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The Sacrament...
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The
SACRAMENT
IDEA

Rev. Gerald S. Sloyan



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The Sacrament Idea

Four addresses delivered on The Catholic Hour from June 6, 1954 through June 27, 1954 by the Rev. Gerald S. Sloyan. The program is produced by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company.

BY
REV. GERALD S. SLOYAN



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Sacrament Idea	5
Torrent Of Newness	11
Olive And Power	17
Life In Wheat And Wine	25

THE SACRAMENT IDEA

Address Delivered on June 6, 1954

Ten years ago today the Normandy landings took place. In a bold stroke that ranks fairly with the tactical triumphs of all military history, 176,000 troops in 4,000 craft made the spearhead assault on a 60-mile coastline, supported by an air cover of 11,000 planes. President, then General Eisenhower, had the unified command of what was the largest amphibious operation in human history — "Operation Overlord" — better known as "D-Day."

We had got our first taste of peacetime compulsory military training as a nation on September 16, 1940, with the passage of the Selective Training and Service Act. The draft is a familiar part of national life now, but when almost sixteen and a half million men registered, one month to the day after that law was passed, America had the feeling she had entered on a new and strange era. What was a commonplace to ancient empires and modern sovereignties, but what had heretofore been foreign to her tradition, became the normal thing: required service under arms at a time when the nation was not at war.

Ancient Rome knew the phenomenon well. Compulsory military service in the empire

was sometimes called **sacramentum** — "the draft," we say — by way of a short-cut of language, deriving from the oath of allegiance the inductees had to take to the protective gods of Rome. After all, it was a sacred matter to serve under the imperial eagles. Home and hearth were at stake. The Roman peace had to be extended, moreover, for the barbarians' own good.

The military oath was simply part of a larger picture. Whenever you made a binding oath before sacred altars, or deposited stakes in a wager or a suit, you had obliged yourself by **sacramentum**. That word or that object was your bond, and a sacred bond because the gods had been invoked in witness. It was an outward sign, a religious sign, of a man's inner intention to serve his country or to redeem a pledge.

When the followers of Jesus of Nazareth in the West began to speak Latin instead of the Greek that had earlier been more common, they had a serious problem in terminology on their hands. This would be in the second and third centuries at Rome and in North Africa. There was no problem in what to do as a follower of Christ. Their ritual behavior and their

suprahumanly good conduct had been the same from the start — ever since his apostles began to spread the good news of new life in God through His only Son, Jesus. No, the problem was not one of practice but of how to describe that practice which had been so long agreed upon. To be a Christian was to engage in a spirit of faith, in certain rites whereby God was worshipped and His grace or favor received. You may put it as simply as that. A bath in water, sacred anointing with olive oil, a small meal in wheaten bread and grape wine — there is no historic Christianity whatever except in terms of this ritual behavior. But how to speak of it?

Well, at the start the Christians felt under no compulsion to describe it at all, so long as they engaged in it. But after a while a word from Greek pagan religion seemed to suit their purpose well, the word **mysterion**, and so it was taken over. For the Greeks it had meant any matter that was secret (originally, "shut up"), in the sense of ritual behavior whose precise character one was not free to divulge. If the devotee had witnessed or experienced something symbolically significant in the temple rites, he had to keep mum about it. He was bound to secrecy over the "mysteries," or sacred rites, of his religion.

Now, what the followers of

Jesus had engaged in from the beginning was a whole series of religious acts which had reference to the body with its senses, as well as to the mind and heart. Some of it was of their own devising, like placing honey on the lips of a child, or giving milk to the newly baptized, but much of it was the Master's direct command. They felt no freedom to do or not to do certain things as they pleased, if He had specified them. Such an act was the laying on of hands by an apostle, or by someone who had had an apostle lay hands on him, for the designation of a man who would by changing the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ make possible the offering of the sacrifice-meal known as the Lord's Supper. Like the Supper itself, this form of deputation was required behavior in a context of sacred worship. Interior religion, which is of course the only important kind, was roused or expressed or given outward embodiment by some visible object or outward action. It was the Lord's command, and He had said that the proof of love was to keep his commandments. Therefore, never was there a time in the history of the assembly called by the Master His Church, when there was no "sign" — or "symbol" — activity in the realm of sacred behavior.

Mysterion, we said, was the Christian choice of a term to

describe a supernatural reality or truth hidden beneath an exterior available to the senses. The Latins were not especially good at thinking up equivalents for Greek words. Sometimes they just got lazy and spelled the Greek word in their own way, as is the case with the word **rodeo** north of the Rio Grande, and **el Biesbol** south of it. **Mysterium** was an early way used by the Latins to describe the wonderful boon of God's invisible grace under visible signs, but after a while the word **sacramentum** won out as a translation of **mysterion**. It is not a very exact translation, but it does the job. Any holy thing or pledge, remember, but especially the military oath, was a sacrament to the Romans. To the Church of Jesus Christ, a sacrament has ever been a pledge or token in the order of the senses, of that infinite love of God for man which no eye can see.

There are certain people who say they can not abide ritual behavior, and indeed there is much to be said in their favor. If you have ever been caught in an initiation ceremony or in some fraternal activity where the facts scarcely warranted all the solemnity, you will recognize the feeling. It is downright embarrassing to dress oddly, to employ grandiose formulas and gestures, to duck and bob and weave at stated times, when a few silently expressed sentiments of loyalty

to the organization and its ideals would serve just as well. Yet contrariwise, it seems entirely proper to most minds that an outstanding military figure should be relieved of his last command with honor on the parade ground, full military ritual being employed.

It would be quite erroneous to conclude from what we have just said that all fraternalism is sham and all patriotism under arms a sincere or even sacred matter. By no means. The principle that does emerge is that a thing must be vastly important in the realm of ideas before it really deserves to be translated into symbolic behavior, but that when it is thus important, nothing better or more fitting, humanly, can be done with it than so to act it out. Do you recall how Saul's daughter Michol looked from her window in scorn when she saw her husband David the King dancing wildly in the street to celebrate the return of the ark to Juda? "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself before man and maid, his own subjects, graceless as a common mountebank!"* The substance of David's reply was that to make oneself a fool, even a clown in the Lord's eyes had a lot to recommend it when He had been good enough to choose one king over His own people, and not any other.

