

Golden, J. H.
A Friendly Discussion
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A Friendly Discussion

MSGR. J. H. GOLDEN



A FRIENDLY DISCUSSION
Between
A PROTESTANT MINISTER
And
A CATHOLIC PRIEST
About
MIXED MARRIAGES

By
MSGR. J. H. GOLDEN

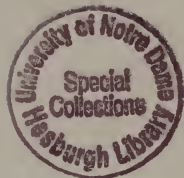


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HE WANTED TO KNOW

EAGLE BUTTE, S. D. May 9, 1949

Rev. Ray Haun
Pastor Congregational Church
Eagle Butte, S. D.

Dear Rev. Haun

At your recent visit you left with me a little booklet "IF I MARRY A ROMAN CATHOLIC". You asked me to read it and to let you know what I think of it.

Here is my answer:

I read the booklet with greatest interest because it deals with an important religious matter which is much misunderstood and often attacked as unfair.

I am grateful to you for having given me the opportunity to read a booklet, dealing with the question of MIXED MARRIAGES, issued by The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

Like yourself, no doubt there are others who would like to find out what Catholics do think of, and what they have to say about the charges made in this booklet against the Catholic Church concerning her rules and regulations in regard to mixed marriages. Therefore, I give you my answer in writing so that both of us, you and I, can use the material for general information for Protestants and Catholics.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Like her Founder, so the Church of Christ loves all men and desires to see all men saved, to become happy for time and eternity. This is the only purpose why Jesus established His Church — to continue His work of Redemption till the end of the world.

All Christians who have the right conception of the purpose of the Church of Christ, and do believe in the Bible as the Word of God, consider the rules and regulations which the Catholic Church has made for her members, in regard to mixed marriages, as an act of love and duty.

Those Christians who belong to different Christian denominations, who have been taught, and do believe that all churches that act as Christian churches are good churches, and that they have a right for their existence and to promulgate their own religious ideas and doctrines, naturally are opposed to the stand which the Catholic Church takes concerning mixed marriages.

Therefore, in order that we may get a sound foundation upon which we can discuss the content of that little booklet, in a reasonable way, first we must clear up a few questions.

PROTESTANT CHURCHES

In the spirit of brotherly love and duty as a Catholic priest I ask our brethren separated from us in faith, who call themselves Christian Protestants — DO YOU BELIEVE that Jesus instituted a Church to continue His work of redemption till the end of the world? Do you? If you say 'Yes', you must admit that that Church still exists in our days. If you say 'No', you have no right to call yourself a Christian. DO YOU BELIEVE in the words of our Lord, and in the commission He gave to His apostles, as recorded in the 28 Chapter of St. Matthew: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world?" DO YOU BELIEVE in the warning words of the Bible that the Church which Jesus founded, will be misrepresented by false teachers and false sects, that the Church of Christ will be hated and persecuted till the end of the world? Do you?

Christians, who accept the Teaching of Christ, see clearly that His Church not only

has the right but the duty to make rules and regulations for her members who wish to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST

If Christ, under penalty of eternal damnation, demands that men must believe His whole Teaching — “He who believes not shall be condemned” — does common sense not say Jesus had to make some arrangement whereby all men, at all times, till the end of the world, could find out for certain WHAT they have to believe?

This Jesus did when He instituted His Church to which He promised the Spirit of Truth, and to which He gave His divine guarantee, that no power on earth, no power of hell, would prevail against His Church.

The Protestant Bible, the King James edition, gives the following proofs that Jesus instituted such a Church: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Mat. 16,18. “And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be

loosed in heaven." Mat. 16,19. "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.'" Luke 22,32.

What ground would Jesus have to judge all men according to His Teaching if His Church could fall into error? Stop, think, judge once for yourself! And is it not a fact that Protestantism is built up upon the blasphemous assertion that the Catholic Church was in need of reform?

