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FINDING CHRIST

The Story of

Fourteen Noted Converts



By John A. O'Brien, Ph. D.

This is the story of fourteen converts who found spiritual peace in the Catholic Church. It dramatically illustrates that Catholics played an important role in starting most of them toward their conversions.

Catholics safely at home in Christ's Church know little of the spiritual suffering and uncertainty that afflict many who have not found Christ. Catholics can help them and many of the millions of others who wander aimlessly outside the Church. A friendly word, a little act of kindness, the giving of a pamphlet such as this, may bring them to the haven of Christ's Church and the certainty of His teachings.

Finding Christ

The Story of Fourteen Noted Converts

By

John A. O'Brien, Ph.D.

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Deacidified

“WHERE can I find peace of mind, contentment and happiness?” asked Joseph Smith as he glanced nervously out the windows of the train speeding into New York.

Tall buildings rising in the distance told him that soon he would be one with the maddening throng, pushing into subways and hurrying along the crowded streets. Desperately he hungered for the answer.

“You will find them when you find Christ,” replied Father Cronin who was sharing the seat with his chance acquaintance. “And you will find them nowhere else,” he added with finality.

Smith was silent as he pondered the priest’s unexpected reply.

“I haven’t had much time for religion,” he remarked. “Have always been too busy. Guess I’ve missed something.”

“Something!” smiled Father Cronin. “That’s putting it mildly. You’ve missed the greatest thing in life.”

“You mean,” said Smith, “that I’ve missed the bus?”

“Yes,” agreed the priest, “you’ve missed it completely. For life without religion, without God, without the spiritual values, blessings and joys which come only from living with Him according to His plan is scarcely living at all. I’d call it vegetating.”

“Lots of Company”

“I’m afraid I have lots of company,” said Smith, “for there’re about 70 million other churchless people who are just vegetating also. It’s a good term, Father Cronin. When we have no spiritual life, nothing to give meaning and purpose to our existence, we don’t differ too much from vegetables or animals—is that it?”

“Christ,” continued Father Cronin, “is the way, the truth and the life. He is the light of the world and all who follow Him walk not in darkness but in the light that never fails.”

As the train pulled into Grand Central Terminal, Smith reached for his bags.

“This little talk,” he said, “has meant much to me, Father Cronin, and I’m going to try to find Christ and walk in His light. He will fill a void in my life.”

“And in every life,” broke in Father Cronin, “of which He has not been a part. Look up any priest and he will be glad to show you how you can find Christ and thus find the peace and happiness which all crave.”

“Thanks, Father,” said Smith. “I’ll do that. Pray that I succeed.”

Symbol of Millions

Smith is a living symbol of the millions of men and women who feel a void in their lives and who are hungering wistfully for Christ but do not know where to find Him.

With a view to helping these millions find Christ we shall tell how fourteen noted men and women found their Lord and thus found meaning and purpose in life and peace and happiness as well. Scholars, philosophers, professors, lecturers, journalists, historians, artists and authors of best-sellers, they lay bare the anxieties and anguish of their souls until at last they found Christ and His Church and then only began really to live.

Their gripping narratives are told in their own words in *Where I Found Christ*,¹ which we have been privileged to edit; it will richly repay reading by yourself and your friends. If you have already found Christ, the book will help you to show others how they too may find Him. If you have not found Him, their story will be invaluable in pointing out the way to you.

KATHERINE BURTON

Among the biographers of our day Katherine Burton has won a high place. She served as associate editor of *McCall's Magazine* and later of *Redbook*; at present she conducts a woman's page in *The Sign*. She is a contributor to the leading magazines and has written *Sorrow Built A Bridge*, the biography of Sister Rose Hawthorne, and about ten other widely known biographies.

"There are two things," blurted out Kath-

¹ *Where I Found Christ*, edited by John A. O'Brien, Doubleday & Co., N. Y., \$2.50.

erine Burton to her Catholic friend, Patricia Jackson, "fixed firmly in the Roman mind: the Pope in heaven and Henry VIII in hell." Irritated at the persistent manner in which Patricia kept insisting that she track down the origin of Anglicanism and compare it with the far more ancient origin of Catholicism, Katherine had found in the explosion a temporary emotional release but she knew it was no real answer to her friend's argument.

