

THE "MESSENGER" QUESTION BOX

THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

Q.—How can I become a Member of the Apostleship of Prayer?

A.—Apply to any Promoter of the Apostleship of Prayer; or, apply direct to the Office of THE IRISH MESSENGER, 37, Lr. Leeson Street, Dublin, 2, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

Q.—What Indulgences are granted for membership of the Apostleship of Prayer?

A.—As it would take up too much space to set down these Indulgences here it would be better to consult the Handbook of the Apostleship of Prayer, where these Indulgences are printed in full.

Q.—If a person wishes to recite a Decade of the Rosary as a practice of the Apostleship of Prayer, is it necessary for him to recite a special Decade apart from his daily Rosary?

A.—It is quite sufficient for such a person to offer up one Decade of his daily Rosary for the intentions of the Apostleship of Prayer.

Q.—Must a person who joins the Apostleship of Prayer fulfil all its practices?

A.—The only essential practice for those who wish to become members of the Apostleship of Prayer is the First, namely, the "Morning Offering" daily. Members are free to adopt the other practices as they wish.

Q.—How may a person obtain the prayers of the members of the Apostleship of Prayer for a special intention?

A.—All you have to do is to write to THE IRISH MESSENGER Office making your request.

Q.—What is the meaning of the Treasury of Good Works?

A.—The Treasury of Good Works consists of certain good works, e.g., Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Visits to the Sick, the Recitation of the Rosary, performed for the intentions of the Apostleship of Prayer.

Q.—May adults be enrolled as Crusaders of the Blessed Sacrament?

A.—Yes. Adults, to become Crusaders of the Blessed Sacrament, should be enrolled as members of the Apostleship of Prayer and promise to go to Holy Communion at least once a week. Any Promoter of the Apostleship of Prayer has power to enroll Crusaders.

THE MASS

Q.—Is not a "Low Mass" as good as a "High Mass"? Is it not all the one Sacrifice?

A.—There is exactly the same Sacrifice in a "Low Mass" as in a "High Mass." The latter, however, is carried out with greater solemnity and more external honour is paid to Our Saviour in a "High Mass" than in a "Low Mass."

Q.—What are "Votive" Masses?

A.—Votive Masses are those which do not correspond with the Office of the day but are said by the choice of the priest.

Q.—Could a person hear Mass properly without seeing the Altar?

A.—Provided a person could follow the Mass, by seeing the movements of the people in front of him, by hearing the bell, etc., he could assist at the Mass though he could not see the Altar.

Q.—Is it possible to hear Mass over the Wireless?

A.—No Catholic can fulfil the obligation of being present at Mass on Sundays and Holidays by simply listening to music and the prayers of Mass through the wireless on these days. Such listening in, of course, may be very profitable, Mass.

Q.—Some times people do not stand during the reading of the Last Gospel, especially if they are making their thanksgiving after Holy Communion, is this correct?

A.—If for a good reason, as the one indicated, people do not stand during the Last Gospel, it is quite all right.

Q.—Is a person late for Mass who comes into the church when the priest is uncovering the chalice?

A.—A person is late for Mass who is absent from any part of the Mass. If a person is absent from a notable part of Sunday Mass through his own fault then the sin is grievous.

Q.—Which is the more correct thing to do; to kneel down or remain standing while the Credo is being said during

Mass?

A.—The more correct thing to do is to kneel during the Credo. In many places there is a custom to remain standing while the Credo is being recited. One should conform to the local custom.

Q.—What is meant by the Sequence at Mass?

A.—The Sequence is a hymn, which is recited at some Masses just before the book is moved for the Gospel. For instance, the "Stabat Mater" is recited for the Feast of the Seven Dolours.

Q.—What is meant by the "Ordinary of the Mass"?

A.—By the "Ordinary of the Mass" is meant that part of the Mass which is the same in every Mass. Certain prayers in the Mass vary according to the Feast and season and others are always the same. These latter are called the "Ordinary."

Q.—What are Gregorian Masses?

A.—Gregorian Masses consist of thirty Masses offered up on thirty consecutive days for the repose of a soul in Purgatory. All the Masses need not be said by the same priest, nor is it necessary that they all be said on the same altar. They were instituted by Pope Gregory the Great, to whom the efficacy of thirty daily consecutive Masses was revealed.

Q.—What do you mean by "A Month's Mind"?

A.—A Month's Mind is a Mass offered for a person thirty days after his death. This is reckoned from any day between the person's death and burial.