SCANDAL

Jesus foretold that there would be scandal among the members of His Church. There was great scandal among the apostles during the days we call 'the Holy Week'. There has been scandal among the members of His Church from the beginning, and there will be scandal among the members of the Church of Christ till the end of the world. Are scandalous Catholics the Church of Christ? Are they? And there certainly were plenty of scandalous Catholics at the time when Protestantism came into existence. Was Marttin Luther, the founder

of Protestantism, not a fallen away Catholic priest, who broke his solemn oath of celibacy and persuaded a nun to contract marriage with him?

Did you ever read the life of Martin Luther based upon his own writings which prove, at times, he got drunk and used all kinds of vile and foul language? Did you? Find out once for yourself what kind of a man Luther was. There are different books and booklets on the market, written by Protestants and Catholics which deal with the real character of Martin Luther.

For a short-cut of general informations on the life and work of Martin Luther I recommend the booklet 'NEW LIGHT ON MARTIN LUTHER', published by the Radio Press, St. Paul 1, Minn. It costs only 15 cents. Order it. Don't you think it is the holy duty of every Christian that he should know the origin and the history of Protestantism? Get also the little book SHORT CATECHISM ON CHURCH HISTORY by Oechtering, published by B. Herder Book Co., 15 S. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo. Price 50 cents.

FALSE TEACHINGS OF MARTIN LUTHER

And what about the false teachings of Martin Luther? His cardinal principle: The right of private interpretation, the right of every individual to interpret the Scripture, the Word of God, and judge for himself in all matters of religion, was ruinous and was bound to bring sad consequences to individuals, to societies and to nations because it destroyed both the true Teaching of Christ and the possibility of true Faith. There can be no creed where each individual is the maker of his own faith; there can be no unity of faith where all matters of faith are referred to the individual judgment.

Suppose I would tell you — it makes no difference how much you sin, what crimes you commit, as long as you believe in Jesus as your Savior, you will be saved; Faith alone will save you; don't worry about Christian virtue, about good works and the commandments of God — what would you think of me? Is this not the teaching of Martin Luther?

OTHER SELF-STYLED REFORMERS

Ulrich Zwingli was a priest in Switzerland, deposed by his Bishop for immorality. In his false teaching he denied the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and other Catholic doctrines. He adopted many of the errors of Luther. By his fanatical preaching he provoked violent mobs, destruction of sacred images and desecration of Churches.

John Calvin, founder of Calvinism, taught salvation by faith alone, total depravation of human nature through original sin, and absolute predestination, that God had predestined a certain part of mankind for heaven and the other part for hell. What a blasphemous assertion! What gloomy doctrine! Christ came, suffered and died to save all men. His grace of salvation is offered to all men of good will.

And what about the fallen away Catholic King Henry VIII, of England? When Pope Clement refused his petition to allow him to marry Anne Boleyn, a young lady of his court, while his lawful wife Catherine of Aragon was living, he left the Catholic Church, started his own national church, known as the Anglican or Episcopal church. Henry had six wives, of whom he beheaded two. He was an adulterer and murderer.

HOW DID THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH COME INTO EXISTENCE?

The reformation in England developed along three lines: Anglicanism, Puritanism and Separatism. The Anglicans held to the old English church, minus papacy. The Puritans, including Prebyterians and some Anglicans, held to the National church but called for a reformation. They did not like the retention of so many Catholic rites, ceremonies and practices, what they called 'papal tendencies'. These Puritans went so far as to decry as idolatry the wearing of surplice for ministers, the use of the sign of the cross, kneeling at Communion, invoking the saints, a.s.o. They demanded a spiritual-minded ministry, the right of the members to a voice in the selection of their ministers, the management of the local church, and the adoption of its creed.

Under the leadership of Robert Brown, in 1580, they began to carry out their plans. Finding opposition from the State church of England, the following year Brown, with some of his followers, emigrated to Holland. When there too they found opposition and difficulties, they decided to sail to the New World where they could practice their religion unmolested. After many delays and discouragements, the first band

of Pilgrim Separatists, 102 persons, under the leadership of Brewster, Bradford and Winslow, landed at Plymouth, Mass., in 1620 and founded there the first Congregational church upon American soil.

GOVERNMENT RELIGIOUS STATISTICS

According to the Religious Census taken in the United States in 1936, there are over 250 Christian church denominations in America. The U. S. Census publication gives the origin of each church, the name of the founder, the year of its establishment and its doctrines.

