

takes people shortly about to be separated again in the turmoil of war.

There had been a moment when she had thought that they might do something about being married to each other, but then some other people had come along and shouted to them and that had been the end of that. After a lot of joking all around the whole party had clambered into the jeep and raced back to the Club for drinks.

(To be continued)

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PREACHERS AND CONFESSORS

Surely a good preacher can win souls, but so can a good confessor. Preaching is the soul of the priestly work, while confession is its heart. Preachers begin the work of salvation, confessors bring it to completion; preachers make known the will of heaven, confessors have it practiced; preachers are doctors giving general principles, teaching the faithful to love and serve God, confessors are physicians imparting individual direction and treatment. Preachers pronounce what remedies will be effectual, confessors apply them. Preachers are the trumpets of God, confessors are the soldiers destroying sin; preachers direct the artillery of eternity from a distance and not always accurately, while confessors battle at close quarters.

Preachers are God's watchdogs, who drive away the ravaging wolf; confessors are His guardians who rescue souls about to be devoured. Preachers exhort, confessors reconcile; preachers are ambassadors of God, speaking in His name, confessors are like little gods, clothed with His power and doing God's work in men's souls.

St. John Eudes, in *The Priest: His Dignity and Obligations* (New York): P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1947), pp. 144 f.

FAITH AND THE CHURCH

"What do you ask of the Church of God?"

In the Latin rite for the administration of Baptism the Catholic Church proposes this question, through the instrumentality of the minister, to every person presenting himself as a candidate for the reception of this sacrament.

The candidate testifies that the immediate good he wishes to obtain from the company of Our Lord's disciples is "Faith."

The Church then asks another question. "And what does faith bring you to?"

The candidate's answer is: "Life everlasting."

According to this particular section of the Catholic liturgy, then, a man seeks admittance to membership within the Catholic Church in order, ultimately, that he may possess eternal life. He asks to be counted among the members of the Church militant so that he may finally rejoice and glorify God forever within the Church triumphant. In order to obtain this ultimate good, however, the candidate realizes that he must have the faith. And, it is precisely this saving faith which he seeks from the hands of the Catholic Church.

The dialogue that prefaces the Catholic ceremony of Baptism according to the Roman rite implies that, in some way or another, the salvific divine faith is unobtainable apart from the true supernatural kingdom of God on earth. If the faith were to be considered as belonging elsewhere, it would be idle to seek it in any special way at the hands of the Church. Obviously, the formula implies that there is a very special connection between belief in God and the society which Our Lord founded and still rules here on earth.

The fact that such an intimate relation exists is outstandingly manifest on the pages of the New Testament. The Second Epistle of St. Peter describes the members of the Church as those who "have obtained equal faith with us in the justice of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."¹ St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians designates the citizen's of Our Lord's kingdom on earth as "those

¹ *II Pet.*, 1:1.

who are of the household of the faith (τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως).² The Epistle urges as a Christian duty the task of doing good to all men, especially to those of the household of the faith.

At the time when the New Testament books were being written, the members of the true Church commonly spoke of their fellow-disciples as the πιστοί (a term which the Vulgate regularly translates as *fideles*), the "faithful." The Christians of Jewish descent who accompanied St. Peter on his divinely ordered visit to Cornelius the Centurion in Caesarea are "the faithful of the circumcision."³ The members of the Churches of Ephesus and of Colossa are greeted by St. Paul both as saints ἅγιοι and as πιστοί.⁴ The singular form πιστός is frequently employed in the New Testament as an adjective, to designate a person as a member of the Christian community.

The Acts of the Apostles uses the formula "they believed" to indicate the process of conversion to the Church itself. At Joppe "many believed in the Lord," or, in other words, entered the Church as a result of St. Peter's preaching.⁵ "Those who believed" is one of the common designations of the members of the Church in the books of the Acts,⁶ as is the word πιστεύοντες, or *credentes*.⁷ The intimate association of belief in God with the Church, thus expressed in the New Testament, is emphasized in both scholastic and patristic writings. Among the scholastics, the formula which came to be most widely accepted as a definition of the Church militant was *congregatio seu convocatio fidelium in Christo*.⁸

The reason why the life of faith is intimately and basically connected with the true Church of Jesus Christ is not at all difficult to see. The true Church on earth, the company of Our Lord's disciples, is essentially a society in a status of preparation. The supernatural life, of which the corporate activity of the Church militant is the one social expression in this world, *belongs* in heaven rather

² Gal., 6:10.

