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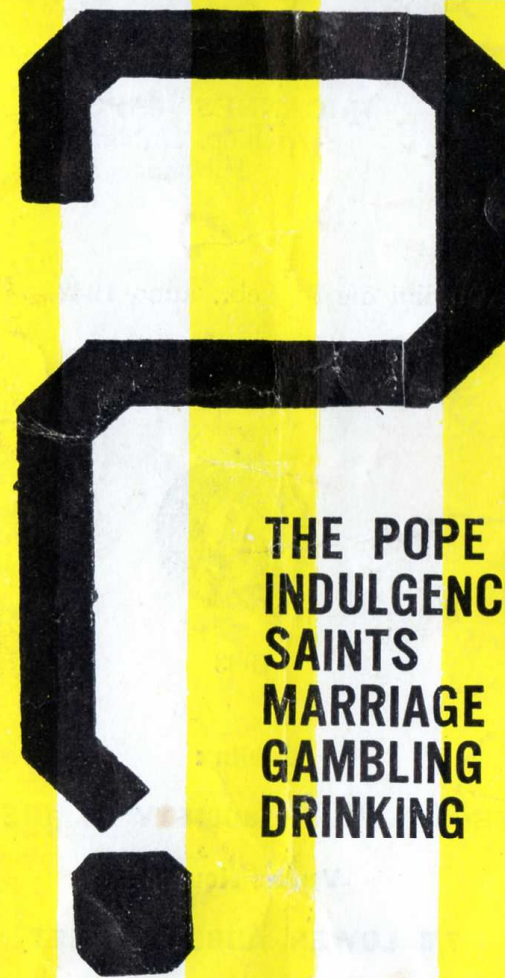
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**THE CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY OF IRELAND
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CATHOLIC ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

3^d



**THE POPE
INDULGENCES
SAINTS
MARRIAGE
GAMBLING &
DRINKING**

Booklet 1

**Put by some Protestants during the Clonard Missions
for All Denominations, 1949-'59**

Nihil Obstat :

Joseph P. Newth, C.C.,
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FOREWORD

During Lent, 1949, the undersigned were invited to give a series of lectures for all denominations in the Redemptorist Church, Clonard, Belfast, by the Very Rev. G. J. Reynolds, C.S.S.R.,* Rector of Clonard Monastery. This was the third series of its kind to be given in Clonard Church since Lent, 1948. On March 18, 1949, two days before our lectures were due to begin, Mr. Norman Porter, organising secretary of the National Union of Protestants (Ireland) wrote to us from the headquarters of his organisation (Belfast) stating that "we feel it our duty to meet what we consider a challenge to the Protestant Faith," and enclosing "a set of questions" with the request that they be answered either at lectures announced to be given between March 20 and April 10, or direct by post.

Mr. Porter's 36 questions covered 16 subjects in all, from the Church and the Papacy to Politics and Sunday Observance. Meanwhile, numerous other questions were coming in from other inquirers. In the limited time at our disposal we could not hope to answer all these questions publicly or to send written replies to all the inquirers. Accordingly, we picked out those questions which would, we thought, be of general interest, including some of those submitted to us by Mr. Porter, and answered them in groups of five or six at a time on the Sunday nights between March 20 and April 10 inclusive, when representatives of the National Union of Protestants were present in Clonard Church. At the same time, we made it clear to our audience that we did not wish to leave any of the questions sent in to us unanswered and promised to give a verbal reply to any inquirer who came to see us in person immediately after the lectures or at some other convenient time.

On April 11—our lectures were due to end on Good Friday evening, April 15—Mr. Porter telephoned Clonard Monastery and asked for an interview with the lecturers. On the following evening, accordingly, he and three other members of his organisation visited us at Clonard and as a result of our discussion with them we decided to publish a full set of answers to their questions.

* Initial letters of Congregatio Sanctissimi Redemptoris (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer), the Official Latin name of the Redemptorist Order.

Already, however, the National Union of Protestants had prepared a booklet of their own entitled *Questions to the Lecturers at Clonard Roman Catholic Church*. It contained the questions which had been submitted to us, "Clonard's" answers to these questions and finally the N.U.P.'s own answer to each question in turn. "Clonard's" answers were taken for the most part as the foreword to the booklet, explained, not from what we had said in the course of our lectures but from an earlier booklet called *Difficulties of Belfast Non-Catholics Answered*, which had been issued after the first Clonard mission of Lent, 1948. When an answer to a particular question was not forthcoming either in our lectures or in *Difficulties*, the N.U.P. recorded, "Clonard: No answer." An unwary reader might interpret these words as meaning, what in fact, the N.U.P. did not allege, that Clonard had no answer to give.

