

How To Know The One True Church

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For the last five years of the Second World War, my duty as Army Chaplain in World War II has given me the opportunity of dealing with many converts to the Church. Before the war I had met many others in the course of fourteen years of Missions to the people. My experience with enquirers on matters of faith has revealed that converts seek the security of clear proofs on various points. Especially they seek convincing proofs:

That the Church which Christ founded is the Catholic Church and that all men should be members of that One True Church.

To give such proofs — simple, clear, and compelling beyond reasonable doubt — to every earnest enquirer is the object of this little book.

My hope is that, by God's grace, Catholics who read these words may be strengthened in the Faith which they possess and that seekers after the truth from outside may be led by them into the One True Fold.

BROAD OR BLANK-MINDED?

We maybe quite sure that if Christ is God and that if He did found a Church to teach all mankind, then that Church would possess proofs of this kind as her testimonials and she would not only be certain herself of her position, but her members too would have that same infallible certainty.

“You are Peter (Rock) and upon this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep. But inwardly they are ravening wolves... By their fruits you shall know them” (Matt. 7: 15-16).

Here are two pronouncements of Jesus Christ. Both may be taken in a prophetic sense. They are both fulfilled at the present day.

On the one hand we see the Church which Christ founded on the Rock of Peter working in every nation and sending out her missionaries to the utmost parts of the world — “going teach all nations” (Matt. 28:19).

On the other hand, there are literally hundreds of warring sects, all professing to teach the doctrines of Christ, yet all at variance with each other.

So great has the confusion become that, outside the Catholic Church, men say: “One religion is as good as another,” or “It does not matter what we believe.” The man who says this often gives himself a pat on the back and adds that he is very broad-minded. What he really means, G. K. Chesterton tells us, is that he is blank-minded. One religion is as good as another to him, for the simple reason that he knows little or nothing about any of them. To say that one religion is as good

as another is saying that the false prophet is as good as the true prophet. But Christ warns us that the false prophet is as dangerous to his flock as the ravening wolf is to the sheep-fold.

In the midst of this blank-mindedness and confusion one Church stands forth in relief and makes the bold claim: "I am the One True Church."

This stand taken by the Catholic Church is sometimes attributed to a spirit of narrow intolerance. But it is, at least in a negative way, one of the proofs of her divine origin. We would see that this is so if we should ever hear the Church say: "I do not know whether I am right or whether the others are, but you may take my doctrine or leave it, for I do not know whether it is true or not." In such an event she would prove one thing:

that she was not the True Church.

For Christ said to His Apostles: "Going, therefore, teach all of you all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20.);

"He that believes and is baptised shall be saved; he that believes not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16.).

On the above supposition, she would be teaching doctrines which, as Christ said, were to be believed under pain of eternal damnation, and yet she herself would not know whether they were true or false.

The man who begins to think, and so ceases to be "blank-minded," will at once see the absurdity to which this leads. Christ, however, has sent His Church to teach all nations and has obliged all men, under pain of eternal damnation, to believe what she teaches. Further, He knew well that she would be surrounded by false prophets. We should expect, therefore, that He would not leave her in doubt about her doctrines or about her own identity. We should expect, too, that He would place on her forehead some clear marks, and that He would give her, as His representative on earth, credentials compelling in their clarity not only to the learned, but also to the "man in the street."

The Gospel was meant, not for the learned only, but for every man, according to the command of Christ:

"Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)

Such, in fact, is the certainty that the Catholic Church has about herself. Such, too, is the certainty that the individual Catholic has about his Faith; and it is this certainty that distinguishes Catholics from the members of every other religion today.

THE PROOFS.

The Catholic Church, then, calls on all men to look into her face, to see that she speaks the truth and to see impressed on her forehead those great characters which distinguish her from every counterfeit or imitation.

UNITY.

The first of those marks is her unity.

Unity is essential to any church that wishes to be acknowledged as the One True Church. The leaders of non-Catholic sects are constantly longing for it and expressing their desire for its ultimate attainment. On the other hand, I have frequently heard unbelievers referring in a scoffing way to the

divisions among what they term “the churches.” So great is this yearning for unity that, some years ago, many representatives of Protestant sects met at Lausanne in Switzerland to devise some method of achieving it. There was no representative of the Catholic Church present, not because she did not desire the unity of Christendom, but because she knew well that, no matter how good their intentions, all their efforts were vain; that the only means of reaching or preserving unity was the one appointed by Christ himself. They must come back again to the Rock of Peter, which they abandoned.

Christ himself prayed for this unity in His Church as a sign of His and her divine mission in the world.

Praying over His Apostles to His Heavenly Father at the Last Supper, He said: “And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they may be one, as You, Father, in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (Jn. 17:20-21).

Our reason tells us that the unity for which Christ prayed is of necessity a mark of Christ’s Church. If, for example, a church is found to have taught one doctrine in the 16th century and the opposite in the 20th, she must either have been a false prophet then or she is so now; still more so if her official representatives are at one and the same time preaching doctrines which are the direct opposites of each other. In such a state of affairs, how can men be expected to sit at her feet to learn of her and consider themselves bound to hear and believe when the teacher herself is so confused.

