

McNeill, Charles J
Prayers
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PRAYERS

CHARLES J. McNEILL



THE CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES
OF
DISCUSSION-CLUB TEXTBOOKS

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THE CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES
OF
DISCUSSION-CLUB TEXTBOOKS

PRAYERS

A Study of Prayers in Common
Use in the Church

by

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Introduction

Prayer, the lifting up of one's mind and heart to almighty God, in order to praise, thank, and petition Him, is one of the primary duties of a Christian, and holds, therefore, an important place in the life of every member of the Church. A better understanding of those formulae which are commonly used in private and public devotions will help a person to discharge this fundamental duty more intelligently, more appreciatively, and more fruitfully.

Prayers, the fifth unit in the Catholic Action Series of Discussion-Club Textbooks, presents a study of prayers which are in more or less common use among Catholics. The booklet contains sixteen chapters and provides sufficient material for a complete discussion-club season. The text of each chapter is supplemented by discussion aids and suggested practices, and no effort has been spared to produce a simple, convenient, and serviceable manual for members of cooperative study groups.

Previous textbooks in the Catholic Action Series are: **Altar and Sanctuary**, an exposition of the externals of the Mass; **Praying the Mass**, a study of the prayers and ceremonies of the holy Sacrifice; **The Liturgical Year**, an explanation of the cycles, seasons, and feasts of the ecclesiastical year; and **The Sacramentals**, a study of the origin, nature, and proper use of the sacramentals of the Church. The extensive use of these textbooks throughout the United States and Canada indicates that they are proving useful to discussion groups which follow the simplified procedure recommended by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

To His Excellency, the Most Reverend Christian H. Winkelmann, S. T. D., Bishop of Wichita, who has wholeheartedly endorsed both the discussion-club movement and the effort to produce suitable materials for the use of discussion groups; to Charles J. McNeill, author of **Prayers** and also of **The Sacramentals**, who gave generously of his time and talents in the writing of these textbooks; to Rev. Edward Graham of Cincinnati, Rev. John Cavanagh of Denver, Rev. Eberhard Olinger, O. S. B., of St. Meinard, Indiana, Rev. Richard J. Dei, Censor Librorum, Wichita, and Mrs. Charles J. McNeill, wife of the author, who read the copy patiently and conscientiously; to Angela A. Clendenin, executive secretary of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and of the Catholic Action Committee of the Diocese of Wichita, who contributed editorial assistance on the manuscript; and to the countless lay apostles who are active in the program of religious education sponsored by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation.

May Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God and our Spiritual Mother, one of whose great feasts we celebrate today, pray that this booklet may have at least a small part in spreading the beautiful and saving doctrine of her divine Son.

(Rev.) Leon A. McNeill, M. A.
Diocesan Director of Education

Wichita, Kansas
August 15, 1940

TO
M O T H E R
WHO TAUGHT ME
TO PRAY

The Religious Discussion Club

ORGANIZATION

1. A discussion club will ordinarily consist of from eight to twelve members. If a greater number are interested, two or more groups may be formed.
2. Each discussion club should have a spiritual director, a leader, and a secretary.
3. A suitable Christian name should be selected for the club.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The spiritual director should encourage the members in their study, show his interest by attending meetings occasionally, and provide an answer to questions which may be referred to him by the club.
2. The leader should preside at all meetings. He should guide the reading of the text and the informal discussion, and keep the discussion within the limits of the day's study. At the close of the session he should summarize the points covered.
3. The secretary should call the roll, keep a brief record of each meeting, and perform other duties pertaining to his office.

MEETINGS

1. Eight to ten meetings should be held during the fall term and the same number of meetings during the spring term.
2. Meetings should be held each week, wherever it is most convenient for the members to assemble. They should begin and end with prayer, and continue not longer than an hour and a half.
3. Order of meeting: Prayer, roll call, secretary's report, discussion, summary by leader, assignment for next meeting, adjournment with prayer.
4. Best results will be obtained if the members take turns in reading aloud the text of the day's lesson, pausing to analyze and discuss each section according to the aids which are given in the textbook.
5. Members should be encouraged to adopt the religious practices suggested at the close of each chapter.
6. Occasional lectures or informal talks on topics suggested in the text may serve to stimulate interest, but they should not be promoted at the expense of the regular club programs.
7. At the close of the season, all discussion groups of a parish or of several parishes may plan a joint meeting, at which pageants, plays, tableaux, illustrated lectures, travel talks or other suitable entertainment may be presented.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Each member of the club should be provided with a textbook and should be encouraged to read in advance the lesson selected for discussion at each meeting.

2. The material is presented in sixteen brief chapters, sufficient for a year's cooperative study. Eight lessons may be covered conveniently during the fall term and the remaining eight lessons during the spring term.

3. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, pictures and other illustrative materials which pertain to the subject of discussion should be brought to the attention of the club. Pictures and clippings may be preserved in a club scrap-book.

ORDER OF MEETING

Prayer to Holy Ghost.
 Roll call.
 Secretary's report.
 Discussion.
 Summary by leader.
 Assignment for next meeting.
 Adjournment.
 Closing prayer.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY GHOST

Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful:
 and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

Oh God, Who hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Ghost, give us by the same Spirit a love and relish of what is right and just, and the constant enjoyment of His comforts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hail Mary

I

Prayer

When Pope Pius XI wrote, "Before everything else let us have recourse to prayer," (Encyclical on the Sacred Heart and World Distress), he was only repeating Christ's command to pray. Time and again the Popes have summoned the faithful to pour out their hearts to God in praise of His infinite perfections, in thanksgiving for His gifts, and in petition for His graces. "Prayer," says the catechism, "is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God." It is the application of the mind to God to bring the human soul into union with its Maker.

Prayer is not merely a pious gesture recognizing God's greatness and man's insignificance. It is absolutely necessary for the salvation of those who have sufficient use of reason; first, because God has commanded us to pray, and second, because without prayer we do not receive the graces necessary for salvation. Man's all-important and final goal is union with God in heaven, where the singing of His praises will be our eternal occupation. Earthly life's closest approach to the joys of heaven is that intimate union with God that results from prayer in its highest form, contemplation. The necessity of prayer was demonstrated by Christ in his own constant prayer, in His teaching the apostles how to pray, and in His repeated injunctions: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew VII, 7); "Ask in My name" (John XVI, 26).

What did Pope Pius XI write about prayer? What is prayer? Why is it necessary for salvation? How did Christ demonstrate the necessity for prayer?

EFFECTS AND KINDS OF PRAYER: Prayer unites us with God and makes us heavenly-minded, gives us zeal and energy for good, comforts us in adversity, and obtains for us the graces necessary for salvation and for perseverance in grace. "To no other pious work have ever been attached such ample, such universal, such solemn promises as to prayer," said Pius XI (Encyclical on the Sacred Heart and World Distress). Prayer is a necessary preparation for Catholic Action because it promotes that personal sanctification which is the first and greatest end of Catholic Action.

Because of its three principal ends, prayer is divided into praise, thanksgiving, and petition. To praise God means to rejoice in His infinite perfections. This is the end of all human activity, the prime reason for our creation—to give glory to God. The mere knowledge that God is the origin and end of all things forces us to realize our complete dependence on Him and our duty of gratitude to Him. "In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God" (I Thessalonians V, 18).

What are the principal effects of prayer? What place has prayer in Catholic Action? What are the three general kinds of prayer? Why should we praise God? Why should we be grateful to Him?

PRAYER OF PETITION: God's knowledge of all things, hence of our needs, would seem to make prayer of petition unnecessary, but Christ Himself said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Luke XI, 9). We pray, not to tell God our needs, but to acknowledge Him as the Giver of all good gifts, to express our dependence on Him, to show our confidence in His goodness, and thus to render ourselves more worthy to receive His graces. This kind of prayer shows our belief in

God and our reliance on Him, and is, therefore, in itself an act of worship. But it should never be emphasized to the exclusion of prayer of praise and thanksgiving. We are obliged to pray directly to God, but we should pray also to the angels and saints, particularly to Mary, the Mother of God, that, through the intercession of His chosen creatures, God will more certainly grant our petitions.

We should pray, first of all, that God be glorified and His kingdom extended upon earth. We should ask all the graces necessary for salvation, and we are encouraged also to seek temporal benefits such as good health, sufficient worldly goods to live in comfort, and other gifts that will help us to work out our salvation. Prominent among our petitions should be the humble prayer asking God to forgive our sins. We have an obligation to pray not only for ourselves, but also for the other members of the Mystical Body of Christ, both living and dead. Christ has told us to pray even for our enemies.

Since God knows everything, why tell Him our needs or desires? Why ask the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints? For what should we pray? For whom?

VOCAL AND MENTAL PRAYER: Many prayers are clothed in words, and Christ Himself taught us the Our Father, but prayer is primarily an activity of the mind and will. Besides vocal prayer, there is prayer in which we place ourselves in the presence of God and think about His perfections, meditate upon some phase of the life of Christ or His saints, or consider the virtues we should cultivate. This is called mental prayer or meditation, and it can be developed to such a degree that the soul is almost lifted out of this worldly life and given a preview of heaven. This intimate union with God is called contemplation.

The first step toward contemplation is an understanding and devout use of vocal prayer. In this text we shall consider vocal prayer primarily—Christ's prayers, other prayers from Scripture, prayers composed by the great saints and mystics, prayers which the Church has approved and to many of which she has attached spiritual favors in the form of indulgences. Among these are the Our Father, prayers of praise and thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity, the Apostles' Creed, the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition, the Confiteor, the Hail Mary and other prayers honoring Mary, the litanies, prayers for ourselves and others, formulas used in administering the sacraments and blessings, the official prayer of the Church—the Divine Office, the Mass prayers and those after Mass, and prayers that should mark the daily life of the Christian home

Explain the nature of prayer as a human activity. What do we call mental prayer or meditation? What is contemplation? What is the first step toward contemplation? What are some of the principal vocal prayers which will be treated in this text?

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PRAYER: We may also consider prayer as either private or public. Prayer of the individual, whether offered alone or in the presence of others, for one's own or for others' good, is private prayer. All prayers officially offered in the name of the Church are public. Such are those of the Divine Office and the Mass. "Many private prayers," says St. Alphonsus Liguori, "do not equal in value only one prayer of the Divine Office, as being offered to God in the name of the whole Church." Official prayer, even when said by the individual layman, can be considered as the prayer of the entire Mystical Body, and hence is preferable to merely private devotion. Nevertheless, private prayer must be recognized and used as a powerful means of grace.

Distinguish between private and public prayer, and explain their relative value. Which are the principal forms of public prayer? If public prayer is better than private, why should we say private prayers at all?

HOW TO PRAY: Whenever we pray, for whatever ends, our prayer must be devout, humble, confident, persevering, and resigned. Our prayer has devotion when we pray from the heart, not merely with the lips, and when we shut out all distracting thoughts in so far as we can. Distractions in prayer are a source of merit when we struggle against them. They are sinful only when we ourselves cause or wilfully entertain them. "He that humbleth himself," said Christ, "shall be exalted" (Luke XVIII, 14). "The prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds" (Ecclesiasticus XXXV, 21). The mere thought of God's greatness and man's insignificance should inspire humility in prayer.

We should pray, not only with a great desire that God will answer us, but also with confidence that He will do so if we pray for things that glorify Him and promote our salvation. The knowledge that God can give us all good things and that, for the sake of Christ, He will grant them should make us confident. Christ promised: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you" (John XVI, 23). If God does not grant the specific things requested, it is because we do not pray as we should, because what we ask is harmful to our salvation, or because we are not persevering. To persevere in prayer means to keep on praying even when we are not aware that God is hearing us. St. Luke records Christ's saying "that we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke XVIII, 1).

Knowing that God will always answer our prayer in some way, we must be resigned to whatever answer His wisdom may choose. Every prayer, whether its specific object is granted or not, brings down God's grace on the petitioner and on his fellow members of the Mystical Body. "The Lord always gives more than He is asked," says St. Ambrose. But even if we can perceive no answer at all to our prayers, we should continue them, saying always with Christ: "Father, . . . not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke XXII, 42).

How should we pray? Discuss distractions in prayer. Why should we pray with humility? How can we achieve humility in prayer? To what extent should we be confident in prayer? When do we pray with perseverance? With resignation? What example of resignation in prayer did Christ give us?

WHEN TO PRAY: Christ has said that we should always pray, and this we can do by offering up all our actions to God for His honor and glory and for the salvation of souls. But there are certain times when we should specially devote ourselves to prayer: At morning and night, before and after meals, in time of temptation, when we are about to make any important step in life, on Sundays and holy days, and in the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent.

How can we obey Christ's command always to pray? At what times should we give ourselves specially to prayer?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make the first end of your prayers the honor and glory of God.
2. In praying for either spiritual or temporal goods, do not forget to thank God for the many graces he has already given to you.
3. Pray, not only for yourself, but for all members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

II

The Our Father

The Gospels record many of Christ's prayers, but that which is known as the Lord's Prayer is the one He taught the disciples when they urged Him: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke XI, 1). Christ prayed: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen." (The version of the Our Father commonly used by the Church varies slightly from the text of the Gospel translations, even as the texts in St. Matthew and St. Luke vary one from the other. For instance, "trespasses" is used in place of "debts" because it is clearer.)

This is the best of all prayers, for it is the prayer of Christ Himself, and a prayer of perfect and unselfish love. Its introduction (Our Father who art in heaven) and seven petitions demonstrate the ends for which we should pray and the spirit in which we should pray. It has always been the favorite prayer of Christians, and it should be recited frequently by all Catholics. The Church often uses it in the Divine Office, and it is included in the most solemn part of the Mass.

Recite the Our Father. What was the occasion of Christ's reciting it? Why is it the best of all prayers? What divisions does the Our Father contain? Discuss its use in the Church.

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN: Christ's first words lift up our minds and hearts to God. They make us realize that God, a loving Father, regards us as His children and will hear our petitions. As we honor our earthly fathers, so much the more should we worship God, our eternal Father. The word "our" reminds us that we are members of one great family, that we should love our fellow men and treat them like our brothers. Already children of God by creation, we are made more definitely His children and heirs of heaven in Baptism, the sacrament that admits us to the Church, Christ's Mystical Body. In Baptism, the priest, following Christ's command, says: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The necessity of Baptism is shown in Christ's words: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John III, 5).

Though God is everywhere, His special home is heaven, where He shows Himself in all His glory to the angels and saints. Heaven is also our eternal home, and we should direct all our actions toward attaining our place in heaven with God. "I am a sojourner on the earth," the psalmist says (Psalm 118, 19).

Explain the meaning of the introduction to the Lord's Prayer. How are we made children of God in a special way? How do we know that Baptism is necessary? What is the meaning of the words "who art in heaven"?

HALLOWED BE THY NAME: In this petition, Christ stated the first purpose of man's creation—to glorify God. Here is no selfish petition, but a wholehearted wish that God be glorified and His name honored. This was always Christ's first prayer, as it should be ours. So great was the veneration of the ancient Jews for God's name that they would not so much as speak it with their mortal tongues. The Old Testament Psalms are filled with the glory of

God: "Give praise to the Lord" (Psalm 117, 1). "The heavens show forth the glory of God" (Psalm 18, 1). "O clap your hands, all ye nations: shout unto God with the voice of joy" (Psalm 46, 1). The New Testament writers also insisted that we should always glorify God. The Church has given one whole part of her official prayer, the Office of Lauds, over to singing God's glory, and has scattered His praises through the rest of the Divine Office.