Here then are our answers to all the N.U.P.'s questions. Taken together they amount to a statement of Catholic teaching on a number of important and topical subjects. As such they will, we trust, serve a twofold purpose. On the one hand they will give interested inquirers a true picture of what we Catholics believe in, as distinct from what we are often credited with believing. On the other hand, they will facilitate for Catholics themselves the observance of the Scriptural precept: "If anyone asks you to give an account of the hope which you cherish, be ready at all times to answer for it, but courteously and with due reverence." (I Pet. 3, 15-16: Knox's translation.)

These words of St. Peter's First Epistle are preceded by others still more important: "Enthroned Christ as Lord in your hearts." Many Protestants would say: "That is just where Roman Catholics fail; they do not enthrone Christ alone as Lord in their hearts, but Christ *plus* something else; Christ *plus* an infallible Church, Christ *plus* the Papacy, Christ *plus* Tradition, and so on." No: we do not enthrone Christ *plus* anything in our hearts, but Christ only, "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2, 13). Why then do we believe in an infallible Church, the Papacy, Tradition and so on? For the same reason that we believe, as Protestants believe, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and so on: because we believe that all these things, sacred books and sacred institutions alike, come to us from Christ and lead us back to Him.

Such is our faith, the faith of every convinced member of the Roman Catholic Church. Is it necessarily an absurd or slavish kind of faith? Surely not: one can hardly dismiss offhand as either a fool or a coward every man and woman of the *thousands* of men and women—among them acknowledged leaders in every field of praiseworthy human endeavour—who, in this as in other ages, have reached the conclusion that what the Catholic Church teaches is not after all a fabrication, but the truth; not a gospel of bondage, but one of spiritual liberation. The open-minded inquirer will at least listen to what the Catholic Church has to say for herself and weigh it well. If having done so he finds himself back where he started, he can at any rate look forward with confidence to the last Verdict of all, as can those other men and women—their number is known to God alone—whose lives, passed in complete good faith outside the visible fellowship of the Catholic Church, are nevertheless sanctified by the inward and abiding presence of Jesus Christ Our Lord. It is on Him that we all, Catholics and Protestants alike, depend for our happiness here and hereafter; and He, the Loving Master and Merciful Judge of us all, will condemn no man who holds to what he sincerely, even if mistakenly, believes to be true and lives according to what he sincerely, even if mistakenly, believes to be good.

S. O'RIORDAN, C.S.S.R.
J. J. W. MURPHY, C.S.S.R.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS*

NOTE

The answers given herein have been grouped under the headings used by the National Union of Protestants itself when submitting its questions. There are three groups of answers, each published in a separate booklet. The present booklet (I) contains answers on the Pope, Indulgences, Saints, Marriage, Gambling and Drinking. Booklet II contains answers on the Church, Images, the Bible, the Virgin Mary and Sunday; and Booklet III on Confession, Tradition, Purgatory, the Mass, the Sacraments and Politics.

THE POPE

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) What is your Scriptural authority for calling the Pope "the Vicar of Christ on earth?"
- (2) On what authority do you claim the Pope to be in direct line of succession to St. Peter?
- (3) How can you prove the infallibility of the Pope from Scripture?

Our Answers

(1) There is no Scriptural authority for the term "vicar of Christ on earth," just as there is none for such terms as the Trinity, the Incarnation or the Virgin Birth.

Nevertheless, all Christians believe that the doctrine designated by these last three terms are contained in Scripture. Similarly we Roman Catholics believe that the doctrine designated by the term "vicar of Christ on earth," which is used to describe the nature of the Papal office, has a solid Scriptural foundation, the main lines of which may be traced as follows.

While Our Saviour was on earth, He Himself was the visible Head of the fellowship of the disciples. He is moreover, and

* New Testament texts occurring in these answers are quoted according to accurate English versions of the original Greek. The Protestant Revised Version is, from this point of view much superior to the popular Authorised Version. See the answer to the question: "Why had your Church banned, even burned, the Holy Scriptures in many parts of the world?" (Booklet II, "The Bible.")

He alone can be, the Divine Head of "His body which is the Church" (Col. 1, 18-24), the inward divine Source of all its spiritual life and energy: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1, 27). But now that He has ascended into Heaven He is no longer the *visible* Head of the Church. Was it then His intention that during the uncounted centuries of its earthly pilgrimage His Church should have no visible head at all? This is on the face of it an unlikely supposition. Every visible fellowship of which we have experience has a visible head. The father is the visible head of the fellowship of the family, the captain of the fellowship of the football team, the king or president, as the case may be, of the fellowship of the nation.