Q.—What are the three cards, usually framed, which are to be seen on the altar during Mass?

A.—These cards or charts, contain prayers which the priest recites during the Mass.

Q.—Must Priests say Mass daily?

A.—At the present time daily Mass is the practice of priests unless they are prevented by illness, but the Church does not impose the obligation of daily Mass on them.

Q.—May Mass be celebrated after 12 noon.

A.—According to Canon Law Mass should not be commenced sooner than an hour before dawn or later than one hour after midday, unless there is a just cause or a legitimate concession for beginning Mass sooner or later than the times mentioned.

Q.—When a priest celebrates three Masses on Christmas Day does he receive the Body and Blood of Christ three times?

A.—As the three Masses celebrated by a priest on Christmas Day are three distinct Masses the priest receives the Body and Blood of Christ at each of the Masses.

Q.—May a Priest offer a Mass which is not a Requiem Mass, that is without wearing black vestments, for a dead person?

A.—Mass may be offered for the dead on any day of the year when Mass is allowed, and black vestments need not necessarily be worn.

Q.—For High Mass is it necessary for the Deacon and Sub-Deacon to be fasting as well as the Celebrant?

A.—Only the Celebrant is required to be fasting for High Mass.

Q.—Suppose a person going to Mass on a Sunday were to find a person dying on the roadside should he go for a doctor though this would involve his missing Mass that day?

A.—In such a case a person should go for a doctor. Such an act of charity would excuse his missing of Mass.

Q. What should be done with Mass Cards?

A.—We presume you refer to Requiem Mass Cards which are sent to the relatives of deceased persons expressing one's intention of getting Masses offered for the deceased. These cards are generally placed on the coffin of the dead person. After the funeral relatives of the dead person may use their own discretion as to what should be done with them.

Q.—Sometimes when I attend Mass in our Church two other Masses are being celebrated at the same time at the side altars, what should be done to gain a benefit from these Masses?

A.—The best thing to do in such case is to concentrate on the Mass offered up at the High Altar, but have the intention

of gaining as much as you can from the other two Masses.

Q.—Can a priest offer Mass for a soul in Purgatory without including other souls?

A.—A priest can offer the "special fruit" of the Mass for a particular soul; but all the souls in Purgatory as well as the faithful on earth share in the "general fruit" of each Mass.

Q.—Why is a person forbidden not to leave until the end of Mass on Sundays, but may leave before the end on weekdays?

A.—To hear the whole of Mass on Sunday is of obligation and therefore to omit a portion of the Mass is sinful; the gravity of the sin will depend on the amount of the Mass omitted. Mass on weekdays is not of obligation, unless the days be holidays of obligation.

Q.—When souls pass from Purgatory to Heaven do these souls know that we will offer Masses and pray for them?

A.—As it is a common belief in the Church that the saints in Heaven hear our prayers, such souls would know that Masses and prayers are being said for them.

Q.—When asking a priest to say Mass for our dead relatives is it necessary to tell him their names?

A.—No. The priest will offer the Mass for your intention, which is the repose of the souls of your relatives, and that is quite sufficient.

Q.—When I think of getting a Mass said for my father thoughts of my other dead relatives and friends come to my mind, and I do not know for whom I ought to get the Mass offered?

A.—The best thing for you to do is to get the Mass offered for your dead friends and relatives, and to leave the application of the fruits of the Mass to God; He knows best to which of your deceased friends the fruits of the Mass should be applied.

Q.—A person promises to get a certain number of Masses said in thanksgiving for favours received, must all these Masses be said at once, and is it necessary to mention the names of the saints in whose honour he wishes the Masses to be offered?

A.—It will be sufficient to get the Masses celebrated according as circumstances will permit, and there is no need to mention the names of the saints.

Q.—When I was young I promised to say prayers and get Masses offered for the dead, am I bound by the promise now? I can't remember what prayers, and the number of Masses I promised?

A.—Generally such a promise is not made with the intention of binding one in conscience and so its fulfilment does not bind under the pain of sin. It would be well, however, to say some prayers and get Masses said for your intention, if that could be conveniently done.

Q.—Why are the vestments used by the priest in the celebration of Mass of different colours for different days?

A.—Mass is offered for many purposes and in honour of different classes of saints, and each of these is symbolised by the colour of the vestments worn during Mass. Five colours are ordinarily used by the Church: White vestments signify innocence, purity and glory and are used on the feasts of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the angels and confessors.