God Himself in the Second Commandment ordered: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain." We can hallow God's name in thought, by offering all our actions up to please Him; in word, by using it as a real prayer and not as a byword; in action, by following His commandments and giving good example to others. We ask in this petition that God's name be known, loved, and honored by all people. Men can help make this petition come true by being faithful Holy Name Society members.

How does the first petition of the Our Father give expression to the first purpose of man's creation? Explain how the ancient Jews revered the name of God. Tell how the Church makes a special effort to praise God in her official prayer. How can we hallow the name of God in thought? In word? In action? What society seeks to insure that God's name will be honored?

THY KINGDOM COME; THY WILL BE DONE: Here we ask that God's kingdom on earth, the Church, will be extended to all peoples and all nations; that sinners will be converted; that the kingdom of grace and love may be established in our hearts, and that after death we may be admitted to the everlasting kingdom of God in heaven. When we say, "Thy kingdom come," we ask that peace, the fruit of justice and charity, may reign among men and nations, that the word of God may be fulfilled in our individual, domestic, and social lives. If we really mean this prayer, we must do something to make God's kingdom come. We must promote peace by laboring to establish social justice and social charity. We can help God's kingdom to come on earth by supporting the missions through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and by spreading God's truth through the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Catholic schools, and Catholic literature.

We pray that God's will may be perfectly fulfilled by men as it is fulfilled by the angels and saints in heaven, who never oppose God in anything. We submit our human wills completely to the divine will. Here Christ teaches us to pray with resignation. In asking that God's will be done, we must resolve to make our actions promote this end.

What do we ask in the petition "Thy kingdom come"? How would the real coming of God's kingdom affect individuals and nations? What means are at our disposal for actual work in spreading God's kingdom? How is God's will done in heaven? Which petition of the Our Father teaches us to pray with resignation?

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD: Here we ask not only for material necessities (food, clothes, and a place to live), but especially for the bread of the soul. We ask everything necessary for body and soul, particularly the grace to serve God well and to persevere to the end. We pray, not for ourselves alone, but for all men. When we ask for the necessities of life for men, we assume a responsibility to do our part to provide them with these necessities.

"It is crying injustice," writes Abbe Grou (The Our Father, page 22), "to diminish or take any part of what belongs to them [other people] . . . If, then, He gives you more than you need and leaves your brother in want, this is not because He forgets him; He simply wishes to give to him through you." When we pray for our daily bread, we bind ourselves to charity and social justice. When

we say **this day**, we express our trust in God to provide for the future. In mentioning bread alone, we are reminded that God wants us to desire only the necessities, not the riches or luxuries of life.

When we pray for "our daily bread," what do we ask of God? What obligations toward others does the petition imply?

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES—LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION: By praying for forgiveness, we admit our sinfulness and beg for the grace of repentance. In this petition we bind ourselves by a condition—that of forgiving those who offend us—and we ask God to pardon us only as we are willing to forgive others. He who says the Our Father sincerely can have no enemies. He must be willing to forgive "till seventy times seven times" (Matthew XVIII, 22). "With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged" (Matthew VII, 2). We say in effect: "Forgive us if we forgive, and do not forgive us if we refuse to forgive" (Grou, *The Our Father*, page 25).

We do not really ask God not to tempt us, for "God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man. But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence" (James I, 13-14). We do ask for the grace not to fall when we are tempted. We ask for strength to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. God permits temptations to try our faithfulness or to punish our unfaithfulness; to increase our zeal for virtue, and to give us opportunities to win supernatural merits by overcoming temptations. God always gives us sufficient grace to resist evil.

What in effect do we say in the petition: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"? How often must we be willing to forgive those who offend us? What do we mean when we ask God not to lead us into temptation? What are the principal sources of temptation? Why does God allow us to be tempted?

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN: The greatest evil is mortal sin because it separates us from God. All the trials of this life are as nothing compared with separation from God. Sin is an offense against God, and if we seek delivery from damnation we must also seek to avoid sin. We must not only pray to be delivered from sin, but we must also make a constant effort to avoid sin. The glory of God is our first duty; sin detracts from God's glory. If we understand these words, we will avoid even the slightest sin because it, too, offends God.

The Church closes most prayers with "Amen," which means "So be it." In this word, we express our ardent desire that our prayers will be heard, and our perfect confidence that God will hear them.

What is the greatest evil? Why should we avoid even the slightest sin? What does "Amen" mean?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. When you say the Our Father try to realize the meaning of the words in each part and resolve that you will make your life conform with your prayer.
2. Promote "The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ" by striving to establish social justice and social charity.
3. Avoid the occasions of temptation and of sin.

III

Praise and Faith

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” The sign of the cross, in which we say this brief prayer, shows the spirit in which we should perform all our actions—in the name of God. This most common of all sacramentals is a beautiful prayer and a powerful weapon against evil. It signifies God’s unity and trinity, Christ’s incarnation and death. It is an act of faith, hope, and love. It wins graces for its user, repels evil spirits, and wards off spiritual and temporal dangers. It is frequently used in the liturgy, and there is attached to it an indulgence of 100 days, 300 days if it is made with holy water.

The sign of the cross is both a statement of faith and an expression of glory to God, for if we do everything in God’s name, then we do glorify Him. But there are other more explicit prayers of praise, notably the Minor Doxology: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.” Here we express our first purpose in life—to praise God. We have also an act of faith in the Trinity and in God’s eternity. We say this prayer sincerely only if we resolve to glorify God by obeying His commandments, using His graces well, and providing good example for men. The Minor Doxology is used constantly in the Church’s liturgy.

Make the sign of the cross. What great mysteries of the faith does it signify? What does it accomplish for its user? What indulgences are attached to it? What is the Minor Doxology? What beliefs does it express? How can we make our actions agree with the words of this prayer?

DIVINE PRAISES: After the blessing with the Host at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the priest and people say the Divine Praises, eleven brief prayers of love for God, His Mother, and St. Joseph: “Blessed be God. Blessed be His holy name. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Blessed be the name of Jesus. Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart. Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy. Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception. Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother. Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse. Blessed be God in His angels and in His saints.”

In the Divine Praises, as in the sign of the cross and the Minor Doxology, is found not only a prayer of praise, but also a formula of faith. We express our belief in the nature of Christ, “true God and true man”; in the Blessed Eucharist, in Mary as Mother of God, in her Immaculate Conception, in the angels and saints.

When are the Divine Praises said? Recite them. What doctrines are expressed in them?

IMPORTANCE OF FAITH: In this time, when so many men have lost their belief not only in the Church, but in God Himself, it is supremely important that those who do believe, constantly express their faith and seek to spread it to others. Modern times have brought not only disbelief, but a diabolical war on faith and on God. Atheistic Communism strives to wipe out all belief in God, and many who claim to be Christians no longer hold to traditional Christian beliefs. Only in the Catholic Church can Christ’s faith be found in its entirety. While thousands of books have been written in explanation of Christian

belief, the whole doctrine of Christ is briefly stated in the creeds. The word "creed" comes from the Latin "credo," which means "I believe." The Church uses three creeds: the Apostles,' the Nicene, and the Athanasian. There are also various formulas for the Act of Faith.

Why is faith so important in our times? Where alone can the true faith be found in its entirety? Where are the doctrines of religion briefly stated? What three creeds are used by the Church?

APOSTLES' CREED: The Apostles' Creed, which tradition says was formulated by the twelve apostles, gives in twelve principal articles the fundamental Christian beliefs. Whether or not the Creed was actually worded by the apostles, we do know that it states the faith given the apostles by Christ and that it has been used from earliest Christian times. This is the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen."

The Apostles' Creed states or implies every doctrine of the Church. Although today many non-Catholics do not accept all of the Apostles' Creed, it is still the official formula of faith for most Christian bodies. It is frequently used in the liturgy and should be said often—at least morning and night—by all Catholics. The Creed's earliest liturgical use was in the administration of Baptism, and its recitation by the person to be baptized or by his sponsors is still part of the ceremony of Baptism. It is said at the ordination of priests and is repeated many times in the Divine Office—at the beginning of Matins and Prime, at the end of Compline, and sometimes in the course of Prime and Compline.

Who, according to tradition, formulated the Apostles' Creed? Even if the Creed was not worded by the apostles themselves, why is it important? Where was it first used in the liturgy? Where else is it used in the liturgy?

NICENE CREED: This prayer was adopted at the First Council of Nice (A. D. 325) and revised at the Council of Constantinople (A. D. 381). It is the Credo often said after the first Gospel at Mass. Thus it has a place in the central act of all Christian living and the supreme act of divine worship. Every day throughout the world, it is repeated by thousands of priests. In longer form, the Nicene Creed expresses the doctrines of the Apostles' Creed. It says: "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; and was made man. He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and Son is adored and glorified; who spake by the prophets. And in one, holy, Catholic, and

apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

Where was the Nicene Creed formulated? Where is it used? What truths are expressed in it?

ATHANASIAN CREED: This prayer, often attributed to St. Athanasius, fourth-century Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, stresses the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the incarnation of Christ, with passing reference to other dogmas. It forms part of the Office of Prime for Sundays. By beautiful repetition in simple words, this creed drives home the real nature and the importance of the doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation. For instance: “So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord . . . We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. God, of the substance of His Mother, born into the world.”

Who is said to be the author of the Athanasian Creed? What doctrines does it emphasize?

NO LIFELESS FORMULA: “The creed, therefore,” says the Catholic Encyclopedia (Vol. IV, page 478), “is to be regarded not as a lifeless formula, but rather as a manifestation of the Church’s vitality. As these formulas preserve intact the faith once delivered to the saints, they are also an effectual means of warding off the incessant attacks of error . . . While the duty of believing rests on each individual, there are further obligations resulting from the social organization of the Church. Not only is each member obliged to refrain from what would weaken the faith of his fellow-believers; he is also bound, so far as he is able, to uphold and quicken their belief. The profession of his faith as set forth in the creed is at once an object lesson in loyalty and a means of strengthening the bonds which unite the followers of Christ in ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism’.”

How is the Creed to be regarded? Why are we bound to uphold and quicken the faith of others?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make the sign of the cross often and consider its meaning.
2. Say the Apostles’ Creed frequently, and always recite the Nicene Creed when it is recited by the priest at Mass.
3. Fulfill your duty as a member of the Church by protecting the faith of others and explaining the faith to those who do not know it.

IV

Faith, Hope, and Love

In order to save our souls, it is necessary that we possess and practice virtues. Virtues, which are habits or permanent dispositions leading us to do good and avoid evil, are either theological or moral. Theological virtues are those which come directly from and lead us directly toward God. Moral virtues lead us to perform good acts in accordance with right reason. The theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity (love). These virtues are infused into our souls by God as the fruits of grace, which is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation. These three virtues are necessary for salvation because without them we cannot perform the acts that win salvation. We cannot obtain virtues by our own merits; they come to us only as free gifts of God. Faith, hope, and love are the supernatural powers of believing in God, hoping in Him, and loving Him. Mere possession of these virtues does not bring us any reward, for we have done nothing to merit them. Only through acts of faith, hope, and love, that is, by practicing the three theological virtues, can we win the reward of eternal life.

What are virtues? Define theological virtues; moral virtues. Name the three theological virtues. How do we receive these virtues? What is grace? Why are the theological virtues necessary to salvation? How do we obtain these virtues? How do we merit salvation through them?

FAITH: "Faith is a supernatural virtue whereby, through the inspiration and help of God's grace, we believe that what God has revealed and taught us through the Church is true, because of the authority of God who reveals it, for He can neither deceive nor be deceived" (Gasparri, *The Catholic Catechism*, pages 53-54). We believe on faith those things which, because of the limitations of our human reason, we cannot attain or understand without supernatural aid. Faith surpasses reason, but can never conflict with it, because the same God who gives us faith also gives us our reason, and God, being perfect, cannot contradict Himself. Neither can one truth be opposed to another. Faith is the highest form of knowledge, because it is knowledge given by God Himself, who can make no mistake.

What is faith? On whose authority do we believe those things which we hold on faith? Why can faith never conflict with reason? Why is faith the highest form of knowledge?

ACTS OF FAITH: We must believe all the truths that the Church teaches, because God has promised to preserve the Church from all error. While it is necessary to believe in order to be saved, mere belief is not enough. We must profess our faith in actions. We can do this by both words and deeds, and we must do it whenever our silence, hesitation, or action would imply denial of faith, contempt for religion, scandal to our neighbor, or an insult to God. We show our faith by glorifying God, by observing His commandments, by reciting the Act of Faith. We must not only profess our faith, but also guard against losing it by apostasy (turning away from Christianity) or heresy (denying one or more of the Church's doctrines).

There are many forms of the Act of Faith, the prayer in which we state our belief in God. A simple and very common form follows: "O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost; I believe that Thy divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived."

Why is it necessary to believe what the Church teaches? What more is necessary? When must we profess our faith? How can faith be lost? Recite the Act of Faith.

HOPE: "Hope is a supernatural virtue whereby, because of the merits of Jesus Christ, and relying on the goodness, omnipotence, and faithfulness of God, we look for eternal life and the graces necessary to obtain it, because God has promised it to those who do good works" (Gasparri, *The Catholic Catechism*, page 201). Hope is the virtue which gives us that supreme confidence in the goodness of God which must mark all our prayers and which inspires us to go on doing good even when the fruits of our actions or the answers to our prayers are not readily apparent to us. He who says the Act of Hope frequently and fervently will never lose His confidence in God. While this confidence, like faith, is necessary, neither is it enough by itself. We must show our confidence through acts of hope—putting our wholehearted trust in the divine promises and bearing the hardships and sufferings of life with patience. Hope can be lost by despair (the deliberate failure to trust that God will give us eternal life and the means necessary for gaining it) and by presumption (the rash confidence that we shall win salvation without grace or good works).

We say the Act of Hope thus: "O my God, relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer."

What is hope? How do we show our confidence (hope) in God? What is despair? Presumption? Recite the Act of Hope.

LOVE: "Love is the very essence of religion," says the Rev. F. Gregory Smith in *The Divine Love Story* (Chapter VI). "God loves His creatures, and the purpose of religion is to teach them in return to 'love God above all things, and to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.'" In theological language love and charity mean the same thing. "Charity is a supernatural virtue whereby we love God above all things for His own sake, and ourselves and our neighbor for the sake of God" (Gasparri, *The Catholic Catechism*, page 202). Love of God arises from the knowledge that is a result of our faith, and from the confidence that is a result of our hope. We show our love for God by keeping His commandments and by doing other good works that are pleasing to Him. To love God sincerely means to value Him above all creatures and to serve Him in everything, even to the point of giving up our lives for love of Him if need be. We lose our love of God by committing mortal sin.

Why is love the very essence of religion? What is charity or love? Whence does love of God arise? How can we show our love of God? How do we lose it?

LOVE OF SELF AND OTHERS: If we love God truly, we must also love ourselves and all other men, for we are all children of God. We love ourselves, not by pursuing worldly honors or riches, but by seeking in all things to glorify God and to win our eternal salvation.

