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Why I am...

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# Why I am a Catholic

by  
James F. Cunningham, C.S.P.



TO OUR HELPERS: "THOSE WOMEN WHO HAVE LABORED . . .  
IN THE GOSPEL . . . WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE BOOK OF LIFE."

*Philippians iv. 3.*

*Nihil Obstat:*

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,  
*Censor Librorum.*

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# Why I Am a Catholic

By JAMES F. CUNNINGHAM, C.S.P.



A SMALL group of men and women were assembled at a dinner party, the semi-monthly event of a club called the "Inquirers' Forum." Their guest was a Catholic priest and it had been explained to him that once every two weeks this group of men and women met. On each occasion their guest of honor was chosen from among the clergy of the metropolitan area. Tonight Father Walter had been asked to talk to these people in his own way on a subject which should have been and was very dear to his heart. These club members, non-Catholics all, had asked that he make clear to them why he was a Catholic.

"If I ask you," said the priest, "why are you Americans, you will give me a variety of answers. Some of you will say, 'I was born here'; others will reply, 'My forefathers emigrated to this country from a foreign land and I have never given the thought much consideration'; still more of you might say, 'My father and mother were Americans and I just followed in their footsteps; if America was good enough for them it is good enough for me.'"

"What would you answer?" questioned one listener.

"I am an American," Father Walter replied, "because I am convinced that for me America is the finest country in the world. I have traveled the world in books, have seen pictures, have read and heard of many strange peoples. I know what goes on in other countries today and I am dismayed, whereas I dislike nothing of my own country's heritage. I am an American because I am convinced that in this country I shall be most happy, shall best work out my material salvation and enter into the harvest planted in the blood of martyred American heroes. I am an American because I am intellectually persuaded, convinced, that it is the one country in the world for me and mine.

"I am a Catholic, too, because I am convinced that I am right. It is not because my parents were Catholics, nor because I learned my religion with the 'three R's,' nor because I have been converted to this belief from heresy. I am a Catholic because I am convinced that the Catholic Church is the one true Church on earth established by Jesus Christ to lead all men to salvation."

One of the men spoke up at this point, "That is rather a large claim, isn't it, Father?"

"Yes, it is a large claim. But you have asked me to tell you why I am a Catholic and I know you all are sincere in your request, in your search for enlightenment. You expect me to speak out clearly and I intend to make my reasons plain to you. However, I am not going to argue, my understanding is that you wish me to explain."

Another of the men, the chairman, echoed the sentiment of the others when he said, "We want you to speak out. No one is going to feel offended and all of us here are modern enough to know that the world of today does not want subterfuge in religion, it wants facts and plain speech. Make your points as strong as you wish and clinch them as tightly as you think necessary."

"Splendid," answered the priest, as without further comment he addressed himself to the group. "I spent several years as chaplain at a large western university and will tell you the story of one convert and his search as his reasons for being a Catholic coincide with mine.

### **Father Walter's Story**

"This young man's parents were heirs to the fallacy that the child should be allowed to choose his own religion when he comes of age. He had been well trained in music, arts and the sciences. He was cultured and athletic, his parents insisting that these things were necessary for his social and physical well-being, though at the same time they denied him the most fundamental and necessary of all teaching, religion, which provides for spiritual well-being. He felt the need of some spiritual assistance and one day, towards the close of his freshman year at college, he spoke to one of his professors about the problem. He asked several questions which were to the point.

"'Professor,' he said, 'you are my faculty advisor and I have some questions which have been causing me worry for over a year. Do you mind helping me with them?'

"'Not at all!' came the reply. 'What are they?'

"'What am I as an individual? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Who is this being men refer to as God? Is He interested in me? Why is there a world? Is this the best possible world? Is this world the

sole reason for my existence? Is death the end of everything? Is there a reward apart from our own feeling of satisfaction for right living, or punishment apart from the remorse we feel when we do evil?

“‘You are not the first to seek an answer to these very real problems,’ the professor replied, ‘but the answer is not to be found in philosophy alone. Of course it can help some, but the complete answer is to be found in religion. Plato, Aristotle, Socrates asked these questions, but Paul, Augustine, Aquinas found the answers. Religion sufficed. It satisfied the analytical mind of a Newman, the historical mind of a Belloc, the many-sided mind of Chesterton. I am sure that in religion, and there alone, you will find adequate solutions to your problems.’

“‘But there are so many religions! Which one shall I investigate first?’

### **Christianity's Claims**

“‘Christianity makes the most pertinent claims and most consoling promises. The Christian religion claims to be a doctrine revealed by God to man; professes to be the one perfect religion; demands to be heard as the guide of man in this life and his reward in the life to come; it was prepared by prophecy and introduced by miracles; it is the climax of all history prior to its coming into the world and the key to all that is subsequent; and lastly, and very important, Christianity declares that it has the answer to every vital human problem.’

“As he looked up the boy's brow was furrowed and his lips puckered as though he would whistle.

“‘Whistle if you wish,’ said the philosopher smilingly, ‘but, to use one of your own expressions, you really have something big there. Religion is not a Sunday attraction, it is a vital influence in life. No other factor has so shaped human life and the history of the world as has religion; it has been responsible for more wars and hatred than any other single element. The great passion of life is not love of a woman for a man or *vice versa*, as you will one day discover. It is religion. Men hold religion sacred and make sacrifices for it out of love, or revile its influence and wish to destroy it out of hate. Of all religious influence there has been none so dominating as Christianity.’

“Where shall I find out about the Christian religion?” the young college student asked.

“Keep in mind first of all that Christianity is an historical fact and then get a copy of the Bible. Read it carefully! Then return to me at the beginning of the fall semester and we will discuss your problems further.”

“Should I go to church in the meantime?”

“Yes, if you wish. I am afraid that most of our Protestant churches will be closed during the summer, but you will find the Catholic church and a few others open. So until the fall—have a good vacation.”

### **The Bible Story**

“Before the young man returned to his studies in October he had read carefully the King James version of the Bible. In the Old Testament he read the story of a people’s hope, the promise of a Messiah, the long line of prophets who foretold His coming, each drawing a word picture which was placed in the divine art gallery so that when He came all would know of His advent. In the New Testament he read of the fulfillment of those ancient Jewish hopes. He saw the Messiah as He walked among men; in Him he saw the prophecies fulfilled, but sadly he noted that the Messiah came to His own and they received Him not, that even His own city of Nazareth rejected Him. He thought of these things now as he walked in the direction of the philosophy department.

“The tanned face of the professor brightened with pleasure as he saw his young visitor. The usual commonplaces of vacation, of the year before them, of athletic hopes and scholastic endeavors, all were soon exhausted. Finally it was the professor who said ‘How is the religious problem coming along?’

“Well professor,” answered the young man, ‘I followed your advice about the Bible. It certainly did open my eyes, but most of all I was amazed that God should walk among men in the person of Christ.’

