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Bandas, Rudolph G.
- Modern Questions
ser. 6 ADJ 3166

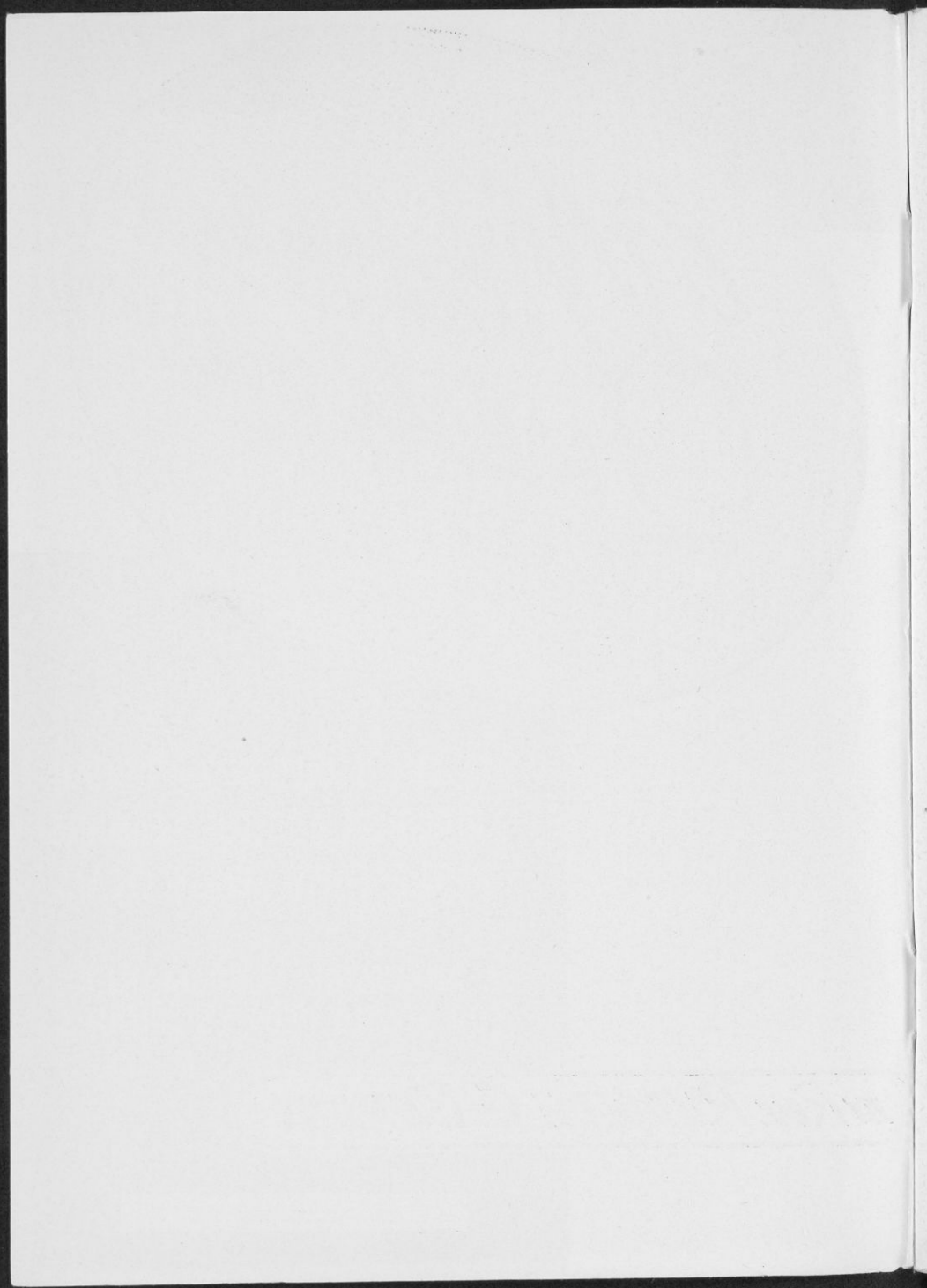
Modern Questions

IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN
PRINCIPLES AND THE TEACHING
OF THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS

A DISCUSSION CLUB MANUAL
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

BY Rev. RUDOLPH G. BANDAS

SERIES SIX



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In the Light of Christian Principles and the
Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals

A Discussion Club Manual for
Young People's and Adult Groups

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Rev. Rudolph G. Bandas

SERIES VI

Nihil Obstat

Right Reverend H. Moynihan, S. T. D.
Censor Librorum

die 25a Aprilis, 1940

Imprimatur

✠ JOANNES GREGORIUS MURRAY,
Archiepiscopus Paulipolitanus

die 26a Aprilis, 1940

Fourth Edition, 20,000

Published In U. S. A.

September 4, 1956

By

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR PRESS

Huntington, Indiana



Decidmed

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Introduction

The chapters in this book are brief explanations of topics which have proved interesting to open forums and discussion clubs of young people as well as of adults. The chapters do not pretend to be exhaustive explanations of the subjects but serve rather as an introduction to the question. They contain basic principles which are indispensable for the proper evaluation of any modern problem.

We wish hereby to express our gratitude to Benziger Brothers for permission to quote from their copyrighted publication, "The Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII" edited by the Rev. John J. Wynne, S. J., and to the Paulist Press for permission to quote from the "Four Great Encyclicals."

Chapter I

VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Every object in the universe manifests in its own characteristic way the glory and perfections of God. Just as various planets and stars combine to render glory to God in the great "milky way," so in every part of the universe many and different objects are necessary to give full praise to God. Just as in a vast and complicated mechanism small as well as large parts contribute to the harmonious working of the whole, so also in the universe the tiny grain of sand, the little insect, and the majestic planet are an integral part of the order of creation. Each one has a providential role to play, each one has a function to perform, each one is the object of God's solicitude and care.

If this is true of irrational creatures, how much more is it true of rational beings. "The very hairs of your head" says the God-man, "are all numbered" ⁽¹⁾. Every human being in this world has a purpose to work out, a mission to fulfill. The inclination towards this determined state in life is called a vocation. A vocation is an invitation and call from God to praise and serve Him in a state towards which our tastes and aptitudes incline us, and in which God will provide for us special aids to enable us to work out our salvation.

Ascertaining Our Vocation

A vocation, on which depends in a sense our temporal and eternal bliss, should be chosen with much deliberation and care. If we embrace a call-

⁽¹⁾ Mtt. X, 30



ing in life blindly, if we choose a wrong vocation, we shall assume obligations for which we were not prepared by nature or grace, and at the same time deprive ourselves of the special divine aids which were in store for us if we had chosen the course marked out by Divine Providence. Moral and ascetical theology lay down the following principles to be observed by those who are trying to ascertain their vocation and make a correct choice:

1) Have recourse to *God* in earnest prayer that He may illuminate your mind and strengthen your will in the choice of the right state of life. Repeat frequently the words of St. Paul: "What wouldst thou have me to do, O, Lord?"⁽²⁾. If necessary, withdraw for a few days from the tumult and distractions of the world, and ask God to manifest His will to you in the solitude of a retreat. Cultivate a readiness to do God's will and be ready to accept generously all sacrifices.

2) If you have chosen a *confessor* to whom you have gone habitually, he has an intimate knowledge of your spiritual life and of your spiritual growth. He is acquainted with your abilities and shortcomings, with your likes and dislikes, with your sins and virtues. Seek his guidance, open to him frankly and completely your mind and heart. He is for you God's authorized representative, a disinterested and competent judge, who seeks only to know God's will and who is unaffected in his decision or advice by any personal interests.

3) Your *parents* who are intimately acquainted with your physical, moral and spiritual development, are also well qualified to evaluate your inclinations and guide you in your choice. They love you,

⁽²⁾ Acts XXII, 10

wish you well, are interested in your future, and you in filial obedience should seek their advice. But discuss with your confessor the attitude and advice of your parents so that you may satisfy yourself that no selfish or worldly maxims enter into their judgment and that only motives of faith prevail.

4) Discuss the matter of your vocation with a *trustworthy friend* of mature years and experience who knows your conduct outside of your home and your community and who can frankly inform you whether the impression you are making upon others would favor a particular calling.

5) Finally, institute with *yourself* the following examination of conscience:

a) What is drawing me to this vocation? Is it the honor and glory of God and the desire to save souls? Is it in this vocation that I can best serve God and man? Or, am I drawn by a spirit of selfishness and vanity, by a desire to be publicized and to have a position of respect and renown?

b) Is it in this vocation that I have the best chance to save my soul? Is it this that I shall have wished to have done when I come to the moment of death? What advice would I give to a friend who finds himself in a position similar to mine?

c) Have I the necessary ability and strength of character for this vocation? Is it in this calling that I can put to best use whatever physical, intellectual and spiritual talents I may have?

d) Do I find a greater attraction for some other state in which I think I would be more happy and contented than in the vocation I am considering? For, after all, God wants us to be His happy children on earth, and the Catholic religion is a religion of happiness and peace. Work done enthusiastically is

work well done; tasks performed as a drudgery are usually done poorly.

The Priestly Vocation

Sacred Scripture clearly affirms the necessity of a vocation from God to the priesthood and denounces intrusion into the sanctuary as a usurpation and even as a sacrilege. Let us pass in review some of the important Biblical passages bearing on this point: In his Epistle to the Hebrews, in which St. Paul extolls the excellence of the Christian sacrifice and priesthood, we read the solemn warning: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was"⁽³⁾. St. Luke tells us explicitly that the apostles were not volunteers but men specially chosen by the God-man: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into the mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when day was come, he called unto him his disciples, and he chose twelve of them"⁽⁴⁾. In His last discourse Christ recalls with tenderness to the minds of the Apostles their election to the apostolic mission: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain"⁽⁵⁾. When there was question of replacing Judas, the Apostles were intent above all to ascertain the will of God: "Show whether of these two thou hast chosen"⁽⁶⁾. Nowhere do we read of Christ accepting some one who offered himself of his own accord. When the scribe said to Him: "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go," Our Lord answered:

(3) Heb. V, 4

(4) Lk. VI, 12

(5) John XV, 16

(6) Acts I, 24

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."⁽⁷⁾.

The reason why the priestly ministry demands a divine call becomes apparent when we reflect on the powers and obligations of a priest. The priestly tasks demand special and abundant graces without which the priest would suffer the loss of his own soul and bring about the damnation of others. If any one who is not called by God, or who has not sufficiently studied his vocation or has serious doubts about it, insinuates himself into the priesthood, he commits a grave sin. Such an intrusion into the priestly office is an injury to the prerogatives of Christ Who alone has the right to choose His ministers; it is an injury to the rights of Christ's people who have a right to be shepherded by good pastors. Such a priest leads an unhappy, guilty existence; his ministry is fruitless; his conduct often scandalous.

The divine voice calling a young man to the priesthood makes itself audible amid various circumstances. Sometimes the divine call is heard in connection with the reading of a book, listening to a sermon, participating in liturgical services, observing the saintly exemplary conduct of a priest, ministering as an altar boy, receiving First Communion, grieving over the death of a friend, escaping miraculously from a great injury, etc. Or the divine invitation may assert itself through the desire to catechize, preach, heal the wounds and sufferings of mankind, and stem the tide of irreligion in the world. At any rate, God usually speaks quietly to the soul which He has chosen; He does not send an

⁽⁷⁾ Mtt. VIII, 19, 20

angel to it; He does not overpower it triumphantly as He did Saul on the way to Damascus. He endows the soul with the necessary gifts and arouses in it the necessary aspirations, and leaves the rest to a pious mother, teacher or priest who will develop the grace of God and gradually make the young man conscious of it⁽⁸⁾.

To reject a vocation to the priesthood or the religious state is probably not a mortal sin; but it makes the working out of one's salvation more difficult. It deprives the young man of the special graces and aids which were in store for him. Since he chose a different path than that in which God had provided a channel of special graces for the supernatural growth of his soul, he is apt to become a mediocre and lukewarm Christian. His life will be marred with sadness, regrets, and dissatisfaction with self as well as with others. He misses a grand ideal—a life consecrated to the noble task of communicating divine life to others, while he intensifies it in his own soul. Because of his selfishness and love of the world—and the indifference of many others like him—the greater part of the world still languishes in paganism.

Signs of a Priestly Vocation

A "vocation" to the priesthood may be taken in two senses: first, it may denote the natural and supernatural qualities demanded of those who aspire to the priesthood. In another sense, it designates the invitation or call from God to enter the priest-

⁽⁸⁾ Canon 1353: "The priests, especially the pastors, should give attention to boys who show signs of ecclesiastical vocation, and take pains to keep them from the contamination of the world, instruct them in piety, give them the first lessons in the study of letters, and foster the seed of vocation in them." (Woywod's translation, p. 278)

hood. The representative of God on earth, the vehicle of His will and thought, is the Church. Hence a vocation in the strict sense is the call or judgment of the Church, which through the Bishop invites a candidate possessing the necessary qualifications and virtues to present himself for ordination. This definition, as is clear, includes both the first and second senses of the term "vocation."

