

Let Us Judge Catholics By The Bible.

“If It’s About The Catholic Church ...Ask a Catholic!”

Ten Questions Posed by Some Baptists.

By a ‘Knight of Columbus’.

Catholic Truth Society of Oregon No.apol052 (1952)

LET US JUDGE CATHOLICS BY THE BIBLE.

The above is the subtitle of a leaflet published by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The title of the leaflet is "Ask a Catholic!" The origin of the title and the purpose of the leaflet are set forth in its opening paragraphs.

"In recent months you have no doubt noted advertisements in newspapers telling all who wish factual information about the teachings of the Catholic Church to "ask a Catholic". "Taking that advice we will ask our Catholic friends these ten questions:

Where in the Bible does it mention praying to Mary or to saints?

Where in the Bible does it say that either Peter or a pope is infallible?

Where in the Bible is a "Mass" mentioned?

Where in the Bible is purgatory mentioned?

Where in the Bible is the authorization for nunneries or monasteries mentioned?

Where in the Bible is the eating of meat on Friday called a sin?

Where in the Bible are seven sacraments mentioned?

Where in the Bible is confession of sins to a priest mentioned?

Where in the Bible does it say a church can add to the teachings of God's Word?

Where in the Bible does it say that Mary is a mediator between God and man?"

It is encouraging to find those who are interested in questions pertaining to Catholic belief and practice turning to informed Catholic sources for their information. Too often, people get it from sources that are most unreliable. And too often people who are interested in the Catholic answers to questions such as the above do not realize that Catholics are anxious to give them the right answers.

These questions are sincere and reasonably clear. They deserve and will be given equally sincere and clear answers.

Would that the answers could be equally brief! But if they were, they would be too general to be clear. Such questions are not satisfactorily answered by one or more references to the Bible because they expect more than that. The use of such Catholic terms as "Pope", "Purgatory", "monastery" and "the Mass" in the questions demands an explanation of what these terms mean — what things and ideas they represent, so that their presence in the Bible can be recognized or the reason for their absence from the Bible will be understood.

Since each of the questions is concerned With "Where does the Bible mention —" or "Where does the Bible say —"an important caution is in order. It should be borne in mind that Catholics do not go to the Bible looking for mere words. We try to understand the ideas and things which the Bible teaches.

When we find these ideas and things, we speak and write about them, using words and phrases which are not always found in the Bible. This is in every way right and reasonable.

Nowhere does the Bible itself demand that its readers adhere to Biblical terminology in speaking about what it teaches. To do so would be impossible in a world where so many languages are in use.

Like Christians in the past, Christians today tend to develop and use their own terms, names and expressions when they speak of what they consider to be Scriptural truth. For example, as you read books which purport to give statements of Baptist belief, you will meet such statements as "the New Testament churches were independent, self-governing democratic bodies...", but, nowhere in the Bible will you find the expression "democratic bodies". "Hereditary sin" is often used in explanations of Baptist belief, but this name cannot be found in the Bible. The "Christian Sabbath" is frequently used for the Lord's Day, but no such name is found in the Bible. As a matter of fact, the very title "Bible", which is given to the book containing the inspired Scriptures, will be found nowhere in the book itself.

It cannot be wrong, therefore, and it should not be unexpected that we Catholics have our own names and expressions when we speak of the ideas and things which we find in the Bible. If we find that the Bible speaks of a place and a state after death which cannot be identified as Hell or Heaven, we have a perfect right to call it "Purgatory" or any other name which we deem appropriate. If we find it more convenient to use the term "Mass" to designate the Service in which we do what Christ did and what He charged us to do at the Last Supper, can anyone reasonably object that the Mass is not in the Bible merely because the word is not there?

This must be emphasized because, unfortunately, there are those who, with little apparent concern for the true meaning of the Bible, place an exaggerated importance on the use of Biblical words and language of the English translation of the Scripture. We shall have frequent occasion to repeat this caution in the answers to the ten questions which we welcome the opportunity to give.

IS IT CATHOLIC OR "ROMAN" CATHOLIC?

We are pleased to find ourselves addressed as "Catholics" in the leaflet we are considering, because many object to our use of the title "Catholic Church". They insist we should say "Roman" Catholic Church and that we should call ourselves "Roman Catholics". And when we do not do so in public print, especially when dealing with matters of a strictly religious nature, we are accused of offending against all codes of truth, fair practice, public honesty, and so on. It may not be out of place, therefore, to get this difficulty out of the way and to make it very plain that we do not use the title "Roman Catholic" for three good reasons. 1) It is a nickname pinned on our Church — and we do not like nicknames. 2) In the sense intended by those who demand that we use it, the title "Roman Catholic" involves a contradiction — and as such, it is hardly an appropriate title for our Church. 3) It is not the historical title of our Church, nor the one which is sanctioned by popular usage. Why do we say it is a nickname?

Let us look at the record and find out.

The "Oxford English Dictionary" is generally recognized as being one of the highest existing authorities on the meaning and derivation of English words, and is not likely to be suspected of Catholic bias. Under the heading "Roman Catholic", we read: "The use of this composite term in the place of the simple Roman, Romanist, or Romish, which had acquired an invidious sense, appears to have arisen in the early years of the Seventeenth Century. For conciliatory reasons, it was employed in the negotiations connected with the Spanish Match (1618-1624) and appears in formal documents ...after this date, it was generally adopted as a noncontroversial term and has long been the recognized legal and official designation, though in ordinary use, "Catholic" alone is very frequently employed" (New Oxford Dictionary VIII 766).

It should be noted that "Roman Catholic" is said to be a substitute for "Roman", "Romanist", "Romish", which had acquired an invidious sense. Very true! This term was adopted by hostile usage early in the Seventeenth Century, but even in 1582, attacks upon the Catholic Church were using this name with considerable freedom. "The starting point," writes Herbert Thurston in a tract entitled "The Name 'Roman Catholic' ", "would seem to be found in the unwillingness of the average English Protestant to abandon the term "Catholic" to the adherents of the older Faith. In Germany, Luther had omitted the word "Catholic" from the Creed, but this was by no means the case in England. The majority of the Reformers, including even a number of those whose sympathies were in general decidedly on the side of the Puritans, not only were unwilling to concede any monopoly of the name "Catholic" to their opponents but loudly asserted that the partisans of Rome were no true Catholics and that the reformed religion alone could justly claim the title." "Popish Catholics".

Thus we find them writing and speaking about the "Popish party", (Philpot), "Catholics after the Pope's making", "the Pope's Catholic religion", "the Pope's Catholics" (John Foxe). On the assumption that there might be different kinds of Catholics, it was easy to pass from "Pope's Catholics" to "Romish Catholics" and "Papists"; and this is what in fact happened. In a book written in 1587, entitled "A Deliberat Answere", Robert Crowley contrasts "Popish Catholics" or "Romish Catholics" with "Protestant Catholics", meaning thereby all earnest followers of the reformed religion. The combination "Roman Catholic" was being used at the same time and even earlier in anti- Catholic books such as "A Checke or Reproofe" by Wilburn, published in 1581.

But while "Roman Catholic" seems undoubtedly to be a more polite brand for Catholics than "Romish Catholics" or "Popish Catholics", the context in which the expression appears is far from courteous. And no evidence has been revealed that English Catholics of those days welcomed or acquiescently accepted such theological nicknames but rather resented them for what they meant and were intended to mean — a spurious variety of Catholic. They resisted the name "Roman Catholic" until it was absolutely forced upon them.

The New Oxford Dictionary is probably right in suggesting that the title "Roman Catholic", as the English quasi-official designation of the Church which recognized the Bishop of Rome as its visible head, dates from the Spanish Marriage negotiations of 1618-1624. King James I in early proclamations and addresses made reference to his Catholic subjects as "Popish" or "Romish" and went out of his way to declare them "falsely called Catholics but truly Papists" (Speech in Parliament, May 1604). But in dealing with the Spaniards and no doubt out of consideration for their Catholic feelings, a more courteous tone was employed and the term used to designate the religion of the Spanish was "Roman Catholic" and "Catholic" alone was sometimes used.

From this time on, it appears that Official English documents commonly used the form "Roman Catholic" in a conciliatory mood which was gradually less resented, but not officially accepted by Catholics, even though the title was creeping into legal language and popular usage. In 1897, the advisors of Queen Victoria, the 'King' of England raised objections against receiving officially any address from the Catholic archbishop and bishops in which they called themselves "Catholics". The only permissible style was declared to be "Roman Catholic". Even the form "Bishop of the Catholic and Roman Church in England" was not allowed. Thus, the name "Roman Catholic" was made compulsory by the State. This brings up the second reason why we cannot accept the name "Roman Catholic". In the sense intended by non-Catholics who insist upon the title, it involves a contradiction and at the very best, is ambiguous. What He Meant.

When the Cardinal, Archbishop Herbert Vaughan, was compelled in 1901 to employ the title "Roman Catholic" in official dealings with Queen Victoria, the 'King', he did so, reserving to himself the right to explain on a public occasion, the sense in which he used the title. "By it (the title 'Roman Catholic'), you mean one thing," he said, "and we another. It therefore becomes an equivocal term and if I deliberately use it as such, I equivocate ...if I should use it in my own and in the Catholic sense and not in yours, I owe it to you and to myself to state frankly that we are using the term in two different senses". (Snead Cox, Life of Cardinal Vaughn II, 235). He declared that "The term 'Roman Catholic' has two meanings; a meaning that we repudiate and a meaning that we accept." After showing that according to Protestants, "Catholic" was a genus — a kind — of which "Roman", "Anglo-", "Greek," et cetera, were species — or "Catholic" meant a circle divided into Roman, English, and Greek sections, he went on to explain the sense acceptable to the Catholic Church.