The Catholics, with whom she discussed religion, had one beginning and one end to every argument: the everlastingness of their Church. It was the first Church established by Our Lord, and there was no other and would be no other. Then one day a Catholic friend showed her a list of the various Christian Churches with their founders: Martin Luther, the Lutheran Church; Wesley, the Methodist; Henry VIII, the Anglican. Though irritated by the disclosure, she could not escape the stark simplicity of the record which boiled down the relevant facts of history to a single telling page.

In her perplexity she consulted Dr. Delaney, the assistant rector at her parish church, St. Mary the Virgin. To her utter amazement he told her he was leaving the Episcopal Church to become a Catholic: more than that, he was leaving soon for Rome to study for the Catholic priesthood. He handed her the manuscript of a book, *Why Rome?*—all but the last chapter.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral she attended the ceremony of Dr. Delaney's reception into the Church; then she looked up the priest, Msgr. Joseph McMahan, who had received her friend into the fold and secured instructions from him. Under the guidance of this scholarly priest and with the assistance of Newman's *Difficulties of Anglicans*, all doubt vanished from her mind: the divine establishment of the Catholic Church stood out crystal clear.

It was not the work of man but of God; into that Church she came with joyful heart. The outstretched arms of the statue of Christ on the altar before her seemed to symbolize the welcome the Master extended to her; it was as if He was saying: "Welcome home, my child." Supplementing the primary consideration just mentioned, were the beauty of the Church's services, the devotion and piety of the faithful, the edifying example of her Catholic friends and the missionary zeal of a few of them in helping her to find her way.

BISHOP HUNT

Duane G. Hunt first began to experience disgruntlement with the Protestant religion in which he had been reared when as a college student he was subjected to the riotous emotionalism of the Evangelistic Revivals common in the first quarter of the century. The crude and sensational emotionalism aroused by these affairs proved thoroughly

distasteful to him; next he found himself out of sympathy with the puritanical code which condemned innocent forms of amusement.

After reading *The Faith of Our Fathers*, he became intrigued with the Catholic chain of reasoning. There was the Divinity of Christ, the establishment of a Church by Him, and the conclusion that the Church so founded could never disappear and could not teach error. He tried hard to break the chain which would logically compel him to enter a Church which had been so alien to him. The more he studied and read, the more unbreakable the links became.

Sketching the premises which he came to find undebatable, he arrived at the following analysis: "I believe in God; I need to be taught the truths which He wishes me to believe; since Christ is God and came on earth to teach me this truth, it is to Him I must look. But how does Christ teach me? There were only three possible ways: 1. By direct and personal revelation; 2. Through a written record (the Sacred Scripture); 3. Through the agency of men, that is, through an organization commissioned by Him for that purpose."

Reflection showed that he received no direct personal revelation from God. But a written record needs a living agency to vouch for its authenticity and to interpret it correctly, otherwise divergent interpretations would lead to the anarchy and strife he ob-

served among the bickering sects. The third method, he perceived, was the only logical manner whereby the divine deposit of revelation would be passed on in its integrity and unity to all generations. After entering the Church he became a priest and later on the Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah, where he labors with Pauline zeal to spread the faith of Christ.

LUCILE HASLEY

Lucile Hasley is a contributor to many magazines and won the first prize in the Catholic Press Association short-story contest with her, "The Little Girls." A collection of her articles, chiefly from *The Sign*, has recently been published in book form under the title, *Reproachfully Yours*.

Lucile was impressed by the deep faith and practical piety of her college roommate, McCarthy. She would slip quietly away in the middle of a risqué story; she would get down on her knees at night and say her rosary; she would tiptoe off to Mass on a weekday morning, rain or shine. If Lucile were upset over something, she would say casually, "Don't worry. I offered up my Communion for you this morning."

During an illness, Lucile promised God that if she recovered, she would investigate religion and the duties which it claimed creatures owed the Almighty. Accordingly upon recovery she went to a Catholic priest

—she had never even talked with one before—and began the course of instructions which led to her baptism.