The Church law specifies that "the bishop should receive into the seminary only boys of legitimate birth, and of such a character that there is good reason to believe they will persevere and work with success in the ecclesiastical ministry"⁽⁹⁾. It ordains that "disorderly, incorrigible, seditious characters and those who lack docility shall not be suffered in the seminary, nor in general, those whose behaviour and talents do not make them desirable candidates for the clerical state. Students who advance but little in studies, so that there is not much hope that they will acquire sufficient learning, shall be dismissed"⁽¹⁰⁾. The Church also demands of the aspirant to the priesthood the observance of "the requirements of hygiene, cleanliness of clothes and person, courtesy and moderation"⁽¹¹⁾. Theologians usually enumerate the following signs or requirements for a priestly vocation:

1) *Good Health*. Since a valid administration of the sacraments, for example, demands an exact pronouncement of the words of the form, a priest must be free from impediments of speech. Since he says Mass and recites the breviary daily he must have good eyesight. Since he is often called upon

⁽⁹⁾ Canon 1363 (Woywod's translation, p. 281)

⁽¹⁰⁾ Canon 1371 (ibid. p. 282)

⁽¹¹⁾ Canon 1369 (ibid. p. 282)

to hear confessions, he must not have defective hearing. He must also be free from such bodily deformities and physical blemishes which would distract the people during divine worship—or repel them from a reception of the sacraments. Epilepsy and insanity are absolute impediments to ordination.

2) *Sufficient Knowledge.* The priest is the teacher of the people, a defender of the truth against the Church's enemies, an exponent of the spiritual life, and a physician of souls. He must catechize and preach, he must instruct the faithful in the pulpit and in the tribunal of penance. All this presupposes an extensive knowledge. For this reason the aspirant must spend six years in a preparatory seminary pursuing the study of the classics and sciences, and six years in a major seminary where he devotes two years to the study of philosophy, and four years to the study of theology. His office also demands an intelligence capable of acquiring and assimilating the knowledge required for the intellectual and spiritual leadership that makes his ministry effective in his community. Intelligence is not to be identified with the ability to memorize. Intellectual ability means the power to apply one's knowledge quickly and correctly to a particular moral case, modern problem or contemporary error. Again, since the Mass is said, the sacraments administered, and the breviary recited, in the Latin tongue, the priest must have a thorough and practical knowledge of this language.

Coupled with sufficient knowledge must go good common sense, good judgment. A priest must have a sound estimate of men and of situations. He must have sufficient business ability to discharge the office of trustee of the property of God with a pro-

portionate appreciation of the financial condition of the people. He must know how and be disposed to conduct himself as a priest at all times and in all places. He must realize with St. Paul that while certain things are lawful for a priest they are not always expedient. An odd, queer, impulsive person has no place in the priesthood.

3) *Moral Aptitude.* Masters of the spiritual life and theologians demand in the priest not only a high development of all the supernatural virtues and a perfection compatible with the priestly state, but they point out that the indispensable basis of clerical sanctity—as well as of all sanctity—is the natural virtues. The aspirant to the priesthood must be well grounded in honesty, truthfulness, self-reliance, refinement of speech and manners, personal neatness, discretion, affability, self-respect, punctuality in keeping engagements, fidelity in keeping promises. Without these the supernatural virtues will be submerged in natural faults of character. The aspirant must be disposed to obey orders and submit to discipline. A man who constantly murmurs and criticizes, spreads discontent and is a detriment to the community. Lastly and above all, the aspirant must be pure in thought, in word and in his actions, for in the subdiaconate he will vow himself irrevocably to chastity. Laymen overlook many shortcomings of the priest but they will not readily pardon any defect in this regard, nor even the appearance of such a defect.

4) *Right Intention.* Besides possessing the necessary qualifications the aspirant must will to be a priest. He must have a clear idea of the nature and obligations which he is contracting and must consent to assume them. The will to become a

priest must be personal, must be his own and not that of his parents, friends or teachers. The wish to become a priest must be a persevering one, undeterred by objections, obstacles and difficulties. The duties of the priesthood must be assumed freely. On May 10, 1907, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars ordained that in the Italian seminaries the courses in secular science be fundamentally the same as those in the establishments of Public Instruction, in order that the students may obtain a legal diploma and thus enjoy more freedom in the choice of their state. On December 27, 1930, the Congregation of Sacraments prescribed that each clerical candidate declare in writing before receiving each order his freedom of choice and his intention.

Finally the candidate must have the right motive in entering the priesthood. The following motives, however laudable they may be in themselves, are not sufficient motives for entering the priesthood; to do penance for one's past sins and disorders; to save one's soul more easily in the priesthood; to embrace its fascinating ideal of perfection. The candidate must will to embrace the priesthood in itself and in its intrinsic character of a divine ministry. He must embrace it as a dignity which associates him with Christ in His divine mediation, the purpose of which is the glorification of God by the sanctification and salvation of souls.

An apostolic and ardent zeal for the salvation of all men is the distinctive characteristic of a true priest. A true priest is interested, above all, in prayer, preaching and catechizing, in administering the sacraments, in converting sinners, propagating the faith, visiting the sick and the poor, sharing his time and his personal possessions with the destitute.

Unfulfilled Aspirations

1) A large number of boys in the intermediate and upper grades frequently express the intention of becoming priests. They dream of preaching and catechizing, of sacrificing themselves in a foreign mission, of leading a life of prayer and self-denial. But as they grow older, another and a secular vocation gradually makes itself articulate. Why then has God shown them the summit but has refused to have them ascend it? These aspirations were not without a providential purpose. These high ideals brought the young boy closer to God, they elevated, purified and refined him, they fortified him with grace against himself and against the world, so that he was a stronger and better man when he came to make his real choice in life.

2) There are many virtuous and zealous young men and laymen in the world who from our viewpoint have every qualification for the priesthood. Yet they remain in the world. The ultimate explanation of this situation must be sought in the dispositions of Divine Providence. The world has need of exceptional laymen, of saintly laymen who in the ordinary walks of life practice sometimes even heroically the evangelical precepts and counsels. The vocation to the priesthood is something supernatural and consequently gratuitous. Barnabas, who was surnamed Just, was a man of many virtues, and yet the choice of membership in the apostolic college fell on Matthias⁽¹²⁾.

3) Frequently a young man cannot make up his mind. He wavers to and fro, now inclining to one calling, now to another. What is he to do? He should continue to pray, awaiting an event or a sign

(12) Acts I, 23

which would trace for him the way. Finally, however, he should with proper direction make a choice of one of the alternative vocations. He has done his best to ascertain God's will, he is fulfilling it as far as he knows it, and God will by His grace sustain him in his decision. If, however, his hesitations were due to a lack of generosity towards God, he may finish by choosing a wrong vocation and will have to expiate in a painful manner his culpable indecision.

4) Frequently a young man is morally certain of his vocation to the priesthood but is held back by his parents. What is he to do? Parents have the right to counsel and advise their child in regard to a life's vocation but they have not the right to choose a vocation for him or interfere with the one towards which he inclines. The choice of a life's work is the inviolable right of the individual; he, after all, must live his own life. If, however, his parents are in grave need, and if this need cannot be remedied except by their son's staying in the world and supporting them, then after consulting with his confessor to avoid self-deception he should remain as long as his parents need him. The law of nature demands this. Besides, there is no particular age at which one must enter on his life's calling.

5) Some young men who are morally certain of their vocation, may—because of unforeseen reasons or difficulties—be refused admission to the seminary when they apply, or may be dismissed from the seminary after a certain period of time. These men are not to lead a solitary, chagrined and depressed existence. They can still practice self-denial and observe virginity. They will find a pro-

life outlet for their zeal in the lay apostolate. Their frustrated desire can be spiritualized into an immolation of self conducing to their own sanctification. They should choose a vocation in which they can best serve God and man, make an irrevocable decision, and resolutely face the future.

Discussion Aids

1. Has every object a role and a function to perform in the universe?
2. What is a vocation?
3. Is it important to ascertain one's vocation? Why?
4. What steps should be followed in ascertaining one's vocation?
5. What questions should each one ask himself before deciding on his vocation?
6. Show from Scripture that the priesthood demands a call from God.
7. Why does the priesthood demand a divine call?
8. In what ways may a vocation to the priesthood become articulate in a young man's consciousness?
9. Is it a sin to reject a vocation to the priesthood?
10. Define the priestly vocation.
11. What are the four signs or requirements for the priesthood?
12. What is the true motive for entering the priesthood?
13. What is to be said of the unfulfilled aspirations to enter the priesthood?

Religious Practices

1. Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?
2. I will accept generously whatever sacrifices my life's calling may involve.
3. I will pray God to enlighten me in regard to the daily obligations of my life's calling.

Chapter II

VOCATION TO CATHOLIC ACTION

Catholic Action has been defined by the late Holy Father as a "participation, in a certain manner, of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate"⁽¹⁾. It is an apostolate which has the same purpose as the Church, is carried on under her direction and uses the means indicated by her⁽²⁾. It is the layman's participation in the Church's threefold ministry of ruling, sanctifying and teaching.

There is, of course, an essential difference between the bishops and priests, on the one hand, and the members of Catholic Action and laymen, on the other. The Council of Trent and the Vatican Council make it clear that the Church is not a society of equals. Hence the laity can participate in the work of the hierarchy only "in a certain manner," as Pius XI says, that is, in a restricted and not in a strict sense. Members of Catholic Action are the extended hand of the bishops; the hierarchy prolongs itself, as it were, in the laity to accomplish more easily its world-wide task of saving souls.

What is the purpose of Catholic Action? To re-Christianize a de-Christianized world. Catholic Action "bends its efforts, even as does the apostolate of the hierarchy itself, to the winning or bringing back of souls. Always it is souls that it should have in view: it should spend itself, put forth its every

(1) Letter to Cardinal Bertram, November 13, 1928. Cf. our pamphlet on "Catholic Action" (Paterson, N.J. 1935)

(2) Cardinal G. Pizzardo, "Conferences on Catholic Action" (N. C. W. C., 1935) p. 7

effort in a quest for souls, that they may return to their father's house"⁽³⁾.

In our country the state and the public schools are utterly divorced from religion. Most of the Protestant Churches, which until recently have retained at least some Christian principles, are rapidly disintegrating. And what is the result? A spirit of paganism is beginning to permeate every department of life and like a cancer to eat into the very heart of society. Economic, industrial, scientific, artistic, literary and recreational endeavors are carried on without any reference to Christian doctrines and principles.

Now, the task of Catholic Action is to eradicate this fundamental evil of our time, namely, the non-conformity of society as such and of individuals with Christian and Catholic principles. It must transform and Christianize the naturalistic neo-pagan environment in which men live, move and have their being. It must act on the masses and influence public opinion.

"Select groups" of laymen must anticipate, aid and prolong the hierarchical apostolate in the midst of the world in order to bring men back to Christ. In close union with the priesthood and in complete dependence upon it, they must draw from the Heart of the Son of God that regenerating life of which decrepit pagan society stands in such great need.

Catholic Action is as old as the Catholic Church. In a letter to Cardinal Segura, Pope Pius XI wrote: "Catholic Action is not something new; substantially it is as old as the Church herself, although in its actual form it has become more and more pre-

⁽³⁾ G. Pizzardo, o. c. p. 11.

cise in recent times"⁽⁴⁾. In his discourse to the International Congress of Youth in Rome⁽⁵⁾, and again in his letter to Cardinal Bertram⁽⁶⁾, Pius XI refers to a lay apostolate exercised as early as the time of St. Paul: "That of which we speak was not unknown even in the times of the Apostles, since St. Paul makes mention of his 'fellow laborers'⁽⁷⁾ and commends 'his co-laborers in the spread of the Gospel.'" In his Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul recalls the names of his many co-laborers and "helpers in the kingdom of God"⁽⁸⁾, and in the Epistle to the Philippians mentions approvingly the services of two zealous women, Evodia and Syntyche "who have labored with me in the Gospel"⁽⁹⁾. St. Peter salutes Christian laymen as a "holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"⁽¹⁰⁾. He calls the Christians "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people"⁽¹¹⁾.

Early Tradition supplies us with many an edifying example of Catholic Action. "Christians, as far as in them lies," says Origen, "try to spread their doctrine even to the ends of the earth. Hence it is that many have assumed the task of making the rounds not only in the cities but also in the villages and the countrysides in order to bring others to practice the pious worship of God"⁽¹²⁾. In commenting on Isaias XXI, 14, 15, St. Jerome writes: "You who are accomplished in perfection, and who

(4) November 6, 1929.

(5) September 11, 1925.

(6) November 13, 1928.

(7) Phil. IV, 3.

(8) Col. IV, 7-12.

(9) Phil. IV, 2-3.

(10) I St. Peter II, 5.

(11) I St. Peter II, 9.

(12) Migne, "Patrologia Graeca," XI, 951.

have in you the light of the knowledge of the Scriptures, rush forth to the assistance of others; do not wait until they come to you, but imitate the father who in the parable of the Gospel goes forth to meet the prodigal son"⁽¹³⁾.

St. John Chrysostom urges the faithful to initiate a holy crusade for the conquest of souls: "Emerge from within yourselves and hasten to carry salvation to the city. If you do not know where the souls that are sick are to be found, set out in search of them—Bring these souls to the feet of the priests, and then by God's grace they will submit, and you can affirm that it is you who made this conquest, since you have lead them as if by the hand—Watch over the salvation of your brothers and bring them back to us, despite their resistance, their cries and their lamentations. Their opposition and their negligence are signs that you have to do with infants. It is up to you to change their soul, however imperfect and miserable it may be. It is your duty to persuade them to become men"⁽¹⁴⁾.

The lay apostolate flows from the very heart of the Christian religion. Let us briefly indicate some of the motives which should impel and animate every participant in Catholic Action:

1) *Love of God and of Christ.* We cannot truly and sincerely love another without wishing him to be loved by every one else. We cannot really love God without wanting Him to be better known and loved by others. Those who love God do not cease thinking of Him, speaking of Him to others, and striving to impress His name indelibly on the minds and hearts of men.

⁽¹³⁾ Migne, "Patrologia Latina," XXIV, 266.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Migne, "Patrologia Graeca," LI, 116.