Truly Catholic.

"With us the prefix 'Roman' is not restrictive to a species or a section but simply declaratory of Catholic. It explains the meaning of Catholic applied to the religion of Christ and asserts its unity. But in another way, the word 'Roman' bears the same relation that the center bears to the circumference of a circle. All the radii rest in their common center, the whole circumference is thus brought into unity with its center. This is to be Catholic. "Now, 'Roman' as prefixed to 'Catholic' is therefore declaratory that the central point of Catholicity is Roman, the Roman See of Peter". (The Tablet — September 14, 1901). This goes to the very heart of the matter. A Church cannot be catholic — universal, world-wide, — and at the same time be localized or restricted to a certain country or to a certain nation, no matter where its people may be. But a Church which is world-wide, — universal — catholic, can have its unifying headquarters in the city of Rome and it is in this sense that the Catholic Church is "Roman". The full name of our Church is "the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church". "Roman" is added not to restrict the meaning of "Catholic" but simply to mark the visible center of unity; and since it must have a center of unity some-where, it is obvious that "Roman", far from neutralizing the meaning of the word "Catholic", serves rather to confirm it and to make the catholicity of the Church more striking and unmistakable.

The History.

Since it is said that the use of the title "Catholic" instead of "Roman Catholic" is a "deception" and using words in a "double sense", it is well to point out that we are building no argument on a mere name. We do not say that because it is called Catholic ours is the True Church. We do maintain that the Church which today, and through history, looks to the Bishop of Rome as the successor of Saint

Peter and the Vicar of Christ, is legitimately called "Catholic". This is its official name, the name by which it has always designated itself and by which it has been designated by others. It is its historical name, its proper name by which it is distinguished in history and in the common speech of mankind. No other Church or ecclesiastical body, worthy of serious consideration, has ever been known and distinguished among men by the name "Catholic". In the early days of Christianity, the Donatists claimed it, but could not appropriate it. They are known in history only as "Donatists". That Church alone with the Pope at its head has borne and bears that title and when speaking of ourselves, we as rightfully call ourselves "Catholics" as others are right in calling themselves "Methodists", "Lutherans", "Anglicans", "Baptists", et cetera.

If the name is an argument in our favor in the minds of some, that is no reason why we should change our name. We are not obliged to change our name because others have changed their Faith and sought religious authority elsewhere. Unquestionably, the name "Catholic" is a strong presumption in our favor and that advantage is rightfully ours. We could not surrender it without being disloyal to Christ and false to history.

All this is more than quibbling over a name. Christ intended His Church to be catholic; we use the small "c" in speaking of the essential characteristic which He gave His Church, which was to teach ALL men, ALL things whatsoever He had commanded, ALL times. This is the idea and the fact of catholicity which Christ built into His Church. He Himself gave His Church no name and we do not go to the Scriptures, which have been translated into countless languages, looking for names, but for things. His Church in the world today must be catholic in fact and possess the catholicity which He promised, no matter what name it bears.

But, as we have said, the name "Catholic" has come down to us from earliest Christian times. Ignatius, who died for his Faith in 107 A. D., appears to have been the first to have recorded the title: "Where Christ is," he wrote, "there is the Catholic Church". (Ad Smyrna, number 8, P. G.). Some time later, the martyrdom of Polycarp (167 A. D.) was recorded and he was called the "bishop of the Catholic Church in Smyrna". (See Ad Ephesus, number 3). In the same century, referring to a certain Marcion and Valentinus, Tertullian wrote: "It is agreed that they lived not so long ago, generally speaking, in the reign of Antoninus, and that they first believed in the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the Church of Rome..." (De Praescrip. number 30).

Well Known.

Most explicit is Augustine: "The Christian religion is to be held by us," he wrote, "and the communion of that Church which is catholic, and is called Catholic, not only by its own members, but also by all its adversaries. For in spite of themselves ...when speaking not with their fellows, but with strangers, they call the catholic Church nothing else but the Catholic Church.

"They cannot be understood unless they distinguish her by that name by which she is designated by the whole world." (Of the True Religion - De Ver. Relig., number 12).

We make no rash and unwarranted claim when we say that we are known as "Catholics" today and our Church in popular usage is called the "Catholic Church". Go into any town or city in the land, ask any lad or hotel clerk or policeman the location of the "Catholic" Church and you will be correctly directed without insisting that it is the "Roman Catholic" Church that you desire to visit.

Proper Name.

The name "Catholic" was not monopolized in the Sixteenth Century for controversial purposes. It is the name handed down continuously to us through history. We use this name ourselves and we ask those not of our Faith to use it because it is our customary and proper name. Common usage has never sanctioned any other.

However, since "Roman Catholic" has lost most of its invidious meaning, Catholics will not get their blood pressure up when this title continues to appear in public print. We, ourselves, will use it, if need be. But let no one say, in the face of facts, that it is the proper name of our Church.

WHAT ABOUT ADDING TO THE WORD OF GOD?

Where in the Bible does it say a church can add to the teachings of God's word?

This is the ninth question in the list, and the first which we shall consider in order to introduce some semblance of order in the subject matter with which the questions deal.

The answer is, of course, that nowhere does the Bible say a Church can add to the teaching of God's word. In fact, it says the very opposite.

We do not take this stand merely because Saint John in the Apocalypse (Revelations), referring to "the words of prophecy of this book," says: "If anyone shall add to them, God will add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (22:8). When the Apostle speaks of "adding to the words of prophecy of this book", he meant his book alone. He was not referring to the whole Bible. Our reason for saying that the Bible condemns any addition to the teaching of the Word of God is not based upon a faulty interpretation of this text.

There is something else in the proposed question which needs clarification. When we read 'where in the Bible does it say "a" church can add to the teaching of God's word', there appears to be at least an insinuation that there is more than one Church. "A" church is not Scriptural language but that of post-Reformation confusion. In the New Testament it is "the" Church or, in one instance, "my" (Christ's) Church. And when the New Testament speaks of "churches", it is always the Church in particular places as in Ephesus, Corinth or Jerusalem. This means the same Church in different places, not different Churches. Following the New Testament, we shall speak of "the" Church.

Our answer that the Church cannot add to the teaching of the Word of God is based upon the meaning of "the Word of God" in the New Testament and the function of the Church as far as the Word of God is concerned.

The expression "the Word of God" is used over and over again in the New Testament. Sometimes it means a decree of God (Romans 9:28), or commandments given by God in the Old Testament (Mark 7:13; Galatians 5:14), or a divine promise (Romans 9:6), or a prayer composed of quotations from the Old Testament (1 Timothy 4:5), and even divine prophecies of future events (Apocalypse 1:2).

More often, however, it signifies the body of truth which God has revealed to us through Jesus Christ and which was taught by His Apostles. It was Christ Who gave the Word of God the Father to the Apostles (John 17:14). And they kept the Word of God (John 17:6; 7:16). This Word of God according to which the Apostles urged their hearers and readers to conform their lives is the teaching of Christ, the doctrine of the Christian religion (Titus 2:5; 1 John 1:10; 2:14).

Revealed Truth.

Those who announce the gospel are said to speak the Word of God (Acts 4:31; 13:46; Philippians 1:14; Hebrews 13:7), to proclaim the Word of God (Acts 13:5; 17:13), to teach the Word of God (Acts 18:11). The hearers of the gospel of Christ are said to hear the Word of God (Acts 13:7), and to receive the Word of God (Acts 8:14; 11:1).

The meaning of the expression "the Word of God," therefore, is usually God's revealed truth made known by Christ (Luke 5:1; 8:11-21) or taught by the Apostles (John 17:20; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:2; 10:44; 8:5). It is Christ's own teaching (John 5:24; 8:31; 8:37-51; 12:48; 14:23). And that of His Apostles (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 2:5).

"God," says Saint Paul (Hebrews 1:1), "who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son..." What he taught is the "Word of God".

How was the Word of God to be communicated to mankind unaltered and unchanged? We find the answer by examining in the New Testament what Christ and His Apostles said and did. And we must not forget for a moment, as we read the record of what Christ said and did, that THIS IS GOD MAKING THE CHURCH WHAT HE INTENDED IT TO BE.

Teachers.

Early in His public life, Christ chose from the rank and file of His followers certain ones who were called His Apostles and His clear-cut intention was that they would form a teaching body — "...He called to him men of his own choosing, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:13-14). Then he began to reveal to them the Word of God which he taught to the public in parables — "He spoke the Word to them (the people) according as they were able to understand it; but without parables he did not speak to them. But privately he explained all these things to his disciples" (Mark 4:34).

This special training of His Apostles is plainly the preparation of a body of teachers. The instructions which He gave when He first sent them to preach the Word of God to the people of Israel (Matthew 10: 5-32) made His purpose incontestably clear and He could not have been more explicit than during His last days on earth when He said to the eleven Apostles collectively: "...all power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

To Last Forever.

He looked far into the future. The teaching body in the Church which He said He Himself was building (Matthew 16:18) was to endure until the end of the world. Only after the Word of God had been preached in the whole world, to all peoples, will the consummation of the world take place (Matthew 24:14).

This teaching body would never fail "Behold, I am with you all days". When we find the Scriptures stating that "God is with anyone", it always means the special assistance of God is assured in the accomplishment of the purpose for which it is given. In this case, it was the commission to teach the Word of God to all men unto the end of the world. The assistance, then, corresponding to this commission would be such as would necessarily preserve the body of teachers from error in teaching the Word of God. Thus, there could never be any question of them adding to the teaching

of the Word of God at any time. No, never! He would be with them all days, not intermittently — at this time or at that — but continually.

Moreover, He promised them the protection and assistance of an "Advocate", the Holy Spirit, Who would dwell with them forever, "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17).