Red vestments symbolise charity and martyrdom and are worn for Masses of the Holy Ghost, on the feasts of the Holy Cross, and of martyrs. Green vestments are symbolic of hope and are worn on Sundays after the Epiphany and after Pentecost, on which there is no special commemoration. Violet or Purple vestments, expressive of penance, are used during Lent and Advent (except on Saints' days), and on the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Black vestments signify mourning and are worn on Good Friday and at Masses for the dead. On the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and on the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) Rose coloured vestments may be used.

Q.—Is the reading of the Missal the only way of assisting properly at Mass?

A.—No. There are several methods of assisting at Mass, any one of which may be used to attend Mass with devotion. The reading of the Missal is recommended because a person who reads the Missal reads the same prayers as the priest does. The best method is the method that suits each particular person best.

Q.—Is it quite all right to say the Rosary during Mass instead of reading the prayers in the Prayer Book?

A.—Reciting the Rosary is an excellent way of assisting at Mass.

Q.—What is the meaning of the words "of the Day" which are put for some days during the month instead of the name

of a Saint, on the Calendar of the Apostleship of Prayer?

A.—When the words "Of the Day" are put on the Calendar instead of the name of a Saint, this means that the Ferial Mass is said on this day and not the Mass of a particular Saint. Except for particular seasons of the year, such as Lent and Advent, the Ferial Mass is usually the same as the Mass of the previous Sunday.

Q.—My sister has to leave Mass often at the Post Communion in order to let her husband go to a later Mass; does she fulfil the obligation of hearing Sunday Mass?

A.—Yes.

Q.—What is the meaning of the cross between words in several places in the Missal?

A.—This means the Sign of the Cross which the priest makes over an article he is blessing.

HOLY COMMUNION

Q.—How often should a daily communicant go to confession?

A.—In general a person who goes daily to Holy Communion and has no serious sin on his soul is advised to go to Confession weekly, as the purer a soul is at the time of Holy Communion, the more grace is obtained. In a case like this it is always good to get the advice of one's confessor.

Q.—A person be in the state of grace, may he go to Holy Communion every morning during the week after Confession, and also, on the following Sunday?

A.—It is the wish of the Church and the Holy Father that the faithful should communicate as often as possible. Provided therefore that a person is in the state of grace and fulfils the other conditions required for his reception of the Sacrament he may go to Holy Communion as often as he can, while he remains in that state. It is advisable, however, for frequent communicants to go regularly to confession.

Q.—Which is the best time to go to Holy Communion, during Mass or after Mass?

A.—The proper time to receive Holy Communion is during Mass after the priest's Communion. Often for the convenience of the people Communion is distributed after Mass but those who can do so should receive during Mass.

Q.—"In some churches where Holy Communion is given before Mass, some people receive as soon as they enter the church, without any preparation, is this correct?"

A.—In such a case a person should always come to the church in time to make a good preparation before Holy Communion. To receive Holy Communion without any preparation would be, at the very least, most disrespectful to the Blessed Sacrament.

Q.—Is it necessary to genuflect at the altar after receiving Holy Communion?

A.—It is not necessary to genuflect at the altar rails after receiving Holy Communion. Oftentimes it is very undesirable to do so when so many are waiting to approach the rails.

Q.—A person who lives a good life but who lives a long way from the church would like to receive Holy Communion each Sunday of the month, is it sufficient for such a person to go to Confession once only during the month?

A.—Provided no mortal sin has been committed since the Confession such a person may receive Holy Communion each Sunday. It would be well, however, to consult one's Confessor about this matter.

Q.—Is a person obliged to go to Holy Communion after having been to Confession?

A.—No. Only Paschal Communion is obligatory on a person.

Q.—Which is better to follow the prayers of the Mass after Holy Communion, or to say one's own prayers of thanksgiving?

A.—The better method is the method each one finds more helpful.

Q.—If a person takes food before going to bed, may he receive Holy Communion on the following morning, although some particles of the food may remain in the teeth, and perhaps may be unknowingly swallowed before the morning Mass?

A.—In such a case a person may receive Holy Communion.

Q.—Is it necessary to tell the priest if he gives a person two Hosts at Holy Communion?

A.—A person who receives two Hosts at Holy Communion should not worry but consume both Hosts in the ordinary way.

Q.—May a man smoke on a Sunday morning before going to Holy Communion?