God so loved men that He sent His divine Son to die for their salvation, and Christ willingly sacrificed His life for mankind. Moreover, He once told His disciples that the least act of kindness done for another man is an act of charity done to Himself. Thus God loves man. We, too, must love our neigh-

bor, and we must show our love for men by pardoning their offenses, by avoiding any injury to them, by helping them in all their needs, particularly through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and by saying the Act of Love often. The corporal works of mercy are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, and bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy are to admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive all injuries, and pray for the living and the dead. The works of mercy are the essence of Christian charity and the heart of social justice.

We make the Act of Love as follows: "O my God, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured."

Why must we love ourselves and other men? How should we love ourselves? How did God show His love for men? What did Christ say about acts of kindness to others? How do we show our love for our neighbor? What are the corporal works of mercy? The spiritual works of mercy? Recite the Act of Love.

USE OF THE ACTS: We should make the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love frequently, and they should form a part of our prayers every morning and night. They should be used especially in time of temptation against the virtues of faith, hope, and love; when we receive the sacraments, and when we are in danger of death.

How often should we recite the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love? On what occasions especially should they be said?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Recite the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love every morning and night.
2. Show your love of God by performing special acts that you know will be pleasing to Him.
3. Make a deliberate effort to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy toward your neighbor.

V

Confession and Contrition

“No matter how far one may advance in the spiritual life, he should never forget that he is a sinner” (Moore, *Prayer*, page 18). Nothing can inspire greater humility, which should be a mark of all prayer, than a realization that we have offended the all-good and all-merciful God, and no prayer is more humble than the Confiteor. In it the faithful join with the publican of the Gospel in crying: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (Luke XVIII, 13). “Confiteor,” the first word of the prayer in Latin, means “I confess.”

This prayer is important to everyone for it has the power, through its production of pious dispositions in the soul, to obtain the remission of venial sins. It has its place also in the Church’s liturgy: It is said at the foot of the altar by the priest and the servers (on behalf of all the people) at the beginning of Mass; it is repeated before the distribution of Holy Communion or the administration of Extreme Unction; in shortened form it precedes the confession of sins in the Sacrament of Penance, and it is used in the Divine Office.

What is the best means of inspiring humility in the soul? Which is the most humble of prayers? What is the meaning of “Confiteor”? Why is the Confiteor important? Where is it used in the liturgy?

CONFESSION OF GUILT: In saying the Confiteor we acknowledge before God, the Blessed Virgin, and all the saints that we have sinned. To this confession we add a prayer that Mary and the saints will intercede with God for us, and that God will grant us pardon and bring us to salvation. If we say this prayer sincerely, we can be sure that God will hear us and, if we have true contrition, will forgive our sins, for He is a God of mercy. In the Confiteor we say:

“I confess to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

“May the almighty God have mercy on me, and forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

“May the almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.”

In the Confiteor to whom do we acknowledge our sinfulness? What prayer do we add to our confession of guilt? In what way can we make sure that God will hear and answer this prayer? Recite the Confiteor.

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION: While it is necessary that we often make prayerful confession of our sins, mere private admission of our guilt in this fashion is not sufficient to obtain forgiveness, for Christ established a special sacrament for forgiving sin. When Christ told the apostles, “Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained” (John XX, 23), He gave His priests the power to forgive sins and bound all Christians to confess to the priests. The law of the Church

requires that everyone go to confession at least once a year. The formula of absolution beautifully expresses the priest's power to forgive sins as the representative of divine authority:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee; and I by His authority absolve thee from every bond of excommunication and interdict, so far as I can and thou hast need. Thereupon, I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Besides mere prayerful admission of our guilt, what else is necessary to obtain the forgiveness of sins? In what words did Christ confer on His priests the power to forgive sins? Read and explain the formula of absolution recited by the priests.

CONTRITION: In order that our confession may be valid, contrition is necessary. "Contrition for sin is heartfelt sorrow for the sins we have committed, with hatred of them and firm purpose of amendment" (Gasparri, *The Catholic Catechism*, page 177). It consists of two distinct elements: Sorrow for having offended God and the resolution not to offend Him again. Contrition should be: 1. Interior—it should come from the heart and not merely from the lips. 2. Supernatural—it should be prompted by God's grace and should spring from motives of faith and not merely natural motives. 3. Universal—it should include all our mortal sins without exception (and venial sins, too, though sorrow for venial sins is not essential for a worthy confession). 4. Sovereign—we should grieve more for having offended God than for any other evil that can happen to us.

There are two kinds of contrition: Perfect and imperfect. Perfect contrition springs solely from the love of God and makes us hate sin above all things because it offends God. Imperfect contrition arises principally from some other motive, such as the hatefulness of sin itself or the fear of losing heaven and deserving eternal damnation. Imperfect contrition is sufficient for a worthy confession. An act of perfect contrition can win the forgiveness of sin even before the reception of sacramental absolution if it is accompanied by the firm resolution to go to confession. Because there may be times when we are in danger of death and no priest is available, it is all-important to cultivate perfect contrition so that we may obtain forgiveness of our sins even when it is impossible to go to confession. We should strive to make such an act whenever we lose sanctifying grace by mortal sin.

What is contrition for sin? What two elements does it include? What four qualities should it have? What is perfect contrition? Imperfect contrition? Why should we cultivate the habit of making acts of perfect contrition?

ACT OF CONTRITION: The Act of Contrition is a marvelous statement of the nature of sorrow for sin. It gives recognition to the motives that inspire imperfect contrition ("the loss of heaven and the pains of hell") but stresses the motive that stirs up perfect contrition ("because they offend Thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love"). It also mentions the other element in contrition, the firm resolution to sin no more. Everyone should include in his night prayers an examination of conscience to recall in what ways he has offended God through the day. This examination should be followed by the Act of Contrition, which should also be said at any time one has committed sin. It follows:

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

How does the Act of Contrition express the motives for imperfect contrition? For perfect contrition? How does it express the other element of contrition besides sorrow for sin? Recite the Act of Contrition.

PENITENTIAL PSALMS: Besides the Confiteor and the Act of Contrition, there are many other prayers expressing our sorrow for sin. Most beautiful of these are the seven Penitential Psalms. Throughout them the horror of sin as an offense against God, the heinousness of sin in itself, its dreadful effects, and the heartfelt sorrow that should arise from the realization of our sinfulness are repeated again and again in the most forceful and beautiful of language. In all the world's literature there is probably no more forceful writing than the Psalms, and these beautiful Old Testament poems reach their heights in the seven that are called penitential—Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142. Like the other 143 Psalms, they form part of the Divine Office, and they have long been recited as prayers of sorrow for sin. At one time their recitation in Lent was obligatory. Psalm 50, the "Miserere," expressing David's repentance, is one of the most touching pleas for mercy ever penned, and everyone is familiar with "Out of the Depths," Psalm 129.

The following quotations illustrate the nature of these beautiful songs of sorrow: Psalm 6—"O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy wrath . . . Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity: for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." Psalm 31—"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered . . . I am turned in my anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened. I have acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my injustice I have not concealed." Psalm 37—"There is no health in my flesh, because of Thy wrath: there is no peace for my bones, because of sins . . . My sores are putrified and corrupted, because of my foolishness . . . I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly: I roared with the groaning of my heart." Psalm 50—"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy . . . Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from Thy face; and take not Thy holy spirit from me." Psalm 101—"Hear, O Lord, my prayer: and let my cry come to Thee . . . For my days are vanished like smoke: and my bones are grown dry like fuel for the fire. I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered . . . Through the voice of my groaning, my bone hath cleaved to my flesh." Psalm 129—"Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice . . . From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord. Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption." Psalm 142—"Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord, to Thee have I fled; teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God."

Which are the most beautiful prayers of sorrow for sin? Where are these Psalms used in the liturgy? Discuss the quotations from these Psalms.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make it a habit to go to confession at regular intervals—every week, every two weeks, or every month.
2. Strive to make your contrition always perfect.
3. Examine your conscience preceding the recitation of the Act of Contrition every night.

VI

Prayer to the Holy Ghost

In the sign of the cross, the Minor Doxology, and the creeds, we state our belief in the Holy Ghost, who is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, but consubstantial with Them, being truly God and possessing the same divine nature. After the Last Supper, Christ promised His apostles "the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name; He will teach you all things" (John XIV, 26). After the apostles and disciples had spent fifty days of prayer in the upper room in Jerusalem, the Holy Ghost descended on them in the form of tongues of fire, and they went out fearlessly to preach the Gospel. The day on which the apostles received the Holy Ghost was the first Pentecost Sunday, the birthday of the Church. The Church is Christ's Mystical Body and its soul is the Holy Ghost.

When the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles, He conferred on them the gifts earned by Christ in the redemption of man, and confirmed and strengthened them in the faith. In Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Ghost comes to all of us to confer on us the same great gifts. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of love and truth and wisdom, the Giver of great gifts. Nevertheless, many Christians forget to pray to the Holy Ghost.

Who is the Holy Ghost? When did Christ promise the Holy Ghost to the apostles? When did the apostles receive the Holy Ghost? What place has the Holy Spirit in the Mystical Body? When do we receive the Holy Ghost?

PENTECOST: Christians who neglect the Holy Ghost in their devotions are not following the lead of the Church, which continually honors Him in the liturgy. The Mass and Office for the feast of Pentecost contain some of the Church's most beautiful prayers. In early Christian times, the eve of Pentecost was a traditional day for the administration of Baptism, in which the Holy Ghost first comes to the soul. We should make the Pentecostal prayers our own, for they are richly indulgenced and they increase in our souls the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost.

The Introit of the Pentecost Mass opens: "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world," and immediately following the Epistle are these versicles: "Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth" and "Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful: and kindle in them the fire of Thy love." These prayers imploring the aid of the Holy Ghost should be said before classes or study periods and at any other time when we must exercise wisdom in making a decision.

How do the liturgical prayers for the feast of Pentecost show the Church's high regard for the Holy Ghost? Read and discuss the short prayers taken from the early part of the Pentecost Mass.

HYMNS TO THE SPIRIT: Two of the most beautiful hymns in Christian writing are found in the Pentecost liturgy: "Veni, Sancte Spiritus" (Sequence of the Mass) and "Veni, Creator Spiritus" (the hymn for Vespers) (five years' indulgence for recitation of each hymn). From the "Veni, Creator" comes the English prayer that is often sung and should often be said in honor of the Holy Ghost:

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
 And in our hearts take up Thy rest;
 Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid,
 To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O Comforter, to Thee we cry;
 Thou Heavenly Gift of God Most High,
 Thou Fount of life and Fire of love,
 And sweet Anointing from above.

Praise the Father and the Son,
 And Holy Spirit with Them One;
 And may the Son on us bestow
 The gifts that from the Spirit flow.

Here we invite the Holy Spirit to take up His abode in our hearts and souls, to give us the grace which is the life of the soul and the love for God that should mark our every action. Praising all three Persons of the Trinity, we implore that Christ, who redeemed us, may bestow on us the gifts that flow from the Holy Ghost.

What two beautiful Pentecost hymns are recited or sung in honor of the Holy Ghost? Recite the English "Come, Holy Ghost." What do we ask in this prayer?

CONFIRMATION: When we are baptized, sanctifying grace floods our souls, and we are made living temples of the Holy Spirit, but as we progress in the Christian life, our faith must be strengthened and our wills fortified for the battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. To give us this added strength, Christ instituted the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which we receive the Holy Ghost and are made soldiers of Christ. Confirmation, which is derived from "confirm," means a strengthening.

In giving the Sacrament of Confirmation, the bishop first prays: "May the Holy Ghost come upon you, and the power of the Most High keep you from sins Almighty everlasting God send forth upon them Thy sevenfold Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, from heaven Replenish them with the Spirit of Thy fear, and sign them with the sign of the cross of Christ." Then he anoints the forehead of each with holy chrism in the form of a cross, saying, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Chrism, one of the Church's holy oils, is a source of health and strength, and hence a beautiful symbol of the Holy Ghost.

What does Baptism do for our souls? What is the purpose of Confirmation? For what does the bishop pray before he confirms? What does he say as he anoints each person being confirmed?

GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST: We receive originally in Baptism and again more fully in Confirmation seven special graces called the gifts of the Holy Ghost: Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Wisdom gives us a liking for the things of God and a desire to serve Him in all things. Understanding aids us to comprehend more clearly the mysteries of faith. Counsel enables us to judge promptly and rightly what must be done in particular cases to fulfill the will of God. Fortitude gives us the strength to perform God's will in all things. Knowledge aids us to see created things in a supernatural way. Piety makes us see God as a Father and obey Him as dutiful children should. Fear of the Lord is a dread of com-

mitting sin because it offends God, whom we revere. "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 110, 10).

When we have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost we grow in sanctity and produce fruits as living branches of the true Vine, Christ. The Holy Spirit can produce many effects in our souls, but those which are most pleasing to God are the twelve called the fruits of the Holy Ghost: Charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity.

What are the gifts of the Holy Ghost? Name them. What does wisdom do for us? Understanding? Counsel? Fortitude? Knowledge? Piety? Fear of the Lord? How are the fruits of the Holy Ghost produced in our souls? Name them.

IN THE PRIESTHOOD: Those who are the successors of the apostles (bishops) and the ministers of God's graces (priests) have special need of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost. And in ordaining priests and consecrating bishops, the Church implores for them the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The "Veni, Creator Spiritus" is intoned in both ceremonies, and in both the officiating prelate lays hands on the candidates, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," even as the apostles imposed hands on candidates for Holy Orders in the years just after Christ's death.

As the Church prays that the Holy Ghost will guide its priests and bishops, so should the laity often pray that their spiritual leaders will be inspired by the Holy Spirit in their work for souls. They should pray too that the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity may inspire the laity and fill them with the grace and strength necessary to perform their duty of participating in the apostolate of the Hierarchy, which is Catholic Action.

How does the Church show that bishops and priests especially need the help of the Holy Ghost? What hymn to the Holy Ghost is recited at ordinations and consecrations? What ceremony and short prayer are used in conferring the Holy Ghost upon those being ordained or consecrated? What should the laity ask for their spiritual leaders and for themselves from the Holy Ghost?

OTHER PRAYERS: The "Preces et Pia Opera Indulgentiis Ditata" (Prayers and Pious Works Enriched with Indulgences) contains a number of other prayers to the Holy Ghost. Among them are a special prayer for the Church, asking the Holy Spirit to "make it strong and secure against the attacks of its enemies," and one for the propagation of the faith: "O Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, come into our hearts; shed the brightness of Thy light on all nations, that they may be one in faith and pleasing to Thee" (300 days' indulgence). There is also a Chaplet of the Holy Ghost, including introductory prayers and short meditations on these five mysteries: "Jesus was conceived of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Jesus. Jesus was conducted by the Spirit into the desert. The Holy Spirit in the Church. The Holy Spirit in the soul of the just man" (indulgence of seven years).

Where can indulgenced prayers in honor of the Holy Ghost be found? What are some of them? What five mysteries are considered in the Chaplet of the Holy Ghost?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Cultivate special devotion to the Holy Ghost.
2. Consider often whether you are cooperating with the gifts of the Holy Ghost received in Confirmation so that the fruits of the Holy Ghost will be produced in your soul.
3. Pray that the Holy Ghost will bless the Pope, the bishops, and the priests.