Thus after Christ left the earth, when we see this teaching body at work in the Acts of the Apostles, we find that "(they) spoke the Word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). They called upon the assistance of Christ in filling the place among the twelve vacated by Judas (Acts 1:25). They were conscious of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, in their decisions when they used such language as: "For the Holy Spirit and we have decided..." (Acts 15:28). But it is in the activity and teaching of the Apostle Paul that we learn how the apostolic body of teachers was to be perpetuated and how the Word of God was to be transmitted to generations yet unborn.

Preaching Authority.

Especially pointed are Paul's recommendations to Timothy, one of his converts, who became his fellow missionary and who was later put in charge of the Church in Ephesus. Paul himself was conscious of the way in which Christ, the teacher of the Word of God, had identified Himself with His Apostles as a teaching body. "He who hears you, hears me and he who rejects you, rejects me..." (Luke 10:16). So Paul spoke of God manifesting His Word "through the preaching committed to my trust by the command of God our Savior" (Titus 1:3).

To Timothy (2 Timothy) Paul wrote: "Preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season... (4:2), hold to the form of sound teaching which you have heard from me... (1:13). Take in what I tell you for the Lord will give you understanding in all things... (2:7), be strengthened in the grace which is in Christ Jesus; and the things that you have heard from me through many witnesses commend to trustworthy men who shall be competent in turn to teach others... (2:2), continue in the things that you have learned and that have been entrusted to you, knowing of whom you have learned them, for from your infancy, you have known the Sacred Writings which are able to instruct you unto salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching; for reproving, for correcting, for instructing in justice; that the man of God may be perfect, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus... **PREACH THE WORD...**" (3:14-17; 4:1-2).

Perpetuation.

Here we find an Apostle charging his successor to preach the Word of God even as the Apostles had been charged by Christ to do so. The word of the body of teachers — the Apostles — which Christ had formed in His Church was to be carried on by their successors whom they left in all places where they founded and organized Christ's Church. Moreover, Timothy, the immediate successor of Saint Paul (2 Timothy 1:6) was to choose other "trustworthy men who shall be competent in turn to teach others". Thus was the body of teachers originating with Christ and His Apostles to be perpetuated until the end of the world.

What was Timothy charged to preach and to commend to other trustworthy men as teachers? The Word — the Word of God which he had heard from Paul during the previous years of companionship and which he read in Paul's letters. Here we have the two sources of the Word of God from which the successors of the Apostles could learn the Word of God — the teaching of the Word of God by chosen and competent men and the inspired Scriptures which contain the Word of

God. But the sole method of propagating the Word of God which Christ and His Apostles commanded was preaching and teaching. "Preach the Word!"

Not Bible Alone.

This should be made clear because it is an important point on which many have gone wrong, falsely persuaded by the unproved but often repeated statement that the sole source in which the Word of God is found is the Bible, and that Christ intended future generations to receive the Word of God solely by reading the Bible.

We have seen the method chosen by Christ to publish the Word of God unto all generations. It was by the preaching and teaching of a body of men, chosen, prepared, commissioned, and especially assisted and protected for that divine purpose. Nowhere did Christ charge men to read the Scriptures as the sole source of the Word of God which He taught and which He directed His Apostles to teach.

It pleased God, however, for the confirmation of faith in the Word of God to inspire some who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, or companions of those who were, to make a written record of the chief events and teachings of the Church's Founder; and also to preserve certain inspired letters which, at various times, the Apostles wrote to their converts and brethren. It is important to remember that these writings were addressed to those who had already been taught the Word of God. They were not written "as to those who do not know the truth, but as to those who know it..." (1 John 2:21). No New Testament writer wrote for the purpose of making disciples, but for the profit of those who were already believers. The charge to make disciples of all nations was carried out then as it is now — by the voice of the teaching Church.

"Search The Scriptures".

Basing their views on a mistranslation of the genuine Biblical text, some contend that Jesus commanded the reading of the Scriptures when He said (John 5:39) "Search the Scriptures..." But this is not a command. The correct version is a simple declaration. "You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have life everlasting. And it is they that bear witness to me, yet you are not willing to come to me that you may have life." Many modern Protestant versions have made this correction.

In the passage cited, Jesus was not exhorting the Jews to read the Scriptures — the Old Testament. He was rebuking them for erroneously thinking that by consuming their time in poring over the Scriptures, they had eternal life. They were more concerned with the mere reading than with what they read, and they failed to understand the prophecies which pointed to Him Who could give them everlasting life. This does not mean that our Lord spoke disparagingly of Bible reading — far from it! He read the Old Testament Himself and quoted from it in His discourses.

Paul, likewise, commended Timothy for his familiarity with the Scriptures. This, of course, meant the Old Testament, as probably very little of the New Testament had been written when Timothy was a child. And Paul took occasion to point out the usefulness of all the inspired Scriptures to the teacher of the Word of God, who must instruct, reprove and correct others. By no reasonable stretch of the imagination, however, can his counsel to Timothy concerning the usefulness of Sacred Scripture be rightly considered a command which would make Bible reading obligatory for all His followers as the sole means of learning the Word of God.

Not only in his dealings with Timothy but also in his dealings with the churches which he founded, Paul made it perfectly clear whence they were to learn the Word of God. Writing to his converts in Thessalonica, he told them plainly: "...stand firm, and hold the teachings that you have learned, whether by word or letter of ours" (2 Thessalonica 2:15). He refers to the teachings which he had received from Christ Himself, "for I have received from the Lord what I also delivered to you" (1 Corinth 11:23). They learned the Word of God from what he taught them orally and in writing. Here again, we have the two mutually complimentary sources of the Word of God from which the successors and disciples of the Apostles were to draw the Word of God.

"It is clear," wrote Saint John Chrysostom, "that all was not transmitted to use by writing. Many things worthy of belief have come to us without having been written. That is why we hold the teachings of the Church equally worthy of belief" (P. G. Volume 62, 488). This is why today Catholics go with confidence to the teaching body of their Church, linked as it is in historical continuity with the body of teachers who succeeded the Apostles, and from whom they received the Word of God as it was taught to the Thessalonians by word and by letter.

In view of the promised assistance of Christ and His Holy Spirit, we Catholics know that the teaching body of the Catholic Church cannot add to the Word of God. This would be the "adulteration of the Word of God" condemned by Saint Paul (2 Corinth 2:17). It would be an adulteration by way of adding human teachings to the deposit of revealed truth which was closed with the death of the last Apostle. "O Timothy, guard the deposit! Avoid the vain and fruitless discussions and disputations of knowledge falsely so styled" (1 Timothy 6:20).

PETER, THE POPE, AND INFALLIBILITY.

Where in the Bible does it say that either Peter or a Pope is infallible? (Second question.) This question is double-barreled since it concerns the Apostle Peter and his successors called "The Pope" — any Pope. So it is asked — where in the Bible does it say that Peter was infallible? And the answer is: nowhere in the Bible does it say that Peter was infallible. Likewise, nowhere in the Bible does it say that God is infallible. The Bible simply doesn't use the word "infallible".

Are we, therefore, to conclude that God is not infallible? Not at all! When we examine all that the Bible tells us about the perfection of God, we must admit that He is infallible, as becomes God, in the very fullest sense that the word "infallible" can bear. And when we examine all that the New Testament tells us about the spiritual authority and power which our Lord bestowed upon Peter in relation to the other Apostles and His whole Church, we must also admit that Peter was infallible in a restricted sense, as becomes a mere man.

Let us examine some of the things which the New Testament tells us about Peter.

Peter was one of the twelve disciples who, as we have previously seen, were especially chosen by Christ (John 6:71) and prepared to be His Apostles to teach the Word of God to all mankind (Matthew 28:19-20). All power is given to me, said Christ, go therefore teach all nations. Our Lord could not have used clearer language in imparting to them collectively — as a body of teachers — the power and authority to teach all that He had commanded them. Christ's language was equally clear and unambiguous when, after stating that the Church was an authoritative tribunal which all were obliged to hear (Matthew 18:15-18), He said: "...whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven". Here He was speaking to the Twelve collectively — as a body — and although these words indicated a

power to rule rather than a power to teach, attention is called to them here to emphasize the fact that Christ intended to confer authority and power on them all, and actually did so.

But Christ also intended the Twelve to have a leader. There was one who was to be chief among them. When a dispute arose concerning which of them was reputed to be the greatest (Luke 22:24-34), Christ took the occasion to teach them a lesson: "Let him who is greatest among you become as the youngest, and him who is the chief, as the servant". He who is chief among them should put his authority at the service of the others. He did not say they were equal, but He did go on to say that they were all judges in His kingdom — the Church.

Who was chief among them? It is significant that He turned at once to Peter and told him that all (collectively) would be subjected to a severe trial and went on to say: "But I have prayed for you (singular), that your (singular) faith may not fail; and do you (singular), when once you (singular) have turned again, strengthen your (singular) brethren". His express purpose in praying especially for Peter as an individual was that he would not lose faith in Him as the Messiah and that after his repentance for denying that he even knew Him, (a falsehood in a moment of fear and weakness), he should strengthen the faith of the others. The permanence of the faith is the security of the Church; but the permanence of the faith is especially identified with Peter. Thus, Christ chose to use Peter to strengthen the faith of the others after He had left them.

Was Peter given a position of chief and leader among the Twelve? What does the record say? He received all the authority and spiritual power which all the Apostles collectively received, but he received more. He, singly and individually, received an office of headship and leadership that was super-added to the powers given to the Apostles as a group.

Here is a quick review of Christ's dealings with Peter as an individual.