Unity is, therefore, necessary if the people are to have confidence in their teacher. Let us search for it, first, among the religious bodies outside the Catholic Church. What do we find among the various sects?

Nothing but confusion and discord!

This confusion is the direct result of the fundamental teaching of the Father of Protestantism, Martin Luther. He protested against the authority of the Catholic Church, hence the name, “protestant”. He proclaimed also the principle of private interpretation of the Bible. He said, in effect: “We will not be dictated to by any authority on earth. The Bible alone shall be our rule of faith”. Now the Bible is, indeed, the inspired word of God, but that fact does not make the Scripture any easier to be understood. The Bible is, perhaps, the most difficult book in the world to interpret. In the first place, to interpret it correctly on one’s own private authority, it is necessary to have an intimate knowledge of several foreign languages, viz.: Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Latin.

If a priest, after completing his ordinary course of studies, wishes to become a Doctor of Philosophy, of Canon Law, or of Theology, two years of extra study may suffice. But to become a Doctor of Sacred Scripture requires at least six years of extra study. This gives us some idea of what a difficult study that of Sacred Scripture is.

But, after Luther’s promulgation of his new maxim, every ignoramus who could barely read was told that he was entitled to take up the Bible and put his own interpretation on the Sacred Text. With what result? In a few short years, outside the Catholic Church, there were nearly as many opinions as there were individuals.

Thus, over a hundred different interpretations were counted of the simple words “This is My Body”, which, up to that time, throughout Christendom, had had but one interpretation. One man took his Bible and said: “This text means so and so”. Another said: “I differ from you, and feel myself

inspired to start a church of my own". A third said: "I do not agree with either of you, so I am going to found another church", and so the confusion spread. Among the latest fanatics who, "unlearned and unstable", to use the words of St. Peter, still feel themselves inspired to "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16) are the self-styled "Jehovah's Witnesses". So the Protestant sects grew in number, until today they number about five hundred. Among this number each differs from the other on some point, which is considered so far essential to the sect itself as to render unity impossible. And then, in spite of their principle of private interpretation, they persecuted and abused each other, for each wished to constitute itself an infallible authority. Still worse, even in these individual sects anything but unity prevails. In the Church of England, for example, a High Churchman may preach doctrines in the morning, and from that same pulpit in the evening a Low Churchman may preach to the same congregation telling them that the things they were told in practice in the morning are blasphemous idolatry.

Dr Frederick Joseph Kinsman, who died in 1944, formally (Episcopalian) Bishop of Delaware, has been called the Newman of the United States. He was at one time Professor of History to the ecclesiastical students of the Episcopalian Church. But he was chosen, because of his learning and piety, to occupy the See of Delaware. As Bishop, he had to visit his Diocese and to examine the candidates for confirmation. In one parish of his Diocese, where a High Church minister was installed, the children gave him answers almost identical with those a Catholic child would give, regarding the Mass, the veneration of Saints and sacred images. In another part of his Diocese, where Low Church sentiments prevailed, he was told that these same things were blasphemous idolatry. He tells us that these sudden changes of the spiritual barometer from torrid to frigid zones were too much for him. He resigned his Bishopric and later came over to the Catholic Church, when he wrote his well-known book "Salve Mater".

After having viewed this picture of confusion, let us come to the Catholic Church. There, thank God, we find a different picture; we find that unity for which Christ prayed. You may question the little children who have just been prepared for their First Holy Communion, or the learned theologians who have spent their lives delving deeply into the mysteries of the Faith, about any of the great Christian truths, e.g. the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Holy Mass, Confession and pardon of sin, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, prayer for the dead, etc. All give the same answer. Among all there is unity of doctrine.

Or again, question the Catholics of the various nations in matters of doctrine. Begin with the nations of Europe: England, Ireland, Scotland; France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Poland, etc; go to the West to the Americas; to the East: to China, Japan, the Philippine Islands; come here in the South to Australia. All give the same answer; among all there is unity of doctrine. Further, the unity of the Church is continued through space and continued through time. Thus, as a matter of fact, we are presented with the second and third great characters that distinguish the true church from every counterfeit.

CATHOLICITY.

Unity continuing through space is Catholicity. The word "catholic" means universal. Any church claiming to be the True Church must be universal, for, in the Apostles Creed, the Creed common to all Christians, we say "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church".

Moreover Christ said to His Apostles: "Go and teach all of you all nations" (Matt. 28:19), "Go all of you into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16: 15). From these words

it is clear that the church which Christ commissioned must embrace all nations and teach all nations.

