

THE CATECHISM
SIMPLY EXPLAINED
By Canon Cafferata

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Chapter 1. Faith

1. Who made you?

God made me.

There is no doubt about this. The ninety-ninth Psalm of Holy David says : He made us and we are His. Some people do, indeed, deny the existence of God; but this is to act against reason: All men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen could not understand him that is. Neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman(Wisdom 13:1). A man who denies the existence of God makes his own existence a greater mystery than that which he denies.

2. Why did God make you?

God made me to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next.

God always has some end in view in all that He does. Surely, then, in creating man, the noblest work of His hands, He must have had a very special end in view. The Catechism tells us what that end is, namely, God Himself. First He made us to know Him. Although we have never seen God. we can. and do, know a great deal about Him: (1) from the Old Testament, in which He revealed much about Himself to the patriarchs and prophets, to Abraham, Moses, Isaias and the rest; (2) from the New Testament, in which through His Son, Jesus Christ, He has made known much more about Himself and about our destiny. Secondly, to love God. Even in this world we naturally love what we know to be beautiful and good. Therefore, the more we know about God and His infinite beauty and goodness, the more we are led to love Him. Lastly, to serve God. We prove our love for God by serving Him, by doing His will. He Himself has said, If you love me. keep my commandments(John 14:15). We all long to be happy, but we can never be completely happy in this life. But if we do our best to know all we can about God, to love Him and serve Him, we shall have in the next life a completely happy life with God for ever. He has promised this, so we cannot doubt it. So you understand now why God made you, why you are here: not to make a great name for yourself, not to get rich, not to enjoy yourself as you like, but simply to serve the God who made you. You are one of His creatures; you depend on Him entirely for everything. As your Creator, God has rights over you, and the greatest of these rights is that you should know, love and serve Him.

3. To whose image and likeness did God make you?

God made me to His own image and likeness.

4. Is this likeness to God in your body or in your soul?

This likeness to God is chiefly in my soul.

5. How is your soul like to God?

My soul is like to God because it is a spirit, and is immortal.

A spirit is a living being which is not material in its nature and which therefore cannot be seen or handled or made contact with by any of the senses. God is a Spirit; and an angel is a spirit; the human soul is a spirit. God and the angels are called pure spirits since they have no body. Man, on the contrary, is not a pure spirit; he is composed of body as well as soul. Man's body and the whole of the material creation must bear some remote likeness to God, for God must reflect His truth, goodness and beauty in all that He has made. But, since God is a Spirit, man's likeness to Him must reside chiefly in his soul. God is the great Spirit, existing of Himself, and infinite in all perfections. The angels and our souls are immeasurably lower than God. They do not exist of themselves, but by the power of God; and they are limited in their nature and perfections.

6. What do you mean when you say that your soul is immortal?

When I say that my soul is immortal, I mean that my soul can never die.

God cannot die; and He has given my soul this likeness to Himself that, being a spirit, it too cannot die. When a man dies, it is really only his body that dies. His soul lives on and will live for ever, either with God in heaven or apart from Him in hell. That is the reason why heaven and hell are eternal. Hence the importance of the next question.

7. Of which must you take care, of your body or of your soul?

I must take care of my soul; for Christ has said, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

When we die our body is interred; but what becomes of our soul? It appears before God and is judged by Him according to the life it has led on earth. Then at least we understand why God has made us. What becomes of our body will not matter to us then; but it will matter very much what becomes of your soul. If you were to be asked, Do you want to save your soul, to make it safe for the next world, you would of course say; but perhaps your difficulty is to know how to go about this all-important task. Hence the next question.

8. What must you do to save your soul?

To save my soul I must worship God by Faith, Hope and Charity; that is, I must believe in Him, I must Hope in Him, and I must love Him with my whole heart.

So you see you have three things to do. You must believe in God- that is, you must believe that there is a God; and you must believe everything that God has made known to us whether you understand it or not. and whether you like it or not. Then you must hope in God - that is, you must trust His word that He will save you and take you to heaven, on condition that you do what He wants you to do here on earth. It is not always easy to do what God wants. It is sometimes very hard to observe the commandments and keep out of sin. But we have God's promise of heaven to help us to be good; and He never leaves us to fight the battle unaided. He helps us by His grace, as He has promised us always to do. But He has insisted that we should ask Him for this help, and that is why in the chapter on Hope (135-140) the Catechism speaks to us about prayer and how we ought to pray. Lastly, we must love Him with all our hearts, more than all

persons and things on this earth; and we must always wish and strive to do what pleases Him. Our Lord has told us we really love Him if we keep His commandments. The chapter on Charity or the love of God (169-227), teaches us about the Commandments.

9. What is faith ?

Faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe, without doubting, whatever God has revealed.

Faith means belief : to have faith means to believe, and to believe means to assent to something that is said to you, because you consider that the person who says it knows all about it and would not tell you a lie. It does not mean that you yourself know all about it or that you quite understand what he says, but you take his word because he knows and he understands. There are two kinds of faith human faith and divine faith; faith in man's word and faith in God's word. If you were to tell me that you had seen a great fire in the city, naturally, thinking you to be a truthful honest man, I should accept your statement as true, even though I had not seen the fire myself. That would be human faith - that is, I should believe on the authority of a man. If I refused to accept your word or expressed a doubt about it, you would naturally consider yourself insulted. Let us now take faith in God's word, or divine faith. This means believing what God has told us and believing it on His word, because it is He who has told us. God is the very Truth itself. Men can deceive and be deceived. Not so God. Therefore, whatever He says must be true. There are of course many things that He has told us which we cannot understand ; they are above our reason. But God knows all about them. and since He cannot deceive us, we ought to believe them without the slightest hesitation. It would be a great sin to doubt God's word or to deny it; it would be equivalent to accusing God of lying. The Catechism says that faith is a gift of God. It is He who gives us the power and the good will to believe. We receive the gift of faith at baptism. It is called a supernatural gift because it is in no way due to the nature that God has given us, but it is in fact a wonderful new gift of His to us, making us able to know Him as we cannot possibly know Him by the unaided power of our reason.

10. Why must you believe whatever God has revealed?

I must believe whatever God has revealed because God is the very truth, and can neither deceive nor be deceived.

But the difficulty which many people have is to know what things God has revealed. They would readily believe them if only they knew what they were. Who is to tell them? The answer is given in the next two questions. The Catholic Church can teach them these things, and she has the commission and authority of Jesus Christ to do this teaching.

11. How are you to know what God has revealed?

I am to know what God has revealed by the testimony, teaching, and authority of the Catholic Church.

12. Who gave the Catholic Church divine authority to teach ?

Jesus Christ gave the Catholic Church divine authority to teach when He said, "Go ye and teach all nations" (Matt, 28:19).

We read in the Gospels how our Lord chose twelve men, who were called apostles. The word "apostle" means envoy or messenger, someone commissioned by authority to carry a message. Our Lord taught the apostles during His life-time all the truths that people had to know and believe in order to save their souls. These twelve men He sent to teach His truths to the world, as the text quoted above shows. He told them that they would be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). After the death of Judas who betrayed our Lord, St Matthias was chosen to complete the Twelve; and later St Paul was added to the number. The teaching of the apostles can be read in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. By means of the apostles our Lord founded the Catholic Church and therefore she carries to all peoples of all ages the commission and the authority which He gave to His apostles. This will be proved later (84, etc.).

Chapter 2: The Apostles' Creed

13. What are the chief things which God has revealed?

The chief things which God has revealed are contained in the Apostles' Creed.

14. Say 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, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose, 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.

This Creed does not contain all the truths which God has revealed, but the chief ones. It contains all the truths which you must believe in order to be saved, and it sets them out in a clear and simple way, so that anyone can easily learn it by heart. It is called the Apostles' Creed because the teaching it contains was the teaching of the Apostles. which they had learnt from our Lord Himself.

15. How is the Apostles' Creed divided?

The Apostles' Creed is divided into twelve parts or articles.

The articles of the Creed may be grouped into three sections: (1) the first article which tells us about God the Father and the work of creation; (2) the second to the seventh articles which tell

us about God the Son becoming Man and His work of Redemption; (3) from the eight article to the end, which tell us about God the Holy Ghost and His work of sanctification through the Catholic Church.

The first Article

16. What is the first article of the Creed?

The first article of the Creed is, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

17. What is God?

God is the supreme Spirit, who alone exists of Himself, and is infinite in all perfections.

God is the highest and greatest spirit. He alone was never created; He has always existed and it is His very nature to exist. His perfections are absolutely without limit of any sort; He is all-powerful, all knowing, all-holy, all-merciful, all-just and so on. We are only imperfectly powerful, imperfectly holy, imperfectly wise, etc.

18. Why is God called Almighty?

God is called Almighty because He can do all things "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

But God cannot do what is against reason, for instance, make a square circle. Nor can He commit a sin; to sin would be against His very nature since He is by nature all-holy.

19. Why is God called Creator of heaven and earth?

God is called Creator of heaven and earth because He made heaven and earth, and all things, out of nothing, by His word.

"Heaven and earth is an expression taken from the Bible and it means "all things except God. There was a time, millions of years ago, when there was nothing but God. Then by an act of His all-powerful will, He commanded things to exist and they came into existence. He has told us Himself that He did this. See for instance, Psalm 134; Isaias 11:26; Jeremias 10:10; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; and especially the beginning of the first book of the Bible, Genesis, where the creation of the world is described. Moses in Genesis assigns the work of creation to six days. That he means ordinary days seems clear from the fact that each had an evening and a morning, and the six days of work are followed by a day of rest, like the Hebrew week. Some people reject the Genesis description because of its so-called contradiction with Science. Science, however, cannot say much about the process of Creation because the laws of growth and development must have been very special (man, for instance, came to existence as if he was a 30 years old adult). Besides, Moses was not intending to write a scientific account of the Creation, but a clear, historical account of God's work.

20. Had God any beginning?

God has no beginning; He always was, He is, and He always will be.

There is, then, this infinite difference between God and us. He has always existed; we have come into existence by His power.

21. Where is God?

God is everywhere.

God is present in everything that He has made: in the farthest star, in the whole world and in every part of it, and in each of us wherever we are. Nor is He divided up so that part of Him is here and part there: but, since He is a Spirit, He is whole and complete everywhere. Every moment He upholds everything in existence by His almighty power; and He rules and governs everything, both the great and the small, always.

22. Does God know and see all things?

God knows and sees all things, even our most secret thoughts.

He sees, not with bodily eyes, since, as the next question tells us, God has no body, but with the knowledge of His infinite Mind. There is, then, nothing hidden from Him. Even the darkest night is like full daylight to Him. Sometimes people commit sins in secret, but God can see them. Nor does He forget the sins we have forgotten; He remembers everything. There is no past or future with God. All past things and all future things are present to Him. He knows all that will happen till the end of the world and for all eternity; He sees it all before Him at this present moment.

23. Has God any body?

God has no body; He is a Spirit.

24. Is there only one God?

There is only one God.

All Christians believe this fundamental truth. It is taught throughout the Bible; and reason tells us that there cannot be more than one infinite Being.

25. Are there three Persons in God?

There are three Persons in God - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

This truth was revealed to us by Jesus Christ. The clearest text is in Matthew 28:19, where our Lord commanded His apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Here we have three persons; for Father and Son are personal names, and the Holy Ghost is set alongside the Father and the Son. They are distinct Persons; for the Father and the Son cannot be the same person, and all Three are given the distinctive, definite article: "the Father, "the Son, "the Holy Ghost.

26. Are these three Persons three Gods?

These three Persons are not three Gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are all one and the same God.

God has made known to us that there is only one true, living God. In the text I have just quoted our Lord makes it clear that, though there are three distinct Persons, there are not three Gods. He says in the name of (in the singular). Baptism makes us holy by God's power and sets us apart as God's children; and by using the singular our Lord shows that the three distinct Persons who are making us holy and to whom we are dedicated are one Being, one only God.

27. What is the mystery of the three Persons in one God called?

The mystery of the three Persons in one God is called the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

28. What do you mean by a mystery?

By a mystery I mean a truth which is above reason, but revealed by God.

The Father is really God, the Son is really God, and the Holy Ghost is really God, but there are not three Gods, but only one God. This is something we cannot understand, it is beyond our reason. But it is nevertheless absolutely true, since God, who is the very Truth, has made it known to us. On His word we accept it, although we cannot see how it can be. Our minds are too small to grasp the wonders of God's infinite nature and life.

29. Is there any likeness to the Blessed Trinity in your soul?

There is this likeness to the Blessed Trinity in my soul, that as in one God there are three Persons, so in my soul there are three powers.

30. Which are the three powers of your soul?

The three powers of my soul are my memory, my understanding, and my will.

Although we cannot understand the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, nevertheless God has put in His creation certain traces of Himself which help to make the mystery less difficult for us. Our Lord has told us that God the Son proceeds from God the Father: He is born of the Father before all ages. And He has told us that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. You will find these facts stated in the Nicene Creed, which is a longer form of the Apostles' Creed. We say the Nicene Creed at Mass on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation and on certain other days. If there is any sort of likeness to the Trinity in us it must be chiefly in our souls; we have already said that the image of God is chiefly in our souls. Now we have each of us only one soul; but, as the Catechism says, that soul can do three things. Consider yourself. When you say "I" you mean yourself. All your life you have been saying "I, and you are always, vaguely at least, aware of yourself as the same person throughout your life. You have thus a continuous memory of yourself. From that continuous memory you form to yourself an idea of what you are like, you know all about yourself; in other words, you understand yourself. And this understanding of yourself depends on your memory of yourself. It follows on your memory of yourself, and thus you have a vague image of God the Son proceeding from God the Father. Now further, as a result of your memory of yourself and of your knowledge of yourself, you come to love yourself. We all love ourselves; it is natural to do so. That is our will at work, for the basic activity of the will is love. In this way you have in your soul a vague image of the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son. But, although you have a memory, an understanding and a will, you have, as we said above, not three souls but only one.

The Second Article

31. What is the second article of the Creed?

The second article of the Creed is: "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

That is, I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

32. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is God the Son, made man for us.

He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity who came down from heaven and became man to redeem us and to teach us how to save our souls. We shall discuss these points in the following questions.

33. Is Jesus Christ truly God?

Jesus Christ is truly God.

34. Why is Jesus Christ truly God?

Jesus Christ is truly God because He has one and the same nature with God the Father.

St John wrote his Gospel to show that our Lord was God (John 20:31). He begins by telling us of the Word who was God and who was made flesh; and throughout the Gospel our Lord's very clear and definite claim to be God is brought out. For instance, He claims to have been living an unchanging life before the days of Abraham (8:58); He says also: "I and the Father are one(20:30). In the other Gospels too in various ways He makes the same claim. Thus He always sets Himself apart from us in relation to God; He does not say, "our Father, but "my Father and "your Father. He claims the divine power to forgive sins and proves it by healing the man sick of the palsy (Mark 2:1-12). He forgives the woman who was a sinner because she has loved much; but it was He whom she loved (Luke 7:47). He claims that He and the Father have complete knowledge of each other (Matt. 11:27). He maintained the claim at His trial and went to death maintaining it (Luke 22:67-71). That this constant claim of His was genuine was guaranteed by the numerous "signs" He gave, that is, His miracles, and particularly by His resurrection from the dead.

35. Was Jesus Christ always God?

Jesus Christ was always God, born of the Father from all eternity.

Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as the next question tells us. He is God the Son, as the texts I have quoted above show. Therefore He was born of God the Father; but, since He is God, He has existed equally with the Father from all eternity.

36. Which Person of the Blessed Trinity is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

37. Is Jesus Christ truly man?

Jesus Christ is truly man.

38. Why is Jesus Christ truly man?

Jesus Christ is truly man because He has the nature of man, having a body and soul like ours.

He had a body like ours; he was born, grew up, suffered and died; we read in the Gospels that he fasted, was hungry, wept, slept and was weary. He had a soul like ours: He said in His agony that His soul was sorrowful even unto death (Matt. 26:28); when dying, He commended His spirit to His Father (Luke 23:46); He did acts of virtue: adoration (John 4:22); obedience (John 5:30); humility (Matt. 11:29), and acts of virtue are acts of the soul.

39. Was Jesus Christ always man?

Jesus Christ was not always man; He has been man only from the time of His Incarnation.

His human life began when He was conceived in His Mother's womb. This took place when she said to the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation (Feast, 25th March): "Be it done unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

40. What do you mean by Incarnation?

I mean by Incarnation that God the Son took to Himself the nature of man: "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14).

41. How many natures are there in Jesus Christ?

There are two natures in Jesus Christ: the nature of God and the nature of man.

This follows from what we have already said. He was really God and really man. Therefore He had both the nature of God and the nature of man. We have only one nature: the nature of man.

42. Is there only one Person in Jesus Christ?

There is only One Person in Jesus Christ, which is the Person of God the Son.

At the beginning of his Gospel St John says: The Word was God, which means that the Son of God had the divine nature. A little later St John says: The Word was made flesh, that is, the same Person, the Son of God, took to Himself a second nature, man's. He thus became one Person in two natures. He acted in both natures: He worked miracles and raised Himself from the dead using His divine nature and power, and He ate and slept and suffered pain and death in His human nature. So, whatever He did, whether as God or man, it was God who did it. Hence we rightly say that God died, although He did not die in His divine nature but in His human nature. The union of the two natures in the one Person is called the Hypostatic Union. Hypostatic is in origin a Greek word and means of the Person.

43. Why was God the Son made man?

God the Son was made man to redeem us from sin and hell, and to teach us the way to heaven.

This is a most important answer. Once we understand it we shall understand a great deal about Jesus Christ and His love for us.

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we read how God made our first parents, Adam and Eve, and placed them in the garden of Paradise, and told them to till it and keep it in order. They were God's friends, which means that they had been given the gift of sanctifying grace, which is a special gift of God to which none of us is entitled and which makes us holy and pleasing to Him (Grace is treated of later on, 138, etc.). In addition they had two other gifts. One of these gifts made them free from the evil inclinations to which we are prone and which are known as concupiscence. The other gift made them free from death and from sickness and pain. They were to keep these three gifts provided they obeyed a certain commandment of God that they should not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And Adam had these gifts not only for himself but for all his descendants, that is, for all of us; so that, if he disobeyed God's command, he was to lose them for us as well as for himself. It was quite just of God to make this arrangement, because the gifts were special favours and God could give them on any condition He chose, just as the Queen can give a peerage to a man for himself and all his descendants, provided he remains loyal to her, so that, if he is guilty of disloyalty, he loses it both for himself and them.

We read in Genesis how Eve and then Adam broke this commandment of God, tempted by the devil under the guise of a serpent with the suggestion that, if they ate the forbidden fruit, they would not become liable to death, as God has decreed that they would, but that they would become as gods, knowing good and evil. They committed a mortal sin of disobedience; its motive was pride: the desire to share in divine knowledge. In consequence of their sin they lost the grace which made them God's friends, and they lost also the other gifts which I have mentioned. They became subject to the conflict between their evil passions and their reason and will which is known as concupiscence. They were now doomed to die: dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return, said God; and doomed also to sickness and tribulation; man would earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, and woman would bear children in pain. Thus, as St Paul says, by one man sin entered into the world and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men (Rom. 5:12). This sin is called original sin (see 113, etc.).

The sin which Adam committed was a direct insult to God's infinite Majesty and Goodness. Now you measure the gravity of an injury by the dignity of the person offended. It would be a more serious wrong to insult the Queen than to insult one of us; not because the Queen is not a human being like ourselves, but because the Queen holds a special rank among us and deserves a special reverence from us. God, then, being infinite, Adam's offence against Him was in a certain sense infinite. The consequence was that Adam, of himself, could not make amends for what he had done. He was only a finite creature, and therefore the value of his satisfaction could only be finite, infinitely less therefore than what God could demand. Only an infinite being can make proper and adequate satisfaction to God.

Man, then, of himself was powerless to restore friendly relations with God. But if one of the Divine Persons became man, then you would have an entirely different situation. You would have a Man who, because He was also God, could offer to God proper atonement for Adam's sin and all sins. This is what Jesus Christ did. He came, out of love for us, to offer God the

satisfaction which was His due; as He said, to give His life a redemption for many (that is for all) (Mark 10:45). And Jesus Christ went to the limits of love for us. Since He was a Divine Person one single act of His will would have been sufficient to redeem a million worlds. But our Lord chose to suffer and die for us to show how much He loved us and how serious a thing it is to sin against God.

The punishment of mortal sin in the next world is hell, the place of banishment and pain which God created for the devil and the other rebel angels (see 74 and 125). Therefore we say in this answer in the Catechism that our Lord rescued us not only from sin but also from hell. He thereby made it possible for us to get to heaven. And not only did He make it possible, but He also taught us how to live so that we might keep out of sin and go to heaven when we die. By the way He lived He showed us how we should live in order to please God; and in addition to His example He gave us commandments, counsels and advice. In a word, He did all He could to help us to be good and God-fearing. We should, therefore, love Jesus Christ very much, for if it had not been for Him we should have no right to go to heaven.

44. What does the holy name Jesus mean?

The holy name of Jesus means Saviour.

“Jesus” is really a Greek word. This name was given by God to His Son because He was to redeem us from sin and hell (Mat 1:21<*7>). Catholics show respect for the holy name of Jesus by bowing the head every time they mention or hear it.

45. What does the name Christ mean?

The name Christ means anointed.

Christis also a Greek word and it translates the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean anointed. In the Old Testament kings, prophets and priests were known as the "anointed of the Lord. Our Lord is the Christ because He has all these three offices in a supreme way. He is our King, whose kingdom on earth is the Catholic Church; He is our Prophet, that is our Divine Teacher; and He is our High Priest who offered Himself in sacrifice on Mount Calvary and daily offers Himself, through the ministry of the priests of the Catholic Church, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. All this will be explained later.

46. Where is Jesus Christ?

As God, Jesus Christ is everywhere. As God made man, He is in heaven, and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

We have already explained (33-40) that Jesus Christ is both God and Man. Since He is God, Jesus Christ in His divine nature is everywhere. But as man, or in His human nature, He is not everywhere. As God made man, He is in heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, as the Creed says; and He is also in every Catholic church and chapel in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept. In a Catholic church you will always see a light burning in front of the altar; this a sign that the Blessed Sacrament is in the tabernacle on the altar and that Jesus Christ is really there (see 266).

Article Three

47. What is the third article of the Creed?

The third article of the Creed is, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

48. What does the third article mean?

The third article means that God the Son took a body and soul like ours, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The article tells us that, when God the Son became man, He had a real mother as we have had; but He had no man for His father on earth: His Mother Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus she remained a virgin while becoming a mother. This the Sacred Scripture (Mat. 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-43) tells us plainly. It is the teaching of the Church that she always remained a virgin.

49. Had Jesus Christ any father on earth?

Jesus Christ had no father on earth; St Joseph was only His guardian or foster-father.

It was the office of St Joseph as Mary's husband to act as father to Jesus, to provide for Him, protect Him in His childhood and so on. Our Lord must have loved St Joseph very much; and we believe that, now that he is in heaven, our Lord has given him great power to help us, and we honour and pray to him as the Protector of the Catholic Church. St Joseph died before our Lord left His home at Nazareth to go and preach to the people; and, since he died with Jesus and Mary by his side, we pray to him for a happy death.

50. Where was our Saviour born?

Our Saviour was born in a stable at Bethlehem.

51. On what day was our Saviour born?

Our Saviour was born on Christmas Day.

Christmas means Christ's Mass, which shows the Catholic origin of the Feast, as also do Candlemas (2nd Feb.) and Michaelmas (29th Sept.).

Article Four

52. What is the fourth article of the Creed?

The fourth article of the Creed is, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

53. What were the chief sufferings of Christ?

The chief sufferings of Christ were - first, His agony and His sweat of blood in the garden; secondly, His being scourged at the pillar and crowned with thorns; and, thirdly, His carrying His cross, His crucifixion, and His death between two thieves.

Our Lord's trial before the high priests, Anna and Caiphas, and before Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, and His sufferings and death are recorded in the four Gospels. There is a Catholic devotion, known as The Stations or The Way of the Cross, in which we prayerfully follow our Lord on His journey to Calvary.

54. What are the chief suffering of Our Lord called?

The Chief suffering of Our Lord are called the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Passion is originally a Latin word and means suffering.

55. Why did our Saviour suffer?

Our Saviour suffered to atone for our sins, and to purchase for us eternal life.

This answer has been sufficiently explained in question 43.

56. Why is Jesus Christ called our Redeemer?

Jesus Christ is called our Redeemer because His precious Blood is the price by which we were ransomed.

To redeem is to buy back. Our Lord said that whoever committed sin was the slave of sin (John 8: 34). A slave was one who was sold under the power of another. In the case of sin this slave-master is the devil. Our Lord's act, therefore, in making atonement for us has always been regarded as a buying-back from slavery, at the price, not of gold or silver, but of His own precious Blood shed for on the Cross. Jesus Christ has thus become our Master, to serve whom by leading a good life is our duty and our privilege.

57. On what day did our Saviour die?

Our Saviour died on Good Friday.

58. Where did our Saviour die?

Our Saviour died on Mount Calvary.

Mount Calvary is a hill just outside Jerusalem.

59. Why do we make the sign of the cross?

We make the sign of the cross - first, to put us in mind of the Blessed Trinity; and secondly, to remind us that God the Son died for us on the Cross.

The sign of the cross is made by placing the tips of the fingers of the right hand on the forehead (saying at the same time, In the name of the Father), then on the breast (saying, and of the Son), then on the left shoulder (saying, and of the Holy), and lastly, on the right shoulder (saying, Ghost). The hands are then joined at Amen.

60. In making the sign of the cross how are we reminded of the Blessed Trinity?

In making the sign of the cross we are reminded of the Blessed Trinity by the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

61. In making the sign of the cross how are we reminded that Christ died for us on the cross?

In making the sign of the cross we are reminded that Christ died for us on the cross by the very form of the cross which we make upon ourselves.

The sign of the cross is an act of faith in the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion - that there is one God in three Persons, and that the Son of God became man and died for us. It is an act of devotion which Catholics and many non-Catholics constantly practise. We have the custom of making the sign of the cross before and after our prayers, at grace before and after meals, when we enter a church (and then it is made with holy water as an act of purification, for we are coming into the presence of the All-holy God), and, lastly, in time of temptation, for it is a very powerful means of ensuring our Lord's protection and driving away the devil. Satan hates the cross; it is the sign of Christ's triumph over him.

The sign of the cross in one form or another has been used by Christians from earliest times. In the year 211 Tertullian writes of the North African Christians, At the beginning and end of every journey, whenever we enter a house or leave it, when we put on our shoes, at the bath, at table, when we light the lamps, go to bed or to sit down, in our intercourse with one another, we mark our forehead with the sign of the cross.

Article Five

62. What is the fifth article of the Creed?

The fifth article of the Creed is, "He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead."

63. What do you mean by the words, "He descended into hell?"

By the words, "He descended into hell, I mean that, as soon as Christ was dead, His blessed Soul went down into that part of hell called limbo.

After the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, the gates of heaven were closed against them and their descendants, and were opened again only by the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. His redeeming death, as we all know, happened many thousands of years after the creation of our first parents, and during those years millions upon millions of people had lived and died. The wicked were lost in hell. But where did the good go? God could not send them to hell. Of necessity, then, they must have gone to some other place where God kept them until our Lord

came to redeem us. This place is limbo; in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus our Lord calls it Abraham's bosom. It was into that place that our Lord's blessed Soul descended immediately after His death. He went to give the souls of the just, souls most dear to Him, the joy of His presence and to impart to them the glad tidings that they were redeemed.

Nowadays when we speak of hell, we mean the state and place of eternal punishment for the wicked in the next world. That is not the sense in which the word is used in the Creed. There it translates a Latin word which means the lower region. Our Lord went to limbo. The word limbo means fringe or border, and it denotes the borderland, so to say, of those regions which are outside heaven and include the actual hell of the lost. The souls in limbo did not suffer: they were holy and therefore at rest and in peace.

64. What do you mean by limbo?

By limbo I mean a place of rest, where the souls of the just who died before Christ were detained.