*II Kgs. (II Sam.) 6:16

When the matter in hand transcends human littleness utterly, surely some special note should be made of the event by a man in his whole person, not his silent inner self only. And when that event is the highest and holiest thing that may occur to him in this mortal life — namely, a sharing in God's blessed knowledge and appreciation of Himself in a way more proper to Him than to us — then, should a man sing and dance and play, he acts not only reasonably but one might even say in surprisingly subdued fashion, given the joy of the occasion.

Happily, there is no requirement of emotional exaltation in Christ's religion. While it may easily prove untrustworthy, it is nonetheless not forbidden. What He did impose was converse with His Father through the expressive language of signs. This type of communication was the most natural in the world, and as nature's Master (with the Father and the Holy Spirit), Christ fitted everything creaturely to the divine plan.

How do Christians use signs to speak to God, or more properly, how does He use signs to converse with them?

There is essentially the use of some stuff or substance, or a formula of words in the order of nature for its proper purpose, which has the effect of reminding the user and all

the Church of a loftier signification in a world above the everyday world of nature. For example, water is good for washing; you can also slake thirst with it, and this sometimes makes it the difference between life and death; a man can be submerged in water to the point of forfeiting his life, drowning. Oil is helpful in restoring bodily strength, whether medical science be primitive or highly perfected. Bread sustains life; wine does that and more. A spoken promise binds a man, while a spoken charge or commission can give him both obligations and status. All these uses and transactions are the very stuff of human life. They are symbolic of a man's course of days on the earth. What more ingenious than that the Author of Life should have designed that the unseen reality of the life of grace be transmitted by means of signs that closely parallel it in the order of nature? The Christian does not say, "It is entirely fitting. Let us assume that Christ did it." He says, "From the New Testament and from that early Christian practice which the New Testament partially reflects, it is evident that He did it. Was this not because He deemed sacramentalism so well suited to our nature and our needs?"

There are a few special points that need to be raised about sacraments, because they

are so widely misunderstood. Let us list them in order.

1. A sacrament does not merely remind the recipient of God's love. It bestows that love in measure. In other words, the sign of supernatural birth or resuscitation or growth or nourishment achieves the very thing it signifies. Water gives divine life, oil protects it, what seems bread and wine sustains it. God's grace is not only bespoken by the sign, but resides in the sign in virtue of His determination of the thing, and not by any human poetry or guesswork. The outward reality in nature is the instrument of an unseen reality from on high.

2. No man can be sanctified against his will. He must have a disposition to love God — which includes sorrow for sin — else barrels of oil, signs of the cross and forgiveness — formulas without number will leave him totally unaltered except for the worse guilt of sacrilege.

3. A sacrament is meaningless except in terms of the redemption in Christ's blood won for all men on Calvary, ratified by God through His resurrection and ascension. All prayers, rites and formulas are lifeless observances but for the blood of the new Lamb.

4. That the Master should have designated how He chose to save is enough for the disciple. But His choice of sym-

bolic prayers and actions is subject to this much scrutiny: it is very comforting to be assured that on certain distinct occasions, if we are not deliberately and in cold blood rejecting God's grace, we are really receiving it. No prayer or work of charity gives the same high certitude of this as does a sacrament.

5. Many sacred signs over the course of twenty centuries have been described as **sacramenta**. Slowly but very surely a distinction became clear between a restricted few and all the rest. From the beginning, three were in no doubt whatever as having power to sanctify men in virtue of the efficacy dwelling in their sign: baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper. Last anointing, forgiveness of sins, matrimony and sacred ordination were four others which, while practiced since the beginning like the other three rites gradually emerged clearly even, being equal to the other three in grace-giving power.

6. A sacrament is simply an extension of the Incarnation in space and time. If God really sent His Son to be one of us men, nothing is more likely than that His Son should attempt to reach our innermost selves through the only avenues proper to man as a learner and a lover, his senses. Such was the means He used when with us, and the Son of Man is not a one to change.

Outward show of religiosity is a pompous, hateful thing. Jesus spent all His energies in combating it. Real religion is of the heart, a matter of God's spirit and man's locked in the embrace of truth. Jesus spent His days in fostering it. The sacrament idea? It is not sham —It is Love, known by a sign.

TORRENT OF NEWNESS

Address Delivered on June 13, 1954

In the **Times Literary Supplement** of London for April 30 last, the British cultural historian Arnold Toynbee had a letter to the editor in which he took strong exception to the views of Mr. Douglas Jerrold, also an historian. He criticized the latter for making any special claims for western civilization on the ground that it is a Christian and hence a superior one. Let me quote him:

"Christ's unique merits cannot be appropriated by any human being or by any institution, either secular or ecclesiastical. To claim to appropriate them is to commit the sin of pride. The pretension is untenable, because no human being or institution ever has the monopoly of being Christ's instrument . . . Pride is a desperate sin, because it is a denial of the sinner's need for God's grace — and God's grace is forfeited when it is taken for granted."

So Mr. Toynbee, now that is earnest confusion at the very highest level. For if there is one thing sure about the preaching of the apostles and of those who came in succession after them, it is precisely that they claimed a monopoly as Christ's instrument. Peter and Paul and John, Barnabas and Silas were agreed on one thing more surely than any other: that the unique

merits of the Master were available through His living Body the Church, and not, by positive design of God, through any other means. You may not like their claim, but you had better not deny that they made it, short of resolutely determining never to look in the New Testament again. The same men who preached the humble Christ proclaimed in all humility that salvation was not to be found elsewhere than in His name, whose word they preached so confidently (Acts. IV, 30). He told them, "He who hears you, hears Me." (Luke X. 16), and they never for a moment acted as if they doubted the identification. The assembled church in Jerusalem, wishing to hammer out some basic legislation for the Gentile converts of Syrian Antioch, prefaced their directives with the phrase, "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." (Acts XV, 28). On Mr. Toynbee's reading of things, the apostles and elders could not have got much prouder than that. Instead of deserting them, however, God's grace went on to accomplish even greater marvels through their instrumentality.