Again, let us first search for such a church among the non-Catholic sects. All the Protestant churches are confined to some nation or race. The Anglican Church, as its very name implies, is national, not international. It is, in a word, English. The Lutheran Church is German. You may find Lutherans in Australia, but they are mostly of German descent. Presbyterians are, almost without exception, Scotch. But there is one church that is international and universal, and which has given Christianity to every nation, the Catholic Church. There are [in 1952] between three and four hundred million Catholics, scattered throughout the globe, of every nation and race under the sun. [In 2011, the figure is approximately 1.2 billion.] They differ in colour, in language, in national outlook — but they are one and united in Faith. This marvellous unity has triumphed over differences of nationality and the passions of men. Surely this unity can be due to nothing less than Divine Providence, for we know how hard it is to preserve unity even in a small society composed of a handful of men. We know, too, that all who have broken away from the Catholic Church have had on them at once the curse of Babel.

I may fittingly conclude this point with an extract from “How to Look For the True Church”, by John S. Vaughan, D.D.:

“Our Lord commanded His disciples in a word, His Church to go and teach, or, as the original has it, to make disciples of all nations. ‘Teach all of you all nations.’ What church most truly carries out this command? Who has been teaching the world from the beginning? What church was it that converted and made ‘disciples’ of England itself and won her from paganism? What church converted Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal? Was it our neighbour the Anglican Church? Was it any of the Protestant churches? It was no other than the Catholic Church.

“If a Protestant race or nation or country exist to-day, it is one converted originally from paganism to Catholicity. The question may well be put: Has the Protestant Church, whether Anglican, Lutheran, or any other, carried out the command to teach all nations? If not, it is simply not the Church addressed by Christ.

“Has it, since its rise in the 16th century, converted as much as one country, or one nation, from paganism to Protestantism? If it has not, then how can it be the Church of Christ, for the Church is especially charged with this duty, entrusted with this office. On the other hand, if it has converted even as much as one nation from infidelity, I should very much like to know which it is”

(“How to Look For the True Church,” by John S. Vaughan, D.D.)

As a matter of fact, history records, as Bishop Vaughan states, that every nation of Europe was converted to Christianity by missionaries sent out under the authority of the Pope. England itself was converted by St. Augustine (died 605) and his monks, sent there by Pope [St] Gregory. The last nation converted, as a nation, to Christianity is the Philippine Islands, which was converted by Catholic monks and friars from Spain.

APOSTOLICITY.

As was said above, this unity of the Church continues through time, as well as space, and so the Church has another great distinguishing character. She is apostolic. It is self-evident that any church

which claims to be the True Church of Christ must be able to trace her origin back through the long centuries to the Apostles, and through them to Christ, her Founder.

Let us again look outside and seek the origin of the Protestant churches which surround us. The name of not a single one of them was even heard of before the 16th century. The Anglican Church came into existence in 1532. Henry VIII became its founder when he forced through Parliament the Act of Supremacy. The world knows the sordid matter of his 'divorce' and why he threw off the yoke of Rome. "And yet this monstrous tyrant and scandalous adulterer", writes Fr. Coppens, S.J., "is supposed by many simple folk to have been the chosen instrument of Providence for separating the English Church from dependence on the one pastor of the one fold." "When Henry VIII died in 1547", continues Fr. Coppens, "the faith of the English people was still the same that it had been for nearly a thousand years, ever since St. Austin, [Augustine] with his monks, had brought it to them from Rome." He adds: "Those who take it for granted that our English ancestors deliberately left the Catholic Church on account of its corruptions, are very much mistaken. The people were driven into the Reformation by fines, imprisonment, terrorism, the rack, the scaffold, and foreign soldiers.

Under the long reign of Elizabeth," he continues, "priests who said Mass in secret and ministered to the faithful were hunted like wolves and, when found, they were hanged, disembowelled while still alive, and their limbs exposed in public places. The faithful who harboured them or who assisted at Holy Mass were imprisoned and tortured to make them betray their friends. By such persecutions, continued under several reigns, Protestantism was gradually propagated among the English people. Once separated from Rome, private judgment gradually divided the nation into countless sects."

("The Protestant Reformation," by Rev. Charles Coppens, S.J.)

If Hitler had been able to continue his persecutions of the Church in Germany for half a century, we should rightly have feared for the future of German Catholicity, though his persecutions were mild compared with those of Elizabeth. Yet such, the facts of history tell us, is the way in which England was robbed of the Catholic Faith, and how the Protestant Established Church took its place.

To mention the origin of a few of the other Protestant sects:

the Baptists were founded in 1639 by Roger Williams;

the Presbyterians in 1560 by John Knox;

the Methodists in 1739 by John Wesley.

Similarly, we could put dates and places to the origin of every sect if we were to take the trouble to go through the long list of four to five hundred that have since sprung into existence.

The Catholic Church alone can trace back her history to her origin at the time of the Apostles and through them to Christ Himself.

If we wish to find the beginnings of the True Church, we must go back to where Christ Himself established her; that is, on the Rock of Peter. Christ addressed St. Peter in these words: "I say to you that you are Peter (Rock) and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19). To find the Church of Christ, then, we must seek for the Rock of Peter, on which it is built, and we arrive there, over a long, unbroken road — the line of the Popes, which ends today with Pius [XII] and begins with Peter. [It has continued from Pius XII up to Benedict XVI in 2011.] History records that St. Peter went to Rome. Whiston, a Protestant, in his Memoirs, remarks that the presence of St.