65. Why were the souls of the just detained in limbo?

The souls of the just were detained in limbo because they could not go up to the kingdom of heaven until Christ had opened it for them.

66. What do you mean by the words, "The third day He rose again from the dead?"

By the words, "The third day He rose again from the dead," I mean that after Christ had been dead and buried part of three days, He raised His blessed Body to life again on the third day.

The Resurrection of Christ is a fully attested historical fact. You can read the account of it in the four Gospels and in St Paul (1 Cor. 15). Our Lord foretold on several occasions that He would rise again from the dead on the third day; His resurrection would be the sign of Jonas, the great proof that He was the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 12: 40). And He prophesied that He would rise by His own power (John 10: 17). He died on Good Friday afternoon about three o'clock. He was buried that same evening, and the authorities sealed His tomb and placed a guard of soldiers there to prevent anyone removing the Body. But on the third morning, Sunday, the tomb was empty. The frightened Apostles had not moved the Body; nor the Jewish rulers or the Roman soldiers, because they could not produce it to refute the preaching of the Apostles that Christ was truly risen. The tomb was empty because Christ had in fact risen from the dead. On eleven distinct occasions He appeared - to the women, to Peter, to all the Apostles more than once, to the Apostle James, and to a gathering of over five hundred of His followers. They saw Him, conversed with Him, ate with Him, felt His flesh. Thus He proved that He had really risen and that therefore He was truly the Christ, the Son of God. He proved also, as St Paul tells us (1 Cor. 15), that, as He has arisen from the dead, so we too should rise at the Last Day, a truth we affirm in the eleventh article of the Creed.

67. On what day did Christ rise again from the dead?

Christ rose again from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Easter Sunday is a very great festival, because of the Resurrection and the assurance we thereby have that we can put our complete faith and confidence in Christ. With St Paul we can say, "I

know whom I have believed(2 Tim. 1: 12).

The Sixth Article

68. What is the sixth article of the Creed?

The sixth article of the Creed is: "He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

69. What do you mean by the words, "He ascended into heaven?"

By the words, "He ascended into heaven," I mean that our Saviour went up Body and Soul into heaven on Ascension Day, forty days after His resurrection.

Our Lord went up into heaven by His own power, by the power of His divinity and by the power of His Soul which His divinity had now made glorious. He went, as He has said, to prepare a place for us (John 16: 2), to be our intercessor with the Father (Heb. 7: 25), and to send the Holy Ghost, as He had promised (John 16: 7)

During the forty days which elapsed between His resurrection and ascension the Holy Scripture tells us that our Lord appeared to His apostles on several occasions, speaking of the kingdom of God Acts 1: 3). It was during these days that He prepared them for the work they were to do, gave them fuller instructions how they were to act and how they were to build up and govern the Church. He gave them power to forgive sins (John 20: 23) and to preach and baptise (Matt 28: 19), and He promised them that in this commission to teach the nations He would stand by them to the end of the world. He appointed St Peter the head of His Church, to be the shepherd of His flock in the place of Himself, the Good Shepherd (John 21: 15-17).

70. What do you mean by the words, "Sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty?"

By the words, "Sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." I do not mean that God the Father has hands, for He is a Spirit: but I mean that Christ, as God, is equal to the Father, and, as man, is in the highest place in Heaven.

As God, Christ is in all ways equal to the Father in power, dignity, eternity, Godhead; but, as man, He is not equal to the Father, because a man cannot be equal to God. But, because He is both God and man, He is, as man, in the highest place in heaven. The host at a dinner puts his chief guest on his right hand. Christ in heaven, seated at God's right hand, not only enjoys the highest honour and blessedness, He shares also in God's kingly authority over men and angels.

The seventh article

71. What is the seventh article of the Creed?

The seventh article of the Creed is: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

From thence... that is, from heaven.

72. When will Christ come again?

Christ will come again from heaven at the last day, to judge all mankind.

On several occasions our Lord foretold that He would come as Judge of all mankind: for instance in Matthew (16: 27):

The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works. He described vividly the judicial process that will take place (Matt.24:30, etc.; Matt.25:31, etc.). This will be His second coming. He came at His Incarnation to save men; He will come at the end of the world to judge them.

73. What are the things Christ will judge?

Christ will judge our thoughts, words, works and omissions.

Our good and bad thoughts, words and acts, and the things we ought to have done but have not done all these Christ will examine and judge. We see, then, that we can commit sin in four ways:

1- By thinking. Many people imagine that thoughts do not matter, provided they do not do anything wrong or say anything wrong. This is a mistake. If God has forbidden us to do a certain thing, He has thereby certainly forbidden us to think of doing it. For instance, everyone knows it is wrong to steal. God has expressly said so: Thou shalt not steal. But He has also said: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods that is wish or intend to get hold of them by dishonest means. God forbade adultery; but He also forbade adulterous thoughts: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. Therefore if a man makes up his mind to murder someone, he has already committed a grave sin in thought and intention, even though he does not get the chance to carry out his murderous design.

This does not mean that all wicked thoughts that come into our heads are sins. We cannot help many of them; they come in against our will and sometimes persist against our will. But when they come, it is our duty to try and rid ourselves of them by saying a prayer and turning our minds to thoughts that are good and wholesome. If we do this we cannot commit a sin by thought. But if we are aware that a bad thought is in our mind and make no effort against it but go on thinking it purposely, then we commit a sin by thought. If the thought is a very bad one and we know it is and deliberately consent to it with full consciousness, then the sin is mortal. But if the thought is not very bad, or if it is in itself very bad, but we give only a kind of half consent to it, then the sin is only a small or venial one.

2. By word that is, by saying things we are forbidden to say: for instance, angry words, words that damage our neighbour's reputation, lies, unlawful oaths, immoral talk.

3. By deed that is, wrong actions, such as stealing, getting drunk, immoral conduct, etc.

4. By omission God has not only forbidden us to do certain things, He has also commanded us to do certain things; and if we fail to do them through our own fault, we neglect our duty and are guilty of a sin of omission. If a father wastes his wages on drink and thus neglects his home and family, he omits to do his duty as a father. Again, if a person stays in bed on Sunday instead of going to Mass when he is well and able to go, he

sins by omission. So too, if a person does not pay his debts, he is guilty of omitting to fulfil his duty of justice. And so on.

74. What will Christ say to the wicked?

Christ will say to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."

These words, quoted from our Lord's description of the Last Judgement (Matt.25:41), have a terrifying significance. They are set in contrast to the words which will be quoted in the next question. To the good Christ will say, "Come". To the wicked He will say, "Depart". And, as the text shows, the welcome and the rejection are equally irrevocable. The bad will go into everlasting punishment; the just into life everlasting (Matt.25:46). Our Lord tells us that God created hell for the devil and the rebellious angels, not for man. But man has free will and by his conscience he knows the moral law imposed on him by God. If he dies in deliberate rebellion against the law, he inevitably incurs the penalty of that rebellion; he condemns himself to hell. Faced with this awful fact of eternal punishment, let us remember that no man will be subjected to it who does not deserve it. God is infinitely just; by His very nature, therefore, He cannot punish anyone beyond his deserts. If we lead a good life we have no cause to fear the loss of our immortal souls.

75. What will Christ say to the just?

Christ will say to the just, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you" (Matt. 25:34).

Here again our Lord distinctly says that no hell, but the kingdom of heaven was prepared for us men. Heaven is the happy home where we are to be with God for ever. But just as no one will go to hell who has not deserved it, so no one will go to heaven who has not merited to go there. We must work our way to heaven; and the only way of getting there is the way laid down by our Lord, not the way we think is right or we or other men have invented.

76. Will every one be judged at death, as well as at the last day?

Every one will be judged at death, as well as at the last day: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgement" (Heb. 9:27).

With death man's time of probation ends. Death, as our Lord said, is the night in which no man can work (John 9:4). There are no more chances; at death a man's fate is fixed. Immediately he dies Christ passes judgement on him, there in the very place where he dies. This is known as the Particular Judgement, because it takes place between God and the soul alone. We see, then, the supreme importance of the last moment of our life; on it our eternity depends. How often during life should we remember that final moment and prepare well for it!

The other judgement, the one we have been speaking of in the preceding questions, is called the General Judgement. All mankind will be together at that Judgement. Our bodies will then have risen from the dead, and we shall be judged as men, and our bodies which during this life are the soul's partners in our good and bad conduct will be its partners also in triumph or condemnation. The General Judgement will justify God's dealings with us, so often obscure to us; it will mark the complete triumph of Jesus Christ; and it will restore the balance between the good, who on

earth have so often been down-trodden and persecuted, and the bad who have so often enjoyed unjust domination and glory among men. The Judgement will take place on earth.

The eighth article

77. What is the eighth article of the Creed?

The eighth article of the Creed is, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

78. Who is the Holy Ghost?

The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

This we have already seen and explained in questions 25-28.

79. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed?

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

St. Paul tells us (Rom. 5:5) that it is the Holy Ghost who puts the love of God in our hearts. This activity assigned to Him gives us an insight into the nature of His procession from the Father and the Son. It is a procession of love; so intense and wonderful is the mutual love of the Father and the Son that it issues in a Third Person the Holy Ghost.

80. Is the Holy Ghost equal to the Father and to the Son?

The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and to the Son, for He is the same Lord and God as They are.

It is part of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity that, although the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, yet all Persons are equal to One Another. This is because, although They are distinct from One Another, They are the same infinite God.

81. When did the Holy Ghost come down on the apostles?

The Holy Ghost came down on the apostles on Whit Sunday in the form of "parted tongues, as it were of fire" (Acts 2:3).

Before His Passion and again before His Ascension our Lord told His apostles that the Father and He would send down the Holy Ghost upon them. He fulfilled His promise on Whit Sunday, or Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension. The Holy Ghost appeared in the form of tongues, to show that the apostles were to preach to all nations and were receiving for this purpose the gift of tongues, as recorded in Acts 2:5-12, so that, though they preached in their own native language, men of different nations would understand them immediately, each in his own tongue. And they were in men's hearts the fire of the love of God, the fire which our Lord Himself said He had come to cast on the earth and longed to see kindled (Luke 12:49).

82. Why did the Holy Ghost come down on the apostles?

The Holy Ghost came down on the apostles to confirm their faith, to sanctify them, and to enable them to found the Church.

The Holy Ghost came down on the apostles: (1)to strengthen them in their faith, for, as our Lord had foretold (e.g. Matt. 9:17) and the Acts tell us, they had to suffer and even die in defence of it; (2)to make them holy, and give them an unbounded love of God, courage and constancy to carry out their difficult mission. As the Acts show, the effect on the apostles of the coming of the Holy Ghost was most striking; (3)to enable them to preach Christ, sanctify others, and build up the Church. The phenomenon of the parted tongues was momentary; but the Holy Ghost remained, hidden, but effectively at work in the Church. Our Lord said that the Holy Ghost was coming to stay and to take His place as the Paraclete, that is, the Advocate and Comforter (John 16:16); He was the Spirit of truth, and He would teach the apostles and their successors all truth.

The ninth article.

83. What is the ninth article of the Creed?

The ninth article of the Creed is, "The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints."

That is, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, etc.

84. What is the Catholic Church?

The Catholic Church is the union of all the faithful under one head.

We have now reached a most important article of the Creed. When you say, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, you mean, I believe that the Holy Catholic Church is the one true Church founded by Jesus Christ, and therefore to that Church I must belong if I wish to save my soul. The vital question is, Which is the Holy Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ? In every town you see so many different places of worship; there are Catholic churches, Anglican churches, Methodist chapels and so on. Which of these would our Lord recognise as His own if He came back to earth today? Many non-Catholics hold that He would recognise them all, because they are parts of the one Catholic Church. We Catholics cannot admit this. We maintain that Christ would recognise only one Church, namely, ours. The reasons why we maintain this are set out and explained in the present and the following questions of the Catechism.

There are three points to note in the answer to the present question. The Church is a union, that is, a visible society. Our Lord called it a kingdom (Matt. 9:23; 13:24), a city set on a mountain (Matt. 5:4). He compared it to a flock (John 10:16) and to a grain of mustard seed that becometh a tree (Matt. 13:31,32). St Paul called the Church a body (e.g. 1 Cor. 12:13), the body of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor. 12:27). Our Lord made the apostles, with Peter at their head, the rulers of His Church; and He sent them to preach and to gather members into the Church by the external rite of baptism.

It is a union of all the faithful, that is, of believers; not of people who believe certain of Christ's doctrines at their own choice, but who believe all things whatsoever He has commanded (Matt. 28:20).

It is a union under one head. Every society must have a head to rule and guide it; other wise it will break up, because everyone will want to have his own way. This is common sense. Our Lord provided a head for His Church and thereby ensured its stability and at the same time gave us an easy way of knowing which is the true Church, as the questions which follow will make clear.

85. Who is the head of the Catholic Church?

The head of the Catholic Church is Jesus Christ our Lord.

Naturally, since He founded it. But Jesus Christ is now in heaven. We cannot see Him, talk to Him, consult Him. His visible Church on earth must, therefore, like every other visible society, have a head here on earth to exercise the ruling functions of Jess Christ. Our Lord arranged for such a visible head.

86. Has the Church a visible head on earth?

The Church has a visible head on earth, the Bishop of Rome, who is the vicar of Christ.

A vicar is one who supplies the place of another and performs an office on his behalf. The answer means that the Pope, who is the Bishop of Rome, holds the headship of the Church by Christ's authority and in His name. The proof that the Pope is the visible head of the Church is given in the next two questions.

87. Why is the Bishop of Rome the head of the Church?

The Bishop of Rome is the head of the Church because he is the successor of St Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the head of the Church.

This answer will be explained along with the next.

88. How do you know that Christ appointed St Peter to be the head of the Church?

I know that Christ appointed St Peter to be the head of the Church because Christ said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 26:18,19).

We do not get the full force of Christ's words from the English text, because in English Peter and Rock seem to be quite different words. But Peter means Rock. What our Lord really said, then, was: Thou art a Rock, and on this Rock (that is, on thee, Peter) I will build my Church. Our Lord compares His Church to a building, and it is set on a rock (Peter). In another context (Matt. 7:24,25) our Lord spoke of a wise man who built his house on a rock, and the storms came but could not destroy the house, because it was built on a rock. So the Church will stand. The gates (that is, the power) of hell will not prevail against it. Darkness, error, falsehood, will have no force against the Church, because of Peter, the rock. Now, as we have already seen, the Church is a society; and, if you ask yourself what it is in any society which gives it stability and strength, the answer must be that it is the ruling authority which upholds and preserves a society. When there is no ruler, a society goes to pieces. Therefore, by making Peter the rock-foundation of the Church, our Lord in actual fact was making him the supreme ruler in His Church.

Our Lord went on to compare His Church to a kingdom. It is the kingdom of heaven. And He placed the keys of that kingdom in St Peter's hands. It is to be noted that in the New Testament keys are assigned only to our Lord and St Peter. Now to have the keys of a place means to have absolute power over that place. If you have a cupboard and you have the keys of it, you have control of it. Therefore, by giving St Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, our Lord gave him full sway over it.

After our Lord ascended into heaven, we find St Peter exercising supreme authority among the apostles and therefore over the Church. This point is clear to anyone who reads the first fifteen chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. St Peter presided at the election of St Matthias. He spoke as chairman at the Council of Jerusalem. He was the spokesman for his brethren before the Jewish Council and before the people. He stood out as a miracle worker. It was he who inflicted punishment on Ananias and Sapphira. And it was he who received the first Jewish converts into the Church at Pentecost, and later the first Gentiles (Cornelius and his household).

St Peter settled in Rome and he was martyred there by the Emperor Nero in A.D. 67. But the Church continued to exist and to grow. The primacy which Peter had exercised must therefore have gone on also. There had to be a central authority and the need of it became more urgent the greater the Church became. Otherwise the Church, composed as it was of men of different races and languages, and of different classes and outlook in life, would have gone to pieces. As a matter of fact, ancient writers give us lists of the early Bishops of Rome and in every case they give the line as beginning with Peter; and ancient writers also tell us that the Bishops of Rome were the supreme bishops in the Church precisely because they had the power which Peter was given by our Lord. The line of Bishops of Rome has gone on from St Peter's day to the present; there have been about 260 of them, succeeding one another down to the present Pope, John-Paul II. That Church, therefore, over which John-Paul II rules, is the Church of St Peter, the Church which Christ founded and of which He made St Peter the first head. This is the Roman Catholic Church, and no other. It is the only true Church because it alone can show, through its long unbroken line of Popes, its direct origin from Christ.

89. What is the Bishop of Rome called?

The Bishop of Rome is called the Pope, which word signifies "Father."

"Pope" is the English translation of the Latin word Papa. Quite often children call their father papa. The next question tells us why the Bishop of Rome is called Pope.

90. Is the Pope the spiritual Father of all Christians?

The Pope is the spiritual Father of all Christians.

In a family the father is the head.

91. Is the Pope the Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians?

The Pope is the Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, because Christ made St Peter the shepherd of the whole flock when He said, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep" (John 21: 15, 16, 17). He also prayed that his "faith" might never fail, and commanded him to "confirm" his brethren (Luke 22:32).

In the Bible the image of the shepherd is commonly used to denote a king. Thus David: And my servant David shall be king over them: and they shall have one shepherd (Ezech. 34:24). God Himself, as the Ruler of His people, is called their Shepherd: Behold the Lord God shall come with strength: and his arm shall rule... He shall feed his flock like a shepherd (Isaias 21:9-11). Hence, when our Lord calls Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10), He means that He is the loving, protecting King of His people. It is clear, then, that when our Lord gave Peter the office of shepherding His flock, He was making Peter His delegate or vicar as King over His people, that is, over His Church. St Peter was made the supreme ruler of the Church on earth. Our Lord had promised (Matt. 16) that He would make St Peter the head and give him the power of the keys. Here Christ after His resurrection fulfils that promise.

One of the great functions which Christ the Good Shepherd performed was to teach God's truth: And Jesus going out saw a great multitude: and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things (Mark 6:34). Therefore when Christ made St Peter the supreme shepherd He thereby made him the supreme teacher of the people in His own place. This is confirmed by the words from St Luke quoted in the answer above. When Christ spoke them He was just about to enter on His Passion. The gates of hell were going to attack the apostles; Satan would test their faith (that is what sifting means). Peter's faith would be shaken presently, when he denied his Master, and all the apostles would be scandalised, delivered over to doubt and despondency, when Christ was taken prisoner and put to death. But our Lord says that He had prayed that Peter's faith may not fail completely. He will turn back to Christ in sorrow for his lapse; and on his turning back, he has the office of making firm the faith of his brethren; words which can only mean that Peter is head of them all with a special office of leading them in faith by his teaching and example. It is clear, then, from the two foregoing texts that St Peter was head of all, of the apostles and of the entire flock of Christ, and that he was given by Christ power and authority to rule and teach the universal Church of Christ.

92. Is the Pope infallible?

The Pope is infallible.

93. What do you mean when you say that the Pope is infallible?

When I say that the Pope is infallible I mean that the Pope cannot err when, as Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.

What does infallible mean? Does it mean that the Pope cannot commit sin? Certainly not; he is liable to fall into sin like any other man. Does it mean that whatever he writes about science or history is necessarily true? Certainly not. Does it mean that if I were to ask his opinion on some doctrine of the Church, he could not mislead me? No; because he would then be giving me his opinion privately, like any ordinary bishop of the Church. Or if he came to preach in some church, would his words be necessarily free from error? No; because he would be preaching, not as the head of the Church, but as an ordinary preacher who might make a mistake. It is, as the Catechism says, only when the Pope speaks as the head shepherd and teacher of the entire Church of Christ, and declares with the fullest weight of his authority what we must believe on any given point of doctrine, it is then, and then only, that he is protected by Christ from teaching

what is contrary to faith. In these circumstances God does not inspire the Pope; He simply prevents the Pope from making a false decision. You see, the Pope is the supreme teacher. Therefore, if he could go wrong when he acts as supreme teacher, we would all be led into wrong beliefs, and Christ's promise that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church would be made void. Since Christ is God, this cannot possibly happen. The three texts which we have already examined and which show that St Peter and his successors were to be the rock on which the church is unshakeably built, that they were to feed Christ's flock and confirm their brethren all these texts make clear that the Pope is infallible. Right faith is an essential element in the Church; men must believe whatever Christ taught, and for that they must be completely certain what He taught. Therefore Peter's office as the rock and as the confirmer of his brethren and as the shepherd must include the maintenance of the true doctrine of Christ. This St Peter and his successors cannot do unless in the exercise of their office as supreme teacher Christ effectively preserves them from error. But such preservation from error is precisely what infallibility means.

94. Has the Church of Christ any marks by which we may know her?

The Church of Christ has four marks by which we may know her. She is one; she is holy; she is Catholic; she is apostolic.

In the Nicene Creed we affirm our belief in these four characteristics of the true Church of Christ. They are her credentials. By them she can be distinguished from all man-made sects which claim to be Christ's Church or part of Christ's Church. Christ gave them to her; and so any Christian body which does not possess them is not the Church founded by our Lord.

95. How is the Church one?

The Church is one because all her members agree in one faith, have all the same sacrifice and sacraments, and are all united under one head.

Our Lord clearly affirmed that His Church would be one: Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring. And they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16). He means that, in addition to the sheep of the Jewish flock, He has others, namely, the Gentiles. Jews and Gentiles together will constitute in the future one flock under one shepherd. For this unity our Lord prayed just before His Passion (John 17), and since He was God's own Son, His prayer was bound to be heard. The Catechism says that this unity, established by Christ, is threefold

(a) Unity of faith. Our Lord sent His apostles to teach all nations all things whatsoever He had commanded (Matt. 28:20). There was to be no picking and choosing. All men must accept the whole body of teaching both the pleasant truths and the unpleasant ones. Now, go where you will, all over the world, and you will find every Catholic bishop and priest teaching, and every Catholic believing, exactly the same doctrine; there is among us no High Church, Broad Church, or Law Church party. But, in the Anglican Church, for instance, how little unity of doctrine exists! Some clergymen teach nearly every Catholic doctrine, such as Mass, the seven sacraments, devotion to our Lady and the saints, prayers for the dead. Other clergymen of the same Church reject these practices as being contrary to the teaching of the English Reformation. There are indeed professed members of the Church of England who even deny that Christ was God. Surely a Church in which such

disunity, even on fundamental doctrines, exists, cannot claim to have the first mark of the true Church.

(b) Unity of communion, that is, in the one Sacrifice of the Mass and in administering the seven sacraments. We shall see later that our Lord instituted the Mass as the one act of Christian worship, and instituted seven sacraments for the sanctification of men. All over the world in the Catholic Church you find one Mass (although celebrated with different rites in Western and Eastern Europe) and the same seven sacraments.

(c) Unity of government. Our Lord set up unity of government in His Church by appointing the twelve apostles with power to bind and loose and making St Peter their head with the power of the keys and personal power of binding and loosing. This unity of government has been continued down the centuries in the united bishops of the Catholic world with the Pope at their head, so that today you have the humanly inexplicable fact of 425 million Catholic of all races united in a common allegiance to the Pope

96. How is the Church holy?

The Church is holy because she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by eminent holiness in so many thousands of her children.

It will be obvious to anyone who reads through the Catechism that the Church teaches a holy doctrine. As for the means of holiness, besides the ideal life she sets before men in her teaching, she has the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the seven sacraments, practices of prayers, countless spiritual books, religious communities of men and women dedicating themselves exclusively to God's service and that of their fellowmen and so on. Then there is the striking holiness of so many of her members. By their fruit you shall know them, said our Lord. Applying this test to the Church we find her triumphant in her achievements. From age to age she has the saints, countless in their number, heroes and heroines of holiness, who have attained their sanctity precisely because they lived to the full the life of a Catholic. There have, of course, been many bad Catholics. Our Lord foretold that there would be, when, for instance, He spoke of the cockle among the wheat. You could not expect anything else in so vast a multitude; but they are bad because they refuse to use, or to use properly, the means of holiness offered by the Church.

97. What does the word "Catholic" mean?

The word "Catholic" means universal?

98. How is the Church Catholic or universal?

The Church is Catholic or universal because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and is the one ark of salvation for all.

The real Church of Christ must be Catholic or universal. It must be universal in time that is, it must have existed through all the centuries from Christ's day to this, because Christ said His Church would never fail. We are that Church, the same Church that St Augustine set up among our English forefathers when Pope St Gregory I sent him to this country in A.D. 597. Before the Reformation in the sixteenth century everyone in England, from the king to the least of his subjects, acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope and belonged to our Church.

The real Church of Christ must also be universal in place. Our Lord sent His apostles to teach all nations (Matt. 28:19); and St Paul wrote: There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond

nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). Our Church, more numerous than all other Christian bodies put together, is found everywhere. And she has always regarded herself as a missionary Church, striving to bring all men of all races into the fold.

Lastly, the Church must be universal in doctrine; teaching, that is, the whole doctrine of Christ. He sent His apostles to teach the nations all things whatsoever He had commanded (Matt. 28:20). The true Church, then, must teach unreservedly all that the Creed contains and all that the Ten Commandments contain.

We are in fact the only Church that does so.

As, then, Noah's ark was the one means of bodily safety in the Flood, so the Church is the one source of salvation for men's souls. We are sometimes regarded as very bigoted because we say that no one outside the Catholic Church can be saved. What we mean is that no one can be saved who deliberately refuses to be a Catholic Church we he knows he ought to be one. If a man begins to feel the force of the Church's claims he must in conscience go into the question fully. All this necessarily follows from the fact that the Catholic and Roman Church is the one true Church of Christ. As for those who without any fault on their part are quite ignorant of her claim, Pope Pius IX has clearly stated the Church's doctrine: We know that those who are in invincible ignorance of our holy religion, but who carefully observe the precepts of the natural law which God has imprinted in the hearts of all and who in ready obedience to Him lead a good and upright life, can, with the help of His light and grace, attain to eternal life; for God who clearly sees, examines and understands the mind, intentions, thoughts and dispositions of every man, will in His supreme goodness and clemency never allow anyone to suffer eternal punishment who has not of his own free will committed sin.

99. How is the Church apostolic?

The Church is apostolic because she holds the doctrines and traditions of the apostles, and because, through the unbroken succession of her pastors, she derives her orders and her mission from them.

Since our Lord sent His apostles to found His Church, Christ's true Church today must be the same as the one the apostles founded. It must be apostolic in doctrine: it must teach the truths handed down by the apostles. It must be apostolic in its orders, that is, in the spiritual power to say Mass and administer the sacraments. Lastly, it must be apostolic in its mission; in other words, it must have Christ's commission which He gave to His apostles to teach and sanctify mankind. How do we know which Church today is apostolic? There is an easy sign, Where Peter is, there is the Church. The Church in union with the Pope is the Church of the apostles, as is clear from what we have said about the supremacy of St Peter and of the Pope as Peter's successor.

100. Can the Church err in what she teaches?

The Church cannot err in what she teaches as to faith and morals, for she is our infallible guide in both.

We have already seen that the Pope is infallible when he teaches us with supreme authority what we must believe and what we must do. In this answer we say that the Church also is infallible; and by the Church we here mean all the bishops of the Catholic world with the Pope at their

head. Our Lord formed His apostles into a body under Peter, and He gave them special powers to rule, teach and sanctify His Church. The apostles had to appoint successors to carry on their powers down the ages. Those successors are the body of bishops under the Pope. When He made the apostles and their successors teachers of His doctrine, our Lord gave them guarantees that what they taught, as a body, with the fullness of their authority from Him would be necessarily right and true. Our Lord's guarantees are shown in the next question.

101. How do you know that the Church cannot err in what she teaches?

I know that the Church cannot err in what she teaches because Christ promised that the gates of hell shall never prevail against His Church (Matt. 16:18); that the Holy Ghost shall teach her all things (John 19:16-26); and that He Himself will be with her all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. 28:20).