"The Father has put everything under His dominion," St. Paul wrote of Christ, "and made Him the head to which the whole Church is joined, so

that the Church in His body, the completion of Him who everywhere and in all things is complete" (Ephesians I, 23).

The first Christians never took God's grace for granted—surely that is sin; but they took for granted once the Master had taught it to them, that there was no source of grace above the Church and its sacrament—surely that and that only is historic Christianity.

"Each of us, brethren," wrote Clement, Bishop of Rome, around the year 96, "must in his own place endeavor to please God with a good conscience, reverently taking care not to deviate from the established liturgy . . . we are obliged to carry out in fullest detail what the Master has commanded us to do at stated times . . ." (XLI, 1 and XL, 1).

First and foremost of these commands was that of giving a ritual bath as a sign of initiation. "Go, and make disciples of all nations," Jesus said, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . ." (Matt. XXVIII, 19). History's record is that no one was considered to have any part with Christ until this was attended to.

* * *

Almost at the very beginning of the Bible, in its opening book called Genesis (which means beginning"), you read these lines:

The earth was waste and void; covered by the abyss, and

the spirit of God was stirring above the waters. (Gen. I, 2-3) Within the past three years there have been a number of excellent books available, on the riches of life in the depth of the sea. Miss Rachel Carson of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has given us "**The Sea Around us**" and the the earlier **Under the Sea Wind**, and a year or so ago there appeared **The Silent World**, by Captain Jacques Ives Cousteau.

Far from being a silent tomb of lifelessness, however, the sea is shown by these marine biologists to be the relatively noisy home of millions of animal and plant species. There is life there in abundance, and water, while not the cause, is the condition of it undoubtedly. In fact, without the waters of the seas, no life anywhere on the earth would be possible.

We live out our human lives so long as blood keeps flowing in our veins. Like so many liquids, blood is largely water, and in our blood "sodium, potassium and calcium are combined in almost the same proportions as in sea water." The sea gives evidence of being our mother, in the sense **that she is** a necessary condition for our life.

Did Moses, did the ancient Jews know all these things about the waters of the abyss? Hardly so; but they knew that God in His all-persuasive power

was like a mighty wind. They called Him "Breath" or "Spirit" because, although He was unseen, He was the cause of all. They could not describe His creative power better than by declaring, under the influence of divine inspiration, that the darkness of the abyss, its turbulence, and its chaos, were completely under the sway, now gentle, now mighty, of the life-giving God. "The spirit of God was stirring above the waters."

In Christian art you sometimes see a dove fluttering over the waters of a stream, usually near the font in a baptistry. The symbolism is evident. This is the Holy Spirit, a Person of the tri-Personal God, who was seen as a dove by Jesus and by John the Baptizer, as the latter, hesitantly doing as he was told, immersed his cousin from Nazareth in the waters of the Jordan.

In Holy Baptism, the sacrament or rite of initiation into Christian life, the spirit of God stirs above the waters. The candidate is enlivened. He already possesses the life proper to man's nature — human life — in itself a great gift. He is given in addition new life, a kind of existence more proper to God than to man. He begins to live on a higher plane than before — born of water and the Holy Spirit. He lives unto God.

God is the cause of this new life. One is tempted to say; water is its condition. But that would be wrong. That would

not be good sacramental doctrine. Christians have believed from the beginning that God takes the water and makes it to become the very instrument, the cause, of new life. We live to God in baptism, He lives in us, with the saving flow of water as the instrumental cause. Water gives us more-than-natural life. That is why the Fathers of the Church used to love to describe the baptismal font as the womb of Mother Church, which the Holy Spirit has made fruitful.

Our Lord said to Nicodemus, that influential Pharisee who came to visit Him by night: "Do not be surprised, then, at my telling you, 'You must be born anew,'" He had been surprised, though. He had been skeptical, and it was only natural because the claim Jesus made was so startling.

"Believe me," Our Lord went on to say, "no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless birth comes to him from water, and from the Holy Spirit. What is born by natural birth is a thing of nature, what is born by spiritual birth is a thing of spirit." (John III, 6-7).

At the University College of Cork in Ireland there is a remarkably beautiful little church for student worship, a memorial, called Honan Chapel. The sanctuary walls in their entirety are a rich blue mosaic in which dozens of fish play in the running stream. The graphic

representation is an old one, going back to the days of the catacombs. The fish are baptized Christians and the waters are their life-giving element. Why fish? Well, it was early discovered that the five-letter Greek word for fish, *ichthys*, was formed by the first letters of the five Greek words for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior," and since much had to be done in secrecy in persecution times, and earlier still out of a reticence over holy things this symbolic word "fish" was substituted for our Lord as a harmless code word to throw enemies of Christ off the scent.

Every baptized person is another Christ, and he is at home in the "living waters" of the sacrament. He lives again in the new element—water.

Traditionally, in Christian practice, certain blessed objects or blessings have been used to excite believers to thoughts of trust in God, of love, of the shortness of life, of sorrow for sin. Such objects are ikons or images of Christ and the saints, ashes, palms. The lifeless object has an effect, but chiefly through the action of God's grace on a free human will. By employing these sacramental objects, Christians are moved to action. The efficacy of the object of itself is at a minimum, compared with the prayerful disposition of the user.

That is how sacramentals work. With sacraments it is dif-

ferent. Sacraments are likewise signs and reminders, but they are much more powerful than sacramentals. They are a marvelous new creation of Christ our Lord, not of men, and are like nothing else in the world. They are a family of seven signs—things that we use and do — which He has devised to act as vehicles for His wonderful work of redeeming and sanctifying us. What He accomplished for us on Calvary's hill, He shares with us in this most soul-satisfying way. They give to the soul not temporary helps to holiness but God's permanent grace, the love that lasts as long as we continue to love in return.

They are signs which bring about in the order of grace that marvel which, in the order of nature, they somehow parallel. While hands are in motion or a thumb is tracing a cross in olive oil a transaction is, at that very moment, in progress between heaven and earth. Sacraments are not just reminders. They are real causes or effectors of holiness.

What does the outward sign of holy baptism convey to the mind? Two things: a burying, and a washing. What are the spiritual gifts that holy baptism transmits? They are likewise two: burial with Christ only to rise with Him again, and cleansing of all guilt of sin.