The example of the family is particularly worth noting. No other fellowship springs so directly and spontaneously from the social nature of man as does this one; yet within it, says St. Paul "the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the Church... Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands in everything" (Eph. 5, 23-24).

Must we then refuse to look for a visible head in the fellowship of Christ's Church? Does it possess no one member who serves as a centre of unity and cohesion for all the other members: no one who has been entrusted by Christ with the task of ruling and teaching it in His name and as His delegate: in a word, no "vicar of Christ on earth?" If so, the Christian Church no longer answers to Christ's own design for it. The New Testament clearly teaches that Christ established His Church not only on the general "foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2, 20) but on one part of that foundation in particular: the Rock of Peter, the *kepha* of *Kepha*, on which He declared, in the plainest possible words, that He would build His Church (Matt. 16, 18).*

True, He makes no explicit reference to a perennial line of successors to Peter in this office, just as He makes no reference whatever, explicit or implicit, to the fact that in course of time the Holy Ghost would inspire the writing of a new collection of sacred books parallel to the inspired writings of Israel. But He does explicitly promise that the Church built on Peter will endure to the end of time. This can only mean one of two things; either that Peter himself will continue to live in his

* See Booklet II, "The Church."

own person until the divine Head of the Church becomes its visible Head once more, or that Peter will continue to live in the person of other men who will carry on his work, generation by generation, to the world's end. Christ Himself expressly rules out the first alternative: Peter will die as his Master died (John 21, 18). Therefore the second alternative must be true: there will be other visible heads of the Church, other "vicars of Christ on earth," until He Himself returns.

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven" (Acts I, II). Meanwhile we have Peter "standing up in the midst of the disciples" (Acts 1, 15), ruling and teaching us in Christ's name.

Postscript

Questions, p. 2, objects as follows: "The Church of Rome cannot give any Scripture for such a title ('the Vicar of Christ on earth') to a human being. It is blasphemy, and the Scriptures claim that the Holy Spirit is the rightful owner of such a title (John 14, 26; 15, 26)."

The texts referred to do not describe the Holy Spirit as "the Vicar of Christ on earth" but as "the Paraclete" (the Comforter or Advocate or Helper). The Pope is a human instrument of the Paraclete, not a substitute for Him.

Questions, p. 3, raises another objection to Papal supremacy: "In 1 Peter 5, 1, Peter refers to himself as an elder, and he was sent out preaching by the apostles (Acts 8, 14). Is the Pope sent out to preach by his subordinates?"

Acts 8, 14 does not say that Peter was sent out preaching by the apostles but that "when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John"—obviously by arrangement with Peter and John themselves, since they too were apostles. To the present day a Council of the Church can, by arrangement with the Pope, entrust to him the execution of any scheme which it judges to be for the good of the Church as a whole. Thus the Council of Trent entrusted the Popes of the sixteenth century with the task of revising the Vulgate translation of the Scriptures, and the work of revision was actually carried out under Papal supervision between 1546 and 1592. As for Peter's

description of himself as an "elder" (a "fellow-elder" to be exact, 1 Pet. 5, 1, Revised Version), we may compare it with the traditional title of the Pope, "the servant of the servants of God."

(2) The following is a brief selection from the enormous mass of historical evidence which proves:

- (a) that St. Peter established his See at Rome;
- (b) that his successors in the Roman See inherited his primacy over the Christian Church.

1. About 95 A.D. Clement, Bishop of Rome, wrote to the Corinthians: "Let us set before our eyes the good Apostles. There was Peter who . . . having borne his testimony went to his appointed place of glory. By reason of jealousy and strife Paul pointed out by his example the prize of patient endurance . . . To these men of holy lives was gathered a vast multitude of the elect who . . . set a brave example among ourselves."

This passage shows that the Romans of Clement's day regarded St. Peter and Paul as the apostles of their own city. It occurs in a letter in which Clement himself lays down the law for the Corinthians with such a tone of authority that Bishop Lightfoot, a distinguished Anglican scholar, regarded this document as "the first step towards Papal domination" (*Apostolic Fathers I*, 69-70). But it must be remembered that Clement himself had, according to St. Irenaeus, who wrote about 180 A.D., "known the apostles Peter and Paul and conversed with them" (*Adv. Haer.* 3, 3). Moreover, he was writing at a time when thousands who had also known the apostles were still alive and could easily have disproved his statements and his claims if they were not well founded.