The first of these texts has already been considered. In the second our Lord promises the apostles that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, will come to them and stay with them, and teach them the whole truth. In the third our Lord promises His effective help (That is what I am with you means) to the apostles and their successors until the end of the world, as they go and teach the nations everything He had taught. Therefore He guaranteed for ever the accuracy of their teaching, when they combine in teaching with the fullness of their authority. From these texts it is clear that any Church which cannot tell you with certainty what our Lord taught is not His true Church.

102. What do you mean by the Communion of Saints?

By the Communion of Saints I mean that all the members of the Church, in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory, are in communion with each other, as being one body in Jesus Christ.

St Paul often speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ (e.g. 1Cor.12:12 ; Eph.4:4); and he tells us that just as all parts of the human body work together for the good of the whole body and of each part of it, so also do the members of the Church co-operate for the good of the whole Church and of every part of it. There is thus a living union among all who belong to the Catholic Church. And when the members of the Church die, we do not lose all communion with them. Those who have gone to heaven and those who are still in purgatory are still united with us in the ways which the Catechism explains in the next few questions. This union between the members of Christ's Body on earth, and the members who are now in heaven or purgatory is called the Communion of Saints; and the three groups who form this Communion are known as the Church Triumphant in heaven, the Church Suffering in purgatory, and the Church Militant (because still struggling against sin and evil) on earth.

103. How are the faithful on earth in communion with each other?

The faithful on earth are in communion with each other by professing the same doctrines, and obey the Pope. They pray for one another and help one another by good works of various sorts. All this makes a common bound of union among them.

104. How are we in communion with the saints in heaven?

We are in communion with the saints in heaven by honouring them as the glorified members of the Church, and also by our praying to them and their praying for us.

Our Lord has told us that there is joy before the angels of God on one sinner doing penance (Luke 15:10). What is true of the angels must be true also of the saints, who share with the angels the glory and the joys of heaven. The angels and saints, then, know what is passing on earth and take a deep, practical interest in our eternal salvation. Now Christians on earth have always prayed for one another; St Paul wrote to the Romans: I beseech you, therefore, brethren, through Our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God. (Rom. 15:30). It was the same in the Old Testament. God often spared the Israelites at the prayers of Moses. It is, then, perfectly reasonable to ask the prayers of the saints in heaven. They are our friends at God's Court, and more powerful in prayer than when they were on earth.

An objection often made against praying to the angels and saints is that it places them between man and God, making them mediators instead of Jesus Christ the Mediator. The objection really comes from a misunderstanding. The power of intercession which the saints enjoy comes entirely from the merits of Christ. They have no power of their own apart from Him. What He said to His apostles, Without me you cannot do anything, applies equally to the saints. Therefore, far from diminishing Christ's status as our Mediator, the intercession of the saints rather enhances it. So great is His mediatorial power that He can assume others into a share of His mediatorship without any loss to Himself. In any case, as we have already said, the intercession of the saints does not substantially differ from our intercession on earth one for another; and from the beginning of the Church people saw no difficulty in it until Protestantism came and began to teach that The Romish doctrine concerning... invocation of saints is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God (The Thirty-nine Articles, Article XXII). Against the Reformers the great Council of Catholic Bishops held at Trent decreed that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honoured and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us. What we have said on this point will show which of these statements is true.

105. How are we in communion with the souls in purgatory?

We are in communion with the souls in purgatory by helping them in our prayers and good works; "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2Mach.12:46).

The Catholic Church teaches that we can aid the souls in purgatory (that is, the Suffering Church) by asking God in His mercy to release them from their sufferings, and also by offering our good works for them. Of all prayers the most efficacious is the Holy Mass offered for the dead. Judas Machabeus collected twelve thousand drachmas of silver and sent them to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead (2Mach.12:43). We Catholics in our turn offer the Sacrifice which Christ instituted, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, for the sins of the dead. We recite also indulgenced prayers (for Indulgences, see 300). Our good works, done in the grace of God, have two qualities. They merit grace and they make satisfaction for sin. The merit of these works belongs to ourselves and we cannot, even if we wish, pass it on to another. But the satisfaction we can pass on; and it is a noble act of charity to offer it to God on behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory, for those souls cannot help themselves.

106. What is purgatory?

Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time after death on account of their sins.

This is another doctrine of the Church which the Protestant Reformers attacked. In the Thirty-nine Articles (Article XXII), along with the invocation of the saints, the doctrine of purgatory is called "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God. This is another instance of Protestantism denying a truth that had been believed during all the Christian centuries and among the Jews before Christ came (see 109).

107. What souls go to purgatory?

Those souls go to purgatory that depart this life in venial sin, or that have not fully paid the debt of temporal punishment due to those sins of which the guilt has been forgiven.

For an explanation of venial sin see question 126, 127.

108. What is temporal punishment?

Temporal punishment is punishment that will have an end either in this world or in the world to come.

Two classes of souls, then, go to purgatory:

(1) Those who go before God stained with venial sin. Such souls will not go to hell; only those who die in mortal sin go to hell. But neither will they go straight to heaven. They are saved; but they are defiled by unforgiven venial sin, and nothing defiled shall enter heaven (Apoc.21:27) into the presence of the All-holy God. He will, therefore, give them an opportunity to expiate that sin somewhere in the next world and of thus reaching heaven sometime. That somewhere is purgatory, which mean a place of cleansing.

(2) Those that have not fully paid the debt of temporal punishment owing for forgiven sin.

We must distinguish two things in sin, viz. its guilt and its punishment. There are several instances in the Bible which bring out this distinction between the two elements of sin. Take the case of King David (2Sam.12:13). David committed a great sin of adultery and murder, and God sent Nathan the prophet to him. We read: David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. Here we see that God had forgiven the guilt of David's sin, but punishment remained; the child, said God, must die. All sin carries with it a debt of punishment. Mortal sin which is a direct rejection of God (see 121-125) deserves the everlasting punishment of hell. Forgiven mortal sin, however, cannot merit eternal punishment. It would be unjust to punish in hell one who has repented. But normally, as in David's case, there remains for forgiven mortal sin some temporal punishment to be undergone. For venial sin also there is generally some temporal punishment remaining after forgiveness. Usually, then, we have to do penance for our sins somewhere. If we have not done this in this world, then we must do it in the next. We cannot do it in heaven, for heaven is a place of unalloyed happiness. If the punishment is temporal, we cannot do it in hell, because hell is the place of eternal punishment only. There remains only purgatory. And so purgatory in addition to expiating our unforgiven venial sins we undergo whatever debt of temporal punishment we have not paid in this life.

109. How do you prove that there is a purgatory?

I prove that there is a purgatory from the constant teaching of the Church and from the doctrine of Holy Scripture which declares that God will render to every man according to his works (Matt. 15:27); that nothing defiled shall enter heaven (Apoc. 21:27); and that some will be saved, "yet so as by fire" (1Cor.3:15).

In what we have already said about purgatory we have given sufficient proof that purgatory exists. There are other, and stronger, proofs from what God has told us in the teaching of the Church from the beginning and in the Bible. In the earliest Christian writers and in the inscriptions in the underground cemeteries at Rome (known as the catacombs) we learn that they prayed for the dead. This showed that they believed that the dead were in some place in which prayers could help them. That place could not be heaven; for in heaven a soul does not need the help of prayers. It could not be hell; souls in hell are there for ever and are beyond the help of prayers. Therefore the place must be some third state in which souls were detained for a time, that is, purgatory. The name of purgatory was not given to the place till some time later.

In the Bible you have, first, the belief of the Jews before our Lord came. In the Second Book of Machabees (12:39-46) we read the text quoted in question 105: It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins. The Protestant Reformers did not admit that the Books of Machabees were part of the Bible; they rejected them because they taught prayers for the dead. It was an easy way of getting rid of doctrines the Reformers did not like. But even supposing that these books were not part of inspired Scripture, nevertheless they are historical; they show us, as a matter of history, that it was the custom of the Jews to pray for the dead; which means, as we have said above, that they must have believed in the value of such prayers, and therefore that the dead were in the place later called purgatory. In the New Testament you have our Lord's words: Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: be he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come (Matt.12:32). These words surely imply that there are some sins which are forgiven in the world to come. But in hell no sins are forgiven; in hell there is no redemption. In heaven there is no question of forgiveness; nothing sinful can enter heaven. Therefore our Lord indicates a third state, and that is purgatory.

Our Lord also said that God would render to every man according to his works (Matt.16:27); and St Paul writes: Every man's work shall be manifest. For the day of the Lord (that is, the day of judgement) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire... If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire (1Cor.3:15). If we turn to the context, we see that the Apostle says that he has laid the foundation, namely, the doctrine of Christ. Others will build upon that foundation. If they preach wholesome doctrine (which he calls gold, silver and precious stones), their work will win approval when God comes to judge. But if they preach useless or unhelpful doctrine (wood, hay, stubble), their work will be burnt up when God comes to judge; the preacher will suffer loss, be he will be saved. This indicates that not all men will be approved at God's judgement; but neither will all be utterly cast off. Some must pay a penalty, but they will be saved. This means that they will go to purgatory.

Does all this look as if the doctrine of purgatory were repugnant to the word of God, as the Reformers said it was? On the contrary, does not the doctrine agree with God's word?

The tenth article

110. What is the tenth article of the Creed?

The tenth article of the Creed is, "The forgiveness of sins."

111. What do you mean by "The forgiveness of sins?"

By "The forgiveness of sins" I mean that Christ has left the power of forgiving sins to the Pastors of His Church (John 20:23).

On the day of His resurrection from the dead in the evening our Lord appeared to His apostles. He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side to convince them that He had really risen; and He went on to say to them: Peace be with you. As the Father hath sent me I also send you. He then breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they shall be forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain they are retained (John 20:21-23).

Notice our Lord's action as well as his words. He breathes on the apostles, giving them the power of the Holy Ghost to enable them to continue the mission which He had Himself received from the Father. He had come to save us from sin. He said to the Pharisees when they found fault with His eating with sinners, "I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32); and He constantly used His divine power to forgive sins, as a glance through the Gospels shows. Now, then, after His resurrection, when He will soon ascend into heaven and leave the apostles and their successors to carry on down the ages the work of mercy He came to do, He solemnly tells them that He is putting the sins of men in their care, to forgive or not to forgive according as they see that men are worthy or not of forgiveness. Therefore, from then onwards, the Church can in God's name and by His power and authority forgive sinners their offence against God. But the apostles and their successors must not forgive without using discretion. They must judge men's souls to see if they may be pardoned or not; and this can only be if they know what men have done against God and are given proof that the said men are sorry for their sins. We shall consider these words of Christ again when we come to the Sacrament of Penance and confession. Meanwhile we see clearly that Our Lord really gave the apostles the power to forgive in His name (that is, to absolve sinners); but He also laid down prerequisite conditions to the giving of absolution, namely, that the sinner should make a confession of what he had done and should make clear his sorrow for his offences.

The Catechism here, by indicating John 20:23, refers primarily to the power the Church has to forgive sins in confession. But the words of the Creed, "The forgiveness of sins, embrace the whole power of the Church to forgive, and include, therefore, not only the Sacrament of Penance, which Christ was instituting when He spoke the words in John 20:23, but also the Sacrament of Baptism, which, as we shall see when we study it, is a sacrament of pardon, remitting original sin and any personal sins of which the subject is capable. In a word, the Creed covers the whole extent of the Church's power to forgive sin.

112. By what means are sins forgiven?

Sins are forgiven principally by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance.

Note the word "principally". When we have worked through the sacraments we shall see its significance.

113. What is sin?

Sin is offence against God by any thought, word, deed, or omission against the law of God.

It is to be feared that few people really understand what sin is. They say a thing is wrong, or that it is degrading or not done, etc.; but no expressions of this kind bring home the real malice of sin as an offence against God. To have some idea of the malice of sin we must call to mind what some sins have done.

Take the fall of the angels. For one single sin of thought, one single sin of pride, God created hell and cast into it for all eternity myriads of those wonderful spiritual beings whom He had made to be happy with Him for eternity. Again, the human race does suffer, and will suffer to the end of time for the sin of Adam. Again, look at the crucifix. Who is it that is hanging there, nailed by His hands and feet, and dying in agony and shame? It is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour. His sufferings and death for us are meant to teach us how awful in God's sight sin is. We should try to learn this lesson by pondering before the crucifix the sufferings of our God. Such serious thought will assuredly lead us to make a firm resolution never to commit a great sin deliberately.

The Catechism tells us that sin is any thought, word, deed or omission against the law of God. We can, then, commit sin in four ways (this we have already explained under the seventh article of the Creed see 73).

114. How many kinds of sin are there?

There are two kinds of sin original sin and actual sin.

115. What is original sin?

Original sin is that guilt and stain of sin which we inherit from Adam, who was the origin and head of all mankind.

This question and the next have already been explained in question 43.

116. What was the sin committed by Adam?

The sin committed by Adam was the sin of disobedience when he ate the forbidden fruit.

117. Have all mankind contracted the guilt and stain of original sin?

All mankind contracted the guilt and stain of original sin, except the Blessed Virgin, who, through the merits of her divine Son, was conceived without the least guilt or stain of original sin.

118. What is this privilege of the Blessed Virgin called?

This privilege of the Blessed Virgin is called the Immaculate Conception.

The Immaculate Conception does not mean, as some people have absurdly supposed, that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in some miraculous way. She had a father and mother (St Joachim and St Anne) like every other ordinary human being. The Immaculate Conception has nothing to do with her natural conception and birth; but it means that when God created her soul He didn't

allow it to be stained with original sin. The rest of us are conceived with original sin on our souls, and it is not till we are baptised that we are freed from it and given the gift of God's grace and friendship. Mary had this grace and friendship from the very first moment of her existence in her mother's womb; and she was thus privileged because God had predestined her to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Christ has redeemed us; and He redeemed Mary too. She would not have been free from original sin but for the merits of His death and passion. The difference between Mary's redemption and ours is that, while we are cleansed from original sin after we have contracted it, she was prevented from having it. The following example will help to make the matter clear. If a man is condemned to prison for debt, I may redeem him in two ways. I may pay his debts for him after he has already gone to prison; or I may pay them before he goes and thus prevent him from going. In both cases you have redemption. The first alternative represents our case in the matter of original sin; the second alternative Mary's "Immaculate" means "stainless. Original sin is a deprivation of the grace which God intended us all to have, had not Adam sinned. Grace is an adornment of the soul. It makes the soul beautiful in God's sight. Therefore, to be without grace is to be lacking this beautiful adornment, and thus to be stained. Since Mary was endowed with the adornment of grace from the first moment of her conception, her soul was unstained, immaculate.

The Immaculate Conception of our Lady is a dogma of the Catholic faith, defined by Pope Pius IX on 8th December, 1854. That she should have been free from all sin, both original and actual or personal, is demanded by the closeness of her relationship with God the Son made man. She was His Mother; He was flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone. St Paul says that we are all temples of the Holy Ghost. How much more so she in whose chaste womb the Human Nature of the Son of God was formed. She had to be a holy person for so sublime an office holy from the first moment of her existence. Add to this that the very purpose of the coming of the Son of God to earth was the destruction of sin and the overthrow of the sway of Satan. How, then, could Christ allow the Mother who bore and nurtured Him to come even for a moment under Satan's sway! He miraculously preserved her virginity. It is unthinkable that He should not have preserved also the absolute purity of her soul.

If now we turn to the very beginning of the Bible, to the account of the sin of Adam and Eve, we find God saying to the serpent (Satan) that He would put enmities between him and the woman, between Satan's seed and her seed (Gen. 3:15). The woman immediately indicate Eve; and the passage foretells constant hostility between the fallen angels and mankind. But the seed of the woman will triumph; the serpent's head will be crushed; mankind will defeat Satan. Since it was by Christ that this defeat was inflicted and since the whole strength of men's resistance to Satan comes from Christ, the words spoken by God in Eden contain a prophetic allusion to Christ. (Interpretation to be checked!)

Christ, St Paul tells us, is the new Adam, restoring to men what the old Adam had forfeited. By the side of the new Adam the Church has from the beginning seen a new Eve, sharing with Him His victory over Satan, as the old Eve had shared the old Adam's defeat. The new Eve is Mary. And so, in the words of God, spoken to the first Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Church has seen the newer and greater Eve foreshadowed (weak expression), Mary, by the side of her Son, and, by His power and after His example, untarnished by sin.

119. What is actual sin?

Actual sin is every sin which we ourselves commit.

120. How is actual sin divided?

Actual sin is divided into mortal sin and venial sin.

121. What is mortal sin?

Mortal sin is a grievous offence against God.

This is the sin we must avoid at all cost. It is a direct act of rebellion against God, and therefore, a direct insult to His infinite Majesty and Goodness. Three things are necessary to make a mortal sin: (1) the commandment which we break must be grave; for instance, it is gravely wrong to commit murder, really to hate someone, to destroy a man's character, to steal several pounds (hundreds of Dollars); (2) we must know what we are doing; (3) we must do it deliberately. If the wrong is not grave in itself, or if it is grave, but we are not aware of its gravity or are only half deliberate, then the sin would not be mortal, but venial.

122. Why is it call mortal sin?

It is called mortal sin because it kills the soul and deserves hell.

Mortal means causing death. A mortal wound, for instance, is one that causes death.

123. How does mortal sin kill the soul?

Mortal sin kills the soul by depriving it of sanctifying grace, which is the supernatural life of the soul.

At the beginning of the Catechism we saw that the soul is immortal that is, it can never die. Yet here we are told that mortal sin kills the soul. But, as the answer says, killing does not here refer to the ordinary life of the soul. The soul in mortal sin continues to exist. But by grace a soul has, so to say, a second life superadded to its natural life. We call it supernatural life; it gives us vitality in the service of God which we cannot display by our merely natural powers (see 138, 139). Now mortal sin takes away grace from the soul; thereby it destroys this supernatural vitality; and in that sense it kills the soul.

124. Is it a great evil to fall unto mortal sin?

It is the greatest of all evils to fall into mortal sin.

There is nothing that we can have which is comparable to God's love and friendship. By mortal sin we forfeit God's friendship. Therefore mortal sin is the greatest of evils. Moreover, as the next question tells us, those who die in mortal sin will go to hell for ever; they will never be with God in heaven. To lose heaven is the greatest calamity that could befall us.

125. Where will they go who die in mortal sin?

They who die in mortal sin will go to hell for all eternity.

Mortal sin is a direct rebellion against the infinite Majesty of God. You measure the gravity of an offence by the dignity of the person offended and his claims on our love and service. Therefore

directly to insult the infinite goodness of God is to commit a crime which has a certain infinity about it. Its punishment, therefore, must be adequate to the offence, and so, in justice, unending. Mortal sin kills the supernatural life of the soul. The sinner thus dies spiritually. If he refuses the grace of repentance and dies refusing it, he passes from this life, spiritually dead, cut off from God; and so he must remain for ever, since after this life there is no further opportunity for repentance. But to be for ever cut off from God is the essential punishment of hell. Therefore, the mortal sinner who dies in his sin necessarily goes to hell. By his sin unrepented of he has condemned himself to hell; he has given God no choice but to reject him for ever.

126. What is venial sin?

Venial sin is an offence which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God, and often leads to mortal sin.

127. Why is it called venial sin?

It is called venial sin because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin.

The word venial comes from the Latin word *venia*, which means pardon. To get mortal sin forgiven we are bound to go to confession and receive absolution from a priest, or in a case of necessity to make an act of perfect contrition, having at the same time a desire and intention to go to confession (see 294); but for a venial or small sin it is sufficient to make an act of sorrow, and God will forgive it at once, and there is no need to go to confession. We are not bound to confess small sins. When we were considering mortal sin, we said that three conditions were required for a sin to be mortal; the matter must be serious and we must have full knowledge of its seriousness and be fully deliberate about it. If the matter is serious, but we only half know what we are doing or are only half deliberate, then the sin cannot be mortal; it will be venial. Again, even though we know full well what we are doing and are quite deliberate about it, but the matter is not serious, then again the sin is venial. Suppose a person is tempted to tell a small lie; he knows that it is a sin and that he ought not to do it, but it will get him out of bother if he deliberately tells it that is a venial sin. It would be different if the lie were calculated to destroy some man's character or lose him his livelihood; that would be a very serious matter, and a deliberate lie of that kind would be a mortal sin.

In the previous answer it is said that venial sin often leads to mortal sin. Venial sin weakens our faith and lessens our fervour. It is like a bruise in the soul. If a person is careless about injuries to his body, he may easily contract some grave illness and die. Similarly, if we are careless about venial sin, we weaken our resistance to temptation and render ourselves liable to a grave fall. It is not that venial sins, as such, ever add up to a mortal sin; but, especially if habitual, they predispose us to fall into some mortal sin. A spark can cause a great fire; likewise small moral lapses can lead to a moral collapse.

Sometime people say, It is only a little sin, it does not matter much. But every venial sin is an offence against God, and therefore is, after mortal sin, the greatest of evils, far greater than any of the physical evils which can be inflicted on us.

The Eleventh Article.

128. What is the eleventh article of the Creed?

The eleventh article of the Creed is, "The resurrection of the body."

129. What do you mean by "The resurrection of the body?"

By "The resurrection of the body" I mean that we shall rise again with the same bodies at the Day of Judgement.

When we die, the body and soul are separated for a time. The soul goes to be judged by God and to be rewarded or punished according to its works. The body is buried and in course of time falls to dust. Dust thou art, said God to Adam, and into dust thou shalt return. Every Ash Wednesday those words are repeated to us as the blessed ashes are put on our heads to remind us of our mortality. But at the end of the world, in preparation for the General Judgement body and soul will be reunited and we shall be judged in our full human nature.

If you read the Gospels you will find that our Lord on a number of occasions very clearly taught the resurrection of the body; for instance, in the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11). St Paul (1Cor.15) tells us that our Lord's resurrection was the pledge of ours; and he describes the glorious qualities of the risen bodies of the good. There will be no more suffering or death; the body will glow with beauty; and in its perfect subjection to the soul, it will share as fully as possible in the spiritual vitality of the soul.

The bodies of the bad will also rise, to share for ever in the soul's condemnation.

The Twelfth Article

130. What is the twelfth article of the Creed?

The twelfth article of the Creed is, "Life everlasting."

131. What does "Life everlasting" mean?

"Life everlasting" means that the good shall live for ever in the glory and happiness of heaven.

132. What is the glory and happiness of heaven?

The glory and happiness of heaven is to see, love, and enjoy God for ever.

The great St Augustine has said: Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee. Our nature craves for complete happiness. The goods of this world cannot satisfy our longing; none of them is wholly good, and we know all the time that we must one day give them up. But God is the supreme and absolute Goodness. In heaven we shall possess Him, and in a way far beyond our natural need of him. We shall see Him as He is, says St John (1John 3:2); face to face, says St Paul (1Cor 13:12) in all His infinite Majesty and Beauty, compared with which the truly good things of this world and the beautiful things are nothing; and we shall be enthralled for ever with love of Him. We shall be utterly happy, in complete rest and peace, with no pain, suffering or sorrow any more. God has told us about it, and we know it

is true; and the thought of it is a great help to us in meeting the difficulties and temptations of this life.

133. What does the Scripture say of the happiness of heaven?

The Scripture say of the happiness of heaven, "That eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1Cor.2:9).

134. Shall the wicked also live for ever?

The wicked also shall live and be punished for ever in the fire of hell.

The human soul is immortal, and therefore the wicked also shall live for ever. But God will have said to them at the Judgement: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. These words show that the wicked will suffer for ever a twofold pain: (1) the pain of loss, by being cut off from God, for whom they were made; this is beyond comparison their greatest pain; (2) the pain of sense, punishment by fire. That the fire of hell is real fire of some kind is clear from what our Lord said about it on a number of varied occasions.

Chapter 3. Hope

135. Will faith alone save us?

Faith alone will not save us without good works; we must also have hope and charity.

In order to be saved we must believe all that God has told us and do all that He has commanded us. For even as the body without the spirit is dead: so also faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Our Lord demanded both faith and good works: He that believeth not shall be condemned (Mark 16:16); If you love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15).

Why we must have hope and charity is explained later.

136. What is hope?

Hope is the supernatural gift of God, by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and all the means necessary to obtain it, if we do what He requires of us.

When we considered faith, we saw that it is a supernatural gift of God. Hope is another such gift, a power that God gives us, making us able to have full confidence in Him that we shall get to heaven and have all the help from Him that we need in order to get there. To hope is to expect to have the opportunity to obtain some good thing which we do not yet possess. Here hope is the expectation of reaching heaven, of possessing God for ever. But, as in all true hope, there is a condition attached; we must do our part, by practising our religion and leading a good life.

137. Why must we hope in God?

We must hope in God because He is infinitely good, infinitely powerful, and faithful to His promises.

If a man promises to do something for us, we trust him if he is a good man, a man of his word, and well able to do what he promises. God has all these qualities in an infinite degree. Therefore He can be trusted absolutely.

138. Can we do any good work of ourselves towards our salvation?

We can do no good work of ourselves towards our salvation; we need the help of God's grace.

Salvation means getting to heaven. We saw (132) that the glory and happiness of heaven is to possess God for ever, and that the glory that is offered to us is something far beyond what we can by the desires of our nature aspire to. We merit heaven by a good life here on earth. Now, since the goal of our endeavour (heaven) is above-nature (that is, supernatural), the acts by which we merit it must also be above-nature or supernatural; God has decided this, and it is He who lifts our good actions above their normal level and gives them a value which they have not in themselves. He does this by giving us His grace.

139. What is grace?

Grace is a supernatural gift of God, freely bestowed upon us for our sanctification and salvation.

Grace is so called because it is a gift of God, freely given by Him to us through the merits of Christ. It is not due to us on any title except God's goodness. It is called supernatural or above-nature because it is not part of the human nature which God has given us nor something which our nature has a right to, such as, for instance, God's care of us by His Providence, but because it is freely added by God to our nature and, as we said in the last paragraph, gives to our good actions a value in God's sight incomparably higher than they would naturally have.

There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying (or habitual) and actual grace.

1) Sanctifying grace is a quality with which the Holy Ghost endows our souls to wash away our sins and make us holy and pleasing in His sight. We must not take this to mean that grace merely makes our souls beautiful for God to look upon. It does much more than that. St Peter tells us that it makes us partakers of the divine nature(2 Pet. 1:4). This does not mean that grace makes us God. It means that grace enriches and ennobles us immeasurably beyond our natural capabilities so that we have a wonderful intimacy with God; instead of being only His servants we become His friends and adopted children. Grace imparts to us a new life, the life our Lord spoke of when He said: I am come that they may have life... more abundantly (John 10:10).

We receive this grace at baptism. Once received, it remains in our souls. That is why it is called habitual grace, and those who have it are said to be in the state of grace. The only way we can lose it is by mortal sin; but a good confession or an act of perfect contrition restores it to us if we have lost it. Sanctifying grace can be continuously increased by prayer and the reception of the sacraments. Since it is so great a treasure, we should guard it carefully and do all we can to increase it in our souls.

2) Actual grace is a passing supernatural help which God gives us to enable us to avoid sin and do good. By it He enlightens our mind and moves and strengthens our will. Good thoughts that come into our minds to love and serve God better, to repent of our sins, to forgive injuries, to be kind to the poor, etc., are examples of actual grace.

140. How must we obtain God's grace?

We must obtain God's grace chiefly by prayer and the holy sacraments.

Chapter 4. Prayer

141. What is prayer?

Prayer is the raising up of the mind and heart to God.

We use two things in prayer: our mind to think of God and what we are saying to Him, and our heart to mean what we say. Prayer is a conversation with God. The word prayer means asking or petition. But this is really only one of the ways in which we raise our thoughts and hearts to God. Besides petition, there is adoration by which we offer our homage to God as our Creator and Lord; thanksgiving by which we express our gratitude to Him for all His benefits to us; contrition or sorrow by which we humbly express our sorrow for our sins.

Prayer is a very great act of religion, because in it we acknowledge our weakness and misery and our complete dependence on God. We should always say some prayers at the beginning of the day and at night. There is at the end of this book a short form of morning and night prayers. And we should pray at other times, when we are tempted or in trouble, and so on.

142. How do we raise up our mind and heart to God?

We raise up our mind and heart to God by thinking of God; by adoring, praising, and thanking Him; and by begging of Him blessings for soul and body.