A.—A man may smoke on a Sunday morning before Holy Communion. Out of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament many men prefer not to smoke before Holy Communion, and we heartily recommend this practice.

Q.—Is it right to use tooth paste when cleaning the teeth before going to Holy Communion?

A.—Tooth paste may be used when cleaning the teeth before Holy Communion.

Q.—If the Sacred Host falls on the ground when a person is about to receive Holy Communion, is that a sign that the person is unworthy to receive it?

A.—Certainly not. It is merely an accident and to think otherwise would be mere superstition and quite wrong.

Q.—I suffer from Asthma and inhale vapour of Glycerine in order to get relief, may I do so in the morning before going to Holy Communion?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Sometimes after receiving Holy Communion, the Host adheres to the palate of my set of teeth, is this any harm?

A.—No. In such a case the Host may be gently removed with the tongue.

Q.—I have artificial teeth and always worry after Communion thinking that a particle of the Host may remain under the plate."

A.—It is quite wrong to worry in such a case. Receive the Host in the ordinary way and consume it as soon as possible; and then lay aside all worry.

Q.—My artificial teeth are slightly loose, is it necessary to remove them before receiving Holy Communion?

A.—In such a case there seems to be no necessity to remove the artificial teeth before receiving Holy Communion.

Q.—Are sinful thoughts, which come into a person's head immediately after receiving Holy Communion, a sign that the person has received unworthily?

A.—Sinful thoughts which a person experiences unwillingly after Holy Communion are not a sign that the person has received unworthily.

Q.—Sometimes I get bad thoughts before Holy Communion and often I feel no devotion when about to receive Holy Communion. Is it wrong to receive in such a state?

A.—Bad thoughts, even before Holy Communion, when not voluntarily entertained are not sinful, and therefore are no hindrance to the reception of Holy Communion. The absence of a feeling of sensible devotion before or after Holy Communion is no indication that a person was not prepared for the Sacrament.

Q.—Is a scrupulous person who remembers some sins of the past which he thinks have not been confessed but does not know whether they are mortal or venial, bound to confess these sins?

A.—There is no obligation on such a person to confess these sins.

Q.—If a person, by mistake, ate meat on Friday, could he go to Communion the following day without going to Confession?

A.—Yes. There might be some fault in forgetting the abstinence, but it would be a slight one and should not hinder one from receiving Communion.

Q.—A person wishes to receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive days, beginning on a Sunday. Is it necessary for that person to go to Confession again on the following Saturday if he is in the state of grace?

A.—Provided a person is in the state of grace, Confession is not required in such a case. For those who go daily to Communion, weekly confession is advised, so that our souls may be as pure as possible for the reception of so great a Sacrament.

SIN AND CONFESSION

Q.—What is an occasion of sin? May a person visit a place which formerly was an occasion of sin for him if his absence from that place would cause inconvenience to him?

A.—Occasions of sin are any external circumstances (persons, places, or things), inciting to sin. They are called proximate occasions when they are generally followed by a sinful act, and remote when they are rarely followed by a sinful act. The general rule with regard to occasions of sin is that we are bound to avoid them if proximate, but not if remote. In view of this general rule if a person, by taking precautions, makes a place which was formerly a proximate

occasion of sin for him a remote occasion of sin he could go there.

Q.—What are "Reserved sins?"

A.—"Reserved sins" are certain sins the absolution from which a superior reserves to himself. Certain cases are reserved to the Pope and others are reserved to the Bishops. In the latter case the special reserved sins and the number will depend on the Bishop of the place.

Q.—Are we bound to confess doubtful mortal sins?

A.—Doubtful mortal sins, namely, whether we committed them, whether they are mortal, or whether we have already told them in confession, need not be told in confession. It is good to confess them as doubtful sins, since, by doing so, we may save ourselves worry.

Q.—What do you mean by the sin of "Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?" Why cannot this sin be pardoned?

A.—The following sins are generally called ' Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit ': Final Impenitence, Despair, Obstinacy in Evil, Resistance of the Known Truth, Presumption, Hatred of Fraternal Charity. These sins are said to be unpardonable, not because they cannot be forgiven, because it is of faith that there is no sin that cannot be forgiven by God, but because people who thus sin become so depraved that their conversion is very difficult.

Q.—If a person learns later that an act, which he did not consider sinful when doing it, is ordinarily a mortal sin, is it a mortal sin in his case?