Peter in Rome is fact so sound historically that: “It is a shame for any Protestant to have to confess that any Protestant ever denied it.”

History also records the names of St. Peter’s immediate successors in the See of Rome — Saints Linus, Cletus, and Clement, and so on with the unbroken line of 262 Popes. [267 popes by 2011.]

This argument was used by St. Augustine (died A.D. 430) against an heretical sect of his own time, the Donatists. Pointing to the Unbroken Line of Popes back to St. Peter, he appealed to these heretics to return to the centre of unity in the well-known words: “Come back to us brethren, if you wish to be engrafted in the True Vine. It grieves us to see you cut off from it. Count the Bishops in the See of Peter, and mark in this list of Fathers how one succeeded the other. There is the Rock, against which the proud gates of hell do not prevail.” And again he adds: “What binds me to the Catholic Church is the continuous line of bishops in the See of Rome down to the present Pope.”

If St. Augustine could use this argument with great force in the 4th century, with how much more power can we not use it in the 20th century [or the 21st]? If the world endures for another 20 centuries, Catholics will still be able to point to the unbroken line of Popes in the See of Peter. For, as St. Augustine says: “There is the rock against which the proud gates of hell do not prevail.”

The words of Macaulay, the non-Catholic historian, may well be quoted here:

“There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilisation. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre.

“The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs.

“That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the 19th century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the 8th, and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable.

“The Catholic Church is still sending forth missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila.

“Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all.

“She was great and respected before the Saxon set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca.

“And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch, the ruins of St. Paul’s.”

— (Essay on Von Ranke’s History of the Popes.)

Not only must the True Church be able to trace her existence back through the ages of history, but she must be able to trace back her doctrines as well; for, as I said previously, if at any time of her long history it can be proved that she taught doctrines contrary to what she teaches now, she is at once stamped as a false prophet.

Once more let us take a glance outside and see what extraordinary changes have taken place in the non-Catholic sects. I think we may safely assert that all these began with basing their belief on the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God. But now we hear many of their official leaders, whilst retaining their places of eminence in their churches, publicly teaching that the Gospel miracles are fables, and denying such basic doctrines of Christianity as reward and punishment in a future life.

Dean Inge (formerly Anglican Dean of St. Paul's) writes: "The Gospel miracles have become, or perhaps they always were, symbols, myths, poetry; but symbols which are recognised as having only symbolic truth and are no longer helpful" ("Fall of the Idols," by Dean Inge). The Dean might have added, if he were in a logical frame of mind, that since they are myths and are related as facts, the Gospels themselves may now be looked upon as a tissue of lies, and hence also "no longer helpful."

The Angus case, a few years ago, received wide publicity in Australia. For weeks the Sydney dailies placarded it forth in heavy type headlines. Dr. Angus was professor of Sacred Scripture and Theology at St. Andrew's College, University of Sydney and, as such, was entrusted with the education of candidates for the ministry in the Presbyterian and other associated churches. In his writings, Dr. Angus refers to Christ as a mere man, who was ignorant of many things and subject to the superstitions and erroneous scientific ideas of the backward age in which He lived. With Dr. Angus, too, the gospel miracles are myth and fable. Some of the authorities in His own church became genuinely alarmed, as Dr. Angus held such a key position in the church. The question came up for debate [in 1932, though the affair became a cause célèbre for the next decade,] before the Presbyterian General Assembly of N.S.W. In the voting which followed a resolution in favour of Dr. Angus was carried by 174 votes to 83, showing that more than two-thirds of those official representatives of the Presbyterian Church held similar views, or at least thought it quite permissible for Presbyterian Ministers to hold and publicly teach such things.

No wonder that confusion prevails. No wonder that Christian Faith in many is dying or almost dead. No wonder that the pews of their churches are so empty, for the teachers themselves have undermined the very foundations of Christianity, Well may we add: No wonder that Christ warned us to beware of false prophets, who come in the clothing of sheep, but who are as dangerous to the spiritual life of the people as the ravening wolf is dangerous to the life of the sheep. The founders of Protestantism, Luther, Calvin, and Knox, would certainly not recognise their doctrines in the teachings of these official expounders of Protestantism today.

Let us return again to a scene that gives us more joy and hope. We come back to the Catholic Church and there we find the same doctrines taught today as were taught, by the Christian Church of the first five centuries, the Church of the Catacombs and of the Apostles.

How are we to know this? History faithfully records it. Just as we have preserved in our libraries the works of many profane writers who lived 2,000 years ago, so too, we have the writings of the great Greek and Latin scholars of the early Christian centuries.