143. Do those pray well who, at their prayers, think neither of God nor of what they say?

Those who, at their prayer, think neither of God nor of what they say do not pray well; but they offend God, if their distractions are wilful.

Often, when we are saying our prayers, our thoughts wander to our work, for instance, or to some worry we have. This is called being distracted. If it is not our fault, if at the time we do not realise that we are being distracted, it does not make our prayer bad; God understands the weakness of human nature and He makes allowance for us and continues to listen to our prayer. But if we notice these distractions and do not try to bring our thoughts back to God, then our prayer is bad and we commit a sin of irreverence to God.

144. Which is the best of all prayers?

The best of all prayers is the "Our Father" or the Lord's Prayer.

145. Who made the Lord's Prayer?

Jesus Christ Himself made the Lord's Prayer.

That is why it is the best of all our prayers. One day, after our Lord had been praying, one of His disciples begged Him, "Lord, teach us to pray; and He taught them the "Our Father". We should often say this prayer; it contains a summary of all that we can ask God for.

146. Say the Lord's Prayer.

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 them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Catechism now gives a short explanation of each of the petitions of the "Our Father. They are easy to understand, and there is no need for me to add anything.

147. In the Lord's Prayer who is called "Our Father"?

In the Lord's Prayer God is called "Our Father.

148. Why is God called "Our Father"?

God is called "Our Father" because He is the Father of all Christians, whom He has made His children by holy baptism.

149. Is God the Father of all mankind?

God is also the Father of all mankind, because He made them all, and loves and preserves them all.

150. Why do we say "Our Father, and not "My Father"?"

We say "Our Father, and not "My Father," because, being all brethren, we are to pray not for ourselves only, but also for all others.

151. When we say, "Hallowed be Thy name", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Hallowed be Thy name", we pray that God may be known, loved, and served by all His creatures.

152. When we say, "Thy Kingdom come", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Thy Kingdom come", we pray that God may come and reign in the hearts of all by His grace in this world, and bring us all hereafter to His heavenly kingdom.

153. When we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven", we pray that God may enable us, by His grace, to do His will in all things, as the blessed do in heaven.

154. When we say, "Give us this day our daily bread", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Give us this day our daily bread", we pray that God may give us daily all that is necessary for soul and body.

155. When we say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us", we pray that God may forgive us our sins, as we forgive others the injuries they do to us.

156. When we say, "Lead us not into temptation", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Lead us not into temptation", we pray that God may give us grace not to yield to temptation.

The way this petition is expressed is curious to our ears. It is a Hebrew way of speaking, and means: Keep us from yielding to temptation.

157. When we say, "Deliver us from evil", what do we pray for?

When we say, "Deliver us from evil", we pray that God may free us from all evil, both of soul and body.

The addition, For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen, is not found in the best texts of the original Gospels and is, therefore, not part of the Lord's Prayer.

158. Should we ask the angels and saints to pray for us?

We should ask the angels and saints to pray for us, because they are our friends and brethren, and because their prayers have great power with God.

We have already seen (104) that the angels and the saints have power to help us and are interested in our welfare (see our Lord's words in the next question). It stands to reason, therefore, that we should avail ourselves of their power and interest. Some people say that they prefer to go straight to God. But very few people are unwilling to ask and accept the prayers of their friends on earth, and are quite prepared to say that their friends' prayers are better than their own and more likely to be heard by God. Why not apply the same rule to our friends in heaven? They certainly are our friends; and their prayers are certainly better than ours, precisely because they are in heaven and no longer liable, as we are, to sin, distractions, and forgetfulness of God.

159. How can we show that the angels and saints know what passes on earth?

We can show that the angels and saints know what passes on earth from the words of Christ: "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance" (Luke 15:10).

160. What is the chief prayer to the Blessed Virgin which the Church uses?

The chief prayer to the Blessed Virgin which the Church uses is the Hail Mary.

161. Say the Hail Mary.

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.

162. Who made the first part of the Hail Mary?

The angel Gabriel and St Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, made the first part of the Hail Mary.

In St Luke's Gospel (chap. 1) we read how the angel Gabriel was sent from God... to a virgin... and the virgin's name was Mary. Coming as God's ambassador, the angel addressed her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: They are the first words of the Hail Mary. After Mary had accepted the office of Mother of God and the Angel had departed, Mary went to visit her cousin, St Elizabeth. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice and

said: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. These are the next words in the Hail Mary and conclude the first part. They are the words of God to our Lady, and when we use them we are only repeating the praise which God gave her.

In the official non-Catholic English translation of St Luke, the Greek word which we translate as full of grace is translated as highly favoured. But full of grace is correct. It corresponds to the ancient Latin version of St Luke, made by St Jerome over a thousand years before Anglicanism came into existence; and, as a matter of fact, it is the expression used in the oldest non-Catholic English translations those of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer. In any case a soul that is highly favoured by God must be endowed with the fullest grace. When God favours a soul He enriches it with grace.

Non-Catholic generally speak of our Lady as "the Virgin Mary. Catholic call her the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Mary's own Canticle (Luke 1:48) she said: For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

163. Who made the second part of the Hail Mary?

The Church of God guided by the Holy Ghost made the 2nd part of the Hail M.

164. Why should we frequently say the Hail Mary?

We should frequently say the Hail Mary to put us in mind of the Incarnation of the Son of God; and to honour our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God.

165. Have we another reason for often saying the Hail Mary?

We have another reason for often saying the Hail Mary to ask our Blessed Lady to pray for us sinners at all times, but especially at the hour of our death.

It is necessary for us always to keep in mind Jesus Christ, for from Him all our holiness comes; as St Peter said, there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). Now the first part of the Hail Mary is a direct reminder of the Incarnation. Therefore, the oftener we say it, the more continuously and lovingly do we remember our Lord. In remembering Him, we remember His Mother; it cannot but please Him, as it would please any good son, that we should remember His Mother. Then, in the second part, we invoke her intercession. We have already seen that it is right to pray to the angels and saints. How much more, then, to our Lady, who exceeds them all because of her surpassing dignity as the Mother of God. We ask her to intercede for us at all times, but especially when we come to die; no period of our life is so important as the time when we are on our deathbed, for our whole eternity depends on our dying well. And, when we are dying, it is the devil's last chance to overcome us, and so we need all the help we can to meet his final assault on our perseverance in faith, hope and charity.

166. Why does the Catholic Church show great devotion to the Blessed Virgin?

The Catholic Church shows great devotion to the Blessed Virgin because she is the immaculate Mother of God.

Since God the Son chose Mary to be His Mother and made her sinless even from the first moment of her conception, we are but following the example He gave us when we pay her a reverence and honour which we do not, and would not, pay to any other of the angels or saints.

We do not, of course, worship her with the worship we give to God; we recognise too that all her glory and dignity is His gift to her. Nor in the honour we pay her, however great it may be, do we let her overshadow her Son. He is the centre of all our religion, the one Mediator: Mary's Mediator as well as ours. We honour Mary that we may grow in love of Jesus. As has been said, "Every crown that is wreathed for Mary is laid at Jesus' feet.

167. How is the Blessed Virgin Mother of God?

The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God because Jesus Christ, her Son, who was born of her as man, is not only man but also truly God.

Our Lady is called in the Bible the Mother of Jesus (John 2:1). Now Jesus was God; therefore Mary, being the Mother of Jesus, is the Mother of God. She is not, of course, the Mother of His divine nature; the divine nature is uncreated and eternal. Nor is she the Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, according to His divine nature, for that would be the same as saying that she was the Mother of the Divinity. She is the Mother of God made man. Mothers are mothers of persons. Therefore our Lady was the Mother of the Person of Jesus Christ, that is of the Person of God the son according to His human nature.

168. Is the Blessed Virgin our Mother also?

The Blessed Virgin is our Mother also because, being the brethren of Jesus, we are the children of Mary.

St Paul tells us that Christ is "the firstborn amongst many brethren(Rom. 8:29). We are Christ's brethren because we are the adopted sons of God. It follows, therefore, that Christ's Mother must be our Mother too. When Jesus was dying on the cross He said to His Mother, "Behold thy son(John 19:26). He was speaking of the Apostle St John; but it is generally believed that by these words He intended to give, in the person of St John, all men to His Mother to be her adopted children. We have, then, in heaven, the love of a Mother protecting us and praying for us. Now that she is there, enthroned as Queen, for her Son is King, how powerful must be her prayer for us! We have some indication of the power of her prayer in heaven when we realise how powerful it was on earth; if you read the account of the marriage feast at Cana (John 2) you will see there that our Lord worked His first miracle, changing water into wine, at the request of His Mother.

Chapter 5 : Charity

The Commandments of God

169. What is Charity?

Charity is a supernatural gift of God, by which we love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake.

We have already seen that faith and hope are supernatural gifts of God. We are now told the same about charity. The charity of God, writes St Paul, is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us(Rom. 5:5). It is a supernatural gift, because it makes us able to love

God in a way in which we could not possibly love Him of ourselves; it gives us an intimate friendship with God to which we have by nature no claim. When He prayed to His Father after the Last Supper for His disciples and for us, our Lord said: I have made known thy name to them and will make it known: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them(John 17:26). This can only mean that by the gift of charity we are made to share in God's own love. When we were considering sanctifying grace (139) we recalled St Peter's words that grace makes us partakers of the divine nature. We said that this means that grace enriches and ennobles us immeasurably beyond what we are naturally capable of, and that, as a result, we have a wonderful intimacy with God and become His friends and adopted children instead of merely being His servants.

Now grace and charity go together. You can lose grace by mortal sin and still keep faith and hope; most sinners do so. But you cannot lose grace and keep charity; mortal sin destroys both. The reason for this is that mortal sin, being an act of rebellion against God, directly breaks friendship with Him; and it is the very purpose of grace and charity to make us God's friends. Grace makes to be friends; charity makes us able to act towards Him in accordance with the status of friendship which grace has given us. By grace we share in the divine nature, as St Peter says; by charity we share in God's love for Himself. (God is love, says St John.)

Therefore charity gives us the power to love God for His own sake above all created persons and things, and thus fulfil the first and greatest commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind.(Matt 22:37). It also gives us the power to love our neighbour as ourselves, which our Lord calls the second commandment like unto the first, for you cannot truly love God unless you love also your neighbour (that is, everybody) who, as we have seen, was created by God to His own image and likeness and has been redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Son. Indeed, the love of our neighbour is the test and proof of our genuine love for God. If a man say: I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?(1 John 4:20). But it is no easy matter to love our neighbour with the love God requires of us; for it includes loving our enemies and praying for them that persecute us (Matt. 5:44).

170. Why must we love God?

We must love God because He is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely good to us.

Two excellent reasons. First, God is so good in Himself. We know He is, and we appreciate the fact, even though we cannot, because of God's infinity, realise all that it means. Second, God is so good to us; He made us, redeemed us, and has promised us a happy home with Himself in heaven and offered us all the grace and help we need to get to heaven. From this goodness of God to us it is not difficult to rise to the first reason and appreciate how good God must be in Himself; just as we easily recognise our mother's goodness in herself from her goodness to us.

171. How do we show that we love God?

We show that we love God by keeping His commandments, for Christ says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

God is not satisfied by our merely saying, "My God, I love Thee. He requires this practical proof of our real love, that we should keep His commandments. What would you think of a boy who was always telling his mother that he loved her but at the same time was constantly disobeying

her? Would you not say that it was a very poor sign of his love; that if he really loved her, he would obey her? It is, then, quite to be expected that God would ask for our obedience to Him as a proof of our genuine love.

172. How many Commandments are there?

There are ten Commandments.

173. Say the Ten Commandments.

I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

4. Honour thy father and thy mother.

5. Thou shalt not kill.

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

174. Who gave the Ten Commandments?

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses in the Old Law, and Christ confirmed them in the New.

The account of the giving of the Ten Commandments can be read in Exodus 19:20. Our Lord confirmed them when He said: Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Matt. 5:17).

I do not intend to enter into much explanation of the Commandments, partly because they are more or less clearly explained in the words of the Catechism, but principally because my object in this little book is to explain the doctrines of the Catholic Church and try to put them in their true light for those who have unfortunately had wrong impressions about them instilled into their minds. All Christians of all denominations believe the Commandments to be binding on their consciences, and it seems to me sufficient to set out briefly the Catholic explanation of these Commandments.

The First Commandment

175. What is the First Commandment?

The First Commandment is: "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them.

176. What are we commanded to do by the first Commandment?

By the first Commandment we are commanded to worship the one, true, and living God by faith, hope, charity and religion.

Religion is the virtue by which we render to God, our Creator and Lord, the honour which is His due.

177. What are the sins against faith?

The sins against faith are all false religions, wilful doubt, disbelief, or denial of any article of faith, and also culpable ignorance of the doctrines of the Church.

Once we are certain that God has made known certain truths, it would be a great sin to deny or to disbelieve even one of them, or to doubt any one of them. God is the very Truth, and He means us to accept unquestioningly whatever He tells us. Not to do so is a grave insult to Him. If, then, we have come to suspect that the Catholic Church is the true Church and her teaching God's teaching, we are bound in conscience to enquire further; and once we are convinced that she is the true Church, we are bound in conscience, cost what it may, to become Catholics and remain Catholics.

178. How do we expose ourselves to the danger of losing our faith?

We expose ourselves to the danger of losing our faith by neglecting our spiritual duties, reading bad books, going to non-Catholic schools, and taking part in the services or prayers of a false religion.

Spiritual duties. This means hearing Mass, going to confession and Communion, praying, and hearing instructions.

Bad books, especially books against religion and immoral books. If a Catholic child is sent to a non-Catholic school, it cannot learn its religion; it is a grievous sin on the part of a parent to deprive a child of the knowledge of its faith. It is a mortal sin for Catholics to attend non-Catholic places of worship for the purpose of taking part in the services, because they know that all religions except their own are false.

179. What are the sins against hope?

The sins against hope are despair and presumption.

Despair means wilfully giving up hope in God's mercy. Presumption is a rash expectation of heaven and of the means of getting there, without doing what God requires of us; for instance, leading a bad life and expecting to make peace with God on our death-bed. It amounts to a mockery of God's mercy and justice.

Despair sins against hope by denying or doubting that God will carry out His part of the contract; presumption, by refusing to carry out our part of the contract.

180. What are the chief sins against religion?

The chief sins against religion are the worship of false gods or idols, and the giving to any creature whatsoever the honour which belongs to God alone.

181. Does the first Commandment forbid the making of images?

The first Commandment does not forbid the making of images but the making of idols, that is, it forbids us to make images to be adored or honoured as gods.

We Catholics have many statues and images in our churches, and we have been accused of thereby breaking the first Commandment. But it is not true that the first Commandment forbids the making of images as such; for God who imposed the first Commandment on the Jews also commanded them on certain occasion to make images. Thus we read: And the Lord spoke to Moses: ...Thou shalt make also two cherubims of beaten gold, on the two sides of the oracle (Exod. 25:18). And again, when the people for murmuring against God were afflicted by fiery serpents, God said to Moses: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign. Whosoever being struck shall look upon it shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent (Num. 21:8-9).

What God did forbid was the making of images to be adored as gods, as for instance, the Jews did with the golden calf. We Catholic do not do that. When we kneel before statues and pray, we are not honouring the statue as such, but the statue as representing our Lord, our Lady or some saint. It is quite a natural and human thing to do; we all treasure photographs of our father and mother and we do not condemn one another for honouring the photograph, any more that we condemn the poet Cowper for writing a poem, "Line to his Mother's Picture. When we pray before a statue, we are not praying to the statue, but to the person whom it represents. It is easier to pray with attention and devotion before a crucifix or a statue than before a bare wall. The Crucifix reminds us of our Saviour and keeps our thoughts collected. We light candles and put flowers before statues; but our motive in so doing does not differ from the Primrose League who deck Beaconsfield's statue on Primrose Day, nor from that of those who lay wreaths before a war memorial on Armistice Sunday.

182. Does the first Commandment forbid dealing with the devil and superstitious practices?

The first Commandment forbids dealing with the devil and superstitious practices, such as consulting spiritualists and fortune-tellers, and trusting to charms, omens, dreams, and suchlike fooleries.

We indulge in superstition when we ascribe to certain things the power to bring us good fortune or misfortune, when they cannot possibly have such power; a horseshoe, for instance, has no power to bring good luck, nor the spilling of salt to bring bad luck.

Spiritualism is banned by this Commandment, and a Catholic may not be a spiritualist or attend spiritualist meetings. Spiritualism, in so far as it is a religion, is a false religion; and, although many of the strange happenings in spiritualism can be explained by natural causes, still there are a few which cannot, it seems, be so explained and can only be ascribed to evil spirits.

Catholic often wear a crucifix or a medal round the neck. We do not wear them as charms; we wear them to show honour and reverence to our Lord and His saints. No one sees harm in wearing a locket with a picture of a relative or friend in it. What harm, then, is there in wearing a crucifix or medal?

183. Are all sins of sacrilege and simony also forbidden by the first Commandment?

All sins of sacrilege and simony are also forbidden by the first Commandment.

Sacrilege is a violation or irreverent treatment of what is consecrated to God, whether of things, such as the sacred vessels used in the church, or of persons, such as priests or nuns, or of places, such as a church or cemetery. Simony (named from Simon Magus Acts 8:18, etc.) means buying or selling material things that have been made sacred, v.g. by a blessing, and increasing the price because of their sacred character.

184. Is it forbidden to give divine honour or worship to the angels and saints?

It is forbidden to give divine honour or worship to the angels and saints, for this belongs to God alone.

185. What kind of honour or worship should we pay to the angels and the saints?

We should pay to the angels and the saints an inferior honour or worship, for this is due to them as the servants and special friends of God.

We have already spoken about this in the ninth Article (see par. 104). Let me repeat what the Catholic Church teaches us: The saints who reign with Christ offer up their prayers to God for men; it is good and profitable suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, help and assistance in order to obtain benefits from God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our only Redeemer and Saviour(Council of Trent, Sess.25).

We adore Christ; we honour the saints. So, it seems, do Protestants. Do they not dedicate their churches to saints? We hear of St Margaret's church, St Philip's, St Jude's, St Thomas's, All Saints' church. There is a calendar of saints at the beginning of the Book of Common Prayer. The Church of England, therefore, officially honours the saints; but in this, as in so many other things, there is great divergence of belief and practice in the Church of England. We Catholic honour and venerate the Our Lady and the saints. We give them the honour which is their due, and this is only right and proper. But to give them divine honour would be a very grave sin indeed.

186. What honour should we give to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures?

We should we give to relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures a relative honour, as they relate to Christ and His saints and are memorials of them.

Relics are the bodies or part of the bodies of saints or anything that has belonged to them. The Crucifix is the representation of our Lord on the Cross. The answer means that we honour relics, etc., because of those to whom they belonged or whom they represent; and they serve to remind us of the saints and so help us to pray better.

187. Do we pray to relics or images?

We do not pray to relics or images, for they can neither see, nor hear, nor help us.

The Second Commandment

188. What is the second Commandment?

The second Commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

In vain means without necessity, or without due respect.

189. What are we commanded by the second Commandment?

By the second Commandment we are commanded to speak with reverence of God and all holy persons and things, and to keep our lawful oaths and vows.

Holy persons are our Lady and the saints and all those on earth who have consecrated themselves to God's service, such as priests and nuns. Holy things mean all that belong to the service of God, such as the Mass, the sacraments, the sign of the Cross, etc.

An oath is calling God to witness that what we say is true. A vow is a solemn promise made to God to do something great and good in His honour, which we are not already obliged to do for instance, to build a church if we recover from an illness. Those who give their lives to God in religious orders take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

190. What does the second Commandment forbid?

The second Commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths; as also blasphemy, cursing, and profane words.

A false oath is calling God to witness that what we say is true when we know it to be false; it is also called perjury. A rash oath is one taken without sufficient reflection. An unjust oath is swearing to do something which is forbidden by God. An unnecessary oath is an oath taken when there is no need of it. Blasphemy is speaking evilly or impiously against God or holy persons and things. We can also act blasphemously. Cursing, in the strict sense, means calling down God's anger on ourselves, our neighbour, or any of God's creatures, or wishing them great evil. We are never allowed to curse.

191. Is it ever lawful to swear or to take an oath?

It is lawful to swear, or to take an oath, only when God's honour, or our own, or our neighbour's good requires it.

We are sometimes forced to take an oath, in a court of law, for instance. The public good requires it, so that people shall tell the truth and justice shall be done.

The Third Commandment.

192. What is the third Commandment?

The third Commandment is, "Remember that Thou keep holy the Sabbath Day."

193. What are we commanded by the third Commandment?

By the third Commandment we are commanded to keep Sunday holy.

The Jews' Sabbath, or Day of Rest, was Saturday, kept sacred because God at the creation rested on the seventh day and because they wished thus to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt.

The Church, using the power our Lord gave her, altered the observance of the Sabbath to the observance of Sunday, to commemorate our Lord's resurrection on Easter Sunday and the descent of the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday. There is evidence in the New Testament (Acts 20:7; 1Cor. 26:2) that the apostles were beginning to observe Sunday as a day of worship as well as Saturday; but the apostles made no law on the matter, and the full transfer from Saturday to Sunday was a gradual process, under the authority of the Church. Those Christians who believe in the Bible and the Bible only have some difficulty in explaining why they keep Sunday holy and not the Sabbath.

194. How are we to keep the Sunday Holy?

We are to keep the Sunday holy by hearing Mass and resting from servile works.

The obligation to hear Mass on Sunday is explained in question 232. Servile work is that which is done by the body rather than the mind, and is the kind that slaves used to do (hence "servile"), such as ploughing, working in stone or iron, etc., and, for women, spinning, etc. It is distinguished from liberal work, which is done chiefly with the mind, such as writing, playing music, etc. This kind of work is permitted. So too is necessary work, even though it belongs to servile kind cooking meals, for instance. It is not forbidden to play games on Sundays; but it is better not to do so, if we would give scandal thereby.

195. Why are we commanded to rest from servile works?

We are commanded to rest from servile works that we may have time and opportunity for prayers, going to sacraments, hearing instructions, and reading good books.

The Fourth Commandment

196. What is the fourth Commandment?

The fourth Commandment is, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

197. What are we commanded by the fourth Commandment?

We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to love, reverence, and obey our parents in all that is not sin.

A parent may not order a child to steal or to tell a lie or to do anything else that is sinful. If the parent does so, the child must not obey.

198. Are we commanded to obey our parents only?

We are commanded to obey, not only our parents, but also our bishops and pastors, the civil authorities, and our lawful superiors.

Bishops and priests stand in God's place in all that concerns our souls, and so must be obeyed (see Heb. 13:17). Government is necessary for the well-being of the State; therefore our civil rulers must be obeyed (see Rom. 13:1-7).

199. Are we bound to assist our parents in their wants?

We are bound to assist our parents in their wants, both spiritual and temporal.

200. Are we bound in justice to contribute to the support of our pastors?

We are bound in justice to contribute to the support of our pastors: for St Paul says, "The Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel" (1Cor. 9:14).

This is why there is a collection morning and evening in the churches on Sundays. (See 245, 246).

201. What is the duty of parents towards their children?

The duty of parents towards their children is to provide for them, to instruct and correct them, and to give them a good Catholic education.

The fourth Commandment commands not only the duties of the children towards their parents and of all towards those lawfully in authority, but also of parents towards their children and those in authority towards their subjects. The family is the basic unit of society; and therefore the welfare of the family and so of society will depend on the way parents fulfil their duty. The religious education of their children is a very important duty. The school cannot take the place of the home; the two should work in harmony, the teacher aiding the parents to carry out their duty before God. This is one of the matters in which mixed marriages can do serious harm.

202. What is the duty of masters, mistresses, and other superiors?

The duty of masters, mistresses, and other superiors is to take proper care of those under their charge, and to enable them to practice their religious duties.

203. What does the fourth Commandment forbid?

The fourth Commandment forbids all contempt, stubbornness, and disobedience to our parents and lawful superiors.

204. Is it sinful to belong to a Secret Society?

It is sinful to belong to any Secret Society that plots against the Church or State, or to any Society that by reason of its secrecy is condemned by the Church; for St Paul says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:1,2).

No Catholic may be a Freemason, because the society is a secret one and is condemned by the Church; it is moreover a kind of religion, for Freemasons have temples, chaplains, and a ritual. No Catholic may be a Communist. Communism is not strictly a secret society, but it is condemned by the Church; it is atheistic and aims at the overthrow of all religion; it is against the state, denying private property, the rights of the family and personal liberty, and teaching violent revolution and the class war.

The Fifth Commandment

205. What is the fifth Commandment?

The fifth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill."

206. What does the fifth Commandment forbid?

The fifth Commandment forbids all wilful murder, fighting, quarrelling, and injurious words; and also scandal and bad example.

Wilful murder is one of the sins crying to heaven for vengeance (see 327). Suicide, which is self-murder, is forbidden by this Commandment. Also the direct deliberate killing of an unborn child. But it is not murder when the State executes a criminal; it has the right to do so. Nor is it murder when the State orders its armed forces to kill the enemy in a just war. And one may always kill in self-defence, when there is no alternative.

207. Does the fifth Commandment forbid anger?

The fifth Commandment forbids anger, and, still more, hatred and revenge.

208. Why are scandal and bad example forbidden by the fifth Commandment?

Scandal and bad example are forbidden by the fifth Commandment because they lead to the injury and spiritual death of our neighbour's soul.

Many people misunderstand the word "scandal", and think it means saying evil things about someone; but this is really calumny, or detraction (see 221). "Scandal" comes from a Latin word (scandalum) which means a stumbling-block, something put in a person's way to trip him up and make him fall. A spiritual scandal is, then, something which is done to make, or is likely to make, a person fall into sin. Bad example is like scandal, but not quite so wicked. The amount of sin, in scandal and bad example, depends on the gravity of the injury we do our neighbour's soul.

The Sixth Commandment

209. What is the sixth Commandment?

The sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

210. What does the sixth Commandment forbid?

The sixth Commandment forbids all sins of impurity with another's wife or husband.

Adultery is a crime against the sanctity of marriage; it is also a grave sin of injustice. Its consequences are disastrous for family life.

211. Does the sixth Commandment forbid whatever is contrary to holy purity?

The sixth Commandment forbids whatever is contrary to holy purity in looks, words, or actions.

The eyes are called the windows of the soul; death enters into the soul through them. Evil conversation is a very fruitful source of sin.

Unchaste actions, whether alone or with others, are forbidden by this Commandment. A very grave form of such action is committed by those married couples who directly impede by contraceptive methods the first end of marriage, which is the procreation of children.

The next two questions merely illustrate what has already been said.

212. Are immodest plays and dances forbidden by the sixth Commandment?

Immodest plays and dances are forbidden by the sixth Commandment, and it is sinful to look at them.

213. Does the sixth Commandment forbid immodest songs, books, and pictures?

The sixth Commandment forbids immodest songs, books, and pictures because they are most dangerous to the soul and lead to mortal sin.

The sexual faculties are a wonderful and noble work of God, created by Him for the propagation of the human race. To use them outside marriage is to abuse them and is a mortal sin. We should reverence our own and other's bodies. They are the dwelling-places of immortal souls, intended by God to share for eternity in the glory of the soul and made here by grace to be the temples of the Holy Ghost (1Cor. 6:19). To avoid sins of unchastity it is imperative to control one's thoughts, which are the springs of action. Prayer, frequent confession and Communion, a temperate life, avoidance of idleness and laziness, and an interest in life to which one can turn one's mind when evil thoughts present themselves these, with the grace of God, will be powerful helps to avoid sin. Those who are keeping company with a view to marriage need to be specially on their guard; they are not allowed, even when they become engaged, to take liberties with each other.

The Seventh Commandment

214. What is the seventh Commandment?

The seventh Commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

215. What does the seventh Commandment forbid?

The seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking away or keeping what belongs to another.