“You believe then, in the divinity of Christ, that He is God.’

### **Christ Is God**

“Oh, yes, it is all very clear in the Bible. Christ was the founder of Christianity and if He is not God, then as

a religion it is mere sham and pretense. Either Christ is God or an impostor, either He is God or a fabricator. Why do you ask?’

“Many Church leaders disagree with you today. They say He is a great man but not God.’

“It is impossible for Him to be a great man and not God. He claimed to be God, manifested the power of God by miracle and prophecy; because He stated clearly before the High Council of Jewry that He was God, He was put to death. Why! He foretold His own death and Resurrection from the dead and the truth of Christianity rests on the miracle of the Resurrection. I believe firmly that He is God. But I want to find the Church He established. In the Bible it is evident that He founded a Church and promised to remain with it all days to the end of the world. Where is that Church?’

“If you are so confident that Christ is God then you had better investigate the Church which through the ages has steadfastly maintained the divinity of Jesus Christ—the Roman Catholic Church. If you cannot find there what you seek you may always go elsewhere.’

“‘You know,’ replied the boy, ‘during the summer I was reading one of Macaulay’s essays and came across a remarkable quotation about that Church. Since he was not a Catholic I thought that his testimony should be of interest. May I read it to you?’

“Please do.’

### Macaulay’s Tribute

“There is not, and there never was on this earth a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of

life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those which landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments which now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's.'

### The Historical Church

“That is a powerful statement,’ said the professor. ‘But, of course, if you are interested in history you cannot escape a knowledge of the Catholic Church. She is written across its every page, many times being the only interesting and cultural force in its story. At one time you see her with the martyrs of the blood-drenched arena and above the cry of the jackal, the snarl of tiger and roar of lion, can be heard the triumphant chant of Christians who are to face the beasts of the jungle and the Roman populace on the morrow. Armies have gone forth to conquer so-called savage tribes, only to find that the Church is already teaching them the way of salvation. Often her missionaries have gone out with expeditionary forces, but when the military returned to its barracks, soldiers to other duties and civilian volunteers to the life of the city, the Church remained to build an empire, not by force of arms, but a spiritual empire in the hearts of men.

“‘At another time the barbarians poured down from northern jungles devastating the fertile valleys of Italy. Nothing, it seemed, could stem the tide of barbarism; it appeared that culture was about to be destroyed; yet destroyers knelt at the feet of the Church and these conquerors returned to their native fastnesses vanquished by the power of Christ and His Church. It has ever been in the same story. Call to mind the California missions. What a tribute they are to a Church which brought the faith of Christ to the native Indian, converted and made of him a useful citizen. It did what our forefathers never could,



it elevated and beautified the savage nature. But—after all it is your search. Don't let me influence you!

“But professor, how am I going to begin this search? You told me to read the Bible; I've done that and know that Christ established a Church—but which one?”

“Reaching for the *World Almanac*, the teacher turned to the page designating the various religious denominations. ‘Why not begin with the largest Christian denomination? There are 331,500,000 Roman Catholics throughout the world. You will find their churches everywhere. Suppose you follow this plan. Take the Church as you find it, study it carefully and then read the New Testament again. Compare the Church as she is with the blueprint or plan of the great Builder, Christ. He gave to His Church certain characteristic notes, trademarks of the genuine article. What are they? You will find them in the Gospels, and then come back for another discussion.’

### **The Church of Jesus Christ**

“It seemed a good plan to the young man and, as he told the professor afterwards, the first fact that was outstanding in the Roman Catholic Church was the mark of unity. In this Church were Germans, Frenchmen, Italians; there were English, Irish, Japanese and Chinese; every national group under the sun was represented, some of them sharply divided politically, socially and economically. These nations could not agree on one point of importance for their national and economic well-being, world peace—they lived constantly in the shadow of war. Yet, dealing with the most fiery of all human passions, religion, they were in perfect accord. As Catholics these many millions, with different ideas of life and living were in harmony. They all believed the same doctrines, all worshiped in the same manner, all acknowledged the same spiritual guide, the Pope. Modern religious life has no more modern miracle than the religious cohesiveness of the far-flung Catholic Church. Then our young investigator, with this first characteristic note firmly impressed on his mind, read the New Testament. The prayer of Jesus to His Father the night before He died was ‘That they may be one as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in

Us, that the world may believe Thou hast sent Me—a prayer for unity.

“Other Christian groups are hopelessly divided. The seamless robe of Christianity, ripped asunder in the sixteenth century, is now scattered piecemeal among over two hundred and twenty-five different denominations in the United States alone. Nor is there any hope for unity in the various denominations themselves. Among the Baptists may be found eighteen different groups, among the Methodists nineteen, the Presbyterians nine, the Lutherans twenty-two, to name but a few of the more important sects. One Church alone has a unity characteristic of Christ. It is the Roman Catholic Church.

### **An Apostolic Church**

“What other marks did the university student find in the Catholic Church? He found, in addition to unity, an apostolic succession, that is, an unbroken line of sovereign Pontiffs or Church rulers from the present Pope Pius XI, the two hundred and sixty-first to sit in Peter’s chair, back to Peter himself, the first Pope of the Catholic Church. To Peter, his fellow apostles, and their legitimate successors was the command given to teach the gospel of Christ. Only a Church which begins with the apostles, which can trace its origin back to the head of the apostolic band, which was commissioned by Christ, can claim to be His Church.

“What shall we say of the denominational groups? Do they go back to Christ and His apostles? All of them have fallible human founders, whether it be the Episcopal Church, which began under Edward VI, though the breach appeared under the rule of Henry VIII, who died full of years and sin. The Lutheran Church began with Martin Luther, an apostate priest. John Knox and John Calvin, sixteenth century reformers, were men who also abandoned their priestly calling and founded Churches of their own.

“Methodism began with John Wesley; Christian Science owes its life to Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy, as the Four Square Gospel Sect owes its existence to Aimee Semple MacPherson Hutton. No one thinks of claiming that these are apostolic Churches. Only one Church can substantiate and prove such a beginning from which it has never been separated—the Roman Catholic Church.

## A World-Wide Church

“But Christ’s Church must be a universal Church! He said to His followers ‘Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature!’ The only universal Church, one without national affiliations as regards its origin, is the Roman Catholic Church. Lutheranism began in Germany, the Episcopal Church is the Church of England; Christian Science is distinctly American, as is the Four Square Gospel Church, which began in Los Angeles. What claim to universality have they? These modern Churches were not founded and sent into the world to teach His Gospel by the Divine Master. One Church has been—the Roman Catholic Church.

“One day as they were leaving the administration building, the professor and the young man met. ‘I’ve been investigating the Catholic Church further,’ said the student, ‘and find that it conforms in many respects to the plans of Christ for His Church. I am worried though, because this morning our history professor told us that there were scandals in past Church history.’