You know as well as I do that every one of the existing modern Christian churches claims to be the true Church of Christ and yet, each one has a different teaching. What a contradiction! Common sense says — impossible! it can't be; they can't all be the true Church of Christ.

Suppose you would ask a member of the Lutheran church — why do you call yourself a Lutheran? No doubt he would answer — because I belong to the Lutheran church. Who founded your church? He will answer — Martin Luther. By making such a statement he admits that his church was

not founded by Christ but by a man by the name of Luther. If you would ask a Lutheran whether he thinks that the Episcopal or Congregational church is the true Church of Christ, what do you think that he will answer? Try it once and find out.

The same reasoning can be applied to all modern self-styled Christian churches. They all were established by a man or woman since the days of the so-called reformation.

If you ask a Catholic why he belongs to the Catholic Church, he will tell you — because the Catholic Church is the only true Church founded by Jesus. He will prove his claim by historical facts: The Catholic Church is the only Church that can trace back its origin to Christ and the apostles by an unbroken line of the Popes as successors of St. Peter. She is as old as Christianity and without her there would be no Christianity.

HE WANTED TO FIND OUT

A Congregational minister, who years ago lived across the street, and who visited me frequently, one day asked me: "Father, can you tell me how my church came into existence? After I had explained to him

the origin and the history of the Congregational church, looking at me in a serious way, with deep emotion in his voice, he said: "I WANT TO KNOW!"

It is on account of this statement, and that you are the pastor of a Congregational church, that, before dealing with the question 'How Did the Congregational Church Come Into Existence?' I did give a more detailed explanation of this church.

I pray and hope that this serious-minded minister, who did not hesitate to go to a Catholic priest friend and ask him for information regarding the origin of his church, will find his way back to the old Mother Church, as so many other ministers have done, who 'Wanted to KNOW' and DID FIND OUT, that Jesus established but ONE Church for ALL men for ALL generations till the end of the world.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROTESTANTISM

The fact that the principle of Protestantism 'The right of private interpretation' resulted in the rise of more than 250 different and conflicting sects, proves that it is false.

If we had no Supreme Court in America, if every citizen could interpret the Constitution of the Country according to his own private judgment, would we have United States? Must the same sound reasoning not be applied to the Church of Christ, as a world institution to unite all men in faith and love? It is hard to see why Jesus arranged that His Church will have always a visible representative?

Protestantism has destroyed the great Christian commonwealth of nations. Before the so-called reformation the rulers and their subjects of Christian nations had the same faith, were led by the same high Christian ideals. The same was true in regard to the relationship of Christian nations. All matters had to be settled on general Christian principles.

Protestantism drove a wedge of religious dissension not only between rulers and their subjects, not only between nations, friends and neighbors, but also between husbands and wives, between parents and children.

Is it not on account of the consequences of Protestantism that today we have to deal with the question of mixed marriages?

SCRIPTURAL WARNINGS

"This, then, you must understand first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation." II Peter 1,20.

"But there were false prophets among the people, just as among you there will be lying teachers who will bring in destructive sects." II Peter 2,1.

"For there will come a time when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap up to themselves teachers according to their own lusts." Tim. 4,3.

"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the precepts of men. Mat. 15,9.

"He who does not hear the Church let him be to thee as a heathen and publican. Matt. 18,17.

"For they have not received the love of truth that they might be saved. Therefore God sends them a misleading influence that they may believe falsehood." II Thess. 2,10.

PRESENT CONDITIONS IN PROTESTANTISM

Professor Geo. Herbert Betts, who holds the chair of religious education in North-

western University, has written a book THE BELIEFS OF 700 MINISTERS, published by the Abingdon Press, Chicago, which shows the present deplorable religious conditions among a great number of Protestant ministers in the United States. This book is based upon returns of questionnaires received from 500 ministers in service and 200 theological students in five Protestant seminaries. In a shocking way it gives staggering figures on how many Protestant ministers do not believe in the Blessed Trinity, in the Divinity of Christ, in His Resurrection; that Jesus lived a life wholly free from sin and wrongdoing; that Christ will come again to judge all mankind; that the Bible is the Word of God, that there is a hell, etc.