As Christians we must imitate Christ, our Leader, Who came upon earth to transform a sinful pagan world, to inculcate a new conception of man's dignity, and to infuse a new life into an old and decrepit world. If Christ's tears and death for men leave us indifferent and untouched, if we do nothing to extend the benefits of Christ's Incarnation and Redemption to others, how can we still claim that we love Christ?

2) *Love of the Church.* The Church is Christ's representative upon earth, divinely instituted to renew and perpetuate the graces of Christ's Redemption among men. If we wish to be genuine and loyal sons of the Church, if we wish to fill the heart of our common Mother with happiness and joy, we must gladly cooperate with her in her mission of saving souls. We must be deeply interested in her works of propagating the faith, in her foreign and home missions, in her preaching and catechising, etc.

3) *Love of neighbor.* When God was about to create the universe He said "fiat," but when He wished to redeem man's soul He suffered and died. We often pretend to be ready to lay down our life to save another, we are willing to sacrifice our earthly existence for flag and country. Yet how often do we remain cold and indifferent when there is question of safeguarding the supernatural and eternally beatific life of our neighbor's soul?

We believe that our own soul is spiritual and immortal, that it was redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and that it is destined for the Beatific Vision of God. Yet, has not the soul of our neighbor been bought with the same precious price and has it not the same noble destiny?

We avoid sin because it offends God's Infinite Majesty. But has not our neighbor's sin the same malice and should it not likewise be prevented at all costs? How can we assert that we love God and yet remain indifferent to the lot of our neighbor's soul which tomorrow may be in hell?

4) *Love of self.* Charity covers a multitude of sins. The conversion of another may be the blotting out of all our sins. If the Saviour promised to reward the donor of even a glass of cold water, how much more will He reward a sincere apostolate for the conversion of souls? If we spend our whole life doing good for others, need we fear the judgment seat of God? If Christ warned the scandalizer that "it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea"⁽¹⁵⁾ how highly will He reward, on the other hand, those who help others on their way to eternal salvation?

5) *The Sacraments.* *Baptism* incorporates us into the Mystical Body of Christ. As each member is bound to cooperate for the well-being of a physical body, so the faithful must cooperate according to their ability in safeguarding the welfare of the members of Christ's mystical body: "The members should be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it"⁽¹⁶⁾.

Confirmation makes us defenders of the faith and soldiers in the service of Christ and of the Church. A soldier must labor and fight not only for himself but also and, above all, for others.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Matt. XVIII, 6.

⁽¹⁶⁾ I Cor. XII, 25, 26.

The *Eucharist* furnishes the soldiers with a celestial and supersubstantial bread and in that way sustains the strength and zeal of the lay apostles.

The dignity of a participant in Catholic Action and the supernatural end which he strives to attain makes imperative the presence of certain qualities in the lay apostle. Let us briefly enumerate some of them.

1) The lay apostle should cultivate an intense, vital spiritual life and a filial devotion towards the hierarchy and priesthood. When in 1929 Pius XI was pointing out that Catholic Action consisted not only in the pursuit of personal perfection but also in a true apostolate, he was careful to indicate that "personal perfection must ever remain for each of us the first, the supreme duty"⁽¹⁷⁾. This supernatural spirit must be acquired through spiritual reading, meditation, days of recollection, retreats, liturgical prayer, study of our Lord's life, and frequent reception of the sacraments.

Why must the lay apostolate be steeped in the supernatural? Because the transformation of conduct, the conversion of a heart, demands grace; without grace we can no more convert a soul than we can make marble weep.

2) The lay apostle must remember that he is only an instrument in God's hands. "Apollo watered," says St. Paul, "but God gave the increase"⁽¹⁸⁾. He must not expect to accomplish with a few words what it took the passion and death of Christ to accomplish. The devil takes a long time, if necessary, to undermine a soul; so also it sometimes takes a long time to convert a soul. If men reject the lay

⁽¹⁷⁾ Quoted in G. Pizzardo, o. c. p. 12.

⁽¹⁸⁾ I Cor. III, 6.

apostle together with his message, let him be consoled by the thought that they rejected His Master also. Let him say a prayer and try again.

3) To spread light one must possess light. To defend and explain your religion you must be well acquainted with its fundamental principles. This knowledge of Catholic doctrine must be obtained through personal study, discussion clubs, open forums, and weeks of study.

4) The lay apostle must possess a habitual Catholic spirit and outlook which will enable him to evaluate every situation and problem according to the mind of the Church.

5) A transformation of the environment in which we live will demand appropriate social reforms. Hence the lay apostle must be prepared to expound the social doctrine of the Church and to instil a truly Christian social spirit.

6) Above all, let the lay apostle be constant and persevering. If at times he is inclined to think that the apostolate should be the exclusive prerogative of the priest, let him remember that Christ's army needs both officers and soldiers. If he feels that there is so much to be done that it is almost useless to start, let him understand that he is not to dissipate his energies in every direction by trying to convert the whole world, but let him concentrate on one activity or on one person.

If he hesitates because he is young, let him recall that God has often chosen the weak things of this world to confound the wise. Did not God choose twelve simple fishermen as His instruments for converting the world? Youth is a defect which will soon be corrected. Youth has energy and ardor and an enthusiasm to do things expeditiously. Old age

with its sicknesses and frailties does not lend itself so readily to an apostolate. At any rate, the lay apostle must be as zealous in the spread of truth as the evil spirit is in the spread of error.

Catholics should always be ready to participate in Catholic Action by carrying out the activities enjoined upon them by the bishop through their pastor. In conclusion, we shall briefly indicate some apostolates in which all can profitably participate.

1) *Apostolate of family peace.* Try all in your power to prevent those misunderstandings, dissensions, and quarrels which often blight a home. Do not yourself try to have the last word in everything and, if it is not a question of principle, learn to give in. Try to introduce into your home the spirit of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

2) *Apostolate of prayer.* If someone in your household has abandoned the practice of religion, try to convert him by your prayers, good example, discretion, tact, goodness and meekness. He will admire you and finally seek and come to the source of your goodness and spiritual strength.

3) *Apostolate of consolation.* Cooperate closely with your diocesan office of Catholic Charities. Visit the sick, especially those who seem to be abandoned by others. Bring them a little joy and sunshine, speak to them the language of faith without preaching it, be with them in their last agony, do not leave them until their salvation is assured.

4) *Apostolate of mercy.* Do not neglect the poor. Remember that the poor man is a king since Christ promised the kingdom of God to the poor. Recall that he is another Christ and that any service rendered to him is done to Christ. Gladly offer to

God in the person of the poor a portion of your earthly goods; the only thing that you will carry from this world into eternity at the moment of death is alms given to the poor.

5) *Apostolate of truth.* Become a member of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, of the Propagation of the Faith, or of the Mission Crusade. Offer to assist your pastor in the instruction of Catholic children who attend the public schools. Make systematic visits in the parish to seek out children who absent themselves from religious instructions. Arrange for the transportation of teachers and pupils. Establish and conduct, or at least attend religious discussion clubs. Help in the formation of groups of parents to discuss the religious and moral training of the children in the home.

Strive to introduce a Catholic periodical into every Catholic home. Correct misrepresentations in the secular press. Oppose the sale of obscene and salacious literature. Remail Catholic periodicals to needy Catholics and non-Catholic families. Help to maintain a pamphlet rack in your Church or hall, and assist in the distribution of pamphlets to non-Catholics. Strive to introduce the Narbeth plan into your local secular newspaper. Sponsor a Catholic radio program or at least encourage the public to listen in on Catholic radio programs. Oppose pernicious programs in the theatre and demoralizing forms of recreation. Supply or help to gather and prepare clothing, medical supplies and Mass kits for the missions. Assist in all works of the propagation of the faith in both the foreign and home missions.

Discussion Aids

1. Define Catholic Action.
2. In what sense do the laity participate in the hierarchical apostolate?
3. What is the purpose of Catholic Action?
4. What evidence of Catholic Action have we in the New Testament?
5. Give examples of Catholic Action from Tradition.
6. On what religious motives is the lay apostolate based?
7. How does Catholic Action flow from the various sacraments?
8. What qualities are required in the participant of Catholic Action?
9. In what ways may one participate in Catholic action?
10. Mention ten activities which belong to the domain of Catholic Action.

Religious Practices

1. I shall cultivate within myself and in others a filial devotion to the Pope and the bishops.
2. I shall receive with a reverent obedience their decrees and regulations.
3. I shall to the best of my ability take an active part in the various apostolates enjoined by the Pope and the bishops.

Chapter III

VOCATION TO THE SISTERHOOD

The religious state is defined in Canon Law as a "permanent community life, in which the faithful besides observing the common precepts, oblige themselves to the observance of the evangelical counsels by the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty"⁽¹⁾. A religious order or institute which observes the duties of the religious life is described as a "society, approved by legitimate, ecclesiastical authority, whose members strive after evangelical perfection by living according to the special rules governing the society and by taking the public vows of poverty, chastity and obedience"⁽²⁾. All religious—superiors as well as subjects—"must not only faithfully keep the vows which they have taken, but also live according to the Rules and Constitutions proper to their order or congregation, and in this manner strive after the perfection of their state"⁽³⁾. In every religious house the community life shall be strictly followed by all, even in matters pertaining to food, clothing and furniture⁽⁴⁾.

These canons bring into relief the essential notes of the religious life. The religious life is a more complete development of the Christian life, and those who practice it constitute a circle of God's specially devoted and generous friends. If a vocation is necessary for each particular work on earth, it is all the more necessary for the religious life

(1) Canon 487.

(2) Canon 488, 1.

(3) Canon 593.

(4) Canon 594.

which is a life of self-denial, of daily crosses, of a constant aspiration after higher perfection. This vocation to the religious life is a special actual grace, enlightening the mind as to the nature of the religious life and at the same time inspiring the will to embrace it. It enters into the life of the prospective religious in a variety of ways. Sometimes it is a dream from childhood, a suave attraction replete with spiritual delights, which gently draws the candidate from a Christian home into the novitiate. Sometimes it is the ardent desire to lead a life of prayer, purity and holiness. At other times the vocation is a cold affair of the will, a matter of duty, in which temperament and sentiment play little part. Sometimes it is a sudden unexpected inspiration of God's grace changing the whole course of a young person's life. Sometimes the beginnings are clear and certain; then comes a period of anxiety and doubt due to a lack of courage or proper direction; finally, after this test of the soul has passed, the candidate takes the final step.

The law of the Church sums up in one canon the signs of a vocation to the religious life: "Admission to the religious life is open to any Catholic who is not under any legal impediment, who has the right intention, and is capable to fulfil the duties of the religious life"⁽⁵⁾. This canon lays down the following four requirements for the religious life: 1) The candidate must be a member of the Catholic Church: non-baptized persons, apostates, heretics, schismatics, and excommunicated persons are excluded. 2) The candidate must be free from the impediments which would make entrance into the religious life invalid or illicit. 3) The candidate

(5) Canon 5^o

must have the intention to live up to the aim and purpose of the religious life, namely, Christian perfection through the observance of the vows, rules and constitutions. The religious life is an attempt to attain full conformity with Christ who was born and lived in absolute poverty, Who was absolute sinlessness, Who was obedient even unto the death of the Cross, Who fasted and prayed in the desert, led a life of unique hiddenness, and lived a community life with His apostles and disciples. A candidate would not have the "right intention" if she entered the convent in order to be provided for during the remainder of her life, to enjoy the respect paid to religious, etc. The convent is often erroneously considered as a refuge of sinners and of those whose conscience is surcharged with remorse, of those who are disappointed, discouraged, or whose heart has been broken by a frustrated romance, etc. Such religious may exist in stories but not in reality.

4) Finally, the candidate must have the necessary qualifications to fulfil the duties of the religious life. She must have a spirit of prayer, docility, mortification, forbearance with others. She must have a love of humility, recollection and silence. She must have the necessary physical and intellectual talents which will enable her to carry out the special work of the religious institute to which she belongs. Some religious must teach, others must take care of the sick, of the aged, of the poor, of orphans, others must work in foreign missions, etc. For all these tasks special abilities are required.

Suppose a young woman is morally sure of her vocation, but is held back by her parents. What is she to do? If her parents are in grave want and depend upon her for support, so that no other pro-

vision can be made for them, the natural law forbids her to abandon them for the religious state. Parents have the right to oppose her plan if she is too young, or if her health is poor, or if she is acting too impulsively. Again they may ask her to reflect before she takes the step. But if she has the necessary qualifications and if the parents oppose her vocation for worldly and selfish reasons, she has a right and duty to leave for the convent. Such parents oppose the will of God Who has reserved this soul for Himself. They deprive the child of many graces, expose her to the danger of committing sins which otherwise she would have avoided, they arrest rather than promote her spiritual growth. Such parents should remember the words of the Master: "He who loves father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me." The daughter may delay her entrance into the convent a few months in order to prepare the parents for the sacrifice and in order to show by her serious and virtuous life that she is firmly determined in her vocation. During this time she should strive to make her parents understand the following truths: that we have no right to disobey God; that we belong first to God and next to our parents; that if she is free to choose a husband she should also be free to choose God; that those who enter the religious life love their parents more dearly than the married children; that if the parents love her truly they will sincerely desire her happiness; that a vocation is a pledge of blessing for the family and for the whole community. If none of these considerations prevail, the young woman should leave. We must serve God rather than man. The choice of one's life's calling is man's inviolable right.

Just as a young man must pass a certain time in training and receive several lower orders before being ordained to the priesthood, so also a candidate to the Sisterhood must pass through several steps before making her perpetual profession. A brief description of these stages will also bring out the requirements for this exalted state.