³ Acts, 10:45.

⁶ Cf. Acts, 2:44; 15:5; 18:27; 21:20, 25; 22:19.

⁷ Cf. Acts, 4:32; 5:14; 11:21.

⁸ Cf. the article "Scholastic Definitions of the Catholic Church," in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* (CXI, 1, 2, and 3 [July, Aug., and Sept., 1944]).

than upon earth. It is a life which is meant to be enlightened by the intellectual knowledge of the beatific vision. The beatific vision, however, pertains of its very nature to the condition of perpetual reward and enjoyment, rather than to the status of trial and preparation. Hence, here on earth, in the expectation of the intuitive supernatural knowledge of God, the supernatural life, in its corporate as well as in its individual expression, demands the presence of true divine faith, the only valid enlightenment about the supernatural order available to those who are preparing for the glory of the beatific vision.

Hence, despite the fact that Catholic theology has always recognized that it is perfectly possible for an individual man to elicit an act of divine faith, and even to possess the supernatural virtue of faith, as a non-member of the true Church, the very principles of this same science assure us that there is a sense in which faith is inseparably joined to God's kingdom on earth. Only as a member of the Church can a man elicit an act of faith which is complete in all of its social perfection. Only as a member of the Church can he make his supernatural belief in God an active and fully effective component in the divinely constituted inward bond of unity within God's household.

The act of faith in God possesses within itself a definite unitive force, tending to join the believer to God and to his brothers within the household of the faith. In the man who is not a member of the Church, but who has real divine faith, the unitive function and the corporate aspect pertaining to this belief are in some measure thwarted and frustrated. Hence, when such a man seeks admittance to the Church, either as a catechumen preparing for baptism or as a baptized person seeking reconciliation, he is actually asking for faith, at least in the sense of the full and corporate completeness of faith, from the only agency in this world competent to give it. The candidate for admission to the Catholic Church asks and receives from the society into which he is being initiated or to which he is being reconciled the social and unitive perfection of faith itself. Hence the first gift the neophyte obtains from his new spiritual home is the fellowship which alone constitutes in this world the corporate unity to which divine faith contributes. By reason of his inclusion as a member within the Church of God, his faith actually achieves the result God intends that it should achieve.

It contributes actively as a component of the inward bond of unity within the company of Christ's disciples.

Since, then, it is possible to seek and to obtain this social and corporate perfection of the faith only from the Church, it is quite accurate to say that, from this particular point of view, the faith itself is something which only the Church is competent to give. The social or unitive function of belief in God is something which, by its very nature, belongs to the act. It would be absolutely inaccurate to esteem it merely as a kind of accidental perfection, apart from which the act or the virtue of divine faith would be really complete. Hence the agency which alone can give this function its proper expression and effect can properly be said to be the reality from which a candidate for the Christian life can seek and obtain the faith itself.

Moreover, it is important to remember that the Church reserves the title of *fideles* exclusively for its own members.⁹ Those who accept the content of divine public revelation on the authority of God are designated as *credentes* whether they are members of the Church or not. The name of *fidelis*, however, implies something more than the bare fact of Christian belief. It involves the idea of the profession of that belief in the manner according to which God Himself wills that it should be professed. The *fidelis* is a man who manifests his acceptance of Our Lord's divine message within the household of the faith itself. The baptismal profession of that faith is meant by its very nature to constitute a part of the outward or visible bond of unity within the kingdom of God on earth. The profession of that faith within the Church, by a member of this society, is the basic factor in making the member one of the *fideles*.