Commenting on her conversion, she says, "In a very literal sense, I can say the words of Bloy: 'For my part, I declare that I never sought or found anything unless one wishes to describe as a discovery the fact of tripping blindly over a threshold and being thrown flat on one's stomach into the House of Light.'" God's ways are indeed mysterious and beyond our power to trace; but to the writer it looks as though one McCarthy served as a sweet channel of His grace and should be credited by the recording angel with what in baseball would be called no small "assist."

EVERY ROBERT DULLES

Avery Robert Dulles is a graduate of Harvard and is the author of *A Testimony to Grace*. From history courses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Avery seems to have gotten interested in mediaeval philosophy; this led to a study of Plato and Aristotle. The inadequacies of the philosophy of these thinkers, profound as they were, were missing in the philosophical systems of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Under their guidance he came to see that the God of philosophy could be none other than the God of the Christian revelation.

This led to a diligent reading of the New

Testament to learn more about Christ and the teachings He commissioned His followers to transmit to all generations. Desiring to be incorporated into the living Christ, he turned more and more to Catholicism. He became aware that the Catholic Church was not a fossil of the Middle Ages but a living force in the world today: a force drawing open minds to her as the magnet draws the steel.

Reading, pondering and praying, he spent his last year in college: he had now begun to realize that on one's knees one comes best to know God and to love Him. Knowing no priest, he arranged through a Catholic bookstore to meet one and receive instructions. Convinced of the Divinity of Christ, the existence of a visible Church founded by Him, and the identity of that Church with the Catholic Church, he entered the fold and is now studying for the priesthood in the Society of Jesus.

ELIZABETH LAURA ADAMS

Elizabeth Laura Adams is a Negro author of distinction. Her talents have found expression in music, drama, poetry and prose. Her book, *Dark Symphony*, stamps her as a writer of originality and power. She is a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and of the Gallery of Living Catholic Authors; she plans to specialize in writing plays on Negro life.

Elizabeth was greatly impressed by reading

a book, *Wonder Work of Lourdes*, which related the story of the many miracles wrought at that famous shrine. Then one day she met in the public library a nun who invited her to her convent; taking her into the chapel she told Elizabeth about our Eucharistic Lord in the tabernacle, always ready to comfort and help her.

As a Negress she had suffered from the prejudice and discriminations of the whites, and so she was touched by the kindness of the nun. Following this, she sought to learn more about Christ and His Church from a priest; he showed her that God was no respecter of persons and that the Church, like her Divine Founder, opened wide her arms to embrace people of every race and color.

“Remember, child,” he said to her, “though the world may segregate you to a hilltop, God can lift you to mountain heights.” The kindly interest of the nun in an unknown Negro girl, encountered by chance in a library, started Elizabeth on the path that led to Christ and to His universal Church.

EDWARD O. DODSON

While at Carleton College, Edward O. Dodson won many scholastic honors, including the Elliott Prize in Greek, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and also to associate membership in the Society of Sigma Xi, honorary scientific society. He was graduated in 1939 *magna cum laude* with honors in Greek

and zoology. He received his Ph.D. in zoology from the University of California and has contributed to scientific journals. After teaching at the University of California he transferred in 1947 to the University of Notre Dame.

Edward took a great interest in the work of his Church (Congregationalist) and even thought of studying for the ministry. While attending Carleton College he began to be disturbed by the wide differences of belief manifested in the sermons and lectures of Congregationalist ministers. Some believed in the Virgin Birth, in the miracles and in the Resurrection of Jesus; but most viewed these as myths designed merely to create so-called "value judgments." The common viewpoint in regard to the communion service was that the bread and wine were not the true Body and Blood of Our Lord but merely a memorial of Him.

Here was a watering down of the historical content of the Christian Faith so that little more than its ethical precepts remained intact. The climax of this discarding of historic Christianity was reached in an address delivered by the president of the college, an ordained minister. His God was an impersonal one: a sort of summation of the vital forces of the universe. As to the Divinity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and the miracles of Jesus along with the dogmas which differentiate Christianity from other religions which teach a good

morality, he said, "Rather than anything else in the world would I have you get rid of these ideas."

