month before the wedding. The priest must publicly announce this promise of marriage three times on Sunday. Catholics should be married at a special wedding Mass called a Nuptial Mass (though there is no law forbidding a marriage before a priest outside of Mass).

If you are contemplating marriage with a non-Catholic it is necessary to see your parish priest three or four months before the date of the marriage to learn if such a marriage is possible and to provide instructions for the non-Catholic, if the Church permits this mixed marriage.

K. CHILDREN, THE GREATEST BLESSING OF MARRIAGE

Children are the greatest source of happiness in marriage. Court records show there are fewer marriage break-ups among couples with large families. We priests feel sorry for childless couples. If possible, they wish to adopt children.

L. CONCLUSION

When a couple marries in the Catholic Church the priest reads to them this beautiful passage: "May this love with which you have joined your hands and hearts together never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on. And if true love and the spirit of perfect sacrifice guide your every action, you can expect the **GREATEST MEASURE OF EARTHLY HAPPINESS** that can be allotted to man in this vale of tears. The rest is in the hands of God. Nor will God be wanting in your needs. He will pledge you the life-long support of His graces in the Holy Sacrament which you are about to receive."

How beautiful it will be when your wife is on her death bed and will say to you as she hands back the wedding ring to you: "To this ring and its signification I have never been disloyal, not in thought or desire. Since you gave it to me before the Altar of God I have loved no other man but you. You controlled all the affection and devotion of my heart, all the warmth and glow of my imagination, and all the feelings and emotions of my being. Receive this ring, then, as pure and as hallowed as it was when I received it from you on our wedding day." Happy you, if you can then respond with the same declaration of untarnished and unwavering loyalty.

LESSON 37

EXTREME UNCTION

"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church." (James 5:14)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Sacraments accompany us on our journey from the cradle to the grave. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is the wonderful Sacrament made by Jesus Christ that helps us when we need help most, namely, when in danger of death. As a Catholic you will have the opportunity to help others receive this Sacrament; and you will have the opportunity to receive it yourself, we hope, when you think you are about to face your God to answer for your entire life.

The Christian religion is very practical. It is not just a matter of going to church or of learning the teachings of Christ or even of leading a good life. Christianity gives us practical helps which everyone of us needs. All of us need this Sacrament especially, because all of us will one day face death.

A. JESUS CHRIST HAD GREAT LOVE FOR THE SICK

We read in the gospel that Christ cured the mother-in-law of St. Peter; he cured the paralytic; he cured the son of the ruler of Capharnaum. St. Matthew sums up what we want to say in this paragraph by telling us that our Lord went about doing good and "*healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people*". (Matthew 4:23)

Christ knows all our human sufferings and the ultimate cause of them — original sin. Christ is the Man-God with pity in His heart.

B. WE WOULD EXPECT CHRIST TO PROVIDE SPECIAL CARE FOR THE SICK

When you are seriously sick there are many consolations you might obtain: someone might read the Bible to you; some friends might offer a word of sympathy. But these things really don't do much good. Since Christ had such special love for the sick, you might expect some very special consolation from Him in your suffering. It is natural that He would give this special source of consolation to the Church, so that She in turn, could give it to the people of all ages in all parts of the world.

C. THIS SACRAMENT IS FOUND CLEARLY IN THE BIBLE

Extreme Unction, the special Sacrament for the sick, is clearly referred to in the Bible. In fact everything is in the Bible except the priest's phone number. In St. James Epistle (5 : 14-15), we learn what we are supposed to do when someone is sick.

"Is any man sick among you? Let them bring in the priests of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man. And the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

The Bible very definitely tells us what to do when someone is sick, namely to call in the priest. It goes on to tell us the effects of the Sacrament in the soul of the sick person.

D. HOW IS IT GIVEN?

"Extreme" means last. "Unction" means anointing. "Extreme Unction" means last anointing or the anointing before death. The priest anoints all the members of your body with which you may have sinned — your eyes ears, nose, mouth, hands and feet. While he does this anointing, he prays: "By His tender mercy may the Lord pardon you from every sin you may have committed by sight, (or hearing, or speech, and so forth)".

Extreme Unction proves God's great love for us because it shows us God's mercy. We have misused God's gifts and we have sinned throughout our life; through the Sacrament of Extreme Unction God forgives our sins and helps us to undo the damage of sin.

E. WHAT DOES EXTREME UNCTION DO FOR THE SICK PERSON?

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction gives grace to the sick person; through this Sacrament God forgives his venial sins and also forgives his mortal sins if he is unconscious and cannot use the Sacrament of Confession. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction gives comfort in sickness, strength against the temptations of the devil. It will even give health to the body if this will help the soul. In short, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction gives the sick person everything he needs to get to heaven; and probably it will send him right into heaven if he is deeply sorry for the sins of his life.

F. ONLY THE PRIEST OR THE BISHOP HAS THE POWER TO GIVE EXTREME UNCTION.

Christ gave the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to the Apostles. The Apostles have passed this power down through the ages and Catholic priests and Catholic bishops have this power today. When you see priests in various hospitals attending the sick, they are there to give this Sacrament of Extreme Unction made especially for the sick.

G. WHEN IT SHOULD BE RECEIVED

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction should be received by anyone who is suffering from a serious illness. It should be received, for example, by a person who has pneumonia, bad heart, old age, or anything else that might be considered a danger to life.

It is a terrible sin to let the sick person wait too long before the priest is called to administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. If it is possible, the priest should be brought to the sick person while the sick person still has full use of his senses; then the priest can urge the sick person to be sorry for his sins and thus prepare himself to go into eternity.

H. THOSE WHO WILL NOT CALL A PRIEST FOR THE SICK ARE FOOLISH

Sometimes you will hear someone say that he will not call a priest because he is afraid that the presence of the priest will frighten the sick person. Any priest can tell you that in case of sickness only the relatives and friends are frightened; the sick person isn't frightened — he wants help. He is no more frightened by the priest than he is by the doctor.

Would you refrain from calling a physician when a person is sick? It is a terrible sin for relatives and friends to neglect to call the priest to a sick person. It is also a sin for them to put off summoning the priest until the person is very close to death. The priest should be summoned at the early stages of the sickness and should be asked to come back to the sick person frequently.

A famous brain specialist in a non-sectarian hospital in Chicago said this at a hospital staff meeting: "In this discussion about calling a priest to a Catholic patient, I would like to say this. I am not a Catholic, but I always ask for a priest. Then I can be sure that the patient will get whatever the Catholic priest has to give before I let the anesthetic be administered. I don't know what the priest does; but whatever it is, it makes the patient a better surgical risk."

The priest does have some common sense. He will not go into the sick person and say, "Well, Jones, this is the end for you; I brought the undertaker to arrange for your funeral." Rather, he chats pleasantly, hears the person's confession, and asks him if he would like to receive Extreme Unction. The sick person ordinarily says, "Yes," and he is never frightened.

In case of illness, think about the sick person! He is the only one to be considered. Pay no attention to frivolous relatives.

I. OTHER THINGS DONE FOR THE SICK PERSON

When a person is sick the priest not only gives the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, he also hears Confession, brings Holy Communion and gives the last blessing. The last blessing brings with it a plenary indulgence, or forgiveness of all the punishment due to sin if the proper dispositions are present.

When the priest comes to your home you should have a table ready near the bed of the sick person. On the table you should have a white linen cloth, two lighted candles, a crucifix, a glass of water, a spoon and some balls of cotton.

Very often the priest comes with the Blessed Sacrament, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Meet the priest at the door, especially if he is carrying the Blessed Sacrament. You should be holding a lighted candle as you meet the priest. Genuflect to Our Lord and lead the priest to the room of the sick person. After you have placed the lighted candle on the table prepared near the bedside, leave the room so that the priest can hear the sick person's confession. The priest will tell you when he has finished hearing the confession and will invite you back into the room. When you return to the room, kneel down because the priest will then give the sick person Holy Communion. After this he will give the Sacrament of Extreme Unction and the last blessing with the plenary indulgence.

J. IN CASE OF SUDDEN DEATH

What should be done if a person dies before he has received Extreme Unction? Even though a person has been pronounced dead, call the priest anyway. The only sure sign of death is the decay of the body.

From medical science we know that sometimes a man is still alive after his heart has stopped beating. Therefore, the priest will still administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction conditionally up until two hours after the person appears to have died in the hope that the person is still alive and the soul is still present.

K. HELP THE SICK PERSON PRAY AFTER THE PRIEST LEAVES

After the priest leaves, use the time that remains to pray for the sick person and to help him pray for himself. Help him say the Rosary, or, if he is too weak, help him say a few short prayers like "My Jesus, mercy!" or, "My Lord and My God!" or, "Jesus, help me!"

L. WHEN IN A NON-CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

If you are going to be a patient in a non-Catholic Hospital, go to Confession and Communion before you go to the hospital because there will be no priest in the hospital.

If you are in the hospital for a month or more, call a priest to hear your Confession and bring you Holy Communion. Before the priest comes, prepare a table for the Blessed Sacrament alongside your bed, or have the nurse do so. After you have received Holy Communion, make a good thanksgiving.

While you are in the hospital, tell the nurse to get you a priest immediately if your condition becomes critical or if you are in any danger of death.

M. YOU HAVE BEEN MISSING SOMETHING VERY NECESSARY IN LIFE

Napoleon entered a bad marriage; he imprisoned the Pope and treated him like a criminal; he was a scandal to the world! And yet before he died that same Napoleon asked the Pope for a priest. And the Pope sent a priest to the island of Elba where Napoleon received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction and the other Sacraments too.

Catholics feel sorry for people outside the Church who are deprived of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Only the true Church can give this Sacrament to the people. Catholics frantically call for a priest when they are in danger because they know that the priest has power from Christ to help the sick.

We cannot teach you for certain that if you have a priest when you are dying you will go right to heaven; you may still go to purgatory. But perhaps you will go right to heaven after receiving these Sacraments.

Some great Catholic theologians think that the reception of Extreme Unction with deep and sincere sorrow for your past sins will blot out even purgatory!

N. CATHOLIC BURIAL

Catholics may be buried by any undertaker. The undertaker need not be Catholic. But Catholics must be buried only in a Catholic cemetery. (If you have a grave in a nonsectarian or a Protestant cemetery, see the priest after this lesson.)

Cremation of the body is forbidden except in case of necessity, for example, in time of plague.

Pray for your deceased relatives and have Masses offered for them.

Remember the command of the Bible: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." (2 Machabees 12:46)

In fact, it is unholy and unwholesome and even cruel not to pray for the dead; they depend on our prayers to shorten their time in purgatory so that they can get to heaven sooner. The person who is dead does not want a lot of flowers; he wants prayers.

You can obtain a spiritual bouquet from your parish priest. This spiritual bouquet card says that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for that person at your request.

Present this card to the family of the deceased person. The Mass you have offered is much more beautiful than flowers and it is a universal custom among Catholics.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 36 & 37

1. If a Catholic marries a non-Catholic without a priest, is the marriage valid?
2. Are mixed marriages approved?
3. Is a mixed marriage tolerated?
4. Are marriages of non-Catholics valid by the laws of the Catholic Church?
5. What is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?
6. What does the Bible say about Extreme Unction?
7. What should be prepared for a sick person about to receive Extreme Unction?
8. Why do Catholics call for a priest when someone is very sick?
9. What do Catholics have Masses offered for those who die?

AN OLD DOCTOR'S OPINION

As a doctor in a large city hospital was about to retire, he was heard to comment about dying patients who were Catholics:

"It is now fifty years since I began to visit the hospitals and attend the dying. On my word of honor, I can declare before God and man that I have never once seen any evil effect following the announcement to a sick Catholic patient that death was near at hand. On the contrary, I have known them to receive it quite calmly, and to thank those who offered to send to them a priest."

NOTES

LESSON 38

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17)
"I meditated also on Thy commandments which I loved." (Ps. 118)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

You are about to begin a course in Christian morality. The Catholic Church presents to us the whole way of Christian life; this way of life flows from the Bible, from Tradition, and from reason. We will consider every action possible to man thoroughly and scientifically. You will learn perhaps that some actions which you formerly disregarded as not being seriously wrong are mortal sin. You may also learn that certain actions that you thought were sinful are not sins at all in themselves. You will probably never again have the chance to study the Ten Commandments so thoroughly. Please study these lessons well; try to understand the reasons why actions are evil or not evil.

You must learn the Ten Commandments by heart. At the end of your course the priest will ask you to recite them in order.

A. THE COMMANDMENTS COME FROM ALMIGHTY GOD

The Commandments do not come from men; they do not come from the government of a given nation; they do not come from the Catholic Church, or, any other church. They come from God!

B. THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

Our life is not for health, wealth or riches. The purpose of our life is to learn, to understand, and, to keep the Commandments. Once you understand the true purpose of your life you should be wise and successful. If you don't know the Commandments, or if you don't keep them, your life is a failure.

C. GOD DEMANDS INSTANT OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENTS

You demand instant obedience from your children, because you have a right to demand instant obedience. So God, our Creator, demands instant obedience to the Commandments. Don't debate whether you intend to live according to the Commandments. You *MUST* obey them. How do you treat your children when they disobey you? You punish them. So God will punish those of us who do not obey the Commandments.

D. GOD GAVE THE COMMANDMENTS IN A DRAMATIC WAY

The Commandments, written on the fleshy tablets of the human heart (man's conscience) had in great part been lost and forgotten because of original sin; therefore, God gave these Commandments to us again on tablets of stone. He did this in a dramatic way to impress their importance upon us.

"And now the third day was come, and the morning appeared: and behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud, and the people that were in the camp feared.... And all Mount Sinai was in a smoke: because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace: and all the mount was terrible. And the sound of the trumpet grew by degrees louder and louder, and was drawn out to a greater length: Moses spoke, and God answered him, and the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, in the very top of the mount, and he called Moses unto the top thereof. And when he was gone up thither. . . the Lord spoke all these words: I am the Lord thy God . . . Thou shalt not have strange gods before me . . . Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God, in vain . . . Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day . . . Honor thy father and mother . . . Thou shalt not kill . . . Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . Thou shalt not steal . . . Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor . . . Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife . . . Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." (Exod. 19:16-25; Exod 20:1-7)

E. OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMANDMENTS IS NOT TOO DIFFICULT

Before the great St. Augustine was converted he broke all the Commandments and even bragged about the way he broke them. By the grace of God he was not only converted, he became a priest, a bishop, and a Saint. The great sinner-Saint said: "How is it said to be impossible for man to love. . . a beneficent Creator, a most Loving Father."

God promises His grace to help us observe the Commandments. God told St. Paul, who was seriously troubled: "My grace is sufficient for thee." But you yourself will have to fight too. Everyone has different temptations — chiefly against only one Commandment. What is your particular temptation? That is the temptation you will have to conquer.

F. REWARDS FOR KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS.

Rewards for keeping the Commandments are peace of conscience on earth and a happy life even when things are going wrong. Did you ever see a good person in time of sorrow, for example, at his wife's funeral? Even then he is happy because he keeps the Commandments.