A.—If at the time of doing a certain act a person did not think such an act mortally sinful he did not commit a mortal sin and the knowledge he gets afterwards cannot change this.

Q.—Is it sufficient for a good Confession to have Contrition some time previous to the actual Confession?

A.—To prepare for confession, say, the day previous to the actual Confession and to have sorrow for the sins you will confess the following day is quite all right provided no new serious sins were committed in the meantime. An effort should be made to renew

this sorrow before the actual Confession.

Q.—If a sin were committed in a church does this circumstance add to its guilt?

A.—This would depend on the nature of the sin. For instance, to maliciously break the window of a private house is a sin, to do the same injury to a church window is a greater sin, because of the irreverence shown to God's house. Generally a notable external sin committed in a church will nearly always have an aggravating circumstance which makes the sin greater, owing to the obvious irreverence added to the malice of the sin. For instance, to steal a pound from a person in church is a somewhat greater sin than to steal a pound from the same person in the street, because such an act could hardly be done without an added sin of irreverence.

Q.—When a priest asks a penitent to mention a sin in his past life, is it necessary to mention a mortal sin, or to tell the number of times?

A.—It is never necessary to mention a mortal sin that has been confessed and absolved. A priest asks a penitent to mention some sin of his past life to make sure that the person is presenting sufficient material for absolution and has greater sorrow. To mention a venial sin of the past is therefore quite sufficient. It is advisable to conclude one's accusation by a general accusation, e.g., "For these and all the sins of my past Life, especially sins of uncharitableness, anger or lying, I wish to accuse myself."

Q.—How is a General Confession to be made?

A.—Methods of making a General Confession are given in the larger Prayer Books. The confessor is always ready to help a person in this matter.

Q.—If a person forgets to mention a few serious sins in a General Confession, is it necessary to mention these sins in his next Confession?

A.—These sins need not be mentioned again unless the General Confession was made for the purpose of rectifying previous bad Confessions.

Q.—If a person be in mortal sin what benefit does he gain from prayers said and Masses heard while in that state?

A.—St. Paul tell us: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor and deliver my body to be burned and have not charity it profiteth me nothing." Good works, therefore, performed while a person is in the state of mortal sin are of no avail. They may, however, win for the person the grace of repentance. An Act of Perfect Contrition, with the real

intention of going to Confession as soon as possible will restore sanctifying grace to the soul.

Q.—What use are the prayers and other good works performed by a person in mortal sin?

A.—A person in mortal sin can always make an act of perfect contrition and this act with the intention of going to confession as soon as possible will reconcile him to God. Apart from this, prayers and good works can obtain for a person in mortal sin the grace of repentance.

Q. Just after Confession a person remembers that he has forgotten to tell a mortal sin in the confession, should he return immediately to the confessional in order to tell the sin?

A.—Provided the telling of the sin has not been omitted through carelessness it is sufficient to tell such a sin in the next confession. Such sins are absolved by the general absolution of the priest with the obligation however, that they are confessed when remembered.

Q.—What are "doubtful" sins, and is a person obliged to tell them in confession?

A.—Doubtful sins may be divided into three classes: A person may doubt whether the sins were ever committed, whether they were ever confessed, or whether they were mortal or venial. If any of these doubts is really present then there is no obligation to confess them though it is advisable to confess them as doubtful sins for peace of mind.

Q.—A scrupulous person has been advised by a confessor never to go back on past sins but thinks that the telling of certain past sins would bring great peace of mind, would it be advisable for such a person to tell these sins?

A.—Such a person should always follow the advice of the confessor and it is only by following the confessor's advice that peace of mind may be got.

Q.—If a certain article is ordered from a shop and two articles are sent by mistake, does a person sin who keeps the second article without paying for it?

A.—Of course. To keep the second article without paying for it would be just the same as keeping an article you found though you knew the owner.

Q.—Is it a sin to gamble?

A. Gambling in itself is not sinful; it is, however, very often an occasion of sin; the losing of money which should go to the support of one's family, the neglect of duty, often the risking of money and property belonging to other people.

MARRIAGE

Q.—Is "company keeping" sinful?

A.—"Company keeping" when carried out according to the intention of the Church, namely, with a view to marriage, and using the safeguards which the Church advises in such cases, is not sinful.

Q.—Is it lawful to marry a first cousin?

A.—No. By the impediment of consanguinity Catholics are forbidden to marry within the third degree inclusive.

Q.—May third cousins marry?