VII

Prayers to Jesus

As members of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, we live fully only when we live in complete union with Christ, who is our Head. It is, therefore, necessary that much of our devotional life should be centered in Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity and the Redeemer of mankind.

The official book of indulgenced prayers and pious works lists general devotions to Jesus Christ, prayers in honor of the holy name of Jesus, to the Infant Jesus, to Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist, to Jesus Crucified, in honor of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, in honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, and to Jesus Christ King.

Why is much Christian devotion centered in Jesus? Under what headings does the official book list prayers to Him?

THE HOLY NAME: The obligation to honor the name of God applies equally to Jesus' name. There are many beautiful ejaculations expressing our love for the holy name: "Praised be Jesus Christ" (300 days' indulgence when said to another), "My Jesus, mercy!" (300 days'), "Sweetest Jesus, be to me not a judge but a Saviour" (300 days'), "Jesus, my God, I love Thee above all things" (300 days'), "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (500 days'). There are also many hymns honoring Jesus' name, and the Litany of the Holy Name.

As the Christmas liturgy centers in devotion to the Infant Jesus, so should our prayers in this season show our personal love for Him. There are many indulgenced prayers and devotions in honor of the Infant Saviour. A special prayer is directed to Jesus, "who, being made an infant for us, was willing to be born in a cave, to free us from the darkness of sin, to draw us to Thyself, and to inflame us with Thy holy love" (three years').

What are some of the indulgenced ejaculations expressing love for the holy name? When should we have particular devotion to the Infant Saviour?

CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST: The Blessed Sacrament, which is Christ's body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine, is the source of Christian life, the food of the soul. At holy Mass, the bread and wine are changed into Christ's body and blood, and if we are to participate fully in the Mass we should receive Christ into our own hearts in Communion. In giving Communion, the priest prays: "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life everlasting. Amen." The feast of Corpus Christi, the greatest day of eucharistic devotion, is the second Thursday after Pentecost. In the Collect of the Corpus Christi Mass, we pray: "O God, who in this wonderful sacrament has left us a memorial of Thy passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to reverence the sacred mysteries of Thy body and blood, that we may ever perceive within us the fruit of Thy redemption." The Sequence of the Mass is the beautiful hymn, "Lauda, Sion, Salvatorem" ("Praise Thou, Sion, Praise Thy Saviour").

The Elevation at Mass gives us a wonderful opportunity to adore Christ in the Eucharist. When the Host is elevated at Mass or is solemnly exposed, we should say: "My Lord and my God" (seven years' indulgence; plenary indulgence once a week if said daily).

How may we participate abundantly in the Mass? What does the priest say in administering Holy Communion? What is the great annual feast of the Holy

Eucharist? Read and discuss the prayer which forms the Collect of the Corpus Christi Mass. What beautiful hymn is the Sequence of this Mass? What ejaculation should we say when the Host is elevated in the Mass?

BENEDICTION AND FORTY HOURS': Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is a beautiful devotion in which the Host is exposed for adoration and the people are blessed with It. Only the "Tantum Ergo" and the blessing are formally prescribed for Benediction, but in our country the devotion usually embraces two hymns, the "O Salutaris Hostia" or some other appropriate eucharistic hymn, and the "Tantum Ergo," prayers including the Corpus Christi Collect, the blessing, and the Divine Praises. The hymns just mentioned, are:

O SALUTARIS HOSTIA

O saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of heaven to man below!
Our foes press on from every side:
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

To Thy great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, one in three!
Oh, grant us endless length of days
In our true native land with Thee.

TANTUM ERGO

Lowly bending, deep adoring,
Lo! the Sacrament we hail:
Types and shadows have their ending,
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying
Where the feeble senses fail.

Glory, honor, might, dominion,
Be unto our God most high;
To the Father, Son, and Spirit,
Ever Blessed Trinity,
Praise be given, and power eternal
Unto all eternity.

In the Forty Hours' adoration, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for public adoration through a period approximating forty hours. One of its principal ends is to pray for peace. This devotion is richly indulgenced.

What is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament? Which two hymns are usually sung at Benediction in this country? Read and comment on the words of the two hymns. What is the Forty Hours' adoration?

CHRIST CRUCIFIED: In passion time, the two weeks before Easter, the liturgy stresses the sufferings and death of Christ. Like the Church, all Christians should cultivate devotion to the dying Saviour. The Stations of the Cross, in which we meditate on Christ's sufferings, are both popular and highly indulgenced. There are special prayers in honor of Christ's five wounds and His precious blood. July is the month and July 1 is the feast of the Most Precious Blood. In the Mass for the feast, this versicle is several times repeated: "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy blood." There is a plenary indulgence for those who after Communion recite before a crucifix the prayer: "Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus."

When does the liturgy especially stress the sufferings and death of Christ? What is one of the most popular and richly indulgenced devotions to the suffering Saviour? When are the month and the feast of the Precious Blood? What prayer said before a crucifix after Communion carries a plenary indulgence?

THE SACRED HEART: Since the time of St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque (17th century), devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, particularly the novena of Communions on the first Fridays, has spread round the world and warmed the whole Christian family with the fire of its love. As Christ's love for us flowed from His heart, so should our love be directed to the same heart. Pope Pius XI often insisted that only in devotion to the Sacred Heart can the world find the solution of its woes. June is the month of the Sacred Heart.

In 1925 when he instituted the feast of Christ the King, Pius XI ordered that annually on this feast, the whole human race be dedicated to the Sacred Heart in the beautiful prayer: "Most Sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thy altar. We are Thine and Thine we wish to be; but to be more surely united with Thee, behold each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Thy Most Sacred Heart . . ."

Three years later, Pius XI commanded that an Act of Reparation for all offenses against God be recited in every church on the feast of the Sacred Heart, the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. This prayer opens: "O Sweet Jesus, whose overflowing charity for men is requited by so much forgetfulness, negligence, and contempt, behold us prostrate before Thy altar eager to repair by a special act of homage the cruel indifference and injuries to which Thy loving Heart is everywhere subject." Pius XI also approved a new Mass and Office of the Sacred Heart, and attached an octave to the observance of the feast.

When did devotion to the Sacred Heart in its present form originate? Why should we direct our love to the Sacred Heart? What is the month of the Sacred Heart? On what great feast is the Act of Consecration of all men to the Sacred Heart recited? What does the prayer of consecration ask? When is the Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart recited?

OTHER DEVOTIONS: Other devotions to the Sacred Heart include the Apostleship of Prayer, the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes (see Chapter XVI), the Litany of the Sacred Heart (see Chapter X), and various prayers. The Apostleship of Prayer includes devout persons throughout the world who daily offer all their prayers, works, and sufferings to Christ in union with His Sacred Heart. Its prayer is the Morning Offering, which begins: "O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee . . ." Each month the Holy Father proposes a special intention for the Morning Offering, through which we can make our whole lives an act of prayer.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is summed up in such ejaculations as: "Sweet Heart of Jesus, I implore that I may ever love Thee more and more" (300 days); "Heart of Jesus burning with love for us, inflame our hearts with love of Thee" (500 days).

What are some other devotions in honor of the Sacred Heart? What is the Apostleship of Prayer? The Morning Offering?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Say, "My Lord and My God" whenever you see the Sacred Host.
2. Always recite the prayer, "Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus," before a crucifix after you have received Holy Communion.
3. Recite the Morning Offering daily.

VIII

The Blessed Virgin Mary

When Christ was dying on the cross, He beheld His Mother and His beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. To Mary He said, "Woman, behold thy son." To St. John: "Behold thy mother" (John XIX, 26-27). Thus, through St. John, Christ made known to us that the same spotless virgin who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, had brought Him into the world, is also our mother.

Being Christ's Mother, Mary must of necessity be the Mother of God. As the Mother of God and the most perfect of creatures, Mary is man's most powerful intercessor with God. Loving all her children, she tries to draw them into that close union with God which she herself enjoys. Since Mary is our mother, we should pray often to her, seek to imitate her virtues, and through honoring her honor her divine Son.

When did Christ make known to us that Mary is our mother? In what way does Mary show her love for her children? How should we honor Our Lady?

MARY IN THE LITURGY: The Church's devotion to Mary is shown by the place which has been given to her in the liturgy. She is often mentioned in the Mass and the Divine Office. May is a month of special devotion to Mary, and October is the month of her holy rosary.

The great feasts honoring Mary are jeweled ornaments of the whole ecclesiastical year. In the United States, the feasts of her Immaculate Conception and her Assumption are holy days of obligation, on which all are obliged to hear Mass. The Church has special Masses and Offices to honor Mary on many other feasts: her Holy Name, September 12; Presentation in the Temple, November 15; Purification, February 2; Annunciation, March 25; Visit to her Cousin Elizabeth, July 2; Seven Sorrows, Friday of Passion Week and September 15; Holy Rosary, October 7; Miraculous Medal, November 27; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, July 16; Our Lady of Good Counsel, April 26; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, June 27; Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12 or November 16.

How does the Church show its devotion to Mary? Which months are specially dedicated to her? Which two feasts of Mary are holy days of obligation? Name five other feasts of Our Lady.

HAIL MARY: There are hundreds of prayers and devotions honoring Mary, and she is addressed under many titles. The great religious writers have vied with one another in producing the most beautiful prayers and hymns to the Mother of God, but there is one brief prayer that better than all others expresses the devotion of Mary's children to her. It is the Hail Mary, the Angelical Salutation:

"Hail Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

This is a prayer of both praise and petition. The first half, up to the word "Jesus," is sheer praise of Our Lady. The first part was spoken by the Angel Gabriel at the time of the annunciation, the second (not including "Jesus") by St. Elizabeth when Mary came to visit her. Jesus' name and the petition ending the prayer were added by the Church. The exact time of the petition's origin is not known, but it had its present form in the Roman Breviary of 1568.

Whose words make up the first part of the Hail Mary? Who added the final petition?

MEANING OF PRAYER: The Hail Mary begins with a joyous greeting to the Blessed Virgin. The words "full of grace, the Lord is with Thee" show that Mary was from the moment of her conception filled with sanctifying grace, that she was never stained by the slightest sin, that she was always a living temple of the Holy Ghost, and that she was in constant close union with God. "Blessed art thou amongst women" expresses Mary's exalted position as the greatest of creatures. "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," is an expression of praise, both for Mary as the Mother of God and for Jesus as one of the divine Persons. Thus we glorify God as well as His Mother.

The petition asks Mary to use her influence to preserve us from sin and to guide us toward God now and "at the hour of our death," when above all other times we shall need divine assistance.

What do the words "full of grace, the Lord is with Thee" show? What is the meaning of "blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus"? What do we ask in the petition?

THE ROSARY: The rosary, which includes fifteen decades of ten Hail Marys each, counted on beads, is a summary of the main events in the life of Jesus and Mary and a resume of the whole liturgical year. One of the most highly indulgenced of all devotions, the rosary is both vocal and mental prayer. Vocally we recite the Hail Marys, Our Fathers, and Glorias. Mentally we meditate on the great mysteries of the faith. Many sacred writers have called the rosary Mary's favorite prayer, and Popes for nearly 400 years have hailed its recitation as the best remedy for the evils afflicting society. Urging the rosary as the cure for modern evils, Pius XI said that Mary's aid was never "hoped for in vain by those who besought it with pious and trustful prayer" (Encyclical on the Rosary, September 29, 1937). Many pious Catholics recite the rosary daily, and its use is particularly recommended on the feast of the Holy Rosary, October 7, and throughout October.

Explain briefly the nature of the rosary devotion. Is this a mental or vocal prayer? What did Pius XI say of the value of the rosary? When particularly should we use the rosary?

OTHER PRAYERS TO MARY: Both the Old and the New Testaments praise the Blessed Virgin, and Solomon's Canticle of Canticles, which calls her the "most beautiful of women," is one of the most exalted poems ever written. The Psalms, many of which honor Mary, are part of the Divine Office, which also contains special prayers and hymns to Our Lady. In using these prayers, the faithful make their own the inspired words of Scripture and unite their prayers with those of the whole Church.

A part of the daily Vespers is Mary's own hymn, the Magnificat: "My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed . . ." This prayer of praise for both God and His Mother should be part of every Catholic's devotional life.

The "Angelus," said morning, noon, and evening, honors Christ and His Mother. It includes three Hail Marys and several other prayers. In the Easter time, it is replaced by the "Regina Coeli" ("O Queen of Heaven"). The Litany of Loreto invokes Mary's aid under many of the beautiful titles bestowed on her (see Chapter X).

Where can the praises of Mary be found in the Old Testament? Who composed the Magnificat? How does it begin? What is the "Angelus"? The "Regina Coeli"?

"SALVE REGINA" AND "MEMORARE": Two of the most powerful prayers honoring Mary are the "Salve Regina" and the "Memorare," both named from their first words in Latin. The "Salve Regina" ("Hail, Holy Queen"), recited in the prayers after Mass, calls Mary "Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope." It asks her to turn her "eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile [earthly life], show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

The "Memorare" stresses the power of Mary's intercession: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions; but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen" (three years' indulgence).

Name two of the most powerful prayers to the Blessed Virgin. What does the "Salve Regina" call Mary? What does it ask of her? What does the "Memorare" emphasize?

SPECIAL TITLES OF MARY: Many of the faithful have been led closer to Mary, and closer to God, through devotion to Mary under one of her special titles, such as Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, of Perpetual Help, or of Sorrows. There are novenas (devotions repeated on nine consecutive days or weeks) to Mary under these titles, and their approval by the Church and their power to stir up pious sentiments in the faithful make them powerful aids to salvation. In recent years, perpetual novenas in which the faithful gather every week to honor Mary have fired the zeal of all Catholic America.

There are special indulgenced devotions to Mary Immaculate, Mary Sorrowing, the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. There are also indulgenced prayers to Mary under the titles of Our Lady of Piety, Mother of Divine Providence, Our Lady of the Cenaculum, Help of Christians, Queen of Prophets, Mother of Confidence, Our Lady of Reparation, Our Lady of the Most Holy Sacrament, Comforter of the Afflicted, Our Lady of Pity, of Guadalupe, of Ransom, of Perpetual Help, and of Good Counsel, Queen of Peace, Mother of Orphans, Mother of Graces, Our Lady of Suffrage, of La Salette, and Queen of the Apostles.

Among all these prayers, every devout child of Mary can find some that will express his own feelings of love for his mother. Through them he will be advanced in the spiritual life, drawn closer to Mary, and united more intimately with her divine Son. We must go to Jesus through Mary.

What are some of the special titles with which we honor Mary? What is a novena? A perpetual novena? Name some of the special indulgenced devotions to Mary. Name some of the many titles under which we address indulgenced prayers to her.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Erect a small shrine honoring Mary in your home each May.
2. Recite the rosary daily, especially during October.
3. If there is a novena honoring Mary in a nearby church, attend the services.

IX

Angels and Saints

We glorify God, not only by honoring Him directly, but also by venerating His chosen creatures, the angels and saints. In honoring the angels and saints, we pay them no worship, which is due to God alone, nor do we venerate them for their own sake. We do not ask them for grace, mercy, or forgiveness, because these gifts come from God alone. We venerate them because they have served God well and are now with Him in heaven, where they can act as our intercessors. We ask them to pray for us and we seek to imitate their virtues so that we may attain our place in heaven.