Mark the words unjust taking away. That means against the will of the owner, unless, of course, necessity compels it. It is not stealing to take away the bottle of poison with which a person intends to kill himself, even though the poison is his property. The Commandment forbids not only all forms of stealing, but also wilful damage done to the property of another.

216. Is all manner of cheating in buying and selling forbidden by the seventh Commandment?

All manner of cheating in buying and selling is forbidden by the seventh Commandment, and also every other way of wronging our neighbour.

217. Are we bound to restore ill-gotten goods?

We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods if we are able, or else the sin will not be forgiven; we must also pay our debts.

God will not forgive sins against this Commandment unless the person makes restitution for his theft, etc., if he is able to do so, or, if he is not able, has at least the will and intention to do so when he can. The wrongdoer has no real sorrow for his sin, if he is unwilling to make restitution.

218. Is it dishonest in servants to waste their master's time or property?

It is dishonest in servants to waste their master's time or property, because it is wasting what if not their own.

Employers must pay a living wage; and employees must do an honest day's work for their wage.

The Eighth Commandment

219. What is the eighth Commandment?

The eighth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

220. What does the eighth Commandment forbid?

The eighth Commandment forbids all false testimony, rash judgement, and lies.

False testimony means giving false evidence in a court of law. Rash judgement means forming or expressing an evil opinion of someone without sufficient grounds.

A lie involves the deliberate deception of another by telling him what we know to be false. Lies told in jest or to offer an excuse are small lies. Lies which do serious harm to a person's reputation are grave lies.

221. Are calumny and detraction forbidden by the eighth Commandment?

Calumny and detraction are forbidden by the eighth Commandment, and also tale-bearing, and any words which injure our neighbour's character.

Calumny is saying something wicked against our neighbour which we know to be false. Detraction is telling something against him which is true but not known. Both calumny and detraction are mortal sins, if we do grave injury to our neighbour's character, and, before God will forgive us, we must repair the evil if we can; but this is much more difficult than restoring stolen property.

Tale-bearing is telling someone what others are saying about him. Back-biting and betraying of secrets are forbidden by this Commandment.

222. If you have injured your neighbour by speaking ill of him, what are you bound to do?

If I have injured my neighbour by speaking ill of him, I am bound to make him satisfaction, by restoring his good name as far as I can.

The Ninth Commandment.

223. What is the ninth Commandment?

The ninth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife."

224. What does the ninth Commandment forbid?

The ninth Commandment forbids all wilful consent to impure thoughts and desires, and all wilful pleasure in the irregular motions of the flesh.

The sixth Commandment forbids all actions, words, and looks against chastity. This Commandment forbids thoughts and desires against the same virtue.

225. What sins commonly lead to the breaking of the sixth and ninth Commandments?

The sins that commonly lead to the breaking of the sixth and ninth Commandments are gluttony, drunkenness, and intemperance, and also idleness, bad company and the neglect of prayer.

The Tenth Commandment.

226. What is the tenth Commandment?

The tenth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

227. What does the tenth Commandment forbid?

The tenth Commandment forbids all envious and covetous thoughts and unjust desires of our neighbour's goods and profits.

The seventh Commandment commands us to observe the virtue of justice which renders to everyone his due in our actions towards our neighbour's property. This Commandment commands us to observe this justice in thought and desire. We are not forbidden to wish to have what our neighbour possesses, provided we do not wish to get it by unjust means, or to deprive him of it.

Chapter 6: Church Commandments

We now come to another set of Commandments namely, those framed by the Church of Christ. Our Lord not only established a Church and entrusted His doctrine to it and made it the means of our sanctification, but He also gave it power and authority to make whatever laws it might consider necessary for the carrying out of its mission of teaching and sanctifying men. He gave the apostles this power to make laws when He said: Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven (Matt. 18:18; see also 16:19 for Peter's power). This means that God

would ratify what the apostles and their successors decreed. And so our Lord said on another occasion: He that heareth you heareth Me(Luke 10:16).

228. Are we bound to obey the Church?

We are bound to obey the Church, because Christ said to the pastors of the Church, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (Luke 10:16).

229. What are the chief Commandments of the Church?

The chief Commandments of the Church are:

- 1 To keep the Sundays and Holy days of Obligation holy, by hearing Mass and resting from servile works.*
- 2 To keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church.*
- 3 To go to confession at least once a year.*
- 4 To receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter or thereabouts.*
- 5 To contribute to the support of our pastors.*
- 6 Not to marry within certain degrees of kindred, nor to solemnise marriage at forbidden times.*

There are many other Commandments; but these are the chief ones. Since they are Commandments of the Church they may be modified, according to circumstances, by the Pope, the Head of the Church.

The principle on which the Church has made these Commandments is this. During His life on earth our Lord issued many precepts, but He did not tell us how, or when, or how often we had to fulfil them. He left these details to the Church. For example, God demands that we should adore Him and serve Him. The Church says, If you assist at Mass (the Christian sacrifice of adoration) on certain days, you will have fulfilled God's Commandment to adore Him. Again, Christ says, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me(Luke 9:23). The Church steps in and says, If you will abstain and fast on the days I appoint, you will do much towards carrying out this precept. Again, Christ said to His apostles, Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them(John 20:23). The power was given that people might submit their sins for forgiveness. The Church says, You must submit them once a year. Christ further says, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you(John 6:54). How often, as a minimum, must we receive His Flesh and Blood? He did not say; but he Church says, You must go to Communion at least once a year at a certain time, and you will then not have failed to fulfil this very important precept of Christ.

The First Commandment of the Church

230. What is the first Commandment of the Church?

The first Commandment of the Church is, "To keep the Sundays and Holy days of Obligation holy, by hearing Mass and resting from servile works."

231. What are the Holidays of Obligation observed in England?

The Holydays of Obligation observed in England are: Christmas Day, the Octave Day of Christmas, the Epiphany, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, SS. Peter and Paul, the Assumption of our Lady, and All Saints.

In Scotland they are the same, with the addition of St Joseph (19 March) and the Immaculate Conception. In Ireland St Patrick and the Immaculate Conception are added to those for England with the exception of the Epiphany and SS. Peter and Paul. Wales has the same as England. The obligation to abstain from servile work does not bind those who have to work on these days.

232. Is it a mortal sin to neglect to hear Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation?

It is a mortal sin to neglect to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation.

The Mass is explained in question 277, etc. We are bound by our very existence and dependence on God to adore and worship Him. In the third Commandment God has commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath day, and the Christian Sabbath is the Sunday. There can be no better way of keeping it holy than by adoring and worshipping God. Now our act of worship is the Mass, the re-offering to God of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. Therefore, the Church, anxious for our sanctification, imposes on us the obligation of going to Mass on Sundays, and on these other great feast days which she makes like to Sundays; and so important is the worship of God through the Mass that the Church imposes the obligation on us under pain of mortal sin. There are, of course, occasions when it is impossible to go to Mass, and it is then no sin to miss. Such occasions would be illness, a serious duty of charity which you cannot neglect, too great a distance from the Church.

233. Are parents, masters, and mistresses bound to provide that those under their charge shall hear Mass on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation?

Parents, masters, and mistresses are bound to provide that those under their charge shall hear Mass on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation.

The second Commandment of the Church

234. What is the second Commandment of the Church?

The second Commandment of the Church is, "To keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church."

The fasting we are about to explain must not be confused with the fasting necessary before receiving Holy Communion (see 272).

235. What are fasting days?

Fasting days are days on which we are allowed to take only one full meal.

This does not mean that no other food may be taken. Apart from the full meal we are allowed by the Church to take a little food twice during the day. The amount should be regulated by local custom.

Many Anglicans think that fasting and abstinence have nothing to do with them. But in the Book of Common Prayer there is A Table of the Vigils, Fasts, and day of Abstinence, to be observed in

the Year, and the list includes even some that Catholics do not observe, v.g. the three Rogation Days preceding the Ascension, and it expressly mentions every Friday (except Christmas Day) as a day of abstinence.

236. Which are the fasting days?

The fasting days are the weekdays of Lent; certain vigils; and the Ember days.

Lent ends at midnight on Holy Saturday. The vigils are those of Pentecost, the Immaculate Conception, and Christmas. When a vigil falls on a Sunday, it is transferred to the Saturday and does not carry the obligation to fast or abstain. The Ember days are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday in Lent, in Whit-week, after 14th September, and after the third Sunday of Advent. They were instituted to pray for God's blessing on the fruits of the earth, and for good pastors in the Church.

On account of the difficult circumstances created by the Second World War the Pope has relaxed the law of fasting, so that, for the time being, only four fasting days need to be observed, namely Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception and Christmas Eve.

237. What are days of abstinence?

Days of abstinence are days on which we are forbidden to take flesh-meat, and soups made from meat.

Fasting and abstinence days differ in this, that on a fasting day the quantity of food is limited, but on an abstinence day only the kind of food is restricted.

238. Which are the days of abstinence?

The days of abstinence are all Fridays except any Friday on which a Holy day of Obligation falls; the Wednesdays of Lent (in England); the three Vigils (unless one falls on a Sunday); and the Ember days.

For the three vigils, see 236. Along with the relaxation of the law of fasting the Pope has also relaxed the law of abstinence, so that the only abstinence days at present in force are Fridays, Ash Wednesday, and the vigils of the Immaculate Conception and of Christmas.[\[1\]](#)

239. Why does the Church command us to fast and abstain?

The Church commands us to fast and abstain that so we may mortify the flesh and satisfy God for our sins.

We must learn to refrain from things lawful in themselves and thus keep down our evil inclinations or they will master us and lead us to sin and hell. Mortification also makes satisfaction to God's justice for the sins we have committed and obtains the remission of temporal punishment.

Unless one is excused or dispensed, all are bound by the law of fasting from the completion of their twenty-first year to the beginning of their sixtieth; and by the law of abstinence from the completion of their seventh year onwards.

The third Commandment of the Church

240. What is the third Commandment of the Church?

The third Commandment of the Church is, "To go to confession at least once a year." Confession will be fully explained later on in question 281, etc.

241. How soon are children bound to go to confession?

Children are bound to go to confession as soon as they have come to the use of reason, and are capable of mortal sin.

242. When are children generally supposed to come to the use of reason?

Children are generally supposed to come to the use of reason about the age of seven years.

Confession becomes obligatory when a person can really distinguish between right and wrong, and is thus capable of sin. It may seem strange that the Church should require confession at an early age from children, but we must remember that this sacrament not only forgives sins that have been committed, but also helps the soul to keep from sin in the future; it has a preserving as well as a healing power.

The fourth Commandment of the Church

243. What is the fourth Commandment of the Church?

The fourth Commandment of the Church is, "To receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter or thereabouts."

The Code of Canon Law (Canon 859, par. 2) limits the time for the Easter Communion to the fortnight from Palm Sunday to Low Sunday, but the period may be extended in certain dioceses - viz. (as a rule) from the fourth Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday inclusive. The period allowed in England and Wales is from Ash Wednesday to Trinity Sunday.

244. How soon are Christians bound to receive the Blessed Sacrament?

Christians are bound to receive the Blessed Sacrament as soon as they are capable of distinguishing the Body of Christ from ordinary bread, and are judged to be sufficiently instructed.

On 8th August, 1910, Pope Pius X issued a decree that children who have begun to use their reason, that is, about the age of seven, and are capable of the above distinction, should be admitted to Holy Communion after being instructed according to their capacity, in the necessary truths of the Faith. The same saintly Pontiff, by a decree of 20th December, 1905, urged on the faithful the practice of frequent and even daily Communion, the only conditions, being that they should be in a state of grace, duly fasting, and approach the Holy Sacrament with a devout and upright intention.

The fifth Commandment of the Church

245. What is the fifth Commandment of the Church?

The fifth Commandment of the Church is, "To contribute to the support of our pastors."

246. Is it a duty to contribute to the support of religion?

It is a duty to contribute to the support of religion according, to our means, so that God may be duly honoured and worshipped, and the kingdom of His Church extended.

St Paul says : The Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel(1 Cor. 9:14). To Catholic priests in England this especially applies. They have no endowments and livings as the Anglican clergy have. The money which is now devoted to supporting the Established Church was for the most part once Catholic money. At the Reformation it was taken from the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church in England is poor, and it naturally looks to its members to support it. The Catholic priest is forbidden by the law of the Church from exercising a profession or plying a trade. It is true that he does not need much to support him personally, since he has no wife or children dependent on him; but, as he has given up all for God in order to work solely for Him and the salvation of souls in other words, as he lives for his flock and is ready at any time of the day or night to do his duty as a priest for them, even at the risk of his life so the Church requires that his flock should support him and enable him to live in reasonable comfort and to carry out the services of God becomingly and to maintain the fabric of his church, house and schools. This is why there are collections at the services on Sundays, seat rents, offerings for the Holy Mass, offerings for baptisms, marriages, churchings, etc. There are also other needs of religion besides those of the immediate parish. There are the needs of the diocese, the support of students training for the priesthood, the foreign missions, etc.

The sixth Commandment of the Church

247. What is the sixth Commandment of the Church?

The sixth Commandment of the Church is, "Not to marry within certain degrees of kindred, nor to solemnise marriage at the forbidden times."

All relationships up to second cousinship by blood inclusively and up to first cousinship by marriage inclusively prohibit marriage; but, for very special reasons, the Church grants dispensations even for first cousins by blood. If there is any difficulty about marriage, a priest will readily give advice.

248. Which are the times in which it is forbidden to marry with solemnity?

The times in which it is forbidden to marry with solemnity without special leave are from the first Sunday of Advent till after Christmas Day, and from Ash Wednesday till after Easter Sunday.

Not that people may not get married during these times, but the weddings must be more or less private or quiet. The Nuptial Mass may not be said nor the special blessing given without the bishop's permission. This permission will be granted for an adequate reason.

Chapter 7. The Sacraments.

We have seen that Christ came to redeem us and to make it possible for us to save our souls and get to heaven; and we have seen what we must do to save our souls, namely, keep the commandments. He offered satisfaction to His Father for our sins and He merited for us grace. Without this grace which He merited we cannot be saved and get to heaven. We now come in the third part of the Catechism to consider the means which Christ instituted to enable us to share in the grace which He merited and thus live good lives, rid ourselves of sin, and steadfastly keep the commandments He has laid upon us. These means are the sacraments.

249. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward sign of inward grace ordained by Jesus Christ, by which grace is given to our souls.

Outward sign. In every sacrament some act is done, and certain words are said while the act is being done; and the act and the words together signify a corresponding effect produced in the soul of the person receiving the sacrament. In baptism, for example, the outward act is the pouring of water on the child's head, and the words I baptise thee, etc. In confirmation the outward act is the anointing of the forehead with sacred oil, and the words I sign thee with the sign of the cross, etc. (see 265).

Of inward grace. This is the effect produced in the soul by the outward act and the words said. Each sacrament gives its own particular grace, and this grace is indicated by the outward act. Thus baptism makes us Christians and cleanses the soul from original sin; hence the act done in baptising is an act of washing.

Ordained by Jesus Christ. This means that a sacrament must have been instituted by Christ and by no one else. Grace belongs to God to give, and so only He could give power to signs and words to give grace to our souls.

By which grace is given to our souls. The sacraments do not merely signify that a special grace is being given by God to our souls, but it is by means of them that God gives the grace.

250. Do the sacraments always give grace?

The sacraments always give grace to those who receive them worthily.

Worthily, that is, in a proper state to receive it. God naturally demands that we should be fit to receive a grace He offers to us; for instance, if a person went to confession to have his sins forgiven, the sacrament of penance would not benefit him unless he was sorry for what he had done wrong.

251. Whence have the sacraments the power of giving grace?

The sacraments have the power of giving grace from the merits of Christ's precious Blood, which they apply to our souls.

252. Ought we to have a great desire to receive the sacraments?

We ought to have a great desire to receive the sacraments, because they are the chief means of our salvation.

253. Is a character given to the soul by any of the sacraments?

A character is given to the soul by the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Order.

254. What is a character?

A character is a mark or seal on the soul which cannot be effaced, and therefore the sacrament conferring it may not be repeated.

All the sacraments give grace, as we have said; but the three named above give, besides grace, this seal which marks the soul for ever as specially related to God. Baptism makes us Christians (hence we call it christening) and seals us as Christians, children of God. Confirmation stamps us as soldiers of Christ. Holy Order marks a man as a priest of God. Once properly baptised, confirmed, ordained, a man can never be baptised, confirmed or ordained again.

255. How many sacraments are there?

There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony.

We Catholics believe this, and we believe it on the authority of the infallible Church. In the sixteenth century the Protestant Reformers began to teach that there were only two proper sacraments, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper (the Eucharist); but this was one of their many errors, and it was the first time that anyone had doubted the doctrine. Until then all Christians had believed that there were seven sacraments not only we, but also those churches in Eastern Europe (known as the Orthodox Churches), who broke away from the Pope in the ninth century. There is a beautiful reason why our Lord made seven and just seven sacraments. In our ordinary bodily life we have certain stages and requirements, and they number seven. A man must be born, he must attain manhood, he needs food, he needs medicine when he is sick, and he must have special attention when he is dying. That makes five and they concern the individual

man. But man is not only an individual. He is also naturally a member of a state or nation, and that state requires rulers if it is to function and hold together; and he is also ordained to form a smaller unit within the state and as the basis of the state, namely the society of the family, which is absolutely essential to the propagation of the human race. Because of the close link between the soul and the body, the supernatural life of the soul follows the pattern of the life of the body. In this supernatural life of grace there are also certain stages and requirements and they number seven. A man must be born to the supernatural life, and that birth is by Baptism. He must grow up and become strong, and that strengthening is given by Confirmation. He needs spiritual food, and he has this in the Holy Eucharist. His soul may fall sick by sin; Penance is its medicine, so to say; he needs special care and comfort at death, and Extreme Unction gives him that comfort. So you have the five supernatural requirements of the individual. But a man is also a member of the spiritual society founded by Christ, the Church, and he needs those who shall minister and govern in the Church; Holy Order establishes those ministers. Finally the family is needed for the Church as well as for the state, for without the propagation of the human race the Church could not continue to exist; and so for the foundation of the Christian family there is the last of the Sacraments, Holy Matrimony.

Two of these sacraments, Baptism and Penance, are called Sacraments of the Dead, because their purpose is to cleanse us from sin, and grievous sin is the death of the supernatural life of the soul. The other five sacraments are called Sacraments of the Living, because the soul should already be in the state of grace and have supernatural life when it receives them; their purpose is therefore to increase and strengthen the life of grace in the soul.

Baptism.

256. What is Baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, and members of the Church.

The word "baptism" means a washing. It is the first of the seven sacraments, the gate through which all must enter into God's Church. It gives a child the right to receive the other sacraments. None of the other sacraments has any value if it is given to an unbaptised person. By giving us grace baptism takes away original sin and makes us God's children.

257. Does Baptism also forgive actual sins?

Baptism also forgives actual sins, with all punishment due to them, when it is received in proper dispositions by those who have been guilty of actual sin.

Sometimes, for one cause or another, a person is not baptised until he has reached the age of reason. This will often be the case with Jews who become Christians, and with pagans who are converted to the Catholic Faith by missionaries. Such a person must be properly instructed in the Christian religion and make an act of faith in it before he can be baptised. When he is baptised the sacrament takes away not only original sin but also every other sin, great and small, that he may have committed and all punishment due to God's justice for those sins; his soul is made clean of all traces of sin, so that, if he were to die immediately after Baptism, he would go

straight to heaven. But it must be clearly understood that Baptism will not take away actual sins unless the person is sorry for them. Faith in what God has taught and sorrow for one's personal sins are the proper dispositions of which the Catechism speaks.

258. Who is the ordinary minister of Baptism?

The ordinary minister of Baptism is a priest; but anyone may baptise in case of necessity, when a priest cannot be had.

Baptism is so absolutely necessary for salvation that our Lord allows anyone to baptise when a child is dying and a priest cannot be brought in time. The baptism is valid, no matter who administers it (he may even be a pagan), provided he does it properly in the way explained in the next question and intends in his mind to do what the Church requires.

We sometimes hear people say, So-and-so was baptised an Anglican, or a Methodist or a Baptist, as though there were several kinds of baptism and a person became a member of a certain denomination because he was baptised by a minister of that denomination. Now, there is only one real Baptism One Lord, one faith, one baptism, says St Paul (Eph. iv. 5); and that one Baptism makes a child a member of God's one true Church the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church for there is no other true Church and no other true religion. A child cannot be baptised a Protestant, because Protestantism is not the true religion of Christ. Methodists, Baptists, etc., are Protestants; so too are Anglicans, whatever they may say to the contrary. Every child that is really baptised no matter by whom is thereby a Catholic and a member of Christ's Church. Later, when it accepts membership of a non-Catholic religion, it ceases to be a member of the Catholic Church.

259. How is Baptism given?

Baptism is given by pouring water on the head of the child, saying at the same time these words: "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Baptism washes original sin from the soul. To signify this the water must flow on the skin. There are three ways of baptising: (1) by effusion, or pouring; this is the method given above and is the only authorised method with us today; (2) by immersion, or dipping, a method once common with us and still used by Catholics of the Eastern Rites and by the Orthodox Churches; (3) by aspersion, or sprinkling, a method of doubtful validity, because it may often happen in this case that the water does not flow. Some non-Catholic clergymen baptise by dipping their finger in water and then tracing a cross on the child's forehead. This is a very doubtful method since it often means merely damping the forehead instead of washing it, and the water does not really flow.

260. What do we promise in Baptism?

We promise in Baptism to renounce the devil and all his works and pomps.

That is, the godfather or godmother (for only one is necessary) makes the promise for us, and when we get old enough we must keep it. The new Easter Vigil service includes a renewal of the baptismal promises to be made by the people immediately after the blessing of the font. It is a promise to lead a good life and avoid sin and the occasions of sin.

The office of godparent is a serious one. He has to look after the religious upbringing of the child if the parents neglect their duty in the matter or if they die while the child is young.

261. Is Baptism necessary for salvation?

Baptism is necessary for salvation, because Christ has said, "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John vi. 5).

Hence one cannot be too careful about baptism, and a child should be baptised as soon as possible. If there is any doubt about the validity of baptism, the person must be baptised again conditionally. The priest in that case says, N., if thou art not baptised, I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. To make sure of their baptism converts to the Catholic Faith are often re-baptised conditionally. Baptism by water is a necessary means of getting to heaven. But our Lord has provided two other ways of getting to heaven, when actual baptism by water is impossible. They are known as the Baptism of Blood and the Baptism of Desire. The Baptism of Blood took place in the martyrs who proclaimed themselves Christians and were put to death for the Faith before they could actually be baptised. Our Lord's promise of the saving value of martyrdom is given in the words. He that loseth his life for me shall find it (Matt. 10:39). Even the infants who were put to death by Herod are honoured by the Church as saints. They were not baptised with water, of course; but, because they were massacred for our Lord's sake, they suffered martyrdom; they confessed Him, not by speaking, but by dying, as the liturgy says. Their feast (the Holy Innocents) is on 28th December.

The Baptism of Desire is an act of perfect love of God or of perfect contrition (see 293, 294) with a desire (at least implicit) to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. That the Baptism of Desire is valid for salvation is assured by our Lord's words: He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him (John 14:21). But, while the Baptism of Blood and the Baptism of Desire obtain for us the state of grace, they do not confer the character (see 253). Only the Sacrament of Baptism confers the character; and therefore it alone makes us members of the Church and able to receive the other sacraments.

Confirmation.

262. What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a sacrament by which we receive the Holy Ghost, in order to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Baptism makes us Christians; Confirmation, as its name shows, makes us strong Christians. The Holy Ghost is brought down into our souls as He came down on the apostles and disciples on Pentecost Day; and by the Sacrament He increases the grace in our souls and gives us a character (see 253, 254) marking us as Christ's soldiers and entitling us for the whole of our life to the graces we may need in order to bear ourselves with courage as Christ's soldiers, professing our faith openly and fearlessly and living the lives of good, practical Catholics. It is, then, a very necessary sacrament. It is not, however, necessary for salvation as Baptism is; but it

would be a great sin to neglect to be confirmed, especially if a person were weak in his faith or exposed by his circumstances to temptation against it.

Our Lord is generally supposed to have instituted Confirmation some time between the Resurrection and the Ascension. We read of this sacrament being conferred by the Apostles: Now, when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For he was not as yet come upon any of them: but they were only baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them: and they received the Holy Ghost(Acts 8:14). And again: And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them(Acts 29:6).

263. Who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation?

The ordinary minister of Confirmation is a bishop.

But the Pope can give power to priests to confirm. All parish priests or their equivalent (but not assistant priests) have this power within the territory allotted to their authority; but it can be used only when the faithful are in real danger of death by sickness and the bishop is not available.

264. How does the bishop administer the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The bishop administers the Sacrament of Confirmation by praying that the Holy Ghost may come down upon those who are to be confirmed; and by laying his hands on them, and making the sign of the cross with chrism on their foreheads, at the same time pronouncing certain words. At the beginning of the ceremony the bishop stretches out his hands over all who are to be confirmed, and prays that the Holy Ghost may come down upon them and bring His graces and gifts with Him (for the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, see 318). Then each one kneels in front of the bishop who makes the sign of the cross on his forehead with chrism, saying the words in the next question. Chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam, which has been given a special blessing by the bishop. It is blessed on Maundy Thursday each year.

265. What are the words used in Confirmation?

The words used in Confirmation are these: "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.

It is called the chrism of salvation. Olive oil has always been considered to give and preserve strength, and spiritual strength is the effect of Confirmation. Balsam has been regarded as a preservative. So the chrism makes and keeps us strong that we may save our souls. In Baptism we are given the name of an angel or saint to be our protector and model during life. It is usual in Confirmation to take a further name for the same reason.

The Holy Eucharist.

266. What is the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, together with His Soul and Divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine.

We now come to the most important of the sacraments. Catholics believe that our Lord is really and actually present, Body and Blood, Soul and Godhead, in this Sacrament as really present as He is in heaven. Non Catholics hold various views about His presence, and it is not always easy to understand what they hold. For instance, in the Anglican Catechism the child is asked (speaking of the Lord's Supper), What is the inward part of the sacrament or thing signified? The answer given is, The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper. Again, in the Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer, just before the Communion is administered, the minister says in the name of the people, "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood. Delivering the Communion the minister says, The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life; and then he says, The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. These statements can bear a thoroughly Catholic meaning of the Real Presence. But in the same Book of Common Prayer the rubric at the end of the Communion Service (known as the Black Rubric) explicitly denies a Real Presence in any Catholic sense. The rubric says: Whereas it is ordained... that the communicants should receive the same kneeling... yet lest the same kneeling should by any person be misconstrued and depraved: It is hereby declared that thereby no adoration is intended or ought to be done either unto the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any corporeal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored... and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one. Taking these different statements together, if they are not to be regarded as completely contradictory, we can only conclude that for the Anglicans the presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament is not actual and substantial, but in some way spiritual, a presence by power and influence. In their belief the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine throughout. Such a belief is contrary to the plain, clear meaning of our Lord's words in the New Testament. In St John's Gospel (chap. 6) we read how our Lord worked a miracle of feeding 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fishes; and then how He walked upon the sea. Christ's long discourse to the people follows; a large part of it contains the promise of the Holy Eucharist. Having returned to Capharnaum, our Lord is found there by the people. He upbraids them: You seek me not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you(verse 26). Here is our Lord's promise to give them a food much superior to ordinary food a food which will give them eternal life.

The Jews ask what they must do to work the works of God. In reply our Lord points to faith in Himself; He demands their faith. They ask for a sign to justify His claim, forgetting the miracle He had worked the day before. They remind Him of the manna in the desert; that was called bread from heaven. Our Lord answers that the manna was not really bread from heaven; but His

Father will give them real bread from heaven. Delighted, the Jews ask to have this new bread from heaven always. Jesus then speaks plainly and says, I am the Bread of life(verse 35). This puzzles them, and they begin to murmur and to say to one another, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith he: I came down from heaven? Jesus gently rebukes their murmuring and unbelief, insists once more on the necessity, of faith in Him, and then (verse 48) begins to speak with complete plainness: I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert: and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

The Jews took Christ's words quite literally; how can He do this, they said, how can He give us His flesh to eat? Our Lord does not correct the impression He has given them. He does not say, You misunderstand Me. On the contrary He reinforces His statement by repeating it in various ways. Amen, amen, I say to you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed...Note how definite and clear is this last statement.