We have already mentioned the fact that Christ made him the confirmer of his brethren's faith. There was also the occasion when Peter first confessed his faith: "You are Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16: 13-19) and Jesus changed his name from Simon to "Rock" — Peter, and said to him: "...upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, et cetera". It was God Who spoke and they were not idle and ineffective words. Who will dare to limit the bounds of the power here conceded? It should be noted that to Peter alone was it said that he would stabilize the Church which Christ would build so that it would not fall before the powers of evil... to him alone would be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven — a symbol of power and authority in the Church. Here is a grant of power to bind and to loose that afterwards was extended to the other Apostles also. But that God chose to make it to Peter first means something. To Peter singly was given in promise what was subsequently bestowed upon the rest collectively and with him.

Power and authority given to an individual to be exercised by him individually is distinct from authority and power given to a group to be exercised collectively. Authority exercised by an individual is more independent than that of a group due to their dependence upon common action. Peter received the authority that all the Apostles received and something added in relation to them — leadership. He alone was to be Peter — the Rock (Christ's name for him according to John 1:42) — he alone was to be the key bearer. He alone was to be the chief in the body of teachers which Christ authorized to bring the Word of God to all men.

But this was only a promise made by Christ to Peter. The fulfillment of the promise took place when Christ had risen from the dead; the work of the Redemption was accomplished; the Ascension was at hand; and all things were ready for the action of the Church to commence. In the presence of the other Apostles, He singled out Peter, saying: "Simon,... do you love me more than these do?" Three times Christ asked Peter: "Love you me?" ...and three times the Lord charged Peter: "Feed my lambs... feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

Thus the Savior made one man — Peter — the shepherd of His flock. The Lord had previously declared: "I am the Good Shepherd... and other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring... and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10: 10-17).

It is impossible to conceive language which would express more positively a delegation of authority over the universal fold of God. No limitation is hinted at. The entire flock is committed to Peter's care.

The Apostles understood the significance of the Lord's words when He spoke of His Church as His flock, because we find them referring to the Church as the "flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2). Saint Paul, addressing the presbyters of Ephesus, said: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops, to rule the Church of God..." (Acts 20:28).

Referring to His flock as "my" sheep and "my" lambs, Christ appointed Peter to feed and tend them in His place... to be a vice-shepherd... to be Christ's vicar over His flock on earth.

So if we consider all Christ's dealings with Peter as an individual and ask who is the chief and leader, it all amounts up to Peter's supreme authority. He alone is the Rock, the key bearer, the confirmer of his brethren, the shepherd of Christ's whole flock. All these figures of speech used in Christ's words to Peter express supreme authority in relation to the other Apostles and the whole Church. Comparing carefully the conferring of authority on Peter and on all the Apostles, it is striking that they received nothing without him and he alone received an authority including and exceeding theirs.

As the teaching body, it was charged to make known God's Word to all men to the end of the world — a permanent mission; this would be done by the Apostles and their successors (bishops) with Peter and his successors (Popes) in their midst as the Rock, the key bearer, the confirmer of his brethren, and the supreme pastor of Christ's whole flock — the Church. This is why there has always been the Episcopacy (bishops) and the Papacy (Popes) in the Catholic Church. There always has been and always will be — a hierarchy. Christ had said to His Apostles: "He who hears you, hears me". He had thus identified their voice with His. Should not their voice be free from error as was His own? Therefore, to the body of teachers with Peter at their head, Christ made two important promises — promises which He as God could certainly fulfill. First, He promised that He Himself would be with them forever until the end of the world. It has been explained elsewhere in this pamphlet that this special promise meant special assistance in the achievement of the mission which He had given all the Apostles collectively as teachers of the World of God, but also to Peter singly at their head, as the confirmer of his brethren and the shepherd of the whole flock. This could only mean special assistance for Peter in his special office.

The second promise was the assistance of the Holy Spirit. It was at His last supper with His Apostles on the night before He died (John 14:16, 17, and 26). They were troubled when He told them that He must leave them. And He said: "I will ask the Father and He will send you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of Truth... He will dwell with you and be in you".

Another Advocate means that until then, He had been their helper, comforter, guide and protector. Another Advocate will watch over their interests, help their cause and take care of their needs. It is clear that Jesus considered His Apostles as a body of men which would go on until the end of time. They would be perpetuated by a succession that would never be broken. He declared that the Holy Spirit would be with them forever.

The Advocate, He declared, is the "Spirit of Truth", because He would teach the Church the infallible truth forever.

"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach all things and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you".

This is an important promise. The assistance of the Holy Spirit would consist primarily in bringing to their minds what Jesus had taught them. This assistance of another Advocate would be effective as long as Jesus, their Advocate, would be no longer with them in the flesh (John 16:12) — a horizon that extended far beyond their lifetime. He would cause them to know whatever Jesus had told them and to understand progressively the deposit of truth (John 16:13) which Jesus had revealed. It is on this assistance that the body of teachers in the Catholic Church has always leaned in its teaching mission down through the years.

So Christ's promise gave assurance that when He left the world, divine guidance was not taken from those who would carry on the work of preaching the Word of God to all nations. "The Spirit of Truth will teach you all the truth" (John 16:13). There was no danger that any of the Word of God would be lost, forgotten or adulterated. The Spirit of Truth would see to that.

These promises made to the teaching body of the Church — the Apostles and their successors — are nothing more than a promise of divine guidance when they would announce to men what God has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1). This is what the Catholic Church means by the word "infallibility". Nothing more, nothing less.

Like each of the other Apostles, Peter heard these promises of Christ assuring him that he would have divine guidance in carrying out the common work Christ had given them to do. But Peter also heard these promises of divine assistance and guidance as the holder of a special office in which Christ had placed him — as the Rock, the key bearer, the confirmer of his brethren and as pastor of the whole flock of Christ. If any of the Apostles was infallible, certainly Peter was, as the confirmer of his brethren and the preserver of the faith of Christ's Church.

If the Apostles were troubled at the prospect of carrying on the mission Christ gave them and needed the assurance of divine guidance and assistance in making disciples of all nations, what about their successors? Such guidance and assistance was even more necessary after the death of the Twelve who had received the Word of God from Christ's own lips. There can be no doubt but that Peter's office was intended to continue after him. If not, why was it instituted at all? That is an important question; and it is followed by another equally as important. What about the successor of Saint Peter in the teaching body of the Church?

Christ had promised the assistance and guidance of the Holy Spirit, not in a general, vague sort of way. The promise was given to a definite body of teachers each with a definite job to do. Peter's successor fell heir to Peter's job which carried with it the assurance of divine guidance and assistance such as had been promised to Peter. This is what is meant by infallibility of the Pope.

When Christ promised divine guidance and assistance to Peter and his successors in teaching the Word of God, He promised infallibility to the Pope.

"Pope" is the name by which the successor of Saint Peter is designated in order to distinguish him from other bishops who are the successors of the other Apostles. The word "Pope" is not in the Bible and it does not need to be. The important thing is that Peter and Christ's promise to Peter, and his successors are there — no matter what words we may use to designate them today.

Put yourself back in the year 70 A.D. Peter is dead, and another man named Linus has taken his place and is carrying on what Peter had been charged to do. Would you not expect him to teach you the Word of God as this had been delivered to the Apostles? The words of Saint Paul: "Guard the deposit" (2 Timothy 6:20) are ringing in his ears.

Christ had made no promise of divine inspiration for writing to His Apostles or their successors, so you would have no right to expect divinely inspired epistles from him, even if he wanted to write a few. Infallibility is not inspiration. He did not receive the Word of God directly and immediately from Christ Himself as did the Apostles, so he will have no new revelations from God for you. Infallibility is not revelation. But he can faithfully deliver and explain to you the truth Christ revealed and which the Apostles passed on to their successors. Remembering the promises of Christ, you would have a right to expect that he would have the assistance and guidance of God in teaching you the Word of God without error.

You would have no right to expect him to be sinless or in any way incapable of sin. Christ made no such promise to His Apostles or their successors. In fact, He foresaw the scandals that were to come, even those in high places. Infallibility is not sinlessness.

Nor would you have any right to expect him to be incapable of mistakes and errors in his private life or even in the routine administration of the affairs of the Church. The protection from error promised by Christ was limited to the teaching of revealed truth.

You would have no right to expect him to utter an infallible answer to every religious question you might put to him. The divinely promised protection from error was meant to enable him in his official capacity as the pastor of the whole flock to teach the whole Church.

When Christ looked into the future and promised to be with the teaching body of the Church, He looked further than the teachers and their teaching. He saw the people who were obliged to believe the teaching of the Apostles and their successors. The Faith of the Church, the whole Church, needed to be protected from error, so He promised freedom from error to the body of teachers in order to insure freedom from error to the Faith of the people. Infallibility is for the people and this is why, as they say, "Catholic people are so sure of themselves".

SEVEN SACRAMENTS NO MORE ...NO LESS.

Three of the ten questions which we are considering deal with what are called "Sacraments". These questions and their answers can easily be combined.

Where in the Bible are seven Sacraments mentioned, and in particular the "Mass" or the confession of sins to a priest? (Questions three, seven and eight.)

Before examining the passages in which the Bible mentions these things, it is well to point out that the answers to previous questions should make it clear that even though there were no indication of

seven Sacraments in the Bible, this would be no reason to conclude that there are less than seven or none at all.

The Sacraments were possessed by the Church and in daily use long before a single line of the New Testament was written. The Christians for whom the New Testament was composed knew about them from the Apostles and their successors. The accounts of our Lord's last supper with His Apostles, given in the Gospels and in Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, are rather an allusion to a thing well known than a description of it. At the time Saint Paul wrote, the priesthood and the Eucharist had been in daily operation for twenty-five or thirty years, and every Christian knew by the evidences of his senses the full details of both. Nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose that the early Christians, or Christians at any date, were intended to obtain their knowledge of the priesthood and the Eucharist merely or mainly from the Scriptures. In the New Testament, when this was first written, they and the other Sacraments were institutions on which the Church was founded. People were being received into the Church by Baptism, were receiving the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands in Confirmation, were having their sins forgiven, were being married according to Christ's teaching, and were praying over and anointing the dangerously sick.