Private devotion to the angels and saints must never detract from the worship of God and must never be substituted for the Mass, the sacraments, or the official prayer of the Church. If these devotions do not increase our love for God and lead us closer to him, they are useless.

Explain how we honor God by venerating the angels and saints. Why do we not ask the angels or saints for grace, mercy, or forgiveness? What do we ask of them? What ends should our devotion to them serve?

ANGELS: After Mary, the angels, who are God's messengers and ministers, come next in the Church's veneration. They constantly worship God in heaven, and they have often been sent as messengers to men. It is believed that countries, cities, families, churches, etc., have special guardian angels, and we know that each person has a guardian angel to protect him from evil and influence him toward good. Moreover, the angels in heaven pray for men on earth.

First among the angels is Michael the Archangel, leader of the heavenly hosts that defeated the angels who rebelled against God. In the Mass on the feast of the Dedication of St. Michael, September 29, we pray: "Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in battle: that we may not perish in the dreadful judgment." In this day's Vesper hymn, "Te Splendor," we pray that we may fight with Michael against Satan and thus win salvation. May 8 is the feast of the Apparition of St. Michael. In the daily prayers after Mass, we beg Michael to help us overcome the wiles of Satan, and we always ask him to lead the souls of the dead into the presence of God.

The feast of St. Raphael, who was sent by God to Tobias, is October 24, and St. Gabriel, who announced to Mary that she was to be the Mother of God, is honored March 18.

How do the angels serve God? How do they serve man? Who is the first in rank among them and when are his feasts? What do we ask of the great archangel in the Mass on the feast of the Dedication of St. Michael and after Mass every day? What other angels have special feasts?

GUARDIAN ANGELS: The feast of the Guardian Angels, October 2, reminds us that we should specially honor the ministers God has assigned to protect and defend us. To them we owe both gratitude and veneration. The Collect of this day's Mass asks: "O God, who . . . hast deigned to send Thy holy angels to watch over us: vouchsafe to Thy suppliants . . . to find safety in their protection, and in eternity to share their happiness." There is an indulgence of 300 days for reciting:

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
 To whom His love commits me here,
 Ever this day be at my side
 To light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

The book of indulgenced prayers and pious works also lists prayers and novenas to Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. In a special invocation which has been enriched with 300 days' indulgence, we honor each of the nine choirs of angels: Angels, Archangels, Thrones and Dominations, Principalities and Powers, Virtues, Seraphim and Cherubim.

When is the feast of the Guardian Angels? What does the Collect of the Mass for this feast ask? Recite the short verse honoring the guardian angel. What are some other devotions to the angels?

SAINTS: The saints are the men and women who have served God best. By their outstanding virtues, they have won a place in heaven, where they glorify God and pray for us. All the faithful are members of the communion of saints, which is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed. In the communion of saints, the blessed in heaven pray for the living and for the suffering souls in purgatory, the souls in purgatory honor the blessed and pray for the living, and the faithful on earth venerate the blessed and pray for the suffering souls in purgatory. Thus the Church Triumphant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Militant join in praising God and in communicating with one another.

Because the saints are God's best servants and because following them can lead us to union with God, the Church seeks their intercession for the living and encourages its members to imitate their virtues. The Church names a patron saint for each country (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception for the United States) and gives each child in Baptism a saint's name. Likewise churches, schools, and other institutions bear saints' names to remind the faithful that they should imitate their patrons.

What do you mean by the communion of saints? Why should we imitate the saints? Why are countries, churches, and persons given patron saints?

ALL SAINTS: The liturgical year is made up of two concurrent cycles—the Temporal, which recalls the events in Christ's life, and the Sanctoral, which honors the saints. Almost every day, we specially venerate one or more saints. First the Church honors the Blessed Virgin, then St. John the Baptist, who after Mary was most intimately associated with Christ's incarnation; St. Joseph; Sts. Peter and Paul; the other apostles and evangelists; national, diocesan, or parish patrons; martyrs, confessors (male saints not martyred), pontiffs, doctors, confessors not pontiffs, abbots, virgins, and holy women not virgins. There are common (standard) Masses for different classes of saints.

Because it would be impossible to honor individually each of the thousands of saints, the Church celebrates the feast of All Saints on November 1. In the Postcommunion of this day's Mass, we pray: "Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that to Thy faithful people the venerating of Thy saints may ever be a joy: and that the unceasing prayers of Thine elect may be their sure defense." In the Litany of the Saints also we honor all the blessed (see Chapter X).

What two cycles make up the liturgical year? In what order does the Church honor the saints? Why do we have the feast of All Saints? When is it observed? What do we ask in the Postcommunion prayer on this feast?

SAINTS IN THE MASS: At Mass every day, the Church honors the saints. Every altar and altar stone contains relics of the saints, and as the celebrant goes

to the altar after saying the Confiteor at the beginning of Mass, he prays over these relics: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints, whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins."

The Canon, the most solemn part of the Mass, contains three lists of saints. Before the Consecration, we commemorate the memory of Mary, the apostles and martyrs: Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon, and Thaddeus; Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, and Cornelius; Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and all the saints.

After the Consecration, we ask God to grant us "fellowship with Thy holy apostles and martyrs: with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and with all Thy saints, into whose company, we beseech Thee, admit us."

In the prayer that follows the Our Father, we ask God to deliver us from all evils and "by the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary ever Virgin, Mother of God, together with Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the saints, mercifully grant peace in our days."

What does the priest ask as he prays over the relics in the altar? Name some of the saints commemorated before the Consecration of the Mass. What do we ask in the prayer that follows the Consecration? Who are named in the prayer after the Our Father?

IN THE OFFICE: The Divine Office also honors the saints daily. Like the Mass, it follows Temporal and Sanctoral cycles, and there are common Offices for certain classes of saints. On days honoring special saints, there are Collects recalling the saints' works or virtues. Matins contains a short biography of the saint or history of the feast being commemorated, and at Prime, we pray: "May holy Mary and all the saints intercede for us with the Lord, that we may receive help and salvation from Him who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever."

How are the saints honored daily in the Divine Office? What of the saints and the Office of Matins? What do we ask in the prayer quoted from Prime?

OTHER DEVOTIONS: Many prayers honor St. Joseph, Christ's foster father and the patron of the Universal Church. His feast is March 19, and there are special indulgences for venerating him in his month of March. There are also the litany (see Chapter X), a novena, and a number of indulgenced prayers to St. Joseph, such as the one which asks the guardian of the Innocent Jesus and the Virgin Mary "that, being preserved from all uncleanness, I may with spotless mind, pure heart, and chaste body, ever serve Jesus and Mary most chastely."

There are many indulgenced prayers honoring the saints, and from them each one should choose those that best promote his spiritual development. Each should particularly honor and imitate his own patrons. Many find their spiritual life greatly aided by following the devotions of the Third Orders attached to some of the religious orders. In all our devotion to the saints, we must remember that we honor them, not for themselves, but because they have honored God.

When do we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph? What month is devoted to him? Which saints should we especially honor? What must we remember in venerating the saints?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Recite a prayer daily to your guardian angel.
2. Say the prayer to St. Michael after Mass with real sincerity.
3. Cultivate some special devotion to your patron saint.

X

Litanies

The litany is an ancient form of prayer in which salutations and responses are repeated again and again. Litanies are found even in the Old Testament, such as in the 135th Psalm, where God's praises are repeated with the response, "For His mercy endureth for ever." This form of prayer was adopted by the early Christians and litanies soon found their place in the Mass. In the Oriental Church today, there are several Mass litanies, and the "Kyrie Eleison" of our Mass is a remnant of the ancient custom. Special litanies are used in the Good Friday Mass of the Presanctified and in the Holy Saturday Mass. The Litany of the Saints is part of several liturgical services.

The Middle Ages produced many litanies, and by 1600 about eighty were in use. To correct abuses, Pope Clement VIII in 1601 forbade public recitation of any but the ancient Litany of the Saints and that of Our Lady. Since then the Litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Sacred Heart, and St. Joseph have been approved for public use.

The litanies open with the "Kyrie, eleison; Christe, eleison" (Lord, have mercy on us; Christ, have mercy on us) and a plea that Christ will hear our prayers. Then follow invocations to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and to the Trinity as a whole, each followed by: "Have mercy on us." Near the end of the litanies, we say the "Agnus Dei," thrice invoking the aid of Christ, the "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world." We ask Him to spare us, to hear our prayer, and to have mercy on us.

What is a litany? Trace the history of litanies. How many were in use about 1600? Which litanies have been approved for public use? How do the litanies begin and end?

LITANY OF THE SAINTS: Oldest of the litanies is that of the saints, which is used extensively in the liturgy. Its exact origin is unknown, but its antiquity is shown by its correspondence with the ancient listing of the saints in the Canon of the Mass. This litany has three main divisions, and is recited in three forms:

1. The most common form is recommended for private devotion and is said at the laying of a church cornerstone, at the blessing of a church or cemetery, on the Rogation days, on April 25, feast of the Greater Litanies; at the giving of major orders, the consecration of bishops, blessing of abbots, coronation of kings and queens, and at solemn exorcisms of the possessed. It is said in time of storm or danger, and is an approved blessing for people and crops. 2. A shorter form is used on Holy Saturday and the Vigil of Pentecost. 3. The third is the "Litany of the Dying" in the "Commendation of a Soul Departing."

Discuss the origin and antiquity of the Litany of the Saints. How many main divisions has it? How many forms are in use and when is each form used?

COMPOSITION OF THE LITANY: After the "Kyrie" and the invocation of the Trinity in the ordinary Litany of the Saints, we ask the saints to pray for us, calling first on Mary and then on the angels, mentioning Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael by name. Next come St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles, evangelists, disciples, and many other saints who have been important in history. Finally we pray: "All ye holy men and women, saints of God, make intercession for us."

The second part begins with another cry for mercy: "Be merciful, spare us, O Lord. Be merciful, graciously hear us, O Lord." Then, using the response, "Deliver us, O Lord," we ask to be kept from evil, sin, wrath, sudden death, the snares of the devil, anger, hatred, ill will, the spirit of fornication, lightning and tempest, earthquake, plague, famine, war, and finally from everlasting death. Then we ask Christ to deliver us through His incarnation, nativity, Baptism and holy fasting, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, and "through the coming of the Holy Ghost." Finally: "In the day of judgment, deliver us, O Lord."

In the third part we acknowledge our sinfulness but beg God to hear us despite our unworthiness: "We sinners, we beseech Thee, hear us." The petition "We beseech Thee, hear us" is repeated after a number of short prayers for mercy, pardon, and penance; for the Church, the Pope, protection against our enemies, for peace and unity in Christendom, for our friends and relatives. Then comes the "Agnus Dei," followed by the "Kyrie," the Our Father, and a number of prayers renewing our petitions. We conclude with fervent appeals that our prayers will be heard and that the faithful departed may rest in peace.

How does the Litany of the Saints begin? Who are mentioned after the invocation of the Trinity? How does the second part of the litany open? What is the response in this part? What is contained in the third section? How does the prayer end?

GREATER AND LESSER LITANIES: April 25 is the feast of the Greater Litanies, instituted at Rome in the fourth century to replace a pagan corn festival. This day is marked by a procession in which the Litany of the Saints is recited and God is asked to bless the people and their crops. The Rogation Days (Lesser Litanies) are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Thursday. The procession formerly held everywhere on these days and still practiced in rural parishes was instituted in the fifth century by St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, France, who prescribed it to appease the anger of God and to ask deliverance from the great evils which his diocese was then suffering. In 511, the Rogation Days were adopted throughout France, and in 816, Pope Leo III introduced them at Rome. Soon they were universally observed. On these days in the spring growing season, the Church prays for the crops, and, as the procession moves through the fields, the litany is several times interrupted while God is asked to bless the fields and the people.

When is the feast of the Greater Litanies celebrated? What part has the Litany of the Saints in the observance of this feast? Discuss the origin and observance of the Rogation Days.

LITANIES HONORING CHRIST: Two approved litanies honor our Lord—that of the Holy Name of Jesus and that of the Sacred Heart. Each carries an indulgence of seven years.

The Litany of the Holy Name was in use before 1601 but with many others was barred from public use by Pope Clement. Requests for its approval were denied in 1640, 1642, and 1662. Finally in 1862, Pope Pius IX approved it for dioceses whose bishops had made special application. Leo XIII extended it to the whole world in 1886. The first part of this litany contains a series of invocations each beginning with the holy name of Jesus and followed by the petition, "Have mercy on us." Jesus is called most patient, most obedient. He is hailed as splendor of the Father, king of glory, sun of justice, father of the world to come, lover of chastity, God of peace, our refuge, father of the poor. In the second part we ask delivery from evils through the great events of Christ's life. The litany ends with the "Agnus Dei" and two short prayers.

The Litany of the Sacred Heart, approved by Pope Leo XIII in 1899, contains many invocations ending with "Have mercy on us." We hail the Sacred Heart as the holy temple of God, burning furnace of charity, abyss of all virtues, desire of the eternal hills, and fountain of life and holiness. This litany closes with the "Agnus Dei" and a short prayer asking God's mercy.

What two litanies honor Our Lord? What indulgence is attached to each? When was the Litany of the Holy Name approved for the whole world? When was the Litany of the Sacred Heart approved? What are some of the titles by which we hail the Sacred Heart?

LITANIES OF OUR LADY AND ST. JOSEPH: The Litany of Our Lady is one of the most beautiful and popular prayers to the Mother of God. Its origin is lost in the Middle Ages, when many litanies were composed in Mary's honor and when some of them formed part of the Office of Our Lady. The form now used was adopted at the famous shrine in Loreto, Italy, a fact to which we probably owe its preservation. One of the two litanies approved in 1601, this prayer has since spread round the world and inspired the love of millions for Our Lady and for God. Mary is addressed under many beautiful titles, some of them from Holy Scripture. She is called mother most chaste, virgin most powerful, mirror of justice, seat of wisdom, mystical rose, tower of ivory, house of God, gate of heaven, morning star, refuge of sinners; queen of angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and finally queen of peace. An indulgence of seven years may be gained each time this litany is said, and those who recite it daily for an entire month may, under the usual conditions, gain a plenary indulgence.

The Litany of St. Joseph, sanctioned by Pope Pius X in 1909, is the most recently approved. It carries an indulgence of five years. In it St. Joseph is addressed as Joseph most chaste, most prudent, most strong; mirror of patience, guardian of virgins, pillar of families, patron of the dying, terror of demons. The litany ends with a prayer asking that "we may have for our advocate in heaven him whom we venerate as our protector on earth."

Discuss the origin of the Litany of Loreto. What are some of the titles under which Mary is addressed? What indulgences are attached to the Litany of Loreto? When and by whom was the Litany of St. Joseph approved? What indulgence is attached to it? Name some of the titles conferred on St. Joseph.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make a practice of participating in the devotions held on the days when the Litany of the Saints is part of the liturgy.
2. Say the Litany of the Holy Name on the feast of the Holy Name and that of the Sacred Heart during June and especially on the feast of the Sacred Heart.
3. Recite the Litany of Loreto often to bring yourself closer to Mary and to God.

