

It All Began In Ireland

The Story of a Former Anglican Clergyman's Conversion

By W. Reginald Taylor

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I first saw the light of day on St. Peter's Day, 1889, at Newcastle on Tyne, England. I first saw the light of truth in October, 1947, in Ireland. My early years were spent in the North of England, in the county of York. Of Methodist parentage, I have vivid memories of the large Sunday School under my father's superintendency, and of accompanying him on his preaching excursions.

After education at Leeds and Harrogate, I served for over three years with a firm of Civil Engineers. All through boyhood days I had the urge to preach, and in my teens, as a lay preacher, I travelled many miles in the West Riding of Yorkshire, taking services in various chapels. It was only natural, therefore, that one day I should seek admission into the Wesleyan ministry.

Exams were duly passed, and after training at Didsbury College, Manchester, I was sent out to circuit work at the end of 1914. Ordination followed, strangely enough, at Newcastle on Tyne. My work was mostly in country districts, in different parts of England. During the first World War, in addition to ministerial duties, I was called upon to do agricultural work in the South of England.

The additional strain, for several months, affected my heart, and after a time I was obliged to take a year's rest.

During that time, I began to think out seriously my position. Somehow, I felt that Methodism did not satisfy me in many ways. My College Principal was one of the leading Modernists, and the movement was causing alarm throughout the Church. Little emphasis was placed on the Sacraments, and Holy Communion was infrequent. Some of the great Festivals of the Church passed almost unnoticed, and the great saints were seldom mentioned. The circuit system of Methodism allowed little concentration; and I failed to see the need for so many chapels, of different denominations all over the country.

Before returning to work after my year's rest, a friend suggested a visit to the famous Buckfast (Benedictine) Abbey, in South Devon. There for a week I found a welcome, hospitality, and peace of soul. It was a wonderful experience to share in the worship of the community in the glorious Abbey Church, and to join with them at meals in the Refectory, seated next to the Lord Abbot, the late Dom Anscar Vonier. Each night, after a stroll with the Guest Master, I retired to the quiet of my cell. As I left the Abbey, however, I felt that the time had not yet come for a change.

It seemed that the Church of England might satisfy all my desires, and so I began to explore its possibilities. She was the National Church; her great historic Cathedrals and Churches (formerly belonging to the Catholic Church, until the so-called Reformation), made a strong appeal to me. I loved her beautiful and ordered services: I believed that her orders were valid, and that she was part of the one, true Catholic Church. Moreover, her comprehensiveness (as I found later, too much so),

including Evangelical, Liberal, Central and Anglo-Catholic, made me feel that here I could find a true spiritual home where I might render better service to God.

At the end of 1925, I resigned my position as a Wesleyan Minister in Cornwall, and was received into the Church of England and confirmed by the then Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Woods) in his chapel at Farnham Castle. A year later, he ordained me deacon in the glorious Cathedral at Winchester, and priest the following year.

Former Anglican Clergyman's Story By Reginald Taylor

For ten years I enjoyed a happy ministry as an Anglican Clergyman in the great centres of Portsmouth, Bournemouth and East London, with three years as Vicar of a country parish in the Midlands. After the first World War, I had the privilege of visiting, on holiday tours, the Passion Play of Oberammergau, the Holy Land and Lourdes. How much more would those visits have meant to me if I had been a Catholic. My one regret was that I was unable to visit Rome.

In 1936 there came an unexpected call to go out as a missionary, first to Southern Rhodesia, and then to South Africa. For ten years I travelled those vast distances, and came in touch with people of all types - white, coloured, Native and Indian. The work was hard and exacting, but full of interest. The biggest obstacles the missionary had to face were the colour question, and the multiplicity of religious sects, which bewildered the native. Everywhere in South Africa I found generous support, hospitality, and kindness.

At the end of 1946 I returned to England, to face the worst winter for forty years. Severe rationing was in force, and conditions were most difficult. After a short period as locum at a High Church in Plymouth, I left in the Spring, for a visit to my friends and relations. The Autumn of 1947 found me in Western Wales. Here a doctor recommended me to spend the Winter in Ireland, with its milder climate and better conditions. Crossing over from Fishguard, I landed at Cork, and was soon riding from the Quay in a jaunting car, seeking accommodation. (This was my second visit to Ireland. In the summer of 1926 I had visited Dublin, Belfast and Northern Ireland.)