“The professor smiled. ‘Yes, there have been scandals. The greatest of all the scandals took place in the apostolic college when Judas betrayed his Master for a few silver coins. There have been men like Alexander VI, John XXII, Torquemada—but there have been great saints, too. The Church, you will find, is not proud of her sinners, but if you want to enter into the life stream of the Church with men and women like Augustine and Aquinas or St. Theresa and Catherine of Siena, you have to take the Church as she is. To my mind the greatest miracle of all is the fact that the Church has outlived her own children. Only a divine institution could withstand so many and violent shocks from without and within. Are you worried because some Church members were not representative or were false to their high calling?’

“‘Yes, that is it.’

### Scandals?

“‘Remember then, that the human element is part of Church composition and do not try to judge the people of the twelfth century by the enlightenment of the twentieth,

but keep in mind that the Church which taught the need of prayer and penance in the fifth and the fifteenth and in every other century will still be preaching it in the twenty-fifth. Individuals have failed but the Church of which they were members has never ceased preaching holiness of life. You see Catholics attending Sunday Mass with a regularity that shames us Protestants, abstaining from meat on Fridays and during Lent with an ascetic spirit which has departed the evangelical Churches.'

"Pardon my interruption, professor, but did you see this quotation I took from a book called *Rome from Within*? It was written by a converted minister, Father Selden P. Delany, and he quotes a fellow minister as saying: "To those of us who were brought up to believe in the laxity of Catholic morals, it is somewhat astonishing to discover that in these latter days it is the Catholic Church which through pastoral sermons, diocesan letters, Papal encyclicals and thoroughgoing ecclesiastical discipline is taking the most unqualified stand against immodest dress, indecent dancing, obscene literature, and sex emancipation for immature youth." Of course we know what was accomplished with regard to immoral plays and motion pictures!'

"I am glad to see you are making notes!' the professor commented. 'In the Church you must not expect human beings to be angels, even if you do remember that some of the angels fell. You will always find clay in creatures. It has always been so in the past nor do I think the future will be any different.'

"Perhaps I was unduly disturbed, for as you were talking I remembered that our Lord said scandals would come even while He condemned those by whom the scandals came. There are good and not-so-good people everywhere and I suppose we must expect to find them in the Church. She teaches such a high and difficult standard of living that when we find failures we are apt to let them occupy the focal point of our attention. Even today one evil person gets more front page publicity than ten million people who live well. It is the way of the press and the way of history.'

"Let me point out the blue print and the demand Christ made of His followers and of His Church,' said the teacher. 'Perhaps we should call it a counsel—"Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."'

"You seem to know quite a bit about this yourself,

professor.' The statement made in a questioning tone went unanswered as the philosopher questioned the boy.

"I wonder that the doctrine of infallibility of the Church or Pope has not raised doubts in your mind.'

### **Infallibility**

"Infallibility did worry me at first, until I found out that my idea of Catholic teaching was wrong. The Pope, I discovered, is infallible only in matters of faith and morals. In other matters he is as fallible as you or I. We can readily understand the need of this prerogative. Christ promised to remain all days with His Church, to keep it from error. He demanded that all receive His teaching under pain of damnation. "He that believes and is baptized will be saved," He said, but "he that believeth not will be condemned." To demand our submission to His teachings under such a penalty means He must have left an infallible teaching authority to guide us. If we have a Supreme Court to interpret our Constitution, written in English and not yet two hundred years old, how much more necessary is it to have an infallible teaching body in matters of religion. The question of infallibility presented no problem. I looked for that in the Church of Christ and found but one Church making the claim—the Roman Catholic Church—all others admit they may be wrong. The Roman Catholic Church denies that on a teaching of faith or morals, she can ever be false to her teaching commission or allow her children to profess error. She is the answer to the quest for authority in religion.'

"Does the Roman Catholic Church make use of the Bible?' asked the professor with a twinkle in his eye. 'You refer constantly to the Bible, use it as the source of information about the Church of Christ. Yet we who are not Catholics think that Catholics make little use of the Bible.'

### **The Bible Church**

"Of course the Catholic Church uses the Bible' laughed the boy. 'When you consult Catholic sources of information you find how misinformed we have been. It was the Catholic Church which gathered the various books of the New Testament, approved, preserved and taught them to the advent of the printing press. You find every doctrine

of Catholic faith has its source in the Bible. The Bible is ready every day in Catholic services, on Sunday it is commented on in sermons and every Catholic soon finds that the Mass—the central act of worship in the Catholic Church—is made up in large part of extracts from the Bible.

“If the Protestant churches have a Bible today they can thank the Catholic Church for preserving it, and while the reformers rejected what seemed to their minds unfitted, and selected what they wished, the Catholic Church maintained the integrity of the Bible. I was surprised at the respect and reverence accorded the Bible and the official exhortation of the Popes that all Catholics do more Bible reading. Protestants have only the Bible and not a complete one at that, while in the Catholic Church the Bible is but one of many divine aids to salvation.”

“The professor put his hand on the young man’s arm. ‘You have gone into the matter quite thoroughly, have you not? In fact I would say in passing that your knowledge seems a bit technical. How did you learn all this?’

“The boy looked a trifle sheepish. ‘I only took your advice,’ he said. ‘All last year you kept telling the class that an education does not mean an accumulation of facts, rather it teaches us where to look for information we may need. You insisted that we can learn only a few things in life; that when we needed technical advice we should consult an expert in that field. Remember what you said! “Two things are given to you freely by those least qualified and most ignorant of the facts, free medical advice and free religious guidance, and both very apt to be wrong.” Well, I decided that since I was investigating the Catholic Church I should be acting wisely were I to secure information from an official source, a Catholic priest. He answered most of my questions and directed my reading but beyond that left me to my own devices.’

“‘What conclusion did you reach?’ the philosopher asked.

“‘I have decided that the only Church which has all the trade-marks of the genuine article, the Church established by Jesus Christ, is the Roman Catholic Church.’

“They walked on in silence. Where their ways parted, the older of the two men said: ‘Be sure to follow your conscience; go slowly and be sure of your way.’

"'I'll talk to you before making any decision,' said the student. 'At the present time the difficulty is that I am not sure of myself.'

### The Professor Wonders

"Several days passed without a visit from his young friend and the professor had begun to wonder about him. He had no comment on the remarks of a chance visitor to his office, a young Episcopalian minister, who said that the boy was drifting towards Rome. He was surprised, however, when the clergyman informed him that a visit from the boy had proven fruitless, that he was not satisfied with what the Anglican Church had to offer and had gone his way, leaving behind an impression of unquestioned sincerity. He was still searching for the Truth.

"It was a classroom discussion in sociology that pushed the student further in his quest. Comment on the book of Alexis Carrel, *Man the Unknown*, had prompted the instructor to discuss the subject of man. 'Man is the center of the universe and the best way to throw the whole system out of order is to misplace man. If you budge him even slightly from the center you have chaos.