In contrast to this crumbling of belief in the distinctive doctrines of historic Christianity, Edward observed, was the unwavering adherence of the Catholic Church to all that Christ taught. Here was no trimming of sails to fit the latest winds of fashion: here was a Church which preached Jesus Christ yesterday, today and the same forever. For more than nineteen centuries she had been fulfilling the mission entrusted to her by Christ to "teach all nations all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

It was the indefectibility of the Church, combined with her catholicity of doctrine in all climes and ages, which enabled Edward to see in her the imprint of the divine. After completing a course of instruction, he was intellectually satisfied on all points of Catholic doctrine. "But conversion," he observes, "is not only of the mind but also of the heart. I needed the nourishment of the Blessed Sacrament before I could ever grow in emotional and spiritual appreciation of the Church."

At last came the day when he knelt at the communion rail and received the Body of Our Lord: the Real Presence. "In my own life," he reports, "the reception of the Eucharist has been the climax of a spiritual pilgrimage which commanded my interests and energies, both intellectual and emotional,

for a period of about eight years. Now that pilgrimage is over: I have come home, and I have found rest in the house of my Holy Mother." Now a brilliant young scientist at Notre Dame, Dr. Dodson is penetrating deeper into the secrets of nature and in the knowledge of nature's God.

DOROTHY DAY

Outstanding in the apostolate of charity and social justice is Dorothy Day, lecturer, editor and author. She is a co-founder with Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker Movement and of the Houses of Hospitality. Busy contributing to many newspapers and magazines, she is the author of *From Union Square to Rome* and *House of Hospitality*, and these two books tell the story of her life and work.

Dorothy grew up in a home in which the name of God was rarely if ever mentioned. While not actually a Communist, she was active in all the radical left-wing movements which they supported; genuine and deep, however, was her compassion for the poor whose lot she struggled ceaselessly to improve. Returning from all night sessions in taverns or dance halls, she would see people going to an early week-day Mass; the spectacle stirred her and caused her to long for their Faith. She would enter and, kneeling in a back pew, murmur, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

The deep faith and piety of a couple of Catholic girl friends made a deep impression on her and gave her an insight into the powerful help they derived from the practice of their religion. She read *The Imitation of Christ* and the New Testament and hungered wistfully for closer union with Jesus.

While working in New Orleans, she continued to make visits to the Church; she did not meet a single Catholic or at least none of her acquaintances disclosed their Catholicity. Among them were undoubtedly some Catholics in so Catholic a city and it is a pity that they did not manifest their Faith; for she was then close to the Church and apparently needed but a friendly hand to bring her in. It offers an interesting sidelight upon the strange reticence of so many Catholics regarding their religion and their blindness to many opportunities to share their Faith with churchless people and thus fill an aching void in their lives.

In her visits to the Church, she prayed: "God, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief. Take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh." When her baby came, she was determined to have her baptized a Catholic, cost what it may. "I knew," she writes, "that I was not going to have her floundering through many years, as I had done, doubting and hesitating, undisciplined and amoral. I felt it was the greatest thing I could do for a child. For myself, I prayed for the gift of Faith."

One afternoon she got up courage enough to stop a Sister of Charity and ask her how she could get her infant baptized. The nun not only arranged for that but also proceeded to instruct the mother in the teachings of our holy Faith. A year after her baptism she was confirmed and Pentecost never passes without a renewed sense of happiness and thanksgiving.

“It was human love,” she observes, “that helped me to understand Divine love. Human love at its best, unselfish, glowing, illuminating our days, gives us a glimpse of the love of God for man. . . . I pray that all who are groping for the truth will be led by the Holy Ghost from darkness into light. I could not breathe or live without that light which I have now—the light of Faith which has been given to me by a merciful God who Is the Light of the World.” For years she has been carrying on her apostolate of charity, bringing Christ and His love to the poor, the underprivileged and the “down and outers.”

DAVID GOLDSTEIN

Widely known as a street preacher, lecturer, columnist, lay apostle, labor leader, and author is David Goldstein. For many years he was active in the Socialist labor party and has remained a champion of labor. With the collaboration of Mrs. Martha Moore Avery, he wrote *Socialism—The Nation of Fatherless Children*; he is also the

author of *Bolshevism: Its Cure*. He has spoken to large crowds in parks and street corners on a street preaching campaign that took him from coast to coast. He is the author of a half dozen books and a recognized authority on labor problems and on the apostolate to the Jews.