1) *Postulancy*⁽⁶⁾. This stage is a period of preparation and probation in a religious house before admission to the novitiate. Postulancy gives the candidate a taste of the religious life, tests her in her vocation, and affords the Superior an opportunity to ascertain whether she is a fit subject for the novitiate. Postulancy usually lasts six months, although it may be shortened by a few days or prolonged as much as an additional six months. The postulant devotes a certain amount of time to study and also to manual labor, and wears a plain dress different from that of the novices. Prior to her admission to the novitiate the postulant makes a retreat of at least eight full days and is examined by the local bishop as to her intentions and freedom of her actions.

2) *Novitiate*⁽⁷⁾. The novitiate is a period of preparation and probation before admission to religious profession. During this time the novice becomes acquainted with the duties of the religious life, is tested in her vocation and qualifications for the religious state, and wears the habit prescribed by the constitutions. The novitiate must last for an entire and uninterrupted year. The constitutions of some communities prescribe a period longer than

(6) Canons 539-541.

(7) Canons 542-571.

one year. Canon 542 states that the following cannot be validly admitted to the novitiate:

a) Apostates from the Catholic Church, even though they later repented and returned to the Church. The rule does not apply to converts who were never active members of the Church.

b) Those who have not the required age, namely, 15 years.

c) Those who were compelled to enter by grave fear, or by deceit, or by force, or where the superior was thus constrained to receive the individual.

d) Those who are married, for the duration of the marriage.

e) Those who are or have been professed members of any religious community.

f) Those who are subject to a penalty for grave crime of which they have been, or may be, accused.

The regulations concerning the postulancy and the conditions imposed by the constitution of each respective religious community must also be observed.

The same Canon 542 states that the following are admitted validly but not lawfully: a) Those who have debts to pay and cannot settle the obligation. b) Those who are responsible for positions of trust (guardians, trustees) or who are implicated in any other secular business, by reason of which law suits and other annoyances may come to the religious. c) Those whose father, or mother, grandfather or grandmother are in great want or in need of their help, and parents whose help is needed for the support and education of their children.

When a candidate applies for admission into a religious community she usually entrusts to the convent a certain amount of money or goods which is known as a dowry⁽⁸⁾. The bringing of a dowry is a measure of prudence, for should the postulant, or novice, or professed religious leave the convent, she will have available funds to take care of her immediate needs. The amount constituting a dowry is usually determined by the constitutions. The constitutions of some communities authorize the superior to dispense from the dowry in case of poor applicants. The dowry must be kept in trust by the community till after the death of the sister. It becomes the permanent property of the convent at the death of the religious, even though she has not yet taken perpetual vows. If the candidate dies before the end of the novitiate, the dowry reverts to the legal heirs.

3) *Religious Profession.* Religious profession is entrance into the religious state by taking publicly—that is, in the presence of a lawful ecclesiastical superior accepting the profession in the name of the Church—the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in a religious community approved by the Church. The taking of the vows implies the person's surrender to and acceptance by the religious community. By profession the person becomes a religious, assumes the obligations of a religious, begins to enjoy the indulgences, privileges and spiritual favors granted to religious, and acquires a right to sustenance and care from the community.

When vows are taken for only a certain length of time they are temporary. When taken for the rest of the person's life, the profession is *perpetual*.

⁽⁸⁾ Canons 547-551.

Vows are said to be *solemn* when they are so designated by the Church; otherwise they are *simple*. Those who desire to make religious profession must be fully sixteen years of age if there is question of temporary vows, and twenty one years if there is question of perpetual vows either solemn or simple⁽⁹⁾. In every congregation which has perpetual vows the novice must take temporary vows for three years, or for a longer period if she will not yet be twenty one years of age after three years of temporary vows⁽¹⁰⁾. At the expiration of the temporary vows the religious may return to the world, or make perpetual profession, or, if she is not judged worthy to continue, be dismissed.

The religious state is properly constituted by the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. By the *vow of obedience* the religious binds herself to obey all personal as well as all general orders of her lawful superior and live according to the rule and constitutions of the community. The *vow of chastity* forbids all voluntary carnal pleasure, whether in thought, word, or act; it excludes matrimony and hence also the licit sexual pleasures of those legitimately married. The *vow of poverty* varies in its range in different communities. A Sister with simple vows renounces the independent use—that is, use without the permission of the competent superior—of her property, of its revenue and administration, but retains the actual ownership of the property. The Church permits this ownership because if the Sister for any reason were to be dispensed from her vows, she would again need her goods. Sisters with solemn vows renounce not only the independent

(9) Canon 573.

(10) Canon 574.

use of the property but they renounce the property itself. Finally, a Sister may join a community which itself renounces the right to own any property (Poor Clares).

In conclusion, let us point out again that the call to the religious life, to a more perfect spiritual life, is a grace which God vouchsafes to His chosen few. This divine favor must elicit the love of the privileged soul; the Divine Lover on the Cross must become the object of a profound love of the religious. This same favor will also imply self-immolation: the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, the renunciation of the goods of the earth and the affections and joys of family life, this death to all that is worldly and human, will constitute a daily immolation of the will. And the results? Divine Omniscience alone can count the riches of the consecrated soul and the social blessings which the world owes to those Sisters who voluntarily and out of the purest love become the educators of children, the mothers of orphans, the benefactors of the old, poor and afflicted, the expiators of the sins of men.

Virginity in the world. Circumstances frequently oblige a young woman to remain unmarried and practice virginity in the world. The World Wars will increase the number of unmarried women by the thousands if not by the millions. Such women should not remain forever in an undecided state, always expecting something while nothing is forthcoming. Above all they should not be egoistic, disagreeable in manners, trying in speech, narrow minded, critical of every one, embittered by their lot, green with envy and jealousy, reserving their affection for a cat or a dog, and spending a good

deal of their time talking to a parrot. Rather, let them cultivate virginity as a privilege in common with the holy women of the Church and choose a useful occupation, be occupied intelligently at it, and resolutely face the future. In this way they will make their lot a happier one. Let them avoid worldly amusement which will only create dissatisfaction with their state and even become a stumbling block to them. Let them be the support of a father and a mother, a Big Sister to their younger sisters and brothers, angels of mercy to the poor and sick, mothers to orphans. These works of lay Apostolate will make their cross easier to bear and fill them with peace and contentment.

Discussion Aids

1. What is meant by the religious state?
2. What is the nature of a vocation to the religious state?
3. In what ways may this vocation enter into the consciousness of a young woman?
4. What are the four signs of a vocation to the religious life?
5. What attitude should an aspirant to the religious life adopt towards parents who are opposing her entrance into a convent?
6. If the parents are in grave want, should she abandon them for the religious state? Why?
7. What is meant by the postulancy?
8. What is the novitiate?
9. What are the requirements for a valid novitiate? For a licit novitiate?
10. What is a dowry? When does it become the property of the convent?

11. What is a religious profession? What are its effects?
12. What is the difference between temporary and perpetual vows? Between simple and solemn vows?
13. Explain briefly the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
14. What advice would you give to one who is to practice virginity in the world?

Religious Practices

1. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven, and come, follow Me" (Mtt. XIX, 21).
2. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Mtt. V, 8).
3. "Obedience is better than sacrifice."

Chapter IV

VOCATION TO THE MARRIED LIFE

Those who are convinced that they are destined for the married state should always keep in mind that they are being called to a very serious and holy state. They should see in marriage the particular road along which they are to journey to the eternal mountain—a state in which they will form a hearth and home where the human race will be renovated and perpetuated, and whence will issue beings made in God's image, true worshippers of the Lord, members of Christ's Church, heirs of heavenly glory. They should reflect that they are approaching a state whose author is God, for it was the Creator Who formed the first two spouses one for the other, and Who inspired, witnessed and presided at their union. Jesus Christ added a new grandeur and consecration to this state when he raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, making it at the same time a symbol of the union between the Church and Himself. To the recipients of this Sacrament He assured special graces which would sanctify their love as well as their power of love, sanctify the spouses one through the other, strengthen their union of minds and hearts, and sweeten their daily crosses and trials. The matrimonial state is so holy that no human agency can pronounce the dissolution of its contract or impede the exercise of its rights and duties.

The two young persons should realize that the married life is a state full of heavy responsibilities. Romance is a providential veil, as it were, which

screens off the trials awaiting them—the rose concealing many a thorn. The novelty of courtship will gradually wear off, the burning flames will fall low, love grown accustomed to the possession of its object always the same will lose much of its original impulsive ardor. The daily common life will bring out the true habits, temperament, and character of each, for henceforth there is no need of hiding anything. The medal of which they had hitherto seen only the bright side, will begin to reveal disenchantingly its reverse side. In addition there will be sicknesses which may make an invalid of either one, changing him from a joy and support into a charge and a burden, and provoking impatience and irritability. There may also come unemployment and reverses of fortune, resulting in great mental and moral depression, and ushering in a series of dark and melancholy days. The monotonous and hard realities of life will dissipate the dreams and air-castles of earlier days. Only a Christian life, supported abundantly by the special graces of the sacrament of Matrimony, will bear all these problems not only patiently but even joyfully.

For these reasons the two parties should prepare for marriage with prayerful reflection and from the outset determine to shun a marriage devoid of all religious and supernatural motivation. A type of marriage to be avoided is the so-called "dowry marriage" where one marries another solely because of his wealth or social prestige. Parents frequently scheme and push through marriages such as these. They calculate that the marriage will strengthen the two families socially, financially and politically. Money, however, is of its very nature a source of dissension, the dowry is often quickly

spent, politics is a very changeable and unstable thing. Marriages based on such grounds are usually lacking in mutual love and devotion, and end in mutual distrust, hatred and divorce. Then there is the "steam-roller" marriage, which is contracted rapidly and without the necessary reflection and preparation which the holy state of matrimony demands. It is usually concluded by young people who are giddy and superficial in thought, and who want to be liberated from their environment and from the surveillance of their parents. Finally, there is the marriage of passion motivated by the physical attraction of one party for another. It is based on the person's good looks, smoothness in externals, ability to dress and dance well, ease in speech, athletic prowess, etc. Passion is a blind faculty; it does not reason or deliberate. A courtship in which the mind does not at all times maintain an absolute primacy will not be an adequate preparation for marriage.

Marriage has been described as a meeting of two souls who had been seeking one another across space and time. God has endowed the young heart with a gentle attraction towards the opposite sex. This attraction is at first general but gradually becomes more selective until it narrows down to a few and finally to one person. Courtship is a providential arrangement in which two parties try to ascertain if one was really destined for the other. Courtship is frequently the occasion of gossip, of contemptuous remarks, of unfounded criticism. Yet it is the articulation of a tendency which God Himself has impressed upon the human heart.

Courtship should be a novitiate. A young woman aspiring to the Sisterhood spends six months

in the postulancy, one to two years in the novitiate, and three years in temporary vows, before taking the final step and making perpetual vows. During all this time she may, if she wishes, leave the convent and return to the world. A young man spends six years in a preparatory seminary and six years in a major seminary before making an irrevocable decision to be ordained a priest. During all this time he prays for divine light and guidance, reflects upon the obligations of the state to which he is aspiring, and examines himself in regard to his qualifications for such an exalted state. By ordination he in a sense gives up his freedom, he begins to serve God, his supreme Lord, Whose yoke is sweet and Whose burden is light, from Whom he need not fear anger or condemnation, unless he first commences to quarrel with Him. But marriage binds a person until death to one who may differ from him in disposition, temperament, inclination and mood. The step may mean hell in this life and hell probably in the next life. How then can anyone take this all-important and all serious step without first becoming thoroughly acquainted through a prayerful courtship with the person who is to be his life's partner?

Just as a machine will use up a good deal of energy and accomplish little work if its parts are not evenly correlated, so a husband and wife will not use God's graces effectively and fruitfully if they are not well matched. The one party must complement the abilities and compensate the weaknesses of the other. The following are some of the qualities in a prospective life's partner which should form the subject of a serious inquiry: Is the party a practical Catholic, a nominal Catholic, a fallen-away Catholic, a non-Catholic or a non-believer?

Has he a virtuous past and has he a sound moral character? What kind of health has he? Has there been feeble-mindedness, insanity, tuberculosis, a tendency to alcoholism, in his family? Is he infected with venereal diseases? Is he willing to undergo a physical examination and furnish a health certificate? Has he sufficient means to start a secure household, and what is his actual and prospective income? Is he willing to plan economically, and is he ready to make sacrifices, if necessary? What kind of an education has he? To what race and nationality does he belong? Is he able to meet people, to make and keep friends? How does he bear up under illness, suffering, disappointment, success? Has he an appreciation of the use of money? What is his attitude towards amusements and spending? Has he a sense of humor, or is he over-sensitive? Is the woman able to cook and keep house? Is she a home-loving and family-loving person? Finally, both parties should obtain, preferably from a trustworthy physician, sufficient knowledge about the physical side of marriage—the marital act, pregnancy, child-birth, rearing of children—and in that way avoid unnecessary grief and even serious mistakes.

It is advisable that Catholic young people become acquainted with the canonical impediments to marriage. A clear knowledge of this often ignored legislation of the Church will prevent many a young person from launching on a course where he will meet serious if not unsurmountable barriers. These impediments are motivated by the solicitude of the Church for the well-being of the spouses themselves and of the future family. In setting up these impediments the Church, the representative of Christ

on earth, is not bent upon arbitrarily restricting the liberty of her children but rather upon closing to them avenues which might lead to temporal misery and eternal damnation. Impediments are of two kinds: prohibitive and diriment. A *prohibitive* (hindering) impediment makes a marriage unlawful but not invalid; a person marrying despite a prohibitive impediment commits a sin but is really married. A *diriment* (destroying) impediment makes a marriage both unlawful and invalid; a person marrying despite a diriment impediment commits a grave sin, is not married in the eyes of God, and has no right to act as a married person. Let us say a word about these two groups of impediments.