OH TIMES! OH FUTURE!

And people are wondering what it is all about, why the world is going to pieces, cracking in all joints. God is not mocked! His mills are grinding slowly but surely.

"The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine; but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance."
II Pet. 3,9.

No wonder that under such deplorable conditions in Protestantism, we have in our country over sixty millions of people who do not profess Christian belief any more.

No wonder that since the days of the conversion of the famous Newman, more than three thousand Protestant ministers have resigned their pastorates to become humble laymen in the Catholic Church and, that millions of earnest Protestants have fought their way through darkness and confusion until they found the Divine Light and true peace for heart and mind in the old Mother Church.

Members of modern Christian churches are filled with doubts, they are confused, they do not know what to do in religious matters. Here is a striking proof. More than 30 years ago I clipped from Faith Gazette, published in a neighboring town, the following item: "There will be a congregational meeting at the Federal church next Sunday morning. The object of the meeting is not only to decide whether Rev. Davis shall remain another year, but determine whether the federation shall continue as it is, or whether it shall be a Presbyterian or a Methodist church."

THE OLD MOTHER CHURCH

The mother of a child remains the child's mother regardless of how ungratefully the child treats her. Without the mother the child would not exist. The Catholic Church is the mother of the spiritual life of all Christians. Whosoever calls himself a Christian owes his spiritual life to the Catholic Mother Church. Has it ever come to your mind that without the Catholic Church there would be no Christianity today? Has it?

THE BOOKLET

'IF I MARRY A ROMAN CATHOLIC'

By this time we have dug deep enough; we have reached solid rock bottom of Divine Truth and of historical facts.

Now the whole matter concerning MIXED MARRIAGES appears in a different light. All accusations made in the booklet against the Catholic Church in regard to the rules and regulations she has made concerning mixed marriages, and the other accusations made against her for claiming to be the only true Church of Christ, are all answered already.

Now it should be clear to any serious thinking Christian WHY the Catholic Church

is the only true Church of Christ. WHY she speaks with unbending Divine Authority when it comes to matters of faith and morals.

CATHOLICS DO BELIEVE

That Matrimony is a Sacrament instituted by Christ to give special graces to the members of His Church to enable them to carry out their duties as husband and wife in a Christian way.

The Effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony are: To sanctify the love of husband and wife. To give them grace to bear with each other's weaknesses. To enable them to bring up their children in the fear and love of God.

It makes a great difference to have and NOT to have these graces. It is the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant marriage.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

The Catholic Church makes rules for her members HOW they must receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. Catholics can be married validly only before the parish priest and two witnesses.

A Catholic who attempts marriage before a Justice of the Peace is not married according to the Laws of the Church; he lives in sin.

A Catholic who attempts marriage before a Protestant minister is excommunicated.

MATRIMONIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Realizing the great importance and the many responsibilities of married life, when Catholics intend to get married, the Church requires that they must receive special instructions.

These instructions deal with the dignity and purpose of matrimony — the duties of husband and wife — what they must do in order to live in love and peace — how to avoid and to overcome family troubles — the duty of parents towards their children — how to establish a happy Christian home.

MIXED MARRIAGES

In the case of a planned mixed marriage the Church has made the following rules and regulations:

The Catholic party must explain to the non-Catholic party the stand his Church takes in regard to mixed marriages.

He must ask God to help him present the matter in a clear, convincing way.

He must pray that God may give to the non-Catholic party light and strength to see and to do God's Will.

He must notify his pastor about six weeks before the date of the planned marriage, in order that arrangements can be made for instructions.

The non-Catholic party must take several religious instructions.

The pastor explains to the non-Catholic party why the Catholic Church claims to be the only true Church of Christ, he presents the proofs.

He tells the non-Catholic party the reasons why the Catholic Church forbids mixed marriages; what rules and regulations the Church has made and must be fulfilled before the pastor can apply for a dispensation.

He gives to both the general matrimonial instructions as he does when two Catholics prepare for matrimony.

PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT

(To be signed by the non-Catholic party
in a mixed marriage)

I, the undersigned, not a member of the Catholic Church, wishing to contract marriage with, a member of the Catholic Church, propose to do so with the understanding that the marriage bond thus contracted is indissoluble, except by death. I promise on my word of honor that I will not in any way hinder or obstruct the said, in the exercise of religion and that all children of either sex born of our marriage shall be baptized and educated in the Catholic faith and according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, even though the said should be taken away by death.

I further promise that I will marryonly according to the marriage rite of the Catholic Church; that I will not either before or after the Catholic ceremony, present myself with for marriage before a civil magistrate or minister of the gospel.

The Catholic party must sign a form of promise:

I, the undersigned, a member of the Catholic Church and having domicile in

....., wishing to contract marriage with do hereby promise that, if the Bishop finds a canonical cause for granting me a dispensation, I will have all my children baptized and reared in the Catholic Church, and that I will practice my religion faithfully and do all I can, especially by prayer, example and frequentation of the Sacraments, to bring about the conversion of my consort.

Both statements must be signed by two witnesses.

In case the non-Catholic party refuses to take the instructions, the Church knows that under such mental conditions, there is no hope for a happy married life; she refuses to cooperate in making people unhappy, no dispensation will be granted.

The Catholic pastor understands the situation of the non-Catholic party; therefore he treats him or her with kindness and consideration.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DOES NOT TEACH

That marriages contracted by non-Catholics before a Justice of the Peace or before a minister are invalid.

The Church does not teach that children, the offspring of marriages validly contracted by non-Catholics, are illegitimate.

THINKING REFORM

When will people begin to use their God-given reason and liberty in the right way and do some serious thinking and investigating for themselves, instead of letting others do the thinking for them and be led to destruction?

What we need is a thinking Reform. Sound thinking, judging and acting is based upon humility, sincerity and prayers.

Did you know that that famous and beautiful hymn 'LEAD KINDLY LIGHT' was composed by an English Protestant minister John Henry Newman, who later received the Divine Light that led him back to the old Catholic Mother Church and, that he became a Catholic Cardinal? Did you?

St. Paul, in his first letter to Timothy talks about his conversion: "I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a bitter adversary; but I obtained the mercy of

God because I acted ignorantly in unbelief."

The Catholic Church prays daily for the conversion of the world and for reunion of all who believe in Christ as their Savior.

Thanking you once more for your kindness and good spirit, by giving me that booklet 'IF I MARRY A ROMAN CATHOLIC', and asking me to let you know what I think of it, I pray that God may reward you and that all who read my answer may benefit by it.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours

J. H. GOLDEN

HE TURNED HER DOWN

During the four years that Francis had worked in the Bank, his boss and all customers had learned to like him because Francis was diligent and honest in his work, he had always a smile, was obliging and friendly to every one.

Beddy, the oldest daughter of the boss, worked also in the Bank. She had fallen in love with Francis, but no one knew about her secret, not even Francis.

Then something happened. Pa died suddenly on a heart stroke. Great was the

shock to the community and much greater was the grief of the family. Now Francis was a very busy young man; he took care of all the Bank business and he tried to help the bereaved family wherever he could.

Several days after the funeral, when Ma talked to her daughter about her worries concerning the Bank business, Beddy opened her heart and told her mother that she loved Francis, and if she would marry him, there would be no ground for worries for Francis was a very able manager.

Ma was not surprised, for her mother's eyes had seen beyond her daughter's love-dreams. Giving Beddy to understand that, under the circumstances, it would be a good idea, she encouraged Beddy's plan.

More and more Francis noticed Beddy's attention. He too became more friendly to her but avoided anything that would encourage her plan, because he said to himself — it can't be done; I do not want to make her and myself unhappy; never shall I enter into a mixed marriage!

Mrs. N. invited Francis frequently up to the house, pretending she wanted to talk to him about business matters. Clearer and clearer to Francis was the real reason behind it. He prayed for strength not to become a victim of the temptation.