"'In the industrial order we have tried inadvicably to replace man by the machine and have had industrial disorder. I do not mean that we should retard progress but we cannot throw man aside abruptly without precipitating a crisis. The last few years have demonstrated this fact. Observe the States of the world which have disregarded individual rights. Russia, seeking relief from the tyranny of the czar, has set the State in place of man, forgetting that the government was made for man and not man for the government. The Soviet has "liquidated" some seven million people in a few years that the State may retain its position of influence. Germany forces race hatred and religious persecution on a people for the same reason; Mexico has destroyed home life and closed churches in many sections. Countries where national socialism holds sway make every possible sacrifice of individuals that the nation may be deified. In our own United States, which put finance first and man second, we have had a crash in the money market which was felt around the world. This presents a strange paradox because the old theologians held

that it were better for a nation to fail than that a single individual be deprived of his inalienable rights. Modern nations disregard individual rights—care little for man as an individual, hesitate not to tread him under foot if the State, industry or finance may be furthered.’

### A Further Test

“‘There may have been more to the discussion,’ said the student at the professor’s office when he finally arrived, ‘but I do not remember. Here, however, is a marvelous test for a Church. Christ sent His Church to save sinners, to help all men to Salvation. I want a Church therefore which is interested in Me the Man. I want a Church which makes me important in its program. Christ’s Church would be primarily a Church for man. I am going to find out tonight what a Father Walter has to say about this.’

“‘Do you mind if I accompany you?’ softly spoke the older man.

“‘No, indeed! I’ll be happy to have you. I’m meeting Father Walter at the rectory at 7:30 tonight and I’ll drop by your home about that time and pick you up.’

“‘I’ll be ready,’ spoke the professor, and he was.

“‘The rectory bell at St. Anne’s rang shortly after the appointed time and the priest met his visitors. ‘Hello, Tom! Good evening, Professor. It is good to see you again.’

“‘Do you know Professor Wilbur?’ asked the student, rather startled.

“‘Both laughed but the professor answered. ‘Father Walter and I have played tennis many times.’

“‘The priest smiled as he said, ‘We are quite evenly matched, so our games are interesting. However, to set your mind at ease, let me say that we have never at any time discussed religion, though I believe the professor has read some of the books I’ve loaned him at different times.’

“‘The group was seated in the priest’s study, each with his own type of smoking comfort. Tom restated his class discussion of the afternoon, all of which was familiar to the professor. He concluded, ‘I’m interested in a Church which is interested primarily in me. What can the Catholic Church offer more to my advantage than other Churches?’

“‘Looks to me as though you were interested in bargains. However, here I am going to surprise you.



## The Church Is Interested in You

“From its infancy the Catholic Church has accorded to man a unique position in her teaching. She has been sent to man; every activity is for him, her mission is to lead him salvationwards. She goes out to man wherever he may be that she may bring Jesus Christ to him through the Church, and him to the Saviour. Though she may not alter a single one of Christ's principles, she makes every possible concession to human weakness. If a conflict arises between her own laws and man's interest, man comes first. She demands abstinence from meat on Friday, on certain days throughout the year, yet for a good reason—man's welfare—that law can be temporarily suspended by proper authority. For grave reasons the obligation to attend Sunday Mass may be removed by the bishop of the diocese.

“Take the sacramental system as an example. Recently I was called to the bedside of an unconscious and dying man. To receive the sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction, ordinarily, he would have to tell his sins, give evidence of sorrow, promise to amend his life. There was a conflict, as the man was unable to speak. Should he be denied the grace of the sacraments? Of course not, for, like everything else in the Church, the sacraments were made for man. If he cannot live up to the conditions required by the Church to receive them, then they must take him as he is. The sacraments were made for him and must serve him. So, too, the Church is for him and must serve him, and, though she adheres rigorously to the laws of Christ, which she has no power to change, though at times she may seem old-fashioned or reactionary, she never for a moment forgets that she was instituted for man, for you. She never forgets her mission, which is inseparably connected with his welfare, with yours. Perhaps that accounts for so many sinners not giving up their Church. They know that despite every failure on their part, in spite of uncompromising hostility to fashionable sin, the Church ever manifests infinite charity toward unfashionable sinners.

“So the Church has the Sacraments for you, seven of them. The professor will tell you how Protestantism rejects certain of them, destroys the meaning of others and selects what she wishes to retain. You cannot do that with the teachings of Christ, you must take all of them or you can hardly call yourself a Christian, a “follower” of Christ.”

## The Sacraments

"The professor added: 'Tom knows what the German poet Goethe says about the sacraments, as it came up in class only a few days ago. "How truly this spiritual whole (of the sacramental system) is broken into pieces in Protestantism, a part of these symbols being declared apocryphal and only a few admitted as canonical. How shall we be prepared to value some highly when we are taught to be indifferent to the rest?" He expressed my own convictions in the matter.'

"'Let me tell you what Karl Adams, another German, wrote about the sacraments,' resumed the priest. He does it very beautifully and I am sure you will find that the Church is considering you, the man:

"'The worship of the Church is not merely a filial remembrance of Christ, but a continual participation by visible mysterious signs in Jesus and His redemptive might, a refreshing touching of the hem of His garments, a liberating handling of His sacred wounds. That is the deepest purpose of the liturgy, namely, to make the redeeming grace of Christ present, visible and fruitful as a sacred and potent reality that fills the whole life of the Christian. In the sacrament of Baptism—so the believer holds—the sacrificial blood of Christ flows into the soul, purifies it from all the infirmity of original sin and permeates it with its own sacred strength, in order that a new man may be born thereof, the reborn man, the man who is an adopted son of God. In the sacrament of Confirmation Jesus sends His "Comforter," the Spirit of constancy and divine faith, to the awakening religious consciousness, in order to form a child of God into a soldier of God. In the sacrament of Penance Jesus, as the merciful Saviour, consoles the afflicted soul with the word of peace: "Go thy way, thy sins are forgiven thee." In the sacrament of the Last Anointing the compassionate Samaritan approaches the sick bed and pours new courage and resignation into the sore heart. In the sacrament of Marriage Christ engrafts the love of man and wife on His own profound love for His people, for the community, for the Church, on His own faithfulness unto death. And in the priestly consecration by the imposition of hands, He transmits His Messianic might, the power of His mission, to the disciples whom He calls, in order that He may by their means pursue without interruption His work of raising the new men, the children of God, out of the kingdom of death.

"'But the sacraments which we have enumerated are not the deepest and holiest fact of all. For so completely does Jesus disclose Himself to His disciples, so profound is the action of His grace, that He gives Himself to them and enters into them as a personal source of grace. Jesus shares with His disciples His most intimate possession, the most precious thing that He has, His own self, His personality as the God-Man. We eat His Flesh and drink

His Blood. We are not left orphans in this world. Under the forms of bread and wine the Master lives amid His disciples, the Bridegroom with His bride, the Lord in the midst of His community, until that day when He shall return in visible majesty on the clouds of heaven.