The following marriages are valid but unlawful: A marriage without the preliminary publication of the three banns; marriage with a validly baptized non-Catholic; marriage within the forbidden times: from the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas inclusive, and from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday inclusive; marriage with some one who by a solemn and written contract, countersigned by the pastor or two witnesses, promised marriage to another (impediment of previous bethrothal); a marriage considered unlawful by the civil law of the country because of legal relationship resulting from adoption. When the bishop considers there is a serious reason to excuse the parties from the law he may dispense from these impediments, and the marriage will be both valid and lawful.

The following are some of the *diriment* impediments:

- 1) *Substantial error*, for example, if a twin-

sister were deceitfully substituted for the woman whom the man thinks he is marrying.

2) *A previous valid marriage* prevents either party of that union, even though civil divorce has been granted, to marry as long as the other party is living. 3) *Difference of worship* which exists where one party is Catholic, baptized in the Catholic Church and the other party is unbaptized. The Church may dispense from this impediment but only for serious reasons.

4) *Defects of age.* Canon law demands that for a valid marriage the boy must be at least sixteen years of age and the girl at least fourteen.

5) *Grave fear and violence* render a marriage invalid. 6) *Physical impotency* or the inability to perform the marital act. If this impotency exists before marriage and is absolutely incurable, it renders a marriage invalid. The inability to bear children or *sterility* is not an impediment.

7) *Consanguinity or blood relationship.* Thus a man cannot marry a woman from whom he descends or who descends from him. Again a brother cannot marry a sister (first degree). In all these cases the Church grants no dispensation. For weighty reasons she may grant a dispensation for a marriage between first cousins (second degree) and second cousins (third degree).

8) *Spiritual relationship.* A sponsor at baptism may not marry the god-child, and a person administering private baptism may not marry the person baptized. For serious reasons the Church dispenses from this impediment. 9) *Affinity* or blood relationship of a previous wife or husband. A man may not marry his step-daughter or mother-in-law or any ancestor or descendant of his deceased

wife. For such cases no dispensation is granted. If there are strong reasons he may obtain a dispensation and marry her sister, first cousin, aunt or niece. In conclusion, it might be added that a dispensation—in those cases where the Church grants it—cannot be granted except for the most serious reasons. For while a dispensation removes the opposition of the Church it does not remove the difficulties which motivated the Church to establish the impediment. Laws are made to be observed and not to be dispensed from, and even the bishop cannot set aside the application of the law without a reason that justifies him in conscience according to the rules under which he is governed.

Care should be taken lest a romance, instead of blossoming into a generous and genuine love degenerate into a selfish and sinful passion. Courtships and engagements give no right to sexual liberties and pleasures. In this connection it is well to remember that a man's sex constitution differs considerably from that of the woman. A man's sex urge and impulses are aroused with less effort and controlled with greater difficulty than the comparatively more dormant sex tendencies of a woman. Familiarities which leave the woman cold and untouched may arouse a strong passion in the man. Physical contacts such as petting, pawing, kissing, embracing, dancing of certain types, often act like an electrical current and forthwith kindle a passion in man's entire sensitive nature. At any rate, the two young persons should remember that true love is respectful. When it degenerates into something sinful the parties may well suspect that something essential to their courtship is lacking. Certainly they should not wish a cortege of sins to follow them

to the altar on their wedding day; this would hardly be a pledge of heavenly blessings. Then, too, familiarities breed contempt. Parties who have descended to sinful intimacies during their courtship may expect mutual contempt and infidelity in the married state. The courtship should last long enough to enable the parties to get to know one another, but not so long that it degenerates into lust.

Marriage is God's institution for the propagation of the human race. As author of this state He will hold out His graces abundantly to those who aspire to that state and who are humble of heart. God will enlighten the mind of a young person that he may find the life's partner providentially destined for him. Hence, it is necessary to pray daily, receive the sacraments frequently, and, if necessary, seek a clearer manifestation of God's will in the solitude of a retreat. Information about marriage is not to be sought in movies, for Hollywood is a stranger to the Church's conception of the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage. The prospective bridegroom must prayerfully reflect—in the same way as novices and seminarians do—on the sanctity of this calling, on its obligations, and on his ability to meet these responsibilities. He should consult his confessor, whose experience with men will be of immense value to him and who will advise him dispassionately. Finally, he should consult his parents who are interested in his future and intent on procuring his welfare. But above all—he should pray.

Discussion Aids

1. Why is married life a holy and serious state?
2. What are some of the difficulties and problems which may arise in the married life?

3. What kind of marriages should be considered as devoid of all supernatural motivation? Why?
4. Is the attraction of a person towards the opposite sex a natural tendency? Why?
5. What do we mean by saying that "courtship should be a novitiate"?
6. What are some of the qualities of a prospective life's partner concerning which inquiry should be made?
7. What is an "impediment" to marriage?
8. What are the "prohibitive" impediments to marriage?
9. What are the "diriment" impediments to marriage?
10. From which of the diriment impediments may the Church dispense?
11. How long should a courtship last? Why?
12. In what sense is it true that a girl can keep a boy straight and clean?
13. How should a young person prepare for the married state?

Religious Practices

1. During my courtship I will frequently seek light from God through earnest prayer.
2. During my courtship I will try, with God's grace, to preserve the primacy of mind over emotion and passion.
3. In choosing a life's partner I will esteem religion and Christian character above earthly advantages and pleasures.

Chapter V

MARRIAGE, A CONTRACT AND A SACRAMENT

"Each individual marriage, inasmuch as it is a conjugal union of a particular man and woman, arises only from the free consent of each of the spouses.—But the nature of matrimony is entirely independent of the free will of man, so that if one has once contracted matrimony, he is thereby subject to its divinely made laws and its essential properties"⁽¹⁾.

Marriage, A Stable Contract

According to the dictates of both the natural and the divine law, marriage is a stable union—not a free and revocable partnership—suited for constituting a family. The stability, permanence, and indissolubility of marriage are demanded by both the natural and divine laws, and by both the primary and secondary ends of marriage.

A. *The Voice of Reason.* a) The primary purpose of marriage is the procreation and education of children. The *birth of children* is the ultimate end for which nature has set up a diversity of sexes. The existence of the sexes, their union and relations—in fact nature's whole arrangement in all that pertains to the sexes—are intended to lead to the birth of a child. Furthermore, nature intends that the sexes should exhaust all the potentialities of the powers with which she endowed them—in other words, she aims at the birth not of one but of sev-

⁽¹⁾ Pius XI, Encyclical on "Christian Marriage" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), p. 73.

eral children. Hence the marriage union must continue for life so that not only during the full period of fecundity but also for the additional years required for the full development of the family as an integral social unit the children from the eldest to the youngest may be brought to the maturity of cultural as well as physical and moral life. Even then the natural relation of parent and children does not end. This is evident from the following considerations: 1) Should the child meet with any misfortune, care of him falls upon the parents, for it is they who brought him into existence and are consequently responsible for him at every age. 2) The contracting of a new marriage by the parents in old age would mean a dissipation of the fortune which they amassed during their lifetime and to which the children as natural heirs of the parents have a natural claim. 3) The wife, who has given to her husband the best years of her life, needs the love and support of her husband especially in old age and in her declining years.

Promiscuity and free love, which in our day is receiving the blessing of the Soviets and of many modern sociologists, has no foundation in historical practice or in the nature of man. 1) The further back we go in history, the stronger we find becomes man's passion of jealousy. When we come to the primitive stage, we find that almost all communication between the wife and other men is forbidden. The severest provisions are made for the chastity of women: special quarters in the home are assigned to them, their faces are frequently veiled or disfigured. The code of Hammurabbi, which goes back to about the year 2000 B. C., presupposes monogamy and establishes severe penalties for adultery, incest, .

and rape. The matriarchate, which prevailed in some tribes, was not due to promiscuity but was necessitated by the conditions of the times; since the father was frequently absent because of hunting, fighting, and wars, the children were more easily identified by bearing the name of the mother. 2) Physiologically, promiscuity leads to infecundity and would have meant the extinction of belligerent tribes whose survival was frequently due to conditions favoring the increase of the race. 3) Ethically, if promiscuity is nature's arrangement, how did these free sexual relations develop into the restraints and self-discipline which we find prevailing later on? 4) Psychically, the instinct of mine and thine is not only inbred in man but is very strong in birds and animals where we often find a great jealousy of the female on the part of the male.

b) The procreation of the child might indeed be brought about by a brief association of the sexes. But the rearing of the child requires a stable and abiding union of the sexes, and not a mere momentary and shortlived union dictated by mere fancy and emotion. Nature, in fact, as St. Thomas tells us⁽²⁾, aims not at the mere existence of children but at their continued existence and development, and for this the child requires the support and care of both parents. Unlike the birds and animals, the child cannot shift for itself soon after birth, but depends upon others—not only in its infancy but also after it has reached the use of reason—for its physical, mental, and moral growth. And upon whom does this obligation of caring for the child devolve by the natural law? Upon the parents. It is they who brought him into existence, it is they who are

(2) "Summa Theologica," III a, q. 41, a. 1.

responsible for his training and development. This duty devolves on *both parents*. Since it was as one joint principle that they gave the child existence, so as one joint principle they are bound to care for the child. Parental care and direction are especially necessary at the age when boys pass into manhood and girls into womanhood. From all this it is clear, then, that marriage must be a stable and permanent contract.

At this point the Communist would interpose the following claim: The State is a better guardian and educator of the child than the parents. This contention, however, is fallacious. Nature has designated the parents—and not the state—as the proper and exclusive educator of the child. To the mother—and not to the state—nature has given milk naturally destined for the nourishment of her child. To the parent—and not to the state—nature has given instincts of affection and care which no other relationship can satisfy or replace. Note how these instincts come into play when the child is ill or in danger.

c) The secondary aim of matrimony is mutual aid and a remedy of concupiscence. The one sex by a natural instinct seeks the company of the other. The two sexes complement one another. Though both man and woman are complete human beings, yet when the dispositions of the two blend together, they complete each other spiritually, temperamentally, and physically, and the result is two fully developed personalities. But this mutual aid cannot be given unless the two parties are united by a stable contract. Secondly, only a stable union can restrain concupiscence and keep it within proper limits. Promiscuity, by its changing relations and

new pleasures, only inflames concupiscence and increases its force.

B. *The Voice of Revelation.* Scripture and Tradition not only uphold the stability and permanence of the marriage contract as demanded by the natural law, but clearly vindicate the unity and indissolubility of marriage—the truths, namely, that marriage is a conjugal union of only one man and one woman, and that the matrimonial bond is dissoluble only by the death of one of the parties. The Biblical passages which we shall now quote frequently contain at once both doctrines:

a) At the beginning of creation God created one woman for one man. The very close and intimate union which should exist between husband and wife is evident from the fact that Eve was formed out of Adam's side. "And Adam said: this now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be *two in one flesh*"⁽³⁾. It is to be noted in this connection that this primitive institution of monogamy was after the deluge succeeded by polygamy. God permitted an exception to His law so that the Jewish patriarchs might have many wives and that thus the offspring to be educated in the worship of the one true God might be multiplied.

b) In the beginning, marriage was by God's ordinance indissoluble, but in the time of Moses it was made dissoluble by a bill of divorce: "And there came to him the Pharisees tempting him, saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who answering said to them:

(3) Genesis II, 21-24.

Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, made them *male* and *female*? And he said: For this cause shall a man leave 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. They say to him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so"⁽⁴⁾.

c) Christ cancelled unreservedly the permission granted through Moses and since His time marriage is again absolutely indissoluble. On this point the Evangelists and St. Paul are absolutely clear.

St. Matthew: "I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting because of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery"⁽⁵⁾. (The putting away for fornication refers to separation, not to absolute divorce).

St. Mark: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. And in the house again, his disciples asked him concerning the same thing. And he saith to them: 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"⁽⁶⁾.

St. Luke: "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery;

(4) Mtt. XIX, 3-8.

(5) V, 32.

(6) X, 9-12.

and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (7).

St. Paul: "Therefore whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man; but if her husband is dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" (8).

"Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (9).

"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" (10).

Polyandry (the conjugal union of one wife simultaneously with many husbands) and polygamy (the conjugal union of one husband simultaneously with many wives) do not render wholly impossible but make very difficult the procreation and education of children. In polyandry the woman's fecundity is lessened by relations with different men, the education of the offspring becomes difficult because of the uncertainty of the father, and the wife finds it difficult to serve several masters at once. Polygamy makes extremely difficult the maintenance of peace and harmony in the family, and is an unsatisfactory remedy for concupiscence.

Divorce places a premium on man's inconstancy and converts marriage into concubinage. It makes a mere tool of the wife who is kept by the husband as long as her beauty, strength and efficiency endure, and then dismissed. It makes impossible that mutual, constant, and enduring love which

(7) XVI, 18.

(8) Rom. VII, 3.

(9) I Cor. VII, 2.

(10) I Cor. VII, 10.

constitute the happiness of the spouses and their consolation in trials. Rather, it is the occasion of conjugal discords which serve as a prelude to the breaking of the existing union and to the formation of new ones. Above all, divorce renders difficult the attainment of the primary purpose of marriage, namely, the education of children. The child needs its parents not only at the moment of its birth but during the whole process of its development. It needs its own parents and not other educators, since paternal love and instincts cannot be delegated. "It is hardly possible," says Leo XIII, "to describe how great are the evils that flow from divorce. Matrimonial contracts are by it made variable; mutual kindness is weakened; deplorable inducements to unfaithfulness are supplied; harm is done to the education and training of children; occasion is afforded for the breaking up of homes; the seeds of dissension are sown among families; the dignity of womanhood is lessened and brought low, and women run the risk of being deserted after having ministered to the pleasures of men. Since, then, nothing has such power to lay waste families and destroy the mainstay of kingdoms as the corruption of morals, it is easily seen that divorces are in the highest degree hostile to the prosperity of family and states"⁽¹¹⁾.