A Jew and a Socialist, David Goldstein was greatly impressed by the Church's unwavering stand in defense of the sanctity of the home and the permanence of the marriage bond. This led him to study the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on *The Condition of the Working Class*; the compassion of the Church for the poor and her insistence on the priority of human rights over property rights made a great appeal to this champion of labor.

He was assisted in his study of Catholicism by Mrs. Martha Avery, a convert from Marxism. He found in Catholicism the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament and the full flowering of Judaism. He found the Church to be as superior to the Temple as Jesus is to Moses. He discovered that the means instituted by Christ for the attainment of salvation were greater and more efficacious than were those recorded by Moses.

"I found the beauty which abided potentially in Judaism full-blossomed in Christianity, just as the potential beauty in the caterpillar is unfolded in the butterfly.

Therefore, when a Jew becomes a Catholic, he no more denies the faith of his fathers of the days when Judaism was the Mosaic religion in its fullness than the butterfly, if it had the power of reasoning, could rightly deny the caterpillar from which its beauty evolved."

Approaching the baptismal font, he received the sacrament instituted by the Messiah for Jews and others to be incorporated into His Mystical Body—the Church. The 44 years which have passed since that event have been for him years of ever-growing understanding and love of Jesus and the Catholic Church which He established. With Pauline zeal he has labored to share his discovery with the children of Israel. His daily prayer is:

Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life;
Grant Israel that Way to know,
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
Whose joys eternal flow.

JOCELYN M. C. TOYNBEE

Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee, sister of the noted historian Arnold Toynbee, is a professor of classics at Cambridge University, England. Reared as an Anglican, she became disturbed by the frequent controversies between the clergy and the bishops of the Church of England. In such conflicts the clergy not infrequently appealed behind a bishop to Catholic authority.

But where was Catholic authority, if not in the Anglican episcopate? It was no longer possible to think of it as existing vaguely in a nebulous Catholic Church composed of mutually exclusive communions or branches. It must be located precisely, if it existed anywhere; so she set out on her journey of inquiry with one all-important question in the forefront of her mind: On whom was I ultimately relying for all that I believed and did?

Her search led her to investigate the Catholic Church. Here was a Church, founded by Christ, she discovered, and clothed by Him with infallible authority to teach all mankind in His name. For more than nineteen centuries she has been discharging that divinely appointed mission. After making a novena to the Holy Ghost, every vestige of doubt vanished; she applied to a priest for systematic instruction in the Faith and a month later was received into the fold of Christ.

“To the convert from Anglo-Catholicism,” she writes, “the Catholic Church is, in a special sense, a place of liberation. Here is freedom from the tyranny of private judgment as the criterion of what one may, and may not, believe; freedom from the stifling task of trying to reconcile Anglican formularies with the Catholic doctrines which these formularies explicitly deny; freedom from the paradox of relying on Rome’s authority for what one has selected of Catholic Faith and

practice while being committed to the belief that Rome has erred. Here is freedom from the limiting notion of a 'Catholicism' specially adapted to the English-speaking race; freedom from the dilemma of having to regard as 'Catholic' bishops and clergy who would repudiate the name and have no intention whatsoever, when they celebrate the Anglican Communion Service, of offering Mass."

On the firm foundation of certain knowledge of God's revelation and of knowledge imparted by the lips of a Living Church, she has been able to build that spiritual life of worship and service of God which is the essence of perfect liberty for man. Ending the story of her spiritual Odyssey, she says: "By the gift of faith in the Catholic Church the soul is released, as it were, from a cage and can explore at will all the manifold streets and mansions of the City of God."

DANIEL SARGEANT

Daniel Sargeant is a poet, historian and biographer of note and is the author of more than a dozen books. Reared as a Unitarian and educated at Harvard, he later became a teacher at that university. His interest in the Catholic Church was aroused by a course in the traditions of European literature under Barrett Wendell of Harvard. This was followed by a course in Dante where he came to perceive something of the magnificent cul-

ture which the Church had brought to a rich blossoming in the Middle Ages. "Since I have read Dante," he remarked, "I cannot help thinking that someday I will become a Catholic."