“The sacraments are naught else than a visible guarantee, authenticated by the word of Jesus and the usage of the apostles, that Jesus is working in the midst of us. At all the important stages of our little life, in its heights and in its depths, at the marriage altar and the cradle, at the sick bed, in all the crises and shocks that may befall us, Jesus stands by us under the veils of the grace-giving sacraments as our Friend and Consoler, as the Physician of soul and body, as our Saviour. The sacraments breathe the very spirit of primitive Christianity. They are the truest expression and result of that original and central Christian belief that the Christian should be inseparably united with Christ and should live in Christ.

“‘And mind you, Tom, this guarantee of sacramental interest is definitely and entirely and only Catholic. Christ, the real self of the Church, lives on in His Church. He can no more be separated from it than can the head be separated from the body and live. Catholicism gives you the whole Body alive with the redemptive might of Christ—Protestantism offers only a dying trunk. Which would you say is more interested in you, which has more to offer you that your spiritual life may flourish? Is the Church interested in you? Just as interested as Christ was, and that means whole-heartedly.’

### **The Professor's Observations**

“‘It is strange,’ observed the professor, ‘how our minds react differently to obvious facts. I should have answered Tom’s question from an entirely different point of view. Your answer betrayed a priest’s chief interest, the spiritual welfare of the individual, whereas mine would have been based on a consideration of modern problems. I would have said that the only Church in the world today which seems to have definite principles of thought and rigid standards of action from which she will not deviate is the Catholic Church. Other churches and church leaders too often go the way of the crowd, beguiled by the many instead of leading them.’

“‘What do you mean, Professor, when you say that the Church has rigid standards of action from which she will not deviate?’ queried the student.

“‘I think that Father Walter could better explain that

but—the priest nodded to him to proceed—‘the point of view of a layman is not without its value even in a discussion of religion. Let me take three social problems about which we have heard so much frothy emotionalism and too little clear thinking. Consider sterilization, “mercy-killing” and birth control. On any platform where these subjects are discussed you will find a so-called modern clergyman—he will not be Catholic—right in the midst of things. He has no sound principles to guide him, no rigid standards enforced by his Church, which he can follow. As spiritual as he may be, there is no living teaching authority of the Church he recognizes.

### Modern Problems

“‘Suppose you tell us briefly, Father, what the Catholic Church has to say about the practice of sterilization.’

“‘Briefly,’ replied the priest, ‘the practice of eugenical sterilization of the mentally deficient, of the socially inadequate, the physically unfit, cannot be justified in the present state of society, and must be condemned as an unwarranted assault on human rights. Society has the right to protect itself adequately against the danger resulting from the presence and increase of the mentally diseased but many scientists say sterilization is not the proper way.’

“The professor returned to the discussion. ‘Father just enunciated two principles, Tom, but what he did not say is that all our hurry to have laws passed and the socially inadequate placed in the hands of faddists is unwarranted by facts. We know too little of hereditary traits at the present time to attempt their elimination by sterilization. Hasty laws are generally bad laws. Who are the socially inadequate? The sick, the tubercular, drunkards, cripples, dependents and delinquents. We have no right to deliver these people into the hands of empirical scientists for their immoral experiments. A contemporary writer says that approximately 95 per cent of our great men would never have been born if the advocates of sterilization were ruling the world. However, I must confess to a vast amount of impatience with these experimenters on human life and happiness who have forgotten all about the love of Christ for the socially inadequate, the unfit, the poor, deformed, sick and infirm. Segregation is a much more human and Christlike way of solving the problem. That

would be the Catholic way—sterilization is the way of the “dictatorial tyrant.”

“What about “mercy-killing”? You mentioned that as one of the social problems a moment ago,” declared Tom.

### **Mercy Killing**

“Again I appeal to the Father for a principle before I discuss it. What is the guiding principle here, Father?”

“The Catholic Church teaches that God alone has supreme authority over life, as man’s Creator and Lord. Neither the individual nor the State possesses such absolute power. The individual may not wantonly take his own life, the State may not arbitrarily take the lives of its citizens, nor may the doctor educated and trained to save life callously prescribe the lethal dose to terminate it.

“The principle is clear cut and decisive but here again you have the same lack of Christian consideration which dominates the world, lack of charity towards others. And again you find the only Church voice loud enough to be heard is that of the Catholic Church. Suppose we do get old. Granted that we do have some suffering. Must we be hurried immediately through the portals of death? Must we be rushed from the earth as soon as we become partially dependent upon others? I don’t want to be killed when I am old and suffering. I am sure a little suffering will help balance the many joys I have known in the past and perhaps atone for some of my youthful indiscretions. The Church leaves you not for a moment in doubt about the principle of thought and standard of action. Life belongs to God Who gave it, not to man who makes so many errors of judgment. “Mercy-killing,” blood purge, liquidation, murder—the way of the tyrant. Care for the aged, diseased, infirm—the way of Christ, the way of His Church.”

### **Birth Control**

“The professor noticed his cigar had gone out. As he paused to light it he said, ‘About birth control or birth limitation I have little to say except this. It is a grievous abuse of marriage forbidden by the natural law; it is absolutely evil and according to any moral standards may not be voluntarily practiced. If those who advocate it and are bringing our country into evil ways and dark days could read history they would know that nations which have been

addicted to this vice have been quickly crushed in the onward march of civilization. In three generations our large cities will be reduced by two-thirds if the present practice continues.' He looked up and smiled. 'I am sorry, gentlemen. I've taken up your valuable time.'

"The priest said, 'You have said only what I would have said, and perhaps have said it better. Coming from you it will have more of an influence on our young friend.'

"The "young friend" would like to have the professor summarize what he has said. He always does this in class.'

### **Christian Principles**

"Very well,' he answered. 'If you were to ask me is the Church interested in the individual I would say emphatically yes. The Catholic Church defends the right of the unfortunate who falls into the hands of the sterilization-mad doctor; she protects the life of the sick, the old, the infirm; she defends the right of the unborn child to live and objects to the abuse of a natural faculty. In her protection of individual rights she is the strength of a modern society which fails to recognize that fact. You will hear other denominational leaders condemn her "reactionary" tendencies, but a few hundred years from now you will still find the Catholic Church teaching the way of salvation and the very names of her critics will be forgotten. What is the reason for the powerful influence which makes her the only great Church? To my non-Catholic mind it is because she has principles to guide her thought, standards to guide her actions. These are Christian principles of living and in them, you, the individual, find protection. Her standard is that of Jesus Christ. The question she asks herself is "How would Christ act in this matter?" and she answers her own question in the Christlike manner.'