Prominent among these Fathers, Doctors, and Ecclesiastical writers of the first three centuries are St. Ignatius, St. Irenaeus, St. Clement, Papias, Origen, and Tertullian;

of the fourth and fifth centuries St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. John Chrysostom — to mention only a few by way of example. If we study their works, what do we find? The same doctrines are there taught as are taught by the Catholic Church today, viz., devotion to the See of St. Peter at Rome as the central authority of Christendom; beautiful homilies on the Mass and the priestly dignity as those of St. Chrysostom;

exhortations to prayer for the dead, tracts on the Sacrament of Penance and the forgiveness of sins as those of St. Augustine; works showing forth the dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and exhortations to devotion to her, as those of St. Basil, etc.

This identity of worship in the early Christian Church and the Catholic Church of to-day was demonstrated in a remarkable way by the great religious revival which took place in England during the last [the 19th] century and which is known as the Oxford Movement. Its leader, one of Oxford's most brilliant scholars, was John Henry Newman, who afterwards became Cardinal Newman [and has since been beatified]. He was, when the movement began, a member of the Church of England, and his idea of the Catholic Church was that she was anti-Christ. A series of sermons were preached by him to this effect.

However, he and his collaborators at the Oxford University wished to revive a spirit of fervour within the Anglican Church, and they thought that the best way to do this was to draw on the fervour of early Christianity.

They chose as their slogan: "Back to the Fathers." They took the works of the early Fathers down from their library shelves and studied them carefully. What was the result? They soon saw that the doctrines of the early church could not be reconciled with those of the Anglican Church, or any other Protestant body; but that, on the other hand, they were identical with those of the Catholic Church. Their efforts led to this result:

that within 10 years over 200 Anglican clergymen and ten thousand laymen renounced Protestantism and asked to be received into the Catholic Church. That great trend towards Catholicity has continued in England, without interruption, ever since. Among the converts are famous men of every rank and calling. To mention only a few, such prominent names come to mind as those of Robert Hugh Benson, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury; Phillip Gibbs, G. K. Chesterton, Fr. Ronald Knox, Fr. Martindale, Arnold Lunn.

Rev. Fr. H. A. Johnston, S.J., in his pamphlet "Religion Without Authority," writes: "During the twenty-five years of the reign of the late King George V, 250,000 converts, including more than 300 Anglican clergymen, were received into the Catholic Church in England and Wales."

Those who thus come into the Catholic Church are, for the most part, the cream of Protestantism. From the worldly point of view most of them have nothing to gain and often much to lose. They made the change because in the Catholic Church they found continuity of doctrine in all ages — a proof to them that she is the One True Church.

HOLINESS.

The last great character on the forehead of the True Church distinguishing her from every other is holiness. It is self-evident that the True Church should be holy, because she was sent into the world to make men holy.

She ought to be holy in her founder, in her doctrines, and in her members.

We may well ask: Do the churches founded at the time of the Reformation possess that mark of holiness in their founders?

John L. Stoddard, an agnostic who was converted to the Catholic Faith, whilst still searching for truth, made a study of the character of Luther, who is acknowledged by all as the Father of Protestantism. This is his summing up of Luther's character: "What then, had I found at the end of my investigation of the history of Luther? Unquestionably a man of remarkable energy and great ability — qualities which he had used, however, not to reform and unify Christ's Church, but to assail, insult, and rend it; and, furthermore, a man whose record shows a grossly animal nature, immoral conduct, the assertion that a man is wholly unable to resist sensual temptations, broken vows to God, a dangerous doctrine of salvation, without regard to moral life, a violent reckless style of preaching, which produced terrible results to human life and property, a condoning of bigamy in order to retain a Prince in Protestantism, an astounding amount of vile and vituperative language, fierce intolerance of criticism, domineering arrogance in his treatment and translation of the Bible, scurrilous abuse of priests, the Pope, and the Holy Mass, a belief in witchcraft and the advocacy of burning witches, and a direct incitement to burn and plunder Jewish houses, property, and synagogues. What the results of Luther's revolutionary system in general has been, remains to be considered; but at this point I asked myself : What is there in this man's personality, character, or moral code, which of itself would induce me to espouse his doctrine? To this, I could only answer: Nothing"

("Rebuilding a Lost Faith," by John L. Stoddard).

Dr. Frederick Joseph Kinsman, while still Professor of History in a Protestant Ecclesiastical College, wrote in his notes: "The Reformers were for the most part unattractive characters, most of them detestable. In England we had a succession of unlovely leaders. Henry VIII was a brute, Cranmer a poltroon, the Privy Council of Edward VI unscrupulous thieves, Elizabeth an accomplished liar. The only heroic characters were some of the martyrs for the Old Faith like Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More".

("Salve Mater," by F. J. Kinsman). [Fisher and More have both been canonized.]

The Catholic Church alone can make the historical claim that Jesus Christ is her Founder, as has already been shown.