In our Lord's day and for many centuries afterwards in

warm climates, the usual manner of being baptized was to be wholly immersed. It was custom, which the Church, acting as Christ in the world, felt free to modify when it became difficult to realize for practical reasons. The candidates for baptism, so called because of their **vestes candidae**, or white robes, were led down by the administering bishop or priest into a bath which had steps in the form of a V. They buried in the waters the man they had been with his life of sin; in this grave or running water they left all former wickedness, just as Christ had left His mortality behind Him in the rock tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea. Christ's resurrection in glory is paralleled by the candidate's emergence from the water, who comes to life in a new kind of life. He has died a sinner and risen a supernatural man.

"In our baptism," says St. Paul, "we have been buried with Him, died like Him, that so, just as Christ was raised up by His Father's power from the dead, we too might live and move in a new kind of existence." (Rom. VI, 4).

A new kind of existence! Washed in water, the universal sign of cleansing, the Christian goes cleansed and takes on a more than earthly lustre. He is a member of Christ, a sharer in all He won for His brothers, new-born unto God whether

two weeks old or thirty years, or eighty-three.

Sometimes an abrupt change is required in putting on the full mind of Christ. There is a considerably altered outlook necessary before some adults can say: "I would be brought to life in this supernatural world." They may find the price of full Christian faith too high; they know they must break with the past and are not ready to; they realize that burial of their former selves is necessary, with an abrupt end to these habits or familiar ways, those attachments or forbidden loves, and they are not equal to the choice.

"Give me chastity," the young Augustine prayed, "but not yet awhile." "I sighed and longed to be delivered, but was kept fast bound, not with outward chains but with my own iron will. 'Presently,' 'by and by'; but this 'presently' did not presently come, these delays had no bounds, and this 'little while' stretched into a long time."

Christian baptism is a double choice. It is God's loving choice of men, and their responsive choice of God.

A baby cannot choose, cannot love, and so the Church believes for that child, hopes, and loves for him, until at the discretionary years, he comes to choose to be a member of Christ in his own name. We know that by the second century, the custom of

baptising infants was already widespread. The earliest pattern of Christian baptism was the burial and the cleansing of adult pagans and Jews. Many of the latter were just and many pagans sincere, but others had lived their lives up to that point, on very different terms. Perhaps they had envied or lusted, been gluttonous, or deceived. That is why the prayers accompanying even infant baptism seem so mysterious to us, with their numerous quizzings about fidelity to Christ and their several exorcisms of the devil.

The modern ceremony is a simple telescoped version of a whole series of rites that used to be spread over several years, in the lives of grown-ups.

"Sylvia, what do you ask of the Church of God?"

"Faith."

"What does faith bring you to?"

"Life everlasting."

And for that introductory exchange, the thirty-six year old matron Sylvia would embark on a two-year training course as a catechumen. Signed with the cross on brow and heart and still tasting the symbolic salt of heavenly wisdom, she would begin to learn of the mysteries of God, chiefly at the Sunday instruction, before Holy Mass proper began. On the Wednesday following the third Sunday in Lent before her baptism, she would embark on a series of final tests in religion called

"scrutinies." Only in these last two and a half weeks of non-Christian life would she hear the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed for the first time and have them explained to her. She was on the brink of a heavenly existence; its secrets must be unfolded.

Life in the Church of Christ is a life of signs. There is progress in holiness, which is a thing unseen, through a series of outward signs. At the font or baptistry we are brought to birth in the living Christ. Water is the sign that has done it. Every time we come to God's holy temple to take part in the Christian Sacrifice we sign ourselves with holy water. It is a sacramental, not a sacrament, and so it says: "Remember, Christian soul, that by water you live again. By water you were enabled to believe the words you hear read and preached, by water you were given power to pray the Mass in union with Christ. You are a person of supernatural worth you are a creature who can be to the world a treasure, because you live again by water and the Holy Ghost."

That water was a torrent once, a coursing stream that brought only life and newness. Cracked cisterns can make parched fields, dry lips. Is there life, still from the former freshet? Or does it lie in the future, for souls who have yet to come alive, in water and the Holy Spirit?

OLIVE AND POWER

Address Delivered on June 20, 1954

In 1680, the Dutch scientist Christian Huygens described an internal combustion engine which would utilize gunpowder. It has only been in relatively recent times, however, that successful engines have been constructed to burn gasoline and fuel oil. Nikolaus Otto introduced this principle of the internal combustion engine in 1876, burning gas, but it was Gottlieb Daimler who constructed the first gasoline engine ten years later. Rudolf Diesel's invention came only in 1895. The commercial exploitation of petroleum in this country had begun in Titusville, Pa., in 1859, with the opening of Drake's oil well.

The energy of the sun has been stored in the ground in historic plant life compressed by the centuries. All fuels are storehouses of potential energy, and this heat energy is converted by engines into useful work. Surely, then, it is no exaggeration for our modern petroleum companies to proclaim in their advertising, "Oil is power."

Oil is power in another and quite different sense. Why do we read that the Iranian government and the British commonwealth dispute so bitterly, that Russia would play the Arab world off against Israel, and vice versa, if it is not simply that oil is wealth, oil is power. You have all heard amusing

stories, I suppose, about the Cherokee Indians who have it as a problem in modern Oklahoma, which Cadillac they shall use. Again, oil has done for them what four centuries of patronizing interest in their survival could not accomplish.

Oil was a sign of power in the ancient world just as it is in the modern. It was the oil of olives then, but still, a commodity which spelled influence and power.

Joel the prophet, wrote of the Lord God; "His answer comes, Here is grain and wine and oil to your hearts' content; no more will I let the nations mock you." (Jl. II, 19). That was the trinity of commerce which recurs continually throughout the Bible, "grain and wine and oil."

Moses called Palestine a "land of olive oil" (Deut. II, 8). Nobody can remember a time when olive trees were not growing there. The kings of pre-Christian Samaria derived the chief wealth of their realm from fat olives of the Samaritan highlands. Before that, King Solomon had paid Hiram of Tyre for the services of carpenters in hewing cedar for the Temple in olive oil in lots of 20,000 quarts.