The Psalmist says that God's Commandments convert souls, give wisdom, rejoice the hearts, enlighten the eyes, are sweeter than honey, and are more to be desired than gold and precious stones. The greatest reward for keeping the Commandments is heaven. "Be glad and rejoice for your reward is very great in heaven." (Matt. 5:12)

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Cor. 2:9)

Those who keep the Commandments shall bask in the light of God's countenance forever: "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house: and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure." All the pleasures of earth are nothing in comparison with it. We shall be drunk with the pleasure of God. The joy of heaven will be in "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over." (Luke 6:38) Suppose that you go to a soda fountain where your friend works to buy ice cream. He packs it well and shakes it down to get more in the carton: he gives you good pleasure — the ice cream is running over the top. That's the way God will reward us for keeping the Commandments.

G. NECESSITY OF KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

"Faith without good works is dead." (James 2: 20) "Not everyone who says, 'Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven.' 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.'" (Matt 19:17) For what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Matt 16: 26) Our Lord means that if you gain the whole world, for example, if you became President of the United States or king of all the nations of the world, and lose your soul, you have gained nothing.

Non-Catholics have the same obligation to obey the Commandments as Catholics. You take up no more obligations when you become a Catholic.

Don't be deceived by a pagan world that refuses to study the Commandments and pays little or no attention to them. Don't be deceived by a modern pagan who says that we all sin and that God will forgive us. God forgives only *repentant* sinners.

H. PUNISHMENT FOR NOT KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

If you do not obey the Commandments, you will not have peace on earth. From disobeying God's Commandments comes sorrow and despair. "If you despise my laws and condemn my judgments . . . I will set my face against you." (Leviticus 26:14-15)

I. ASK GOD'S HELP WHILE LEARNING THE COMMANDMENTS

You must keep all the Commandments. Any habit of serious sin will lead you to hell. God forgives only repentant sinners. Pray sincerely to God for His help while you are studying the Commandments.

Teach and explain the Commandments to your children. Give your children the example of observing the Commandments always.

J. LEARN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

At the end of this course of instructions the priest will ask you to recite the Commandments in order. Study them *now*.

1. I am the Lord thy God thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember thou keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. Recite the Ten Commandments in order.
2. Did the Ten Commandments come from God?
3. What is the whole purpose of life?
4. Why did God need to give the Commandments in a written form?
5. What reward can we expect for keeping the Commandments?
6. Do non-Catholics have the same obligations to observe the Commandments as Catholics do?

LESSON 39

THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN LAW IS A LAW OF LOVE

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind . . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT:

To be a real Christian you must love God, your neighbor and yourself. You cannot be a Christian at all without practicing the law of love. Love includes all the teachings of Christianity.

A. LOVE IS THE WHOLE LAW OF CHRIST

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40) In these two Commandments, the Commandments of love, is contained all of the Ten Commandments. In the Ten Commandments, the first three Commandments have to do with the love of God; the last seven Commandments have to do with the love of our neighbor.

B. RELIGION IS CONCERNED ABOVE ALL ELSE WITH THE LOVE OF GOD

The first thing in religion is God and the love of God, the knowledge of God and His teachings, the service of God. Man comes next.

In the twentieth Century we confuse religion with a humanitarianism that leaves out God. Many so-called religious organizations in the United States are really not religious because their whole effort is for the help and service of man. We have now started to call them "non-profit charitable" organizations.

C. WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE GOD

We love God first of all because God is so infinitely good and perfect and worthy of our love. *"One is good, God." (Matthew 19:17)*

The second reason for loving God is that God is good to us. There is nothing that you have that has not come from the hand of a good God—your health, your wealth, grace, the Sacraments, the Church—all have come from God, nothing from yourself. *"For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (John 3:16)*

The third reason for loving God is that God commands us to love Him. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind and with thy whole strength." (Mark 12:30)*

D. WHEN IS THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECT?

You love God perfectly when you are willing to give up anything, even the slightest imperfection, rather than offend Him. If a person would be willing to give up life, property, friends and all things else, rather than tell a small lie, that would be perfect love of God.

You love God also if you are willing to give up all your mortal sins for God. This is not perfect love but it is a true Christian love and is the *beginning* of perfect love of Almighty God. So, you must start at least with giving up your mortal sins.

E. HOW TO LOVE GOD

The love of God does not consist only in thinking lovingly of God, or in saying beautiful things about God. You must show your love mostly by deeds. *"My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18)*

One who really loves God has his whole being united with God, his whole business, his marriage, everything that God has given him. We show our love for God also by silent prayer, by doing our actions all day for God, in keeping our minds fixed on God by prayer, by obeying the laws of God and of God's Church. *"Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31)*

F. LOVE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR

Connected immediately with the Commandment of love of God is Christ's command to love our neighbor. You cannot love God if you do not love your neighbor. *"If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar." (1 John 4:20)* By your neighbor is meant all other people besides yourself: all people regardless of their race, religion, or national origin. You do not have to love all your neighbors the same as you love yourself, your family or your relatives; but you must love your neighbor for the same reason - for the love of God. Neither do you have to like everybody, but you must love them.

G. WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

You must love your neighbor with the same kind of love you have for yourself, but not with the same degree of love. The reason you must love everyone is that everyone is made by God. God loves each person in the world so much that He died on the cross to bring that person to heaven. Your neighbor is your brother. All human beings come from the same Adam and Eve. We all belong to the same human family; we are all made by the same God who desires to bring all of us to heaven.

H. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR FOR GOD'S SAKE

If you love your neighbor only for your neighbor's sake, or because it's the decent thing to do, or because you believe in mankind, or some reason like that, you will get only a human reward. You should love your neighbor for the sake of God; then you will get a reward from God.

I. HOW TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Feeling kind and affectionate toward your neighbor is *not loving your neighbor*. Doing nothing to injure him is not loving him. You must show your love in a positive way. Christian love is best manifested by performing the Christian works of mercy. These Christian works of mercy are:

1. *Convert the sinner.* Give kindly advice to sinners when it will be well received; pray for sinners; give good example to sinners; bring sinners to instructions.
2. *Counsel the doubtful.* Help to explain the deep and necessary truths of religion to people who are doubtful about them; encourage them, (the doubtful) to bear their trials for love of God. Be kind and sympathetic to people.
3. *Instruct the ignorant.* Lead others to religious instructions, give people good books on the Catholic religion; answer doubts and difficulties about religion. Teach catechism to children. "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." (Daniel 12:3)
4. *Comfort the sorrowful.* Attend wakes and funerals; give your sympathetic understanding to your friends and companions when they are in sorrow. Sorrow is the hardest trial to bear and sometimes leads people into giving up God.
5. *Bear wrongs patiently.* Be meek and humble as Christ was. Do not seek revenge — wait until the anger of your neighbor has cooled. Be humble as Christ by being the first to mend a broken friendship, even when it was the other person's fault. Don't be sensitive — bear wrongs as Christ did in His suffering and death for us.
6. *Forgive injuries.* Forgive people who offend you "till seventy times seven times." (Matthew 18: 22) Show your forgiveness by your words and by your actions.
7. *Pray for the living and the dead.* Say prayers for your friends, enemies, and for the dead. Offer up Holy Communion, make the Stations of the Cross, visit the Blessed Sacrament for the benefit of others.
8. *Feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.* Give freely to charitable organizations, Catholic orphanages, other worthy causes, and especially the poor box in the church.
9. *Clothe the naked.* Give useful clothing to the poor, mend old garments for the poor; support societies that do this work.
10. *Shelter the homeless.* Support orphanages and homes for the aged and asylums for defectives. Adopt a child for the love of God. Help people who are homeless.
11. *Visit the sick.* Visit the sick in homes or hospitals; help them in their dreary hours of suffering and loneliness by giving them courage and hope, and bringing them gifts to show your love for them. Help them to pay their bills, take care of their affairs at home while they are sick.
12. *Visit those in prison.* Visit prisoners. By visiting those in prison, even if they are bad criminals, you are building up their self respect and their hope in God and humanity.
13. *Bury the dead.* Attend wakes and funerals. Act as a pallbearer at funerals. Help to pay the expenses of burial when the family of the deceased is in difficulty. Have Masses said for the dead. Take care of cemetery plots. An act of charity to relatives and friends when they are in trouble is one of the greatest consolations in life. **BE SURE TO DO THE WORKS OF MERCY FOR THE LOVE OF GOD AND NOT FOR A MERELY HUMAN MOTIVE.**

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is the Christian law of love?
2. In what does the "whole law and prophets" consist?
3. What is the "first thing" in religion?
4. Why should we love God?
5. What is a perfect love of God?
6. How do we love our neighbor?
7. Why should we love our neighbor?

LESSON 40

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

"I am the Lord, thy God . . . Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me." (Exodus 20:2-3)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The very purpose of your existence is to adore God. All creatures are made by God to show forth the glory of the Creator. Religion demands first of all the adoration of the Creator. In this lesson you should understand what the adoration of God means and how you are to adore your God. You must also understand how people sin against their obligation to adore God.

A. YOUR FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT DUTY IS THE ADORATION OF GOD

In the First Commandment God tells men: There is a God. I am God. I am your Maker and you must adore Me.

No matter how much you do for others, or how great you are in the eyes of the world, if you do not recognize God as your supreme Lord and Master, you are a failure. Try to realize this: you must adore God — this is the whole purpose of your existence.

The First Commandment commands you to adore God and not to adore any other being (person or thing).

B. TO ADORE GOD MEANS TO ADMIT TO GOD THAT HE MADE YOU AND THAT YOU DEPEND ON HIM ABSOLUTELY FOR EVERYTHING

To adore God means to acknowledge God as your supreme Lord and Master. You adore God because God is perfect, without limit; His perfection demands respect, you depend entirely on God — you could not even breathe without the cooperation of God.

The respect you give the Blessed Virgin Mary is not adoration: the respect you give your parents, your employers, your government is not this kind of respect, it is not adoration, because none of these has infinite perfection. You adore only God.

C. YOU ADORE GOD IN SEVERAL WAYS

You adore God, that is, recognize God as your supreme Lord and Master, by living continually in His presence, by keeping His Commandments, by doing the duties of your state in life (for example, your duties to your family). You adore God by fasting during Lent, by abstaining from meat on Friday, by good example, and especially by prayer.

Are you praying? Early in the instructions you had a lesson on prayer. Go over the lesson on prayer again — at least the most important parts of it: what prayer is, the kinds of prayer, the necessity of prayer, for whom we should pray, for what we should pray, and are our prayers always answered. Remember the words of Our Lord: *"And all things whatsoever you ask for in prayer, believing you shall receive."* (Matthew 21:22)

Parents must teach their children to pray and must give good example to their children by praying themselves.

D. THE ONLY WAY YOU MAY ADORE GOD IN PUBLIC IS IN GOD'S TRUE CHURCH

The only way to adore God publicly is in the Catholic Church. Taking an active part in the religious services of any other church tells God that you are turning to His enemies, the false churches. Even worse than this, it shows that you are beginning to lose the true Christian faith. You soon slip back into the easy-going ways of a false religion. You will give bad example to people who know you have become a Catholic, and who know that your life should be different.

People who belong to these churches are frequently in them because of ignorance. We do not judge them, we do not condemn them. They have been cheated out of graces and truths which you have received. Pray for them.

E. QUITTING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS ONE OF THE MOST TERRIBLE SINS

A person who leaves the Catholic Church does so usually because he is attached to some sin. No one ever quit the true Church to lead a better life. He left because he became more and more involved in some sin, perhaps a secret sin. If he gives you some other reason for leaving the Church, he is probably not telling the truth. No Catholic can be sincerely converted to a false religion.

Following is the usual pattern in one's leaving the Church: some Commandment is difficult, (for example, the Sixth Commandment) the person becomes disgusted with himself, then begins to miss Mass. Gradually he becomes very "broad-minded" about religion: he insists that one religion is as good as another; he pays no attention to the laws of fasting and abstinence; he does not mortify himself. He no longer prays — he has nothing left, no religion.

When you are in sin or have a serious habit of mortal sin, leaving the Church is no solution. It is the same as running away from the physician when you are sick.

F. DENYING A TRUTH TAUGHT BY THE CHURCH

The Church teaches only what Christ and the Holy Spirit have given her to teach. The Church teaches no error: nor does she omit any of God's truths. To be a Christian and a Catholic you have to accept all of the truths which the Church teaches. Therefore, it is a serious sin to deny the marriage laws, or the authority of the bishop or pastor, or any of the Christian obligations which have been explained to you. You have been thoroughly prepared for the true faith; you have been instructed; you will soon take the

Profession of Faith under oath. Then you will be baptized, go to confession and receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. After all of this you will never again have reason for serious doubts. In case of difficulties about the Faith, you can always see a priest.

G. JOINING THE MASONS OR ANY FORBIDDEN SOCIETY

The Church does not forbid the existence of any legitimate organization. The Church tries to keep peace with all organizations and she does keep peace with almost all of them. The Church does not forbid all secret societies, but the church does forbid secret societies whose secrets are not manifested to the Church and government. Because many Masons really do not openly oppose the Catholic Church does not mean that the organization itself is not an enemy of the Church.

It's just as foolish to say that Masonry is not against the Catholic Church as it would be to say that the Ku Klux Klan is not against Negroes. Because of the nature and purpose of Masonry a Catholic cannot be a Mason.

The Catholic Church forbids Masonry because Masonry rejects God's Revelation, because Masonry intends to destroy the Catholic Church and because the oath required of all Masons is evil.

H. COMMUNISM

Any Catholic who joins the Communist Party is automatically excommunicated from the Catholic Church. The reason is that Communism is against God and His Church.

When the Iron Curtain was more prevalent, communists killed thousands of Catholic priests and nuns and destroyed thousands of Catholic churches, schools and hospitals. Not only is Communism against God, but it also denies the rights of man.

I. SUPERSTITION

Superstition is giving equal adoration to material things as should be given to God. Anyone who puts belief, trust and confidence in superstitious practices is breaking the First Commandment. Why? Because he acts as though creatures had power that belongs to God alone.

J. FAITH HEALERS

Faith healing began with false religions. When the Catholic Church was put out of certain countries, the people had no Blessed Sacrament, no strong religion to turn to in time of trouble and sickness. The sick began to go to the king or someone else of importance.

King Charles I of England is said to have touched 90,000 sufferers. Another man, Greatrakes the Stroker, stroked the affected parts of sick people to cure them and made a huge business out of it. In our own day there are hundreds who travel the country pretending to possess the healing powers. Whoever gives his hard earned money to a man to do what only God can do should be in a mental care facility. The faith healers who use the Bible and religion to deceive people, are committing a terrible sin; and you commit a serious sin by taking part in such services. God did not give the power of healing to the Blessed Virgin; God did not give it to the priest to whom He has given the power of forgiving sins and bringing Christ Himself down on the altar. In the name of common sense, how can some believe that a faith healer has such a power?

When you are sick or in trouble, go to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Get down on your knees and pray. Ask the priest to say the Prayers for the Sick over you. Don't bring down God's anger or men's laughter by being ignorant and superstitious. There is money to be made in pretending to cure people. Everyone is looking for a cure; and the ignorant are deceived and give their money.

It is a mortal sin to go to a faith healer.

K. ASTROLOGY

Astrology pretends to tell the future events by the position of the stars. Astrologers often give double meaning predictions to fool you. For example, one may tell you: "Great things *may* happen to you in the month of January." Therefore, if anything great happens to you in January, the astrologer will be right; or if nothing great happens, he will still be right. Pope Sixtus V said: "The astrologer cannot know the things of the future nor the hidden things of the past; all they do is to dispense nonsense and lies." All the newspapers in the United States claim to form the minds of the people, to be great educators and inspirers of action, and yet some of them go down to one of the lowest forms of superstition, astrology.