Mother and daughter felt sure about their plan. One evening, in a diplomatic way, they led their conversation to the point. Having expected this moment, Francis was not unprepared. In a polite way he thanked them for their confidence in him but shortly and firmly he said: "I shall never enter into a mixed marriage!"

The surprise was great and shocking, especially for Beddy. Ma, seeing her daughter's tears, tried to overbridge the tense situation by saying: "But, what has religion to do with business?"

"Mrs. N., I am not marrying your business, but if I would marry your daughter RELIGION would step in. Beddy and I have different religious beliefs; we would not be happy, and I do not want to make her and myself unhappy."

Francis explained the reasons why a mixed marriage can't be a happy one. Both mother and daughter looked at Francis with astonishment and respect. They saw the truth of his words and could not help but admire his earnestness, his courage and character-greatness. And poor Beddy's love for Francis was now greater than ever.

Francis stood up: "I am very sorry to have to disappoint you but my duty towards myself and the respect I have for

you prompted me to tell you openly how I feel about the matter, and I hope that you see it in this light. Good night!"

What was the result? Beddy, although baptized and reared a Christian, had never thought that religion could play such an important part in a man's life. That a poor man would refuse a fortune for it. The more she reflected upon Francis' firm stand, the more she admired him and his religion. She came to the conclusion — if the Catholic religion means so much to Francis, and gives him such spiritual power, why should it not do the same for me?

Beddy took religious instructions. Soon she found out WHY Francis treasured his religion so highly. She joined the Catholic Church, became a pious Catholic and a happy wife.

A WISE FATHER

Years ago the daughter of a Protestant minister came to my office and told me that she would like to take instructions and join the Catholic Church.

I knew her reasons. She had courtship with a Catholic young man.

After I had given her a few instructions, I asked her:

"Does your father know about your plans?"

"No, he does not know yet, but I will tell him", she answered.

I talked to the father myself. Having presented the case to him, he showed real sound judgment. He said: "If she wants to marry that boy, she just as well may join his church."

Both father and mother, another minister and a number of Protestant friends, attended the wedding ceremonies. We went together to the wedding dinner and rejoiced in the happiness of the newly wedded young couple.

If all parents, in similar cases, would show the same sound judgment, they not only would do a favor to their son or daughter but would help them to become happy for time and eternity.

Parents who do oppose their children who wish to take religious instructions in order to find out for themselves the reasons why the Catholic Church claims that she is the only true Church of Christ, interfere in the right their grown-up children have and take a great responsibility.

Reasonable parents will say — all right, find out for yourself, use your own judgment and you cannot blame us if you do not become happy in married life.

AN UNHAPPY WIFE

A weak, love-sick, Catholic girl contracted marriage before a Justice of Peace. After a few months she came to me and said: "By this time I have found out that I have done wrong. I cannot live that way any longer. I want you to straighten out our marriage."

"I am glad to hear that. Bring your husband and we shall talk matters over."

When she brought her husband, I explained to him why the Catholic Church forbids mixed marriages, and why a Catholic girl who goes before a Justice of Peace to get married, can't be a happy wife, because she knows that she is not married and that she lives in sin.

He listened with interest and attention. At the end of the instructions he said, "I am willing to do my part to make my wife happy."

He signed the promises. I got the dispensation from the Ordinarius and married them according to the laws of the Church.

This girl could have saved herself the disgrace and all that went with it, if she would have told her future husband about the rules of the Catholic Church, for he was willing to fulfill them.

THE CATHOLIC HUSBAND WAS TO BLAME

Many years ago a lady called and told me that she would like to join the Catholic Church.

I knew her family circumstances. When I told her that she can join the Church only on condition that she would separate from her husband or that both, he and she would live together like brother and sister, not making use of the marriage rights, tears rolled down her cheeks. Sobbing, she said, "I do not want to die without the Sacraments." I was surprised to hear such a statement from a non-Catholic.

I felt very sorry for the poor woman and consoled her:

"You are not to blame. All blame goes to your husband. As a Catholic he should have known the wrong he did when he married you, while his wife who left him, was still alive. Pray and hope. As long as you want to do what is right, God will take care of you."