⁹ After their admission into the catechumenate, candidates for membership in the Church were considered as *Christiani*, but not as *fideles*. Cf. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien* (Paris, 1898), p. 281. The so-called seventh canon of the second oecumenical council (in reality a portion of a letter sent during the fifth century by the Church of Constantinople to Martyrius of Antioch), speaking of those who come into the Church from paganism or from certain heresies which have completely disfigured the Trinitarian teaching, states that these people are first made Christians, then catechumens. The final step in the process of initiation, that by which they become actual members of the true Church, brings these converts into the ranks of the *σωζόμενοι*. Cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1908), II, 35 ff.

Thus, in still another sense, the man who seeks admittance into the membership of the Catholic Church is actually asking for the perfection of faith from this society. By admitting the candidate into its own fellowship, the Catholic Church gives him a benefit in the line of faith which he could obtain from no other agency on earth. The Catholic Church, and this society alone, is competent to give to any believer in God the complete effectiveness of the profession of his own faith. By his entrance into the Church, the believer finds that the manifestation or profession of his own faith in God acts as God wills that it should act, as an element, indeed as the dominant element, in what has been called the outward or visible bond of unity within the city of God on earth.

We must not allow ourselves to forget that, just as there is a corporate life of divine faith ordained by God in this world, there is also a corporate profession of divine faith. The corporate life of faith is that communal activity carried on in the light of those truths that constitute God's supernatural doctrinal gift to His children. This life actually centers around the sacrificial offering of the Eucharist. In and through this work, the people of God join themselves to Our Lord in His eternal sacrifice. They express and give ultimate effectiveness to their prayers, as individuals, and as the one Body of Christ on earth. They labor effectively for the eternal glory of the Church triumphant. This corporate life of faith finds its perfection in the work of charity. It involves the accurate teaching of God's supernatural message to those for whom Our Lord gave His life on the Cross. This communal life of faith is the perfection which the Catholic Church, and this society alone, can give to a man in this world.

Furthermore, there is also a corporate or communal profession of faith demanded by God. Indeed, the social manifestation of faith is by its very nature the sign on this earth of the company of Our Lord's disciples, the society which lives the corporate life of faith itself. The kingdom of God on earth lives its life of faith in the midst of and despite a hostile environment, the group of men under the sway of God's spiritual enemy, the *ecclesia Satanae*. As a visible society, visibly victorious over this environment, the *ecclesia Dei* must necessarily manifest its acceptance of God's supernatural Christian message. And, as far as the individual believer

is concerned, his profession or manifestation of faith is thus meant by God to be a factor in the unity of His people in this world.

When a man lives as a member of the Catholic Church, and only when he is a member, his profession of divine faith actually contributes towards the social and visible unity which God commands in His followers on earth. And since, as St. Thomas Aquinas has taught, the external manifestation of faith, its *professio* or *confessio*, really pertains to the virtue of faith itself,¹⁰ the Church which alone gives proper and ultimate effectiveness to this profession can truly be described as the institution from which the candidate for Baptism receives the gift of faith. Through this faith of the Church, the Christian can obtain life everlasting.

Heretofore we have considered faith subjectively, belief in God and the manifestation of that belief. There is, however, still another way in which a man may be said to receive the faith from the true Church of Jesus Christ, and from this institution alone. From God's kingdom on earth men receive the objective content of faith, the actual message revealed by God through Jesus Christ Our Lord. It is in the acceptance of this divine public and Christian revelation alone that men perform their duty of faith in God. Consequently the Church, which alone is the authorized and infallible teacher of that message on earth, is the reality from which men receive the faith, considered objectively, or supernatural divine public revelation.

Historically, this is the meaning attached to the introductory dialogue in the Roman rite for the administration of Baptism. During the time when the catechumenate was the ordinary process by which a man prepared for admission into the membership of the true Church, the most important single event in this process was that in which the initial instruction culminated, the conveying to the candidate of the basic formulae of Christian belief. According to Msgr. Duchesne, the Church of Rome marked this particular portion of catechetical training by reading and explaining to the candidate portions of the four gospels, the creed or baptismal profession of faith, and the Lord's prayer. In the preparatory ceremonies immediately preceding Baptism itself, the candidate recited the formula of faith which had previously been entrusted to him.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. *Summa theologiae*, IIa-IIae, q. 3, a. 1.

¹¹ Cf. Duchesne, *op. cit.*, pp. 289 ff.