To participate in Astrology is a mortal sin.

L. PALMISTRY, CRYSTAL GAZING, OULJA BOARD

Palmistry, crystal gazing, reading tea leaves, the use of ouija board are superstitious. The person who believes in them puts himself in the class of the ignorant and foolish; and even worse, he puts himself in mortal sin. "*For the Lord abhorreth all these things - and for these abominations He will destroy them at thy coming.*" (Deut. 18:12)

M. SPIRITUALISM OR SPIRITISM

Spiritualism or spiritism is a good example of the nonsense of superstition. Spiritualists foolishly claim they can communicate with the dead.

About a hundred years ago, spiritualism was started in the United States by two little girls, the Fox sisters. They rapped on the floor to their mother, who was a silly old lady. The mother thought it was spirits. She brought in the neighbors. Soon the girls began to charge the neighbors money to talk to the spirits. When money became involved it turned into a fine business. Ultimately, the girls were prosecuted and went to jail. A few great men were deceived, for example, Arthur Conan Doyle.

Don't be a fool with your money; above all, don't sin mortally by going to spiritualists.

N. DREAMS

A few special people, like St. Joseph, were told by God to believe in certain dreams. But we are not among these few. God has not told us to believe in dreams, in fact, to believe habitually in dreams is a serious sin condemned by God in the Bible.

"For dreams have deceived many and they have failed that put their trust in them." (Eccles. 34:7) "You shalt not divine nor observe dreams." (Luke 19:26) "Neither let there be found among you any one. . . that consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens." (Deut. 18:10)

The Bible says that people who believe in dreams get into other foolish and sinful things. We must fear God and forget our dreams: *"Where there are many dreams, there are many vanities, and words without number; but do thou fear God." (Eccles. 5:6)*

O. VENIAL SINS OF SUPERSTITION

Venial sins of superstition are chain prayers, lucky and unlucky numbers, lucky rings, coins or emblems, superstitious use of votive lights, and lucky or unlucky practices. Catholics must be particularly careful to avoid the superstitious use of Catholic medals. Whoever acts as though these articles had power which belongs to God alone commits a sin. To draw lots, play cards or dice is not superstitious.

P. SINS AGAINST RELIGION

A person sins against religion in two other ways, namely by tempting God and by sacrilege. Tempting God means demanding from God something you have no right to expect, for example, putting yourself deliberately in unnecessary temptation and asking God to take care of you. A sacrilege is the abuse of a sacred person, place or thing; for example, a priest, a church, a rosary. Thus, theft of church property is a sacrilege. A sacrilege can be a mortal or a venial sin, depending on how serious the abuse of the sacred object or person is.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What does "adore" mean?
Tell if the following actions are mortal or venial sin or else no sin at all:
2. Sing and pray in a Protestant church?
3. Attend a funeral for a friend in a Protestant church?
4. Read the Protestant Bible and books?
5. Quit the Catholic Church?
6. Join the Masons or the Communists?
7. Deny the truths taught by the Catholic Church?
8. Put trust and confidence in faith healers, astrology, palmistry, crystal gazing, horoscopes and the like?
9. Spiritualism?
10. Put confidence in dreams?
11. Chain prayers, lucky and unlucky numbers, lucky rings, coins, emblems and other superstitious practices?
12. Playing cards?

A SACRILEGE AVENGED

On the eve of the Assumption, 1834, the Puritan population of Charleston attacked the local Ursuline convent after being excited by fanatics. It was late at night, and the students and the Sisters were asleep. They were startled by shouts and the smell of smoke. Their building had been set on fire! While those inside the convent made their escape, those on the outside started to ransack the church and convent. One of the leaders of the crowd ascended the altar, seized the ciborium from the tabernacle, and emptied the Hosts into his pockets. He then left the church and headed for a tavern.

As is the case with most evil men, he soon gained an audience as he bragged about the things he did in the church building. An Irish Catholic nearby heard him and showed the shock on his face. The sacrilegious man taunted the Catholic by taking a few Hosts from his pocket, saying: "Here behold your God! Why do you need to go to the church anymore when you can see Him right here with me?" The Catholic was horrified, both by the words of the Puritan and by the events that followed his little speech. Suddenly the blasphemer turned pale and began to cough violently. He fled from the tavern quickly. When over half an hour went by and the Puritan had not returned, a few people went in search of him. They found him in a room not far away. He had died in the same manner as the heretic Arius.

LESSON 41

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

This lesson has two main purposes. The first purpose is to form your conscience correctly on vulgarity and the irreverent use of the name of God: vulgarity is not necessarily a sin- the irreverent use of the name of God is a venial sin. The second purpose of this lesson is to lead you to great reverence for the name of God.

Other ways of breaking the Second Commandment are also listed in this lesson. You should also learn the ways of paying honor and reverence to God's name.

A. VULGAR LANGUAGE

Vulgar language is not sinful. "Damn," "hell" and some stronger words are not sins, not even venial.

Vulgar language lowers you, especially if you are a woman; don't make your home sound like a cheap tavern. A real gentleman or lady will not use vulgar language. Parents should teach their children to avoid vulgar language.

B. IMPURE LANGUAGE

Jokes and "sexy" stories, "dirty" stories are frequently an occasion of sin for some people. They should be avoided, even though they are not always sinful.

C. THE IRREVERENT USE OF THE NAME OF GOD

Take the words of the Second Commandment as it stands and you will not be confused. The Commandment says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "In vain" means carelessly, uselessly, flippantly.

Such common expressions as: "By God," "My God," "By Christ," "Christ," "Jesus," "Jesus Christ," "Oh, Christ," are usually venial sins. They will not send you to hell. But to use the name of God in vain is wrong and shocking.

By honoring a name we actually honor what the name stands for. You permit no one to dishonor the name of your father or mother. You honor the name of your school, your club or your national heroes.

In the Old Testament the name of God was pronounced only by the high priest and then only once a year.

The Bible says: "Holy is His name." "His name shall be blessed forever." (Psalm 71:17)

"O Lord, our Lord: how admirable is Thy name in the whole earth." (Psalm 8:2)

"From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise." (Psalm 112:3)

Men should not drag the name of the Lord through the gutter. It is a venial sin.

All creatures are made to praise and reverence the name of God. The flowers of the field, the stars in the heaven show forth the beauty of God; and in this way they try to get men to love and reverence God and the name of God.

"That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." (Phil. 2:10)

The Bible tells us St. Peter cured a lame man by saying: *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk." (Acts 3:6)*

"By the name of Jesus we are saved," says the Bible; "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

You reverence the name of God by using it respectfully, by bowing your head or tipping your hat at the name of Jesus, by speaking reverently of persons closely connected with Jesus, such as the Blessed Mother, the saints, the angels the priests and sisters. In the Catholic Church, we have a large society of men who promise to honor the name of Jesus—The Holy Name Society. Men should join this society and take part in its rallies and processions to honor the name of Jesus: they should live the way Jesus Christ wants them to live.

By attending Mass, benediction and public prayers, you outwardly show honor to the name of God and to the name of Jesus Christ.

Be very strict about the use of impure language in the home because it can lead to impure thoughts and desires. Absolutely forbid the irreverent use of God's Name by your family, friends and children, even though it is not a mortal sin; it is a venial sin.

D. BLASPHEMY

Blasphemy means an insolent, insulting, scornful use of the name of God. for example: "God be damned," "There is no God," and so forth. *Blasphemy is a most serious sin against religion.* It is a serious sin to blaspheme saints in so far as they are men of God. The habit of blaspheming without thinking of what you're saying is usually not a mortal sin; but it is mortal if you do not try to wipe out the habit.

Anger is often the cause of blasphemy. People in severe and protracted pain or ill health are sometimes tempted to blaspheme God.

E. OATHS

An oath is calling upon God to be witness to the truth of what you say. When you raise your hand to heaven or place your hand on the Bible and say any of the following expressions, "I swear by God," "God is my witness," "So help me, God," "By my oath," or, "I solemnly swear," *you have made an oath.*

Perjury means telling a lie after you have taken an oath. It is a very serious sin. It is severely punished by the civil law. Unfortunately, it is a practice among some godless lawyers to ask people to perjure themselves in court. Don't do it. To tell a lie in a small matter is a venial sin; to tell the same lie under oath is the terrible sin of perjury.

Oaths should be taken only in very serious matters. They are usually taken before a priest or a judge. To take an oath in an unimportant matter is a venial sin. *"But I say to you not to swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is His footstool."* (Matt. 5:34)

F. VOWS

A vow is a free and deliberate promise made to God to do something very good under pain of sin. Vows are good because the virtuous act is now performed especially for the worship of God.

The Sisters and priests of religious orders in the Catholic Church have three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. Thus the nuns in our school worship God by being poor, chaste and obedient as Our Lord was. The vows of religious are good because by them they place not only their actions, but their whole being under God. They give God not only the fruit of the tree, but the tree itself. Vows are also good because those who are under a vow act with a steady will. They usually do not hesitate.

Never take a vow without first obtaining the advice of a priest in confessional.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

Tell if the following are mortal sins, venial sins, or no sins at all:

1. Vular language?
2. Impure language?
3. Impure jokes and stories?
4. To use the name of God without good reason?
5. To say, "There is no God," or some other similar phrase?
6. What is a vow?
7. Should one seek advice before taking a vow?

THE OATHS OF A SECRET SOCIETY

The oaths administered by the secret societies, especially the Freemasons, are both rash and unjust. No Catholic is allowed to participate in these oaths. The members of these societies swear unswerving obedience to unknown superiors to obey all orders and commands without question even if they be asked to do something that is a crime. They offer as a proof of their obedience the oath of allowing themselves to be hurt seriously, even killed, should they violate these oaths or even reveal what they know to anyone on the outside.

It is no surprise that the Popes of the last century and a half have forbidden Catholics to participate in the secret societies. They also took those opportunities to condemn these societies as destructive not only to the true Faith, but also to society as well.

NOTES

LESSON 42

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." (Exodus 20:8)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Non-Catholics have more difficulty with this Commandment than with any other. Many people outside the Catholic Church have a very lax conscience regarding Sunday worship. The average non-Catholic feels that he should go to church on Sunday; but he also feels that if he misses church for any slight reason God will understand. For him Sunday worship is not something he owes to God. When a non-Catholic goes to church, he hopes to receive God's blessing during the week, but if he does not go to church, he does not realize that he is being unjust to God, that he is not paying God His debt. The non-Catholic has little sense of obligation in this regard and certainly no idea of mortal sin.

In this lesson try to understand your obligation to assist at Mass on Sundays and the six Holydays of the year.

At the beginning of the course you should have begun the practice of assisting at Mass every Sunday and the six Holydays of Obligation. If you have missed Mass a few times since the second lesson, you should defer your Baptism until you have assisted at Mass regularly for at least three months.

To receive instructions without practicing the simple obligations of Sunday Mass attendance and Friday abstinence is a serious error.

A. NATURE, THE BIBLE AND TRADITION IMPOSE ON EVERYONE THE OBLIGATION OF WORSHIPPING GOD

Because all of us, Catholics and non-Catholics alike are creatures of God because all of us are made by God, we have a serious obligation to worship God. The Bible and Tradition tell us that we must worship God publicly. It is a *mortal sin* to miss Mass through our own fault on Sunday or on a Holyday of Obligation.

B. THE DAYS ON WHICH YOU MUST ATTEND MASS: SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS

Too often the new Catholic accepts the obligation of Sunday worship, but does not see clearly the obligation of Mass on Holydays. It is a *mortal sin* to miss Mass on Sundays or Holydays through your own fault. There are fifty-eight days of obligation: fifty-two Sundays and six Holydays.

The six Holydays are December 8, December 25, January 1, Ascension Thursday, August 15, and November 1.

If you do not seriously intend to assist at Mass fifty-eight days a year, do not enter the Catholic Church at this time. Wait until you are attending Mass regularly. Even if you have a valid excuse for not attending Mass during the course of these instructions, the priest will probably ask you to delay your Baptism until you get the habit of assisting at Holy Mass.

C. FOOLISH EXCUSES FOR MISSING MASS

We will list in this section some invalid excuses for missing Mass. Some of these excuses will sound very foolish, but they are actually used. Perhaps you would never think of using them, but they are listed for the benefit of other readers.

These are common excuses: "I'm not feeling too well, I have a headache, I have a cold cramps, I am not feeling up to par."

Answer: You are not really sick: get out of bed and go to Mass and you will feel better.

"My clothes aren't good enough, my clothes are at the cleaners, my shoes are in the repair shop." Answer: Neither God, nor the priest, nor the people care about the condition of your clothes. In this case, go to Mass in your old clothes.

"I work hard on Saturday or Saturday night, I'm tired because of my work." Answer: The other people were tired too, but they went to Mass.

"Relatives came in from out of town", "I was visiting in another state." Answer: ' These are certainly not good reasons.

"I have no money for the collection." Answer: This is an insult to the Church and to priests; you don't need money to assist at Mass. These are foolish excuses that should not even be mentioned by intelligent people.

It is a serious mistake to baptize a person who has not developed the habit of assisting at Mass; if he does not have the habit of assisting at Mass before Baptism he will most likely not have it afterwards. By baptizing him, we would do him a real injustice. We make him wait for Baptism until he assists at Mass regularly.

D. VALID REASONS FOR MISSING MASS

There is only one rule to remember. If the inconvenience that keeps you from Mass on Sunday would keep you from your job on Monday, you are excused.

The following excuses are generally valid: If you are so sick that you would stay home from work on a working day, then it is not a sin to miss Mass on Sunday.

If you are working during all the hours when Mass is said on Sunday, it is not a sin to miss Mass. (If it is possible to attend Mass while working on a Sunday, it is a sin to omit Mass.)

If the Catholic Church is so far away that it is very difficult to go to Mass then it is not a sin. (Remember, this is seldom true in an American city.)

If you are caring for a sick person and cannot get anyone else to take your place for an hour on Sunday morning, it is not a sin to fail to go to Mass.

E. PARENTS HAVE A GRAVE OBLIGATION TO SEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN ASSIST AT MASS REGULARLY.

Parents sin gravely by telling the child (seven years or older) to sleep, saying "You are tired; Sister won't know," or "It's vacation time; you don't have to go to Mass."

Parents who do not attend Mass also sin gravely by giving the children bad example. Such parents destroy the training given by the Catholic school. If the parents are going to act this way, they should take their children out of the Catholic school. These parents are not playing fair with the teachers who give their lives for the religious training of the children; they are not playing fair with the pastor, who lets them use the school, and with the Catholic people who give their money for the maintenance of that school.

F. TARDINESS AT MASS

If you are very late for Mass, it is a big sin. If you are only a little late, it is a small sin. If you come in after the Gospel, you commit a serious sin. You should wait for the next Mass or go home and come for another Mass. The pastor and priests of this parish have good reason to be angry with the adults who come late and give bad example to our children. This is especially so if the excuse of coming late for Mass is an attempt to sit in the back of the church, out of sight of the priest and the altar.

G. THE OTHER SUNDAY OBLIGATION: ABSTAIN FROM UNNECESSARY MANUAL WORK

God strictly forbids unnecessary manual work on Sunday. Don't be deceived by those who disregard the laws of God. God commanded the Jews to stone a man to death for working on the Sabbath. (*Numbers 15:32-36*)

"Six days shalt thou labor, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." (*Exod. 20:9-10*)

This is the law of God. It still binds in the twentieth century; we must not be lax.