Marriage A Sacrament

The essence of the matrimonial contract is the free consent of the two spouses. In order to found a contract, this consent must be internal, that is, elicited by the will with the intention of living as husband and wife; it must be free; it must be mut-

⁽¹¹⁾ Encyclical on "Christian Marriage" in "The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII" (Benziger, 1903), pp. 74-75.

ual, that is given and accepted by each party, and it must be externally manifested by some sign which makes other contracts valid and which would make the matrimonial contract recognizable and valid among men. The moment that the matrimonial contract is formed, it assumes all the attributes which God wished it to possess. Now Christ has taken this contract and elevated it to a sacrament. The Scriptures do not specify the moment of the institution of this sacrament. It may have been on the day when Christ went to the wedding feast of Cana or at the time when He restored the original holiness and indissolubility of marriage. Whenever Christians enter upon a valid contract to live as husband and wife, that contract is a sacrament and causes grace. Among Christians every marriage contract is a sacrament; the two cannot be separated. The Church alone has the right to proclaim the existence of the sacraments. But her teaching is also supported by reason. Let us briefly state the arguments for the sacramental character of matrimony.

a) Whenever God confers upon man a certain office, He also gives him the necessary graces to fulfil that office. For whoever wishes the end must also wish the means. Now Christ endowed marriage with the attributes of unity and indissolubility: "They *two* shall be in *one* flesh"⁽¹²⁾; "What therefore God hath joined, let no man put asunder"⁽¹³⁾. The disciples of Christ were themselves amazed at the severity of the Master's doctrine: "If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry"⁽¹⁴⁾. For divorce was quite common at the

(12) Mtt. XIX, 5.

(13) Mtt. XIX, 6.

(14) Mtt. XIX, 10.

time and was permitted by Moses. Yet Christ demanded absolute fidelity from all. Now if God makes this demand of human nature, He also supplies the necessary graces for the accomplishment of what man's natural powers cannot do. Hence matrimony confers graces upon the spouses for the fulfilment of their duties, that is, it is a sacrament—"an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace."

b) In his Epistle to the Ephesians, V, 22-32, St. Paul draws a detailed comparison between the union of husband and wife, on the one hand, and the union of Christ the Head with His Church, on the other. The first is a sign and symbol of the second. Just as man leaves mother and father, adheres to his wife, and becomes one with her, so Christ left His heavenly Father, adhered to His Church, and became one with His mystic members; just as the wife is subject to the husband, so the Church is subject to Christ; just as the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the Head of the Church; just as Eve is of the bones and flesh of Adam, so we are members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Let us quote the passage in full: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the saviour of his body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life, 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. So also

ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church, because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." From these great dogmatic passages flow several important conclusions: first, the matrimonial union is a sign of something very sacred—the union of Christ with His Church; second, it is a sign of grace, for the cementing bond between Christ and His members is grace, both actual and habitual; third, the mutual duties of the spouses are to be as supernatural as the reciprocal relations between Christ and His Church; but human nature is of itself inconstant and moves on a purely natural plane; to elicit supernatural acts the spouses need divine grace; hence marriage must be endowed with a grace-bestowing power.

c) Christ's message is only partly contained in the New Testament. The greater part of his teaching was transmitted orally until it was finally incorporated into the writings of the Fathers and into the liturgy, prayers, inscriptions, art, and architecture of the Church. The sacramental character of matrimony was taught from the earliest times by both Catholics and schismatics, in both the Orient and in the West. In commenting, for example, on the marriage feast at Cana, the Fathers speak of marriage as a holy thing, carrying with it a special blessing from God, and to be contracted religiously before the Church. Now it would be difficult, if not

impossible, to explain this unanimity of belief without admitting that the doctrine in question goes back to the Apostles and to Christ Himself.

Modern Attacks on Marriage

In conclusion, we shall list the modern attacks on marriage as they are enumerated and evaluated in Pius XI's Encyclical on Christian Marriage. These attacks are made in our contemporary erotic literature, theatrical productions, romantic fiction, amorous and frivolous novels, motion pictures, radio, etc. Marriage is undermined by the following false views and evil practices:

1) *Marriage a mere invention of man.* Marriage is said to be neither a contract instituted by the Author of nature nor a sacrament established by Christ. It is merely a means of producing life and of satisfying sexual impulses. Since man himself made marriage laws, he can modify them, change them, or abrogate them. The generative faculty may be exercised in or outside of marriage.

2) *Companionate marriage* or the indulgence in matrimonial rights without an indissoluble bond and without offspring.

3) *Birth control*, the exercise of the marriage act in such a way as deliberately to frustrate its natural purpose and power to generate life.

4) *Abortion* or the taking of the life of the offspring hidden in the mother's womb—the direct murder of the innocent.

5) *Sterilization*, or depriving a person of the faculty to procreate.

6) *A false view of the weakness of human nature* which contends that the inborn sexual tendency

cannot be satisfied within the narrow limits of monogamous marriage

7) *The emancipation of women*, the full liberty of woman to free herself at pleasure from the duties of a spouse, wife and mother, to devote herself to business and public affairs, and to conduct and administer her own affairs.

8) The substitution of a certain *vague compatibility* for a constant union of spirit, solid love, and mutual conjugal chastity.

9) The degrading of marriage to a mere *civil ceremony; mixed marriages; divorce*.

Discussion Aids

1. Give three arguments from reason based on the ends of marriage to show that marriage should be a stable contract.
2. Has free love any basis in historical practice or in man's nature?
3. Is the state a better educator than the parents? Why?
4. Give arguments from Scripture for the unity and indissolubility of marriage.
5. Show how polyandry and polygamy make very difficult the procreation and education of children.
6. Point out the evils of divorce.
7. Give three proofs of the sacramental character of matrimony.
8. Is the contract and sacrament separable in marriage?
9. What are some of the evils which today are

undermining marriage? How are these evils to be counteracted?

10. How would you answer these two objections:
 - a) The indissolubility of marriage is opposed to man's liberty?
 - b) Life in some homes is so intolerable that divorce should be permitted?

Religious Practices

1. Prepare for a chaste wedlock by a constant practice of mortification and self-denial, especially during courtship.
2. Look upon courtship as a means of choosing—with the help of God's illuminating grace—a suitable companion for life.
3. Prepare yourself for marriage by frequent prayer, by meditation on the duties of the married state, and by a frequent reception of the sacraments.

Chapter VI

MIXED MARRIAGES

"Care also must be taken that they (Catholics) do not easily enter into marriage with those who are not Catholics; for when minds do not agree as to the observance of religion, it is scarcely possible to hope for agreement in other things. Other reasons also proving that persons should turn with dread from such marriages are chiefly these: that they give occasion to forbidden association and communion in religious matters; endanger the faith of the Catholic partner; are a hindrance to the proper education of children; and often lead to a mixing up of truth and falsehood, and to the belief that all religions are equally good"⁽¹⁾.

"In these mixed marriages it becomes much more difficult to imitate by a lively conformity of spirit the mystery of which we have spoken, namely the close union between Christ and His Church"⁽²⁾.

It is important to distinguish at the outset between the impediment of *mixed religion* and the impediment of *disparity of cult*. The first exists between two *baptized* persons, of whom the one is a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic, whether a heretic or a schismatic. It is only an impedient impediment, that is, it renders the matrimonial contract merely illicit. Disparity of cult exists between two persons of whom the one is baptized and the other is not. It is a diriment impediment, that is,

(1) Leo XIII, Encyclical on Christian Marriage in "The Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII" (Benziger, 1903), p. 81.

(2) Pius XI, Encyclical on Christian Marriage in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), p. 102.

it renders the matrimonial contract null and void. Disparity of cult, then, is not based on the difference of religious affiliation but on the fact that one party received the sacrament of baptism and the other did not. A catechumen, professing the Catholic faith, could not be validly married to a Catholic as long as he is unbaptized.

The bishop must in the case of both impediments give a dispensation before a priest can perform the marriage. A mixed marriage performed by a priest without a dispensation is valid but not licit. Where there is not dispensation from disparity of cult, the marriage is neither lawful nor valid.

In a mixed marriage the non-Catholic as well as the Catholic receives the sacrament of matrimony. An unbaptized person makes a valid matrimonial contract but does not receive the sacrament; the Catholic party to the contract probably does not receive the sacrament.

It may be laid down as a general principle that whenever one of the parties to a marriage is a Catholic, the marriage is not valid unless witnessed by a Catholic priest and two other witnesses.

1) A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic before a Protestant minister is invalid; besides, the Catholic party incurs excommunication. This penalty means exclusion from the sacraments (not Mass), Christian burial, and the prayers of the Church. An excommunicated person may be absolved only by a priest who has applied to the bishop for special faculties and obtained them to absolve the censured person.

May such a marriage be rectified? Yes. The parties go before a priest (privately) who has obtained the necessary dispensations, and exchange the

vows in the presence of the priest and two witnesses. Since the civil license has already been obtained, the parties have no new or further civil obligations.

If the marriage is not rectified, the parties may remarry after obtaining a civil divorce and presenting their case to ecclesiastical authority. Since the previous union was not a valid marriage, the Catholic may be married to a Catholic before a priest after freedom to do so is declared by ecclesiastical authority.

2) A marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic before a justice of the peace is invalid. But the Catholic party does not incur excommunication since the civil judge does not act as a minister of a Protestant sect. The marriage may be rectified in the same way as in the previous case.

3) A marriage between two Catholics before a civil judge is invalid. It is also invalid if performed by a Protestant minister; in addition, both Catholics incur excommunication.

4) A marriage of two Protestants before a justice of the peace or before a Protestant minister is valid and indissoluble in the eyes of the Church if there was no impediment to the marriage.

5) Children born of an invalid marriage are illegitimate in the eyes of the Church. They become legitimate when the marriage is validated. Church laws bar illegitimate children from the priesthood.

If, however, a marriage is putatively valid, the children are legitimate. Now, what is a putative marriage? Let us give an example. Suppose two Catholics marry before a Catholic priest. Later on it is discovered that one of the parties was never baptized. The marriage was in reality invalid because of the impediment of disparity of cult; but in

the estimation of men ("putatively") the two parties were validly married.

6) In a mixed marriage the two parties are never allowed to go through a second ceremony before a Protestant minister. If they do, the Catholic incurs excommunication. If the priest knows of their plans for a second, Protestant ceremony, he will not assist at the mixed marriage. It may happen, however, that the parties are all the while planning secretly to go through another—a Protestant ceremony. In such a case the marriage is not invalid but both parties are guilty of sin.

7) A Catholic may not serve as best man, maid of honor, usher, or bridesmaid at a Protestant wedding, since this is equivalent to taking part in Protestant religious ceremonies.

A Protestant may not serve as best man or maid of honor (witness) at a Catholic wedding. Witnesses play an important part in a marriage ceremony since without their presence the marriage would not be valid. To admit Protestants indiscriminately to this office would give no control to the Church to exact testimony from the witness. Sometimes for weighty reasons a Protestant in the absence of any other available witness may act as witness.

Protestants may serve as ushers at a Catholic wedding provided there is no scandal.

The Promises

Before the bishop grants the dispensation for the performance of a mixed marriage, the two parties must present in writing certain guarantees or make the so-called promises.

According to the formula used in the matrimonial forms of the St. Paul Archdiocese, the Cath-

olic party promises "to observe all the rules of the Catholic Church and abide by whatever decision may be made in the consideration of my application for a dispensation, and I furthermore promise that, if the dispensation is granted, only the ceremony of the Catholic Church will be performed in our matrimonial union, that I will have all the children born of my marriage or adopted during our marriage or received into our home under our authority, baptized and reared in the Catholic Church, that I will never have recourse to the civil courts or consent to such recourse to have said children reared in any religion other than the Catholic faith, that I will practice my religion faithfully and that I will do all that I can prudently do, especially by prayer, good example and the frequentation of the sacraments to bring about the conversion of my consort."

The non-Catholic party promises: "I will never interfere in any way with the Catholic faith and practice of the said Catholic party nor with the education of said children in said Catholic faith nor with the free exercise of the duties of the Catholic religion by said Catholic party to this contract and by said children, and I furthermore promise that I shall fulfil all the aforesaid promises concerning said children even though the Catholic party be taken away by death or otherwise separated from this matrimonial union."

Both parties agree or promise in writing that 1) all the natural and adopted children in the marriage and all children living in the household and subject to their authority shall be baptized, educated, and brought up solely in the Catholic religion; that 2) no recourse will be made to the civil courts for the annulment of these promises; and 3) the

promises shall be binding on the respective heirs, next of kin, administrators, executors, or future guardians and their successors; that 4) the marriage contracted will be indissoluble except by death and that no ceremony other than that by the priest will be performed.

There must be a moral certainty on the part of the one who dispenses that these promises or guarantees will be kept. This is a requisite condition for the valid granting of a dispensation.

If the one who dispenses (the bishop in normal circumstances, or a priest in case of danger of death), is not morally certain of the fulfilment of the promises, he may not dispense; if he does, the dispensation is both invalid and illicit. In the case of the impediment of mixed marriage—which is only a prohibitive impediment—the invalidity of the dispensation would not affect the validity of the marriage. But in the case of the impediment of disparity of cult, the invalidity of the dispensation would also render the marriage invalid, because disparity of cult is a diriment impediment.