The True Church must be holy in her teachings. Again the Catholic Church rings true to the high standard of perfection demanded. No matter what fashions of moral corruption have prevailed, she has never pandered to human passions in her teaching, but has always stood, often almost alone in the midst of a corrupt world, for the highest and purest morality. The fact that some of her children, even among those occupying high offices, have proved false to this, is no more an argument against her essential sanctity than the wickedness of Judas the Apostle is an argument against the sanctity of Christ Himself.

The holiness of the Church in her members does not mean that all Catholics are actually good. Christ compares His Church to a field of wheat in which grow both cockle and wheat, and to a net

in which there are good and bad fish. We sadly admit that, as a result of man's free will, with which God will not interfere, there are Catholics who abuse the great graces at their disposal, as did Judas, who was one of the chosen twelve.

Those who leave the Catholic Church do not depart for the purpose of seeking a deeper spiritual life.

Some do so through ignorance or carelessness, and others do so because they find difficulty in living up to the standard required. This is notoriously the case with clergymen who have left her. "When the Pope weeds his garden," said a certain Protestant divine, [was it Dean Swift?] "I wish he would not throw the weeds over our fence."

The mark of holiness consists, as the Catechism says, in the great number of the faithful, who have been eminent for holiness in all ages, i.e., the great number of saints - who in all ages have practised virtue, not in an ordinary, but in an heroic degree, and on whose holiness God has placed His own seal by the working of miracles.

The Prayer Book of the Church of England contains a long catalogue of saints. But, strange as it may seem, they are all Catholic saints, including Popes like St. Gregory, to whom England owes her Christianity.

Since the Reformation, not a single name has been added to that catalogue.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church has constantly gone on adding to her list of canonised saints. I have heard it said: "There are few saints in our days, and no miracles, or at any rate very few." I would like to challenge that statement and to be so bold as to say that, perhaps, there was never a time in the history of the Church when God raised up more saints and worked more miracles than during the past century. Let us look at the facts.

Pius XI, the late Pope, canonised quite a long list of saints, several of whom lived in comparatively recent times, e.g., St. John Bosco, St. John Vianney, St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus.

Now, it should be known that the canonisation of a saint, ordinarily, requires at least four miracles. Two are demanded for the beatification and two for the canonisation. These miracles must be proved beyond all shadow of doubt, as due not to any natural cause, but to the intercession of the servant of God. "The cautiousness of the Holy See in accepting these miracles is proverbial," writes Mgr. P. E. Hallett. "The witnesses will be usually physicians or surgeons, and, if possible, specialists in the disease alleged to have been cured. They have to testify that a complete cure has taken place and that it cannot be explained by natural laws." He continues: "As an example, we may give one of the miracles accepted for the beatification in 1908 of St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, who was canonised in 1920. The cure occurred in 1892.

Maria Mazzarella, a girl of 17, appeared to be dying of tuberculosis, being covered all over the body with abscesses and looking like a corpse. The third day of the novena she was not expected to live for the night, but in the morning she arose, put on her clothes, and came down stairs perfectly cured"

("Canonisation," by Mgr. P. E. Hallett, B.A.).

We may take St. Therese, the Little Flower, as the best example of a saint of our own time, because she had, in 1950, two sisters still living in France in the same convent in which she reached the

summit of perfection. [Pauline, (Mother Agnes of Jesus) died in 1951. Celine, (Sister Genevieve of the Holy Face) died in 1959.] She is called the “Little Flower” because she names the autobiography which she wrote in obedience to her superior: “The Story of the Springtime of a Little White Flower.”

When she was only fifteen years of age, she obtained a special dispensation to enter the Carmelite convent, though still so young. She lived there for nine brief years, dying at the tender age of 24. Her one aim in life was to love God for those who loved Him not — to become, as she herself said, “A victim of Divine Love” — to praise Him for those who blasphemed Him, to pray for those who would not pray for themselves.

The wise man of the world, seeing this beautiful and gifted child entering behind those convent walls, never to come forth again on this side of the grave, would say, as many have said: “It is a crime to let such things take place; the poor child is burying herself in a living tomb. These convent walls should be pulled down.” But St. Therese did not think so and, what is still more important, God did not think so.

When our little Saint was lying on her death bed, one of her sisters in religion said to her: “Sister Therese, will you look down on us from Heaven?” “I will not only look down,” she answered, “but I will come down.” “There can be no rest for me till the end of the world,” she wrote, “till the angel shall have said: ‘Time is no more’. Then I will take my rest, then I will be able to rejoice, because the number of the elect will be complete.” “When I am dead,” she said, “I will let fall from Heaven a shower of roses.”

Scarcely had her pure soul left her body when the “Shower of Roses” she had promised began to fall in every part of the world, in the form of wonderful favours, granted through her prayers. In many cases these favours were most astounding miracles. The reports of many of these began to come into Rome. The Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, had them subjected to a careful examination. The result was that, contrary to the usual slow procedure of the Apostolic See in such matters, she was soon beautified, and in 1925 she was canonised, while four of her sisters were still living. Pius XI, one of the greatest of the Popes and also one of the greatest statesmen of his time, went further still. He made that little child the patron of all the Foreign Missions throughout the world, and he himself proclaimed her his “Guiding Star.” [Blessed Pope John Paul II was to proclaim her a Doctor of the Church.]