The number of the Sacraments is sufficiently established, when we find seven Sacraments in the Word of God as this has been consistently preached and practiced down through the years by the Church, drawing its teaching from what the Apostles taught by word and by letter.

How do we know the number of the various inspired books which make up the Bible, and what they are? Nowhere in the Bible is a list and the exact number given. Divine inspiration of the human author of a book is an act of God and He alone can know the authors whom He has inspired. The inspired character of one or many books could be made known only by God revealing. And we know the exact number of the inspired books and what they are because this was made known to us by the Church teaching this truth as contained in the Word of God. This is equally true of the number of Sacraments which Christ left in His Church.

Yes, the Scriptures mention the Sacraments, but in so doing, the word "sacrament" is not used. The thing is there but not the name. What we call "Sacraments" others sometimes prefer to call "ordinances". The word "Sacrament" which Catholics in the Western World have used to distinguish clearly between rites that are and those that are not Sacraments is derived from the Latin word "sacramentum", which, in its religious usage, meant the same as "mystery" — something sacred, hidden and secret. Among Greek Catholics, Sacraments have always been called mysteries.

The name "Sacrament" is given to a combination of words and actions performed by certain ministers whom Christ uses to produce certain effects in the world today — mainly sanctity. Thus, in the Sacrament of Baptism, the audible words (I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit) and the visible action (washing), employing a visible and tangible thing (water), are used by Christ through the person baptizing to produce a spiritual and invisible effect (a gift of grace — the removal of sin — sanctity) in the baptized. It produces the desired effect because it was ordered by Christ and is used by Him. This is a rite — an established ceremony — which makes us holy and simultaneously signifies the special effects which each of the Sacraments was meant to produce. The institution of Sacraments was Christ's way of getting in touch personally with each individual in the "all nations" to whom He sent His Apostles with the words: "Go,

therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

The Bible does not use our language and say, "Christ instituted this Sacrament or that Sacrament", and it doesn't have to. All we need find in the Bible is the explicit or implicit statement that a rite used by Christ or by His Apostles gives the Holy Spirit and His gifts, that it effects and develops the Christian life which Christ came on earth to bring, and we have the divine institution of that rite. It belongs to God alone to produce grace through a rite and Christ alone, as the sole mediator between God and men, could have made known that fact.

Baptism.

Baptism, of course, is mentioned in the Bible over and over again. Saint Paul speaks of the use Christ makes of it and the effect produced when he wrote to the Ephesians: "...Christ loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, cleansing her in the bath of water (also Titus 3:5) by means of the word..." (Ephesians 5:25-26). Here we find a visible thing composed of a double element — the water used to cleanse, and the word: in the name of the Father and of the Son, et cetera, (Matthew 28:19) used by Christ to sanctify the members of His Church.

That Christ intended to produce this effect through the medium of others whom He associated with Himself is evident from the words of the Apostle John: "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (the Baptist) — although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples..." (John 4:1). (Since these events occurred before the Resurrection, we are permitted to ask if this was sacramental Baptism or a repentance rite similar to John's baptism.)

It is through the Sacrament of Baptism that Christ makes people Christians by giving them a new Christian life: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

The Eucharist.

Almost as frequently as Baptism, the Eucharist appears in the New Testament as a rite to which Christ gave the standing and the significance of a Sacrament. Practically the whole sixth chapter of Saint John's Gospel is devoted to our Lord's promise of the Eucharist. "I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you... For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him."

Here is how Saint Paul records the fulfillment of that promise: "...the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said, 'This is my body which shall be given up for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In like manner, also, the cup, after he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes" (1 Corinth 11:23-26).

There are two important features of what Christ did and said that need to be underlined. First, He stated the significance of the bread and wine, which He changed into His Body and Blood and which He gave them to eat and drink. He spoke of them as food and, when consumed, they were nourishment. By His Body and Blood, under the appearance of bread and wine, He gave them spiritual nourishment for the Christian life which had been implanted in them at Baptism.

Moreover, in this way, He and each of the Apostles present were intimately united in a spiritual manner. The visible appearance of bread and of wine signified the invisible effects which Christ produced — the strengthening of the Christian life that He had likened to the life drawn by the branches from the vine (John 15).

What He had done, He charged and empowered them to do likewise. This is a Sacrament.

Secondly, in doing what He had done, He assured them "You will proclaim the death of the Lord". The body they received under the appearance of bread, apparently separated from His blood, was to be offered up for them. The blood which they received under the appearance of wine, apparently separated from His body, was His blood of the new covenant. The blood of animals shed in sacrifice sealed the old covenant — the blood of Christ in His sacrifice on the Cross sealed the new covenant of God with His people. Thus at the Last Supper, He represented the bloody sacrifice which showed forth His death which He offered to His Heavenly Father in satisfaction for the sins of mankind.

What He had done — He charged and empowered them to do. This is a Sacrifice.

The partaking of the Eucharistic Bread and Wine is called "Communion" in the Catholic Church today. And the sacrificial offering of the Eucharistic Bread and Wine from the preparatory to the concluding prayers, we call "The Mass".

Confirmation.

The Acts of the Apostles give abundant evidence that the rite of imposing hands was considered by the Apostles not only to signify but also to effect the descent of the Holy Spirit on those who had been baptized (Acts 8:14-18; also 19:5-6), but this imposition of hands must be performed by those who have received the plenitude of the Spirit — the Apostles (Acts 8:12-16).

We have here all the elements of what Catholics call a "Sacrament" — Confirmation. The significant ceremony of the imposition of hands by which it is intended to communicate to another some favor, quality or excellence, usually of a spiritual kind, is extremely ancient and was practiced in Old Testament times (Genesis 48:14, Numbers 27:8-23). Christ likewise used this ceremony on several occasions. When they imposed hands on the newly baptized, however, the Apostles used it with a new and distinct significance — the communication of the Holy Spirit, His grace and gifts. This meant the development of the Christian life in the baptized and a strengthening which, as confirmed Christians, they needed in living and publicly confessing their Faith.

Ordination.

But the imposition of hands was also used by the Apostles for another and different purpose. They deputed their office to their successors by imposing hands upon them. We find that the significance of the imposition of hands in this rite, which we call the Sacrament of Order, is the Holy Spirit conferring an office and the grace to exercise it well. This can be easily verified in Saint Paul's words to Timothy: "...stir up the grace of God which is in you by the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6; also Acts 6:6). Since Timothy was Paul's successor as Bishop of the Church in Ephesus, these words make it clear that it is the Christian rite for the ordination of the successors of the Apostles. Likewise, it was to be the rite whereby they should ordain their successors, (1 Timothy 5:22). The altogether distinct and special purpose of this imposition of hands makes it a distinct Sacrament.

Matrimony.

The ceremony of Christian marriage is not mentioned in the Bible — probably because it consists simply and essentially in the exchange of marriage vows between a Christian man and woman. But the New Testament mentions Christian marriage and the Catholic Church teaches that it is a Sacrament.

When we examine the teaching of Jesus Christ on marriage, it is clear that it was His intention to elevate it from the sad state into which it had fallen in the world at large and among the Jews. He insisted that it is a union between one man and one woman and that this union is indissoluble. He plainly considered marriage to be sacred, since it is God Who joins the married couple. Saint Paul adds that it is sacred for a most sublime reason.

The principle point which Saint Paul stressed in writing to the Ephesians (5:21-33) is that, since the coming and death of Christ, Christian marriage is something different than marriage was before. The union of husband and wife is now similar to and should be modeled after the union between Christ and His Church. The union of husband and wife is that of one man and one woman until death and is holy with the holiness of the union between Christ and His Church.

To a quotation from Genesis: "The man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh," Saint Paul adds the following reflection: "This is a great mystery; I mean in reference to Christ and the Church". He does not state that the rite of Christian marriage is a Sacrament, but he indicates that the union of husband and wife is not only similar to the union between Christ and His Church but that the marriage union is a title to the assistance of the grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit to make it holy.

According to Saint Paul, Christian marriage has a significant character. It signifies the union between Christ and His Church. The fact that this union of Christ and His Church is the model of Christian marriages means that they should be patterned after it and marriage, thus understood and practiced by Christians, will therefore exemplify the union of Christ and His Church. This is the Scriptural basis for the teaching of the Catholic Church that Christian marriage is a Sacrament.

Last Anointing.

Much more explicit is the New Testament when we consider the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, or the Last Anointing, the Anointing of the Sick. In the Epistle of the Apostle James (5:14-15), we find a brief description of this Sacrament. "Is anyone among you sick?" he wrote. "Let him bring in the presbyters of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Saint James is writing to Christians and telling them what to do. When one of them is dangerously ill, he should call in those who could perform the desired rite — the presbyters of the Church. The New Testament uses this name for certain leaders of the first Christian communities who were superior to laymen and deacons but inferior to the Apostles and their principal successors who established these communities. These are the same "presbyters of the Church" whom the Holy Spirit has placed in the whole flock "as bishops to the Church of God" (Acts 20:17-28).

What the presbyters of the Church are to do is then indicated and it is something established and official. They will pray over him — supplicate God in his behalf — and at the same time anoint him with oil — a strengthening and comforting action. All this is done in the name of the Lord. Their acting in the name of Christ means that they act in a religious manner and are not applying merely a

natural remedy of some kind; and it means, also, that they are acting as ministers delegated to act in the name of Christ Himself.