A comfortable home was soon found in a Catholic Guest House, where I received a warm welcome. For eight months I acted as locum in the Protestant Church of Ireland, serving in the diocese of Cork. Everywhere I received kindness and friendship from Protestant and Catholic alike.

Soon after my arrival in Cork, my landlady suggested a visit to the celebrated Cistercian Monastery of Mount Melleray, sixty miles away, on a mountainside near Cappoquin in County Waterford. Here, I spent a memorable four days, and was tremendously impressed with all that I saw and heard. The peace and quietude, the busy life of the monks in church and school, in the monastery, and on the farm - a life of austerity, and labour. Yet, through it all, the monks looked happy and contented, for they had found a peace which the world could neither give nor take away. But, above all, the High Mass, and, particularly, their singing at Compline of the Salve Regina (Hail, Holy Queen) described by H. V. Morton as the "most beautiful of Catholic prayers," thrilled me, and made me think seriously. Could it be possible that the Light of Truth was at last dawning in my restless soul? Perhaps the Queen of Heaven was to help in the ordering of my future. (This story will show that this was to be so.)

I returned to Cork to continue my clerical work, but with a determination to find out all I could about the Catholic Church. In my search for the truth, I was recommended to visit the Dominican Priory at Pope's Quay. At the close of an interview with the Prior, his parting words were: "You

must say a prayer to our Lady every day, and then make a great act of Faith." The first, however imperfectly, was carried out daily, but alas, it was to take more than six years before the second was fulfilled.

Later, I visited the Capuchins at Holy Trinity, and was recommended to study the Penny Catechism, which I did very thoroughly.

During a week's Mission to the men of Cork, I attended a service at Holy Trinity and could hardly obtain a seat, because it was so crowded. In that week, hardly a man was to be seen on the streets of the city while the Mission was on. One Sunday afternoon found me at a crowded service in St. Mary's (Dominican) Church. It was a public Novena in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes. Remembering my brief visit to Lourdes, this interested me greatly. The preacher seemed to have a special message for me when he said: "All our prayers to Our Lady are answered, if not in our way, then in God's way." How often since then have I found that very true. Benediction completed a service which brought real peace to my soul.

It was good, too, to be in Ireland on St. Patrick's Day. Everyone I met in the streets of Cork seemed to be wearing the dear little shamrock. Though still a Protestant, I found my way to Mass at the Church of St. Vincent de Paul, and offered there my prayers for Ireland, and especially for her unity, that one day Partition might be removed.

Another happy memory is the Feast of Corpus Christi, when thousands gathered in the main streets that Sunday afternoon, kneeling on the pavements, as the Sacred Host was carried in procession by the aged Bishop of Cork, His Lordship Bishop Coholan.

Later on, I visited Kerry, lovely Killarney, Tipperary, Cashel, Limerick, Clare, and Galway; and on through wild and beautiful Connemara. Never shall I forget the magnificent sunset behind the Twelve Pins as we motored to Clifden. It seemed almost as if Heaven itself were opening her gates to let us in.

And everywhere I went, it was the same story. Packed churches at Sunday Mass. Men, women, and children visiting the churches each day for prayer. As they passed the churches, men doffed their hats, and women crossed themselves, and the same thing happened when a funeral passed, with the addition of a prayer for the departed. When The Angelus bell rang, everybody paused to offer the salutation to Mary.

Everywhere too, I met with courtesy, kindness, and generous hospitality. As I saw these things, one thought predominated; these folk have something I have not got. What sustained them during these long years of persecution, when everyone's hand seemed to be against them, when the priests said Mass at the risk of their lives, and their scattered congregations gathered at some lonely place among the rocks and mountains, and again during the years of cruel famine; and, later, through wars and revolutions. What has caused thousands of them to leave country, home, and friends, in the spirit of the great St. Patrick and go forth to other countries throughout the world as Missionaries (priests, monks, brothers, and nuns), so that Ireland is known today as the great Missionary country of the world? Surely only one thing is the answer. The Catholic Faith in all its fulness. These good people possess what this age lacks and needs, and as I met them, and looked at them, I felt very humbled and touched, glad that such a faith is still to be found in our sad and disillusioned world of today.