During his service in World War I he was brought face to face with the universality of the Church: in every country it loomed up as the central fact in the history of Europe. The work of the Catholic chaplains made a deep impression upon him.

"They went about their work unself-consciously," he writes, "bringing with them not their virtues but God's sacraments. They did not stand with their own personalities between the dying men and God. I had caught sight of the divinity of the Church, not in a book, but in a drama of which I was a part. From then on the Catholic Church became vivid and living about me."

The reading of *The Voyage of the Centurion* by Ernest Psichari and a volume of *Selected Verse* by Charles Peguy further deepened his insight into the Church and enhanced the impression first made by Dante. He attended midnight Mass on Christmas eve in a little chapel in Monastir and discovered then and there that this sacrifice is no invention of man but is God's own act—Christ offering Himself as the Victim for the sins of man.

Returning to this country after the war, he applied at a priest's office for instruction only to learn he was out. Later he circled

twice around another Catholic rectory but couldn't quite screw up enough courage to knock at the door. When finally he began his instructions under Father Martin Scott, S.J., he was asked: "State your reasons for thinking that Jesus Christ is God."

Taken unawares Sargeant felt tongue-tied and confused. "Certainly I was stupid," he remarks, "but one reason for this particular stupidity was that I had not come to the Church by first learning that Christ was God. I had begun by finding the Church to be divine, and inferred that its founder must be divine. I had never put to myself the question that Father Scott put to me. That Christ was divine was self-evident."

Daniel Sargeant refers to the Faith which he embraced on Palm Sunday in 1919 as "the pearl of great price" and declares that it has brought him a joy which no words can describe. Something of that joy finds its way into his writings, especially those which record the life and deeds of some of God's great heroes.

DALE FRANCIS

Dale Francis, a journalist, editor, lecturer and free-lance writer, is director of the University Press at Notre Dame. After graduating from a Mennonite college, Dale entered the ministry in the Methodist Church. He experienced an aversion to the shouting type of fundamentalist religious services and

doubts about the Divinity of Christ bit into him. His service in the army brought him for the first time into sustained contact with Catholics, particularly with Catholic priests.

Little things helped him move toward the Church: a soldier making the sign of the Cross in a mess hall, the *Catholic Digest* on newsstands and the pamphlets in the army chapel. More important was the wholesome influence and the edifying example of the Catholic girl whom he married.

“Marrying Barbara explains a lot,” he observes. “She is a good Catholic. During the years when my decision was being made, hers was the major influence. She knew her Faith and it was of prime importance. She attended daily Mass and she lived a good Catholic life.”

Further study convinced Dale of the Divinity of Christ and that He must have provided some effective means for the transmission of His revealed truth to all generations. It could not be through revelation to each individual since persons claiming such revelation contradicted one another. Neither could it be through the medium of churches which disagreed with one another as to the meaning of Christ’s teachings. Therefore it must be through a Church which for more than 1900 years had been teaching the truths revealed to her by Christ, her Founder.

“I had through my studies,” he says, “made out the dim outlines of the True

Church, but the light of grace had brought the truth of the Church into blazing clarity. . . . On the day I knelt in an army chapel and became a Catholic I was certain that mine was an intellectual conversion. I'd come to the Church through pure reason, I would have said, and believed what I said. Now, five years later, I know how small a role my intellect played, how great was the role of grace."

JACQUES AND RAISSA MARITAIN

Jacques Maritain is one of the leading Thomistic scholars of our day and one of the outstanding philosophers of the twentieth century. He has lectured at the leading universities of Europe and in America and is the author of about twenty scholarly books. His wife, Raissa, is a scholar in her own name, a graduate of the Sorbonne, and is the author of several works.

Raissa was born of Jewish parents but, like Jacques, came under the influence of the skepticism prevailing at the Sorbonne in their day. After a considerable period of wandering in the No Man's Land of agnosticism, they came under the influence of a brilliant and forceful writer, Leon Bloy. A devout Catholic, Bloy brought them for the first time face to face with the reality of Christianity.