Traditionally, then, the candidate for admission into the Church seeks from this society the one and only genuine message of Jesus Christ, the teaching absolutely necessary for the attainment of eternal salvation. In seeking this message from the Church, the candidate actually begs it from Our Lord. Actually the Church must not be thought of as a teaching agency in any way separated from Christ. He lives within the Church, according to His promise. He acts as the Head of the Church, in such a way that the essential corporate activity of the Church is produced by Him, acting from within this company. He teaches His own divine message within the Church, in such a way that the man who obtains the objective content of faith from the Church really receives it from Him. The Church is competent, and is alone competent, to give the bread of divine truth to men precisely because of the fact He is its only supreme Teacher, and that the Holy Father and the hierarchy of the Church act as His instruments in the communication of that truth.

This, of course, is the key point in all of the Catholic teaching about faith and the Church. It is only because Our Lord Himself really acts as the supreme Teacher within the company of His own disciples that this company, the kingdom of God on earth, is able to act in the capacity of an authorized, infallible, and living proponent of divine revelation. It is only because of Our Lord's indwelling within the Church as its supreme and ultimate Teacher that this society is the *congregatio fidelium*, in such a way that the enlightenment of the Church militant is the light of divine faith and the life of the Church is the life of faith. Furthermore, it is precisely by reason of Our Lord's indwelling within it that the doctrines proposed by the Church as divine revelation can be received, not on the authority of the Church, but actually on the authority of God Himself.

The Church's prerogative as the only authorized exponent of divine revelation in this world is a matter of tremendous practical importance. Unfortunately the mentality of the world around us, with its highly emotional view of faith itself, and its utter disregard for doctrinal accuracy in the religious sphere, sometimes tends to make even the children of the Church forget the nature and the implications of the Church's unique position with reference to the faith. Actually the faith belongs to the Church because it belongs

to Our Lord. Objectively no individual outside of the Church and certainly no organization apart from the Church can have the slightest right to preach the gospel of the kingdom. The wrong, in such cases, obviously does not consist in the preaching of the truth, but in preaching it out of its proper place. Christ is the one great Prophet of divine truth. No one apart from Him is commissioned objectively to bring that teaching to men. The members of the *ecclesia docens* within the company of Our Lord's disciples, and indirectly those who are commissioned by them to aid in their apostolic labors, act as the ambassadors of Christ when they propose the divinely revealed truth to those for whom Our Lord died.¹² No man has a right to arrogate this function to himself. The presumption of any individual or of any group to act in this capacity without a commission from God is, in itself, one of the most serious violations of the divine order in the universe which can be perpetrated.

According to the very definition of divine faith, the proponent of that faith in this world and, of course, the immediate rule of faith, must necessarily be infallible. To impart the doctrines of divine faith is to present a certain set of teachings for which an absolutely certain assent, based on the authority of God Himself, is demanded. Such a demand would be obviously blasphemous without a perfect assurance that the teachings thus proposed were actually true and actually communicated supernaturally by God. To claim the authority of God for doctrines which He had not imparted to man, or for doctrines which are false in themselves, would be objectively a heinous offence against God, an offence somewhat similar to that of perjury. Hence the Church, which alone is the authorized proponent of the faith, and which alone is the infallible teacher of revealed doctrine in this world, is the institution to which alone the candidate for baptism may legitimately apply for the salutary truths of divine faith.

Again, the catechumen seeks faith from the Church as from a living teacher. The Church stands as a living and infallible pro-

¹² The necessity of a mandate or mission for the salutary preaching of divine truth is treated at great length in one of the outstanding works of polemical theology, the *Tractatus generales de controversiis* by the brothers Peter and Adrian Van Walenburch. The entire eighth treatise of their book is devoted to this concept. The work is printed in the first volume of Migne's *Theologiae cursus completus*.

ponent of the faith only by reason of the presence of Christ within itself. Christ, dwelling within the Church, speaks by the Church's voice to the men of all ages and of all cultures. As His instrument, the Church can explain and propose the content of the divine faith in the face of any difficulties raised by the unrelenting but ever-shifting attack of the world against God's kingdom.