XI

Prayer for Persons

In the Act of Love we tell God: "I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee." We love men, not for themselves, but because they are God's children and because He loves them. Every man is our neighbor, and we must love him for the love of God. Because true love includes the duty of prayer, we must pray for every man. But there are some for whom we must specially pray—leaders in Church or state, our parents, teachers, relatives, friends, and benefactors. But it is not enough to pray for those who do good to us. Christ said: "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you" (Matthew V, 44). Hence we must pray for our enemies, for persecutors of the Church, for heretics and sinners. For all we should ask first the grace of perseverance and salvation, then all the needs of soul and body.

Often we will compose our own prayers, asking God for blessings we know our fellow men need. But mostly we should use the liturgical prayers composed by the Church. The Mass Collects (the Collect, Secret, and Postcommunion prayers) for special occasions cover most necessities of men, and the Ritual and the book of indulgenced prayers and pious works contain prayers for many classes of persons. When we use these prayers we pray, not as individuals, but as members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Why must we pray for our neighbor? Name some of the persons for whom we should specially pray. What should we ask for them? Why should we use the prayers of the Church? Where can some of these be found?

CHURCH AND POPE: Early in the Canon of the Mass we pray for the Church "that it may please Thee to grant her peace, to protect, unite, and govern her throughout the world, together with Thy servant N. our Pope, N. our Bishop, and all true believers and adherents of the Catholic and apostolic faith." There are also special Collects for the Church.

As head of the Universal Church, the Pope needs many graces, and we should pray that he will receive all the blessings necessary for his work as Christ's Vicar on earth. The Missal contains special Collects asking that Christ will save and defend the Pope "whom Thou hast been pleased to appoint as pastor over Thy Church." An indulgenced prayer asks God to bless the Holy Father and to unite all the faithful with him in prayers and good works. In the Litany of the Saints we pray for the Pope: "The Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies."

Where in the Mass do we pray for the Church? What do the special Collects for the Holy Father ask? The prayer for the Pope in the Litany of the Saints?

CHRIST'S OTHER MINISTERS: The bishops and priests also need God's special help in their duties, and we should pray that they receive it. The Collect for the Hierarchy asks God, "by whose spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our prayers for all the orders therein; that, by the gift of Thy grace, all in their several degrees may serve Thee faithfully." Collects for prelates and their flocks are also found in the Missal. We have a special obligation to pray for the reigning Pope, our own bishops, and our pastors and priests.

Which of God's ministers besides the Pope need our special prayers? What does the Mass Collect for the Hierarchy ask? Which members of the clergy must we specially remember?

CIVIL RULERS: The Collects for emperors and kings ask God to give these rulers the wisdom to conduct their civic duties well and to promote peace. In the prayer for the Church and civil authorities composed by Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore, first member of the Hierarchy in the United States, we pray: "O God of might, wisdom, and justice, through whom authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment decreed, assist, with Thy Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness, and be eminently useful to Thy people, over whom he presides, by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion; by a faithful execution of the laws in justice and mercy; and by restraining vice and immorality. Let the light of Thy divine wisdom direct the deliberations of the Congress, and shine forth in all the proceedings and laws framed for our rule and government; . . . We pray for His Excellency, the Governor of this State, for the members of the Assembly, for all judges, magistrates, and other officers." Thus we pray for all our civil rulers.

What is asked in the Collects for emperors and kings? Who was the first member of the Hierarchy in the United States? What does his prayer ask for the President? For Congress? What other officials does it mention?

FOR LIVING AND DEAD: We must pray, not only for certain persons, but for all men. From Ash Wednesday to Passion Sunday, the Mass Collects implore the intercession of the saints that all the living and dead may attain salvation. In the Postcommunion we ask that our reception of the Eucharist may "be the washing away of sin, the strength of the weak, a protection against all the dangers of the world . . . the remission of all the sins of the faithful, living and dead." A Collect for the welfare of the living asks "that they may seek Thee with all their heart and be made worthy to obtain that which they meetly ask." The Postcommunion begs God to give his people "constancy in Thy faith and truth."

Special Collects ask God's help in any necessity or tribulation, deliverance from temptation, from persecutors and evildoers, from famine, earthquake, drought, storms, and bad weather. Others ask for the gift of tears, the remission of sins, continence, humility, patience, and charity.

For whom must we pray? What do the Mass Collects ask for the living and the dead? In the Postcommunion of this set of Collects, for what do we pray? What of the Collect for the welfare of the living? From what evils do special Collects ask deliverance? For what gifts do others ask?

FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS: Because God has placed our family and friends close to us and because they love us and do good to us, we have a special obligation to pray for them. In the Collect for a congregation or family, we ask God to "keep this family from all harm; and mercifully deign to protect them from the snares of the enemy." Another asks for concord in a congregation. Since the parish is the unit of all Catholic life and action we should pray that we and our fellow parishioners may do our part in the parochial work.

In the Collects for our friends, we ask God: "Give to Thy servants and handmaids . . . health of mind and body; that they may love Thee with all their strength and accomplish with perfect love what is pleasing to Thee . . . that . . . they may obtain the grace of Thy heavenly blessing and attain to the glory of everlasting bliss."

Why have we a duty to pray for our family and friends? For our fellow parishioners? What do we ask in the Collect for a congregation or family? In the Collects for our friends?

FOR OUR ENEMIES AND FOR ALL SINNERS: Not only for our family and friends, but also for our enemies must we pray. In a special Collect we ask God to give our enemies "peace and true charity; grant them the remission of all their sins, and by Thy power deliver us from their wiles." While we must ask God to bless our enemies, we should also ask for deliverance from those who would interfere with our salvation or would harm the Church. Thus there are special Collects against the persecutors of the Church and all persecutors and enemies.

In our charity we must pray for those who are in prison or in trouble and for all sinners. There are special indulgenced prayers for many races and for the conversion of heretics and sinners. We must always remember that only by the grace of God are we spared all the miseries and sins of others, and we must ask Him to deliver those who are so afflicted.

In the Collect for our enemies what do we ask of God? Why is it that we are sometimes spared the trials that trouble others?

PRAYER TO SACRED HEART: One of the most beautiful prayers for persons is the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart. Here we offer ourselves to Christ and beg Him to be merciful to all men. We pray: "Be Thou King, O Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken Thee, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned Thee; grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house lest they die of wretchedness and hunger. Be Thou King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions, or whom discord keeps aloof . . . of all those who are still involved in the darkness of idolatry or of Islamism . . . Turn Thine eyes of mercy toward the children of that race once Thy chosen people . . . Give peace and order to all nations, and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry: Praise be to the divine Heart that wrought our salvation; to It be glory and honor forever."

Discuss the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart. What does it ask for those who have abandoned Christ? Of what special classes does it ask Christ to be King?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make it a habit to include the Pope, the bishop, and the clergy in your daily prayers.
2. Instead of making up your own prayers for people, use those that the Church has composed.
3. Pray every evening for your relatives, friends, and benefactors.

XII

The Sick, the Dying, the Dead

Our prayer obligation extends to the sick, the dying, and the dead. For them the Church in her liturgy has provided Masses, Offices, and many blessings and prayers. Christ, who said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew V, 7), instituted a special sacrament for those in danger of death. For the sick we should ask health of body and soul and the grace of a happy death; for the dead, eternal rest. By praying for those who suffer we make ourselves worthy of Christ's mercy and win advocates for ourselves before the throne of God. Besides, we fulfill our great obligation to love our neighbor and assist in his salvation.

What liturgical provisions has the Church made for the sick, the dying, and the dead? For what should we ask in their behalf? How can our prayer for them be of benefit to us?

THE SICK: The Ritual's long section devoted to the sick contains many ceremonies. On February 3, the feast of St. Blase, who saved the life of a child that had choked on a bone, a special blessing of the throat asks for prevention of throat disorders and other ailments. This is one of the most popular sacramentals in the Ritual.

In blessing a sick child, the priest prays that "he may come to the fullness of age, and all the days of his life ever thank and serve Thee faithfully." For a sick adult the Church asks: "May the Lord Jesus Christ be with you to defend you; within you to preserve you; before you to guide you, behind you to protect you, and above you to bless you" (Scholz, "Sacramentals for the Sick," *Orate Fratres*, Vol. V, pages 158-62).

The priest making a formal visit to the sick blesses the house and sick-room before praying over the afflicted person. Readings from Holy Scripture recall Christ's healing St. Peter's mother-in-law and the paralytic at the pool of Siloe. One prayer asks "that this Thy servant may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body; and, by the intercession of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, may be delivered from present sorrow, and obtain eternal joy" (Layfolk's Ritual, page 65). God is asked to refresh the soul of the sick man "that, being corrected by his chastisement, he may directly feel himself healed by Thy medicine" (Layfolk's Ritual, page 77).

The Collect in the Votive Mass for the Sick asks God that the sick may be restored to health. The Secret begs God to receive our prayers "on behalf of those for whom in their sickness we crave Thy mercy; so that we may rejoice in the safety of those at whose danger we were afraid." There is also a Votive Mass for a Happy Death.

What are some of the sacramentals of the sick? On what day especially are throats blessed? What does the priest ask for in blessing a sick child? A sick adult? Describe the pastoral visitation of the sick. For what do we pray in the Votive Mass for the Sick? Is there any other Votive Mass valuable for the sick?

THE DYING: Most important rite for those in danger of death from sickness is Extreme Unction. St. James the Apostle says: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of

faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (St. James V, 14-15). The form of the sacrament follows St. James' description: The priest prays over the sick man and anoints him with oil, the symbol of strength. As he anoints the man's senses, the priest asks God to forgive the sins committed through the senses. During the anointing the seven Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints or some other suitable prayers should be recited by those present. Extreme Unction should be administered, if possible, while the sick person is still conscious and able to participate.

In giving Communion (Viaticum) to the sick, the priest says: "Receive, brother (sister), the Viaticum of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may preserve thee from the malignant enemy and bring thee to life everlasting."

Which apostle described the Sacrament of Extreme Unction? Of what does it consist? What prayers should be recited while the sick man is being anointed? What is Communion of the sick called? What does the priest pray for in giving Communion to the sick?

AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH: The blessing "in articulo mortis" (at the moment of death) bestows a plenary indulgence. Before the blessing, the priest prays: "Graciously grant unto him the pardon and remission of all his sins, that his soul at the hour of its departure may find in Thee a most merciful judge and . . . that he may be worthy to pass to everlasting life."

The Recommendation of a Departing Soul, to be said as death approaches, includes the litany and other prayers for the dying. The priest bids the soul to go forth in the name of God, and the angels and saints are asked to welcome it to heaven. In the prayer in memory of the passion of our Lord, to be said by the dying person or repeated for him by another, Christ is asked to deliver the soul from the pains of hell and bring it to heaven.

As death nears, a crucifix should be placed in the hands of the dying, a blessed candle should be lighted, and those present should kneel in prayer. Besides the prayer in memory of the passion, the Layfolks' Ritual contains others that should be said by or for the person in agony. These include acts of thanksgiving, resignation, and, above all, of perfect contrition. The act of perfect contrition should be repeated frequently by one of the attendants for and with the dying person, for the Church teaches that an act of perfect contrition remits all stain of sin. Especially recommended are also short aspirations which even the dying can usually recite or at least understand when they are said by others. Such are "My Jesus, mercy," "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," or the mere repetition of the name of Jesus. If possible, the priest should be called when death seems to be near at hand, in order that the dying person may be comforted and strengthened in his last moments.

What indulgence does the blessing "in articulo mortis" confer? Before giving this blessing what does the priest pray for? What is the Recommendation of a Departing Soul? What should be done as death draws near? What prayers should be said by the dying man or by those around him?

THE DEAD: After death those present continue their prayers, including that one which so beautifully expresses the Christian idea of eternal life: "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him." Then: "To Thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of Thy servant (name), that being dead to the world he may live to Thee" (Layfolk's Ritual, page 108). The Psalm "De Profundis" (Out of the Depths) is said, and the prayers go on until time for the funeral. A common and beautiful prayer for the dead is: "May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace."

The liturgy of the dead is among the most beautiful and consoling ceremonies of the Church. The body should be carried to the church in procession, but in our country the procession usually begins only at the church door. The corpse remains before the high altar during the Office of the Dead, the funeral Mass, and the final absolution. As the procession enters the church, the priest prays: "Come to his assistance, all ye saints of God; meet him all ye angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ receive thee . . . and may the angels conduct thee to Abraham's bosom" (Layfolk's Ritual, pages 113-114).

The Office of the Dead contains Psalms, hymns, and prayers begging God to receive the departed, to forgive his sins, and to give him everlasting life. In the final absolution after the funeral Mass, the bier is sprinkled with holy water and is incensed. The beautiful "Libera Me" (Deliver me, O Lord) is recited. At the actual burial more prayers are said, and the grave is blessed.

What prayers should be said after a person's death? Describe the funeral rites of the Church. Where does the procession usually begin in this country?

ALL SOULS' DAY AND REQUIEM MASSES: The liturgy for the dead centers in All Souls' Day, November 2. Having on the previous day paid tribute to all the blessed, the Church now turns to the suffering souls in purgatory. On this day every priest may celebrate three holy Masses, a privilege granted August 10, 1915, by Pope Benedict XV, who was deeply moved by the thousands of men dying in the World War. The three Masses ask that the poor souls may be admitted to the everlasting joys of heaven.

From noon November 1 to midnight November 2, those who receive the sacraments, visit a church, and pray for the Pope's intentions, may gain a plenary indulgence applicable to the poor souls. Because this indulgence is granted for each visit it is called "Toties Quoties" (as often as). Special services for the dead are often held in cemeteries on All Souls' Day.

There are also special Masses for the day or the anniversary of death or burial and a common Mass of the Dead. These are called Requiem (rest) Masses because they beg God to grant "eternal rest" to the souls of the faithful departed. There are special Collects for different classes of the deceased, and the dead are commemorated in every day's Mass and Office.

There is no despair or terror in the liturgy of the dead. Rather the Church stresses the eternal glories of everlasting life, as in the Preface of the Requiem Mass, in which we praise God "through Christ our Lord. In whom the hope of a blessed resurrection hath shone upon us, that those whom the certainty of dying afflicteth, the promise of future immortality may console."

When is All Souls' Day? How many Masses may a priest celebrate on this day? What is the "Toties Quoties" indulgence? What is a Requiem Mass? What are some of the different Requiem Masses? Tell how the Requiem Mass Preface shows the Church's attitude toward death.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If a person is in danger of death be sure to bring in the priest while the dying one is conscious of what is going on.
2. Have Masses offered up for your deceased relatives on their anniversaries.
3. Always live prepared for death. Daily say some prayer for a happy death.

XIII

Mass Prayers

It is mainly through the Mass that Christ unites Himself with the members of His Mystical Body by becoming their food in Holy Communion. The Mass is a true sacrifice, repeating Christ's sacrifice on the cross, but on Calvary Christ acted alone, and in the Mass man can join in the sacrifice. The Mass is also true prayer. It fulfills the ends of prayer by worshiping God, giving thanks for His gifts, asking His forgiveness for sin, honoring His saints, and begging His blessings.

The Mass is cooperative action and cooperative prayer. The prayers call for the people's participation, history proves that the early Christians actually did participate, and all recent Popes have called the faithful back to this traditional practice. We participate in the Mass through union with the intentions of the Church and the priest, recitation of the prayers, and reception of Holy Communion.