The Church permits the celebration of mixed marriages only for very serious reasons. The following are some of the canonical reasons for granting mixed marriage dispensations: a well-founded hope of the conversion of the non-Catholic party; to prevent the apostasy of the Catholic party if the dispensation were denied; danger of a civil marriage or a marriage before a non-Catholic minister; to validate a marriage attempted before a civil judge or a non-Catholic minister; to protect the reputation of a woman who is pregnant; to legitimize children; to bring up in true religion children born of another mixed marriage; a probable hope

that a non-Catholic family will be brought into the Church by means of the mixed marriage; the probability of great advantage accruing to the Catholic Church from the mixed marriage, for example, a royal marriage.

Catholics should strive by all means within their power to avoid and prevent mixed marriage. They should prize their faith above all earthly connections and advantages; they should ask God through earnest prayer to direct their mind in the choice of a life's companion; they should establish clubs and societies which would give young Catholic people an opportunity to become acquainted with one another.

Pauline Privilege

If two pagans or two unbaptized persons marry and later on one is baptized and becomes a Catholic, and if the unbaptized party *refuses* to live with the Catholic party, the two may separate, and the Catholic party is free to be married to a Catholic by a Catholic priest after proper investigation of all the facts is made and the bishop authorizes the marriage. This is known as the Pauline Privilege. ⁽³⁾. The Privilege holds only when *both* parties were unbaptized at the time of marriage. It does not hold if the parties were doubtfully baptized, or if one party was doubtfully baptized, or if one party was baptized. Since many Protestant sects no longer baptize, the Pauline Privilege will be of frequent occurrence in the future.

If two unbaptized parties marry and if later, they both become Catholics, the matrimonial contract very likely becomes also a sacrament at the moment of baptism.

(3) First Epistle to the Corinthians, VII, 12 sqq.

Additional Principles

1) Mixed marriages are performed in the rectory or in the sacristy. Bishops have faculties to permit the celebration of mixed marriage inside a church in a side-chapel or in front of the altar railing. The priest does not wear a surplice or a stole. All sacred rites are forbidden. If subsequently the non-Catholic party is converted, both parties may be admitted to the nuptial blessing.

2) Any marriage may be contracted at any time of the year but without solemnity or nuptial blessing in Advent and Lent. If the bishop permits it, marriage may be celebrated, and the nuptial blessing may be given, even during the forbidden times, but the parties must avoid all pomp.

Marriage in private houses may be permitted by the bishop only in an extraordinary case and only for very serious reasons.

3) Where there was a real marriage, the Church *never* grants a divorce. When the Church "annuls" a marriage, she merely declares that there never existed a real marriage. The Church may, however, for very serious reasons permit the parties to separate. They may separate temporarily if one party, for example, is inflicting harm upon the body, soul, and good name of the other party. They may separate perpetually if one party has committed adultery, and it is not condoned by the other. With the bishop's permission, the innocent party may sue for a civil divorce.

4) The prolonged absence of a married partner is not sufficient reason for contracting a new marriage. The Church requires an authentic death notice or death certificate from the office of vital

statistics, or from the parish register, or from a hospital, or army, or insurance company, etc.

5) Impotency is the inability to perform the marital act. If impotency existed *before* the marriage, and if it is *perpetual*, that is, if it cannot be removed by medical treatment or by an operation, it makes the marriage invalid from the beginning.

Mere sterility, since it permits the marriage act, does not invalidate the marriage.

6) Occasionally a pastor will decline to perform a marriage of his own parishioners within his own parish. In that case he may give them authorization by letter to be married by another pastor (sometimes even in another state); or he may send them to the bishop who will give them authorization to be married by some other priest. A pastor who without authorization would marry strangers *outside of his parish* would not marry them either validly or licitly. Nor can a pastor validly marry his own parishioners *outside of his parish*. These regulations are based not so much on the nature of the marriage ceremony as upon the necessity of orderly procedure in the administration of the Church.

Discussion Aids

1. What is the difference between the impediment of *mixed marriage* and *disparity of cult*?
2. Are the following marriages valid or invalid? Why?
 - a) The marriage of a Catholic and non-Catholic, before
 - a Protestant minister
 - a Justice of the peace
 - a Priest

MODERN QUESTIONS

- b) The marriage of two Catholics before
 - a Protestant minister
 - a Justice of the peace
 - a Priest
 - c) The marriage of two Protestants or two pagans before
 - a Protestant minister
 - a Justice of the peace
 - a Priest
3. In which of these cases would a Catholic incur excommunication?
 4. What about Catholics assisting at a Protestant wedding, and vice versa?
 5. What are the so-called "promises"? What does each party agree to do?
 6. What are some of the reasons for permitting mixed marriages? Why is the Church opposed to these marriages?
 7. What is the Pauline Privilege?
 8. Where and how is a mixed marriage performed?
 9. Does the Church ever grant divorce? Does she permit separation?
 10. What is the difference between impotency and sterility?

Religious Practices

1. I will prize my faith above any earthly advantage that might come to me through a mixed marriage.
2. I will ask God daily to direct me by His illuminating grace in the choice of my life's companion.

3. In courtship, I will always follow the reasoned judgment of the mind and not be blinded by emotion and passion.

Chapter VII

THE FAMILY

“On the sixth day of creation, having made man from the slime of the earth, and having breathed into his face the breath of life, God gave him a companion, whom He miraculously took from the side of Adam when he was locked in sleep. God, thus, in His most far-reaching foresight, decreed that this husband and wife should be the natural beginning of the human race, from whom it might be propagated and preserved by an un failing fruitfulness throughout all futurity of time. And this union of man and woman, that it might answer more fittingly to the infinitely wise counsels of God, even from that beginning manifested chiefly two most excellent properties—deeply seated, as it were, and signed upon it—namely, unity and perpetuity. From the Gospel, we see clearly that this doctrine was declared and openly confirmed by the divine authority of Jesus Christ. He bore witness to the Jews and to His apostles that marriage, from its institution, should exist between two only, that is, between one man and one woman; that of two they are made, so to say, one flesh; and that the marriage bond is by the will of God so closely and strongly made fast that no man may dissolve it or render it asunder”⁽¹⁾.

Marriage is the enduring union of man and woman for the purpose of procreating and educating children and of enjoying mutual comfort in this

⁽¹⁾ Leo XIII, “*Arcanum divinae*” in the “*Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*” (Benziger, 1903), p. 60.

common conjugal life. It was established by God in Paradise and ratified in many utterances of Our Lord. It is the foundation of the family and of the home. In ancient times, married life was undermined in a threefold manner:

1) *Attacks on the dignity of the woman:* History clearly shows how deplorable was woman's condition among the Babylonians and Phoenicians, among the ancient Gauls and Germans, and even among the more civilized peoples. Among most of these peoples, woman was considered as a mere object or thing and not as a person—not as a being having her own responsibility and inalienable rights. It was man alone who had a personal destiny; woman had no destiny, was not considered as a human being save on account of and through man. It was man who existed; woman merely coexisted. Says Leo XIII in his Encyclical on marriage: "Nothing could be more piteous than the wife, sunk so low as to be all but reckoned as a means for the gratification of passion, or for the production of offspring. Without any feeling of shame, marriageable girls were bought and sold, just like so much merchandise; and power was sometimes given to the father and to the husband to inflict capital punishment on the wife" (2).

2) *Attacks on the dignity of the child:* The child fared no better in ancient times than did woman. It was considered as having no inalienable rights or personal destiny. Poets, philosophers, and historians unanimously testify to the cruel and inhuman treatment of the child in ancient times. The child was frequently sold, exposed, or even killed. In Babylon his head was dashed against the rock;

(2) Ibid, p. 62.

in Palestine he was cast into a red hot furnace to be offered as a holocaust to the pagan god Moloch.

3) *Attacks on the marriage bond itself:* The fall introduced a disorder into man's being. His lower faculties were no longer subject to the higher but tended inordinately to the possession of their own object. Man's intellect could no longer perceive the truth with that promptness and clearness as he did before. He gradually fell into idolatry and nature worship. This darkening of the mind was followed by a hardening of the heart. Man changed and corrupted the idea of marriage. The marriage bond was relaxed. The union of one man and one woman was followed by a plurality of husbands and wives. The way to divorce was open among both Gentiles and Jews ⁽³⁾.

All these perverse tendencies had a destructive influence not only on the marriage bond itself, but also on the primary purpose of marriage, namely, the procreation and education of children. In such circumstances, home and family life in the true sense of the word was quite impossible. By establishing the dignity of the woman and of the child and by restoring marriage to its primitive form, Christ laid firm and permanent the foundations of family and home life.

1. *Christ and Womanhood:* Christ could have come upon earth as a full grown man like Adam, or He could have assumed the form of an angel. But no, He chose to be born of one who, though immaculately conceived, was a member of the hitherto despised sex. The Incarnation conferred a unique grandeur on woman, and placed an obligation of reverence towards womanhood upon all

⁽³⁾ Mtt. XIX, 8.

those who believe in a God-Man born of a Virgin. The sex which was so humiliated in Eve was exalted beyond expression in her who is "blessed among women."

The enemies of women were stunned by the Incarnation. They seemed unable to shake off the stupor of their secular prejudices. Hence it was not long before the impious heretic, Nestorius, came forth and pretended that the God-Man did not take His flesh and blood from Mary, that He was not really her son, that He had no more relation to her than He has to the ciborium in which He rests as the Eucharistic Host. Woman faced once more her supreme peril. Was that very mystery, which was understood to raise woman to such sublime heights, only to emphasize her inferiority? It was then that the Catholic Church, the pillar and foundation of truth, came to her rescue. Gathering her bishops quickly at Ephesus, she proclaimed that Mary is verily the Mother of God. And as the bishops were leaving that memorable assembly, they were met by the rejoicing women of the city who prostrated themselves before the prelates and kissed their feet, and then with lighted candles and sweet-burning incense, conducted the bishops to their dwellings. They knew that Mary's triumph was their triumph, and that by this momentous decision of the Church in Mary's favor, the grandeur and dignity of Christian woman was definitely assured.

What the Church did at Ephesus, she has continued to do ever since. When the so-called Reformers began to propound doctrines on original sin which were inimical to woman's dignity, when they affirmed, for example, that man is hopelessly corrupt, that his free will is extinguished, that concu-

piscence is irresistible, it was again the Church, assembled at the Council of Trent, which by her anathemas confounded the blasphemies of heretics and saved woman from another major peril. And when Henry VIII of England wished to put away his lawful wife, Catherine of Aragon, in order to marry Anne Boleyn, the Pope was immovable. Rather expose himself to the fury of the irritated monarch, rather see Catholicism driven from England and the country become schismatic, than allow this attack on the dignity of woman and on the sanctity of the family and of the home. Indeed the passions of men have always been halted when they reached the chair of Peter; they have been dispersed like waves when they struck the rock on which the Church is built.

If the Incarnation safeguarded woman's dignity, the Redemption consecrated her equality with man. The humiliating bondage to which she was subject met its deadly opponent in the spirit of liberty and peace which Christ's Redemption brought into the world. Christ freed us from the true bondage which is the bondage of sin; and by shedding His precious Blood for us, made all equally children of God and brothers and sisters in His Blood. Henceforth "there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (4).

Christianity showed from the very beginning a great respect for woman. Far from being despised or belittled, woman is addressed by such beautiful titles as "sister" and "beloved co-worker in the Lord." No longer was woman to be considered as a mere slave whom the man could use or put away

(4) Gal. III, 28.

according to his pleasure, no longer was she to be regarded as a mere piece of property which could be sold or brutally destroyed.

2) *Christ and the Child*: Christ knew that the dignity of the family would not be secure if He did not safeguard the rights of the child. For while the angels were proclaiming the praises of God on high and bidding the shepherds to seek the Divine Child, the air was still tense with the shrieks of Babylonian mothers whose children were being dashed against the stone, and of Palestinian mothers whose children were cast into a red hot furnace as holocausts to the pagan god Moloch. This prejudice was deeply rooted in paganism and continued to hold obstinate sway. The Apostles themselves were not wholly free from it, for on one occasion they tried to impede children from approaching Our Lord. It was then that Christ uttered those words which renewed the face of the earth and filled the hearts of parents with hope and joy: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not. For of such is the kingdom of God" (5). These few words—so simple and yet so beautiful—proclaim the eternal truths that the child is made in the image and likeness of God, that he has an immortal soul capable of participating in sanctifying grace, and that he is destined for the Beatific Vision. It is Christ Himself—full of grace and charm and made a "child" for us—Whom we receive when we receive children: "Who-soever shall receive one such child as this in my name receiveth me" (6). Mothers, who instinctively felt the warmth of Christ's love for children, brought their children in full confidence to Him,

(5) Mk. X, 14.

(6) Mk. IX, 35.

graciously besought Him to touch them, to bless them, to lay His hands on them, and to pray for them.

3) *Christ and Marriage*: The dignity of the child and of the mother is dependent on the stability and holiness of the married life. By restoring marriage to its primitive unity and indissolubility, Christ laid a firm foundation for the family. Christ declared that the marriage bond cannot be dissolved by any human agency: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the 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" ⁽⁷⁾. Having set aside the difficulties adduced from the practice of the Jews in the time of Moses, Christ as supreme lawgiver declared: "I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery" ⁽⁸⁾. In order that the two parties might not be left to their passions and weaknesses, in order that the married parties might accomplish faithfully their duties, Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. Because marriage is a sacrament, it confers on the contracting parties not only sanctifying grace but also other special graces, whereby their natural love will always be ennobled and elevated, the burden of their obligations lightened, and their daily trials and tribulations changed into happiness and joy.

This Christian ideal of marriage prevailed throughout the primitive and mediaeval ages of

(7) Mtt. XIX, 5, 6.

(8) Mtt. XIX, 9.