Thus, in its salutary effort to guard against any misrepresentation of the divine message, the Church can always indicate the correct meaning of the teaching entrusted to it. It can definitely resolve questions which have been raised about the significance of the various truths contained in this message. In its teaching, it acts by the authority of God Himself as the immediate rule of divine faith. The teachings which God wills that men should believe on His authority are precisely those so designated by the teaching power of the visible Catholic Church. The Church is the only agency in this world from which men may properly seek the faith of God.

Because of the intimate relations between the Church and the gift of divine faith, a relationship so close that the kingdom of God on earth must be defined and understood in function of faith, there are certain powerful tendencies in our own time against which the loyal Catholic must be on guard. The first of these tendencies is that of assigning to the Church, for all practical purposes at least, what seems to be only an accidental connection with faith and the life of faith. This tendency manifests itself in the idea that true divine faith is to be found commonly or even regularly outside of the Catholic communion, particularly in any organization which thinks of itself as in some way Christian in character. In such teaching a recognition of the Catholic Church is represented as a kind of perfection which, in the general run of things, may or may not come to the person who serves God according to the precepts of Christian belief.

It is conceded that, if a man comes to know more and more about the content of divine revelation, he will eventually learn that the Catholic Church is the true Church and the only authorized proponent of Christian revelation. Yet this information is depicted as something not at all requisite for the faith. All in all, this tendency represents the Church and the knowledge of the Church as

valuable resources for living the life of faith in all of its perfection, yet as definitely not required for the basic act of belief in God.

The men who give expression to this tendency offer what is, in the last analysis, a manifestly faulty explanation of the Catholic teaching on the absolute minimum explicit content of an act of divine faith. As a matter of fact it is perfectly possible to have an act of true divine faith elicited by a person who is not aware that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we know that a man can elicit an act of divine faith without being a member of the Church at all. Yet these incontrovertible facts do not in the least constitute the Church as in any way an accidental factor in the life of divine faith. The person who makes a true act of divine faith without being explicitly aware of the Church's position in the order of divine grace actually believes this teaching implicitly. The man who believes without being a member of the Church is, knowingly or unknowingly, accepting a body of doctrine which actually belongs to the Church.

Furthermore, in each one of these cases, there is something manifestly lacking to the perfection of the life of faith. The man who believes without being aware of the Church's position in the supernatural order is, objectively, improperly and incompletely instructed in the divine teaching. The supernatural truths about the Church form one of the most important sections in God's revealed message. The believer who is not aware of these teachings is not in a proper position as a believer. His act of faith is not the standard by which the faith of others is to be evaluated. Although he actually accepts the true divine teaching on the authority of God who has communicated this teaching to mankind, he is sadly ill-instructed about the content of this message.

In exactly the same way, the faith of the man who is not a member of the Catholic Church is actually something out of place. The acceptance of the divine teaching on the authority of God who has revealed it actually belongs within the fabric of God's supernatural kingdom on earth, the *congregatio fidelium*. Thus the position of this act outside of the Church is objectively a violation of the divine order. There is nothing wrong, of course, with the act of faith itself. That remains a good thing wherever it may be. But it definitely is not a good thing to have a person who possesses

the divine gift of faith existing outside of that company which God has formed and constituted as the society of the faith.

Another tendency which stems in great measure from a forgetfulness of the intimate relations between the faith and the Church is that which manifests itself in a weakening of the proper Catholic fervor for doctrinal orthodoxy. Those who are insufficiently aware of the fact that the true faith is the basic concern of the Church are prone, for all practical purposes at least, to think of zeal for the purity of the Catholic faith as a matter of little moment, as something which is hardly necessary in these enlightened days. That was one of the basic attitudes of the Modernists during the early days of the twentieth century. That, unfortunately, seems to be an attitude of a few writers even since that time.

The Catholic Church does, and always has done, a great deal of work for the natural and temporal benefit of its own members, and of all men. Because it is the company within which Our Lord resides, it has never ceased from an unselfish performance of the temporal works of mercy. Nevertheless, the prime concern of the Catholic Church is God's glory in the fullness of Christ, a glory to be achieved ultimately in the eternal felicity of the Church triumphant. It works for the attainment of the purpose for which Our Lord sacrificed His life on the Cross. This is its basic objective.