How does Christ unite Himself with members of His Mystical Body? What is the Mass? How does the Mass fulfill the ends of prayer? Discuss participation of the people in the Mass.

PRAY THE MASS: The best way to assist at holy Mass is to follow the sacrifice and to recite the same prayers which are being said by the priest at the altar. Those who during Mass practice private devotions fulfill their obligation of attending Mass, but deprive themselves of many blessings that come from closer union with this official act of supreme worship of God.

The way to pray the Mass is to use the Missal, which contains all the Mass prayers and directions for their use. The Missal grew out of several books that formerly contained the prayers. The Roman Missal was first printed at Milan in 1474. There are English Missals for those who cannot read Latin. Very inexpensive Sunday Missals also are available.

Before the Reformation the Mass books were known to many of the laity. Later the people lost their familiarity with the Mass, and only in this century is the liturgical revival restoring it. Through the *Missa Recitata* many Catholics are reviving the ancient practice of praying the Mass. Here the faithful answer the prayers with the server, say the Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and "Domine, non sum dignus," with the priest, and recite the Confiteor together at the Communion.

What is the best way to assist at holy Mass? What of private devotions at Mass? How can we pray the Mass? When was the Roman Missal first printed?

THE MISSAL'S CONTENTS: The Missal contains the Ordinary (prayers that remain the same throughout the year) and the Proper (prayers that vary according to the feast). There are Propers of the season and of the saints. The first follows the Temporal cycle commemorating the events of Christ's life. The other follows the Sanctoral cycle honoring the saints. There are also Masses for special occasions like weddings and funerals. The Ordinary and Proper are clearly marked in the Missal, and each Mass contains prayers from both.

Main divisions of the sacrifice are the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful. The early catechumens, unbaptized persons under in-

struction, were dismissed after the sermon and only the faithful participated in the following mysteries. The Mass of the Catechumens is still a preparatory and instructive ceremony. The principal parts of the sacrifice—Offertory, Consecration, and Communion—are in the Mass of the Faithful.

What does the Missal contain? What is the Ordinary? Proper? What are the divisions of the Proper? What are the main divisions of the Mass? What purposes does the Mass of the Catechumens serve? Name the principal parts.

PREPARATION: The prayers said at the foot of the altar as Mass begins include the sign of the cross, the antiphon "I will go in unto the altar of God," the "Judica Me" (Judge me, O God), the Confiteor, and a few short versicles. Already the people's participation is demanded—the Confiteor is said once by the priest and again by the server in the name of the people. Answering the people's confession, the priest uses the plural form of the Latin word for "you" when he asks God to "have mercy upon you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting." After the versicles, the priest says for the first time the "Dominus vobiscum" (The Lord be with you), again using the plural form. Ascending to the altar, he begs God to take away "our iniquities that we may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the holy of holies."

What prayers are said at the foot of the altar? How do they prove that the people are included in the Mass? What prayer does the priest say as he goes up to the altar?

INSTRUCTION: The Mass of the Catechumens really begins with the Introit, a Proper prayer giving the feast's keynote. Then follow the Kyrie, in which we implore God's mercy, and the Gloria, which opens with the angels' song at Christ's birth and is a beautiful hymn praising the Trinity. Then come the Collects, Epistle (with the Gradual, Alleluia or Tract, and sometimes the Sequence), Gospel, (sermon), and Credo. All but the Credo are Proper prayers. The Epistle and Gospel, Scriptural readings for the people's instruction, are appropriate for the season or feast. The Sunday sermon is an important traditional part of the instructive Mass of the Catechumens. The Credo, ending this part of the Mass, is the Nicene Creed, and properly belongs in the instruction part of the Mass.

What is the Introit? Discuss the Kyrie and Gloria. What follows the Gloria? What is the purpose of the Epistle and Gospel? Does the sermon have an appropriate place in the Mass of the Catechumens?

OFFERTORY: The Mass of the Faithful begins with the Offertory. Formerly the faithful brought gifts for the sacrifice in the Offertory procession. We today should recall this procession by offering ourselves and, if there is a collection, by giving our money to God. The Offertory verse, a Proper prayer, has no sacrificial theme but expresses the feast's dominant thought. In the oblation prayers following the Offertory verse, the priest asks God to receive the host offered up "for mine own countless sins . . . and for all here present . . . that it may avail both me and them unto salvation." He prays that the mystery of the union of water and wine may unite us with God. A third prayer offers "the chalice of salvation." The prayer, "In a humble spirit and contrite heart may we be received by Thee, O Lord," precedes an invocation of the Holy Ghost.

After washing his hands and in humble prayer addressing the Trinity, the priest turns to the people and, in the *Orate Fratres*, invites them to "pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father almighty." Through the server, the people answer: "May the Lord receive the sacrifice at thy hands,

to the praise and glory of His name, to our own benefit, and to that of all His holy Church." The *Orate Fratres* (Pray, Brethren) is followed by the Secret, another Proper prayer.

What is the first part of the Mass of the Faithful? What was the Offertory procession? Is the Offertory verse directly related to the offering of the sacrifice? What is asked in the oblation prayers? Tell of the *Orate Fratres*.

THE CANON: We proceed to the Canon, the most solemn part of the Mass, through the Preface, another Proper prayer. The Canon includes the Consecration and ends just before the *Pater Noster* (Our Father). It is really one long eucharistic prayer, divided into several parts, whose central idea is thanksgiving for the Holy Eucharist. It includes two prayers of thanksgiving, four of oblation, and six of petition for the Church and its members, living and dead. The Canon, and the Mass itself, reaches its climax in the Consecration when the priest recites Christ's words, "This is My body . . . this is My blood," and calls Jesus down from heaven into the midst of His people.

The "Memento" in the Canon shows the part the faithful should play in the Mass: "Be mindful, O Lord . . . of all here present . . . for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee, this sacrifice." The prayers after the Consecration again stress the cooperative nature of the Mass: "Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people . . ." "We most humbly beseech Thee." "Be mindful . . . of Thy servants . . . who are gone before us."

What prayer introduces the Canon? How far does the Canon extend? What is its climax? Its central idea? What prayers make up the long prayer of the Canon? Show how the Canon indicates that all should pray the Mass.

THE COMMUNION: So far the Mass has emphasized the sacrifice. Now it begs God to share the sacrificial Gift with the givers. "Give us this day our daily bread," says the *Our Father*, first prayer after the Canon. Then come a prayer asking God to "deliver us . . . from all evils"; the breaking of the Bread; the *Agnus Dei*, begging God's mercy; and three prayers preparatory for the Communion, in which God returns the Gift in the flesh and blood, soul and divinity of His divine Son. These three prayers stress the effects Communion should produce in souls: Peace, sanctification, and grace.

After the Communion the Mass ends in an atmosphere of gratitude. In the blessing before the last Gospel, the priest asks: "May almighty God bless you: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

What prayer immediately follows the Canon? How does the theme of the Mass change here from the idea of offering? What comes after the *Our Father*? What do the three prayers preceding Communion stress? What attitude marks the Mass after the Communion?

PRAYERS AFTER MASS: After Mass the priest and people recite three Hail Marys, the Hail, Holy Queen; a prayer to God, our Refuge and our Strength; a prayer to St. Michael, and three invocations to the Sacred Heart. These prayers, first commanded by Popes Leo XIII and Pius X, were ordered by Pius XI to be said for the Church in Russia.

What prayers are said after Mass? Who ordered them? For what intention are they said?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Obtain a daily or at least a Sunday Missal and use it regularly.
2. Take part in the Offertory at Mass by contributing generously.
3. Receive Holy Communion at Mass as often as possible.

XIV

The Divine Office

Those who participate in the Church's official worship by using the Missal will also be attracted toward the Divine Office, the Church's official prayer. The Office extends the Mass and spreads the liturgy throughout the day, centering all life in God. Like the Mass, the Office follows the ecclesiastical year, reviewing Christ's life in the Temporal cycle and honoring His saints in the Sanctoral.

"If those who love the Mass wish to carry their devotion to its logical conclusion, they must inevitably take up the Breviary," says Dom Rodolphe Hoor-naert (*The Breviary and the Laity*, page 24). The first hours of the Office form a preparation for Mass, and the others carry the theme of the Mass on through the day. "The hour prayers are perfectly subservient to the focal point of our worship, the eucharistic Sacrifice, as it were a wreath of flowers around the monstrance" (Parsch, in *Orate Fratres*, Vol. XII, No. 12, page 560).

What is the relation of the Office to the Mass? Does it follow the same liturgical cycles? What is the logical outcome of using the Missal? Are the Hour Prayers superior to the Mass?

OFFICIAL PRAYER: The Office serves first as the official community prayer of the Church. It is far superior to private prayer, which centers attention on the individual and his interests. Official prayer rises above the individual to become the voice of the whole Church praising God, thanking Him for His blessings, and asking Him for the means of salvation. Through it the individual prays not alone but with the entire Mystical Body, with the angels and saints in heaven, with Christ Himself. This is the Office's second object—to bring the individual into union with Christ and thus to promote his salvation.

The Office is the result of 1900 years' work by the Church, inspired by the Holy Ghost. It contains the Church's best prayers and sentiments throughout history. Much of it is God's own word—the 150 Psalms, the Scriptural readings and canticles. The Our Father, Hail Mary, and Apostles' Creed are frequently repeated. There are lives of the saints, homilies and sermons of the Fathers of the Church, many beautiful versicles and responses, petitions for needs of the Church and of men, beautiful hymns related to the seasons or feasts being celebrated.

What is the first object of the Divine Office? Why is official prayer superior to private prayer? What is the second object of the Office? What does the Office contain?

OFFICE AND LAITY: As the early Christians took part in the Mass, so did they participate in the public prayer of the Church. In the Middle Ages, crowds flocked to the churches to join the clergy in reciting the Divine Office, and when the Reformation closed the monasteries many families made the Office the common prayer in their homes. Because of the individualistic spirit of the Reformation, the decline in familiarity with Latin, and changes in the Breviary, the laity came to neglect and finally to abandon the Office.

Many today look on the Office only as a penitential task imposed on the clergy and consider the Breviary as the "priests' prayer book." Really the Office is the prayer of the whole Church. The fact that the Church commands priests and religious to recite it daily does not exclude the laity from using it, but

rather emphasizes the importance the Church attaches to it. The liturgical revival aims to return the Breviary to its place as a source of instruction and inspiration for all the people.

Did the ancient Christians take part in the Church's prayer life? Did the faithful in the Middle Ages participate in the Office? Why was the Breviary abandoned by the laity? Is the Breviary merely a "priests' prayer book"? Why does the Church require priests to use it daily?

BREVIARY: The Breviary (from the Latin *breviarium*, meaning abridgment) is so called because it contains the Office as it was shortened by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085). The Breviary includes one book for each season. Each volume contains: 1. Ordinary, prayers that recur daily and determine the Office's general pattern. 2. Psalter, the 150 Psalms distributed over the week. 3. Proper, parts for each day, divided into Temporal and Sanctoral. 4. Common of Saints, parts assigned to different classes of saints. 5. Appendix, Offices and prayers for special occasions or places. There are English translations for those who do not know Latin.

What book contains the Divine Office? Why is it so named? How many volumes does it contain? What are the parts of each volume? Are there English translations?

HOUR PRAYER: Because the Office is divided into eight parts for different hours of the day, it is called the Hour Prayer of the Church. The divisions are Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. Matins (more properly called the Vigils or Nocturnes) is supposed to be said during the early watches (vigils) of the night (*nox* in Latin). The others are the Day Hours. It is not necessary to say the parts at the hours assigned, but it is advisable to do so since the prayers are so admirably suited for the different periods of the day.

Matins was formerly said soon after midnight, when thoughts on the feast being celebrated were proposed for meditation. It contains Psalms, Scriptural readings, a homily on the Gospel, and a short biography of the day's saint or history of the feast. It introduces the theme of the feast and prepares us for Mass and the rest of the Office. Matins contains some of the most beautiful of Christian writings, but it is long, and few lay people say it.

Early in the morning, Lauds greets Christ with the rising of the sun. It is devoted entirely to the praise of God. This hour, so named from the recurrence of the word "Laudate" (praise ye) in Psalms 148, 149, and 150, symbolizes Christ as the Light of the world. Lauds dedicates the entire day to God: "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the high places. Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, O sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars and light" (Psalm 148).

Why is the Office called the Hour Prayer? What are its divisions? What does Matins consist of? Where does Lauds come in? Why is it so called? What is its symbolism?

PRIME—THE LITTLE HOURS: Prime, the official morning prayer which is being adopted by some of the laity, is beautifully expressive of Christian reliance on God. It is filled with humble petitions for God's protection and guidance throughout the day. We ask God to "order our days and actions in His peace" and "to direct and sanctify, rule and govern our hearts and bodies, our thoughts, words, and deeds . . . that . . . we may . . . attain salvation and freedom."

Prime is followed by: Terce, to be said about 9 a. m., commemorating the Holy Ghost's descent, on the apostles: "Come, Holy Ghost . . . our souls possess

with Thy full flood of holiness." Sext, the noon prayer asking God to "extinguish the flames of strife . . . give health of body and true peace of heart." None, about 3 p. m., when we ask God to "brighten our declining day" and to give us His grace. Terce, Sext, and None are called Little Hours because of their brevity.

What is Prime? What is its main sentiment? What do we ask for at Prime? Which hours follow Prime? Why are they called Little Hours? When should each be said? What is the theme of Terce? Sext? None?

VESPERS AND COMPLINE: These two final hours are the official evening and night prayers. Vespers, an exalted song of praise like Lauds, survived in many churches long after the laity had forgotten the rest of the Office, and now it is being revived in some places. At nightfall, Vespers turns our thoughts to God, whose praises we sing and whose blessing we ask. It includes the "Magnificat," the beautiful canticle of the Blessed Virgin: "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

Compline, the night prayer, begs for God's protection against the terrors of darkness and the spirits of evil. Here we say the Confiteor to acknowledge our sinfulness and to beg God's forgiveness. We pray for "a quiet night and a perfect end." The short lesson reminds us to "be sober and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." We ask God to visit our home and drive from it the snares of the devil so that we may dwell in peace, with God's blessing upon us.

Which are the two final hours? Which survived as a public service after the others had fallen into neglect? What is the official night prayer? What do we ask of God at Compline?

LEAGUE OF DIVINE OFFICE: Through the League of the Divine Office, many lay people are taking up the Breviary and joining in the Church's official prayer. Members may recite either all or part of the Office daily. Usually they are organized in groups of seven, each saying one hour daily. Thus every day all but Matins is recited. Each member's part is rotated so that in seven weeks he says all the Day Hours in order. The text, *The Day Hours of the Church*, may be obtained from St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., league headquarters. The monthly solemn Mass offered at St. John's for the progress of the liturgical movement includes league members in its intentions.

We are always in the presence of God, "but in a special manner does His countenance shine upon us when . . . in union with the whole Church we recite the Divine Office which she has established in His honor and with which she has glorified Him day after day," says Dom Thomas Verner Moore (*Prayer*, page 208).

What is the League of the Divine Office? How does it operate? Discuss Dom Thomas Verner Moore's statement about our relations with God when we recite the Office.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Seek to increase your union with the life of the Mystical Body by becoming acquainted with the Divine Office and by participating in its recitation.
2. Attend Vespers regularly if it is held in your parish church.
3. Try to organize a branch of the League of the Divine Office among your friends.