The only kind of work forbidden is unnecessary manual work. Manual work is done with the hands rather than with the mind. Many works of the body are necessary on Sunday and are not sinful. Firemen and policemen must work on Sunday, or perhaps your boss makes you work on Sunday. But remember to try to go to Mass first. Some manual labor is necessary at home on Sunday, such as cooking, making the beds, and so forth.

If manual work is not necessary on Sunday, it is a serious sin to engage in it, for example, washing or sewing on Sunday.

Mental labor is never forbidden. Studying or writing are not sinful because they are not manual — they require more of the mind than the body.

H. RECREATION ON SUNDAY

Any recreation that is not sinful on Monday is not sinful on Sunday. Examples are fishing, playing ball, decent dancing, movies and so forth. But be sure to go to Mass first! Any recreation that takes the place of Mass on Sunday is sinful.

I. MAKE A REAL EFFORT TO MAKE SUNDAY THE LORD'S DAY

Try to remember that Sunday, all of Sunday, is the Lord's Day. It is not just a "day off." Some people make it the devil's day by committing sins on Sunday simply because they are not busy at work. You have been occupied all week with material and worldly cares. Sunday is the day to put your mind on your soul lest you lose it. Do something for your soul on Sunday. Receive Holy Communion. Go to parish affairs on Sunday, if there are any in your parish. Tune in some Catholic radio and television programs at home. Bring home Catholic newspapers from Mass and read them. Read the Bible at home. Many people find an hour in the afternoon to go back to the church to pray and meditate and say the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What kind of sin is it to miss Mass on a Sunday without good reason?
2. What kind of sin is it to miss Mass on the six Holydays of Obligation?
3. What kind of a reason is a good reason to miss Mass on a Sunday or Holyday?
4. Is it a sin to be late for Mass?
5. Is it a sin to not pay attention to the sermon given by the priest at Mass?
6. Are recreational activities allowed on a Sunday?

LESSON 43

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN TOWARD THEIR PARENTS

"Honor thy father and thy mother." (Exodus 20:12)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Probably you are receiving your instructions in a class of adults. This lesson is given to adults because adults should teach their children the duties which children have toward their parents. The duties of parents toward their children are studied in another lesson.

A. INTRODUCTION

God brings children into the world through their parents. Then in His loving providence for the human race, He places the children under the authority of their parents until the children are able to take care of themselves. Therefore, God's order of things commands children to love, obey and respect their parents. In fact without this love, obedience and respect parents cannot fulfill their duties as parents. Without the Fourth Commandment the family will become completely disorganized; it will be in total disorder.

Besides the voice of nature and the voice of God, there is a voice of gratitude which tells us that you must love, respect, and obey your parents. Why should you be grateful? You owe your very life to your parents. And you owe the preservation of that life to your parents. Consider the sufferings of your mother during the long months of pregnancy, the sickness and discomfort required to bring you into the world. And after you were born her troubles really began. Consider the sleepless nights and the restless days that you caused her when you were an infant. And don't forget your father's care for you. During the best years of his life he had to support you and provide for your welfare. He had to supply food, shelter, clothing, and education. This was his whole life. Parents give their lives for their children. The least children can do is to give their parents love, respect and obedience. God rewards those who show love, respect and obedience to their parents.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."
(Exodus 20:12)

The Bible also says: *"He that honoreth his father shall enjoy a long life."* (Ecclus. 3:7)

Thus, God promises a longer life here on earth if we obey the Fourth Commandment. God promises still more: *"He that honoreth his father shall have joy in his own children."* (Ecclus. 3:6) One of the greatest joys parents can wish for on this earth is joy in their own children.

B. THE OBLIGATION OF CHILDREN TO LOVE THEIR PARENTS

Just as children need love for a happy life, so also parents need the love of their children. Children should show love for their parents by signs of affection, by helping them, by praying for them and by making the home a place of joy and peace. Children should be taught to follow the example of the Christ Child Who loved His parents, Mary and Joseph.

Adults fail in love towards their elderly parents by refusing to help them when they are in need, by failing to visit them or console them in their loneliness, by neglecting to obtain the Sacraments of the Church for them when they cannot go to Church. These obligations oblige under pain of serious sin in many cases. Adults can and do commit this sin too often today.

C. THE OBLIGATION OF CHILDREN TO RESPECT THEIR PARENTS

Because your bishop and pastor have their authority from God Himself, you must respect them even though you do not like them or even if they have traits that are disagreeable to you. So also children must respect their parents even though their parents are sinners or even though their parents treat them unjustly; they are still parents and have the right to the respect of their children. This respect is something natural; for instance, a boy will resent someone talking about the drunkenness of his father.

As long as the children live, they must respect their parents even when they are no longer under the parents' roof. Even when the parents have died, the children must respect them by praying for them.

Children sin against the respect due to their parents by being ashamed of them in public, by threatening them, by striking them, or by treating them with contempt.

D. THE OBLIGATION OF CHILDREN TO OBEY THEIR PARENTS

The parents cannot take care of the spiritual and temporal welfare of their child unless he obeys his parents. Parents cannot do their duties as parents unless their children obey them.

A young child should be taught to obey his parents without question, without delay, and without complaint. An older child has the right to inquire about the reason for commands given to him; but he does not have the right to disobey those commands. Children should be taught to obey not only because of fear of the punishment of Almighty God. Above all, children should be

taught the loving obedience of the Christ Child who was subject to Mary and Joseph out of love, all the time He lived with them in Nazareth.

The obligation to obey his parents ends when the child is married or reaches the age of twenty-one; but if the child lives with his parents after he has reached twenty-one, he must obey them in all matters of home discipline. But remember that the obligation to love and respect your parents never ends.

E. THE SINFULNESS OF DISOBEDIENCE

When parents oblige the child under pain of mortal sin in a matter of great importance, the child who disobeys commits a serious sin. Parents may not oblige the child under serious sin in a matter of little importance. If parents command under pain of venial sin, the disobedience is only a venial sin even if the matter is of great importance.

From the way the command is given children can tell whether the parents intend to bind them under serious sin or under venial sin or under no sin at all.

F. THE CHOICE OF A STATE OF LIFE

Children are not obliged to obey their parents in choosing to become a priest a sister or a religious brother. However, they are bound to consult their parents about such an important choice.

Young people who are keeping company are seriously obliged to consult their parents about those with whom they are keeping company. Children should remember that their parents love them, are interested in them, and have a world of experience; they will give them good advice. Therefore, the children have an obligation to consult their parents in this matter.

Parents, too, have a serious obligation to advise their children in the choice of a partner for marriage. Marriage leads many people to heaven; it also leads many other people to hell. Therefore, parents are obliged to do everything in their power to help their child toward a happy Christian marriage. If a girl is thinking of marrying a pagan, a drunkard or a man who will not support her, the parents are obliged to give sound advice and the child is bound to listen.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What are the duties of children toward their parents?
2. What is the obligation we have to love our parents?
3. How do we show respect to our parents?
4. At what age does our obligation to obey our parents cease?
5. Should children consult their parents when they prepare to choose a state in life?

THE LOVE OF SONS FOR THEIR MOTHER

A poor widow, who had been deprived of the use of her limbs, felt a deep regret from not being able to attend Mass on Sundays. When each Sunday came around, she would always say to her sons, "What happiness would I have if I could attend Mass today! But I cannot go. The road is long and I am too old and infirm." On a certain Sunday, as she said these words, she broke down in tears. She fingered her Rosary and kissed the crucifix attached to it with much love and devotion.

As the events of this story took place before easy forms of transportation were available to most people, the widow's two sons felt deep sorrow at seeing their mother so afflicted. In order to satisfy the mother's wishes, they attached two long poles to her chair and prepared to carry her in that fashion down the road to the church. As they started down the road, people stopped along the way to admire the love of these two sons for their mother. They even cast flowers along the path the two sons would walk along.

The pastor of the church was equally moved. He took for the theme of his sermon the words of Deuteronomy: "Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord hath commanded thee." His words were inspiring as he compared the flowers cast on the path of the two sons as they carried their mother to church to the tremendous blessings God would soon shower down on them for their expression of love and devotion. They are a model for all children in the respect and love they should show their parents.

LESSON 44

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN

"Bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." (Eph 6:4)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

The very first purpose of marriage is the birth and raising of children by giving them a proper character formation. It is necessary therefore, to give adults who are about to enter the Catholic Church an instruction which emphasizes their obligation before God to provide for the religious and moral education of their children, especially in our modern age when religion and morality in families is neglected.

A. PARENTS HAVE A GRAVE OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE NECESSARY FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Both parents are obliged to provide for the healthy development of the child's body. A mother fails in her duty by not preparing good, wholesome food for the children, by feeding the family irregularly, by not providing warm clothes and a neat, clean home.

A father sins by not providing the money for a decent home and good food. Men who spend large amounts of their pay on gambling or alcohol or in other ways not connected with the good order of the home commit serious sin because they deprive the family of the necessities of life.

Parents must face the raising of a family as a Christian obligation that requires much sacrifice. They must give themselves for their children, and thus obtain joy of soul both here and in eternity.

B. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO GIVE THEIR CHILDREN GOOD EXAMPLE

Example is the greatest teacher. Children are the greatest imitators. They will imitate their parents more than they will the priests and sisters of your parish. Parents must keep out of the child's life any example that will be harmful.

Lying, bad language, uncharitableness, immodesty, drunkenness must be avoided.

They must lead the child to a life of virtue by giving good example in prayer, attendance at Mass, frequent reception of the Sacraments, abstinence from meat on Friday, love of Our Lord, love of Our Blessed Mother, and respect for the Catholic Church, her priests and sisters.

C. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO PROVIDE A GOOD CATHOLIC HOME FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Keep out of the home modern pagan attitudes and practices — indecent pictures and calendars, sexy, sensational, or cheap magazines, books and comic books. Keep out of the home dangerously immoral, perverse or suggestive radio and television shows, video movies and music.

A Catholic home is one in which God and religion are of the greatest importance. Christian decency in word and action should be the ordinary way of life. The child should see the crucifix, pictures of Our Blessed Mother and the saints in conspicuous places in the home. Prayer should be the ordinary practice in the home.

No Catholic school can make up for an irreligious, pagan or careless home.

D. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN TO PRAY

Parents should not only teach their children to pray, but should lead them in prayer. Daily prayers should be said by the whole family together. The parents should bring the children to religious exercises in the parish church.

The family Rosary should be said together. Prayers before and after meals should not be neglected. Parents should see to it that the children say their morning and evening prayers, too.

E. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO SEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS

Parents must see to it that their children receive God's grace through the Sacraments. Babies should be baptized a week or two after birth. Neglect of the Baptism of an infant is also a serious sin. Be careful in choosing Godparents for your children. Godparents must be not only Catholics, but *good* Catholics, capable of giving your children excellent Catholic example and of providing for their religious training if you die.

See to it that your child makes his first Confession and receives first Holy Communion at the age of seven, when the priest and his teachers feel he is ready. Go with your child to the parish church for Confession frequently (weekly, if possible). Encourage the practice of weekly Communion for all the members of your family.

When the child is about eleven years of age and when the priest and his teachers feel he is ready, he should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from the bishop.

Teach the child the necessity of having the priest bring the Sacraments to your home when a member of the family is sick.

F. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO PROVIDE A RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN

"Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children." (Catholic Church Canon Law #1113) Both the law of nature and the law of the Church teach parents their obligation to raise their children in the fear and love of Almighty God. In their younger years the habits of children are formed by the religious training given by the Catholic home and the Catholic school. This training should not be endangered or lost by attendance at a secular high school or college. Education in a secular high school or college very often leads to indifference about religion and the duties of religion, too often to the total loss of the Catholic Faith.

G. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO PREPARE THEIR CHILDREN FOR MARRIAGE

Attitudes on marriage are formed in people when they are quite young. Children should learn of the obligations and joys of the Christian home and Christian marriage from the example of their parents. Parents should teach their children the sacredness of the marriage bond, the purpose of marriage, the impossibility of divorce. Parents should warn their children of the false teachings of the world on marriage and the unhappiness that comes from following the world instead of following God and the Church in these matters.

The father should teach his son the simple facts of sex, the mother should teach the daughter. This teaching should be given in a beautiful and correct manner always suited to the age and mental development of the child, never shocking him or embarrassing him by the manner in which it is discussed, but always giving correct information. Otherwise your children will learn the facts of generation in an incorrect and even sinful manner from their companions.

H. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO SEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN ASSOCIATE WITH GOOD COMPANIONS

As far as possible children should be encouraged to choose their companions from among other good Catholic families. Constant association with children of non-Catholic families partially destroys the good influence of the Catholic home and the Catholic school. Easy-going religious attitudes and false ideas on life can readily be gained from non-Catholic children.

I. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO SEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN HAVE DECENT RECREATION

Wholesome outdoor recreation and good companions should always be encouraged.

Many forms of recreation are dangerous to children today: many movies and videos, and a great number of radio, television and music programs. Catholic books, radio, television and videos should be encouraged at home.

J. PARENTS ARE OBLIGED TO SEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN RESPECT AND OBEY THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

Teach your children to respect and obey the civil authorities. Avoid carping criticism of civil officials before the children. Teach them to respect the laws of our country. Teach them respect for the authority of all civil officials. Differences of political opinions should be kept to a minimum around the younger children. However, be sure to raise them in a proper understanding of correct political ideals, putting them in perspective with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

K. HELPING THE CHILD TO BE A PRIEST, RELIGIOUS BROTHER OR SISTER

To have a priest, Brother or Sister in the family is considered one of the greatest honors among Catholics. If one of your children seems to show a desire to enter the religious life in the Catholic Church, encourage him and direct him according to the advice given you by your parish priest. To dissuade a child from such a holy and happy life is wrong on the part of the parent.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What are the duties of parents toward their children?
2. Why should parents provide their children a good Catholic home to live in?
3. How important is it to teach children to pray?
4. What influence should a parent have their children's vocations?

A JUST RETRIBUTION

A certain father, who led a sinful and scandalous life, had a son who followed his father's bad example. The father was drunken and degraded; the son was willful, passionate and rebellious. One day when the father reproached his son for his undutiful conduct, the son seized his father by the hair of his head and threw him to the ground. From there he dragged him to the door of the house. There the father raised his voice and said, "Stop, wretched son. When I was your age I never dragged my father farther than this."

In the words of the father he acknowledged the truth of the adage, "Like father, like son." The Justice of God allowed the son to treat his father just as that man had treated his father.

LESSON 45

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

THE DUTIES TO CIVIL AUTHORITY, THE POPE, BISHOP AND PASTORS

"Obey your prelates and be subject to them." (Hebrews 13:17)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

To be a good Catholic and a good citizen, you must understand what is meant both by the authority of the Catholic Church and by the authority of the civil government. The authority of the Catholic Church will keep you in the way of salvation. Unfortunately, non-Catholics do not understand the meaning of "church authority." But you must understand it. Today men are losing their respect and obedience to all authority, especially civil authority. But you must respect and obey civil authority, not because this authority pleases you and because you agree with everything that is done, but because this authority is from God. It is generally a sin to disobey.