The Jews saw that He meant what He said: He had left them no room for doubt. But they would not accept it. This saying is hard; and who can hear it? Many of them, disciples of His though they were, walked away and left Him for good; and Jesus let them go. Surely, if He had meant that they were to receive only some kind of figure of His Body and Blood, and not His real Body and Blood, He would not have let them leave Him all because of a false impression. It was His custom to explain Himself when He was misunderstood. But He did not call them back. Instead, He turned to the apostles, His chosen twelve, and asked them if they too wished to go; as much as to say, My words stand even though I am to loose even you because of them. St Peter, spokesman and leader of the apostles, made their act of faith: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God(verses 69, 70).

What Christ promised at Capharnaum He fulfilled at the Last Supper. In St Luke's Gospel (22:19-20) we read: And taking bread, he gave thanks and brake and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner, the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you. Now turn to St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (11:23-25). For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat: this my body, which shall be delivered for you. This do for the commemoration of me: In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. Likewise St Matthew (26:26-28): Take ye and eat. This is my body. . . Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins. And St Mark (14: 22-24): Take ye. This is my body... This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many. These are the four accounts of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. To which we may add these other words of St Paul: The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the

body of Christ?(1 Cor. 10:16). Could our Lord have spoken more clearly? His words are plain and obvious. He says quite simply: "This is My Body. He does not say: This is a figure of My Body (or a symbol of My Body).The apostles to whom He was speaking were ordinary men, prone to take Him literally. If He did not mean His words literally He would have said so. Otherwise He was deceiving them, and not only them but also generations upon generations of men who would take His words in their plain sense and give to the Holy Eucharist the worship reserved to God a monstrous idolatry which He who was God and knew all things was permitting, or rather leading, men to practise; and that at the most solemn moment of His life when He was about to die and when naturally He would be careful to make all things clear.

So plain are Christ's words that Martin Luther himself, the father of the Reformation in Germany, wrote: In vain I wished to have denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist on purpose to vex the papists more effectually, but the words of the Scripture are so plain and so strong in favour of the mystery that I could never bring my mind to adopt the bold expedient(Ep. car. amico).

What happened when our Lord said: This is My Body? Using His almighty power as God, He changed and bread into His body. He did not alter its taste or the feel of it or the look of it these are what we call the appearances; but, leaving the appearances as they were, He changed the thing itself, the substance of the bread, into the substance of His own Body. After He had spoken, that which continued to look and taste like bread, was in its inner nature no longer bread but His Body. This change of the substance of the bread into the substance of our Lord's Body a change without parallel we call Transubstantiation a long word, but meaning just what we have said. It is the only possible explanation of the Real Presence; and Henry VIII, who was a firm believer in the Mass and. the Real Presence, put to death those Protestants who denied Transubstantiation.

267. How are the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ?

The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ by the power of God, to whom nothing is impossible or difficult.

268. When are the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ?

The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ when the words of consecration, ordained by Jesus Christ, are pronounced by the priest in the Holy Mass.

The words of consecration used by the priest are: This is My Body; "This is the Chalice of My Blood, of the New and Eternal Testament the mystery of faith which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Notice that these are the words of Christ, recorded in the Evangelists and St Paul. Immediately the first sentence is pronounced over the bread by a truly ordained priest, the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of our Lord's Body; and immediately the second is pronounced, the substance of the wine is changed into His Blood. The words in the first instance indicate only the Body, and in the second only the Blood. But, as St Paul says, "Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more. Death shall no more have dominion over him (Rom. 6:9). Therefore, along with His Body which the words of consecration

make present there is the full Human Nature of Christ and His Godhead. In the Holy Eucharist we have the living Christ.

269. Why has Christ given Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist?

Christ has given Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist to be the life and the food of our souls. "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me" ; "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever," (John 6:58-59).

270. Is Christ received whole and entire under either kind alone?

Christ is received whole and entire under either kind alone.

One great objection that Protestants have against us is that the cup is not given to the laity, and they cannot understand why it should be denied to them.

We have just seen (268) that in the Holy Eucharist the full living Christ is present after the consecration under the appearances of the bread or under the appearances of the wine. Therefore, when a person receives one kind only he receives the whole of Christ. Therefore, there is no need to receive under both kinds, unless, of course, our Lord Himself commanded us to do so. Our Lord did not in fact give such a command. When, at the Last Supper, He gave the apostles both His Body and His Blood and said, of the Blood, Drink ye all of this, it was to priests He was speaking, for at that moment He was making the apostles priests; and priests have always understood that when they say Mass they must receive under both kinds in virtue of our Lord's words. To the laity our Lord issued no command. When He was promising the Holy Eucharist He said, If any man eat of this bread(He says nothing here about the cup) he shall live for ever(John 6:51); also, The bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world(John 6:52). St Paul speaks very clearly (1Cor. 9:27): Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread **or** drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. The English Reformers changed the word of God in this passage in the Authorised Version of the Bible and substituted **and** drink for **or** drink to suit their views on Communion in both kinds. In the Revised Version it has been changed back to the original and true text.

The use of the cup is therefore left to the Church to decide. Until the twelfth century it was customary to receive under both kinds. But from the beginning of Christianity there were exceptions. During the persecutions Christian people kept the Holy Eucharist in their houses under the form of bread and communicated themselves. The sick were sometimes given Communion under the form of bread only or of wine according to the nature of their illness. Children were given Communion after baptism under the form of a drop of wine. Sound reasons have determined the long-established practice of the Church not to give the cup to the laity. They are: the danger of profaning the Blessed Sacrament by spilling a very real danger with the feeble and with children; the difficulty in various countries of obtaining sufficient wine for large Communions; the dislike that many have for drinking from a common cup; and so on.

271. In order to receive the Blessed Sacrament worthily what is required?

In order to receive the Blessed Sacrament worthily it is required that we be in a state of grace and keep the prescribed fast; water does not break this fast.

This is explained in the next question.

272. What is it to be in a state of grace?

To be in a state of grace is to be free from mortal sin and pleasing to God.

Two things are required for a worthy Communion. One concerns the body, namely, that we have kept the prescribed fast. This means, since a decree which came into force on 25th March 1957, that we are bound to abstain for three hours from solid foods and alcoholic beverages, for one hour from non-alcoholic beverages, before Holy Communion. Those who receive Holy Communion at midnight or in the small hours of the morning must observe these times. But the sick, even if they are not confined to bed, may take non-alcoholic beverages and genuine medicines, both liquid and solid, before Holy Communion without any time limit. In issuing the new decree Pope Pius XII fervently exhorted the faithful who are in a position to do so to observe the old and venerated form of Eucharistic fasting before Holy Communion, but there is no obligation to do so. The Holy Father added: May all those who take advantage of these concessions, then, repay the benefits received by shining examples of Christian lives and principally by works of penance and charity. The old form of Eucharistic fasting meant abstinence from food and drink (natural water excepted) from the previous midnight. Those who have been to Communion in the morning may not go again in the evening. In a dangerous illness, when Holy Communion is received as Viaticum, which means Food for the journey, all fasting restrictions are removed. The other condition concerns the soul. There must not be any mortal sin of which we are conscious on the soul. If a person is in mortal sin and wishes to go to Holy Communion he must first go to confession and receive absolution; then he may go to Communion.

How often ought we to receive Communion? The Church has during this century revived her ancient discipline in the matter. Anyone may now go to Communion even daily, and they are encouraged to do so, provided they are in a state of grace and have a right intention in going namely, to get more grace and live good lives. To go out of vanity or to win the esteem of others or through mere routine would be wrong. It was clearly our Lord's intention that we should receive Him often, since He gave Himself to us under the form of our staple food, our daily bread.

273. Is it a great sin to receive Holy Communion in mortal sin?

It is a great sin to receive Holy Communion in mortal sin, "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgement to himself" (1 Cor.11:29).

It is to force the God of holiness to descend into a soul which is at that moment His enemy.

274. Is the Blessed Eucharist a Sacrament only?

The Blessed Eucharist is not a Sacrament only; it is also a sacrifice.

275. What is a sacrifice?

A sacrifice is the offering of a victim by a priest to God alone, in testimony of His being the sovereign Lord of all things.

See the next question.

276. What is the Sacrifice of the New Law?

The Sacrifice of the New Law is the Holy Mass.

We have considered the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament; it is the greatest of the sacraments because it is our Lord Himself. We now come to the second purpose for which our Lord instituted it, namely, to be the Christian's act of worship. That is what we mean by the Mass. God has always wished to be worshipped by sacrifice. At the beginning of human history Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God the one of the fruits of the earth, the other of the firstlings of his flock (Gen. 4). When Noah went out of the ark after the Flood, he built an altar and sacrificed to God, by God's appointment, birds and beasts which had been preserved in the ark (Gen. 8:20). Melchisedech offered bread and wine in sacrifice, for he was the priest of the most High God (Gen. 14:18).

In the law of Moses there were four kinds of sacrifice all ordered by God: the Holocaust, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Propitiatory and the Impetratory Sacrifices. These sacrifices were instituted to enable man to fulfil his four great duties to God. The Holocaust (a whole burnt offering) was to acknowledge that God was the supreme Lord and Master; the Eucharistic Sacrifice (Peace-offering) was offered to thank God for His benefits; the Propitiatory (appeasing) to obtain the pardon of sin; and the Impetratory (begging) to ask for all the blessings man stood in need of. It is to be noted that in these sacrifices there was a victim, and a priest offering it, and the act was directed exclusively to God, to adore Him, thank Him, offer reparation to Him for sin, and ask Him for all the needs of soul and body. Now we Christians have, of course, the same duties towards God; and as in the Old Covenant He willed that these duties should be fulfilled by sacrifice, so too now in the Christian Dispensation. The Jewish sacrifices were types and figures of what was to come; and so the prophet Malachy (1:10-11) foretold that the Jewish sacrifices would be done away with, and that another sacrifice (a clean oblation) would be substituted in their place. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation. For my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.

These words of the prophet must be fulfilled. Therefore the pure, clean oblation is in existence now. Can we point to such a sacrifice, offered all over the world among the Gentiles, that is, among us? We can. It is the Mass, the act of worship of the Catholic Church. The Mass is offered everywhere throughout the world; and it is a clean oblation, for it is, as we shall presently explain, the reoffering in a bloodless manner of the pure and holy Victim of Calvary, Jesus Christ our Lord.

277. What is the Holy Mass?

The Holy Mass is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, really present on the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, and offered to God for the living and the dead.

Our Lord instituted the Mass at the Last Supper when He changed bread into His Body and wine into His Blood and commanded the apostles to do the same in memory of Him. The words He then used show that the Mass is a sacrifice: This is my body, which is given for you (Luke 22:19); This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood which shall be shed for you (ibid. 20). A body given for men means a body offered in sacrifice on behalf of men. Blood shed for men (for the remission of sins as St Matthew puts it) means a sacrifice of expiation to God.

It was on the Cross on Calvary that our Lord actually gave His Body for us and shed His Blood. But by what He did at the Last Supper and by His command to us to do the same He evidently meant the Mass to be a continuation of Calvary, a re-offering of that Sacrifice in all places down the ages; and so in the Mass, although Christ does not really die and shed His Blood, yet He becomes present as though slain, for after the words of consecration have been pronounced by the priest (This is My Body; this is the chalice of My Blood), Christ's Body and Blood are, as it were, separated from each other, and the separation of Body and Blood signifies death. It is to this that St Paul alludes when he writes: As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come(1 Cor. 11:26).

278. Is the Holy Mass one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross?

The Holy Mass is one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ, who offered Himself, a bleeding Victim, on the Cross to His heavenly Father, continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner on the altar, through the ministry of His priests.

On the Cross and in the Mass there is the same Victim, Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of the Cross redeemed us; the sacrifice of the Mass applies that redemption to our souls and gives us the means of fulfilling our four essential duties to God (see 279). On the Cross and in the Mass there is also the same Priest; Jesus Christ who offered Himself on the Cross is the principal offerer of the Mass and thus He is for ever a Priest according to the order of Melchisedech (Ps.109:4; Heb.5:5), whose sacrifice of bread and wine obviously typified the Holy Eucharist.

The one difference between the Cross and the Mass lies in the manner of offering. On the Cross our Lord really shed His Blood and died; in the Mass He sheds His Blood mystically, in appearance, and He does not really die, but only mystically and in appearance, in virtue of the double consecration which puts Him, as it were, in a state of death.

One more word. In vain do we look for anything like a rite of sacrifice among our English Protestants. They have a Communion Service the remains of the Mass which at one time was the Christian act of worship in Catholic England. The Reformers abolished the Mass and called it a blasphemous fable, but they substituted act of worship in its place. Where there is no sacrifice there are no priests, and a religion which has no sacrifice nor priests cannot be the religion of Christ. Anglo-Catholics now use an English version of the Roman Missal and celebrate what they call Mass, but officially the Church of England, whose ministers they are, calls the Mass a fable. If three hundred and more years ago they had done what they are doing now, they would have been hanged, drawn and quartered as our Catholic priests were, and their heads put up on London Bridge by the very authors of their own religion.

279. For what ends is the Sacrifice of the Mass offered?

The Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for four ends: first, to give supreme honour and glory to God; secondly, to thank Him for all His benefits; thirdly, to satisfy God for our sins and to obtain the grace of repentance; and fourthly, to obtain all other graces and blessings through Jesus Christ.

In question 276 we saw that the Jews had four kinds of sacrifice and thereby they fulfilled the four duties of man to God. The Mass supersedes all these sacrifices and, being the offering of Christ to His Father, enables us to fulfil our four duties to God superabundantly. Hence in the Mass (1) we can really worship God; the offering of the Body and Blood of Christ gives God supreme honour and glory, for Jesus takes our worship and joins it to His own and makes

it worthy of God; (2) we can, through Jesus Christ, offer God fitting thanks; (3) we can use the merits of Christ's Passion to obtain the gift of true sorrow for our sins; and, lastly, (4) we can through Him obtain all good things, according to His word: "If you *ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you*" (John 24:23), and that is why we always end our prayers "through Jesus Christ our Lord".

Now I think you can understand why we are commanded under pain of sin to assist at Mass on Sundays and certain other days - because we are bound to adore and worship God, and the Mass is the means appointed by Him for that purpose. If we refuse to assist at Mass we are refusing to adore God, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness, and to acknowledge our dependence on Him.

280. Is the Mass also a memorial of the Passion and Death of our Lord?

The Mass is also a memorial to the Passion and Death of our Lord, for Christ at His last supper said, "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (Luke 22:19).

In addition to the words of consecration the prayers said during Mass and the many signs of the cross the priest makes keep Christ's Passion before our minds.

The language, Latin, which we use at Mass often puzzles non-Catholics. But there are serious reasons for it; let me give one or two. The Latin language and the meaning of its words do not change; it is what is called a dead language and is not spoken as their natural tongue by any nation. But in our modern, living languages words do change their meaning; for instance, in current usage, the word "worship" is normally restricted to the worship of God, to the exclusive honour paid to Him. But at one time it simply meant respect or reverence, and we still retain traces of that original meaning in certain expressions we use. Thus in the marriage service the bridegroom says to the bride, "With my body I thee worship", and we address judges and mayors as "Your Worship".

Moreover, when a Catholic goes abroad he finds the Mass the same as in his own country. He is quite at home, and he can attend Mass as easily as in his own church, even though he does not know a word of the language of the country he is visiting. If the Mass were said in the vernacular, what confusion there would be! Think of all the various languages of Europe and of Asia and of the African tribes. In our prayer-books and especially in our small missals for the laity, which they are being increasingly encouraged to use, you find an English translation side by side with the Latin words, so that there is no difficulty in following what the priest is saying.

Penance.

281. What is the sacrament of Penance?

Penance is a sacrament whereby the sins, whether mortal or venial, which we have committed after Baptism are forgiven.

We have already explained a good deal about the forgiveness of sins, and it would be well to turn back for a moment and read what is said under the tenth article of the Creed (111). We are now dealing with actual sins (121-127), that is, sins committed by a person already baptised. Baptism cannot be given a second time. Therefore for sins committed after Baptism another sacrament is needed. That sacrament is Penance.

282. Does the sacrament of Penance increase the grace of God in the soul?

The sacrament of Penance increases the grace of God in the soul, besides forgiving sin; we should, therefore, often go to confession.

The sacrament of Penance has a twofold effect on the soul - (1) it takes away sins, provided, of course, the sinner is properly disposed for receiving pardon; and (2) it gives a special grace and help not to commit sins again. When a person who is already in a state of grace goes to confession he receives more grace along with the special help to resist temptation to sin. Therefore, to go often to confession will mean that we shall get more and more strength to resist sin and lead a good life. The Church binds us to go only once a year; but that is hardly sufficient to help a person to lead a really good life. A dinner now and then 'will hardly keep the body healthy; you must feed it regularly if it is not to grow weak and fall ill.

283. When did our Lord institute the sacrament of Penance?

Our Lord instituted the sacrament of Penance when He breathed on His apostles and gave them power to forgive sins, saying, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven" : (John 20:23).

Our Lord instituted this sacrament when He appeared to the apostles for the first time after His resurrection. *"He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you: As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"* (John 20:21-23). In these words we have a definite power given to the apostles to forgive sin, and a definite undertaking by Christ that He would forgive the sins they forgave; He would ratify in heaven the sentence pronounced by them on earth over the sinner.

But the power was twofold. The apostles could refuse to forgive (retain) and this too He would ratify in heaven. Which they would do would depend, of course, on the attitude of the sinner. By these words Christ put the forgiveness of sin in the hands of the apostles; and, since He was speaking only to the apostles, He limited the recipients of the power. Not all men should have it, but only those who were in His intention included among the apostles, that is, their successors in their work, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church.

That these words of our Lord impose an obligation on the sinner to confess his sins to a priest in order to have them forgiven will be proved later (see 295).

284. How does the priest forgive sins?

The priest forgives sins by the power of God when he pronounces the words of absolution.

285. What are the words of absolution?

The words of absolution are: "I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Of course, as a man, the priest has no more power to forgive sin than any other individual. The power is given him by God, as we have seen; and it must have been given him by God because sin is an offence against God. At his ordination the priest receives, as one of his priestly powers, this power to forgive sin, and the bishop who ordains him shows this by laying his hands on the head of the priest and saying our Lord's words, *"Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"*. But since, in the exercise of this power, the priest acts as a judge of souls, he requires in addition to the power given at ordination a commission from a bishop to use that power. This is known as jurisdiction, and it is so necessary that without it a priest cannot validly absolve sinners, except in the case of those in danger of death. You have a parallel to

this in Her Majesty's judges. They condemn or acquit a man in virtue of the commission to do so which they have from the Queen.

When a judge condemns a murderer to death or acquits him, he (the judge) really does it. He does not say, "*The Queen acquits you*", but "*I do it*". So the priest in absolution does not say, "*God absolves thee from thy sins*", but "*I absolve thee*"; but of course it is done in God's name and by His power.

The absolution, then, is not a declaration by the priest that God forgives the sinner. It is an act of the priest, acting as judge and actually forgiving. Our Lord's words when He instituted the sacrament show that by His ordainment the priest performs the act of absolving: "*Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, etc.*"

286. Are any conditions for forgiveness required on the part of the penitent?

Three conditions for forgiveness are required on the part of the penitent: Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction.

The penitent is the person who goes to confession. The first of these three conditions - contrition - is the most important; so important indeed that without it God will not and cannot forgive any sin, however trifling it may be.

287. What is Contrition?

Contrition is a hearty sorrow for our sins because by them we have offended so good a God, together with a firm purpose of amendment.

"*Hearty*" means "*from the heart*", "*sincere*". The doctrine of the Catholic Church about contrition, or sorrow for sin, is that "*it is a grief of mind and a detestation (hatred) of sin committed with*

a resolution of not sinning for the future... This contrition contains not only a cessation from sin, but likewise a detestation of the old (sins)" (Council of Trent, Session 14; can. 4). There can be no true sorrow for sin unless a man really intends not to sin again and to avoid the occasions, such as persons and places, which have led him to commit sin. Therefore, those Catholics who cannot make up their minds to leave off sin stay away from confession; they know full well that it would only be tempting and mocking God to presume to approach this sacrament in that state of mind.

Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking that they are not truly sorry for their sins because they do not feel sorry. Now sorrow has nothing to do with the human feelings, which often deceive us. True sorrow simply means a detestation of sin in our mind and wills. It means that we realise that it is the most grievous of evils to offend God and that we sincerely regret that we have offended Him who is so good and that we are determined with God's help to avoid sin and the occasions of sin for the future.

288. What is a firm purpose of amendment?

A firm purpose of amendment is a resolution to avoid, by the grace of God, not only sin but also the dangerous occasions of sin.

A firm purpose does not mean a mere wish or desire to better, but a real, sincere determination to be better. And, as we have already seen, it must include a determination to break with whatever has led us into sin in the past.

Sometimes, however, it may happen that we cannot possibly get away from what has been a cause of sin to us; in that case we must at least be prepared to do all that the priest advises us to do to make the occasion of sin less dangerous to us. A priest's work in confession includes the giving of advice and instruction as well as absolution, and he can always tell us what to do to keep out of sin

289. How may we obtain a hearty sorrow for our sins?

We may obtain a hearty sorrow for our sins by earnestly praying for it, and by making use of such considerations as may lead us to it.

It is not always easy for a man to be really sorry for his sins and to do all that real sorrow requires of him. A man, for instance, who is a confirmed drunkard or addicted to sins against chastity may find great difficulty in resolving to make his peace with God and turn over a new leaf. What must he do? He must begin to pray, and to pray hard, for the sorrow which is so necessary for him. Many people assist at Mass several times before going to confession, because in the sacrifice of the Mass our Lord Himself intercedes for them, and then God gives a most abundant sorrow. To his prayers the man must add reflections on the terrible harm sin has done to his soul, and how it has grievously offended God who made him to love and serve Him, and how dreadful it would be if death overtook him in his sins and he had to face God as his Judge. The Catechism in the following questions puts such reflections before us.

290. What consideration concerning God will lead us to sorrow for our sins?

This consideration concerning God will lead us to sorrow for our sins, that by our sins we have offended God who is infinitely good in Himself infinitely good to us.

We feel ready to do almost anything for those whom we love on account of their goodness and nothing pains us more than to feel that we have forfeited their love. If only we can have this attitude of friendship towards God, we have the finest motive of sorrow.

Then we can think how good God has been to us made us, redeemed us, and promises us heaven; every best gift and every perfect gift comes down to us from our Father, as St James says.

291. What consideration concerning our Saviour will lead us to sorrow for our sins?

This consideration concerning our Saviour will lead us to sorrow for our sins, that our Saviour died for our sins; and that those who sin grievously "crucify again to themselves the Song of God, making Him a mockery" (Heb. 6:6).

This motive shows us God's goodness to us. Our Lord was God, and for our sake He died in bitter agony on the Cross. He was not bound to suffer as He did. One tear shed by Him one act of the love of God made by Him would have been sufficient to expiate our sins and those of ten thousand worlds. Why, then, did He suffer so much pain? Simply to show how much He loved us; *"having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end"* (that is, to the limit of loving) (John 13:1). Since it was for our sins that He died, when we commit mortal sin, we crucify Him again, as it were, by making a mockery of His sufferings and repudiating their appeal.

292. Is sorrow for our sins, because by them we have lost heaven and deserved hell, sufficient when we go to confession?

Sorrow for our sins, because by them we have lost heaven and deserved hell, is sufficient when we go to confession.

This is a third reason for sorrow - the fear of God and His punishments, the fear of losing heaven and being damned to hell. This motive is less good than those we have already spoken of, because it contains a less perfect love of God and we are looking more to our own interests than to God's. Hence the contrition based on it is called imperfect contrition, or attrition. It is, however, sufficient when we go to confession and for the forgiveness of

venial sins outside of confession. The Act of Contrition included in the Short Evening Prayers under question 369 contains all the three motives for sorrow which we have just explained.

293. What is perfect contrition?

Perfect contrition is sorrow for sin arising purely from the love of God.

There can be no higher motive for sorrow than the love of God for His own sake (see 290). Therefore such contrition is perfect.

294. What special value has perfect contrition?

Perfect contrition has this special value - that by it our sins are forgiven immediately, even before we confess them: but nevertheless, if they are mortal, we are strictly bound to confess them afterwards.

Our Lord has said, "*He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father*" (John 14:21). To be loved by the Father means to be in a state of grace. Therefore, in these and similar words of our Lord we have His guarantee that an act of the perfect love of God or an act of sorrow from a motive of the perfect love of God has the marvellous effect of obtaining the forgiveness of our mortal sins even before we confess them; but we must have the desire and intention to confess them and actually confess them the next time we go to confession. The reason of this is that our Lord put the forgiveness of sins in the hands of the ministers of His Church and thus made confession (at least in intention) necessary for forgiveness.

Hence a person in mortal sin who is faced with death through shipwreck or some sudden accident can save his soul by an act of perfect contrition; but, if he subsequently escaped, he would have to confess at his next confession the mortal sins which he had had forgiven by the act of perfect contrition. It is advisable, therefore, to know an act of perfect contrition. Here is a short one: "*O my God, I am sorry that I have sinned against Thee, because Thou art so good, and I will not sin again and will carefully avoid whatever may lead me into grave sin.*"

This act does not express the desire and intention to go to confession when opportunity occurs. It is not necessary openly to express it, since any true act of perfect sorrow necessarily includes in its very nature an intention to do all that God wants one to do, and confession is one of the things He wants us to do, as our Lord has taught us.

295. What is Confession?

Confession is to accuse ourselves of our sins to a priest approved by the bishop.

Our Lord gave His priests power to forgive sins and to retain sins; in other words, to be judges on His behalf of the souls of men. But they cannot act as judges, they cannot know how to treat the sinner, unless he tells them what he has done. He must put his case before them by a self-accusation of his wrongdoing. Only so can priests carry out their office of determining whether to remit or retain sin, what degree of guilt there is, whether reparation for an act of injustice is demanded or not, and whether the penitent has the sufficient sorrow that fit him for absolution.

What are we bound to confess? (1) Only those deliberate mortal sins of which we find ourselves guilty after a careful examination of our conscience and which have not hitherto been absolved. (2) Those circumstances which affect the nature of the sin and make it different or more grievous. For instance, to steal a large sum of money is a mortal sin; but to steal it from a church to which it has been given for God's service makes the theft also a sacrilege and therefore much more grievous. (3) The number of times, as far as we can tell, that we have committed each mortal sin. We are not bound to confess venial sins, but it is helpful for our souls to do so; and if we go to confession with only venial sins to tell, we must make an act of contrition for at least one of them.

Some people imagine that, because they come across certain negligent Catholics who do not go to confession, that therefore they do not believe in it. The opposite is the truth. Assuredly they believe in it, but they stay away because they know that if they go they will have to amend their lives, which they are not prepared to do. Their staying away is rather a proof of their faith in the sacrament than otherwise. They know they cannot trifle with it.

Again, you find people who say, *"It is all very well for the priests to hear confessions, but if they had to go to confession themselves they would not like it"*. The truth is that priests, bishops and the Pope himself have to go to confession just like any other Catholic. They are human and may fall into sin, and they need the grace of the sacrament as much as, nay even more than, anyone else. They have to lead very holy lives, and they must make even more use of the means of God's grace (prayer and the sacraments) than others.

296. What if a person wilfully conceal a mortal sin in confession?

If a person wilfully conceals, a mortal sin in confession he is guilty of a great sacrilege, by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost in making a bad confession.

Better not to go at all than to make a mockery of so holy an institution by trying to tell God a lie. A man may deceive the priest, but God who reads the secrets of hearts cannot be deceived. The person may obtain an absolution from the priest on false pretences, but God would not ratify it, and it would be worse than valueless, for the man's sins would still remain and there would be the added sin of sacrilege.