2. Between 107 and 117 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote in his letter to the Romans (chap. 4): "I do not give an order like Peter or Paul: they were apostles, I am a man condemned to death." This sentence would have no point if Peter and Paul had not actually preached the Gospel in Rome. Twice in the inscription in his letter Ignatius speaks of the Roman Church as "presiding."

3. Between 165 and 174, Dionysius of Corinth wrote to Pope Soter: "you have, therefore, by your urgent exhortation, bound close together the sowings of Peter and Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both planted the seed of the Gospel also in

Corinth and together instructed us, just as they likewise taught in the same place in Italy and at the same time suffered martyrdom" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2, 28).

4. About ten years later, St. Irenaeus expressly says that the Church of Rome was founded by Peter and Paul. He goes on to enumerate the succession of the bishops of Rome since "the blessed apostles entrusted the episcopal office to Linus." "To this Church," he declares, "every Church must have recourse because of its special authority . . . since in it . . . the apostolic teaching has been preserved" (*Adv. Haer.* 3, 3).

5. Victor, Bishop of Rome from 189-199, threatened to cut off the bishops of Asia from the communion of the Church if they would not accept his ruling on the date of the celebration of Easter. This was, according to Bishop Lightfoot, another "decisive step" on the road to Papal domination. Yet Irenaeus, who was himself a Greek, did not deny Victor's right to act as he did, though he asked him not to push matters to a crisis.

6. At the beginning of the third century, Tertullian wrote in Africa: "The apostolic Churches show their titles . . . Rome shows Clement who was ordained by Peter" (*De Praescript.* 32).

7. About 370, another African, St. Optatus of Milevis, wrote: "Therefore in the one Chair . . . Peter sat first, to whom succeeded Linus, to Linus Clement . . . (a list of Popes follows), to Damascus succeeded Siricius (the Pope of St. Optatus's time), with whom the whole world is, in accordance with us, in the bond of communion" (*De Schism, Donatist.* 2, 2).

8. In 391, the greatest of all the African bishops, St. Augustine, declared: "I am held in the communion of the Catholic Church by the succession of bishops from the very Chair of Peter the Apostle, to whom the Lord commended His sheep to be fed, up to the present episcopate" (*Contra Ep. Manich.* 41, 5). Elsewhere he speaks of "the Chair of the Roman Church, on which Peter sat and on which Anastasius sits to-day" (*Contra Litt. Petil.* 2, 51).

9. Preaching to the people of Antioch, St. John Chrysostom (347-407) said that God had indeed "ordered Peter, the ruler of the whole world . . . to pass a long time here . . . But though we received him as teacher, we did not retain him to the end but gave him up to royal Rome" (*Hom. in inscript., Act.* 2, 6).

10. As a testimony from Ireland we may note the words of St. Columbanus (died 615) who addresses the Pope as the legitimate occupant of the See of Peter, "apostle and bearer of the keys" (*Monum. Germ. Hist. Ep.* III, 158). To him the bishops of Rome are "almost divine" because they rule in the city of the "twin apostles" (*ibid.* 174-5).

11. Finally we have the testimony of the Councils of the Church. The bishops assembled at Chalcedon in 451 declared that "Peter has spoken by Leo," and those assembled at Constantinople in 681 that "Peter has spoken by Agatho" (*Mansi, Concil.* VI, 972: XI, 665).

In view of this evidence from the early centuries, and it is only a small fraction of what might be quoted, Roman Catholics have the amplest historical justification for believing that the Pope is in the direct line of succession to St. Peter and for accepting the definitions of the Councils of Lyons (1274), Florence (1438) and the Vatican (1870) regarding Papal supremacy and intallibility. True, it was only after a long process of theological debate and discussion that the position of the Papacy in the Christian Church was fully clarified and defined. But this is not a valid argument against our claim that it was accepted, in principle, by the Christian Church from the beginning. The same process of gradual clarification takes place in the sphere of civil law, which is not changed but more accurately defined, even for lawyers, as a result of authoritative legal decisions on intricate cases that come before the courts. As Cardinal Newman came to realise even while he was still an Anglican, "it is a common occurrence for a quarrel and lawsuit to bring out the state of the law, and the most unexpected results often follow . . . It is a less difficulty that the Papal supremacy was not formally acknowledged in the second century than that there was no formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity till the fourth. No doctrine is defined till it is violated" (*Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845: IV, 3).

Postscript

On April 19, 1949, we received a booklet from the National Union of Protestants entitled *A Roman Catholic to a Minister*. It contained a 16-page reply by an American Protestant Minister, the Rev. Albert E. Johnson, to a 4-page letter which

he had received from an American Catholic priest, Fr. John D. Murphy, on the subject of the Roman Catholic claims.