The effects of the rite are both physical and spiritual, and they both concern the sick man's salvation. The prayer of faith in behalf of the anointed person will bring salvation whether this involves the restoration of his health or not. If it pleases God to do so, He will raise him up. Certainly, a restoration of health should be prayed for. But what is more important, if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven. We find in this passage an established Christian rite and a spiritual effect produced when it is used by the Church.

Confession.

It is not out of place to point out that in connection with the Sacrament of Penance in which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven and the confession of sins to a priest, mentioned in one of our questions, Saint James concluded his description of the rite of anointing the sick with this exhortation: "Confess, therefore, your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be saved." (James 5:16) Does the Bible, therefore, say we should confess our sins only to God? These are interesting words, which should be carefully considered by anyone who is concerned about where the confession of sins to a priest is mentioned in the Bible. There are Scripture scholars who find in these words the confession of sins to a presbyter of the Church or what Catholics call a 'priest'.

This much is certain. Saint James speaks expressly of the confession of sins. No matter to whom the sins are to be confessed, — the confession of sins itself is necessary. But to whom? "One another" are his words. What do these words mean? Elsewhere in the same Epistle (5:9-11), exhorting Christians to be patient, Saint James uses these words: "Do not complain against one another". (James 5:9) Does this not mean: those who have reason to complain should not complain against those who give cause for complaint?

Saint Paul used similar language in writing to the Ephesians (5:21): "Be subject to one another". Did he not mean subjects obey those in authority over you — wives obey your husbands — children your parents — slaves your masters? He certainly did not mean to be subject to anybody or everybody.

When Saint Paul says to the Colossians (3:13) that they should "teach one another", does he not mean that those who are in a position to teach should teach those who need to be taught?

No, "to one another" does not always mean anyone or everyone. The sense depends upon what is done to one another.

Consider, therefore, what Saint James said: "Confess your sins to one another." Could he not have meant: "Confess your sins to those who are delegated to forgive sins — the presbyters of the Church?" At any rate, that brings up the question: Did Christ delegate His Apostles and their successors to forgive sins, and was this a Sacrament?

Penance.

If Christ did not depute His Apostles to forgive sins, then His words to them (John 20:19-23) after His Resurrection are unintelligible. Standing in the midst of them, He said: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." When He had said this, He breathed upon them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain,

they are retained." Not merely did He promise the Holy Spirit, He then and there communicated the Holy Spirit to them and His purpose is clear. They were to forgive and to retain sins.

The forgiving of sins is often mentioned in the Bible and there is no mistaking its meaning: a sinner is delivered, freed from his sin, his guilt no longer exists and he is just before God (Romans 5:5, 8 and 14-21; 8:14-17; James 2:23). Now God alone possesses in His own right the power of forgiving sin which is always in some way an offense against Him. After Jesus had forgiven the sins of a paralytic, it was objected that God alone can forgive sins and He did not deny this but went on to prove by the miracle of the paralytic's instantaneous and complete cure that "the Son of man on earth has the power to forgive sins" (Luke 5:21-26).

It was precisely this divine power which Jesus delegated to His Apostles. It was to render them capable of exercising this power, that He communicated to them the Holy Spirit. It was for this reason that He delegated His mission and His authority to them (John 22:21); and His mission was to deliver men from their sins (Matthew 1:21) — to justify sinners (Matthew 9:13; Luke 5:32).

He told them, also, to retain sins, and this was just as much a part of His command as was the forgiving of sins. Moreover, by these words He determined the nature of the act whereby, as His ministers, they were to exercise the power given to them.

Whether they would forgive or retain sins was left to their judgment and this judgment evidently could not be based on chance or caprice. According to their judgment, men would either remain sinners or be freed from sin — they would be guilty or not guilty in the eyes of God. He plainly intended to oblige His Apostles to act prudently and justly, to take into account the degree of the sinner's guilt and the sincerity of his repentance. In order to fulfill this obligation, if they were to judge justly or prudently whether they should forgive or retain, they needed to know two things — what were the sinner's sins and was he truly sorry. How could they ascertain these facts except by confession on the part of the sinner?

It cannot be denied, therefore, that in authorizing and obliging the Apostles to forgive and retain sins, our Lord laid a corresponding obligation of confessing their sins on the part of sinners seeking forgiveness. In so doing, He established the rite known in the Catholic Church as the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation, or as it is commonly called "Confession". The sinner confesses his sins and professes his sorrow for them, the sincerity of which sorrow is indicated by his determination, with the help of God, to commit these sins no more. The priest — a presbyter of the Church — judges him worthy of forgiveness and in the name of God, forgives him.

Isn't it possible that when Saint James referred to the confession of sins in connection with the anointing of the sick, he may have been referring to the conjunction of two Sacraments?

What we have said about the Sacraments in the Bible is not and was not meant to be an answer to all the questions which can be raised concerning the Seven Sacraments. It has been our sole purpose to show any sincere inquirer that the teaching of the Church that there are seven Sacraments can be supported by the Word of God as it is found in the Bible.

WHERE IS PURGATORY MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

Before we go looking for Purgatory in the Bible, it is wise to have the right notion of what we are looking for.

The Catholic Church believes, on the authority of God revealing, that there is a state after death which is commonly called Purgatory. This was not always the name used. For many centuries in the early history of the Church, it was called "the darksome way", "a place of sighs and tears", "a place of cleansing flames", "a place of transitory fire and purgatorial punishment". Finally, in the Thirteenth Century, the name "Purgatory", which is most appropriate, obtained common and established usage.

Catholics are required to believe only two things about Purgatory. First, we believe that they go to Purgatory who have died free from serious sins and are the friends of God and who have, therefore, saved their souls, but who have not, during life, completely met all the requirements of an all-merciful, an all-just God, Who holds us responsible for all our sins.

We also believe that the prayers of the living, especially those which we offer through Christ in the Sacrifice of the Mass, can move God to be merciful to people in Purgatory.

Now, the question is: do we find this in the Bible? The answer will be found in the 12th Chapter of the Second Book of Machabees (Maccabees) in the Old Testament. On the day after his victory over Gorgias, the governor of Idumea, Judas Machabeus (Maccabeus), the leader of the Jews, together with his company discovered under the tunics of the Jewish soldiers who were slain in battle, valuables which had been taken as plunder from the temple of idols in Jamnia. This was contrary to the law of the Jews (Deuteronomy 7:25-26) and Judas and his men considered their death to be a punishment from God.

The inspired author goes on to say: "Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord who had discovered the things that were hidden.

"And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten.

"But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin for as much as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection.

"(For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead). And because he considered that they, who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." (2 Machabees 12:41-46.) Several important points should not go unnoticed in this passage.

After the unlawful plunder was found on the soldiers, their Jewish kinsmen gathered in private prayer for the fallen soldiers that their sin "might be effaced from the mind of God".

Thereafter a public sacrifice of expiation (Leviticus. 4:2-35) was offered in the temple in order to satisfy for their sins and to assure the dead soldiers divine absolution from their sins. These sins had not robbed them of godliness; else, it would have been vain to pray with hope in their future resurrection. Yet prayer was offered to the just and merciful God. And it was expedient to offer public sacrifice in satisfaction for their sins even though they had saved their souls.

From all of which the inspired author concluded, no longer speaking of Judas and the dead soldiers in particular, but of the dead in general — no longer speaking of particular sins of transgressing the

Law which these soldiers committed, but of any sins — no longer approving of the prayer of Judas and his men only, but recommending it to everyone: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins". It is impossible to understand how the Bible could mention the Catholic belief in Purgatory more clearly than this.

Judas Machabeus did not doubt the future resurrection of the fallen soldiers. But their future resurrection was nonetheless affected by the sins committed in the pillage of Jamnia. They would one day rise again and would enjoy the recompense of those who slept in the Lord or prayer for them would have been in vain. But beforehand they needed to be freed from their sins by public sacrifice in the temple.

It must be admitted that in the thought of the inspired writer, these soldiers were not lost forever. At the same time, due to their sins, they did not enjoy the great grace that was laid up for them. They were clearly in a state in which they needed to be loosed from their sins and in which they could be helped by the prayers of the living. And the Bible recommends the whole idea to everyone. By this time, the reader may have thumbed through his Bible, only to discover that the Second Book of Machabees and this whole passage is nowhere to be found. He may ask: Why isn't it there?

That is a good question. It happens to be a question that anyone whose Bible does not contain this Book should not only ask himself, but should also take steps to settle to his own satisfaction. Too many accept without question the well-bound, well-printed volume with the title "Holy Bible" on the cover in gold letters as the real thing. But is it? How do they know? Why don't they find out?

There have always been those who did not hesitate to tamper with the Scriptures. Passages have been rephrased to fit their preconceived ideas and opinions, words have been inserted and others conveniently omitted — in fact, whole books have been eliminated — for the same purpose.

Catholics have no trouble in answering the question "What is the genuine and complete Bible?" Well aware of the danger after centuries of experience with spurious Bibles, the Church insists that all — clergy and laymen alike — use only those versions of the Bible which have been carefully checked with the oldest and most authentic versions available to Scripture scholars over a period of nineteen centuries.

The question of why various books or portions were removed from the Bible has been discussed in our free pamphlet "BUT DO YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?" and will not be considered here.

However, in settling the question of why the Second Book of Machabees was removed from the list of inspired books which make up the Bible, two other questions must be faced by every sincere Christian.

Why do you find the Christians of earliest Christian times using this Book as part of God's inspired word? It is something more than coincidence that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there seems to be remarkable allusion (11:35-36) to the suffering of Eleazar and the seven brothers (2 Machabees 6: 18-28, 29-31 and 7:1-41).