Such is an example of one of those saints’ that the Catholic Church has never ceased to produce, and which she never will cease to produce till the end of the world. “By their fruits you shall know them” (Matt, 7:16). [Since these words were written literally hundreds of men and women have been beatified and canonized. Among the most famous have been modern figures like Saint ‘Padre’ Pio of Pietrelcina (died 1968), Saint Josemaria Escriva (died 1975), Blessed ‘Mother’ Teresa of Calcutta (died 1997), and Blessed Pope John Paul II (died 2005).]

No other religious body can make any claim such as this.

I have made the bold statement that, perhaps, there were never more miracles worked in any age of the Church than during the past century. Christ foresaw that many false prophets would arise, not only of Protestantism, but of Communism, Nazism, etc., “to seduce (if it were possible) even the elect” (Matt. 24:24). And so He would make the position of His Church correspondingly clear.

I have already given examples of modern saints, for the canonisation of each of whom miracles were necessary.

Over and above these we have the miracles worked at the Church's great shrines, which we may consider as God's own seal on the holiness of His Church. Chief among these modern shrines is that of Our Lady of Lourdes, at the foot of the Pyrenees in France. Its history is well-known, for up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the pilgrims numbered over one million annually. The shrine first came into existence in 1858, when Christ's Blessed Mother appeared to a little girl named Bernadette Soubirous. [She is now (since 1933) a canonized saint.] There were eighteen visions in all. During one of these visions Bernadette, at Our Lady's request, made with her hand a small hole in the sand, at the foot of the rock, and the miraculous water began, for the first time, to flow in the grotto. The first miracle worked there was the cure of a blind man of Lourdes, to whose eyes the water was applied. Since that time the cures have been numbered in thousands. Over four thousand certified miracles are on record for the first fifty years of the Shrine's existence. Now, a first class miracle is one which can be accounted for only by direct divine intervention and which it is not possible to ascribe to any natural force.

In evidence of what I have stated, let me quote the authority of one who is not a Catholic and who is one of our best known English writers, namely, John Oxenham (William Arthur Dunkerley) who died in 1941. He tells us what he thought of Lourdes before he went there and also what he thought of it after he had visited it and examined, in person, the testimonies of the cures.

"And now, once again," he writes, "what is Lourdes? How came it? What does it stand for in the life of the world? In common, I suppose, with most outsiders, knowing nothing whatever about it, I have always attached to it a large note of interrogation. I have ascribed its cures to something akin to faith healing, understandable enough in cases of nervous and allied diseases, but as to anything more, I have had my distinct reserves, not to say my very decided doubts.

"After what I have seen and heard and read on the spot, I am bound to say that there is more, and that more is quite beyond my understanding, or I think, that of any man.

"For, that cures unattainable by medical science and quite inexplicable in their nature, have taken place here, and are still taking place, is fact as soundly attested as the landing of William the Conqueror or the birth of Queen Victoria....

"Every medical man who comes to Lourdes can examine the records that have been accepted as cures, unaccountable by any human knowledge — restorations of sight, sound and speech; healing of tuberculosis in all its direst forms; of Pott's disease (a spinal trouble); of hideous cases of lupus and cancer and incurable running sores; and even of broken bones suddenly rejoined; of the instantaneous and absolute disappearance of morbid matter, and the instant supply of all the elements necessary to complete and permanent restoration.

"Every year over a thousand doctors from every part of the world come to the bureau to study these wonders of healing... and they have, however reluctant, to acknowledge it all beyond their understanding.

"I, the writer of this, am a Protestant. In this matter of Lourdes I have been a doubter, simply because I really knew nothing about it. But, having seen it all with my own eyes, and sensed it all with my own heart, I am brought up against the tremendous and overwhelming fact and import of it.

The cures rest upon the testimony of the greatest surgeons and physicians — testimony in many cases given unwillingly”

(“The Wonder of Lourdes,” by John Oxenham):

Here, then is the testimony of a well-known Protestant writer. Most non-Catholics, as he says, who have heard of Lourdes but have never taken the trouble to examine the facts, are of the same opinion as he was before his visit. They “attach to it a large note of interrogation.” They have their “distinct reserves” and “very decided doubts.” But if, like him, they examined the facts, they too, would be compelled to acknowledge that the miracles of Lourdes are “facts as soundly attested as the landing of William the Conqueror or the birth of Queen Victoria.”

If you heard a man say he did not believe that William the Conqueror or Queen Victoria had ever existed, because he had never seen them, you would think he was acting against the clear testimony of well-proved evidence and, therefore, foolishly and unreasonably. The same applies to a man who, presented with the compelling evidence, still doubts the miracles of Lourdes. For these miracles are facts which, as Oxenham says, rest on testimony quite as sound as that for other accepted historical events.