He startled them by saying: "There is but one sadness: not to belong to the saints." His book, *Salvation Through the Jews*, dis-

closed to them the love of Christ and of His Church for the chosen people of Israel. He placed before them the fact of sanctity. He read to them the lives of the saints and kindled within them a spark of love for these noble heroes of God; he did not engage in dialectical discussions but bade them to read deeply into the lives of the saints. This begot in them a burning desire for the happiness and holiness of the saints and led them to make a careful study of the religion which had produced them.

When Raissa was seriously ill, Bloy wrote to her: "This morning at early Mass I wept for you, my friend, I asked Jesus and Mary to take whatever might be meritorious in my tormented past and to apply it mercifully for your recovery, to impute it to you with strength and power, for the peace of your body and the glory of your soul."

Later, after both Jacques and Raissa had removed every vestige of doubt concerning the truth of the Catholic religion, they were baptized, with Bloy acting as godfather. "An immense peace descended upon us," says Raissa, "bringing with it the treasures of Faith. There were no more questions, no more trials—there was only the infinite answer of God. The Church kept her promises. And it was she whom we first loved. It is through her that we have known Christ."

God used Leon Bloy as the channel through which He sent the grace of Faith to the Maritains; serving as that channel brought

him one of the greatest joys in his life. Writing of their conversion, he says: "It is something to think that when I die I shall leave, kneeling beside me and weeping from love, people who knew nothing of such an attitude [of Faith] before they met me."

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

Christopher Hollis, historian, educator, economist, member of Parliament and author of more than a dozen books, was educated at Eton and Oxford and reared in the Episcopal Church. While at Oxford, he made a careful study of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. These miracles, especially the Resurrection, convinced him of the Divinity of Christ. They are wrought in testimony of the truth of His teachings and of His claim to be the Son of God.

The record of such miracles was clearly recorded in the Scriptures which were proven by historical evidence to be authentic records of the events about which they purported to treat. The Apostles were witnesses of these events and proved the sincerity of their belief in Christ and in His teachings by laying down their lives in testimony of their divine Master. The most painstaking research had failed to find any loop-hole through which one could escape from the conclusion that Christ had climaxed the evidence of His Divinity by the Resurrection.

Once Hollis had satisfied himself on this

central truth of the Christian religion, he was not long in finding the answer to the question: "Which is Christ's true Church?" The "churches" were all agreed, he noted, that Christ founded a Church, but none ventured to assert that He had founded the present variety of "churches." All were agreed, too, that His Church was imperishable, that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. That being so, the "one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," of which the Creed speaks, must be in existence somewhere today, and must have been in existence continuously ever since the times of the Apostles.

"There seemed to me," he concluded, "to be nowhere that this Church could be found save in the obedience to Rome. The very definitions of the Church, as given by those outside this obedience, are a denial of her unity. She alone is Catholic. And, if she be not apostolic, certainly no other is, for all others can trace their ancestry back to the Apostles only through her. If Christ was God, the Church must exist, and if the Church exists, the Church of Rome cannot but be the true Church."

THOMAS MERTON

Few writers of our day have been catapulted so suddenly into fame as has Thomas Merton, the author of *Seven Storey Mountain* and other best-sellers. The son of two artists, Thomas was educated in France,

England and the United States, and traveled widely in Europe. The Catholic culture of the Middle Ages stared at him from all the countries of the Old World and awakened his interest in the Church; this was further deepened by his reading of Maritain, Thomas Aquinas and other masters of Christian thought.

After his reception into the Church, his supreme ambition in life became the achievement of holiness: the perfect love of God and man. Emerging from a period of anguished searching and prolonged prayer, Thomas entered the Cistercian monastery at Gethsemani, Kentucky, and was clothed with the white robe of a Trappist novice. In the spring of 1949, he reached the goal of the priesthood and is known in religion as Father M. Louis.