In the second century after Christ, the Pastor of Hermas (140-154 A.D.) refers to 2 Machabees (7:23) in speaking of "God who created the world" (Vision I, 3, 4). Later, about 235 A.D., Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian (258 A.D.) speak of the book. Hippolytus of Rome (255 A.D.) used the book in his commentary on the Scripture, as also did Origen (252 A.D.).

Thus in all parts of the Church — in the East and in the West — this book was received by the early Christians. And it seems obvious that if this book was part of the Scriptures then, it still is and should be today.

Why was this book removed from the list of inspired books and who excluded it from some Bibles?

The pioneer was Martin Luther. In the disputation of Leipsig, he was pressed by John Eck to declare if he still believed in Purgatory. He responded that "in truth, in all of Scripture, there is not one word on the subject". When the passage of the Second Book of Machabees was proposed as evidence, he simply rejected the whole thing by rejecting the two Books of Machabees as having been erroneously placed on the list of inspired Scriptures. He did not believe in Purgatory or the value of prayers for the dead, so the Books of Machabees had to go!

(A final word about purgatory could be had by examining Matthew 5:26 where Our Lord declares that there is a place of punishment for sin wherein release may be obtained after payment of the 'last farthing'.)

ONE MEDIATOR AND INTERCESSOR — CHRIST, THE REDEEMER.

Where does the Bible mention praying to Mary or to saints or that Mary is a mediator between God and man? (Questions one and ten.)

In some people's minds, the act of prayer is associated exclusively with an act of adoration of God, but it should not be. We may adore God when we pray to Him, but this does not mean that we adore some other human being when we direct an act of prayer to him.

The act of prayer, which is referred to in the question we are considering, is the simple act of asking a favor of another. We pray when we ask a favor of a friend. Prayer can be addressed to anyone who is in a position to grant the request which the prayer contains.

Not only do we find the early Christians addressing prayers to God, but to other Christians, as well. Consider carefully the following words of Saint Paul: "I beseech you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Spirit, that you help me in your prayers to God" (Romans 15:30). In thus addressing a prayer to his fellow Christians, was he offending God or robbing Him of any of the honor which is His due? On the contrary, he was but following out Christian teaching: "...pray for one another, that you may be saved, for the unceasing prayer of a just man is of great avail" (James 5:16).

"We beseech you, Mary, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Spirit, that you help us in your prayers to God". By substituting the name "Mary" or any Saint in the place of "my brethren", in Saint Paul's prayer, you have identically the same prayer which the Catholic Church offers to Mary and the Saints.

This is the practice of prayer identical with that which the Bible shows to have been the practice of the Apostles and early Christians. Can anyone doubt that Saint Paul who asked for the prayers of his brethren, would hesitate to include among these brethren Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ? So the same kind of prayer which we offer to Mary and the Saints is mentioned in the Bible.

"But Mary and the Saints to whom you pray are dead", it will be objected. "The Bible speaks only of prayers to the living".

Such a question coming from those who have no idea or hope in a future life makes sense, but not coming from Christians who profess to believe in survival after death and in the reality of the future life. In Mary's case, she most certainly is not to be classed among the dead. Her Assumption into Heaven means that her body, re-enlivened by her soul, was raised from the grave and she is alive in Heaven together with the blessed saints who will have their bodies restored at the end of the world. They, too, all live.

It is the privilege of the Christian to have the full assurance of a future life and to look upon the life after death, as more truly real than the life we at present know. This assurance is founded upon faith, not conjecture or opinion — faith which is no less certain than actual personal experience. We do not lose our friends when they die; we gain them if they die as friends of God. "As I live," said our Lord, "so shall you live also." (John 6:58.) Mary and the saints are in Heaven and Heaven is the abode of the living.

Have Mary and the saints who are with Christ ceased to love us and to be concerned about our affairs? No, we believe in the communion of saints — an oft-forgotten article of our Creed.

"Far be from us," wrote Saint Bernard (On the Death of Malachy), "the thought that that love which we have seen so active upon earth should be lessened or destroyed in Heaven... The love of those who have gone before us, and passed through the valley of the shadow of death, cannot fail, for love is stronger than death, yet, the breadth of Heaven enlarges men's hearts, not contracts them; fills them with more love, not empties them of what they had before. In the light of God, the memory is brightened and strengthened, not obscured; what was not known is now learned; not what was known, unlearned; in a word, it is Heaven and not earth," and Heaven is not a land of separation or of forgetfulness. There is but one Body of the faithful, whether in Heaven or upon earth, and Jesus Christ is their Head and through Him, there is a communion between all the members of His Body. Those who have entered into their rest have not thereby ceased to be our brethren and to love us. Nor have they ceased to love God and to have an interest in all that concerns His honor and glory, and the salvation of men's souls.

If Mary and the saints are living, can anyone deny that they are in a position to know that we seek their prayers? The enjoyment of the blessed life of Heaven does not deprive them of the power of knowledge, rather it is increased. That there is knowledge in Heaven of what goes on in this world is clear from Christ's own words: "...there will be joy among the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 25:10). God surely can cause Mary and the saints to know what goes on in this world.

That He actually does so is certain from the assurance Christ gave that they are "equal to the angels" (Luke 20:36) and although He was speaking of the blessed in Heaven after the resurrection of the body, Mary does have her body restored and the saints do not need their bodies to be capable of knowledge, any more than do the angels who have no bodies.

Mary and the saints are no longer affected by time and space in the way that we are while on earth. They are not subject to the difficulties and imperfections of communication that we are. Nothing prevents Mary and the saints from knowing our petitions to them as soon as they are formed in our minds and hearts and to present them to God. They know these things in God Whom they see face to face.

Those who find fault with prayer to Mary and the Saints usually do so on the ground that they are thereby exalted to a position on a par with Christ. But Saint Paul, they tell us, says: "There is one

God, and one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all..." (1 Timothy 2:5). Christ it is "...who is ever living to make intercession for us" (Hebrews 7:25).

But what did he mean when he spoke of Jesus Christ as our Mediator? Did he not refer to the fact that Christ alone was the Redeemer of mankind — that as man He died and offered His death as a redemptive sacrifice? Catholics make no such claim for Mary today — and they never did. It is true that she was associated with the Mediator in His redemptive mission.

In fact, she was associated more closely than were His chosen Apostles. This does not, however, make her a "mediator" in the sense that this term has when it is applied to Jesus Christ, nor do Catholics say that it does.

Likewise, Christ our Redeemer is ever living to make intercession for us. He Who is our Intercessor is also our Redeemer, Who intercedes on the strength of the Sacrifice He alone has made for us. Neither Mary nor any Saint could be our Intercessor in the sense in which Christ is.

But, we ask, because Jesus Christ as our Redeemer is the sole Mediator between God and men, ever living to make intercession for us, does this mean that the terms "mediator" and "intercessor" cannot be used in other senses and applied to others for different reasons? The dictionary justifies the use of the term "mediator" in the sense of one who acts as the intermediary in effecting something, bringing something about, communicating something, and the like.

Many do not seem to realize that Saint Paul spoke of Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and men and this does not exclude the possibility or even hint at the incongruity of there being intermediaries between Jesus Christ and other men. Indeed, the whole Bible takes such mediation for granted.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was the medium through which Jesus Christ came into this world as man: "...God sent his Son, made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4). She, out of her own heart's blood and from the substance of her body, supplied the wherewithal from which was fashioned the body of Him Whose death on the Cross won our Redemption and reconciliation with God the Father. She willingly consented to become the mother of our Redeemer when this was announced to her (Luke 1:38). Jesus Christ could have come into the world in other ways, but the Divine Plan called for the Savior to have a body which would come into existence through the regular channel of a human mother's womb. In that sense, we are indebted to Mary. She was the medium, or, if you will, the Mediatrix, through which Christ became one of us. Mary is not the mediator between God and men; Jesus Christ alone is that, but it is a historical fact, which no one can deny, that she was the medium through which He came into this world and became a member of the human race.

We find more than one kind of mediation in the Bible. When John the Baptist pointed out the world's Savior with the words: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), he served as the medium which brought the attention of both Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Peter to our Lord. The Baptist was the medium through which Jesus Christ became known to those Apostles. The Baptist who spoke the words was the mediator between them and Jesus Christ. Similarly, when Andrew went in search of Simon Peter to lead him to Jesus, he, Andrew, became the medium which led Peter to the feet of his Redeemer (John 1: 40-42). Jesus could have made Himself known directly to these men, but He chose to work through others as He has chosen to do ever since, down through the centuries. The story of Christ in the Gospels which is read by a man who has never known Christ makes the author of that Gospel a mediator. Matthew,

Mark, Luke and John are mediators. Any preacher who proclaims Christ and His message is a mediator, but — let it be repeated over and over again — not between God and men, but between Jesus Christ and men.

Anyone who administers the Sacrament of Baptism and thus becomes the instrument of the baptized party's regeneration, is a mediator. The one who baptizes is of little consequence in himself, but the rite which Christ prescribed as essential to salvation is of the utmost consequence. It makes little or no difference who administers the rite, whether he be saint or sinner, male or female, believer or infidel; it is obedience to Christ's direction which counts and He, the one Mediator between God and men, must have imparted some powerful and mysterious efficacy to that simple rite for so much to depend on it. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The one who does the baptizing becomes a mediator according to the dictionary's definition of the term. Let it be repeated once more, not a mediator between God and men, but between Jesus Christ and men.

Similarly, when Jesus Christ commissioned the Apostles to go teach all nations all that He had commanded, to baptize them and to forgive sins, He was interposing their ministry of preaching, baptizing, and forgiving between Himself and others. The Apostles, then, by the very appointment of Jesus Christ, became intermediaries between Himself and men, that men might come to have faith in Jesus Christ and share in the benefits of His unique mediation before the throne of Him, Who "alone has immortality and dwells in light inaccessible, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting dominion" (1 Timothy 6:16).