XV

Mental Prayer

Since our prime purpose in life is to give glory to God, and since we glorify God best by bringing our lives into complete union with Him, it is important for us to use any means that will promote this union. This is the end of all prayer, and it is particularly the end of mental prayer, in which we apply the faculties of the soul—imagination, memory, intellect, and will—to the things of God. Mental prayer needs no expression in words, for the soul reflects on spiritual subjects with the aim of stirring the will to resolutions of amendment and acts of virtue.

Three stages are usually distinguished in mental prayer: 1. Meditation, in which the reflections of the intellect predominate. 2. Affective prayer, in which the resolutions of the will take precedence. 3. Contemplation, in which both intellect and will seem to be at rest in God and the soul is caught up in a blissful enjoyment of earth's closest approach to the beatific vision of heaven. These three stages are proper to the three ways of spiritual perfection: 1. The purgative. 2. The illuminative. 3. The unitive. Through all these stages, God is active, giving His graces to produce amendment in our lives, illuminating our minds and strengthening our wills, finally flooding our souls with the rapture of His presence.

How does prayer, especially mental prayer, fulfill the first purpose of our being? What is mental prayer? Which are its three stages? What is meditation? Affective prayer? Contemplation? Which are the three ways of spiritual perfection?

MEDITATION: In this first step of mental prayer, the soul usually is filled with human imperfections that must be rooted out before more perfect union with God is achieved. Meditation is proper to the purgative way, the state of beginners in the spiritual life. This stage is called purgative because the principal aim in it is to purge the soul of sin and imperfection.

We must seek to fulfill St. Paul's injunction: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians II, 5). Since God is a pure spirit, we cannot form an adequate picture of Him in our minds. Hence we seek to arrive at an understanding of Him through consideration of His incarnate Son. In Christ we have both the fullness of the Divinity and the perfect pattern for striving to live in union with God. By meditating on Christ's life and virtues, we gain a clearer insight into what Christian living really means.

But this consideration of Christ is only one part of meditation, the intellectual part. There remains the will's part—the resolution to reproduce the Christ-life in our own souls. "Meditation has for its object to fill our minds with the conviction that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life . . . and finally that it is only by making His modes of thought, affection, and action our own, that we shall enjoy the life that is truly life" (Leen, *Progress Through Mental Prayer*, pages 49-50). Before we can make progress in the spiritual life, we must wipe out our sinful habits, bring our passions under control, correct our imperfections, and begin a real development in virtue.

What is the usual state of the soul at the beginning of the practice of meditation? To which of the three ways of perfection is meditation proper? What is the aim of meditation? What must we accomplish before we can make progress in the spiritual life?

AFFECTIVE PRAYER: Meditation normally progresses into affective prayer, or prayer of aspiration. Here the soul flies immediately to acts of faith, hope, and love—to resolutions to perfect ourselves in the imitation of Christ. The natural activity of the soul is lessened, and the action of God on it is increased. We are getting closer to God, who illumines our minds and souls with the light of grace and truth. This is the illuminative way.

Affective prayer often takes the form of short ejaculations, frequently repeated out of motives of pure love of God. Sometimes in words, sometimes only in the mind, these beautiful aspirations are repeated until their sentiments are burned deep into the soul. St. Francis of Assisi was once observed to spend a whole night in saying again and again: "My God and my all." This type of prayer can be engaged in almost without limitation—in the midst of any hurried activity we can make aspirations. They take only a fraction of a second, and yet they bring us to a realization of the presence of God and open our souls for the reception of His graces. Gradually the human will becomes completely resigned to the divine Will, and this total subjection of man to God becomes apparent in the person's daily actions.

What is the normal development from meditation? To what stage of spiritual life does affective prayer belong? What form does affective prayer often take? Why are aspirations valuable? What happens to the will as a result of affective prayer?

CONTEMPLATION: This highest stage of mental prayer is proper to the unitive way, wherein complete union with God is the aim of the soul. The processes of the earlier stages are simplified, and the soul gives itself over to a loving contemplation of God's perfections. At times unexpected flashes of God's presence flood the souls of those who are inexperienced in the practice of mental prayer, but perfect contemplation has been achieved only by a few of the most saintly mystics. Most persons should seek to perfect themselves in meditation and affective prayer and pray that they be given the grace of contemplation when and if they reach the proper state of spiritual development.

Which is the highest stage in mental prayer? To which of the three ways of spirituality is it proper? What is the principal aim of contemplation? What should be the attitude of most persons toward contemplation?

TRADITIONAL METHOD: The traditional method of mental prayer was to devote oneself constantly to the consideration of the eternal truths revealed in the Bible and the liturgy, drawing inspiration from Christ's life as He lived it on earth and as it is repeated in the workings of His Mystical Body, the Church. This was the method of the ancient Fathers of the Church. It was the method of St. Benedict, and it is the method of his followers today.

Laymen can find in the Bible, Missal, Breviary, and catechism ample materials for meditation. If they build their prayer around the liturgy, they will be drawn into closer union with the life of the Church and of Christ Himself. These materials are available to all, but most persons will find that inexperience and lack of mental discipline will make the practice of mental prayer very difficult without the aid of some detailed method of procedure.

What was the traditional method of meditation? Is it still used? Where can we find ready materials for meditation? Why are detailed methods of meditation necessary for most persons?

MODERN METHODS: The detailed systems of meditation have been developed mostly since the fifteenth century. All strive to make it easier for the mind to communicate with God, all bring into play the various faculties of the

soul, all seek to bring us to God through Christ, and all lead toward affective prayer and contemplation. There is always a remote preparation for mental prayer in mortification of the senses, habitual recollection of the mind, and the practice of humility. The proximate preparation includes the selection of a subject, usually on the evening before the meditation; the preliminary consideration of the topic, and the determination to make the meditation with earnestness, confidence, and humility.

The immediate preparation involves placing ourselves in the presence of God and acknowledging our unworthiness and insufficiency. The body of the meditation includes acts of worship of God, considerations of the truth or virtue being meditated upon, self-examination to make personal application of the subject to our own failings or progress, prayers of petition asking for the grace to grow in virtue, and resolutions to use the means of spiritual development. The conclusion includes acts of thanksgiving, a review of the manner in which the meditation has been made, a final prayer for God's blessing, and the selection of some special maxim or thought to be considered through the day.

The two principal developments of this scheme are those of St. Ignatius Loyola and of the Sulpicians.

What aims do the detailed methods of meditation have in common? What does the remote preparation for meditation involve? The proximate and immediate preparation? The body of the meditation? The conclusion? Which are the two principal methods?

THROUGH VOCAL PRAYER: All of us are familiar with the common vocal prayers, and through them we can find our way to mental prayer. By careful attention to the meaning of the prayers we recite, by sincere resolutions to practice what we pray, we make progress toward mental prayer, for the intellect and the will are already at work. "Vocal prayer is a sure and safe way to the heights of contemplation and the perfect union of the mind and heart with God," says Dom Moore (Prayer, page 24).

While vocal prayer leads to mental prayer, it is not to be abandoned by those advanced in the practice. "For those advanced in the spiritual life," says Father Leen (Progress Through Mental Prayer, page 43), "the liturgical prayers are of a sovereign efficacy for bringing their souls into union with the intellectual illuminations and affective impulses of the Holy Spirit. The prayers and chants of Holy Church become for such souls the natural and spontaneous outlet in which the pent up emotions of the heart acquired in mental prayer find due expression."

Through both vocal and mental prayer, we must seek ever "to purify our souls and replace our natural views by the views of Jesus Christ and to substitute for our natural life, His mode of life" (Leen, Progress Through Mental Prayer, page 64).

What should be the relation between vocal prayer and mental prayer? What does Dom Moore say on this point? Once we have made progress in the spiritual life, what should we do in regard to vocal prayer? What is our ultimate aim in both kinds of prayer?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Give at least a few minutes each day to meditation on the life of Christ.
2. Make frequent aspirations throughout the day.
3. Through definite acts of the will, submit your human desires to the divine will.

XVI

Family Prayer

If the Christian home does not lead its members closer to God, it fails in its duty, for it is in the home that most men must work out their salvation. The weakening of family life has been one of the main factors in the spread of modern paganism. To offset this trend the Popes and bishops in recent times have repeatedly called for a return to the pious practices that used to be the distinguishing marks of the real Catholic home—particularly to the practice of common family prayer.

The home needs special graces if it is to fulfill its obligations. These are supplied mainly through the Sacrament of Matrimony, through which God confers not only sanctifying grace but also particular graces needed for the fulfillment of the ends of marriage. Moreover, the Church has provided special helps for the Christian home in the family sacramentals—the rites surrounding the marriage ceremony, blessings for mothers and children, blessings for homes, sacramental objects, family prayer and devotions.

Why must the home lead its members closer to God? What have recent Popes and bishops urged as a remedy for the paganism that is tearing down family life? What special sacramentals has the Church provided for the Christian home?

FAMILY PRAYER: If members of the family are to reap the full fruits of Matrimony and the family sacramentals, they must actively cooperate with God's grace. This they can do mainly through family prayer, in which parents and children join in acknowledging their dependence on God, giving Him the adoration that is His due, and begging of Him the graces necessary for salvation. The Christian family can reproduce on a small scale the life of Christ's Mystical Body through participating in the joys and sorrows of the Church seasons, and celebrating the feasts of the liturgical year. If these things are done, the young will be led to know, to love, and to serve God. All will be inspired to lead better lives and will be drawn closer to God.

One of the first duties of parents is to teach their children to pray. As soon as infants are able to speak or to make simple movements, they should learn to pronounce the name of Jesus and to make the sign of the cross. A little later, they can be taught the "Angel of God" prayer to the guardian angel, the Hail Mary, the Our Father, etc., as rapidly as their developing minds and tongues will allow. As soon as possible, the children should be included in the family's common prayer.

What is necessary if the family is to reap the full fruits of the Sacrament of Matrimony and of the family sacramentals? How can this be done? What will be the result? What is one of parents' first duties to their children? When should they be included in the family's common prayer?

MORNING PRAYERS: If common prayer is impossible in the morning, each member individually should dedicate himself and the whole day to God. The morning prayers should include at least the sign of the cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles' Creed, and some special petitions for self and others. By reciting the Morning Offering (see Chapter VII) we can dedicate all our actions to God and make the whole day an uninterrupted act of prayer.

The ideal morning prayer is the Office of Prime, in which we ask God to direct all our actions and to protect us from evil throughout the day. To make

the morning perfect, we should if possible assist at Mass and receive Holy Communion to obtain the food necessary for our spiritual life, just as we receive our bodily sustenance at the three regular meals.

What prayers should be said in the morning? What is the purpose of the Morning Offering? What is the ideal morning prayer? What else is needed to make the morning complete for the real Catholic?

MEAL PRAYERS: Mealtime is a fitting occasion both to ask God's blessing and to thank Him for His gifts. The custom of praying at meals dates back to earliest Christian times. No Catholic family should dispense with prayer either before or after meals. The Church's official table prayers contain praise of God, petition for His gifts, and gratitude for His help.

In these prayers, several versicles of praise precede the Our Father, and then comes the familiar: "Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen." A young member of the family then speaks to the father: "Pray, sir, a blessing," and the father at noon gives the response thus: "May the King of eternal glory bring us to a share in the heavenly table." At night, he says: "May the King of eternal glory lead us to the table of eternal life." The others answer, "Amen." The "Bless us, O Lord," alone is also approved.

What is a fitting time for prayer through the day? What ends do the official table prayers serve? Describe these prayers.

NIGHT PRAYERS: At night, we should thank God for the graces He has given us throughout the day, beg His pardon for our offenses, pray for the welfare of the Church and of all men, both living and dead, ask for the graces we need, and beg for God's protection through the night. An examination of conscience, the Confiteor, and the Act of Contrition should be included.

The best night prayer is the official one of the Church, Compline. This part of the Divine Office always contains a beautiful prayer for the home: "Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Thy blessing be always upon us." It takes only a few minutes to say Compline, which is highly recommended for common family recitation.

The rosary too is especially suited for family recitation. Even the smallest children can join in the rosary, and every adult can find in it unlimited material for meditation. Pope Pius XI always recommended daily recitation of the rosary to the newlyweds who came to receive His blessing, and often he gave them rosaries. In his encyclical on the rosary, he wrote: "The fathers and mothers of families particularly must give an example to their children, especially when, at sunset, they . . . recite the Holy Rosary on bended knees before the image of the Virgin . . . This is a beautiful and salutary custom." The family rosary was once a very popular practice; it should be such again.

What should our night prayers include? What is the best night prayer? What did Pius XI say about recitation of the rosary in the home?

SPECIAL OCCASIONS: Every day offers rich opportunities for promoting religion in the home, but there are occasions when family life should bring out special lessons. Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and other great feasts should be celebrated with stress on their religious significance. Lent and Advent should bring a deepening of religious life in the home, and the penitential practices of these seasons should be observed strictly. The special devotions of the different months—such as to the Sacred Heart in June, to Our Lady in May, to St. Joseph in March—should be practiced in the home.

Feasts of the children's patron saints and occasions such as their first Communion or Confirmation offer splendid opportunities for special instruction and devotion. On their birthdays children should be encouraged to honor the saint of the day, whose life might well be read to them by their parents or older brothers and sisters.

What are some of the seasons or days when special family devotions should be practiced?

RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE: If a home is to foster devotion, it must have a truly religious atmosphere. This can be achieved in part in the furnishings and decoration. There should be a crucifix in each bedroom and in the dining room; a statue or a picture of Christ and an image of Mary in every home. A small religious shrine provides an ideal place for family prayers. The "Enthronement of the Sacred Heart" is one of the best means of creating a devotional atmosphere. In this ceremony a picture or statue of the Sacred Heart is formally erected and the family is solemnly consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Christ promised to "bless every house in which an image of My Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honored." Consult your pastor as to this Enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

Then there should be religious articles for members of the family—a rosary for each, a simple prayerbook for the young, a Missal and possibly a copy of *The Day Hours of the Church* for the older members, medals, scapulars, holy water, blessed candles, and the things necessary for the priest's use when he visits the sick. There should also be Catholic reading matter. A home so equipped will necessarily inspire good thoughts and increase devotion in those who inhabit it. It will merit God's blessing, and He will be glad to dwell there in the midst of His children.

What religious furnishings should each home have? What did Christ promise to those who expose and venerate an image of His Sacred Heart? What are some of the religious articles that should be found in every Christian home?

HOLY FAMILY: The Holy Family at Nazareth provides us with the perfect model. Christ was the loving and obedient Child, Mary the most pure and holy Mother, St. Joseph the devoted provider and protector. We should pray often: "Grant us, Lord Jesus, always to follow the example of the Holy Family, that at the hour of our death Thy glorious Virgin Mother, with blessed Joseph, may come to meet us, and so we may deserve to be received by Thee into Thy everlasting dwelling place" (three years' indulgence).

Tell how Jesus, Mary, and Joseph formed the perfect family. Recite the prayer in honor of the Holy Family.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Celebrate the feasts of your children's patron saints so that the children will come to know and imitate their patrons' virtues.
2. Adopt the rosary as the common night prayer in your family.
3. Have a picture or statue of the Sacred Heart enthroned in your home.

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