"The priest merely added, 'Yes, the homes for the aged, the hospitals for the sick, the refuges for sinners, the homes for orphans directed by women who give their lives to the service of unfortunate human beings show that the Catholic Church remembers the words of Christ. "Whatever you have done to the least of My brethren you have done unto Me." It is the Christian spirit.'

"Do you remember a discussion we had a few weeks ago, Professor?' spoke the student. 'You told me that Christianity had the answer to every vital human problem.'

Tonight I want to ask Father Walter for a Catholic answer to five very important problems of today.

### **Five Modern Problems**

“(1) The crime problem has caused us no end of trouble nationally. According to one statistician we spend fifteen billions on crime annually to seven billions spent on education. How solve this problem?

“(2) What about the divorce problem which separates half a million people a year? One divorce for every six or seven marriages seems to be the present ratio.

“(3) What is the solution to the gravest problem we have had to face in many a day, the constantly recurring war between capital and labor? Every paper you read devotes columns to a description of strikes or mediation, of wages and hours, of labor violence. What is the Church's answer?

“(4) International peace is certainly worthy of serious consideration by all right-minded men and women.

“(5) What has the Church to say about Communism or Fascism or Socialism or all three? We are told we must accept one or other of the first two but both are abhorrent to American ideals. Religion is being given a critical test in these matters and I think that the Church Christ established should give us some direction in these modern human problems.’

‘The professor looked at Father Walter. ‘Our young friend has given you a choice assignment, Father. I should say that your work is cut out for you.’

‘The priest replied: ‘No five social problems cry more loudly to heaven for a solution than these. Suppose we take them in the order you have placed them, for you are correct, the Church should give you an answer to these problems.’

### **The Crime Problem**

‘I am vitally interested in the crime problem and have followed it closely as State after State has passed new laws to deal with the ever-increasing criminal element. But modern penologists are barking up the wrong tree. Laws never made a people lawful—they must be educated to love and respect laws rather than to obey because they fear the punishment that offending against them entails. When you have a criminal, ordinarily, there has been fail-

ure at home—divorced parents have already failed in making the sacrifices necessary to maintain a good home—or education is at fault. An education which neglects God in the development of youth is lopsided and criminally deficient. J. Edgar Hoover stated recently that 20 per cent of our crime is the work of persons who have not yet reached the voting age. He castigated fiercely “the sentimental theorists who dominate present-day child guidance” as he told of the “700,000 young people already enlisted in the army of crime” and of the many others who are recruits of subversive foreign philosophies repugnant to our ideals, simply because they have never been taught by responsible parents that “America can exist only as a community of *God-fearing*, sober-minded, liberty-loving men and women.” What shall we say of a youth growing to maturity without any knowledge of a God to love or fear? How shall they be God-fearing?

“Just recently I read *Crime and Religion* written by two prison chaplains who spent twenty years in research work at Joliet-Stateville prison. Here are a few quotations:

““The religious home and the religious school combined and complementing each other are the safest if not the only safe guarantee of public security and peace, the most dependable safeguard against crime.”

““Certain truly effective prophylactic factors being absent, education is just another aid to crime . . . just opens other fields of crime.”

““Religious principles made part and parcel of human life and thought . . . that alone will make of our citizens personally moral men and women . . . responsible home-makers and give us . . . law-abiding citizens of the future.”

““Of all Catholic prisoners, only four per cent had come up to the average standard of Catholic religious practice.”

““The convicts who fill our prisons are quite exclusively people who have neglected religion or have not had the chance to practice it.” (What shall we say of boys and girls of today who have no knowledge of God because of our public school system of education which eliminates the teaching of religion?)

“It should be quite clear to any right-thinking person after reading this book based on the experience of twenty years in a penal institution that we must look to the home



and religious school for aid in striking at the roots of the crime problem.

“What is the Catholic answer to the problem? We believe that the present system of education is faulty in that it develops the child physically and mentally but absolutely neglects him religiously. Modern education is based on defective modern philosophy which varies with different countries. In one place it is found to be socialistic, in another Communistic, Fascist, Nazi or Nationalistic, in accordance with the present desires of the State. In each case it lacks the spiritual element.

“Every worth-while system of education is based on a philosophy of life. It must be a complete and true philosophy. Modern education fails by this standard while Catholic philosophy has stood the test of time. Outstanding in our modern education is a lack of ideals, a complete dependence on natural motives for support, and a naïve and absolute disregard of God and life's spiritual things.

### **Religion in Education**

“The Catholic answer to the crime problem is the Catholic educational system which gives a positive and satisfactory philosophy of life. It deals with the whole man; gives him a complete conception of reality; deals with him, body and soul; considers God and man, the individual and society, and at the same time the relationship of the individual to State, society and Church.

“Education is only part of the answer—religious education at school and at home is the complete answer. To instill a respect for laws we must give man a respect for the God Who made him. We believe this sincerely with all our hearts. That is why over two and a half million children are educated by their Catholic parents at an additional cost to themselves of over two hundred million dollars annually. It means a tremendous sacrifice but it is one which protects our national future. The Catholic answer to the crime problem! Give every child a religious education. The State depends on three supports—Home, School and Church. The first two have failed, the crime problem is the result. The cure is found almost entirely within the bounds of Catholic philosophy—certainly in the field of Catholic teaching.’

“What about the problem of divorce?’

## Divorce

“I was coming to that. Keep this in mind—the Catholic Church is a Christian Church. It follows the teachings of Christ and from the laws He gave she may not deviate an inch, nor can she change a single one of His commands. Put it this way. Who is wiser, man or God?”

“God, of course,” the student answered.

“Very well, then. God made marriage a sacrament which unites two people for life. He said “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” They are now not two individuals but one flesh and forever. The modern State—which means men like ourselves with all of our shortcomings—feels that God’s laws are too stringent, and so weak, finite, ignorant men proceed to change God’s laws. It is just like making a tiny hole in the dyke. Only a little water comes out at first but shortly the whole retaining wall will be swept away. Many modern Churches have followed the State, “to make marriage laws less difficult.” Marriage is a sacrament, established by God, Who knows what is in man, and He decreed that monogamous marriage, one man and woman for life, best suited Him and was best for society and the individual. Man interferes and what has happened? The 1936 statistics show a million people divorced, homes ruined, children without parents’ love, God’s law a mockery. Marriages are made according to the laws of God, and men cannot change these laws.

“Back in 1880 Pope Leo XIII said “Divorce once tolerated, there will be no restraint powerful enough to keep it within the limits fixed or foreseen.” Russia, hating Christian teaching with diabolical fury, has had to make more stringent her marriage laws, because she realizes the strength of the State is the home and out of good happy homes come good, contented, and law-abiding citizens.’

## Unhappy Marriages

“But,” declared Tom, ‘sometimes there are unhappy marriages. What then! Why does not the Church permit divorce when people are unhappily married?’