These miracles, then, are plain facts, the records of which anyone may examine at his will.

Since Christ came on earth and established His Church, I challenge any man to find even one miracle of a similar kind outside the Catholic Church. I have sought for such a one in vain.

The reason of this is that miracles are God’s own hallmark, God’s own seal. False prophets may show “signs and wonders,” but not a real miracle in the sense defined.

Miracles have, from the beginning of Christianity, been used by God as His seal on true doctrine. Thus Christ appealed to His miracles: “Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again... and blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in me” (Matt. 11:5-6).

After healing the blind man He said to the Jews: “If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in the Father” (John 10:37-38).

And the blind man himself, after his cure, rebuked the Jews in these words: “Why herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He has opened my eyes” (John 9:30).

St. Peter, a short time after Pentecost, converted many by healing the man who had been lame from his birth. “For all men glorified what had been done in that which had come to pass. For the man was above forty years old, in whom that miraculous cure had been wrought” (Acts 4:21-22).

We ask, again, then, why do these miracles occur at Lourdes? Let us not avoid the issue, for there is only one answer. These miracles are worked for the same reason as the miracles related in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were worked. As the Gospel miracles were intended by God to prove the truth of the teachings of Christ, so these are worked to prove the truth of the teachings of His Church. They are worked because Christ knew that His Church would be surrounded by false prophets and by enemies. They are worked in order that the members of the Church may have absolute certainty of the truth of doctrines proposed by the Church for their belief, and that they may have certainty that the Church which proposes them is not a human institution, but divine, with God’s seal upon her.

The Miracles of Lourdes are certainly His Seal on the value of the Catholic doctrine of Devotion to Mary, the Virgin Mother of Christ, and the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. For the miracles are worked at the shrine of and through devotion to, Mary Immaculate.

Again, the Miracles of Lourdes are God's seal on the truth of another great central Catholic doctrine, that of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacred Host consecrated during the Mass. For it is a well-known fact that many of the miracles are worked, not when the sick are placed in the waters, but the moment they are blessed by the priest with the Sacred Host, during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, God does not and cannot give His witness to a lie. Hence then, we have the great marks or characters that show forth clearly the True Church of Jesus Christ, in the midst of all counterfeits and imitations. She stands forth in such contrast and relief that she appears in the world as something quite distinct from all others, like the sun in the midst of the other heavenly bodies.

She is one and united; she belongs to all mankind; she comes to us from Christ and His Apostles; she brings forth in every age great saints of heroic sanctity and virtue; and God finally seals her as His own by the working of miracles.

This is why Catholics are so sure of their Faith, whilst around them others are "blown about by every wind of doctrine"; and this is why so many thousands seeking the light and led by the grace of God, find certainty and peace in her fold. Further, when they find her, they are prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice everything else in order to possess the treasures she has to give them — like the man in the Gospel, who sold all he had to buy the field and possess the pearl of great price hidden therein.

In this book I set out to prove that the Catholic Church is the One True Church, founded by Jesus Christ.

That object, I trust, has been achieved.

For any fair-minded enquirer, the proofs that have been given should be conclusive.

One last thought I will put before my readers. It is this:

JESUS CHRIST DESIRES THAT ALL MEN SHOULD BE MEMBERS OF THE ONE TRUE CHURCH.

The schisms and divisions that exist today are none of the Lord's doing. They have been brought about by the passions of men. He desires, on the contrary, that all men should be united in one Church. He never spoke of many churches — or "the churches" — but only of one — "the church" (Matt. 18: 17). He promised only one — "I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). He established only one Church in which He would give to men the fullness of His graces that they might attain to salvation. "And I say to you: That you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever you shall bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19).

On the contrary, Our Lord gave a solemn warning, regarding anyone who would not hear the Church:

"Let him be to you as the heathen and the publican" (Matt. 18:17).

Hence, no one who remains outside this Church through his own fault can be saved.

Therefore Our Lord prayed most intensely in the last hours of His mortal life: “Father that they may be one... as we also are one” (John 17:22). That all should become members of this one Church is the constant object of Our Redeemer’s desires. “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).

St. Paul, the divinely appointed Apostle of the nations, repeated in his day Our Lord’s desire that there be no dissensions and schisms: “I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine you have learned and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not Christ Our Lord” (Rom. 16:17).

He spoke clearly to all. “God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (see 1 Tim. 2:3-5), and that surely, in the Catholic Church, the only Christian Church then in existence.

For, as he affirmed, there “is one God and Father of all” — “one Lord, one Mediator, Christ Jesus” — so he insisted there was one Church, “The Church which is the Body of Christ” (Eph. 1:22-23).

Therefore, the mention of division in the Church was so abhorrent to St. Paul that he cried out: “Is Christ then divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Cor. 1:13). He pleaded earnestly: “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).

Beyond any shadow of doubt, then, Jesus Christ desires that all men should be members of the One True Church.

His desire is that all men find salvation and sanctity, security and peace, as members of the One True, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.