Another thing I noticed was the evidence, everywhere, of Ireland's great love for Our Lady. It seemed as if during the next few years she would not let me as a Protestant forget her. As I walked those country lanes and roads of Ireland, someone seemed to say to me, "You will have to be a Catholic." And so I began to read all that I could lay my hands on about the Catholic Church. Books that helped me most of all at this time, and also later on in my search for the truth, were Dr. Rumble's Radio Replies, and the many booklets of the Catholic Truth Society, especially one entitled Pass It On. (I can never be too thankful for the help I received from these.) Others were the Lives of the saintly Cure D 'Ars, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis of Assisi, Cardinal Newman, Pope St. Pius X, Cardinal Manning and the many Saints of Ireland. Conversion stories, as told in The Road to Damascus, those by Chesterton, Ronald Knox, E. F. Benson, Evelyn Waugh, J. L. Stoddard, F. W. Faber, Dr. Orchard, Douglas Hyde, Sheila Kaye-Smith, R. H. Benson and many more, too numerous to mention. Newman's Apologia was studied, and the history of the Catholic Church. I was confronted with the fact that many converts have been so distinguished - great authors (men and women), eminent scientists, and men of letters. Barristers, ecclesiastics, many of the Jewish faith, statesmen, professors, business men; their name is legion. This caused me seriously to think: "There must be something in the Catholic religion to attract so many of different creeds, races and beliefs, wherein all may find a spiritual home at last."

And now came the time for my departure to the West Indies, where I was expecting clerical work in the Bahamas. As the great liner left Cobh on that lovely June morning, bearing with her eighty Irish emigrants (including many nuns), I remained on deck, watching until the last bit of Ireland faded from view. Then, I turned away, with moistened eyes, for I was leaving behind me the land of my spiritual birth, where I had first seen the light of truth. In my cabin, I found that Our Lady surely had sent me as my companions, two good Irish Catholics, who said the Rosary together every day.

The first week-end was spent in New York. This was my second visit, and again I struck a heat wave. On the Sunday I was able to visit the glorious St. Patrick's Cathedral and say a prayer for my spiritual welfare. On the Monday, we left for the Bahamas via Bermuda. Again, Our Lady took charge of me, and provided me on the ship with an excellent table companion, a Paulist Father (chaplain to the Catholic holiday-makers on board). To him I unburdened my soul, and found him most helpful. On arrival at Nassau (Bahamas) I heard that I had not been expected, and that the work I was hoping to do would be quite beyond my capacity, so that I was literally stranded in a strange but beautiful Island. Within two or three hours, Our Lady sent the Paulist Father to my hotel, with a message from the Prior of St. Augustine's Benedictine Monastery that I was welcome to stay with them as long as I liked.

I remained on the island for three weeks, enjoying the kindness and hospitality of my new friends. At the end of that time, I heard of a steamer leaving for Jamaica, and as I had set my heart on work in the West Indies, felt a call to an Island which I knew was in desperate need of clergy. On arrival at Kingston (Jamaica's capital) I was told that there were twenty-two Church of England parishes without a clergyman, so I found work at once. For over eighteen months I served as locum in a large city parish, then in the country, and for six months in a teeming slum parish, which was unable to pay me any return for my services. The conditions there were indescribable, with over-population, dire poverty, and as a result, much crime. The real Jamaican loves his Church, and we had great crowds at most of our services. Unfortunately, the multiplicity of so many sects is very bewildering to the Jamaican. I received, during my stay in Jamaica, friendship, kindness, and sympathy from the

Jesuit Fathers who are doing very fine work under such difficult conditions. Owing to the extreme heat, and a heart condition, I was ordered by the doctor to return to England as soon as possible.

On my return home, I worked for a time in a parish in Norfolk, eight miles from the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. (Our Lady was determined that I should not forget her.) Then I decided to come to Australia.

In October, 1950, I landed in Australia (the land dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians). On the way out, I mingled on board with many Catholics returning from the Holy Year Pilgrimage to Rome. It was most inspiring to meet them and to hear of their wonderful experiences. Four months were spent in Perth. Here, and elsewhere throughout Australia, I rendered, as needed, regular service to my Church, as I moved from place to place.