A. DUTIES TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

All authority is from God. God is the Author of civil authority just as He is the Author of parental authority. We cannot today live good, decent lives and save our immortal souls without civil authority to rule us. Think what confusion and chaos we would have without public officials, policemen, judges, and so forth. Today many people say that every public official and every policeman, for example, is "crooked." This attitude is unjust, sinful, false, and dangerous to our American way of life, and an offense against God. Even though there may be scandals regarding some politicians, we cannot jump to the assumption that all public representatives are bad.

You have a moral obligation to respect and obey the authorities of the city, state and federal governments. When the officials of these governments act within their power, it is a sin to show disrespect and disobedience.

You must love your country, your state, and your city. You do this by helping the officials strive for material prosperity for all, for public health and education, for sound Christian morality and social justice. You must pay your taxes as an expense to run the government, vote for and pray for the rulers of the city, state and federal government. Voting is an important duty as a citizen that should not be taken lightly especially when certain candidates or issues present a moral obligation to vote for their defeat. Do not speak cynically about public officials, especially before your children.

B. DUTIES TO THE AUTHORITIES IN THE CHURCH — INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church was set up by God Himself and has authority from Jesus Christ. It does not accept you into the Church as a member until you are well instructed. Then, before Christ Himself, before your pastor you take a Profession of Faith. In the Profession of Faith you make known that you are placing yourself under the authority of the Catholic Church. This authority is possessed by the Pope, the bishops, and by your pastor. In matters of religion, you must obey them under pain of sin. The Catholic Church is not like any Protestant Church, we Catholics know we must obey the Church in matters of religion even if we do not like the command given. At the same time we Catholics know that the Pope, the bishop, and the pastor will not give us any unreasonable orders, because all these act in the person and in the manner of Jesus Christ Who was most kind to all He met.

C. DUTIES TO THE POPE

The Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the real successor of St. Peter; he is the representative of Christ on earth. By showing love, reverence and obedience to the Pope, we show love, reverence and obedience to Jesus Christ Himself, because the Pope is Christ's representative on earth. If you wish to love, reverence and obey the Pope, follow herein the example of your parish priest.

When the Pope as the head of God's Church declares to the whole world some teaching of Christ, we must accept that teaching without hesitation. Even when the Pope does not command us under obedience, but only advises us, as when he speaks to private groups, we should accept this advice and live according to it at least out of reverence and respect.

D. DUTIES TO THE BISHOP

The bishop is a real successor of the Apostles; he has the same general powers and duties as the twelve Apostles had when they ruled. From God's Church he has received the powers to make laws and regulations in his diocese to help us on the road to eternal salvation. If the bishop did not lay down any laws to direct us, he would be neglecting his duty. We must obey his laws and directions just as if one of the Apostles had given them to us.

E. DUTIES TO THE PASTOR

God Himself commands us in the Bible: *"Obey your prelates and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your soul."* (Hebrews 13:17) From the bishop, the successor of the Apostles, your pastor receives the power and duty to rule his parish. You call your pastor "Father"; and you owe him the obedience of a loving child. You must obey the pastor in all that concerns the good of his parish. To do otherwise would be a sin. Good Catholics show their reverence for the God-given authority and power of priests by respecting them in speech and action, by avoiding gossip about priests and by praying for them.

LESSON 46

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Many people today misunderstand the ownership of human life; and this is their big mistake about the Fifth Commandment. They think that life belongs to man. Therefore, they do not realize that anger, drunkenness, abortion, mercy killing (euthanasia), and neglect of health are sins.

You cannot understand this lesson unless you accept the basic Christian principle about life; namely, that life belongs to God, the Author of life. Human beings do not have absolute mastery over life.

A. LIFE BELONGS TO GOD, NOT TO MAN

Let's imagine that the president of General Motors, out of the goodness of his heart, lends you a big Cadillac. You thank him and tell him that you will repay him in the only way you can, by taking good care of his car (gift) and using it well. But when you start driving the Cadillac you forget all your promises and obligations; you try to have collisions with every automobile you see. And besides trying to wreck everyone else's automobile, you do your best to ruin the Cadillac that isn't yours — you pour alcohol into the gas tank just to see what will happen. And then, when you get tired of "bumping off" other cars, you go home and entertain yourself by taking the Cadillac apart. You remove the headlights and use them for salad bowls, you take off the horn and use it for a door bell, and then give the wheels to your children for playthings. You have received a beautiful piece of machinery, but you dismantled it, mutilated it, misused it. And it was not yours!

Now, God has given you a wonderful machine for your use — your body. You must not dismantle it, mutilate it, or misuse it. Remember, it is really not yours; it belongs to God. Therefore, you must not injure (do anything wrong to) your own body, your own life; you must not injure (do anything wrong to) the body or the life of another. Life does not belong to us; it belongs to God. Man did not give life; he may not take it away. God alone is the *Author* and *Owner* of life.

B. WHAT THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT COMMANDS

The Fifth Commandment obliges you to preserve your own life and the lives of others. You must take ordinary care of your life; you may do nothing to injure another's life.

C. WHAT THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT FORBIDS

The Fifth Commandment forbids unjust killing, wounding, striking, or mutilation of the body. It forbids anything that may lead to the killing or injuring of another, such as anger, hatred and revenge.

D. MURDER

Murder is the unjust killing of an innocent person. It is always a mortal sin.

E. SELF DEFENSE

In case of unjust attack, you may do all that is necessary to defend yourself or another. To defend yourself, it is even permitted to kill the attacker, if that is the only way you can protect yourself. But, if you can get someone in authority, such as a policeman, to protect you, you may not injure or kill the person who is unjustly attacking you when that authority is present.

F. ABORTION

There is a story told of a mother who went to a surgeon and asked him to perform an abortion. The surgeon refused and made this suggestion to her. He told her to wait until the baby was born and then to hold her finger against the baby's windpipe, until the child stopped breathing. The mother cried out in dismay, "Oh I could not do such a terrible thing! It would be murder." "That's what you are asking me to do," said the doctor. "I can't commit murder any more than you can."

Abortion is the killing of an unborn child. It is murder, no matter what the reason is for committing it. Any Catholic mother, doctor, nurse, or anyone else who has anything to do with an abortion is excommunicated and can return to the Church only through absolution that comes from the bishop. It is murder of the innocent, and what is even worse, it denies the child the opportunity of ever getting to heaven, because the child dies without being baptized. In the case of danger to the life of a mother at the time of childbirth, abortion is not the only way out; very often the mother and child can be saved by other medical means.

Science today tries to prove (falsely) that the fetus (they will not call it a baby) is not a human until it is born. True medical science contradicts this. As a Catholic we believe that life begins at conception. No one has a right to take the life of the innocent child.

G. SUICIDE

Life belongs to God. God gave the body and life for a purpose. Man cannot serve God and achieve this purpose without his body, because man is a composite of body and soul. Suicide makes it impossible for man to use his life as God wants him to use it. Suicide is self-murder, it is a direct violation of the law of nature and, therefore, of God's Law. Catholic suicide victims are refused Christian burial.

A suicide exchanges a life of suffering here on earth for the intense and never-ending suffering of hell. A suicidal person is generally one who has lost hope and the desire to persevere through the hardships we all have to face. He is afraid to face a life of suffering on earth. He doesn't realize that his act could only bring him the intense and never-ending suffering of hell.

If an insane person kills himself, he is not guilty of the sin of suicide and could be buried from the Catholic Church.

H. MERCY KILLING (EUTHANASIA)

Mercy killing is murder. Life belongs to God, not to man. Neither doctor, nor patient, nor relatives have the right to take the life of a sick person. The doctor has taken an oath to preserve life and not to destroy it. When the patient has a choice he does not want to die; and even if he did want to die, he would be asking for suicide or murder. The sufferings before death have a purpose, namely, to make up for the sins of a whole lifetime. More good is sometimes done on a bed of pain, than in a lifetime of activity. Let us be careful not to mistake a misplaced compassion at the sight of the sufferings of another for an ill-placed zeal to stop their suffering.

I. CAUSING DEATH OR INJURY BY SERIOUS CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE

To neglect your property so that others will be in danger of loss of life or limb is a serious sin. Sometimes employers in a factory commit this sin, by not having proper safety devices on their machinery. Landlords commit this sin by neglecting their property, so that it is hazardous to others. By seriously neglecting your automobile, for example the brakes, or by driving at dangerous speeds, you can commit a serious sin.

J. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

God has given to the State the right over life and death, as He has given to every man the right of self defense against unjust attack. It is declared in Scripture (*Exod. 22:18*) and was recognized by St. Paul: "For he (the prince) is God's minister to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear; for he beareth not the sword in vain."

So that this power may not be exercised so as to interfere with human rights, the accused must normally have opportunities to plead his case, the crime punished by death must be legally deserving of this supreme penalty, and the guilt must be established beyond all doubt. No one, no matter how guilty, may be put to death by private initiative, except in the case of self defense.

K. WAR

A just war is permitted because it is self-defense.

A war is just if the following conditions are fulfilled: (1) It must be declared by the government; (2) War must be absolutely necessary — the last resort to settle the dispute; (3) There must be a just and serious reason for the war; (4) War must be fought in a just manner (for example, hospital ships must not be attacked); (5) The purpose of the war must be good; (6) The war may not be carried on after the enemy has been defeated, and (7) The conditions for peace must be just. In a just war you are obliged to defend your country.

Before the outbreak of World War II, Pope Pius XII said: "Everything is gained by peace; nothing is gained by war." Pray for peace. We should do everything possible by prayer and good works to avoid war.

L. ANGER, HATRED, REVENGE, FIGHTING

Anger is not sinful if it is reasonable. For example, scolding a disobedient child is not only not sinful, but is necessary. But if you become more angry than the cause deserves, you sin; for example, a teacher breaks a boy's nose for merely whispering in school.

"But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt 5:22)

Hatred means seriously wishing evil to another. All hatred is forbidden; it is often a mortal sin. *"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (I John 3:15)* *"But I say to you: love your enemies: do good to them that hate you." (Matt 5:44)*

You must forgive injuries from your heart. *"If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he is thirsty, give him to drink." (Rom. 12:20)*

Dislike is not hatred. If you dislike a person you have no obligation to associate with him or be particularly friendly.

When people don't "get along" well together, it is often better for them to stay apart lest there be occasion for quarreling, bickering, uncharitableness or even greater sins. If you cannot associate with some person without committing sins of uncharitableness, stay away from that person; but pray for him. Even some of the saints could not be in the company of another saint.

Fighting at home makes family life miserable; it can be a mortal sin. If the fighting is so constant that it puts the home in continual disorder, someone is guilty of serious sin. It is serious because it undermines the health and welfare of the whole family, especially children.

M. STERILIZATION

In a man, sterilization is an operation to prevent the emission of sperm; in a woman it is an operation to prevent conception by tying the Fallopian tubes or removing the uterus so that conception won't take place. The only time any operation is permitted is when it is necessary for the health of the whole body. When sterilization is done for the purpose of birth control, it is a mortal sin. It is a mortal sin because God made the body and the functions of the body; we cannot destroy these functions unless it is absolutely necessary to maintain the life or health of the whole body.

Unfortunately, many doctors today recommend sterilization. It is becoming a more common practice in many hospitals. Don't let irreligious doctors perform this immoral operation.

N. THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

The moderate use of alcohol is no sin. If you "get tipsy" or are "feeling high" it is a venial sin — you want to sing, shake hands with everybody, but you still know your way home. If you get drunk, it is a mortal sin; for instance, you drink so much that you don't know what you are doing. You could be guilty of further sins you commit while in this state.

Giving alcoholic drinks to minors can be an occasion of sin. Narcotics may be used only on a doctor's prescription. Otherwise it is sinful.

O. ALCOHOLISM OR DRUNKENNESS

Alcoholism today is a scourge of humanity. God attached a certain pleasure to eating and drinking. But God gave us reason by which we govern our eating and drinking. God compares the drunkard to the fornicator and the adulterer: "*Neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers . . . nor drunkards . . . shall possess the Kingdom of God.*" (1 Cor. 6:9)

Unfortunately, the drunkard harms not only himself, but his wife and children, too. He poisons his own system and degrades himself as a father. Because of the drunkard, the home becomes unhappy and degenerate. The drunkard easily falls into sins of impurity and can fall victim to serious venereal diseases. And the result — stillbirths, blindness, insanity! This is to say nothing of the increasing danger of contracting serious sexually transmitted diseases. Promiscuity has brought with itself many curses on mankind.

Girls who keep company should know whether the boy drinks heavily or uses drugs. If he does, you may be sure that you won't reform him after marriage. You can't make a silk purse out of a swine's ear.

P. SCANDAL

Scandal is any word or act that leads another into sin.

"Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh . . . He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were far better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:7-6)

Scandal may be called murder of the soul. Parents commit this spiritual murder by missing Mass; married persons by keeping company; parents by using loose talk about sexual matters before children.

Q. EXAMINE YOUR CONSCIENCE

Next to the grace of God in our souls our life is our most valuable possession. Do you value your life highly? Do you get enough food and sleep? Do you see that your children get enough, too? Do you smoke too much? Are you on the borderline of sin in your use of alcohol? Do you and your children get enough exercise and fresh air?

See to it that you and your children practice patience, humility, generosity, self-control, and mildness so that you have a family that is gentle and thoughtful like the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. If your children do not learn these virtues when they are young, they will commit many of the sins listed in this lesson when they become adults. A Christian is expected to be like Christ, who tells us "*Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.*" (Matt. 11:29)

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

From Lessons 45 & 46

1. What are our duties towards civil authority?
2. Why do we say all authority comes from God?
3. What obedience is promised by the Profession of Faith?
4. What are our duties to the pope?
5. What are our duties toward the bishop?
6. What are our duties toward the parish priest?
Are the following mortal sins, venial sins or no sins at all:
7. Abortion?
8. Suicide?
9. Euthanasia (Mercy Killing)?
10. Serious criminal neglect of your property?
11. Sterilization?
12. Getting drunk?
13. Moderate drinking?
14. Being slightly drunk?
15. Using illegal drugs?
16. Anger and hatred?

LESSON 47

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14)
"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." (Exodus 20:17)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

It is a grave error to allow a convert to go through the instructions with only a vague notion of his obligations in chastity. This often leads to defection from the faith later on. The modern world teaches people that certain sins against chastity are not sins at all. Too often, the non-Catholic does not know the seriousness of impurity; he does not know about the many sins against chastity which can lead him to hell. Therefore, it is necessary to mention to adults various ways in which serious sins against chastity might be committed. These two commandments must be explained to an adult group thoroughly but tactfully, but we will not omit anything through a sense of false shame or from a groundless fear of offending someone.

The Sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The Ninth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet (desire unlawfully) thy neighbor's wife." Both commandments are placed in one lesson with all violations of the virtue of chastity included. The Sixth Commandment forbids especially unchaste actions; the Ninth Commandment forbids particularly unchaste thoughts and desires.

A. GOD'S CREATIVE POWER

God Himself created the first man and woman. Then, in order to people the earth, He (as it were) shared His creative powers with man. He gave Adam and Eve the command "Increase and multiply." (*Gen. 1:28*) In order to accomplish this, He implanted in them a sacred power which we call the sex passion. This passion is not a dirty thing. It is something holy. It is something good in itself. It is something very important in God's plan of creation and providence. The misuse, the wrong use, the abuse of this sex passion is what is evil. In fact, the misuse of this sacred power is an insult to God; it is mortal sin.

B. THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY

The virtue of chastity is the virtue by which you regulate the use of your sexual passions according to the law of God. Outside of the marriage state, no one has the right to satisfy the sexual urge. He must at all times keep it under control. Only husband and wife have the right with each other to satisfy their sexual desires in a lawful way, and thus be God's instruments in bringing children into the world.

C. THE NECESSITY OF THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY

Without the virtue of chastity no one can hope to save his soul. St. Alphonsus tells us that there are more souls in hell because of the violation of this virtue than for any other reason. St. Jerome says that nine out of ten who are in hell are there because of sex sins.

Spiritual things become distasteful to the impure man. Violation of this virtue often means loss of Faith, the neglect of Confession and Holy Communion, the neglect of prayer and Mass. The impure, unchaste person develops a hardened conscience, a weak will, and often loses his character and self-respect. Often impurity makes a man stoop to any crime.

As we look back through the history of the human race we see how God punished people who violated chastity, and how they thus punished themselves.

God brought fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah for sins of impurity, principally that of homosexuality. To this day it carries the odious name of *sodomy*.

God destroyed twenty-four thousand Israelites in one day for this sin. He exterminated almost the entire tribe of Benjamin. Adultery led the great King David into the sin of murder. Henry VIII left the Catholic Church and led a miserable life with six wives because of sins of impurity. He even died a victim of a sexually transmitted disease.

Napoleon's downfall, some historians say, can possibly be attributed to his sins against chastity.

The Bible tells us that "*neither fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liars with mankind . . . shall possess the kingdom of God.*" (*1 Cor 6:9-10*)

The Bible also tells us these sins keep a person out of heaven: "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest; which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury . . . of these which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.*" (*Gal 5:19-21*)

St. Paul tells us that "*no fornicators, or unclean person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*" (*Eph 6:5*)

SO SINS OF IMPURITY (UNCHASTITY OR SEX SINS) MEAN ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

God loves the chaste. He chose for His mother the purest virgin among the Jews. St. John was the beloved disciple of Christ because he was so pure.

Christ said, "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God." (Matt 5:8)

Chastity gives great joy to living. Only the chaste are carefree and joyful in life. The world will become a world of reason and of beauty if men are chaste; the world and life itself will become undesirable if men are impure.

D. MARRIED PERSONS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO MAY USE THE SEX PASSION

This passion is made for marriage and the begetting of children. When it is used for this purpose it is not a sin but rather an act of virtue. The normal use of the sex passion between man and wife is permitted, even rewarded by God.

E. THE GRAVITY OF SINS OF SEX

All deliberate sins against the sacred power of creation, the power of sex, are *mortal sins*. Only married people are allowed to use the sex passion. In the twentieth century, people have many erroneous ideas about chastity. Let it be clear that the following are *mortal sins*: deliberate impure thoughts, immodest touching, petting, necking, indecent dress and dancing, impure talk and kisses for the purpose of arousing passion, sins against nature, masturbation, impure shows and the like. In this matter there is no such thing as a venial sin. Our Lord said that even impure desires deliberately entertained, are mortal sin. The habit in some men of "undressing a woman" by sight is a dangerous one to get started. "*Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" (Matt 5:28)

F. ADULTERY

Adultery is the sin of sexual intercourse between a man and woman, one or both of whom are married but not to each other. It is a very serious sin against chastity and against justice. You violate God's law of chastity when you commit adultery you also violate justice because you are unjust to the partner of the married person, you are violating the right which only married persons have; you have stolen his (her) most precious possession — his wife (her husband). Because you have seriously sinned against chastity and justice, you deserve eternal punishment.

The one sinful act might be two or three mortal sins for each participant in the act: (1) a mortal sin of impurity against the Sixth Commandment; (2) a mortal sin of injustice against the spouse of your partner (if she is married).

G. FORNICATION

Fornication is sexual intercourse between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. This is a mortal sin. Young men and young women who are keeping company have absolutely no sexual right to each other until they are married. Don't fall into the trap of the secular world which says that unmarried couples need to see how compatible they are, even sexually. During the time that they keep company, they must learn respect for each other; they should pray for each other; they should go to Confession and Holy Communion often. They must avoid any signs of affection that would arouse their passions.

The safe rule is always to keep out in the open, where people can see you. Even the best of intentions and the holiest of resolutions can fall by the wayside in the heat of passion.

H. IMPURE THOUGHTS AND DESIRES

Impure thoughts and desires are not sins in themselves. Even great Saints were troubled with these temptations. St. Jerome suffered by temptations for over twenty-five years. If the person deliberately consents to the thoughts and desires to gain pleasure from them, they then become mortal sins.

I. IMPURE TOUCHING

This is touching to arouse the sexual passion outside of the proper use of sex. It applies to touches done individually or on another person. Impure touching is a mortal sin.

J. PETTING AND NECKING

Petting and necking are always serious sins when their purpose is to arouse passion. Don't think that petting and necking is an innocent display of affection. They are mortal sins and can lead to very sad consequences.

K. KISSING

Kissing for the purpose of arousing sexual passion is a mortal sin. Kissing between parents and children, relatives, and so forth, is not a sin because it is not done to arouse the sexual passion.

L. INDECENT DANCING

Decent dancing is good recreation and is not sinful. However, indecent dancing is always a mortal sin. There are several ways in which this sin is committed: by "close" dancing, by certain kinds of slow dancing, and other forms of indecent dancing, for example, dancing in poorly lighted rooms, "dirty dancing" and so forth. Beware of dangerous dance halls. Keep your children out of such places.

M. INDECENT DRESS

Indecent dress is often a mortal sin; and even when it is not a mortal sin at first, it can easily become one. Men's passions are easily aroused by low-cut dresses, indecent sweaters, and indecent bathing suits. The Catholic girl will be taught by her parents to dress in a modern way, but in a modest way. Women are not alone in being careful about the manner in which they dress. Men also should be careful in their dress lest they be an occasion of temptation to women.

N. IMPURE TALK

Impure or "dirty" talk is either a mortal sin or may lead to mortal sin. Always remember that you are in the presence of Almighty God. "Dirty" talk in front of children is one of the worst kinds of sins. Remember also that one impure story told to a group may be the cause of hundreds and hundreds of mortal sins if the story told is repeated by others. You never know where it ends and how many sins it has caused. Don't do the devil's work by telling dirty stories.

O. SINS AGAINST NATURE

Sins against nature are disgusting sins; they are called sexual perversions. They are always mortal sins. They are committed with another person of the same sex or the opposite sex, or with animals.

"Do not err: neither . . . the effeminate nor liars with mankind . . . shall possess the kingdom of heaven." (1 Cor 6:9-10)

P. MASTURBATION

This is the sin known as self-abuse, or of enjoying the sexual passion alone. Solitary sex is also forbidden by the Sixth Commandment just as seriously as forbidden sex between unmarried couples. Care must be taken to avoid the first inclinations to this sin lest it becomes a habit that is very hard to break.

Q. IMPURE SHOWS

In the modern world there are a variety of impure shows which can lead people to sin. To watch impure floor shows, stage shows, movies or videos, or to read books or magazines with the deliberate intention of arousing the sex passion is always a mortal sin. Other shows and books border on the impure; these are dangerous and should also be avoided.

R. IS IT POSSIBLE TO LEAD A PURE LIFE?

It is possible to lead a pure life. Not only is it possible with the help of God's grace, but it is necessary as well.

Observe the following rules and you will not find it too difficult:

1. *Keep busy.* An idle mind is the devil's workshop. The first sin an idle mind generally turns to is impurity.
2. *Keep away from bad companions and evil conversations,* especially with people of the opposite sex. Keep away from immoral books, magazines and newspapers. Avoid indecent shows, pictures and games. Stay away from dangerous dances, dangerous rides in automobiles and anything else that has led you into sin in the past.
3. *Pray fervently and frequently.* In time of temptation say: "Mary most pure, pray for me," or "Mary, help me; Jesus save me;" then turn your mind to something worthwhile. Longer prayers should be said in moments of calm, when no temptation is present.
4. *Gently yet firmly push impure temptations aside.* Don't try to fight the passion of lust with the passion of anger. Don't get angry at yourself if temptations arise. Bad thoughts afflict all men. You will be successful in overcoming temptations if you maintain calm in your life.
5. *Maintain the presence of God.* Remember that you are always in the presence of Almighty God! Even if others don't see you, remember that God sees you.
6. *Develop a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.* The saints greatly recommend the practice of this devotion.
7. *Receive the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion frequently,* at least once a week. "Walk in the spirit; and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Gal 5:16) "Oh how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory, for the memory thereof is immortal; because it is known both with God and with men." (Wisdom 4:1)

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

Tell whether the following are mortal sins, venial sins, or no sins at all:

1. Adultery?
2. Fornication?
3. Masturbation?
4. Indecent dress?
5. Impure kissing?
6. Impure dancing?
7. Impure talk?
8. Sins against nature?
9. Birth control?
10. Impure touching?
11. "Petting"?
12. Looking at impure movies or videos?
13. Looking at impure dances?
14. Looking at impure floor shows?
15. Looking at impure pictures or magazines?
16. Impure thoughts?

LESSON 48

THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

"Thou shalt not steal." (Exod 20:15)
"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." (Exod 20:17)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

As you study this lesson, realize that the goods of the world are sacred things given by the good God. Perhaps you have not been guilty of any serious sin against the Seventh Commandment. If not guilty of such serious sin, examine your conscience on thrift, on the prudent management of your family finances, on gambling that might become sinful, and on cheating your employer by wasting time at work.

A. INTRODUCTION

God is a generous provider. He has put at the disposal of men more than enough of this world's goods. A man must get a sufficient amount of this world's goods to lead a good Christian life and to raise his family in decent comfort. It is most difficult for a man to lead a good life and to raise his family in the ways of virtue without a sufficient amount of this world's goods — food, clothing, shelter and money in the bank. When a man has gained these things for himself and for his family, God protects him with two commandments: the Seventh, "Thou shalt not steal," and the Tenth, "Thou shalt not covet (desire to steal) thy neighbor's goods."

B. THEFT AND ROBBERY

Stealing means taking anything which does not belong to me and which the owner is not willing to give me. Stealing is frequently called *theft* if it is done secretly and *robbery* if it is done openly. People commit this sin in several ways: borrowing an article without the owner's consent, *even with the intention of giving it back*; borrowing something with the owner's consent, and then refusing to return the goods; running up a charge account when one foresees he will never be able to pay it back, and thus forcing personal bankruptcy. To this might also be added defrauding the bank, insurance companies or the social welfare system by false financial reports.

Follow this good advice so that you won't be tempted to steal: Don't be two steps ahead of the bill collector all your life. Don't buy on the installment plan and pay huge interest rates ordinarily charged by credit cards if you can't afford the purchase. Learn to budget you money well. If you have difficulty preparing a budget, or if you are one who can't stop buying what he can't afford, see the Consumer Credit Counseling Service available in most cities.

Don't get into the habit of buying things you can get along without, especially buying things that are beyond your means. Don't live extravagantly. Living above your means leads to fighting at home; you may lose your peace of mind and never be at ease; you may come to look upon yourself as a poor provider and wreck your family life; you may even be tempted to steal. Get out of the rut: make a resolution now that you will never buy on the installment plan; resolve to get along without many of the luxuries of life, and then you will have a peaceful Christian family life.

C. GRAVITY OF THEFT

Ordinarily, if one steals a large amount, it is a big sin — a mortal sin. If one steals a small amount, it is a small sin — a venial sin. However, to steal a small amount from a poor person, or to steal a small amount over a period of time to the point it becomes a large amount, these would be serious sins. For example, a school boy steals some pennies from the newsstand — a small sin, another boy steals \$10 from the corner grocery, a large sin. (We emphasize the difference in the gravity of sins, because some non-Catholics think that all sins have the same malice).

D. DANGERS OF PETTY THIEVERY

Even though a person takes only small amounts at various intervals, these small amounts can add up and become a mortal sin if that is his intention. Small thefts, even though they may not be a grave sin are bad for several reasons. They are venial sins, and venial sin is the greatest evil in the world next to mortal sin. In order to have the sin forgiven, you must always return the amounts stolen. The vice of stealing grows rapidly; the petty thief soon finds himself entangled in larger thefts; he loses his peace of mind in trying to pay back what he has taken. It is terribly hard to break a bad habit! The priest cannot forgive you if you do not sincerely promise to pay back as soon as possible what you have taken. Remember that no one trusts a thief. Usually people recognize a thief; it's a vice you can't keep hidden very long: you'll have difficulty keeping your job and your friends. *If a child steals even small amounts of money or something else, be firm in admonishing him.* Teach him that honesty is always the best policy.

E. TAKING ANOTHER'S GOODS WHEN YOU ARE IN EXTREME NEED

In our country it is never necessary to take another's goods, even if you are hungry. When you are in extreme need, you can go to a charitable agency or to the Church. They will help you through your rough times.

F. RESTITUTION

If you have to take the property of another it is absolutely necessary to restore what you have taken; you cannot just forget about it. The first thing the priest will ask you in Confession is, "Did you give it back?" or "Do you promise before God to give it back as soon as possible?" Otherwise, the priest cannot give you absolution for the sin. *"If that wicked man restore the pledge and render what he had robbed and walk in the commandments of life and do no unjust thing; he shall surely live and shall not die."* (Ezech. 15)

Restitution must be made as soon as possible. Delay amounts to additional injustice and additional sin. The creditor suffers because of your delay. If, for example, you owe bills the company may have to hire collectors to go to you many times and threaten you with the law; you are thus making your sin greater. You must restore the exact amount taken, not just what you feel like giving. You don't have to publicize your sin, the restitution can be made secretly. For example, sending the money back through the mail without signing your name is one way of restoring the value of stolen property.

G. IF YOU FIND SOMETHING

If you find something, you must make a reasonable effort to find the owner. The amount of effort you should make to find the owner depends on the value of the article. If it is something expensive, like a watch, you might be obliged to advertise in the newspaper for the owner. If it is something inexpensive, only a little effort is necessary. If you have made a reasonable effort and cannot find the owner, you may then keep the article.

H. FRAUD AND LYING IN SELLING GOODS

To sell bad or second-rate articles as new and first-class items is to break the Seventh Commandment. Merchants also break the commandment by fraud in weight or measure or number.

"Do not any unjust thing, in judgment, in rule, in weight, or in measure. Let the balance be just and the weights equal, the bushel just, and the sextary equal." (Lev. 19:35-36) *"Diverse weights are an abomination before the Lord: a deceitful balance is not good."* (Prov. 20:23)

I. AN EMPLOYER CHEATING HIS WORKERS

The employer sins, often grievously, by cheating the worker out of a living wage, by not giving him decent hours and good working conditions. The worker is entitled to a wage sufficient to maintain himself and his family in decent comfort. The employer cannot buy labor as he buys raw material; he is dealing with human beings and their families.

Pope Leo XIII encouraged workers who are abused to join collective bargaining units, or unions, to help win security from the employee against injustice. However, the unions of today may actually lead to injustice among workers. Choose your local union carefully if you decide to join.

J. A WORKER CHEATING HIS EMPLOYER

By loafing on the job, doing careless work, wasting material or time, you are cheating your employer and committing the sin of theft. You must restore the money unjustly taken from your employer, just as if you had stolen it from the cash register. If repairmen and others cheat their customers, they are committing the same sin.