So important, in fact, is this mediation of the Apostles and their successors in the Christian ministry, that Saint Paul does not hesitate to declare to Timothy: "Take heed to yourself and to your teaching, be earnest in them. For in so doing, you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:16). The words which are to be especially noted here are those which say that Timothy saves others who hearken to his preaching of the Word. If he saves others by bringing to them the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, by that same token he is a mediator of salvation between men and Jesus Christ, and so is any other minister who by delivering the Gospel message or by baptizing brings Jesus Christ to men and men to Jesus Christ.

Another Biblical example of mediation is particularly to the point raised by our questions. In the marriage feast of Cana, (John 2:1-11), the wine ran out in the midst of the festivities. This was painfully embarrassing to the bride and groom. Mary, with consideration for their feelings, called the situation to the attention of her Son. And, although His hour for performing His first miracle had not yet come, He nevertheless, because He could not find it in His heart to refuse her anything, miraculously supplied wine at her request. In this instance, Mary was a mediatrix. Our Lord surely sensed the situation, but He waited until it was called to His attention by Mary.

Because Mary's prayer was so effective in this case, and induced her Son to anticipate the time when He planned to perform His first miracle, many believe in the power of her prayers. They believe that she is our Mediatrix, not between God and men, but between men and her Son Who is the sole Mediator between God and men. They pray to her, not that she by her own authority or by any personal resources of her own, may give us graces and blessings, but that she may appeal on our behalf to her Divine Son, Who in turn will make intercession for us before Him Who is the source of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).

MONKS, NUNS, AND FRIDAY ABSTINENCE.

Where in the Bible is the authorization for nunneries or monasteries mentioned? (Question five.)

Where in the Bible is the eating of meat on Friday called a sin? (Question six.)

These may appear to be unrelated questions, but they aren't. Both are concerned with laws and discipline of Christian life as authorized by the Catholic Church. The laws of the Church as such won't be found expressly stated in the Bible. But the matters with which these laws deal, and which they apply to Christian life in a practical manner, will be found there.

Consider first the Catholic practice of abstaining from meat on Friday.

The Church has applied this law almost everywhere in the world, for a very simple and Scriptural reason. Our Lord was very explicit when He said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). In the light of these words, it looks very much like everyone who is worthy to be called a Christian is going to be found practicing self-denial.

Now self-denial does not mean refraining only from that which is wrong, but refraining from that which is in itself good. It is denying oneself things which could be lawfully done and enjoyed. Left to their own devices, how many Christians consistently live up to this evident command of Christ? Very few! The experience of the Catholic Church over the centuries has borne this out. So, in order to insure the practice of at least a minimum of self-denial, the Church has ruled that Catholics the world over deny themselves meat on one day of each week — Friday. [Since Vatican II, knowing that meat is virtually unprocurable for millions of Catholics (due to poverty) throughout the world, the Church has lifted the explicit mention of abstaining from meat on Fridays to a command to perform at least one extra act of self-denial on Fridays.]

But why Friday? It could be any other day of the week, but Friday happens to be the day on which our Lord performed the supreme act of self-denial. He not only carried His cross, but on it, He gave up His life for us. That fact we must never forget and ever honor. What better day for Christians to practice self-denial ...to obey His command? So the Church, not the Bible, has specified Friday and who will dare to say this is contrary to the Bible?

There is nothing wrong with good meat anywhere or at any time. So why deny oneself meat? For the obvious reason that meat is a universal food. Can a food be named that is more common to mankind all over the world, than the flesh of animals living on dry land? No doubt, in choosing something as the object of universal self-denial, the Church had an eye on what Saint Paul said about abstaining from meat being good (Romans 14:21), but bread or fish or eggs might have been chosen. When you come right down to it, what more universal food can be found for the catholic, the universal Church, in which there is to be common and collective self-denial? [As mentioned, it was the explosion of conversions among Catholics in Asia and Africa that lead to the Fathers at Vatican II to amend the law, since meat was such a rarity in their diet that to 'abstain' from something they rarely enjoyed, made little sense.]

Importance of Friday.

There are those who do not like the idea of members of the Church the world over adhering to the same practice of self-denial, but they forget the unity Christ expected to prevail among His disciples (John 17:21). Others say that Friday, as a designated day, is not mentioned in the Bible. Of course it isn't, but as we have said, the Friday on which Christ died is — and we do not wish to forget it.

When anyone cries "regimentation", referring to the Church's determination of the day and manner in which we practice the self-denial ordained by Christ Himself, we point to Christ deputing His

Apostles and their successors: ...teach them (their followers among the nations) all things I have commanded" (Matthew 28:19) ...and when He said: "...whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven" (Matthew 18.18), He could have meant nothing less than the moral binding of conduct through the making of laws.

Now what about monasteries or nunneries?

As the dwellings in which monks and nuns live, they are nowhere authorized in the Bible. Neither are Lutheran, Baptist, or Methodist seminaries, parsonages, or rectories. There is no good reason why they should be.

But this question, most probably, inquires if the lives led by Catholic monks and nuns are authorized in the Bible.

Nuns and monks, of course, are religious women and men (who may be ordained priests or not) all of whom live a common life approved and regulated by the Church in which they practice Christ's counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Do we find such a life authorized in the Bible? The answer is easily found.

"Come Follow Me."

There is little need to tarry over Christ's recommendation of obedience and poverty. There can be no doubt but that both are clearly indicated in His answer to the wealthy man who had kept the Commandments of God from his youth, but who wanted to do more. "If you will be perfect," He said, "go, sell what you have and give to the poor ...and come follow me" (Matthew 19:21). It was not a command, but it most certainly was a counsel that authorized special obedience and detachment from worldly possessions. It is the celibate life, the chaste unmarried life of monks and nuns, which is the chief concern of those who ask the "monastery and nunnery" question. Why don't priests and nuns get married?

Unfortunately, there are always those who are anxious to mind the other fellow's business for him. What is worse, their motives in so doing are often based on rash judgments. Such people need to be told that Catholic priests and nuns choose not to get married. No one is obliged to be a priest or a nun. But since the Church has made the celibate life a required condition for the life of a priest or a nun, they freely choose this kind of a life because they want to be priests or nuns.

Celibacy.

But there are those who sincerely want to know what is behind the required celibacy of priests and nuns. "Is it authorized by the Bible?" they ask. If by "authorized" is meant commanded by the Bible, the answer is: No. It is merely a law of the Church. But if by "authorized" is meant encouraged and commended by Christ and His Apostles as their teaching is recorded in the Bible, the answer is: Yes.

We find our Lord expressly recommending celibacy chosen for religious motives (Matthew 19:11-12). But He immediately added that such a life of self-denial is not meant for all. Only the few who have a special calling are to undertake such an obligation: "Let him accept it, who can."

Anyone who asks "Is celibacy authorized by the Bible?" should read thoughtfully the Seventh Chapter of Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, especially where he says: "For I would that you all were as I am, myself; but each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they so remain, even as I" (1

Corinth 7:7-8). Saint Paul was a celibate and the reason why he recommended celibacy for those who can live such a life is stated subsequently in the same chapter: "I would have you free from care. He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please God. Whereas he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided. And the unmarried woman, and the virgin thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. Whereas she who is married thinks about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. Now this I say for your benefit, not to put a halter upon you, but to promote what is proper and to make it possible for you to pray to the Lord without distraction" (7:32-35).

A Good Reason.

Not only the recommendation of celibacy but its purpose is plainly evident in Saint Paul's words. The unmarried man is free from the worries, anxieties, responsibilities and claims on his time and attention, which arise from marriage and family life. A married man cannot devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry; he must needs devote himself wholeheartedly to his family as well. Whereas the unmarried man is free to give his whole attention, time, love, and devotion to the service of those entrusted to his care, and he can thus accomplish more for the spread of the Kingdom of God on earth.

So there is plenty of authorization for the celibate life in the New Testament, but it is not made a matter of obligation. It is presented as a closer and more perfect way of serving the Lord and His interests, but it is not commanded. Consequently, for several centuries in the Church, a married clergy and priesthood and episcopate existed, although at the same time, many members of the clergy were celibates. It was not until several centuries had elapsed before the Church began to make celibacy a matter of obligation for those who wished to enter the ministry of the priesthood, at least in the West. One of the earliest laws was made by the Council of Elvira in Spain in the Fourth Century, and thereafter, one Church Council after another ruled in the same way until within a hundred years or so, the law was universal in the Western World. But it has been the practice of the Church in Eastern and far Eastern countries to ordain married men, but after their ordination, unmarried priests were not permitted to marry. Thus, the Catholic Church knows what it is to have a married and unmarried clergy.

With the intention of imitating Christ, women began living a religious life together at least by the Third Century. We find that Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, in the fourth century, established convents for women and celibacy was their mode of life approved by the Church.

This insistence upon celibacy for priests and nuns, of course, implies no disregard, no failure to appreciate the holiness and nobility of Christian marriage. The Catholic priests and nuns who deny themselves the happiness of marriage and family life are the last ones in the world who can reasonably be accused of looking down upon marriage. In season and out, they have constantly taught that Matrimony is a most sacred union, noble in purpose and instituted by God Himself. As we have pointed out elsewhere in this pamphlet, the Church teaches that marriage is a Sacrament — that the very permanency of the union resulting from the vows of husband and wife to remain faithful to each other unto death, becomes a channel through which the help of God's grace flows to strengthen husband and wife, father and mother, to be faithful to their vows and to discharge perseveringly and conscientiously the sacred responsibilities of parenthood.

Thus, we trust we have answered some of the questions posed by our Christian friends. Will you consider the next step?