Nourishing oil was extracted from the olives by crushing them with heavy stones. The

oil was a staple food, taken with coarse bread; it was stored in stone jars, to be employed as a medium of exchange; it was used to make soap; it was applied as an external curative and salve.

Because oil stood for wealth and power and health, the ancient Jews saw in it a sign of divine approval. The Old Law required that tabernacle and ark, holy tables and the appurtenances of sacrifice, all be anointed with especially scented and spiced oil. "The oil used for anointing is a thing set apart," says the Book of Exodus, . . . and you must keep it holy" (Ex. XXX, 31f.).

It was not only sacred objects which the Jews of old anointed. Three classes of men who had in the God-governed nation of Israel received their designation by way of symbol: priests, prophets, and kings.

In the Book of Exodus the Jews were told, "sprinkle with (ram's blood) and with the oil used for anointing, Aaron and his sons. . . . By this elevation, in the Lord's presence, Aaron and his sons are to be consecrated" (Ex. XXIX, 21, and 25). So did it happen with the family to whose charge was committed the sacrificing priesthood.

When it came time for the prophet Samuel to designate Saul as the Jews' first king, we are told: "And now Samuel took out his phial of oil, and poured it out over Saul's head; then he

kissed him, and said, Hereby the Lord anoints thee to be the leader of his chosen people" (I Kgs. X, 1). Thus was the chief man of the Jews anointed with oil.

The order of signs establishes a relationship between the outward thing done or portrayed and the concept represented. When the relationship is arbitrary, we call that a conventional sign. A striped pole bears no essential relation to barbering; the pole might as easily have been decided upon to stand for a butcher shop. With a pair of glasses hung in neon over an optician's shop, however, it is a different matter. That is a natural sign, just as a cloud is a natural sign of rain, or an extended palm, facing out, a natural sign to halt.

A sign that bears a pair of eyeglasses in outline is a natural sign but not in itself an effective one. It indicates to the passerby: "There is a man here skilled in grinding lenses to the eye-doctor's prescription." The sign does not cause your eyesight to improve; it indicates a means which you are free to take toward improving it. It is a helpful sign in that it tells you something, but there its efficacy ends. It does not, of itself, effect or bring about the improvement it signifies.

Sacramentals are like that. Rosary beads remind the user, "Pray with me. Raise your thoughts to God and keep them

tethered with my little markers. That is what I am for." The plaques or medallions of the Way of the Cross — Stations, as they are called — convey to the mind: "I am an excellent means for meditating on Christ's sufferings. Use me to that end." And so the believer prays, and the transient helps needed for holy living are multiplied by the loving God through that prayer. Sacramentals are outward signs which are occasions of passing graces.

Sacraments are outward signs which are causes of permanent grace, or God's abiding favor. Water, and the words of Christ whereby the three Persons are invoked, just as surely cause birth in His Kingdom as conception and the nine months of gestation bring a human to birth in the order of nature.

The sacraments do not work automatically, that is to say apart from the human will. No, for God's grace is His love, and for love to be perfect there must be a return of love. We are not sanctified despite ourselves. Sacraments are signs which cause human holiness only if we have it so.

Water, we reminded ourselves last week, is the sign of cleansing, and of resurrection from death and burial. What is the significance of oil in the sacramental system? It is used in conjunction with priesthood, which is authorized power to offer gifts to God — tech-

nically, "sacrifice"; it has to do with teaching also, and with ruling. In a word, oil signifies for the Christian what it did in a religious sense for the Jew of old, except in much fuller measure. Priest, prophet or teacher, and king was he to be whom ancient prophecy called **Mashia** — all three in one. The word Messiah means "anointed"; it was with oil that the prophet was designated, the priest consecrated, and the king raised to his high office. The title "Christ" is simply "Messiah" translated into Greek, "the Anointed." The Expected One, it was thought, would be given power from on high and fulfill the three roles admirably.

When He came, Jesus of Nazareth said, "Absolute authority in heaven and on earth has been conferred upon me." (Mt. XXVIII, 19). He claimed to be, and by many was believed to be, God's Anointed — the Christ.

What is it to be a Christian but to be another Christ? It is not possible, therefore, to be born into the Kingdom, His Living Church, without receiving some power to act as He did, some active sharing in His triple role.

Extend for a moment, if you will, the thumb and the first fingers of either hand, and tuck the last two fingers in against your palm. From thumb to index to middle finger is a progression in the normal hand.

They provide an old device to teach the progressive sharing in Christ's priestly power that is given to His members through a series of sacramental signs. In holy baptism, the thumb, we are empowered to become offerers of Christ's sacrifice—the Mass—as members of His living Body, the Church. He is an infinite Person; He shares our poor manhood. In union with Him we grow capable of offering to the Father a perfect gift. Confirmation, the index finger, gives a second measure of priestly power, in the sense that he who is an offerer now has the public responsibility of sharing with others faith in the mystery of the Mass. With ordained priesthood and with its fullest measure, the bishop's office, the middle finger, comes power not simply to offer Christ in sacrifices but also effectively to produce Christ, by a spoken word, as the victim for sacrifice. All members of the Church have some priestly power; the ordained have the unique power to make Him really present whom all the baptized will offer.

Three of the seven Christian sacraments can not be received more than once because they change or modify the recipient in a way that is lasting. They are baptism, confirmation, and order, and the change they bring about is nothing other than to give a share in Christ's priestly power. You can not receive them again because, hav-

ing first come to life and then been deputed to a certain task in the kingdom, you cannot receive that existence, or that commission again. You cannot because you need not, just as it is impossible to commission an army major as a major. A baptized, or confirmed, or ordained Christian, is such forever.

It seems, perhaps, that in a family of three such signs, all would have oil as their common element, if oil is the ancient symbol for the priest-prophesying. For reasons of Christ's mysterious choosing, it is not so. In confirmation only is olive oil the necessary object for sign. There is an anointing in the rites both of baptism and priestly ordination, but in neither case is it precisely that sacrament-sign which gives the grace. The oil is used in additional ceremony which follows the grace-giving water in the one case, and the laying-on of hands in the other. In holy baptism, the Christian is anointed in the form of a cross on shoulders and breast with the oil of catechumens, that is to say candidates, and again on the crown of his head with an oil called chrism. The first is to make him, symbolically, supple and strong in the contest with man's adversary, the devil; the second cross-sign is priestly in character, symbolic of his new power to have a part in Christ's sacrifice and worship. He has become a member of Christ Who is the High Priest of God's new

kingdom. Says the baptizing priest, "May almighty God . . . anoint you with the Chrism of salvation in the same Christ Jesus, our Lord unto life everlasting."