On page 5 of his reply, Mr. Johnson states that "there is not a crumb of evidence" for the supposition that St. Peter was ever in Rome, and on page 3 that "there is no *reliable historian* who would dare say that Peter visited Rome." It would be interesting to hear Mr. Johnson's definition of "a crumb of evidence" and also of a "reliable historian." Most experts in historical studies would think twice before denying this title to Adolf Harnack, the best-known Protestant scholar of his day, or to Professor F. J. Foakes-Jackson. What then can have induced both these men to shatter their historical reputations (in the eyes of Mr. Johnson) by lending their support (presumably without "a crumb of evidence") to the Romanist theory that St. Peter went to Rome and died there? (See Harnack, *Chronologie I* [1897], 240ff.; Foakes-Jackson, *St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles* [1927]. Or again what can have induced Luther (*Werke*, new Weimer edition, XII, 398), Grotius, Ewald, von Soden, Dobschtuz, W. Bauer and a long line of other distinguished men in the field of Scriptural studies—other one of them a Roman Catholic—to believe that the First Epistle of Peter was written at Rome, the "Babylon" of 1 Pet. 5, 13 (cf. Rev. 14, 8; 16, 19-18, 24)?)

Mr. Johnson's own standard of historical accuracy is certainly an original one. On page 2 of his reply to Fr. Murphy he refers to the account of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, 13-32 and says that "James, Peter and John presided." John's name is not mentioned once in connection with the Council.

(3) The command given by Christian to His Apostles was that they should "teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In the exercise of this mission Christ Himself will be with them "even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28, 18-20).

Thus the teaching authority of the Church can never be used to lead Christ's flock astray; otherwise Christ would no longer be with us. In other words, the teaching authority of the Church, formally and solemnly exercised, must be infallible.

The privilege of infallibility was promised in a special and individual manner to Peter. "I have prayed for thee," said Christ to him, "that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke 22, 32). The Protestant

commentator, Bengel, explains the sense of these words: "In preserving Peter, whose fall would have dragged down all the others, Jesus preserved them all. The whole of this discourse of Our Lord presupposes that Peter was the first of the Apostles and that on his resistance or fall would depend more or less the faith of the rest" (*Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, 1742, in *h.l.*). Thus, whoever else may err, the Rock on which the Church is built can never err; and this must hold good not only for the first holder of the headship of the Church but for all its holders to the end of time.

In 1870 the infallible teaching authority of the Church as a whole, acting through the Council of bishops assembled at the Vatican, defined the doctrine of Papal infallibility as an article of faith and at the same time laid down the three conditions which must be fulfilled before a Papal decision can be regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as necessarily infallible.

First, the Pope must speak as the supreme pastor and teacher of all Christians, not merely as an individual priest or even as Bishop of Rome.

Secondly, he must define a doctrine concerning faith or moral conduct; if he cares to express his views on other subjects he does so on equal terms with other men.

Finally, he must define a doctrine to be held by the whole Church, not merely by any particular Christian or group of Christians.

When these three conditions are present, the Vatican Council declares that the Pope is preserved from error, not in virtue of his personal virtue or learning (or lack of them), but "in virtue of the divine assistance promised to him in the person of St. Peter." This was exactly the line taken by St. Augustine in his own day: "Even though some bad men should have crept into that series of bishops from Peter himself to Anastasius, who now sits on the same Chair where Peter sat, this would in no way tell against the Church or against innocent Christians to whom the Lord, in His thoughtful care, said concerning evil rulers: "Those things which they say unto you do ye, but do ye not things which they do, for they say and do not perform" (*Epis.* 53, 1).

Catholics have never denied that an occasional "bad man" has crept into the long series of bishops from Peter to John

XXIII who "sat on the same Chair where Peter sat." But, as a distinguished Anglican theologian said in the last of a series of eight lectures on the Papacy which he delivered before the University of Oxford in 1942, "in spite of the occasional failure of individual Popes to uphold a morality consistent with the demands of their high office, it is a strange form of historical blindness which is unable to perceive in its long and remarkable history a supernatural grandeur which no mere secular institution has ever attained in equal measure. Its strange, almost mystical, faithfulness to type, its marked degree of changelessness, its steadfast clinging to tradition and precedent, above all its burning zeal for order and *Justitia* compel us to acknowledge that the Papacy must always defy a categorization which is purely of this world" (Trevor Gervase Jalland, D.D., *The Church and the Papacy*, 1944, pp. 542-3).