K. OBTAINING MONEY UNDER PRETENCE OF POVERTY

There are some miserable souls who detest the notion of work so much that they will defraud the government by pretending to be poor and incapable of working. It is this same class of people who will go around begging for money instead of making an effort to work. Don't encourage people like this. Give you donations to legitimate charitable organizations.

L. THOSE WHO WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT

When those who work for the government waste their time or neglect their duties, they not only defraud their employer, but they steal money from the public trust. The taxes paid by citizens of our country are meant to help defray the cost of running government. If government employees waste time and material, they waste away this trust. Government employees are obliged to do their job well.

M. DAMAGING ANOTHER'S PROPERTY

Damaging property of another can be done in a variety of ways, e.g. damaging and/or defacing public property such as street lights, or writing graffiti on the inside or outside of buildings, toilets, etc. Damaging private property means neglecting to give reasonable care to buildings or property that is rented or leased, destroying the personal property of another in areas around their

home or at work. Whether the property is public or privately held, willfully damaging it can be a serious sin.

N. CORRUPTING JUDGES, POLITICIANS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

People sin by urging politicians to break their oath of office or by asking them to overlook violations of the law. By doing this, they often cooperate in an injustice done to another. Here are some examples of this sin: tavern owners pay the police so that they can stay open after legal hours; gamblers pay to operate against the law, and the like.

O. GAMBLING

Gambling of itself is not a sin. However, excessive gambling can be a mortal sin. Excessive gambling means using money needed for family support at gaming tables. If you have a real weakness for gambling, stay away from it entirely.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. What kind of sin is stealing?
Are these things sinful?:
2. Not returning what I borrow?
3. Running up a charge account and not paying?
4. Not giving a workman a just wage?
5. Wasting time and material on a job?
6. Depriving a family of money by gambling or spending it foolishly?
7. Bribing officials?
8. Not paying your bills?
9. Damaging the property of others?
10. Cheating another of some money?
11. Not returning found articles?
12. Selling articles with hidden defects?
13. Is it allowed to keep stolen goods?

POOR, BUT HONEST

A poor man one day found a wallet containing about \$5,000.00. He knew that he could not make his own of what he found, and so he posted up a notice, in which was written: Whoever has lost some money can recover it by contacting -----.

About this same time, the man who lost the money was making every effort to find the wallet he lost. He searched and searched, but was not successful. One day he saw the notice that was posted up. He went to the address on the notice and answered satisfactorily the questions about the lost wallet and money.

So grateful was the owner to the poor man that he offered him a reward: ten percent of the money would be his for finding the wallet and reuniting it with its owner.

"No," replied the poor man, "I do not need a reward for doing my duty."

"Then take at least \$100.00," replied the other man.

"No, I cannot."

The owner of the wallet finally persuaded the poor man to take \$75.00 as a reward. No sooner had he received it than he divided it with others who were equally as poor as himself.

NOTES

LESSON 49

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Exod 20:16)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

By the use of his tongue a person manifests his home training or lack of it. By it he betrays his true character, weak or stable! The Bible tells us, *"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."* (James 3:2) Soon you will be a Catholic. Out of love and a spirit of thankfulness and generosity, you will want to be a fine Catholic. You will want to be the perfect man of which the Bible speaks. This means that you must train your tongue and abstain from the many things that lead you to sin with the tongue.

A. THE GIFT OF SPEECH IS ONE OF THE GREATEST GIFTS OF GOD

Speech is an external sign of being human. It distinguishes man from beast. Think of yourself as being dumb, without the faculty of speech. You cannot speak to the members of your family. How terrible this would be. How sorry we feel for a deaf and dumb person. How we dread the possibility of having a child born unable to speak. Therefore, in thanksgiving to God for this great gift you must never misuse it.

B. THE BIBLE ON MISUSE OF THE TONGUE (St. James, Chapter 3)

If you will take out your Bible and read the third chapter of St. James, you will find plenty of food for thought. St. James said: *"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."* A man who governs his tongue trains himself so that he can govern his whole body, his passions, his drink, his sleep, his mind and everything that might lead him into sin. We put bits into the mouths of horses so we can lead them around and make them obey us, and turn about the whole body of the horse. So we should bridle our own tongues so that we can govern the whole body. St. James says: Behold how a large ship is governed by a small thing in the back of the ship called a rudder . . . So your life is often set wrong or right by the small rudder, the tongue. St. James tells that the tongue is a small fire that too often causes a great fire. The tongue is often a world of iniquity. The tongue too often defiles the whole body. St. James says that we tame beasts and birds and serpents, but we do not tame our own tongues. The tongue, if misused, is full of evil and deadly poison. The shame of it all, says St. James, is that by the tongue we bless God and we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God. Then St. James ends this part of the Scripture with these pointed words for you, *"These things, my brethren, ought not to be so."* (James 3:10)

C. SHAKESPEARE ON THE MISUSE OF TONGUE (Othello)

"Good name in man and woman, is the jewel of their souls. Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing; 'Twas mine, 'tis his and has been slave to thousands. But he that filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed." (Othello, Act 3, Scene 3)

How true this is! By the careless use of your tongue you don't steal a man's money; you steal something much more valuable, his good name. What do you get out of it? Nothing. But you make him a very poor man; you have robbed him of his most precious possession, his reputation.

D. THE LIE

A lie is speaking something you know is not the truth. A lie is measured by the damage done. If serious evil is done, serious sin is committed. For example, if your lie makes a man lose his job, your lie has done serious damage. If slight evil is done, for example, if you tell a lie to keep peace at home, a venial sin has been committed.

It is never permitted to tell a lie because every lie is an abuse of the sacred faculty of speech (it is always at least a venial sin). There is no such thing as a "white" lie.

You must always repair damage done by your lies. Lies start quarrels and discord, separate friends, cause hatred. Here is a true story: A teacher in Chicago was doing some outstanding work. One day he meted out some well deserved punishment to a boy in school. The boy complained to his mother. The mother fabricated a story against the teacher. The story went around the neighborhood in about two days. It was too late for anyone to do anything. The man lost his reputation. He had to be removed from his school and sent to another, much to the sorrow of the school, and even to the foolish woman who started the story.

The Bible has the following to say about lies and liars: *"All liars shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone."* (Apoc 21:8) (This, of course, refers to lies seriously harmful. Some lies are venial sins).

"Wherefore, put away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbor." (Ephes. 4:25)

"Thou shalt not be a detractor nor a whisperer among the people." (Lev. 19:16)

E. REVEALING THE HIDDEN FAULTS OF ANOTHER

You have no right to destroy another's good name, even by telling the truth. Organizations, too, have the same right to their good name, for example, Elks, Knights of Columbus, and so forth. The dead, too, have a right to their good name.

Telling hidden faults is a sin against *Justice*. Actually when you lie about someone, you are equivalently stealing. If much damage is done, it is a mortal sin. A man's good name is more valuable to him than his automobile or his possessions. You must

repair the damage done, the same as if you had stolen money.

Some people who would never think about committing serious sins like murder or adultery, sometimes sin, even mortally, by the sin of gossip. If by your gossip, you reveal a secret grave fault of another, it is a mortal sin. If a slight fault is revealed, you commit a venial sin. We have to be careful about justifying our actions of betraying the hidden faults of our neighbor. The higher a station in life the offended person has, the greater the sin against him. To gossip about a common person is bad; to do the same about a priest is worse.

Is it ever allowed to tell hidden faults of another for the sake of promoting the common good, protecting the rights of an innocent party, or for the sinner's ultimate good? Yes, it is. In practice, consult your pastor for a prudent answer in each case.

F. JUDGING ANOTHER WITHOUT SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

Everyone has a right to the good esteem of others unless there is evidence to the contrary. If the judgment is gravely damaging, mortal sin is done, for example: You judge that Mr. X must be a drunkard because he went into a tavern, even though he gives no outward display of a failure in sobriety. If the rash judgment is not gravely damaging, a small sin is committed.

Important: Wives and husbands can ruin their mutual love and their very marriage by this sin! Always try to think of others as you would like them to think of you.

G. INSULTING ANOTHER

By an insult we mean dishonoring a person who is present by contemptuous words or actions. Insult is a sin against justice and charity, for it is against the right one has to the honor and respect of all. It is done by mimicry, lampoons, grins, caricatures, a slap in the face, burning in effigy, and the like. How serious is the sin? It is a serious sin if serious dishonor is done, for example, to say to someone in the presence of others: "You adulterer!"

Note: Friends who joke about the peculiarities and personal characteristics of others without malice do not commit the sin of insult. Make sure that the person who is the victim of such joking also finds it amusing.

H. REVEALING SECRETS

A secret is hidden knowledge which may not be revealed without causing injustice or uncharity. Some things by their nature must never be told, for example: a person's illegitimacy. Others cannot be told because you promised not to tell. Everyone has a strict right to his secret. He is the owner, as it were. You must not steal it. Ways in which people sin in this regard are: Eaves dropping on the telephone; bribing somebody to tell secret knowledge; trying to trick others into betraying secrets; opening the letters of others. How serious is this sin? It depends again on the damage you have done by revealing the secret or by opening the mail. You do damage against justice and charity.

Note: Secrets among children are often not real secrets.

I. TRAIN YOUR TONGUE

Since the tongue, the smallest of your members, can cause great sins (*James 3*), a Christian should train his tongue by certain definite acts of self-denial. He refrains his tongue even in things that are in no way sinful. He does not talk, for example, whenever he feels like it.

Mortify your curiosity, don't be always looking for news, repress the itch for gossip; don't always ask questions about useless things; mind your own business in all things; be reserved in your conversation; pass over gossip in silence; always reserve judgment until you have heard the full story; don't chat about things of a risky nature; cut down on the hours you spend on the telephone. Give up faultfinding and grumbling. Always speak the truth even when it hurts. Correct your children for telling even small lies or for passing about small pieces of gossip, then judge yourself by the same measure. Help your spouse always to tell the truth and correct him (or her) charitably when you find him (or her) telling even a small lie. See that nothing but good is said about anyone in your home. Thus, you will have a really Christian home and a Christian family.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man " (James 3:2)

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. How does the use of speech give an example of home training?
2. What does St. James say about the use of speech?
3. What is a lie?
4. Are we allowed to reveal the hidden faults of another?
5. How serious is it to not reveal secrets?

LESSON 50

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

From this course of religious instructions some people may get the false notion that all they have to do is attend Mass on Sunday, go to Confession and Holy Communion occasionally, abstain from meat on Friday, and avoid murder, stealing, adultery, and all mortal sins. This is an incomplete notion of Catholic life. In giving you these instructions we have emphasized the bare essentials of the Catholic religion. In this lesson we will try to give you a deeper and broader appreciation of Christian living.

A. WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

A Christian is elevated by God's grace, so that he possesses not only his natural human life, but also shares in the very life of God. Therefore a Christian is a Godlike person. When you are baptized, you are really adopted by Almighty God and become a true son of God. You are thus also an heir to the kingdom of heaven. God lives in you; and you are a temple of the Holy Ghost. *"Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor 3:16)*

If you realize what these lessons mean, you will be startled and amazed at what happens to you in Baptism. You will realize your dignity as a Christian; and you will see why you must live your life in accord with your new dignity.

B. IT IS EASIER TO BE A FERVENT CATHOLIC THAN TO BE A LUKEWARM CATHOLIC

Lukewarm Catholics sooner or later fall into serious sin. If you do not strive for real Christian perfection now at the time of your conversion, you, too, will fall into serious sin sooner or later.

A Catholic who simply tries to stay away from serious sin finds his religion a burden. A Catholic whose religion is his most precious treasure, will lead a life of Christian virtue even approaching perfection; he will find his religion a great consolation and a joy. You have discovered God's true religion; now your life will have a meaning and purpose; your life will be a great adventure and a great joy if through your religion you try to be *"perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)*

To lead a truly Christian life and to strive for Christian perfection demands true love of God and of your neighbor. It urges you to make sacrifice, to deny yourselves certain things for love of God. It encourages you to offer all your actions to God. It draws you to frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Communion. It fosters in you a life of prayer and sacrifice for love of God.

C. LOVE IS THE ESSENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The Christian law is essentially a law of love. There is no Christianity without charity or love. Our Lord Himself told us that the whole Christian law consists in the love of God and in the love of neighbor.

Christian life demands, first of all, an imitation of Jesus Christ, the model of all Christians. Christ Himself has told us that He is the way, the truth, and the life. He has asked us to learn of Him because He is meek and humble of heart. He has given us a way of life that we must follow. Real Christianity is the imitation of Christ; real Christians are those who love Christ and imitate Him, follow Him by studying His life in the gospels, by praying to know Him more intimately, and by reflecting on His virtues in the silence of your home or your parish church. There is no leader in the history of the world who has so many followers as Jesus Christ.

Besides imitating Our Lord, all Catholics should have a sincere love and devotion toward the Blessed Mother, the Mother of Jesus. She was left by Her Son to be a Mother to us all. If we draw close to her she will bring us closer and closer to Her Son.

D. THE NEED OF SACRIFICE

Sacrifice is the giving of a gift to God. One who loves Christ sincerely discovers that he must sacrifice (give up) certain things in life in order to keep loving Christ. In general this means a sacrifice of the world, the flesh and the devil: that is, we must give up the evil part of the world, the evil pleasures of the flesh, and the devil.

In the world you must be on guard against unbelievers and religious indifferentists who say that all religions are the same; you must be on guard against hardened sinners who will lead you into sin. Beware of the world's false principles which teach that wealth and popularity and pleasure are the only things worthwhile. Beware of the vanities of the world, for example, dangerous movies and plays, bad pictures, videos and books. Overcome the bad example of the world; it will only lead you to misery and unhappiness, the lot of worldlings! Don't be afraid of the world even though it tries to tear you away from the true religion by mockery and jest, by ridicule, even by threats and persecution. Avoid the occasions of sin in the world, remember the words of the Bible: *"Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God." (James 4:4)*

Your flesh is something good, created by God. God has given to your flesh pleasurable acts such as eating and continuing the life of the human race. The urge to misuse this pleasure leads many people into sin. Your whole body by nature is inclined toward pleasure. An impure word or song can work on your mind and lead you into sin. A Catholic not only renounces evil pleasures; he also avoids dangerous pleasures and even restrains his legitimate pleasures.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." (Galatians 5:24) Realize that your body is holy because, like your soul, it has been created by Almighty God. Respect yourself, love yourself by controlling your desire for pleasure.

The devil, the father of lies, will use every trick to get you away from the fervent practice of your religion; ultimately he wants to bring you to the habit of mortal sin. He knows your weakness; and he will take advantage of it. But your weapons against the devil are much stronger than any power the devil can employ. Pray to God humbly and confidently; run to the Blessed Virgin to your guardian angel and to the Saints. Use the Sacraments frequently, especially Confession and Holy Communion.

E. OFFER ALL YOUR ACTIONS TO GOD

When you become a Catholic through Baptism you become very holy. Then every action you perform will be holy and will increase the life of grace in your soul. From the moment you awake in the morning until you retire at night, you should offer to Almighty God every one of your actions, even the most insignificant. Doing this will make grace grow in your soul; it will raise your soul to a high degree of holiness. When you arise, get down on your knees and say the Morning Offering. Then frequently during the day offer all your actions to Almighty God in simple little acts of consecration made up in your own words.