One night in Fremantle I joined a large crowd entering the Catholic Church of the Oblate Fathers. It was the occasion of the visit of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. It was a most impressive service, and a passionate appeal was made by the preacher, as he repeated the words of Our Lord to St. Peter, the first Pope: "You are Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." (Mt 16:18) It seemed a message for me. Here, I thought, is the Church founded by Our Lord, which I must soon enter.

From Perth, a long train journey of nearly three days brought me to Adelaide. A few months later I moved on to Melbourne. In Melbourne I was often found in St. Francis' Church, under the care of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers. Crowds thronged the sacred edifice day and night, to worship Our Lord on the Altar. To me it was an amazing scene, and made a great impression. >From Melbourne I sailed to Tasmania. Whilst there, I was fortunate to attend a Mission in the Catholic church at Launceston. The church, as usual, was crowded, and on the Sunday morning the preacher's theme was "Peace of Soul," which I sorely needed. During that weekend I often heard the Mission Hymn: "Mother of Christ, Star of the Sea, Pray for the wanderer, Pray for me." It moved me deeply, for I was still the wanderer, and I prayed in the words of Newman's hymn:

Lead kindly Light, Amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on. The night is dark, and I am far from home Lead Thou me on.

Like Newman, when he wrote the hymn, I too, was feeling my way to my home, the Catholic Church, and the Mission at Launceston, together with the kindness of the Dean, greatly helped me on my way.

Returning to Melbourne, I went on to Sydney. Whilst there I was helping for some time at the famous Anglo-Catholic Centre of Christ Church St. Lawrence. Nearby was the Blessed Sacrament Fathers' new Church at Haymarket. Whenever I went there, I felt at once very much at home.

Then on to Queensland, for the benefit of the gentler winter in Brisbane. There I acted for a time as Anglican chaplain in the General Hospital, said to be the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. In the latter part of 1952 I went over to New Zealand for eleven months. In all my journeyings through that beautiful country, I found the Catholic church very vigorous, both in the North and South Islands. Particularly at Christchurch, Napier, Taupo and Rotorua (where I met the Mill Hill Fathers) I found a spiritual home. I also had the good fortune to spend a few days on a farm with a Catholic family in the Waikato, who recited the Rosary together, morning and evening. In this case it was very true that the family that prays together stays together, for it would be difficult to find a happier or more united home.

In October, 1953, I returned to make my home in Australia. In the month of November, acting on a friend's advice, I found myself in Tamworth (New South Wales). Soon after my arrival, the visit of Father Peyton was announced. The hour of truth was now near at hand. That evening, I stood in the Tamworth Showground in the midst of 5,000 people gathered from all parts for a Rosary Crusade. The atmosphere was indescribable; and as I listened to Father Peyton's simple but passionate appeal, someone (was it Our Lady?) seemed to say to me: "You have said a prayer to me every day. Is it not now time to make the great act of Faith?" It was a challenge I must accept, and as I did so, the truth seemed to dawn in all its fulness upon my soul. There is only one Church - the Catholic Church founded by Our Divine Lord on the Rock of Peter. It was now for me to enter that Church against which Our Lord said, "The gates of Hell shall not prevail." Once within that Church, all doubts would disappear.

After an interview with the Administrator, who was willing to help me as much as possible, I found that I should have to wait until arrangements could be made for my entry into a monastery where I desired to be prepared for reception into the Church.

I occupied this time of waiting, by taking stock of my position. For over twenty-seven years I had been in orders in the Anglican Church - and they had been very happy years, and God in His goodness had granted me much success, both at home and abroad. I had particularly enjoyed preaching, but, of late, my enthusiasm had waned, and I had begun to feel that perhaps I was not preaching the truth. Moreover, I had serious doubts as to the validity of my orders. Pope Leo, after exhaustive investigation, and long conferences with the highest and most learned dignitaries and theologians of the Catholic Church, had pronounced Anglican orders to be invalid, also the later efforts of the saintly Cardinal Mercier to bring together more closely Canterbury and Rome were without avail. I realized, too, that Henry VIII by his rejection of the Pope's supremacy, and his own appointment as supreme head of the Church in England, had indeed founded a new Church. The break with Rome was made more complete by his wanton destruction of churches, abbeys, and monasteries and the confiscation to his own uses of the Church's rightful property. His execution of More and Fisher and his persecution of other faithful Catholics, only intensified his crimes. Later, Elizabeth, in her vigorous persecution of the Catholics (during whose reign many more Catholics were put to death, than were Protestants in Mary's reign), closed the door to reunion with Rome. Also, the issue of the prayer book of 1662 (which is the authorized Anglican Prayer Book of today), abolished once and for all the Mass and the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. The churches were altered by the removal of the altars, and the statues of Our Lady and the Saints. Anyone carefully reading the Thirty-nine Articles (to which all Anglican clergy in England have to subscribe before ordination) can no longer doubt that the break with the Catholic Church was complete.