Some people may say that shame would prevent them from telling their worst sins. But why? They have not been ashamed to commit them and thereby run the risk of losing their souls to all eternity; why, then, should they be ashamed to acknowledge them, when by a humble confession they can get rid of them and become God's friends again?

"But what will the priest think of me when he learns my secret life?" He will think no worse of you. Rather, he will bless God that you have had the courage to make a clean breast of everything. One of the greatest joys of a priest's life is to reconcile a poor sinner to God. He feels he has done something really momentous for his divine Master.

Is a priest ever allowed to reveal the sins of his penitent? Emphatically NO. He is bound by the most stringent laws to maintain an absolute silence about them and there is not a priest in the Church of God who would not suffer death rather than make them known. There is scarcely a crime of which priests have not been accused at one time or another, but never of that. The complete sanctity of the seal of confession, as it is called, is accepted by the Courts of Law.

297. How many things have we to do in order to prepare for confession?

We have four things to do in order to prepare for confession: first, we must heartily pray for grace to make a good confession; secondly, we must carefully examine our conscience; thirdly, we must take time and care to make a good act of contrition; and fourthly, we must resolve by the help of God to renounce our sins, and to begin a new life for the future.

To go to confession, then, is a serious matter.

In every Catholic prayer-book you will find a prayer specially to help you to make a good confession. You will also find an *"examination of conscience"* on the Ten Commandments and the Commandments of the Church. This *"examination"* will bring to your mind all the sins you may have committed.

The third and fourth parts of the preparation are the most important. We have already seen that contrition (with a firm purpose of amendment) is the most important thing the penitent has to do.

But, although confession is a serious matter, it should never be regarded as burdensome. It is meant for the comfort of souls, not for their distress. A person, then, should not be afraid of not being able to make a good confession, or of forgetting certain sins. The priest is specially trained for his work as a confessor, and he will always help the penitent and make things easy for him. If a mortal sin has been forgotten, the penitent must mention it in his next confession; he need not go to confession sooner in order to confess it. It has been forgiven already by the absolution, but it must be confessed next time.

298. What is Satisfaction?

Satisfaction is doing the penance given us by the priest.

When a person has finished confessing his sins, the priest may speak to him about the state of his life, telling him what sins he must particularly avoid. Then, before giving absolution, the priest tells him to say certain prayers or do certain things for his penance. Then the penitent makes his act of contrition and, while he is making it, the priest pronounces the words of absolution and forgives the penitent's sins.

When we were speaking about purgatory (108) we saw how after every sin, even though the guilt of it be forgiven by God, there often remains a debt of temporal punishment due in God's justice, and that, if we do not pay this debt in this world, we shall have to pay it in purgatory in the next. To pay this debt in this life one means we have is the penance given by the priest in confession; and it is perhaps the most effectual means, since it is sacramental, part of the sacrament of Penance, and therefore has the merits of Christ's precious Blood joined to it. The priest proportions the gravity of the penance to the gravity of the sins committed. When a due penance is imposed for a mortal sin, the penitent commits a mortal sin if he does not perform the penance.

299. Does the penance given by the priest always make full satisfaction for our sins?

The penance given by the priest does not always make full satisfaction for our sins. We should, therefore, add to it other good works and penances and try to gain indulgences.

The three good works specially recommended are prayer, fasting, and giving alms to the poor.

300. What is an Indulgence?

An Indulgence is a remission, granted by the Church, of the temporal punishment which often remains due to sin after its guilt has been forgiven.

The word "*Indulgence*" has a very unpleasant sound in Protestant ears. For want of knowing better they believe that it means a permission or licence to commit sin. It is, of course, nothing of the kind. An indulgence is the remission or letting off of the whole or part of the temporal punishment which remains after the sin has been forgiven; the indulgence cannot be obtained until the sin is forgiven by repentance. Remember that there are two things in sin - its guilt and its punishment (see 107).

The indulgence is granted on condition that some prayers are said or good works done by the sinner. In the early ages of the Church sinners had to do very severe public penances for their sins - for instance, theft was punished with two years' penance; an apostate, or one who fell away from the Faith had to do penance for the sin for the rest of his life. We see from this how serious a view of sin they took in those days. Sometimes, however, Christians who were awaiting death in prison for the Faith would petition the bishops to let poor sinners off part of their penance; and, in return for the constancy of these Christian martyrs, the bishops would

grant the request. Later, when the persecutions had ceased, it still remained customary to grant remissions of penance on condition of doing other good works. This became a common practice between the eighth and twelfth centuries. Thus, in the Penitential of Egbert, Archbishop of York; we read: *"For him who can comply with what the Penitential prescribes, well and good; for him who cannot we give counsel of God's mercy. Instead of one day on bread and water let him sing fifty psalms on his knees or seventy psalms without genuflecting... But if he does not know the psalms and cannot fast, let him, instead of one year on bread and water, give twenty-six solidi in alms, fast till None on one day of each week and till Vespers on another, and in the three Lents bestow in alms half of what he receives."* Sometimes a pilgrimage was substituted for the penance - to the shrine of our first martyr, St Alban, or to Rome or the shrine of St James at Compostella in Spain. These relaxations and *"redemptions"*, as they were called, were a form of indulgence and form part of the historical development of indulgences but they are not strictly indulgences in the sense in which we use this word. Indulgences in our sense began to be granted by the Pope in the eleventh century.

There are two kinds of indulgences granted by the Church, plenary and partial. A plenary indulgence takes away all the temporal punishment due to sin. Obviously it is not easy to gain since it means that we must be absolutely free from all sin and any affection for sin; as long as there is any guilt on the soul the punishment due to it sticks to it, as it were, and cannot be separated from it. To gain a plenary indulgence we must go to confession, receive Holy Communion and fulfil any other condition the Church may impose. A partial indulgence takes away part of the temporal punishment due to sin. It is worded as an indulgence of so many days or years and is understood to mean that, if we gain the indulgence, we shall receive as much remission as if we had done that number of days or years of the penances they imposed in the early centuries of the Church. A partial indulgence does not require such perfect conditions of soul as a plenary; still, it requires that we should have no mortal sin on our souls.

From whom does the Church get this wonderful power? From her founder, Jesus Christ. He said to St Peter, *"Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven"* (Matt. 16:19). He thereby gave to St Peter and his successors the power to help the faithful to get to heaven by freeing them from whatsoever might prevent them going there. It is a power over sin, both in its guilt and its punishment; for it is sin that will prevent men getting to heaven. Peter and his successors have power to remove the guilt of sin and its eternal punishment by the absolution in the sacrament of Penance; they have power over its temporal punishment by these grants of remission which we know as indulgences.

But the punishment of our sins is not remitted by indulgences without due satisfaction being offered to God. That satisfaction the Pope pays out of what is known as the Treasury of the Church, namely, the superabundant satisfactions of Jesus Christ, God made man, and the accumulated satisfactions of our Lady and the saints.

Our Lord's satisfaction was limitless for He was God, and He needed none for Himself, since He was all-holy and sinless. Our Lady was without any sin, and so her store of satisfaction offered to God throughout her life was not required for herself. The saints have sinned, and some of them were great sinners before their conversion (St Augustine, for example); but the satisfaction they offered to God in their lives of penance went beyond their own needs and could therefore by God's arrangement be used for us. There is thus a boundless store of satisfaction banked, so to say, with God. That it can be used for us is due to the fact that our Lady, the saints and we form one Body in Christ; we all are united in the Communion of Saints (see 102, etc.).

Since the souls in purgatory are also part of the Communion of Saints we can gain indulgences on their behalf as well as for ourselves. But while an indulgence for the living is a direct act of remission of punishment, exercised by the Pope in virtue of the power of the keys which he has, an indulgence for the souls in purgatory is a prayer offered by the Church on their behalf. Over the souls in purgatory the Pope cannot exercise a direct power of remission, since he is Head of the Church only on earth.

Extreme Unction.

301. What is the sacrament of Extreme Unction?

The sacrament of Extreme Unction is the anointing of the sick with holy oil accompanied with prayer.

302. When is Extreme Unction given?

Extreme Unction is given when we are in danger of death by sickness.

When a Catholic is seriously ill, the priest is sent for if he does not already know of the illness. He takes with him the Blessed Sacrament and a little vessel containing the "Oil of the sick", which is specially consecrated for this purpose by the bishop on Holy Thursday. The priest first hears the confession of the sick person, absolves him and then gives him Holy Communion (called in this case Viaticum, or Food for the Journey to Heaven). He then anoints the sick man with the sacred oil, or gives him, as we say, Extreme Unction (that is, the Last Anointing). He makes the sign of the cross with the oil on the eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands, and feet, saying during each anointing "By this *holy anointing and by His loving mercy may the Lord pardon thee whatever thou hast committed by sight, hearing*", etc. The sacrament is given only to those who are in danger of death from sickness or accident. A soldier who is going into action, even though there is every probability of his being killed, cannot be anointed; if he is mortally wounded, he can then receive the sacrament.

303. What are the effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction?

The effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction are to comfort and strengthen the soul, to remit sin, and even to restore health when God sees it to be expedient.

Each of the seven sacraments has its own particular effect on the soul. Extreme Unction gives to the dying man peace and comfort by removing the spiritual debility resulting from his sins, and it gives him added strength of soul to fight against the temptations of the devil for whom this is the last opportunity for destroying a soul and who therefore redoubles his efforts to that end. The sacrament also remits mortal sins when the sick man cannot make his confession - if he is unconscious, for instance - and has attrition for his sins. This is, therefore, a wonderful sacrament of God's mercy, bringing His consolation to the dying, fortifying the soul in virtue, diminishing the power of temptation removing the fear of death, and making the soul peacefully resigned to whatever God wills. Not infrequently, too, the anointing even affects the bodily health and helps nature to revive. Every priest who has had much to do with the sick and dying can testify to this effect of the sacrament.

304. What authority is there in Scripture for the sacrament of Extreme Unction?

The authority in Scripture for the sacrament of Extreme Unction is in the fifth chapter of St James, where it is said. "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."

The effects of the sacrament which we saw in the last question are all here indicated. It is for the sick that is, for the seriously ill, as the original Greek text makes clear. The priests pray over him and anoint him. The effect is to "save" him, the Lord raising him up - that is, conferring on him spiritual strength and consolation, and, if God sees well, restoring his bodily health. It will forgive his sins, too, when the normal sacrament (Penance) cannot be conferred. That this rite is a sacrament is clear, because here there is an outward sign (prayer and the anointing) working an inward effect (comforting and strengthening the soul by grace, and even remitting sins), and ordained by Christ, for only God can give to an outward sign the power to confer His grace.

So we see how wonderfully the Catholic Church can help and succour the dying. The marked contrast between what the priest can do at a deathbed and what the non-Catholic clergyman can do has often been noted and remarked on by non-Catholics. The sacrament can still be given even after the doctor has pronounced the person dead, since it may be some hours before the soul actually leaves the body. The priest completes his ministrations to the sick by conferring the "*apostolic blessing for the hour of death*" - that is, the Pope's blessing, conveying a plenary indulgence.

Holy Order.

305. What is the sacrament of Holy Order?

Holy Order is the sacrament by which bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained and receive power and grace to perform their sacred duties.

You know that our Lord chose twelve apostles to continue His work for souls after He had gone to heaven. He said to them, "*As the Father hath sent me, I also send you*" (John 20:21) and He went on to give them power to forgive sins (ibid. 23). That was on the evening of the day He rose from the dead. Just before He suffered He had given them power to offer Holy Mass and change bread into His Body and wine into His Blood; and He bade them do what He had done in memory of Him (Luke 22:19). Shortly before He ascended into heaven He commanded them to preach the Gospel, teach all nations and baptise (Matt. 28:19; Mark 26:15).

These powers and functions had to continue in the Church for all time, and so our Lord, in giving these powers to the apostles gave them also (by instituting the sacrament of Holy Order) the power to ordain other men for the same work. St Paul speaks of this sacrament when he writes to St Timothy: "*Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood*" (1 Tim. 4:14); "*I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace which is in thee by the imposition of my hands*" (2 Tim. 1:6).

By this sacrament, says the Catechism, bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained. Bishops have the highest degree of the priesthood.. They alone can ordain priests and consecrate other bishops. They are also the ordinary ministers of confirmation. And they succeed the apostles as rulers in the Church; and so you find the Church divided into dioceses in charge of a bishop. Priests cannot ordain other priests or consecrate bishops; but, as we have seen, they can be given the power to administer confirmation; and they share with bishops the power to say Mass, hear confessions, and anoint the sick. Priests and bishops are also the ordinary ministers of baptism.

The Catechism speaks of bishops, priests, and other ministers. Chief among these other ministers are deacons. The apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, appointed the first deacons (Acts 6).

Anglican Orders. During the last hundred years or so, an increasing number of Anglican clergymen have been adopting brighter and more elaborate services, with candles; flowers, vestments, etc.; not a few have gone so far as to adopt the services and ritual of the Catholic Church. They call the Communion Service Mass and celebrate it from an English translation of the Roman Missal; they have prayers for the dead, devotions in honour of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, images, banners, processions, etc. These clergymen claim to be properly ordained Catholic priests. If they are, then the Mass they say is a true Mass; but if they are not, then it is not.

Now at the Reformation, when the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion were drawn up, the Mass was rejected. Article 31 reads: "*The offering of Christ once made is the perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the priests did offer Christ for the quick and the dead to have remission of pain and guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits*". Here is the official Anglican teaching on the Mass, directly opposed to Catholic teaching. To that official Anglican teaching Anglican clergymen who today claim to say Mass have subscribed at their ordination.

The actions of the Reformers agreed with their teaching. They did everything they could to destroy the Mass and to get rid of the idea of an act of sacrifice. The Catholic priests were put to death if they were caught saying Mass. The altars were pulled down, and the altar-stones on which the Mass had been said were turned to profane uses - some were made into hearthstones, and many were let into the pavement of the churches so that the people should walk on them. There is one to this day in the Anglican church at Irnham, in Lincolnshire. "*Tables*" were erected in place of the Catholic altars, and the minister was directed to stand at the side of the table instead of with his back to the people. Therefore, from the teaching and the actions of the authors of the Church of England we have a clear and certain proof that the first bishops of that Church had not the slightest intention or idea of ordaining men to be priests; for a priest is one who offers sacrifice, and if you repudiate the idea of sacrifice you repudiate the essential notion of a priest. The wording of the ordination service from the days of Elizabeth I was so framed as to make it clear that the bishops did not intend to make sacrificing priests. In this way what is known as the apostolic succession was lost. Anglican clergymen were not validly ordained; and so it has remained to this day; Anglican parsons are not really priests and cannot really say Mass. Beyond doubt they are in good faith in believing in their own powers; but good faith does not confer valid orders and Catholics should be most careful not to be deceived by the claims of Anglo-Catholic clergymen or the ceremonial of Anglo-Catholic churches.

Matrimony

306. What is the sacrament of Matrimony?

Matrimony is the sacrament which sanctifies the contract of a Christian marriage, and gives a special grace to those who receive it worthily.

Marriage is the means God has instituted for the propagation of the human race. God created us for one end, namely, to know love, and serve Him here, and afterwards to be happy with Him for ever in heaven. It was, therefore, to be expected that God, who appointed marriage as the means of bringing us into the world, should surround it with all the helps necessary to enable parents to save their own souls and those of their children. Married life has its own difficulties and trials, and it needs special graces from God. Consider, too that the soundness of family life is not only vital to the well-being of the State, but it is vital also to the preservation and promotion of religion and morality. Our Lord therefore, raised the marriage contract to the

dignity of a sacrament, that those who entered into it should have a right to claim from Him all the graces they needed to fulfil their Christian duty.

The Catholic Church teaches: "*If anyone shall say that Matrimony is not truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Christ our Lord, but was invented by men in the Church and does not confer grace, let him be anathema*". These words of the Council of Trent (Sess.24, can.1) give the Church's infallible doctrine which was always held from the beginning and is found in the ancient writers, in the liturgical books, and among those Churches of the East which rejected the authority of the Pope centuries ago. Holy Scripture does not say in so many words that Matrimony is a sacrament, but St Paul quite expressly implies it. In Ephesians 5. he points out the sacred character of Christian marriage; it is holy because it is an image of the wonderful, unbreakable, and grace-giving union between Christ and His Church - of such dignity, therefore, that it must be a true sacrament. St Paul actually uses the word "*sacrament*" but it is from his general doctrine rather than from the word he uses that we frame our proof; St Paul is here using "*sacrament*" in the sense of "*mystery*"; the union; between Christ and His Church is a great mystery, that is, a great truth revealed by God. St Paul's teaching on marriage in this chapter should be carefully read. Since marriage is the symbol of the union between Christ and His Church, the relations between husband and wife find their ideal in the love Christ has for His Church and in the loving submission the Church renders to Him. It is an ideal so exalted that the Apostle evidently has in mind a state of life entered into and blessed by a sacrament and obtaining its strength and spiritual tone from this sacrament.

Between baptised persons the marriage contract is itself the sacrament. Therefore the contracting parties themselves (and not the priest) are the ministers of the sacrament, when by word or sign they mutually give and accept each other as husband and wife. But by the law of the Church the presence of the bishop or of the parish priest or of some priest duly delegated for the purpose and of two witnesses is required for the validity of the marriage and so of the sacrament. The parties should be in a state of grace when they marry, both because they are the ministers of the sacrament and because they are the recipients of a sacrament of the living.

07. What special grace does the sacrament of Matrimony give to those who receive it worthily?

The sacrament of Matrimony gives to those who receive it worthily a special grace to enable them to bear the difficulties of their state, the love and be faithful to one another, and to bring up their children in the fear of God.

308. Is it a sacrilege to contract marriage in mortal sin, or in disobedience to the laws of the Church?

It is a sacrilege to contract marriage in mortal sin, or in disobedience to the laws of the Church, and instead of a blessing the guilty parties draw down upon themselves the anger of God.

A sacrilege means the profanation of a sacred thing. Marriage is a sacrament and therefore sacred, and so to contract it in mortal sin is a mortal sin of sacrilege; but the parties are validly married if they have obeyed the laws of the Church on marriage. Since Easter Sunday, 1908: very serious alterations have been made by the Church regarding marriages by Catholics in non-Catholic places of worship and in the offices of civil registrars. Before that date these marriages were in England and in some other countries admitted to be valid, but the contracting of them in this manner was always regarded as sinful. But since that date these marriages are not only sinful; they are also invalid - that

is to say, they are not real marriages in the eyes of God. For a marriage to be now both valid and lawful (whether it be a mixed marriage or one in which both parties are Catholics), it must be contracted, as we have said, in the presence of the bishop or the parish priest or a duly delegated priest and two witnesses. Unless there is a reasonable excuse, the marriage should normally be celebrated before the parish priest of the bride. Both the parties must be prepared to produce evidence of "*freedom to marry*" - that they are not already married to someone else. They must also sign a prenuptial form guaranteeing, among other things, that they are marrying freely and of their own accord and that they intend to contract marriage in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and without any reservations or conditions to their consent. Any priest will give you full advice on any difficulties you may have in these matters.

309. What is a mixed "mixed marriage"?

A "mixed marriage" is a marriage between a Catholic and one who, though baptised, does not profess the Catholic Faith.

The difference of religion forms an impediment or barrier to marriage and makes it unlawful.

310. Has the Church always forbidden mixed marriages?

The Church has always forbidden mixed marriages, and considered them unlawful and pernicious. .

The wisdom of the Church in forbidding mixed marriages cannot be questioned. One must remember that marriage is for life; it cannot be ended at the will of the parties; they are bound to each other until one of them dies. From the start the partnership is weakened on the very important question of religion, and as time goes on quarrels may arise on the Catholic's attendance at Mass, Friday abstinence, and so on. Grave moral difficulties may also be created for the Catholic in the matter of contraception. Then there are the children. Their hold on the Faith is almost always weakened by the divergence of religious beliefs of their parents; and, should the Catholic party die, the religious education of the children may be jeopardised. The Church has a very long experience of human nature and her strong stand on this matter is supported and justified by that experience.

311. Does the Church sometimes permit mixed marriages?

The Church sometimes permits mixed marriages by granting a dispensation for very grave reasons and under special conditions.

The difficulty of finding a suitable Catholic partner, especially in a small town, and the probable conversion of the non-Catholic party are among the reasons which the bishop may consider sufficient for granting a dispensation. The conditions on which the bishop grants a dispensation are: (1) both parties promise in writing that all children of both sexes that may be born of the marriage will be baptised in the Catholic Church and carefully brought up in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic religion; (2) the non-Catholic party promises, also in writing, that he or she will not interfere with the religious belief of the Catholic party nor with his or her full and perfect liberty to fulfil all his or her duties as a Catholic; (3) the Catholic party undertakes to do all he or she can, especially by prayer and good example, to bring about the conversion of the non-Catholic party. (See 308.)

312. Can any human power dissolve the bond of marriage?

No human power can dissolve the bond of marriage, because Christ has said, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

The law which God has implanted in our hearts, and which is known as the natural law, prohibits divorce for several reasons. The first purpose of marriage is the begetting and education of children. Children need a sound and stable family life and the care of both parents, who bring the complementary qualities of man and woman to bear on the training of the children. As regards the parties themselves, the opportunity of divorce weakens their mutual love and fidelity, diminishes forbearance and understanding sympathy, and tends to encourage hasty and ill-advised marriages. Thus the common good is impeded by divorce and the general standard of morality is seriously lowered, as we can see by actual experience of the state of countries in which divorce is legally allowed. Undoubtedly, there will be many hard cases if divorce is prohibited; but the common good must take precedence over individual advantage.

What the natural law inculcates God's positive law has re-enacted. God permitted divorce among the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts, as our Lord said; but it was not so from the beginning. The original law laid on mankind by God prohibited divorce. That prohibition our Lord restored; and no human authority, not even the Pope, can dissolve the bond of marriage between baptised persons which has been contracted validly and consummated. Many States today pretend to dissolve marriages for various reasons. They have in fact no power to dissolve any marriage whatsoever.

A decree of divorce is not the same as a decree of nullity. The terms are sometimes confused. A decree of nullity declares that the marriage was null, that is, no marriage, from the beginning, from defect of consent through undue fear or coercion, or from the presence of an impediment invalidating the contract.

I have now come to the end of the explanation of the Catechism, as far as I intended to carry it. The rest of the Catechism follows; you can read it and probably understand it fairly well. My object has been to give a simple and plain explanation of the Catholic religion, and to try to remove some of the prejudices which still exist against it.

You must have been struck by the idea this little book has given you of our holy religion, an idea very different perhaps from what you had formed of it yourself or had been given of it by someone, possibly quite ignorant of its real teaching. If you have seen the truth in what you have read, do not stop there. Get some Catholic friend to introduce you to a priest, or go yourself to a priest, and ask him to explain your difficulties. No one need fear to approach a priest. Remember that you have a soul to save. You must not leave it to take its chance. God has left in the world a religion by means of which you can most certainly save your soul. That religion is the religion taught by the Church of Christ, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Embrace that religion and practise it faithfully, and all will be well with you at the day of judgement.

Chapter 8. OF VIRTUES AND VICES

313. Which are the theological virtues?

The theological virtues are Faith, HoPe, and Charity.

314. Why are they called theological virtues?

They are called theological virtues because they relate immediately to God.

315. What are the chief mysteries of faith which every Christian is bound to know?

The chief mysteries of faith which every Christian is bound to know are the Unity and Trinity of God, Who will render to every man according to his works, and the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour.

316. Which are the cardinal virtues?

The cardinal virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude. and Temperance.

317. Why are they called cardinal virtues?

They are called cardinal virtues because they are, as it were, the hinges on which all other moral virtues turn

318. Which are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost?

The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are:

1. *Wisdom.*
2. *Understanding.*
3. *Counsel.*
4. *Fortitude.*
5. *Knowledge.*
6. *Piety.*
7. *The fear of the Lord.*

319. Which are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost?

The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are:

1. *Charity.*
2. *Joy.*
3. *Peace.*
4. *Patience.*
5. *Benignity.*
6. *Goodness.*
7. *Longanimity.*
8. *Mildness.*
9. *Faith.*
10. *Modesty.*
11. *Continency.*
12. *Chastity.*

320. Which are the two great precepts of charity? *The two great precepts. of charity are:*

1. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength."*
2. *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

321. Which are the seven corporal works of mercy?

The seven corporal works of mercy are:

1. *To feed the hungry.*
2. *To give drink to the thirsty.*
3. *To clothe the naked.*
4. *To harbour the harbourless.*
5. *To visit the sick.*
6. *To visit the imprisoned.*

7. To bury the dead.

322. Which are the seven spiritual works of mercy?

The seven spiritual works of mercy are:

- 1. To convert the sinner.*
- 2. To instruct the ignorant.*
- 3. To counsel the doubtful*
- 4. To comfort the sorrowful.*
- 5. To bear wrongs patiently.*
- 6. To forgive injuries.*
- 7. To pray for the living and the dead.*

323. Which are the eight beatitudes?

The eight beatitudes are:

- 1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*
- 2. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land."*
- 3. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. "*
- 4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. "*
- 5. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."*
- 6. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God."*
- 7. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."*
- 8. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

324. Which are the seven capital sins or vices and their contrary virtues?

The seven capital sins or vices and their contrary virtues are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>1. Pride.</i> | <i>1. Humility.</i> |
| <i>2. Covetousness.</i> | <i>2. Liberality.</i> |
| <i>3. Lust.</i> | <i>3. Chastity.</i> |
| <i>4. Anger.</i> | <i>4. Meekness.</i> |
|
 | |
| <i>5. Gluttony.</i> | <i>5. Temperance.</i> |
| <i>6. Envy.</i> | <i>6. Brotherly Love.</i> |
| <i>7. Sloth.</i> | <i>7. Diligence.</i> |

325. Why are they called capital sins?

They are called capital sins because they are the sources from which all other sins take their rise.

326. Which are the six sins against the Holy Ghost?

The six sins against the Holy Ghost are:

- 1. Presumption.*
- 2. Despair.*
- 3. Resisting the known truth.*
- 4. Envy of another's spiritual good.*

5. *Obstinacy in sin.*

6. *Final impenitence.*

327. Which are the four sins crying to heaven for vengeance?

The four sins crying to heaven for vengeance are:

1. *Wilful murder.*

2. *The sin of Sodom.*

3. *Oppression of the poor.*

4. *Defrauding labourers of their wages.*

328. When are we answerable for the sins of others?

We are answerable for the sins of others whenever we either cause them or share in them through our own fault.

329. In how many ways may we either cause or share the guilt of another's sin?

We may either cause or share the guilt of another's sin in nine ways:

1. *By counsel.*

2. *By command.*

3. *By consent.*

4. *By provocation.*

5. *By praise or flattery.*

6. *By concealment.*

7. *By being a partner in the sin.* 8, *By silence.*

9. *By defending the ill done.*

330. Which are the three eminent good works?

The three eminent good works are prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds.

331. Which are the evangelical counsels?

The evangelical counsels are voluntary Poverty, perpetual Chastity, and entire Obedience.

332. What are the four last things to be ever remembered?

The four last things to be ever remembered are: Death, Judgement, Hell, and Heaven.

CH 9. THE CHRISTIAN RULE OF LIFE

333. What rule of life must we follow if we hope to be saved?

If we hope to be saved we must follow the rule of life taught by Jesus Christ.

334. What are we bound to do by the rule of life taught by Jesus Christ?

By the rule of life taught by Jesus Christ we are bound always to hate sin and to love God.

335. How must we hate sin?

We must hate sin above all other evils, so as to be resolved never to commit a wilful sin for the love or fear of anything whatsoever.

336. How must we love God?

We must love God above all things and with our whole heart.

337. How must we learn to love God?

We must learn to love God by begging of God to teach us to love Him: "O my God, teach me to love Thee. °"

338. What will the love of God lead us to do?

The love of God will lead us often to think how good God is; often to speak to Him in our hearts; and always to seek to please Him.

339. Does Jesus Christ also command us to love one another?

Jesus Christ also commands us to love one another - that is, all persons without exception - for His sake.