A.—Third cousins do not come within the forbidden degrees of kindred and, therefore, may marry.

Q.—Is it sinful to write an anonymous letter to warn parents for instance that their children were keeping what was thought to be dangerous company?

A.—Such an anonymous letter would not be sinful. It is better not to write anonymous letters; such letters do little good, if any at all, and often do a great deal of harm. If the matter seems to you to be an urgent one it is better to approach the parents personally.

Q.—What is the attitude of the Church towards "Mixed Marriages"?

A.—"A Mixed Marriage" is a marriage between a Catholic and one who, though baptised, does not profess the Catholic Faith. Such marriages have always been disapproved of by the Church, nor does she ever permit them except on certain conditions, and for very grave reasons.

Q.—Is a Catholic who has made a "mixed marriage" denied the privilege of having the home "Consecrated to the Sacred Heart"?

A.—A Catholic who has contracted a "mixed marriage" may certainly get the home "Consecrated to the Sacred Heart." The Consecration will bring peace and happiness to the home and may bring the non-Catholic member of the family to the true Faith.

Q.—What is the meaning of affinity?

A.—Affinity is an impediment that prevents a valid marriage, unless by dispensation, with certain blood relatives of a previous wife or husband.

Q.—Is it wrong for a wife to leave her husband who takes drink to excess, and live with her own people?

A.—In such a case a person should always consult her confessor.

Q.—Is a Catholic who has been married to a Protestant in a Registry Office married in the eyes of God and His Church, and may such a person receive the Sacraments?

A.—The Church regards such a marriage as invalid and, therefore, a person who has gone through that form of marriage is in sin and cannot receive the Sacraments while in that state.

VARIOUS DEVOTIONS

Q.—When may a person gain the Indulgences of the Stations of the Cross by holding a Crucifix to which these Indulgences have been attached while reciting the prescribed prayers?

A.—Those who are sick, or at sea, in prison, or who are prevented in any other way from visiting a church and making there the Stations of the Cross in the ordinary manner may gain the Indulgences by holding in their hands the specially blessed Crucifix and reciting the prescribed prayers.

Q.—May a person make the Stations of the Cross by meditating on each Station in the usual way without leaving his place in the church?

A.—To gain the Indulgences of the Stations of the Cross it is necessary to meditate, according to one's ability, on the Passion of Our Saviour, and to go from one Station to the other, so far as the number of persons engaged in the devotion, and the space where the Stations are erected will permit.

Q.—If a person who is making the "Nine Fridays" is unable to receive on a certain First Friday but goes to Holy Communion the following Saturday, may this person so fulfil the conditions for the making of the "Nine Fridays"?

A.—In making the "Nine Fridays" the conditions laid down by Our Lord Himself must be observed, i.e., receiving Holy Communion on nine successive First Fridays; the going to Communion on a day other than the First Friday, therefore will not fulfil the conditions.

Q. What are the Blessed Sacrament Beads?

A.—The Blessed Sacrament Beads consist of a string of thirty-three beads. On each of these beads is recited an aspiration: "Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, have mercy on us!"

Q.—What are the Indulgences attached to the Beads of the Immaculate Conception?

A.—The indulgences attached are: 300 days for each recitation. A Plenary Indulgence once a month, on the day of choice, to those who recite it daily for a month.

Q.—I live far away in the country. Could I join the Sodality of Our Lady? There is no Centre near and so I could not attend any meetings.

A.—As the Sodality of the Children of Mary is a sodality composed of active members, persons who cannot attend the meetings cannot become members.

Q.—What is the origin of the Miraculous Medal? May any priest bless this medal?

A.—The Miraculous Medal owes its origin to an apparition of Our Blessed Lady to Catherine Labouré, a nun of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul. The model of this medal as we know it now, was shown to her and she was invited to get it made and distributed among the faithful in order to popularise devotion to the Immaculate Conception. Any priest who has authority may bless this medal.

Q.—In making an Novena is it necessary to complete it with Confession and Communion? May a person make a Novena offering up special prayers morning and night for that purpose?

A.—It is a very good thing to end a novena by going to Confession and Holy Communion, but this is not necessary, unless Confession and Holy Communion are prescribed, as in the case of special public novenas. A person may make a private novena at will, using any prayers that the person may like, and these prayers may be said with the morning and evening prayers.

Q.—When a person wishes to make a Novena is it necessary that the Novena be made in a church?