I was further faced with the fact that the very name Anglican (or Church of England) seemed to mark her off from all other Churches as the Church of a Nation. Though she has today her Church Assembly and convocations, yet she has to submit many of her new laws to Parliament for final approval, as witness the rejection by Parliament of the Revised Prayer Book in 1926-7. Many of her important appointments are made by the Prime Minister, who may not even be a member of the Church. Every bishop too, must pay homage to the reigning sovereign (this of course only applies to the Church in England).

The different titles assumed by the Church in various countries only intensifies the problem. There are the Church of Scotland, the Church of Wales, the Church of Ireland, the Church of England in Jamaica, the Church of the Province of South Africa, the Church of South India (where the

experiments of union between the Anglican and Free Churches is to be tried and is already causing many clergy, who do not approve, to leave their church for the Catholic Church). [1958]

There are also at least three schools of thought in the Anglican Church today: Evangelical, sometimes known as Low Church; Central, including Modernist or Moderate High Church; Anglo-Catholic, including the extreme section. As locum, I have served in all these sections, and at times have found it confusing when trying to adapt myself to all the different types of service in each church. In hardly any church could one be assured of a real Prayer Book service. I found the Church of Ireland the most consistent in her services, especially in the Holy Communion.

Again, there seemed no unity of belief.

Many of us were unsettled, some years ago, by the extreme Modernist views of the late Bishop Barnes, Dr. Major of Oxford, Dean Inge, and others. On one occasion a Unitarian Minister preached in Liverpool Cathedral; and during special services in the cause of Reunion in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, lay preachers of different beliefs, including a woman, were allowed to preach. [In the Catholic Church, where loyalty to the Magisterium holds sway, only the ordained clergy are allowed to preach, though others can be invited to address the congregation at the close of the ceremony. This is not held to be preaching.]

The lack of Authority also caused me anxiety. Bishops preached different doctrines, and there seemed to be no common policy. What was tolerated in one diocese would not be allowed in another. During recent years [1958] the strange utterances and conduct of the Red Dean of Canterbury have caused consternation among loyal Anglicans, and yet the authorities are powerless to remove him. I was also surprised to find (especially in South Africa) that many of the bishops and clergy belonged to the Freemasons.

Another alarming feature seems to be the practice of cremation (once a pagan custom), which is growing in both Anglican and Free Churches. [This practice, too, is now permitted in Catholic circles provided that there is a clear disassociation from any pagan customs or rationalistic denial of the resurrection of the body.]

Moreover, the many attacks during recent years [1958] on the Catholic Church (including our Holy Father the Pope) by Anglican Church dignitaries, both here, and in England, dismayed me, and I felt that I could no longer consistently remain within the Anglican fold.

I remembered also the multitude of other churches and sects throughout the world: Greek Orthodox, "Old Catholic", Dutch Reformed, Moravian, and others too numerous to mention. I had made a study of many of them; Mohammedanism or Islam (including reading of the Koran), "Christian Science", Spiritualism (including my attendance at many seances), Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army, etc. But what a sad spectacle these many sects make today. All of them were founded, not by Christ, but by mere man, and in one case by a woman. I realized that there can be no unity outside the Catholic Church. Our Lord's prayer was "That they all may be one." The Catholic Church alone bears the marks of unity.

And now the time had come for me to enter that Church. Early in 1954, I made my way to the Redemptorist Monastery, Mayfield, N.S.W., where my arrival had been awaited. Here I received a welcome, and found that Our Lady, too, was awaiting me. This is Our Lady's Monastery indeed, where great crowds from Newcastle and miles around throng to her Novena every Saturday of the year gaining grace in abundance for every phase and trial of life. It was an amazing experience to

see the church packed for the six sessions, and to notice the large numbers waiting for confession. It was inspiring, too, to join in the glorious hymns to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, and to hear of some of the marvellous answers to prayers to Our Lady, often numbering over 2,000 a week.