Accept the position in life which God's Providence has given you and offer it to Almighty God. Offer your work, your recreation and above all, your family life to God.

F. RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS FREQUENTLY

The whole purpose of the Sacraments is to increase your Christian life. The Sacraments automatically give grace because Christ gave the Sacraments this power through His death on the cross. The Sacraments are free; they require very little effort from you; God does most of the work.

During your lifetime receive the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion frequently. Be sure to receive Confirmation.

Attend Mass just as often as you can. In the Mass, Christ offers Himself to God, and we offer ourselves with Christ to God. The Mass is the most perfect prayer, the prayer from which you will receive the most grace. Many Catholics assist at Mass daily. Why not you?

G. PRAYER IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

Prayer is talking to God. The new Catholic who does not keep up his prayers will not live up to the basic requirements of his religion. Are you saying your morning and evening prayers, grace before and after meals? Are you reciting the family Rosary? Are you attending devotions at the church? To these you should add your prayers through the day, spiritual reading, and days of recollection and retreats. Then you will be leading a life of prayer.

If you offer up your entire day to God, you will make your whole day a prayer.

Do not forget to do some spiritual reading; it will prepare your soul for prayer.

H. MAKE A RULE OF LIFE

At the age of forty, many men look back and call their life a "rat race". They regret that their whole life has been given to the search for things of this world. They admit that they have had no rule of life other than gaining the material necessities of life and a few luxuries.

The Christian must plan his life according to a set rule. Without this rule your life will be in disorder. A rule of life helps you to use your time well; it helps you to perform your duties carefully; it gives you the opportunity to lead a good Christian life.

A sensible rule of life will allow time for your daily labor, your family duties, your religious activities — prayer, Mass and the Sacraments. Plan to make retreats and days of recollection. Choose one confessor; go to him all the time ask him to help you to lead a Christian life of love and sacrifice, to offer your actions to God, to pray, and to receive the Sacraments frequently.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON

1. How are you going to lead a Christian life?
2. How important is personal sacrifice?
3. What is the Christian life?
4. Why should we strive for perfection?
5. Why is it wrong to misuse the natural good for our bodies?
6. How do we offer all our actions to God?

IMPORTANT WORDS

A priest lent a condemned man a good book to read in hopes of inspiring him. The prisoner read it with great profit and pleasure. Before he died he was heard to remark, "Ah if I always had books like this to read! If I had taken the time to lead a better life and be careful of what I read, I would not now be where I am."

LESSON 51

CATHOLIC DEVOTIONS

The Catholic life is a life of sincere prayer. To help us to pray and thus draw closer to God in this busy world, the Church provides various devotions.

VISITS TO OUR LORD IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. Your parish church is open during the day, so that you can come and pray to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament whenever you have time. Use this opportunity to talk to Our Lord about your difficulties at home or at work, about your joys and sorrows. Make regular visits to Him as you would to your friends and neighbors.

BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. At Benediction Our Lord is placed in a beautiful monstrance over the altar in the midst of lighted candles for your public adoration. The people sing ancient Latin hymns to Christ. Then you receive the blessing of Christ Himself.

HOLY HOURS. Frequently your pastor will have a public holy hour in the church. You should attend. You can make a private holy hour at any time. In a holy hour, we adore our Blessed Lord actually present in our parish church; we answer Jesus' plea, "Can you not spend one hour with me?"

THE FORTY HOURS DEVOTION IN HONOR OF OUR LORD IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. During *Forty Hours* Our Lord is publicly exposed on the altar, so that by our adoration and love we can make up for the many sins of the world, especially for the negligence and indifference He suffers in the Blessed Sacrament.

THE NINE FIRST FRIDAYS. Many Catholics receive Holy Communion on the first Fridays of nine consecutive months. They do this because Our Lord promised to St. Margaret Mary: "I promise in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that Its all powerful love will grant to all those who receive Communion on the first Friday of every month for nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance that they shall not die under my displeasure, and without the Sacraments, that My Heart shall be their secure refuge at that last hour."

By receiving Holy Communion on the nine first Fridays, you will lay up spiritual insurance for yourself. Our Lord promises that you will have His grace, even the Sacraments, when you die. Even after the nine months are up, many good Catholics will continue to receive Communion on the First Fridays as long as they live.

PARISH SOCIETIES. The men of the parish should join the Holy Name Society. The women of the parish should join the Blessed Sacrament Society or the Altar and Rosary Society. The youth of the parish have their special societies. These groups receive Holy Communion in a body on a certain Sunday each month. Join your parish society, take part in its activities, and receive Holy Communion regularly with them. The Church grants special indulgences to those who receive Communion with their parish society.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS OR THE WAY OF THE CROSS. The Way of the Cross is a prayerful visit to the scenes of Our Lord's passion and death. A station is a cross and picture hanging on the wall of the church which shows a scene from Our Lord's passion. You make the Way of the Cross by walking from station to station, pausing and praying at each one. This devotion will help you to be sorry for your sins, and it will give you the strength to practice virtue. Each time you make the Stations of the Cross you receive a large indulgence.

THE ROSARY. The Rosary consists of five "Our Fathers" and fifty "Hail Marys". The rosary is a powerful prayer by which we obtain grace from God by having Mary, His Mother, ask Him for that grace. The best way to learn how to say the Rosary is to follow the priest in your parish instruction class. Get a Rosary in your parish or buy one in a religious goods store. Do not try to learn the mysteries of the Rosary until you have learned how to use the beads.

NOVENAS. A Novena is nine days of prayer in honor of Our Lord or one of the Saints. The Apostles and the Blessed Virgin made the first novena when they awaited the coming of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday. There are novenas to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Mary Our Sorrowful Mother, to Our Lady of Perpetual Help (The Blessed Mother), to St. Anne, to St. Jude, to Our Lady of Fatima (The Blessed Virgin), to St. Anthony, to The Infant of Prague (The Infant Christ). Find a church that has the particular novena you want; get the novena book at the door of the church; join in the public prayers of the novena. There are many other novenas besides the ones listed above.

PARISH MISSIONS. A mission is a series of sermons, prayers and other spiritual exercises conducted by a priest who has special training and experience in this work. The purpose of the mission is to renew the love of God in the people of a parish. A mission is a sort of inventory of your life; it is a new and valuable experience; many sinners are converted, and the just are strengthened in the practice of virtue. Parishes have missions every year or two.

DAY OF RECOLLECTION. A day of recollection is a day set aside for prayer and the consideration of heaven, hell, sin and other important Christian truths. Usually a priest will lead the day of recollection. If your parish does not have a day of recollection you can make one yourself with the aid of a spiritual book which your parish priest will be glad to lend you.

RETREATS. A retreat is a series of sermons, prayers, and other spiritual exercises conducted by a priest. It lasts for several days; it is held in a secluded place where everyone keeps silence. A retreat is even more helpful than a mission.

RELIGIOUS THIRD ORDERS. Religious Third Orders are branches of large religious orders which you may join. The purpose of Third Orders is to help lay people live a religious life in the world. In the United States you can join the Third Order of Franciscans, Augustinians, Benedictines, Carmelites and Servites.

INDULGENCES. After your sins have been forgiven some punishment due to your sins remains. Christ gave His Church the power to forgive even the punishment due to the sin, "*Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven.*" (*Matthew 16:19*)

A plenary indulgence is the forgiveness of *all* the temporary punishment due to your sins; but people very often gain only part of the plenary indulgence because they have some attachment to sin. A partial indulgence is the forgiveness of *part* of the temporal punishment due to sin. To gain the indulgence you must be in the state of grace, have the intention of gaining the indulgence, and do what is required by the Church. To gain a plenary indulgence it is usually required that you go to Confession and Holy Communion and pray for our Holy Father the Pope (at least an "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and "Glory be to the Father"). You gain an indulgence every time you say the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the Act of Faith, the Act of Hope, the Act of Charity, the Prayers of Mass, and Prayers at the Hour of Death. There are many other indulgenced prayers. In a Catholic prayer book you will find the indulgence at the end of each prayer.

PRACTICE OF EJACULATORY PRAYER DURING YOUR BUSY DAY. During your busy day, even while you are working, say short prayers like, "Jesus," "Jesus help me," "My God, I offer you all my work," "My God, I love you," "My Lord and my God". You can find these prayers in Catholic prayer books, or make up your own.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

JOYFUL

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Nativity of Jesus
4. The Presentation in the Temple
5. The Finding in the Temple

SORROWFUL

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion

GLORIOUS

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Descent of the Holy Ghost
4. The Assumption of Mary
5. The Coronation of Mary

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Issued by the Holy Office, Rome, Italy, June 13, 1956.

I, _____, touching with my hand God's holy Gospels, enlightened by divine grace, profess the faith which the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church teaches. I believe that Church to be the one true Church, which Jesus Christ founded on earth: to which I submit with all my heart.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

I believe that seven sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind: namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

I believe that the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, that he is the supreme visible head of the whole Church, and that he teaches infallibly what we must believe and do to be saved.

I also believe everything which the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church defines and declares what we must believe. I adhere to her with all my heart, and I reject every error and schism which she condemns.

So help me God and these His holy Gospels which I touch with my hand.

LESSON 52

BLESSED ARTICLES

A Catholic generally possesses several blessed religious articles. These articles remind him of God and holy things and help him to pray. They have no power of themselves.

THE CRUCIFIX. A good Catholic lives with the crucifix on his person; he dies with his crucifix at his lips. There is one attached to your Rosary; that one is sufficient. You should look upon it frequently while you are praying. You should also hang a crucifix in your home. We suggest the "sick-call-crucifix set" instead of the ordinary crucifix because this set contains not only the crucifix, but also the candles and holy water which you need when you call the priest to your home for a sick call.

HOLY WATER. You should obtain a bottle of holy water from your parish church. Then buy a small holy water font and place it in your home. Holy water is blessed by the priest. In this blessing he asks God to bring special help and grace to those who use the holy water.

CANDLES. Candles signify the presence of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Lighted candles are used on the altar at Mass. Vigil lights are burned in front of the statues of the Saints in the parish church. You will find two blessed candles in the sick-call-crucifix set. Have the priest bless the set for you.

MEDALS. A religious medal is a piece of metal with an image of Christ, or the Blessed Mother, or one of the saints. You should wear a medal to increase your devotion. It is your way of showing that you implore the assistance and protection of Our Lord, Our Blessed Lady or whatever Saint's image is on the medal.

SCAPULARS. A Scapular is part of the religious habit, a part of the clothing which some religious wear. The small Scapular that lay people may wear is a miniature of the large Scapular worn by some religious sisters and priests. By wearing the Scapular you share in the good works and prayers of some religious orders of the Catholic Church.

THE ROSARY OF OUR BLESSED LADY. In the section on Catholic Devotions, we have already explained the rosary. Please obtain one; keep it in your pocket and use it frequently. The rosary is the sign of a Catholic—if you are hurt in an accident and a rosary is found on you, a priest will be called.

PRAYER BOOKS. There are several excellent Catholic prayer books that can be obtained either in your parish or from a Catholic religious goods store. You should have a prayer book.

MISSALS. The Missal is the large book which the priest uses in offering Mass. You can obtain a small Sunday Missal for a small price. Please obtain a Missal and use it at Mass.

INCENSE. Incense is perfumed powder made from the gum of trees in tropical countries. When sprinkled upon a glowing coal in the censer, it sends upward a white smoke and a fragrant odor. The sweet odor from the incense signifies the sweet odor of Christian virtue. The burning symbolizes that your soul should be on fire with love of God. The smoke arising signifies your prayer arising from the church to God in Heaven.

BLESSED ASHES. On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, the priest places blessed ashes upon the foreheads of the people while he says the words: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." The ashes placed upon your forehead in the form of a cross remind you that some day soon your body will turn to dust. The ashes also remind us that the Jews and early Christians did penance in sack cloth and ashes. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of our season of penance, our season of sackcloth and ashes.

STATUES AND PICTURES. Have statues or pictures of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints in your home. They help raise your mind to your future home: heaven.

APPENDIX A

PRAYERS TO BE MEMORIZED

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The Act of Contrition

Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven, and the pains of hell. But most of all, because I have offended Thee, my God, Who art all Good, and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

OTHER CATHOLIC PRAYERS

The Act of Faith

O My God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, Who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

The Act of Hope

O My God, relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

The Act of Love

O My God, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul because Thou art all good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The Confiteor

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel; to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary, ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May the Almighty God have mercy on me, and forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.

The Hail Holy Queen

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears! Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help and sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I flee to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful, O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

The Grace before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

The Grace after Meals

We give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, O Almighty God, who livest and reignest forever. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Morning Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. O My God, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee my prayers works and sufferings of this day, in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the intentions for which He pleads and offers Himself in all the Holy Masses, throughout the world, in thanksgiving for Thy favors, in reparation for our sins, for the petitions of our associates, and in particular for the intentions recommended this month by our Holy Father, the Pope.

Say the entire Lord's Prayer.

Say the entire Hail Mary.

Say the entire Apostles' Creed.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Say the Hail Holy Queen.

Evening Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Say the entire Our Father.

Say the entire Hail Mary.

O my God, I thank Thee for Thy benefits, especially for those which I have received this day from Thy bounty. Enlighten me, and give me Thy grace that I may be truly sorry for my sins.

Examine your conscience to see if you have committed any sins today.

Say the entire Act of Contrition.

Bless, O Lord, the repose I am about to take that I may be enabled to serve Thee better.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints pray for me.

Angel of God, my guardian dear, To whom His love commits me here. Ever this night be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

May the Lord (make the sign of the cross) bless me and bring me to life everlasting. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

NOTES

APPENDIX B

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

O loving and merciful God! help me to make a good confession. Help me to examine my conscience, that I shall be able to tell the priest what sins I have committed and how often. Let me feel a deep sorrow for all my sins and give me the grace firmly to resolve not to sin again.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, my dear Guardian Angel, and all you blessed angels and saints in heaven, pray for me, that I may make a good confession and from now on lead a good life, so that I may join you in heaven to praise our dear Lord, forever and ever.

Say the Our Father and the Hail Mary.

Examine your conscience. Try to remember all the sins you have committed and how many times you have committed each sin.

The following is a partial list of mortal sins:

Missing Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation through your own fault .

Permitting your children to miss Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation.

Arriving at Mass after the priest finishes the Offertory.

Doing unnecessary manual work on Sunday.

Eating meat on Friday or other days of abstinence.

Violation of the laws of fasting.

Deliberate enjoyment of the sex passion outside of marriage — adultery, fornication, impure looks, touches, passionate kissing, petting, necking, impure dancing, unnatural sins against chastity, deliberately entertaining unchaste thoughts in your mind.

Willful religious ignorance — neglecting to learn the truths of God or neglecting to teach them to your children.

Quitting the Catholic Church or actively participating in the services of a man-made religion.

Superstition .

Joining the Masons or the Communists after you knew it was wrong.

Perjury.

Neglecting the bodies or souls of your children.

Hatred.

Drunkenness.

The use of narcotics in a sinful manner.

Theft, fraud, damaging the property of another, not paying your just debts, wasting time, money, or property of your employer, depriving your family of needed money by gambling, drinking, or foolish spending.

Telling serious lies; seriously damaging another's reputation, serious rash judgment, revealing serious secrets.

Say the Act of Contrition.

Go into the confessional to make your confession.

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