INDULGENCES

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *What does your Church mean by an indulgence and what is the Scriptural authority for such teaching?*
- (2) *Are indulgences granted for money, works of penance and the wearing of a scapular; and if so, where did this teaching originate?*

Our Answers

(1) An indulgence, according to the Catholic Catechism, is *the remission of the whole, or part of, the temporal punishment due to sin, which sometimes remains after the sin itself has been forgiven.* Therefore, an indulgence is not either pardon for past sin, permission for future sin, or remission of eternal punishment after death. "The temporal punishment" is not inflicted by the Church, nor measured by the Church; it is in God's hands alone. Scripture for it may be found in John 15, 2: "Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit." The Church understands this to mean that the justified soul needs further purification before it is fully acceptable to God. Purification normally means suffering. Hence the Church in ancient times prescribed works of self-denial, such as so many days of fasting, to those whose sins had been forgiven. She did so on the authority given to St. Peter (Matt. 16, 19): "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on

earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." On the same authority, she charges, as she sees fit, one sort of good work for another and an easier one. Thus an indulgence of so many days (say 300) means that the Church substitutes for so many days of severe penance, such as fasting, something easier, such as saying short prayers. The easier thing is normally something which people are likely to do with more spiritual earnestness than they would put into the harder work. Thus indulgences are granted on certain holydays for the saying of short prayers and attendance at religious services, because people feel more devotion on such occasions. The practical value of indulgences is therefore threefold; they keep before the mind the need for voluntary self-denial, even after sin has been forgiven; they throw emphasis on spiritual earnestness in doing what is smaller, rather than on much repetition of what is greater and tends to be done mechanically; they temper the severity of penance to the weakness of human nature and thus encourage people to do at least something in that way.

The doctrine of indulgences rests on a threefold foundation:

- (a) the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, which is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed (cf. Rom. 12, 5). This Communion unites the Church Militant on earth, the Church Suffering in Purgatory and the Church Triumphant in Heaven;
- (b) the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction by which the good of one soul becomes the good of all. "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church" (Col. 1, 24);
- (c) the infinity of Christ's merits. "Upon the altar of the Cross Christ shed His blood, not merely a drop . . . but a copious torrent . . . thereby laying up an infinite treasure for mankind" (Clement VI, *Unigenitus*, 1343).

This community of spiritual goods between the Redeemer and the redeemed is the source of indulgences in the sense that when the Church substitutes an easier for a harder work of penance, as has been already explained, she depends on the merits of Christ and the holier members of Christ's body to make up the difference for the less holy.

It must, however, be made clear that penance presupposes

repentance and that *no one can repent for another, even though one can do works of penance for another.*

(2) Indulgences are granted for all sorts of good works, including almsdeeds, penitential practices and the wearing of religious emblems, *but only on condition that they are performed with a truly religious disposition of soul*; if this disposition is wanting they are not, in the true sense of the term, good works at all.

From the fourth century onwards bishops were empowered to grant remissions of penance to sinners who were judged deserving of them. "We decree," says the Council of Ancyra (314), "that the bishops, taking into account the penitents' conduct, have power either to show mercy or to prolong the duration of the penance" (Can. 5: Mansi, *concil. II*, 514-5).

In later times indulgences were granted to pilgrims and crusaders, e.g. by the Council of Clermont (1095), and to benefactors of hospitals (e.g. the mediaeval hospital of Halberstadt in Germany). Scapulars, or symbols of the habits worn by different religious orders with which laymen and women desired to associate themselves, first came into use during the thirteenth century. At present, indulgences are generally granted for the recitation of certain prayers, e.g., the short Biblical prayers: "Lord, save us; we perish" and "Thy will be done."

SAINTS

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *Can you explain how dead saints hear the prayers of those who are living?*
- (2) *How long must a person be dead and what must they have done to be canonised by the Church of Rome, and is there any Scripture for the canonising of saints?*

Our Answers

(1) To ask Catholics to explain how dead saints can hear the prayers of those who are living seems rather to beg the question. For saints who are dead in body are very much alive in soul. The mind of man is part of his soul and its vital activity is to know and to acquire knowledge. It would seem

then that the burden of proof ought to be on those who deny that the saints in heaven can know what passes on the earth, not upon those who assume that saints do not lose touch with the Church on earth by going to heaven. St. Paul tells of the saints of the Old Testament who endured torment and death "that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebr. 11, 35). He calls them "witnesses" and says that we on earth are "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," while we struggle against evil as they did (Hebr. 12, 1-5). It is at least, probable that St. Paul thought of those ancient saints as watching over their descendants whom he was then exhorting. Our Lord tells us that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15, 10). This does not prove that the saints in heaven know what happens on earth, but it does prove that some knowledge of that kind can and does reach spirits who have no bodily senses. The Scripture does not explain *how* everything is done; it does not explain *how* Our Lord, after His Resurrection, came and stood in the midst of the disciples, "the doors being shut" (John 20, 26), any more than it explains *how* the angels of God know that a sinner repents. For Catholics it is enough that, by the power of God, it is possible for the saints in heaven to know all things on earth that God wishes them to know.