Christendom. During all this time, too, the family was an industrial union, and recreation and play centered largely in the home. But with the Protestant Reformation and Industrial Revolution, a great change took place, and new forces destructive of family and home life began to make their appearance. These influences prejudicial to the integrity of family life are the following:

a) The principle of private judgment in religion led to man's adopting a moral code which was adapted to his weaknesses and self-indulgences, and which disregarded the sanctity, unity and indissolubility of marriage. Personal pleasure prevails over religious doctrines and principles.

b) Birth control, which is destructive of the primary purpose of marriage and which opens the way to selfishness and self-indulgence, is gradually dissolving the stability of the family and leading to the self-destruction of the human race.

c) With the Industrial Revolution members of the family began to seek employment outside of the home—in mills, shops, and factories. The family no longer formed a compact unit and parental influence can no longer be effectively exercised.

d) The great shift of the population in recent times from rural sections to urban centers, has placed many a family in great instability and insecurity.

e) Unemployment, poverty, and insufficient wages are a constant threat to the stability and normal expansion of family life.

f) The employment of children and mothers prevents the home from being the character-train-

ing agency which it was providentially destined to be. The employment of unmarried women frequently results in their deferring unduly the natural obligations of the married state. The employment of married women frequently leads to a practice of birth control, to poor housekeeping, to a low standard of living, and to inadequate nurture of children.

g) Crowded living conditions in the cities oblige the children to seek recreation in the streets, in theatres, in dance halls, etc. In this way, they are at once withdrawn from the salutary influence of the home and exposed to various demoralizing influences.

h) The stability of the home depends upon the union of hearts and minds of the two spouses. But how can there be this union if the two parties differ on the most important question of life, namely religion? Mixed marriages are doing much to disintegrate the family and home.

i) Homes in the United States are being constantly shattered, children are being deprived of home training at a time when they need it most, the very stability of the social order is being undermined by divorce. The readiness and frequency with which divorce is granted in our country is fast becoming a national scandal. "By divorce, condemned by Christ, the unity of the family is broken, yes, and that of human life; hearts are separated, affections misdirected; ruinous incentives to infidelity suggested; seeds of discord spread among families; the dignity of woman is diminished, and cheapened; the good moral education of children becomes impossible, as they see the authors of their life first divided, then joined in other unions, legalized by

civil law, but which no moral principle can justify" ⁽⁹⁾.

⁽⁹⁾ Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, quoted in St. Paul "Catholic Bulletin," March 25, 1939, p. 4. The various forces undermining the family are discussed extensively and thoroughly in the excellent work of the Rev. Dr. Edgar Schmiedeler, entitled "An Introductory Study of the Family" (Century Company, New York, 1930).

Discussion Aids

1. In what three ways was the married life undermined in ancient times?
2. Show how Christ restored the dignity of
 - a) womanhood
 - b) of the child
 - c) of marriage
3. Explain how each one of the following factors is undermining the family.
 - a) principle of private judgment in religion
 - b) birth control
 - c) the Industrial Revolution
 - d) the drift of the rural population to the cities
 - e) unemployment
 - f) female labor
 - g) crowded living conditions in the city
 - h) mixed marriages
 - i) divorce

Religious Practices

1. I will always be very grateful to the Catholic Church which by her doctrines and her pre-

cepts has safeguarded the dignity of the child and of women.

2. I will not sponsor nor participate in any entertainment which features a mock marriage.
3. I will prepare myself for marriage by prayer, frequent meditation on the dignity of the family, and by a frequent reception of the sacraments.

Chapter VIII

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

“Unjust and unlawful is any monopoly, educational or scholastic, which, physically or morally, forces families to make use of government schools, contrary to the dictates of their Christian conscience, or contrary even to their legitimate preferences”⁽¹⁾.

“There are three necessary societies distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.— Consequently, education which is concerned with man as a whole, individually and socially, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, necessarily belongs to all these three societies, in due proportion, corresponding according to the disposition of Divine Providence, to the coordination of their respective ends”⁽²⁾.

The Family

The duty and right to educate children belongs, in the first place, to parents. Many arguments can be adduced in support of this doctrine which in practice is being rejected by the Communists of Russia, the Nazis of Germany, and the revolutionaries of Mexico.

a) *Diversity of sexes*: The procreation and education of children is the primary purpose of

(1) Pius XI, Encycl. “The Christian Education of Youth” in “Four Great Encyclicals” (Paulist Press), p. 51.

(2) Ibid. pp. 39-40.

marriage: "God created man to His own image, to the image of God He created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply"⁽³⁾. In God's Providence the two sexes were created different, not only that they might complement one another but that their relations with one another might culminate in the birth of an offspring. Secondly, nature aims not at the mere momentary existence of the child but at his continued existence and development: "Nature," says St. Thomas, "intends not merely the generation of the offspring, but also its development and advance to the perfection of man considered as man, that is, to the state of virtue"⁽⁴⁾. But all this implies rearing and education—that is, training of the child in both body and mind. The erroneous opinion prevails in some quarters that the care of the body is the duty of parents, while the development of the mind is the duty of the state. But this is a wholly erroneous idea. For fathers and mothers are parents of the whole child and must train him in both soul and body.

b) *The child is an extension and continuation of the parents:* "A child is by nature of its father: thus, at first, it is not distinct from its parents as to the body, so long as it enfolded within its mother's womb; and later on after birth, and before it has the use of its free will, it is enfolded in the care of its parents, which is like a spiritual womb"⁽⁵⁾. The child is not only an image of his parents but flesh of their flesh, and, in a sense, identical with themselves. Hence the parents must naturally cher-

(3) Gen. I, 27-28.

(4) "Summa Theologica" III, q. 41, Art I, quoted in Pius XI Encycl. "Christian Education of Youth," o.c., p. 46.

(5) "Summa Theologica," II, II, q. X, Art. 12.

ish, maintain, protect, and rear those whom they begot of their own substance and who are, as it were, an extension of themselves. This parental love lies deeply embedded in human nature. Even birds and animals instinctively protect their offspring, frequently at the risk of their own existence.

c) *Child's helplessness.* While birds and animals can shift for themselves soon after birth, this is not true of the child. He is helpless for many years, and depends on others for aid. Hence the duty of caring for the child devolves upon the parents. The birth of the child is the result of the free act of the parents who, consequently, must provide for him, maintain, protect and educate him. They must care for his existence and for the development of both his body and mind. Both parents are bound to care for the child for it is as one joint principle that they gave existence to the child.

d) The right of parents to educate their children was recognized by the United States Supreme Court in connection with the Oregon School Case, June 1, 1925: "The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty, to recognize, and prepare him for additional duties."

e) The Catholic Church has always been the exponent and defender of the parent's right to educate their children. "So jealous," says Pius XI, "is she (the Church) of the family's inviolable natural right to educate the children, that she never con-

sents, save under peculiar circumstances and with special cautions, to baptize the children of infidels, or provide for their education against the will of the parents, until such time as the children can choose for themselves and freely embrace the faith"⁽⁶⁾.

f) The right of the parents to educate their children is not "absolute and despotic"⁽⁷⁾. The parents may not teach the child anything against the natural or divine law or against the truths revealed by God. In imparting to the child a religious and supernatural training, they must follow the plan which God's Incarnate Son established in this world for the salvation of mankind.

The State

The Russian Communists and the Nazis claim that the children belong to the state, and that the state, consequently, should train and educate them. This view is wholly erroneous and untenable. In the first place the family precedes the State both in nature and in time. Historically, the state arose out of a combination of families and tribes. Hence the family has rights and duties which it possessed before the state arose, which it did not receive from the state, and which it retains independently of the state. If the end of the family is the procreation and education of children, in the family, too, resides the immediate right to rear and educate children.

If the parents hand over the child to be taught by another, the latter acts only as a deputy of the parents. He participates in the office and rights of the parents who alone are finally responsible to na-

⁽⁶⁾ Encycl. on the "Christian Education of Youth," o.c., p. 48.

⁽⁷⁾ Ibid. p. 47.

ture and to the Author of nature for the rearing of the children.

Secondly, nature itself has designated the parents as the proper educators of the child. Nature has not endowed the state with any qualities of a nurse or teacher. To the mother of the child—and not to the state—nature has given breasts, fountains of nourishing milk for her offspring. To the parent—and not to the state—nature has given a tender love for their children in virtue of which they willingly sacrifice their means and even themselves for the well-being of their child. Into their hearts nature has infused an inborn solicitude and affection for the child, a great patience with his weaknesses, and an attitude of watchfulness over his growth and development. Parents instinctively penetrate the child's thoughts, desires and volitions, and guide him at every stage—the mother by her suavity, the father by his virility and firmness—until full manhood and womanhood has been reached. On the other hand, into the hearts of children God has infused a special love, reverence and confidence and docility towards parents. In a word, both parents and children are supplied with instincts of affection—one for another—which neither the state nor any other relationship can satisfy or replace.

Thirdly, the exponents of the state's absolute rights over education maintain that man is born a citizen of the state and that consequently he belongs primarily to the state. They forget, however, that before being a citizen man must exist, and that existence does not come from the state but from the parents, as Leo XIII writes: "The child belongs to the father, and is, as it were, the continuation of the father's personality; and, to speak with strict-

ness, the child takes its place in civil authority not in its own right, but in its quality as a member of the family in which it is begotten"⁽⁸⁾.

What rights, then, does the state enjoy in regard to education? Pius XI lays down the following principles:

a) Starting from the principle that the state exists for the individual, and not vice versa, the Pope declares that "it is the right, or to speak more correctly, it is the duty of the State to protect in its legislation, the prior rights of the family as regards the Christian education of its offspring, and consequently also to respect the supernatural rights of the Church in this same realm of Christian education"⁽⁹⁾. The state should encourage and assist the activity of the Church and of the family and when necessary supplement their work. But the state may not wrest the child from the parents, or force on the children an educational system to which the parents would conscientiously object. The state, of course, is not obliged to consult parents on purely technical or scientific matters, or on questions dealing with examinations and the supervision of the school; after all, the state must see to it that the public funds are properly spent.

b) The State has the right to "protect the rights of the child itself when the parents are found wanting either physically or morally in this respect, whether by default, incapacity, or misconduct"⁽¹⁰⁾.

c) The state "can exact, and take measures to secure that all its citizens have the necessary know-

⁽⁸⁾ Encycl. "The Condition of Labor" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press) p. 8.

⁽⁹⁾ Encycl. "Christian Education of Youth," o.c. p. 49.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ibid. p. 49-50.

ledge of their civic and political duties, and a certain degree of physical, intellectual and moral culture, which, considering the conditions of our times, is really necessary for the common good"⁽¹¹⁾.

d) In a nation of different religious beliefs, the state should leave the families free to set up the school demanded by the dictates of conscience. It should give financial assistance—"as justice demands"—from public funds to the schools demanded by the parents⁽¹²⁾. This aid should be extended to all groups of parents—regardless of religion, color, or origin—because before the state all needy parents are equal.

The Church

The work of education belongs preeminently to the Church because of the following titles:

a) The mission and authority to teach was entrusted to the Church by the Divine Founder Himself: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. 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"⁽¹³⁾. The Church's educational mission extends to "all nations" without exception. It embraces the faithful as well as those who are outside of the fold and who also are called to inherit Christ's kingdom. Hence we find the Church establishing schools not only at home but in missionary lands and in the most remote parts of the earth.

b) In virtue of her supernatural motherhood

⁽¹¹⁾ Ibid. p. 50.

⁽¹²⁾ Ibid. p. 64.

⁽¹³⁾ Mtt. XXVIII, 18-20.

the Church begets and trains souls "in the divine life of grace, with her Sacraments and her doctrine"⁽¹⁴⁾.

c) God as Creator and Conserver is intimately present in the whole universe. If God is inseparable from the universe as a whole, He is likewise inseparable from its various parts and component elements which, for the sake of convenience, we study in the so-called secular branches. The secular branches, then, cannot be taught without some reference to God and to His law. In addition, natural truths cannot contradict supernatural and revealed truths—the two are, as it were, two rays from the same Sun. Now, it belongs to the Church, the infallible custodian and interpreter of faith and morals, to determine when a secular branch is properly orientated and when it contradicts divine truth. For the same reason these various secular courses can and should be taught under the direct supervision and sponsorship of the Church herself.

"It is the inalienable right as well as the indispensable duty of the Church," says Pius XI, "to watch over the entire education of her children, in all institutions, public or private, not merely in regard to the religious instruction there given, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation in so far as religion and morality are concerned"⁽¹⁵⁾. Secondly, in order that the education given in a Catholic institution fulfil the Papal ideal, "it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and textbooks in every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that religion

⁽¹⁴⁾ Pius XI, Encycl. "The Christian Education of Youth," in o.c. p. 41.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Ibid. p. 43.

may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth's entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well"⁽¹⁶⁾.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Ibid. pp. 63-64.

Discussion Aids

1. State three reasons to show that the right to educate children belongs to parents.
2. Give three arguments to show that this right does not belong to the state.
3. What rights has the state in regard to education?
4. Give three arguments to show that the right to educate belongs preeminently to the Church.
5. Has the Church the right to supervise all education? Why?
6. What is necessary in order that Catholic schools fulfil the Papal ideal?
7. Suppose a law was proposed in the State legislature for the suppression of parochial schools; suppose you were called upon to present the Church's position; how would you proceed?
8. What precisely was the Oregon case? What was the question at issue?
9. What is the difference between a Catholic school and a public school?
10. May parents or schools teach the pupils birth control, euthanasia, divorce, free love, etc.?

Religious Practices

1. "Thou shalt honor thy father and mother."
2. I will strive to promote Catholic education, whenever the opportunity presents itself, and contribute to the support of Catholic schools.
3. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world (by means of his profane knowledge) and suffer the loss of his soul (by neglecting religious knowledge)?"