In the attainment of this objective, it works through faith and the life of faith. It strives to bring the teaching of Christ to its own children, and to influence others to accept this salutary and supernatural body of truth. Obviously, then, it must be vitally concerned with the accurate presentation of this message. The Church is well aware of the fact that it would be nothing short of blasphemous to carry to the children of men, as the message of Jesus Christ, some teachings which God had actually not revealed. It is conscious of the fact that, objectively, there could hardly be a more serious violation of the divine order than the misrepresentation of that message which Our Lord preached as the teaching of His Father.

Since loyalty to the Church is loyalty to Our Lord, and since this fidelity to the Church obviously involves a zeal for those very benefits for which the Church itself strives, it follows that, in itself, an enthusiasm for the purity of the Catholic faith on the part of any

individual member of the Church must be considered, as a manifestation of devotion to Christ. Yet, strange to say, we may sometimes encounter an attitude of opposition among Catholics to zeal for orthodoxy as such. Those who point out and controvert teachings and tendencies which seem in some way opposed to the purity of the faith have all too frequently found themselves attacked as "heresy-hunters." In the circles from which such attacks originate, a man may contradict any proposition with impunity if he considers it "not sufficiently liberal" or "unscientific." But only at his own peril can he reject a proposition because it appears to contradict Catholic doctrine. We can find a rather striking example of this tendency in some of the recent attacks directed against the distinguished theologian, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange.

Assuredly a statement by any theologian that a definite proposition is or seems to be not in accord with the deposit of faith is an intensely serious thing. If a man makes such an assertion, and that statement turns out to be false, he himself is manifestly in error on some point pertinent to Catholic truth. If he is mistaken, he is certainly bound to correct his error.

If, on the other hand, his evaluation of the proposition under consideration is accurate, then it is definitely the business of all Catholics to heed his warning and to avoid those expressions or attitudes which might misrepresent the teaching of Christ. In any event, the intimate connection of the Church with the life of divine faith makes it imperative that zeal for the purity of the faith should be recognized as incumbent upon all the followers of Christ. The Church from which the little ones of Christ receive the salutary faith of Our Lord is served in proper loyalty only when its members bend every effort to see that its divine message is presented among them in all of its clarity and accuracy.

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Answers to Questions

THE N. OF THE PRAYER *A CUNCTIS*

Question: The chapel of our house of studies has never been solemnly blessed or consecrated and no special title has been given it. What Saint should be inserted at the letter *N.* of the *A cunctis* prayer at Mass and in the Office? The founder of our religious congregation has never been canonized though there are several saints on the calendar to whom we have special devotion as patrons. May one of these canonized patrons be mentioned at the letter *N.*?

Answer: The rubric governing the Saint to be mentioned in the prayer *A cunctis* is found in the Missal, under the title *Orationes pro diversitate temporum*, just after the Mass for the Third Sunday after Epiphany. There it is directed that at the letter *N.* of the prayer, the canonized titular of the church in which Mass is being celebrated is to be named. Liturgical authorities extend this direction to public or semi-public oratories, provided they have been either consecrated or blessed in the solemn manner found in the Ritual. A decree of the Congregation of Sacred Rites (No. 2814, *ad 1*) legislates that where the oratory in which the Mass is said has no titular, in whose name the place has been set apart for divine worship, the patron of the country or city or district should be the Saint to be mentioned at the *N.* of the *A cunctis*. Members of religious *orders* may *add* the name of their canonized Founder to the titular Saint of the church, or oratory, of celebration (S.R.C., No. 3758) but members of religious *congregations* may not do so without special Apostolic indult (S.R.C., No. 4403, *ad 2*). Hence, in the case proposed, the chapel in question being a semi-public oratory to which no titular has been assigned, the saint to be named at *N.* is to be the national or diocesan patron. If there be none such, and the chapel is in the United States, the Patroness of this country being Our Lady Immaculate, since she is already commemorated in the beginning of the oration, the words *atque beato N.* are omitted in the prayer.