When a priest is ordained, one of the steps subsequent to the laying-on of a bishop's hands, which is the efficacious sign, is to anoint his hands with the oil of catechumens in two arcs or crescents — from one thumb to the opposite forefinger tip and then the other way about. After that the bishop anoints the palms all over, and for each new priest he prays: "Be pleased, O Lord, to consecrate and hallow these hands by this anointing, and our blessing. Amen. That whatever they bless may be blessed and whatsoever they consecrate may be consecrated and hallowed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then the bishop removes the oil and hands over a chalice of wine and water, and a dish with a wafer of bread on it: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Mass, both for the living and the dead, in the name of the Lord, Amen."

The Church of Christ must grow, being a thing alive. This moral body is not simply an organization, as many conceive it to be, but an organism. Growth is the very condition of its life. It cannot grow by force of violence. Man must hear God's voice in invitation and freely

choose to be of that living Body, members in Christ, the Head. In ancient times, the admission of new Christians commonly took place on the vigil of Easter. They would go immediately from the baptismal font to be confirmed, then to receive the Paschal Eucharist. Here is a description of it from the pen of Hippolytus in the year 215 or so. He is describing the Church at Rome, in a practical Handbook called **Apostolic Tradition**. First the baptizing minister submerges the candidate three times, asking him, in order, if he believes in God the Father Almighty, then in the Son of God, then in the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church. "After this, pouring the consecrated oil from his hand and laying his hand on his head, he shall say, 'I anoint thee with holy oil in God the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit' and sealing him on the forehead he shall give him the kiss of peace . . ." Then the candidates go in to take their first full part in Christ's sacrifice, the bishop saying as he gives them their first Communion, "The Bread of Heaven in Christ Jesus," to which each replies, "Amen."

The spread of the Church means the spread of love — human happiness on the increase, with God's glory leading it on. There is such a thing as being naturally reticent of temperament. There is also a spirit of delicacy which keeps

men from speaking offhandedly about the most sacred matters. A complete unwillingness to share the treasure of faith, however, is a different case entirely. Any follower of Christ who feels no compulsion whatever to act as God's instrument in bringing others to the joys of baptismal font and altar, needs to examine his use of the graces he received at confirmation. This apostolic desire is worlds apart from the crude proselytism that would force faith on the listener, or even a hearer, whether he will it or not. Our Lord did say, in a graphic figure of Oriental speech, that what is sacred should not be thrown to the dogs. Pearls have their place in necklace and brooch, and not in a pigsty mixed with bran mash. The secrets of the Kingdom are only for those listeners who show a basic willingness to hear them. There do occur times when scoffers at religion need to be called to time, and their obvious bad faith made a point of. In the main, however, what they need most is to be loved and treated kindly even in their rudeness. When the bitter adversaries of religion are subtracted, there remains that great population of fair-minded neutrals whose whole careers in time and eternity could be altered if the Holy Spirit of God were given freer play in the souls of those who are **confirmed** Christians.

When the sacrament of confirmation is discussed, the no-

tion of fortitude is often so much to the fore that all else is drowned out. "Soldiers," is the common term, "commissioned officers in Christ's army," as if the normal conditions of everyday life were siege, attack, and blasphemous attempt to make the Christian apostatize.

Well, of course there is some of that, and the opposition should not be minimized, but actually the chief effect of confirmation is spiritual maturity, which means a priestly function. Holy Baptism gives life, but it makes the candidates to be "as newborn babes" (I Pet. II, 2), regardless of their age. Confirmation is adulthood in the realm of the spirit. A child is an individualist, essentially. He lives, so to say, only for himself. The dawning of manhood should mean his beginning to exert his activity on others. Manhood requires the person to take his place as a citizen and bear his burden as a member of society.

Pentecost meant for the apostles the shouldering of a burden. ". . . 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will receive strength from Him; you are to be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.'" (Acts 1, 8). The fire that Christ had come to enkindle on the earth they set about spreading, so that soon the whole Empire was a blaze of faith and charity.

Confirmation makes the simple baptized Christian to be

spokesman and defender for the message of the Master. He does not hold the good tidings close to himself, either in uncertainty of their truth or in selfishness of possession. He proclaims the mystery of the Church "like a standard set up unto the nations, calling to Herself those who have not yet believed" (DB 1794). He spreads the good odor of Christ in all his deeds, which become as the scented balm that adds fragrance to the chrism's soothing strength.

By confirmation a man is dedicated wholeheartedly to the Christian cause. It is the completion of what was begun in baptism, the sacrament of initiation. Marked twice with the seal of Christ the Priest in the deepest recesses of one's being, the member of Christ joins that other at the altar who from his priestly ordination is thrice-sealed, and together they offer Christ — Friend, Brother, Victim, Lover — to God.

There comes a time in every Christian's life when his exercise of priesthood in union with Christ the Head, whether through confirmation or sacred ordination, approaches a close. There comes a call to death with its "change of mettle . . . its light upon light." Now is the time for a gathering to greatness, and the "ooze of oil crushed" is employed by the Church for the last time, to this purpose.

Christ entered into His glory

through suffering and physical death. The servant should not expect to be any better off than He, the Master. At death, and sometimes in virtue of it and all its grim preliminaries, souls hope to be made perfect, free from all sin and imperfection. If oil stands for bodily strength, and surely in all the history of medication that is the case, then it should serve as an excellent sign of that preparation for the life of glory made by the "extreme unction," life's last anointing in a sacrament-sign.