(2) The canonising of saints is not *making* anyone a saint God alone by His grace can make saints. Canonising is declaring the fact that somebody's life has been marked by such evidence of outstanding holiness that he is certainly in heaven and worthy of public honour for heroic virtue practised during his life. Except in the case of martyrs, canonisation does not normally take place until at least fifty years after death. The purpose of this delay is to give ample time for evidence to be collected and examined. The final proof of holiness which is required for canonisation is the working of miracles by the deceased. A miracle must be something for which no human explanation is possible, such as the instantaneous cure of some organic and long-standing disease. The cure of nervous disease or of functional disease will not even be considered, for this may be cured, as it may be caused, by hysterical imagination.

The *principle* of canonising saints, that is by the public honouring of holy men after death, is clearly Scriptural, as may be seen from such references to the patriarchs as the

following : Deut. 9, 27 ; 2 Chron. 20, 7 ; Isa. 41, 8 ; Matt. 3, 8-10 ; Mark 12, 26-27 ; Heb. 11, 4-40.

In early times, the local Christian communities put the same principle into practice as regards the martyrs and, after persecution had died down, as regards those whose lives had given the highest examples of Christian virtue. From the tenth century onward this official and informal method of canonisation was replaced by a solemn and formal procedure, the veracity of which is guaranteed for Catholics by the Scriptures which assures them that the Church cannot err in teaching religious truth to her members nor in proposing for their veneration and imitation worthy examples of the Christian way of life and death.

Needless to say, no such guarantee exists with regard to the informal canonisations of earlier centuries, though the names of men and women honoured in this way are included in the Church's martyrology or liturgical register of saints. Actually, when lives and calendars of local saints were being compiled in those times, mistakes were frequently made and many names were entered in the lists which had little or no right to appear there. In modern times, hagiologists, or historical experts in the lives of the saints, have done invaluable work in sifting what is true from what is false in these ancient registers. It should be obvious that the infallibility of a Church which patronises the labours of such scholars is not affected by the results of their investigations.

MARRIAGE

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *What is the attitude of your Church to mixed marriages, and is there anything to bind the non-members of your Church before consenting to the marriage ?*
- (2) *What is the difference between a divorce, an annulment and a dispensation, according to your Church ?*

Our Answers

(1) The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to mixed marriages is defined by canon 1060 of her official Code of Canon Law : " The Church prohibits with the utmost severity the contraction of marriage anywhere between two baptised

persons one of whom is a Catholic and the other a member of a heretical or schismatical body." Thus there is, in technical language, an ecclesiastical "impediment" against mixed marriages. The Church does not relax ("dispense from") this impediment unless :

- 1° Just and grave causes demand it ;
- 2° The non-Catholic party guarantees not to endanger the faith of the Catholic party, and both parties guarantee to baptise and bring up all the children who may be born to them in the Catholic religion and in no other (Canon 1061, 1°).

" Normally these guarantees should be demanded in writing (*ibid.* 2°).

The Church's law is reproduced quite accurately in the N.U.P.'s answer to this question (*Questions*, page 7). A comment follows : " It is also well known that the Church of Rome has over-ruled the civil law in regard to marriage." Does this mean that every Christian Church should take its marriage laws from the state ? If so, then the Church of Ireland stands condemned as well as the Church of Rome. The "table of kindred and affinity" given in her Prayer Book still prohibits marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister, though such marriages were legalised in English civil law by an Act of 1907.

The Catholic Church recognises and reverences the authority of the State in its own proper sphere : but she cannot take the civil law as the measure and rule of Christian duty in regard to marriage, since for Christians, marriage is above all a religious matter. It is God, not man, Who joins man and woman together to form one flesh (Mark 10, 6-9).

(2) a) A divorce in the full sense involves the dissolution of a true and validly contracted marriage, leaving one or both of the married parties free to marry again. A "separation" on the other hand—sometimes called a "divorce" in a restricted sense—merely means that the married parties do not live together ; but they are still husband and wife, and neither is free to marry again. According to Catholic teaching, husband and wife may separate when, as sometimes, there is adequate reason for it ; but no power whatever, ecclesiastical or civil—not even the Pope—can *dissolve the marriage bond between*

two baptised people, once they have consummated the marriage by actually living together as lawful husband and wife.