340. How are we to love one another?

We are to love one another by wishing well to one another, and praying for one another, and by never allowing ourselves any thought, word, or deed to the injury of anyone.

341. What are the principal virtues we are to learn of our Blessed Lord?

The principal virtues we are to learn of our Blessed Lord are meekness, humility, and obedience.

342. Are we also bound to love our enemies?

We are also bound to love our enemies; not only by forgiving them from our hearts, but also by wishing them well and praying for them.

343. Has Jesus Christ given us another great rule?

Jesus Christ has given us another great rule in these words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23.)

344. How are we to deny ourselves?

We are to deny ourselves by giving up our own will, and by going against our own humours, inclinations, and passions.

345. Why are we bound to deny ourselves?

We are bound to deny ourselves because our natural inclinations are prone to evil from our very childhood; and, if not corrected by self-denial, they will certainly carry us to hell.

346. How are we to take up our cross daily?

We are to take up our cross daily by submitting daily with patience to the labours and sufferings of this short life and by bearing them willingly for the love of God.

347. How are we to follow our Blessed Lord?

We are to follow our Blessed Lord by walking in His footsteps and imitating His virtues.

348. Which are the enemies we must fight against all the days of our life?

The enemies which we must fight against all the days of our life are the devil, the world, and the flesh.

349. What do you mean by the devil?

By the devil I mean Satan and all his wicked angels, who are ever seeking to draw us into sin that we may be damned with them.

350. What do you mean by the world?

By the world I mean the false maxims of the world and the society of those who love the vanities, riches, and pleasures of this world better than God.

351. Why do you number the devil and the world amongst the soul's enemies ?

I number the devil and the world amongst the enemies of the soul, because they are always seeking, by temptation and by word or example, to carry us along with them in the broad road that leads to damnation.

352. What do you mean by the flesh?

By the flesh I mean our own corrupt inclinations and passions, which are the most dangerous of all our enemies.

353. What must we do to hinder the enemies of our soul from drawing us into sin?

To hinder the enemies of our soul from drawing us into sin, we must watch, pray, and fight against all their suggestions and temptations.

354. In the warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh, on whom must we depend?

In the warfare against the devil, the world, and flesh we must depend, not on ourselves, but God only: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13.)

Chapter 10. THE CHRISTIAN DAILY EXERCISE

355. How should you begin the day?

I should begin the day by making the sign of the cross as soon as I awake in the morning and by saying some short prayer, such as, "O my God, I offer my heart and soul to Thee".

356. How should you rise in the morning?

I should rise in the morning diligently, dress myself modestly, and then kneel down and say my morning prayers.

SHORT MORNING PRAYERS

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost amen

Our Father. Hail Mary. The Apostles' Creed.

Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity now and for ever. Amen.

O my God, I believe in Thee; do Thou strengthen my faith. All my hopes are in Thee; do Thou secure them. I love Thee with my whole heart: teach me to love Thee daily more and more. I am sorry that I have offended Thee; do Thou increase my sorrow.

O my God, how good Thou hast been to me and how little have I done for Thee! Thou hast created me out of nothing, redeemed me by the death of Thy Son and sanctified me by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast called me into Thy Church, and Thou givest me all the graces necessary for my salvation. Thou hast preserved me during the night past and given me the present day wherein I may serve Thee. What return can I make Thee O God, for all that Thou hast done for me? I will bless Thy Holy Name and serve Thee all the days of my life.

I offer to Thee O my God all my thoughts words actions, and sufferings and I beseech Thee to give me Thy grace, that I may not offend Thee this day, but that I may faithfully serve Thee and do Thy holy will in all things.

357. Should you also hear Mass if you have time and opportunity?

I should also hear Mass if I have time and opportunity, for to hear Mass is by far the best and most profitable of all devotions.

358. Is it useful to make daily meditation?

It is useful to make daily meditation, for such was the practice of all the saints.

359. On what ought we to meditate?

We ought to meditate especially on the four last things and on the Life and Passion of our Blessed Lord.

360. Ought we frequently to read good books?

We ought frequently to read good books, such as the Holy Gospels, the lives of the saints and other spiritual works, which nourish our faith and piety and arm us against the false maxims of the world.

361. And what should you do as to your eating, drinking, sleeping, and amusements?

As to my eating, drinking, sleeping, and amusements, I should use all these things with moderation and with a desire to please God.

362. Say the grace before meals.

"Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts which we are going to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

363. Say the grace after meals.

"We give Thee thanks Almighty God, for all Thy benefits, who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen."

+ *"May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."*

364. How should you sanctify your ordinary actions and employments of the day?
I should sanctify my ordinary actions and employments of the day by often raising up my heart to God whilst I am about them, and saying some short prayer to Him.

365. What should you do when you find yourself tempted to sin?
When I find myself tempted to sin, I should make the sign of the cross on my heart, and call on God as earnestly as I can, saying, "Lord, save me, or I perish".

366. If you have fallen into sin, what should you do?
If I have fallen into sin, I should cast myself in spirit at the feet of Christ and humbly beg His pardon by a sincere act of contrition.

367. When God sends you any cross, or sickness, or pain, what should you say?
When God sends me any cross, or sickness, or pain, I should say, "Lord; Thy will be done; I take this for my sins".

368. What little indulgenced prayers would you do well to say often to yourself during the day?

I should do well to say often to myself during the day such little indulgenced prayers as
 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.
 In all things may the most holy, the most just and the most loveable will of God be done, praised, and exalted, above all for ever.

O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine,
 all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.
 Praised be Jesus Christ, praised for evermore.
 My Jesus, Mercy; Mary, help.

369. How should you finish the day?
I should finish the day by kneeling down and saying my night prayers.

SHORT EVENING PRAYERS

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost amen

O my God, I believe that Thou art here present; and that Thou observest all my actions, all my thoughts, and the most secret motions of my heart. I adore Thee, and I love Thee with my whole heart.

I return Thee thanks for all the benefits which I have ever received from Thee and particularly this day. Give me light, O my God to see what sins I have committed this day, and grant me grace to be truly sorry for them.

(Here examine whether you have offended God during the day, by any thought, word, or deed, or by neglect of any duty.)

O my God, who art infinitely good in Thyself, and infinitely good to me I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins and detest them above all things, because they deserve Thy dreadful punishments, because they have crucified my loving Saviour Jesus Christ, and most of all, because they offend Thine infinite goodness; and I firmly resolve by the help of Thy grace, never to offend Thee again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin.

(Here put yourself in the disposition you desire to be found in at the hour of death.)

O my God I accept death as an act of homage and adoration which I owe to Thy Divine Majesty, as a punishment justly due to my sins in union with the death of my dear Redeemer, and as the only means of coming to 'nee, my beginning and last end.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Lord Jesus, receive my soul.

O Holy Mary, be a mother to me.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary St Joseph, and all the Saints pray for us to our Lord that we may be preserved this night from sin and all evils. Amen.

O my good Angel whom God has appointed to be my guardian, watch over me during this night.

All ye Angels and Saints of God, pray for me.

May our Lord bless us and preserve us from all evil, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

370. After your night prayers what should you do?

After my night prayers I should observe due modesty in going to bed; occupy myself with the thoughts of death; and endeavour to compose myself to rest at the foot of the cross, and give my last thoughts to my crucified Saviour.

CHAPTER 11. THE ROSARY

EVERY Catholic knows that the Rosary is a form of supplication which unites in itself mental and vocal prayer. It consists of fifteen meditations on the principal events of our Lord's life and the life of His holy Mother.

The fifteen meditations are divided into three equal parts. The first part brings before the mind the chief mysteries which gave joy to the world - viz. the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of our Lord, His being offered in the Temple as a child, and His being found there as a boy of twelve: these are called the *Joyful Mysteries*. The second part of the Rosary is called the *Sorrowful Mysteries*, because it introduces to our pious notice the sorrows of our Lord's life, which culminated in His sacred and saving Death: the Agony and prayer in the garden, His being scourged at the pillar, His thorn-crowning, His carrying the cross from the place of judgement to Calvary, and finally His Death upon the Cross for the redemption of men. In the third division of the Rosary we

are led to the contemplation of His triumph, and hence it is called by the name of the *Glorious Mysteries*: these mysteries comprise His glorious Resurrection from the dead, His triumphant Ascension from earth to heaven, the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon the infant Church on Pentecost Day, the Assumption of our Lady into the kingdom of her Son, and then her solemn coronation as Queen of earth and Queen of heaven.

The Rosary has been called "*an epitome of the Gospel*", recalling to us as it does the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the consoling doctrine of the Redemption by the sacred bloodshedding, and the hopeful and helpful teaching of the future rewards. "*This is life eternal: to know Thee, the one true and living God, and Him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.*" (Jn 17:3) St Paul gives us a commentary upon these words of the divine Master: "*For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that seek Him*" (Heb 11:6). The Mysteries of the Rosary remind us that He is - that He is our Saviour and our Redeemer, and that He is our Rewarder; that He came into the world "*for us men and for our salvation*"; that He left the world, because "*it was expedient for us that He should go*"; and that He has gone "*to prepare a place*" for us, so that His word may be realised: "*Where I am, there shall My minister be*" (Jn 12:26). This is the doctrinal part of the Rosary; these are the subjects proposed for our meditation, thus supplying spiritual food for the mind, lifting up the intellect to God keeping alive and strengthening the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.

The Rosary Mysteries, like fifteen faithful mirrors, reflect back to us the ways and life, the words and actions, the joys the sorrows, and the triumphs of our Lord. As fifteen lifelike pictures, they reveal to us, as in a cinematograph, the scenes and incidents of which the gospel is the faithful record, and the historic personages who took part in them. We see Mary and Joseph and Elizabeth, and the two Johns, and Anna and Simeon, and the Doctors of the law, Pilate and Herod, the Jews and the Roman soldiers and the Centurion, the Apostles, and the Angels on earth and in heaven; but above them all - like Saul "*head and shoulders above the prophets*" - we see Jesus, the central figure around which all revolve, the Sun which illumines all, the Sheaf before which all fall down in lowly adoring love. As an eloquent preacher, of eloquence beyond the power of words, the Rosary preaches to us "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*". As a most convincing teacher it impresses upon us, in a manner which we cannot gainsay, "*the wonderful ways of God*".

Such is the devotion as a mental prayer or meditation consecrating the mind at once and the heart. But the lips have to be dedicated to God as well as the intellect and the will, and hence, as Leo XIII expresses it, St Dominic "*combined, and as it were interlaced the subjects to be meditated with the Angelical salutation and with the prayer to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Encyclical Letter on the Rosary, Sept 1883). Whilst we meditate upon the sublime truths, and while our hearts are made to "*leap up to God*", to use St Augustine's expressive word, "*and in our meditation a fire - the fire of divine love - breaks out*" (Ps 38:4), we unite the voice to the mind and heart, vocal prayer to mental prayer, saying, as we think of each mystery, one "*Our Father*", ten "*Hail Marys*" and one "*Glory be to the Father*", thus fulfilling our Lord's injunction: "*When you pray, pray thus: Our Father, etc.*" (Matt 6:9) thus again re-echoing the Angel's word to Mary: "*Hail, full of grace*" etc. (Lc 1:28); thus once more vying with the Angels in holy rivalry, and singing with them honour and praise and glory to the Blessed Three: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these divisions is called a decade.

And lest our mind should wander from our subject, lest we should be distracted by the counting of the prescribed prayers, we hold the bead-string in our hands and pass a bead through our fingers for each Pater, Ave, and Gloria that we say, so that we may know when our holy task is done. We sanctify the mind by sacred thoughts, the heart by acts of sorrow and love, the lips by the inspired words of sacred prayer, and the fingers by contact with the blessed beads. With reason then does the Sovereign Pontiff exclaim in the Encyclical already quoted: *"Let the Christian people cling more and more to the practice of the Rosary, to which our ancestors had recourse as to an ever-ready refuge in their distress and as a glorious pledge of Christian faith and devotion"*.

CHAPTER 12. THE SCAPULAR

(by a Carmelite Father)

THE Scapular, a garment worn by Religious of various Orders, is a broad strip of cloth hanging from the shoulders (scapula?) both in front and behind and reaching to the ankles. Originally it merely served the purpose of an apron, but in the year 1250 it received a more mystical meaning.

The General of the Carmelites, St Simon Stock, an Englishman, living at that time at Cambridge, besought the Blessed Virgin, patron of his Order, to protect it against the violent attacks of its adversaries and bestow upon it some mark of her favour. On the night of 16th July she appeared to him holding in her hand the scapular, and saying: *"This shall be your privilege; whosoever dies in this shall not suffer eternal fire"*.

She also appeared to Pope John XXII (1322), promising to free from the flames of purgatory on the first Saturday after death all those who should wear the scapular, observe chastity according to their state of life, and abstain from the use of flesh meat on all Wednesdays and Saturdays in addition to Fridays, or else recite daily the little Office (in Latin).

This is called the Sabbatine privilege, the apparitions and promises having been repeatedly confirmed by the Holy See.

In order to bring these favours within the reach of all a Confraternity of the Scapular was founded as far back as the thirteenth century, the members of which wear a small scapular consisting of two pieces of brown cloth held together by strings and hanging from the shoulders to the breast and the back.

176 The Catechism Simply Explained

It is necessary to be enrolled by a Carmelite Father or a priest having power to that effect (as have at present nearly all priests) and to have one's name inscribed in a register kept at a Carmelite monastery or convent.

The scapular should never be taken off, but when unfit for use may be replaced by another without a new blessing. No special prayers are prescribed, but the wearers of the scapular are exhorted to practice some devotion towards our Lady. Those desirous of enjoying the Sabbatine privilege, but unable to observe the abstinence or recite the Office, should ask a priest who has faculties for a dispensation or commutation with regard to these obligations.

Wearing the scapular does not, of course, imply that one may lead a wicked life and yet be certain of salvation, which would be sinful presumption, but, that, being clothed in the livery of our Lady and leading a good Christian life, one has a right to her protection during life and at the hour of death, when she will certainly obtain for her children the grace of receiving the last sacraments or of making an act of perfect contrition.

CHAPTER 13. DEVOTION OF THE FIVE SATURDAY

371. What is the origin of the five first Saturdays of the month's devotion?

The origin of this devotion is the Will of God to establish in the world the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

It was notified by Our Lady Herself to the three children of Fatima on June 13 and July 13, 1917. On 13 June She promised eternal salvation to those who shall take on the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

On 13 July She said: *"I will come and ask for the Consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of reparation of the first Saturdays of the month. "*

72. When did She come to ask for the Communion of reparation of the first Saturdays of the month? She came, accompanied with the Child Jesus, on December 10, 1925, at Pontevedra, home of the Dorothean Sisters where was the 19 year old Lucie.

373. In what does this practice consist?

One must, five times in the row, on the first Saturday of the month:

- 1) make one's confession*
- 2) receive Holy Communion*
- 3) say the Rosary*
- 4) keep company to Our Lady during 15 minutes by meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.*

All this must be done in spirit of reparation for sins offensive to Our Lady.

374. What are the advantage of this practice?

The Most Blessed Virgin promised for all those who keep this practice to assist them at the hour of their death with all the graces necessary for the eternal salvation of their souls.

375. May we expect some other graces from it?

Yes. The devotion of reparation is also proposed as a means for converting those sinners who are in the greater danger of losing their souls, and as a most efficacious intercession to obtain peace for the world from the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

376. Is that devotion absolutely new?

That devotion is not absolutely new.

For a long time the members of the confraternities of the Rosary used to consecrate to Our Lady of the Rosary 15 Saturdays in honour of the 15 mysteries. Leo XIII and then St. Pius X have approved such practices and attached to them a plenary indulgence.

But on 15 February, 1926, the Child Jesus said to Sister Lucie: *"It is true, my daughter, that many souls begin but a few go till the end, and those who persevere do so in order to receive the graces that are promised. The souls who make the five first Saturdays with fervour, and in view of making reparation to*

the Heart of your heavenly mother please me more than those who make 15 lukewarm and indifferent ones. "

377. What is new in this devotion requested by Our Lady at Fatima?

The new thing is the extraordinary condescending of God Who, while reducing the obligation to five Saturdays, goes as far as promising final perseverance in return.

378. Why five Saturdays instead of nine (like for the first Fridays) or seven (in honour of the seven sorrows of Our Lady)?

There are five Saturdays because: "There are five kinds of offences and blasphemies committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

- 1- blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception;***
- 2- blasphemies against her virginity;***
- 3- blasphemies against her divine Motherhood, by refusing at the same time to acknowledge her as Mother of men.***
- 4- blasphemies of those who publicly undertake to put in the hearts of children indifference, contempt or even hatred towards this Immaculate Mother;***
- 5 offences of those who directly outrage her in her holy images."***

It is the Child Jesus Himself who told Sister Lucie on 30 May, 1930.

379. Are these sins the most grievous ones?

Yes, these five kinds of sins are the most grievous ones. There is not a more unforgivable crime for Our Lord than to despise His most Holy Mother and to outrage Her Immaculate Heart, sanctuary of the Holy Ghost.

God considers them today as the most grievous ones because they jeopardize His project of salvation and redemption for men, as one can see by the present state of the Catholic Church. Since He has decided to manifest more and more His great design of love, which is the grant

every graces to men through the mediation of the Immaculate Virgin, it seems the that refusal to submit to this will is the fault which most grievously hurts His Heart, and for which He finds no longer in Himself any inclination to forgive.

In 1929, at Tuy, in a grandiose manifestation of the Blessed Trinity, Our Lady gave this conclusion: *"They are so numerous, the souls that God's justice condemns for sins committed against me, that I come and ask for reparation. "*

380. Is it not too difficult, especially in our days, to go to confession on a fixed day, a Saturday?

Yes it is, Consequently, at the express request of Sister Lucie, the Child Jesus specified that one might make one's confession in the eight days beforehand, or even more, provided one makes it with the intention of reparation to the Heart of Mary, and one is in state of grace on the first Saturday of the month.

381. What happens if one forgets to mention this intention during the Confession?

It will be possible to mention it in the next confession, but this should be done at the first occasion.

382. Is it not almost impossible for many faithful to receive Communion on a Saturday, while Mass is not celebrated in their parishes?

Yes it is. Therefore Our Lord told Lucie: "The practice of this devotion will be accepted also on the Sunday following the first Saturday when my priests, for just motives, will give this permission to the souls."

Such a permission can be easily obtained during a confession.

383. Are the 15 minutes meditation on the 15 mysteries of the Rosary additional to the recitation of the Rosary?

Yes they are, since Our Lady already requested the daily recitation of the Rosary.

384. Is it necessary to meditate on all the 15 mysteries every time?

No. One may choose some of them.

385. What is the principal condition to be fulfilled? *The principal condition to fulfil is to keep company to Our Lady in a spirit of reparation, to console her Immaculate Heart for all the sins, especially those committed against Her.*

386. Is there any relationship between the devotion of the first five Saturdays of the month and the promise of conversion of Russia?

Yes. On June 13, 1929, as She was asking for reparation for sins committed against Her, the Blessed Virgin also asked that the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops, make the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart, with promise to save it by this means.

That same year, Sr. Lucie wrote to her confessor : "The Good Lord promises to put an end to the persecution in Russia if the Holy Father deign make, and command the bishops of the Catholic world to make also, a solemn and public act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary; and if Her Holiness, taking advantage of this conversion, promises to approve and recommend the above mentioned devotion of reparation."

387. Is there not an astonishing disproportion between the very simple effort required from the faithful and the reward promised to those who will do it : their own eternal salvation and graces of salvation for the (other) sinners?

Indeed there is. Such a disproportion is firstly a proof in intercession of the Most blessed Virgin Mary, and the love of complacency of the Most Holy Trinity towards our heavenly Mother.

Whoever would have fulfilled the required conditions can be assured, at least at the hour of his death, even after miserable relapses in the state of sin, to obtain God's forgiveness and be preserved from eternal chastisement. He can be moreover assured of contributing to the salvation of others and to the peace in the world.

INDEX

(The number refer to the Questions of the Catechism,)

ABSOLUTION, Priest's 285
 Abstinence, 237-8
 Actual sin, 114 grace, 139
 Adam's sin, 43, 116
 Adoration, duty of, 232 276
 Amendment, purpose of, 288
 Angelic Salutation, 160-5
 Angels, invoking, 104, 158
 Anglican Orders 305
 Anointing with sacred oil (Confirmation), 265
 Anointing with sacred oil (Extreme Unction), 302
 Apostles' Creed, 14
 Apostolicity, mark of true Church, 99
 Ascension of Christ, 69
 Attrition, 292
 Ave Maria (Hail Mary), 160-5
 BAD example, 208
 Baptism, Sacrament of, 256 Effects of, 257 Conditional, 261 Necessity of, 261 of Blood and of
 Desire, 261
 Beatitudes, the Eight, 323
 Blessed Virgin 166
 Blood, Precious, of our Lord, 53 applied to our souls, 251, 276

 CALUMNY, 221
 Catholicity, Mark of the true Church,
 98
 Character, Sacramental, 253-4 Charity, meaning of, 169
 Christ, Name of, 45 Christian's rule of life, 333 ff. daily exercise, 355 ff. Christmas, 51
 Church, Definition of, 84 Head of, 85
 visible head. 86 built upon St Peter, 87-8 Church, Marks of, 94 cannot err, 100-101 Three parts of,
 102 authority to teach, 12, 228
 Commandments, Ten, of God, 171, etc. Six, of the Church, 229, etc.
 Communion, Easter, 243 Holy, 270 ff. under one kind, 270 Protestant, 270 Communion of Saints,
 meaning of, 102 Communism, 204
 Conception, Immaculate, of B.V. Mary, 118 foretold in the Bible, 118
 Confession, Necessity of, 241-2 Preparation for, 297
 Confirmation, Sacrament of, 262 ff.
 Contrition, Necessity of, 287 Perfect, 293 Act of, 294
 Creation, Object of Man's, 2
 Creed, Apostles', 14
 Cross, Sign of, 59
 Crucifix, 186

DEAD, Prayers for, 105

Despair, 179

Detraction, 221

Devils, 43, 182

Distractions, 143

Division of Sacraments, 255

Divorce, 312

EASTER Communion, 243

Ember Days, 236

Enemies, Love of, 169

Eucharist Contains the Body and Blood of Christ, 266 Transubstantiation, 266, 268

Sacrament, 274

Jewish Sacrifice, 276

Extreme Unction, Sacrament of, 301ff

FAITH Meaning of, 9, 177 alone will not save us, 135

False testimony, 220

Fast, Ecclesiastical, 271-2

Fasting, 235-6

Forgiveness of Sins, Meaning of, 111 how obtained, 281 ff.

Freemasonry, 204

GHOST, Holy, Procession of, 79 seven gifts and fruits, 318-9 : God, Perfections of, 17

Godfathers and Godmothers, 260

Grace Sanctifying and Actual, need of, 139

HABITUAL grace, 139

Hail Mary, Explanation of, 162 Heaven, 132-3

Hell, 43, 125 *see* Limbo, 64 Eternity of, 74, 125 Sentence of wicked, 74 Holiness, Mark of true

Church, 96 Holocaust, 276

Holy days of Obligation, 231 Holy Order, Sacrament of, 305 Holy pictures, 186

Honour due to angels and saints, 104, 185 Hope, Meaning of, 136

Sins against, 179.

IDOLATRY, 181

Images, 181, 187

Immaculate Conception of B.V. Mary, 118

Impurity, 211

Incarnation, Meaning of, 40 Necessity of, 43

Indulgences, Meaning of, 300

Infallibility, what it means, 93

Invocation of angels and saints, 104, 158 does not detract from Christ's Mediation, 104

JESUS, Name of, 44 Sufferings and death of, 53 Joseph, St, 49
Judgement, General, 73 Matter of, 73 Particular, 76

KINGDOM of God, the Church. 84

LAST Judgement, 73

Lent, Fast of, 236 Lies, 220

Life everlasting, 131

Life of the Soul, 123

Limbo, Meaning of, 64 Explanation of 63

Lord's Prayer, 146-57

Love of God and our neighbour, 169-70

Luther, Sayings of, 266

MAN, Creation of, 2

Marks of the true Church, 94

Marriage, mixed, 309 ff.

Mary, Immaculate Conception of, 188 devotion and reverence to her, 166 Mother of God, 167

Our Mother 168

Mass Hearing, 232 foretold in the Old Testament, 276 Sacrifice of, 276 applies Christ's merits to man, 277 Christian's ad of worship, 276 same sacrifice as that of the Cross. 278

Matrimony, Sacrament of. 306 ff.

Means of grace, 140

Mercy, Spiritual and corporal works of, 321-2

Merit, 105

Militant Church, 102

Mortal sin, 121-5

Mother of God, 167

Mystery, 28

NEIGHBOUR, Love of, 169

Nullity of marriage, 312

OATHS, 189-90

Occasions of sin, 287

One kind, Communion under, 270

Orders, Holy, Sacrament of, 305 Anglican, 305

Original sin, 115

Our Father and explanation, 146-57

PENANCE, Sacrament of, 281 ff. given in confession 298

Penances, Canonical, 300

Peter, St, made head of the Church by Christ, 88 Powers given to, by Christ, 91 Infallibility of,

93 Pope, Meaning of word, 89 Infallibility of, 93

Prayer, Necessity of 141

Prayers for the dead, 105

Presumption, 179
 Priests' Orders, 305
 Punishment for sin, temporal, 108 eternal, 74, 134
 Purgatory, Existence of, 105, 106, 109 Souls that go there, 107
 Purpose of amendment, 288

 REAL Presence. 266
 Redeemer, Meaning of word, 56
 Redemption, applied to mankind through the Sacraments, 249 intro.
 Relics, reverence to be paid to them, 186
 Religion, duty to support, 246
 Restitution, 217, 222
 Resurrection of Christ, 66
 Resurrection of the body, 129
 Reverence due to the angels and saints, 104, 158, 185 to Mary, the Mother of God, 166 Rosary,
 ch. 11

 SACRAMENTS, Means of grace appointed by Christ, 249 intro to
 why there are seven, 255 Division of, 255
 Sacrifice of the Mass, 276
 Sacrifices of the Old Law, 276 Sacrilege, 183, 296, 308
 Saints, Communion of, 102 Invocation of, 104 Reverence due to them, 104, 158
 Salvation, none outside the Church, 98, 258
 Sanctifying grace 139
 Satisfaction,
 sacramental, 298
 Satisfying merits, 108 Scandal, 208
 Scapular ch.12
 Seal of Confession, 296
 Secret Societies, 204
 Servile work, 194
 Sign of the Cross: how made, 59 when made, 61
 Simony, 183
 Sin, Forgiveness of, 111 Meaning of, 113 Original, 115 Actual, 119 Mortal, 121-5 Venial, 126-7
 Sorrow for sin, Necessity of, 28 includes a resolution to sin no more, 287 Act of, 294
 Soul, Immortality of, 6 Salvation of, 8 Powers of, 30
 Statues, 181
 Sunday, 193, 230 rest, reason of, 193 Superstitious practices, 182
 Supremacy of St Peter and successors, 87-8

 TEMPORAL punishment, 108
 Temptation 43, 61
 Theft 215 ff.
 Third, state in the next world, 63, 109. Thought, Sins of 73
 Transubstantiation, 266, 268

Trinity Holy 25 ff.

Two kinds, Communion under, 270

UNCTION, Extreme, Sacrament of, 301 ff.

Unity, Mark of the true Church, 95 Universality (Catholicity), Mark of the true Church, 98

VIATICUM, 272

Venial sin 126-7

Vigils, 235

Virtues and vices, 313 ff.

Vows, 189

WORKS of penance necessary, 298

Works - seven spiritual and corporal 321-2

Worship, Duty of, 8, 232, 276

^[1] In England, when 26th December falls on a Friday, the abstinence is at present dispensed; and when a day of abstinence immediately follows another, meat may be eaten on the second, except in Lent. In Ireland. there is the same dispensation (except in Lent) when two days of abstinence fall together; and in Lent the bishops may transfer the abstinence from Saturday to Wednesday. On St Patrick's Day the obligation of fast and abstinence is removed.