This sacrament is traditionally associated with those ill in body, ever since the apostle James counseled calling in the priests of the Church for anointing in oil in the name of the Lord. "That prayer, said with faith, will save the sick person, and the Lord will restore him to health. If he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him." (James V. 15). And so you see, it is a kind of complement of the effects of penance, just as convalescence achieves what a successful operation cannot quite do. Full restoration of the spiritual health and strength that marked baptismal innocence and eucharistic perfection is what the Church prays for in extreme unction. If the recipient's dispositions include perfect faith and love and sorrow, he can expect full remission of the effect of his sins — namely, all punishment and spiritual weakness. He can hope to enjoy

straightaway the company of the Blessed God.

Primarily the change effected by oil and prayer is a spiritual one, for a religion without suffering and death as necessary has no claim to be called Christianity. Far be it from God's Church, however, to keep Him from healing in body when He chooses, and so the prayers of this sacrament petition restoration to health, if such be God's will. Frequently enough the soul, new in grace, will have a short-term or even a long-term vivifying effect on a weakened body, and often the "last anointing" proves not to be last at all, but a turning point on the way back to health.

Gerard Hopkins tells the course of things in the life of a blacksmith he had anointed:

Sickness broke him. Impatient he cursed a first, but mended Being anointed and all, through a heavenlier heart began some

Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom Tendered to him. Ah well, God rest him all rood ever he offend!

Life in Christ is a life of signs, Water brings first holiness; oil second in confirmation, for a few third in priesthood. In many lives, it is the last sign of God's love. But the chief sign of Christian life is that visible, edible object which not only accomplishes our sanctification but is its very Author. That sign, of course, is Christ Jesus, the living Bread, heart and center of the sacramental system. But of that, next week.

LIFE IN WHEAT AND WINE

Address Delivered on June 27, 1954

Anyone who describes Jesus of Nazareth as an itinerant moralist who had a total unconcern for forms of worship or refinements of dogmatic teaching betrays himself immediately as unfamiliar with the sources on His life and work. These documents, historic in character, are cast in the form of memoirs. They number four, two being the work of close acquaintances of Christ, Matthew and John, and two written by intimate friends of the twin giants of the primitive Church, that is to say, by Mark and Luke, who were the traveling companions, respectively, of Peter and Paul. The four together make clear that the Man of Nazareth was keenly insistent that men hear from His lips a single, clear message from heaven, and act on it in certain specified ways. In general: they must believe strongly all that the Father reveals through His Son and His Holy Spirit, match that faith with the quality of their hope and their love, and receive an increase of the Father's love continually through contact with a series of sacred signs which give life.

Consider, if you will, the revealing conversation that Jesus had at Jacob's well in Samaria with a woman of rather leisurely domestic habits. John tells the story in the fourth chapter

of his gospel. He is alone in it, probably remembering to old age the jar he got when he came out with the rest from buying food in the town of Sichar, to discover the Master talking alone to a strange woman, and a despised Samaritan at that!

Christ had gambled everything on the significative power of a dipper-full of well water at midday. All the hot and dusty routine of daily chores and casual loves, He promised, could be replaced by a "fountain of water welling up (within her) into eternal life" (Jn. IV,14). It was no good. She was too literal-minded for Him, or else by long habit too guarded to be drawn into any conversation on things beyond what met the eye. In either case — dull or provocatively brazen — she said she would welcome the water He spoke of if it would save her these daily trips to the well. With that Jesus changed His tack. He told her to summon her husband, and used her denial that there was any such person to indicate that He knew well that of six tentative candidates for that honor, none, including the present sharer of her domicile, had been troubled with scruples of legality. She grew rattled at Christ's evident detailed knowledge of her career and like many whose

moral lives are disordered, immediately found it convenient to raise the dogmatic question of which was the true religion.

Probably pointing to nearby Mt. Garizim, she acknowledged Him to be a prophet, and then proceeded, with a womanly *non sequitur*, to say, "Well, it was our fathers' way to worship on this mountain, although you tell us that the place where men ought to worship is Jerusalem."

"Believe me, woman," Jesus said to her, "the time is coming when you will not go to this mountain, nor yet to Jerusalem, to worship the Father. You worship you cannot tell what, we worship knowing what it is we worship; salvation, after all, is to come from the Jews; but the time is coming, nay, has already come, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. . . (Jn. IV, 20-23).

Get that clear distinction of His between Judaism, the true revealed religion, and Samaritanism, the seven-century old heresy from it. Notice, too, the firm tone in which He prophesied—He who within moments was to identify Himself to her clearly: "I Who speak to you, am the Christ"—prophesied an end to religion that was essentially local and national. He first distinguished carefully between divinely authorized worship and unauthorized, and spoke of both as shortly to be succeeded

by more perfect forms. What is this if not a dogmatic mind discriminating clearly among manifestations of human reverence for the divine, as more and less pleasing to the loving Father who is honored?

Worship, after all, is "worship," a fair evaluation of another's dignity, and when that other is the Creator and Lord of all, why a creature's only reasonable response is fitting acknowledgment. He must pay homage, which in this case does not mean a cringing vassalage, but simply playing a man's part. When an employer demands acquiescence or bootlicking as the price of an employee's job, we call that a distinguishing performance because the human importance of the one is falsely magnified, while the human dignity of the other is disregarded. It is a vastly different matter when the Boundless and the Timeless, whose love has resulted in a creation, expects that some reasonable response be made by rational creatures to the fact of the difference between them.

Left to themselves, men have always engaged in a kind of worship behavior called sacrifice. They know instinctively that rectitude of moral behavior is the essential thing, however twisted a moral code they may have devised, but they have never been quite satisfied with that. It seems so colorless; also, it is very hard. Some basic

human needs go unsatisfied, it seems, unless there is an outward acknowledgement of God's dominion over human destinies and everything that men possess. What form does the acknowledgment take? Well, you give to the gods what you think will please them most according to the best information you have on who directs the forces of nature you stand daily in awe of. But if you have been told, as the ancient Jews were told, that their Lord was the only God interested in justice and mercy and uprightness of life, then you slaughter and offer to God the best of your animals, and burn grain and fruits, and send up clouds of incense, as a token of your perfect obedience. In early desert days, the sacrifice of the Jews was a pretty crude performance but it was from the heart. Twice they were crushed by conquerors and carried off in exile, but each time they returned to re-establish their blood sacrifice. They knew the terms well enough, but it was so easy to forget.