“Marriage is a contract not with two persons but with three individuals. The third party is God. If men and women began married life with the ideal God has given of an unbreakable marriage bond there would be more happy homes and happy families.

“On the other hand, the Church prepares us for an eternity of happiness, and marital unhappiness, though a severe trial, may mean eternal blessedness. The bargain has been made before God, the contract has been signed and God has a right to expect they will do their best to fulfill the conditions of the contract. They are not doing their best if the divorce court is immediately sought to settle the problems married life brings. A separation is permitted, if necessary, but they are still two in one flesh until death and may never marry again even though living apart. Modern reformers know so little about social and economic problems that one would think the lesson of many failures would induce them to keep hands off problems moral and spiritual of which they know nothing.

“The Catholic answer! Take Christ seriously, believe His teachings, practice them in your life. Be real Christians, give us Christian homes, give us Christian families of which Christ is the head, not the judge in a divorce court. Your home is heaven, not Reno. To the public nuisance reformer or morals meddler we say: “Stop trifling with the laws of God! You have done enough harm to the State already. Keep sacred a belief in the sacrament of marriage God gave with its unity, wholesomeness and the clause ‘until death do us part.’”

### **International Peace**

“The professor terminated the discourse of the priest by saying, ‘Let me answer Tom’s question about international peace, Father. I have been working on this problem and perhaps am more familiar with the details. The subject, however, is one for profound study and my answer can be only superficial and in briefest outline.

“First of all, Tom, let me recommend two books, masterly histories of the teaching and accomplishments of the Church, her representatives and teachers during a period of two thousand years. *The Church and War*, by Franziskus Stratman, O.P., deserves your thoughtful reading. *The Catholic Tradition and the Law of the Nations*, by John Eppstein, will amaze you by the subject’s complexity and its presence in the minds and studies of theologians for centuries. What we have now in the League of Nations was suggested by them hundreds of years ago. We acclaim the wonderful strides toward world amity taken

by the fifty or more nations who bound themselves by the Pact of Paris to outlaw war. They vowed solemnly to settle every dispute by pacific means no matter what might be its origin or nature, but back in 1369, to give you one example, Pope Urban V had said "Desist from war; if you believe yourself to have a just cause, pursue it by the way of justice before a competent judge or else consent to submit it to the arbitration of mutual friends."

### **The Catholic Church and Peace**

"You know, of course, that the Catholic Church insists her children follow the counsels of Christ. One of them, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," explains the position held until recently by the Papacy. The last few years gave us The Hague Tribunal and the League of Nations, but unfortunately Papal influence was unwelcome in these places. Eppstein says, "It is certainly a matter of regret to thoughtful Catholics as a whole, and not to them only, that the arbitral and mediatory offices of the one power which is dependent upon no government and has by its very nature and purpose an equal care for the rights and susceptibilities of all nations, should not have been integrated in the new international system for the prevention of war."

"Christ has been and is called the Prince of Peace. The power He exercises and the influence wielded by His Church are typified today by a statue high on a peak in the Andes, some thirteen thousand feet above the sea, between Argentine and Chile. Erected to the Prince of Peace, it bears the words, "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into the dust than the people of Argentine and Chile break the peace they have sworn to maintain at the feet of Christ the Redeemer." The Catholic Church is the greatest organization the world has ever known. She possesses today a tremendous moral power and is the only force of sufficient strength to bring about international peace without bloodshed as has been done in Argentine and Chile.'

"Would not that be unusual, to call upon the Church or the Pope to mediate difficulties of nations?" asked the student.

"Not at all," replied the professor, 'It has been done many times in the past. I know of at least thirty cases of Church mediation since the beginning of the seventeenth

century. There were seven such incidents under Pope Leo XIII. Pope Pius IX offered to mediate the difficulties between Prussia and France to prevent the war of 1870, saying in his letter to King Wilhelm I, "My mediation is that of a Sovereign, who, in his capacity of King, cannot by reason of the smallness of his territory excite any jealousy, but who, nevertheless, will inspire confidence by the moral and religious influence which he personifies."

"The last four popes are typical of all in their interest in these matters. Leo XIII asked the world to return to a Christian standard of living if it would be saved from itself. He pleaded for world coöperation and world peace in 1889 by a reduction of armaments. "Numerous troops and an infinite development of military display can sometimes withstand hostile attacks, but they *cannot procure sure and stable tranquillity.*"

"Pius X commended the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in the highest terms. "We heartily commend the work already begun, which should be approved by all good men and We most gladly lend the weight of Our authority to those striving to realize this most beneficent purpose—World Peace."

"Benedict XV, called the Apostle of Peace, asked the warring nations in 1916 to submit their differences to the reasonableness of arbitration. He placed before them a peace plan which would have saved billions in money, hundreds of thousands in lives and much unnecessary and useless suffering, but his offer went unheeded.

"No one has been more forceful than the present Pontiff. Pius XI, in 1930, claiming that the apostolate of peace was primarily a Catholic obligation, said that "any civilized state which contemplates war would be guilty of monstrous homicide and almost certainly of suicide." In 1935 he gave utterance to this statement: "If there should be anyone who makes preparations for such a scourge, then We cannot withhold this prayer to the all-powerful God, 'Lord, scatter the nations which desire war.' It would be a crime so enormous, a manifestation of fury so mad that We consider it absolutely impossible that nations could again take up arms against each other." He has asked the world to consecrate itself to the Prince of Peace, stating that "unbridled race for armaments is the effect of the rivalry among nations, the cause of the withdrawal of

enormous sums from the public wealth and no small contributor to the present world crisis."

"From a practical standpoint the Church asks the nations to abolish compulsory military service, to cease from armament races, to abide by the oaths they have taken to preserve peace. The Church has declared that war is seldom just and therefore should not be waged. Father Stratman, whose book I've suggested to you, declares that even the Crusades were not wholly just. The Church is willing to be dismembered, to lay down her life, as did one of her great leaders, Benedict XV, who breathed out his life with the words, "I give my life willingly for the peace of the world."

"This developed into a lecture, Tom, but I advise you to study the Catholic view of peace and war. You will find it intriguing and the Catholic Association for International Peace will be glad to supply you with literature. But Father Walter is ready for your last two questions."

"Don't you think you had better sum up your case, Professor?" asked Father Walter.

"You should," came the student. "It is an old professional custom."

"Very well, then," said the professor as he addressed himself:

"Tell me, Professor, where does the Catholic Church stand on war and peace?"

"She stands definitely and irrevocably on the side of world peace?"

"Tell me, Professor, how is this to be accomplished—world peace?"

"The Church says: (1) "If Society is to be secured now, in no other way can it be saved but by a return to the Christian life and Christian institutions." (Leo XIII.)

"(2) "The only system which is practical and which further could be applied easily with a little good will on both sides, would be to suppress by a common agreement compulsory military service." (Cardinal Gasparri.)