Like Augustine he had sought for happiness in the pleasures of the world only to find a vast void which God alone could fill. The yearning for holiness and truth had turned his footsteps to the Church: in her sacramental system he found the means of nourishing his soul with divine grace and of achieving closer union with God. His life of prayer, contemplation and work as a Trappist monk are devoted to the one end of making himself a more perfect member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

“Baptism implies a responsibility,” he writes, “to *develop* one’s supernatural life, to nourish it by love of God, to reproduce

and spread it by love for other men. All this is ordered to the final perfection of a plan that extends far beyond our own individual salvation: a plan for God's glory which lies at the very heart of the universe." Baptism then implies a distinct individual vocation, a peculiar function in the building up of the Mystical Body.

One of the most basic laws of life is the need to multiply itself; this law applies equally to the supernatural life. "The grace that is given to *me*," he says, "must pour out into *your* heart through works of love, through prayer, through sacrifice. The more fully one enters into the Christian life, the more he feels the necessity of communicating that life to others, if not by word, then by prayer and by the deep, sweet anguish of desire, the craving for souls that burns in the depths of the heart of the priest."

In his long hours of prayer before His Eucharistic Lord in the tabernacle of the altar, in his work in the fields, in his apostolate of the pen, in his daily acts of self-denial and sacrifice and in his unbroken silence within the Trappist monastery Thomas Merton is finding a peace and happiness which the world could not give. Like a pure white candle on the altar of the Lord, he is aflame with love for God and man; while he proclaims to the world with a silent eloquence the mighty truth: "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

Through Many Gates

In examining the considerations which led these fourteen pilgrims to Christ and to His Church, one notices how varied they are. With many it was the double-barrelled evidence of the Divinity of Christ and His establishment of the Church. With others it was the good example of Catholics, the beauty of the Church's liturgical services; with some it was the miracles wrought in testimony of the truth of Christ's teachings, the infallible teaching authority of the Church and her unfaltering adherence to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles.

Some were attracted by the holiness of the saints and the desire to achieve closer union with Christ through incorporation into His Mystical Body; still others were drawn by the unbroken succession of pontiffs from Peter to the present day. The Church's defense of the sanctity of the home and the permanence of the matrimonial bond, her championship of social justice and the rights of labor attracted others. In short, her unity, sanctity, Catholicity and Apostolicity stood out as the marks distinguishing Christ's Church from all its human counterfeits.

It is to be noted, too, how important were the little acts of kindness by which Catholics helped these pilgrims find their way home. It was not argument which won Jacques and Raissa Maritain: it was kindness and prayer. Indeed it might well be wondered if virtually every conversion doesn't have

its beginning in some act of kindness by a Catholic friend.

Friendship and kindness constitute a kind of pulling force toward the Church and through that channel Christ frequently sends the grace of Faith. God does not normally work through a vacuum but rather through human agents. We are Christ's ambassadors in spreading His truth among the seventy million churchless people of America. If you love your churchless neighbor won't you try to share with him your most precious treasure, your holy Catholic Faith?

By loaning a non-Catholic a pamphlet or book, by inviting him to Mass, by explaining to him the beauty and helpfulness of your religion in all the trials of life, by bringing him to a priest for systematic instruction, you can often be instrumental in winning a soul for God. "Everyone therefore that shall confess Me before men," said Christ, "I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven." Yes, such an act of loving kindness will often enable one to save not only the soul of a stranger but his own as well.

Practical Resolution

It is well to end the reading of these lines with a definite resolution, a clear commitment, a specific promise to try each year to win a convert. Otherwise, your good intention someday to do something about this matter is apt to evaporate into thin air. What is needed is *action*, not tomorrow but today, right now.

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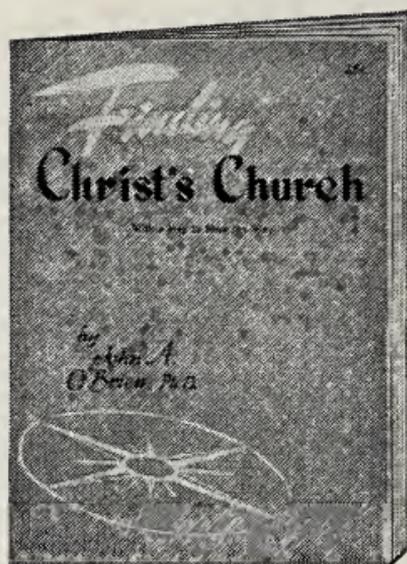
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