This principle admits of no exceptions. It is not a rule laid down by ecclesiastical authority for Roman Catholics only, it is a doctrine which the Catholic Church believes to be inherent in Christ's own teaching on the indissolubility of marriage (Matt. 19, 3-12; Mark 10, 2-12; Luke 16, 18) and which she therefore regards as authoritative for all Christians. In her eyes, therefore, the consummated marriage of a Protestant husband and wife who were baptised and married in their own church is as true, sacred and indissoluble a union as the consummated marriage of two Catholics.

b) Sometimes, for one reason or another, a marriage validly contracted between two baptised persons, or between a baptised person and an unbaptised one, is never consummated. Does a marriage of this kind, which has never found its full expression and final sanction in actual marriage union, also possess the quality of absolute indissolubility? No. According to Canon Law (Canon 1119) such a marriage is dissolved or "annulled":

1. if one of the parties takes solemn vows in a Religious Order;
2. if the supreme ecclesiastical authority, for an adequate reason and at the request of one or both of the parties concerned, grants the annulment.

Furthermore, in the case of a marriage between two unbaptised persons, one of whom subsequently becomes a Christian by receiving Christian baptism, the Roman Catholic Church acts on the principle laid down by St. Paul in I Cor. 7, 12-15: "If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman who has an unbelieving husband, if he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. . . . Yet if the unbelieving one departs, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases."

Thus in certain exceptional and well-defined circumstances the Christian law of marriage, as the Catholic Church understands, authorises the annulment or dissolution of consummated marriages and of marriages contracted by unbaptised persons. But, we repeat, there can be no annulment of a marriage *validly entered into and duly consummated by two baptised persons*. Such a union embodies the reality of Christian marriage in its

final form—"the two shall be one flesh" (Matt. 19, 5-6; Mark 10, 8; I Cor. 6, 16, Eph. 5, 31)—so that marriage becomes a "great mystery," an outward symbol of the inward union of Christ and His Church (Eph. 5, 32). No human authority can now nullify the marriage, no change of personal circumstances except the death of one of the parties can dissolve it. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19, 6; Mark 10, 9). This principle, so emphatically taught by Christ Himself, explains the Roman Catholic Church's objection to the divorce laws which have been put into force in many modern countries and which authorise the dissolution of marriage, without regard to Christian ideals or principles, for all kinds of reasons, often for very trivial ones.

"Annulment," in the sense in which we have here explained it, should be distinguished from a "declaration of nullity," though the two are frequently confused in practice. Strictly speaking, an annulment involves the dissolution of an existing marriage bond; a declaration of nullity merely states that two who are *apparently* married were never truly and validly married at all. Such a declaration is granted by ecclesiastical authority on clear proof that force or mistaken identity or bigamy or some such factor has intervened to make a marriage null and void *from the start*. Here, for instance is a case that was tried, not in the Roman courts, but in the English ones. A man named Sebright forced a certain Miss Scott to marry him, first under threat of ruining her financially and finally of shooting her. The judge did not give Miss Scott a decree of divorce; there could be no divorce because there had been no marriage. Instead he gave her exactly what she would have got in the Roman courts: a decree of nullity based on the principle that where there has been no true consent there has been no true marriage. (See *Nullity of Marriage*, by F. J. Sheed, pp. 39-41).

GAMBLING AND DRINKING

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *What is your attitude to members of your Church who are bookmakers and gamblers?*
- (2) *Does your Church condone its members who are publicans and habitual drunkards?*

Our Answers

(1) The word "gambling" is commonly taken to mean reckless betting, playing at games of chance with the risk of losing more money than one can afford. The Church condemns this as sinful. The Church does not condemn betting or games of chance in which the amount of money risked is not more than the persons concerned could afford to spend for recreational purposes, without prejudice to their duty of providing for themselves or their families or others who may be dependent on them, according to their state in life. Bookmaking is a lawful trade for Catholics in so far as it provides a means for betting as a reasonable form of recreation. If individuals misuse these means, that is wrong for them; not for honest bookmakers.

(2) The same rule applies to publicans as to bookmakers. Drunkenness is a mortal sin and habitual drunkards are not admitted to Holy Communion unless they have a sincere purpose of amendment and have been absolved in Confession. But drinking intoxicating liquor in moderation is quite lawful, as is clear from John 2, 7-11 and I Tim. 5, 23. Accordingly the trade which a publican exercises is in itself a lawful one, but he ought not to supply drink to anyone who has obviously had quite enough already; still less ought he to encourage drinking to excess.

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