During fourteen unforgettable days I was prepared for reception into the Church. The day before, I sent in my resignation to the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle, in whose diocese I was now staying. The next day (January 30, a red-letter day in my life) I made my profession of faith, was baptized, [conditionally], and received into the Church. Later, I made my first confession, and words fail to describe the peace and happiness which then came into my soul. The following day (Sunday) I made my first Communion, and afterwards received the congratulations of many in the monastery who had now become my friends and who gave me many tokens of the great event. At the close of my last day in the monastery, I knelt down at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and gave thanks to her, to whom I had prayed so long. Those prayers had been answered. I had made the great surrender, and was at last a member of the greatest family on earth. As I left the monastery I could not help saying in the words of Newman. "I have not sinned against the light."

It was encouraging to hear that about this time, three other Anglican clergy were also received into the Church in Australia.

Most appropriately, a good Irish priest kindly took me to his presbytery in the country, until I could find a settled home. Whilst there, my happiness was completed when the good Bishop of Maitland (the late Dr. Gleeson) very kindly Confirmed me at a special Confirmation arranged for me in his Cathedral. In addition to the sponsor, only one or two others were present, but the service was most impressive. The bishop's address, too, was very helpful at this important moment in my life. I took as my Confirmation name Francis, as I had for many years been devoted to St. Francis of Assisi.

I then asked Our Lady to help me in the finding of a home, until such time as my future might be settled. The task was appropriately given to the Legion of Mary, who soon found me a comfortable Catholic home in Mayfield, where I stayed for some months.

Soon after my reception into the Church, I received many letters of congratulation - from priests and Catholic friends. Two which I value very highly were from the Bishop of Southwark (Dr. Cowdrey) and Rev. Dr. Rumble, M.S.C. One priest wrote: "Thank God you had the courage to take the step at last."

The question arises, why then all this delay? The light of truth dawned upon my soul in Ireland in October, 1947, and yet the great act of Faith was not made until January, 1954, in Australia.

It must be remembered that it is always harder for one who has spent over forty years in clerical life in two different churches. It meant the loss of clerical privileges, perhaps, too, the loss of many dear friends, and a break with the old associations. It meant relinquishing the joys of preaching, and teaching in the schools and pastoral work, to which I was much attached. All this had to be given up, and as my age and health would not permit me to be a priest or brother, the future seemed difficult and uncertain. Lack of courage was also doubtless a cause of the delay.

However, in the end, my conscience would not allow me to continue, for I felt that with my knowledge of the Catholic Faith I was incurring a great and awful risk by remaining outside the Church. So at last, thank God, I made the great surrender; and when I did, instead of being blamed for the long delay in making up my mind, I met with sympathy, kindness, and understanding from priests and nuns and laity alike.

And now what have I found since I entered the Church.

(1) Security.

The Church has been likened to a ship. Once within her, there is security and safety amid all the storms of life. She is a home for all wanderers who cannot find rest outside her. Father Bede Jarrett, O.P. says: "She is the Church of all peoples, of all times, of all the ages of man. She is the Church for the children, the Church for the poor, the Church for the old, the Church for the young. For each, whatever his state, or age, or capacity, she has the way of good." And, we may add, all nations find a home in her, and her Sacraments sustain the faithful from the cradle to the grave; and after death they are helped by the prayers of those on earth.

(2) Authority.

The teaching of the Church is the teaching of Christ, which has come down to us direct from Him. She speaks with one Voice through the reigning Pope, and not in many voices. It was quite a relief for me, after years of uncertainty of belief, and varieties of worship, to turn to a Church which offered me authority. In times of doubt I could always be assured of finding the truth.

(3) Unity.

The Catholic Church acknowledges One Head: (Christ's representative on earth). The current Pope in 1958 is Pope Pius XII, one of God's greatest gifts to the Church. His saintliness, his great intellectual powers, his enormous capacity for work, his extreme simplicity of life, and his accessibility to all peoples, impressed me tremendously on entering the Church.