"(3) "The governments of the world should bring into being, sustain, and perfect international institutions fitted to effect conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement. The Holy See is eminently fitted to fulfill these functions." (Pius XI and Benedict XV.)

"(4) "Armaments must be reduced to the lowest point

consistent with the maintenance of order within each State and the execution of international sanctions." (Eppstein—Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco.)

"(5) "Rivalry in military preparations between members of the society of nations must be brought to an end." (Pius XI.)

"(6) "The rights of small and backward nations must be respected. We cannot avoid the conclusion that every violent seizure of territory which was at the time inhabited and cultivated by a native tribe and subject to the authority of its rulers was in itself an unjust aggression." (Eppstein.)

"(7) "Everyone must work for peace. 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.'" (Jesus Christ.)

### The Church and Labor

"'Excellent, Professor!' exclaimed the priest. 'My answer to the last two questions Tom has on his list will also be brief, as the Church's position on labor problems, on National Socialism and Communism is too well known to need comment. I, too, must suggest reading. The Catholic answer to modern difficulties of Capital and Labor—and the solution works because as Labor Chairman for a large industry I've applied these principles—is to be found in the encyclical letter of Leo XIII *On the Condition of Labor* and the letter of Pius XI written forty years after Leo's letter, in 1931, named *Reconstructing the Social Order*. The program is complete, workable and based on sound Christian principles of justice.'

"'Let me ask a few questions, Father. I wish to be enlightened on only a few points. What caused this unrest of the past ten years?'

"'The wealthy were content to abandon to charity alone the full care of relieving the unfortunate, as though it were the task of charity to make amends for the open violation of justice, a violation not merely tolerated, but sanctioned at times by legislators," was the answer given by Leo XIII,' answered the priest. 'It was written in 1891 and was a prophecy.'

"'How can we solve all of the problems involved?' asked Tom.

"'Each class must receive its *due share* of the goods of the earth, of property, and the distribution of created

goods must be made to conform with the demands of the common good and of social justice. Each class must be protected in its right to own private property. From State to individual there must be respect for the rights of others.'

"What means are to be used that these objectives be accomplished?"

"Better working conditions and increased wages for the worker, within reason, are mandatory. "In the present state of society, however, We deem it advisable that the wage contract should, when possible, be modified by a contract of partnership, as is already being tried in various ways to the no small gain of both the wage-earners and employers. In this way wage-earners are made sharers in some sort in the ownership, or management of the profits," is the answer Pius XI gives. A minimum wage, a living wage, a saving wage are urged and defined together with the position of women and children in industry. The Holy Father asks that married women and children of tender age be kept from the factory and shop wherever possible.'

"Are unions advisable in securing wage increases?"

"Yes! The worker has a right to join organizations of his own choice to bargain collectively and successfully, but for labor racketeering, jurisdictional disputes, strikes and violence, the Holy Father has no endorsement.'

"What kind of a union would the Popes suggest?"

"In the reconstruction of the social order Pius XI advocates the formation of occupational or vocational groups consisting of employers and employees which would meet together under the authority of the State to decide plans and policies (usually national in scope) of the occupation under the authority of the State.'

"How does the Catholic program regard strikes? How would you settle labor disputes?"

"Strikes and lockouts are forbidden. Arbitration is suggested as the reasonable approach to the difficulty and compulsory arbitration is advocated if that is the only way in which coöperation can be secured.'

"How would the Government help? You mentioned the State and its authority a moment ago.'

"Civil power is more than a mere guardian of law and order—it must strive with all zeal to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administra-



tion of the commonwealth be such as of themselves to realize public well-being and private prosperity.'

"What is the basic principle underlying all this that has been neglected? Is there a fundamental principle in this field?"

"Yes. Justice has been neglected and abandoned. It must be restored to its rightful place and to every man must be given what is rightfully his. You will find a complete program of social action, the principles which should guide the individual, society, State and National Government in their relationship to each other and to industry. The principles of social justice as indicated by the popes, if followed by men of good will, would outlaw labor unrest, but until men believe and act their belief in Christian principles, until they accept the teachings of Christ seriously, no program based on religion will be satisfactory.'

"Let me ask you just a few more questions and I am finished, Father. What is the attitude of the Church toward Communism and Fascism and which is more dangerous?"

### **Communism and Fascism**

"The Church denounces any system of government which places the State superior to the rights of the individual and endeavors to mechanize all of human life. Fascism, National Socialism, Communism all are materialistic, bowing down before no God but the State. Of them all, Communism is the most to be feared.'

"Why do you feel that way about Communism?" asked the boy once more.

"Well, Tom, let me urge you to read Catholic literature on the subject. There is a wealth of splendid pamphlet material. Be familiar, too, with the encyclical on Atheistic Communism of Pius XI. You will see for yourself just why we feel as we do.

"The Church denounces Communism because of three major elements in its underhanded warfare. It is essentially atheistic, denies the existence of God, suppresses every kind of religion and endeavors to exterminate the Catholic Church. It abolishes private property and destroys every human right. Finally, it stirs up class hatred and enmity between the various classes of society to bring about revolution by violence and bloodshed. Wherever Communism has gone its hands have dripped with innocent

blood, altars have been overthrown, churches desecrated and the fury of hell enthroned. Communism is diabolical, it deceives all who believe in it, even its leaders, and serves the devil in hell. Like the one it serves, the Father of Lies, Communism is the great lie, the outstanding deceit of our day. There is no tyranny so despotic and no despotism so ruthless as that of Red Communism. It seems fitting that the founder of modern Communism, scourge of the age, Nikolas Lenin (real name Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) should himself have died of the great moral scourge syphilis.

“Communists believe in violence and force, tyrannical oppression and hate. Catholicism believes in a spiritual discipline, freedom of worship, of conscience, of the press; believes in Christlike charity. By their fruits you shall know them. What are the fruits of both? If we must make a choice between two great international forces capable of dominating the world—there is but one sane choice to be made, that of Catholicism.”

“The student again spoke. ‘It is getting late, Father, and you have given me the information I want. Before the professor here, I want to tell you that I am ready to begin whatever instruction is necessary to prepare me for entrance to the Catholic Church.’

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“The priest turned to the chairman of the meeting. ‘I have been very long in my explanation. The boy became a Catholic because he found in the Catholic Church the one Church established by Jesus Christ; he found a Church which was vitally interested in him, the individual, with an interest modern churches do not have; he found in the Catholic Church the answer to every vital human problem, whereas, certain other churches had not even recognized these problems religiously. These are the reasons which led him to become a Catholic. They are my reasons for being a Catholic.’

“‘What became of the professor?’ asked one woman.

“‘He and Tom were baptized and entered the Church together. They are fast friends. Each helped the other to find what both wanted, absolute certainty in religion and the firm conviction that they are serving God in the manner He ordained. They have found that only one Church in the world today speaks with authority, the authority of God and His Christ—the Roman Catholic Church.’”



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