A.—If the Novena consists in the recitation of certain prayers and the saying of the prayers in a church is not a condition of the Novena, it may be made at home without going to the church.

Q.—Does a person who attends all the sermons and instructions of a Mission or Retreat but goes to Holy Communion in another church gain all the indulgences of the Mission?

A.—Such a person would gain all the indulgences of the Mission. It would be well for a person to receive Holy Communion in the church where he has attended the mission, except for some special reason he cannot go there.

Q.—Should children of seven years say their morning prayers at the bedside or are the prayers they recite in the morning at school sufficient?

A.—It is always best to get the children to recite some prayers each morning at the bedside.

Q.—A person wishes to consecrate himself and those working under him to the Sacred Heart, what is he to do?

A.—He should get a statue or picture of the Sacred Heart. Then arrangements should be made with a priest to bless the picture and perform the Consecration Ceremony in the presence of all concerned. If a priest cannot be got all should assemble round the picture or statue and the Act of Consecration should be recited by all together. The presence of the priest is necessary, however, for the gaining of the special Indulgence granted for the Consecration. A beautiful Consecration picture of the Sacred Heart with a space underneath for the names of those consecrating themselves may be got from THE IRISH MESSENGER Office for 2s. 4d., post free. A Ceremonial Leaflet may also be got for 3d., post free.

Q.—May a business place be consecrated to the Sacred Heart?

A.—A business place may certainly be consecrated to the Sacred Heart. All such places should be consecrated, and people should show their business is dedicated to the Sacred Heart by having His picture or statue exposed in a prominent place.

Q.—May I make the "Holy Hour" every day?

A.—The "Holy Hour" may be made in private in any place and at any time.

Q.—Is it necessary to be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament to make the "Holy Hour"?

A.—The "Holy Hour" is an hour of prayer in union with the Sacred Heart in the Agony of the Garden; this practice was revealed by Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary, and the Arch-confraternity of the Holy Hour was established to extend it. All members of the Apostleship of Prayer share in the privileges of the Archconfraternity. No special place is prescribed.

Q.—May a person recite the Rosary when making the "Holy Hour" privately?

A.—Yes. Any form of vocal or mental prayer may be used in union with Our Saviour's Agony.

Q.—What is the meaning of the letters I.N.R.I, on a Crucifix?

A.—These letters are the initials of the words "Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judaeorum" (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)—the letters I and J. being the same in ancient Latin.

CRUCIFIXES

Q.—May any priest bless a crucifix for the Plenary Indulgence at the hour of death?

A.—Only priests who have the privilege can bless the crucifix with this Indulgence.

Q.—If I got a Crucifix from a dying person, is it necessary to get it blessed again for my own use?

A.—According to the Code of Canon Law, indulgenced objects can be lent, given as presents or received as legacies; the indulgences attached to these objects can be gained by those who receive them, provided they fulfil the conditions for the gaining of the indulgences. A Crucifix got from a dying person can therefore be used by the person who receives it and need not necessarily be blessed again.

Q.—Some time ago I got a crucifix indulgenced at a mission. This crucifix accidentally fell into the fire and some wood which formed part of it was burnt; the figure, however, and the main portion of it are quite safe. Has it lost its indulgence?

A.—As the indulgence of a crucifix is attached to the figure, since the figure was not destroyed it still preserves the indulgence.

Q.—Why are the skull and crossbones represented at the foot of some crucifixes?

A.—The skull and bones are represented at the foot of some crucifixes to remind us of Golgotha, the place of crucifixion—the word Golgotha means a skull. There is also a legend that in the hole dug for Our Lord's cross was found the skull of Adam. This legend may possibly account for the representing of the skull and bones at the foot of the crucifix.

Q.—What is meant by a crucifix blessed for the Stations of the Cross?

A.—Many priests have the power of blessing a crucifix that may be used to gain the Indulgences of the Stations of the Cross by those who are prevented from making the Stations in the ordinary way. To gain the Indulgences a crucifix so blessed is held in the hand, and the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," and "Glory be to the Father" are said twenty times.

Q.—Can two old people who are unable to go to church gain the Indulgences for the making of the Stations of the Cross at home by using a Crucifix indulgenced for that purpose?

A.—Yes. Those who are prevented by sickness, or on account of some other legitimate reason, from making the Stations of the Cross in the usual way, can gain the Indulgences at home by reciting the "Our Father," "Hail Mary" and "Gloria" twenty times and using the indulgenced Crucifix.