In 1934 I received a letter from the lady. She wrote:

"I am happy to be able to inform you we are now happily married. N's first wife died in March and we were married July 1st.

Father, how happy I know you must be at being a priest for so many years in the Catholic Church. An outsider, like myself, wanting so badly to receive the Sacraments since 1917, can truly appreciate.

I feel more than many life-time Catholics, what a blessing Jesus gave to the world, when He instituted Confession and Holy Communion, and He Himself waits in the Church, always eager to talk to us.

I am only two blocks from the Church and go to Holy Communion daily whenever possible."

HE DID NOT KEEP HIS PROMISES

What would you say about a man, who during the days of courtship had no bound to prove his love for his sweetheart, did sign the promises before the wedding, that all children God would give them, would be brought up in the Catholic faith and then — later objects to have his children baptised?

Like many others, you too, probably, would say — a man who is so unfaithful to his wife that he breaks his signed promises which mean so much to her, not only is a characterless man but he can blame only himself if his wife loses all

love and respect for him and he has to go through an unhappy life.

That is one way to look at it. But it is not the Christian way to judge in such a case. When there are troubles in a family, and then make things worse, is folly.

The wife should stand up for her rights but do so wisely, appealing in a calm way, to the duties of her husband, to his self-respect, and to his responsibilities he has towards her, towards the children and towards himself.

If her efforts do not bring the expected results, she should wait and pray and carry her cross patiently, for she made it herself by ignoring the warnings of the Church.

When a wife is faithful to her husband in spite of his unfaithfulness and cruelty to her, her love and fidelity in time is bound to work on the heart and mind of her husband; he cannot help but admire his wife and sooner or later he is forced to do some serious thinking.

Some husbands, who were put to shame by the actions of their devoted wives, in time not only consented to have their children baptised but they themselves joined the Church. God can change evil into good. The prayers and sacrifices of a good wife give God ground to work on

to give the grace of conversion to the husband who himself would not deserve this grace.

In a case where in spite of all good efforts of the wife, her husband will not live up to the promises which he signed before the wedding, the wife has the right and it is her duty to have her children baptised against the will of her husband.

And when it comes to the worst, she can apply to the Church authorities for a separation from her husband, in order that she can live in a place where she can bring up her children in the love and fear of God.

But such a separation does not give her the right to marry another man.

WHY SOME POOR CONVERTS

Unless one is sincere with himself and honest with God he cannot expect to get the divine light of faith and the needed supernatural help to live up to the teaching of the Church of Christ.

This applies also to young men who join the Church in order to get the girl they wish to marry. It applies also to those girls, who are in such conditions that they must marry and say to themselves — in

order to protect my reputation I just go through the rulings of the Catholic Church, but later I do as I please.

Joining the Catholic Church or receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony not in the right disposition, the guilty party deprives himself not only of the graces but his or her dishonesty will bring unhappiness to them and to their marriage partner.

Those who join the Catholic Church with hypocritical intentions and later try to excuse themselves for not living up to their duties as a member of the Church by saying, "There are so many things in the Catholic Church which I cannot understand," give themselves away that they have little brains.

All sound thinking people know that there are many things in the teaching of Christ and His Church which the best of Catholics cannot understand. For faith is not a matter of understanding, but of believing. Faith is a grace that enables us to believe.

Could God give this grace to anyone who is not sincere with himself and dishonest with Him? Could He?

THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF HIS WIFE

A former parishioner of mine married a Mason. She had made it clear to him that she would marry him only on condition that they would be married according to the laws of the Church.

He not only consented to do so but he brought his wife on Sundays to Church. And that was in the old horse and buggy days.

The good example of his wife, the things he heard in Church, and no doubt, the prayers of his wife, led him to serious thinking.

After some years, when they had several children, he made up his mind to join the Catholic Church. He took instructions without telling his wife about it.

Before Christmas he was baptised. When, during the Midnight Mass he went up to go to the Communion railing, his wife was scared stiff. She did not know what to make out of it.

After Mass he looked at his wife with a happiness she never had seen before in her husband. And, with a twinkle in his eyes, he said:

"This is my Christmas gift for you."

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