One Head, One Faith, and One Mass: Wherever one goes, into whatever country, and in whatever language, all Catholics hear the same Faith taught in the schools and preached in the Church. It is the same Sacrifice of the Mass in the one language (Latin) which can be followed by the faithful everywhere. [Of course, now, since Vatican II, it is still the same One Head, One Faith, and One Mass. That One Mass is often now heard in many different languages, but even before Vatican II the same One Mass was celebrated in the Catholic Church in rites other than the Latin rite, (which happens to be the biggest), such as the Maronite and Byzantine and others. Today the same 'Unity in Diversity' is even more obvious to the casual observer. It is still the same Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the entire world.]

(4) Continuity.

"The gates of hell," said Our Lord, "shall not prevail against her." Wherever I have gone, in different parts of the world, it is the same story. Persecutions (since the earliest times), opposition, slander, wars, misrepresentation, communism, revolutions - in spite of them all, she still endures, because she is of God. When all else have passed away, Christ's Church will still remain.

(5) Progress.

The progress of the Catholic Church everywhere is astounding. Churches, halls and presbyteries are being built in all countries. Catholic schools are turning out thousands of fine boys and girls, equipped in the best way for the future. Homes for the orphans, the aged, the deaf and dumb, and blind, for the retarded children, Moral Welfare Homes, hospitals, monasteries and convents: Missions at home and abroad. The many Orders of the Church, all doing the special work for which they were formed; the Catholic Press; the work for conversion (especially in England). All this astounded me when I came into the Church. Since then, I have seen something of the working of the

St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Holy Name Society, the Legion of Mary, Children of Mary, and the countless Sodalities of the Church. I have seen too, the devoted service of men and women and children, week by week, for their churches. Devoted priests, monks, brothers and sisters, all working for nothing (including overtime), and never going on strike! What a lesson for the restless, discontented world of today.

And this is going on year after year, all over the world, and is seldom mentioned in our newspapers. It all made a profound impression upon me, both before and after entering the Church.

Our prayer daily must be that there may be more vocations for this great and glorious work. Ireland has contributed more than her share. It is time for others to contribute their full share as well.

I wisely left my future in the hands of the Blessed Virgin, praying that one day, if it be God's will, I might find a home near the Franciscans where I could have time for rest, worship, and some kind of service. Meanwhile, I found I was able to be useful in giving talks on my conversion to schools, Catholic clubs, convent classes, Enquiry Days for Converts, the Legion of Mary, and to Church congregations after evening service, in New South Wales and Queensland, and also by writing short articles for Catholic magazines.

In addition, I have had lots of quiet talks with Protestants on their usual objections to the Catholic Church, nearly all based on ignorance and prejudice - Why do Catholics worship the Virgin Mary? Why are Catholics not allowed to read the Bible? Does Peter's Pence go to keep the Pope in luxury?

What of the infallibility of the Pope?. Do Catholics pay their priests to have their sins forgiven? Why do they pray to images? Why pray for the dead? The meaning of Indulgences. The Mass in Latin, and so on. I have been able in most cases to open their eyes, and refute their arguments. In this way, the Catholic Truth Society, and Dr. Rumble's Radio Replies are doing much to disseminate the real truth about the Church.

I have found that the prospective convert has to make the first move, the Church is not out to waylay those of other churches, but leaves the ever-open door, that the enquirer himself may enter therein.

At last, after much travelling and enquiry, I found at Michelmas, 1955, a home with the Franciscan Fathers at Kedron, Brisbane. In a house in Gympie Road (now used as a Mass centre) I am able to have a room, and at the same time act as voluntary care-taker and sacristan and attend the daily Mass.

For the present I go to the Little Flower Church near the friary (a mile away) for other services. It is wonderful how Our Lady has led me in answer to prayer these last eight years, and has placed me in one of her own churches, "Our Lady of the Angels."

And as I look on this sad war-torn world, so full of materialism, unbelief, sin and communism, I am convinced that there can only be one cure for the ills of the world today, and that is a full and complete acceptance and practice of the Catholic faith by all, the world over. The Catholic Church seems to be the only body today that is combating the evils of the world, including, the greatest evil of our time, communism.

A writer has said, "It is in the power of God to lead me individually to Himself, by a path singled out from all eternity, that I alone shall take."

I believe that God in His Wisdom led me along this path, and brought me at last into the fuller life which the Catholic Church alone can give.

If this story may, in the hands of God, be the means of leading only one soul along that path to the Church founded by His Son Jesus Christ, then it will not have been written in vain.

W. REGINALD TAYLOR.