Religion always tends to revert to mere ritualism; it is nature's tendency. Temple and altar were daily occupied. The levitical priesthood fattened on the rich revenues. But the natural language of signs came to be betrayed, because the required destruction of the richest and best was not taking place and when something like it

with poor substitute beasts did transpire, there was little genuine spirit of obedience and love being acted out.

"What do I care, the Lord says, how you multiply those victims of yours? I have had enough, and to spare. Burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of stall-fed beasts, and the blood of calves and lambs and goats are nothing to me. Think you it is a welcome sound, the tramp of your feet in my courts, bringing worship such as yours? . . . Wash yourselves clean, spare Me the sight of your busy wickedness; keep holily from wrong-doing. Learn, rather, how to do good, setting your hearts on justice . . . then come back, says the Lord, and make trial of Me." (Is. I, 11-18)

Sacrifice is sign language. It is a particular case of gift-giving to furnish the receiver with proof of affection. When the gift is given but the heart not along with it, we have a sham. It is like Judas' kiss in the garden, or the kiss of a lover who loves only himself and the pleasurable sensations he can garner.

The idea of blood sacrifice was not unworthy of God. He had specified it, legislated for it in detail in the inspired Books of Moses. It takes courage for a man to separate himself from costly heads of stock and see their carcasses go up in smoke, especially if they represent a

good part of his earthly fortune. Something of himself is given in the gift. The chief troubles with the destruction of symbolic victims under the Mosaic Law, however were these:

- a) The sacrificing priesthood, being human, was itself sinful, so that the gifts to God would always be slightly tainted in the very transmission.
- b) Human sins occur daily which means that there would forever be need of daily sacrifice, just to keep even with things.
- c) Splendid as was Solomon's Temple and that of Herod the Great after it, it was all a pretty puny business contrasted with the majesty of the Infinite God.
- d) There was that old, unfulfilled promise of God about a priest who would continue forever, in the line of Melchisedech. Now, Melchisedech was outside the blood lines of the hereditary priestly families, and his symbolic gift had been bread and wine.
- e) The Lord of Israel was over the Gentiles as well. Like it or not, the Jews had received from Him a progressive multiplication of prophecy that their national mission would come to a close when the Messiah came to rule over all the nations. Geographic

universality was to mark his reign, his priesthood and his sacrifice.

When Jesus of Nazareth came, He said, "I, who speak to you am the Christ." He said it too often and to the wrong people, not in so many words, but by miracles, courageous indictment of evil, and by shattering, superhuman goodness. As the poet puts it, "The devil didn't like Him, and He died."

Now here are His qualifications as a sacrificer, or gift offerer in worship:

- a) He is a high priest suited to our need, "holy, and guiltless and undefiled... one who has no need... to offer sacrifice day by day, first for his own sins..." (Heb. VII, 26f).
- b) "Of those other priests there was a succession, since death denied them permanence; whereas Jesus continues forever, and his priestly office is unchanging." (23f).
- c) Jesus is neither an angel of God nor a servant, like Moses, but a Son—"the radiance of His Father's splendor, and the full expression of his being; all creation depends, for its support, on his enabling word." (Heb. I, 3)
- d) The Law had nothing in it of final achievement. It was admirable for outward observers, but Jesus arose, a fresh priest to

fulfill the type of Melchisedech, and in the power of His unending life brought a fuller hope. When the priesthood was altered, the Law necessarily was altered with it. Heb. VII, 12-19)

- e) He was the giver, and He was the gift. God received a perfect sacrifice of praise in the perfect obedience of His son, Jesus. The token of it, the sign, was "his own blood, not the blood of goats and calves . . . the ransom He has won lasts forever." (Heb. IX, 12, 13)

The night before He gave His life in sacrifice, Jesus took in His hands wheaten bread — yeastless because of the Jewish feast—and grape wine, and declared them to be His body as offered, His blood, as shed. In His public career He had been a master Teacher. He had used common, everyday objects to make His points: weeds, fish-nets, coins, children's games. He Who was the unseen God in tangible human flesh could sacramentalize anything, making visible objects bear invisible burdens much weightier than themselves. This was His master stroke. His whole message had been: "I am life." He chose to remain behind in the form of staples without which there is no life. He taught unity in love, the crushing of self for the good of all. Here was He in His own

hands, a moment before wheat ground to powder, grapes crushed to a fiery consistency of oneness. He said the Son of Man had come to give His life as a ransom for the lives of many (Mt. XX, 28); here in an unforgettable symbol of the exchange was the Ransomer and the ransom, the Giver and the gift, the sacrificing Priest and the victim. It seemed to be table fare, but in fact, "It is the Lord."

Sacraments are effective signs which give the grace they signify. All seven of them bespeak, in some measure, life of a kind above and beyond the existence proper to man. One of the seven is the very Author of that life, Jesus Christ, the living Bread Who has come down from heaven. A thousand years of discipleship went by before anyone questioned that He was truly and substantially present at the priest's word, as He had said He would be, and the foodstuffs present no more. Thirteen centuries elapsed before it occurred to anyone to deny that the Lord's Supper, that is to say, the Mass, was one Sacrifice with Calvary, that supreme example of worshipful gift-offering which could never be repeated nor ever improved. "As often as the commemoration of this offering is celebrated, the work of our redemption is renewed."

"The time is coming, nay, has already come when true

worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Christianity is not meant to divide men but to unite them, to make all men brothers of that elder Brother Who is their spotless high priest. It hopes to draw them away from the mountain of this national spirit or that sectarian aloofness, up to the summit of perfect gift-offering. Calvary was a place, made sacred in a distant time. By God's loving design its fullest effects are available to men of every nation, even to the world's end, in the realm of

sign. Says a prayer of the Mass at Christmas: "Through Him Whom we recognize as God made visible we are carried away in love of things invisible."

Through water, and oil, and bread and wine, through imposition of hands, and promise, and prayer, God's love becomes real to us. Our highest achievement, God's greatest gift, comes when we offer to Him His Son in sacrifice. Christian life has always been and forever will be, this loving exchange known by sign.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from the address of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes at the inaugural program of the Catholic Hour in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven; a strength, and a power divine through Christ; pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

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