SCAPULARS

Q. What is the origin of the Scapular Medal?

A.—Scapular medals had their origin in Africa. The Catholic negroes used to wear the cloth scapular on their uncovered breasts as a profession of faith. Owing to dust and perspiration the scapular quickly became discoloured, soiled and unbecoming in appearance.

Consequently, at the request of the missionaries, permission was granted to the negroes to wear a medal instead of the cloth scapular. Gradually this permission was extended to the whole world.

Q.—What are the Five Scapulars?

A.—The Five Scapulars are: The Scapular of the Passion (red), the Scapular of the Seven Dolours (Black), the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception (blue), the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (brown), the Scapular of the Most Holy Trinity (white).

Q.—If a person is enrolled in the Five Scapulars, but wears a Scapular Medal instead of the Scapulars does he gain the Indulgences attached to the wearing of the ordinary Scapulars?

A.—A person who has been enrolled in the Scapulars but wears a Scapular Medal instead of the Scapulars, participates in all the indulgences and privileges accorded to the wearing of the ordinary Scapulars.

Q.—"I have been enrolled in the Five Scapulars but ceased wearing the Scapulars for some time as I had lost them. I have found them; is it necessary for me to be enrolled again?"

A.—No.

Q.—Will one Scapular Medal suffice for all the Scapulars, or is it necessary to have a different medal for each Scapular?

A.—A single Scapular Medal will suffice for all the Scapulars provided it has received a special blessing for each Scapular it is meant to replace. It is well to remember, however, that when being enrolled in a particular Scapular the ordinary Scapular of wool should be used.

Q.—Who may enroll in the Brown Scapular?

A.—Practically all priests are authorised to enroll in the Brown Scapular.

Q.—When a person wears the Five Scapulars together, is it necessary (a) to wear both the red and brown strings; (b) that the red string should touch each of the other four scapulars; (c) in what order should the scapulars be arranged?

A.—It is recommended that each scapular have its own cord; but if only one cord is used this should be red if the Scapular of the Passion is among the five. The scapulars should be sewn together at their upper ends, and all should be attached to the cord. It is recommended, but not essential that the white Scapular of the Most Holy Trinity be first and the red Scapular of the Passion be the last of the series.

Q.—What is the proper material and colour for the Brown Scapular?

A.—The material for the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel or, the Brown Scapular, should be wool and of the same colour as the Carmelite Habit. The strings of the Scapular may be made of any material.

THE ROSARY

Q.—Are the prayers said on a Rosary Beads which has not been blessed of any use?

A.—Of course they are! All prayers are good and besides special blessing are granted to those who say the Rosary. The Indulgences which are usually conferred with the blessing of the Beads, however, cannot be gained by those who use an unblessed Rosary Beads.

Q.—Does a Rosary lose its Indulgences for its owner when used by another person?

A.—No. Indulgences attached to rosaries and other objects of devotion are lost only when the object is sold or completely destroyed. Rosaries may be repaired again and again, and missing beads replaced, without losing their Indulgences.

Q.—If a person were distracted when saying the Rosary should he repeat the decade?

A.—No. Such repetition could become an annoying and unfruitful habit. Very few people are free of distractions when praying, so when it is noticed that the mind is wandering bring it back quietly to prayer. Say your Rosary with ordinary care and do not let the distractions worry you.

Q.—What Indulgences may be gained by saying the "Family Rosary"?

A.—The faithful who recite in common the five decades of the Rosary, whether in their homes, in the church, or in a public or private oratory, may gain the following Indulgences: 10 years once a day. A Plenary Indulgence on the last Sunday of each month, provided they have recited the Rosary in common at least three times in any of the preceding weeks; the conditions for the gaining of this Indulgence are: Confession and Communion and Prayers for the Pope's Intentions, and a visit to a church.

Q.—If a Rosary Beads needs re-wiring is it necessary to get them blessed again after they have been re-wired?

A.—No.

Q.—May persons repair their Rosary beads, using parts of an old Rosary beads for the purpose?

A.—Provided the Rosary Beads you wish to repair is substantially intact, portions missing may be supplied from an old Rosary.

Q.—If some beads of a Rosary are missing, do the other beads still retain the indulgence with which they were blessed?

A.—Provided that the Rosary as a whole is intact, the absence of some of the beads does not affect the indulgences attached to it.

Q.—Does the blessing leave Rosary beads or crucifixes at the death of the owner?

A.—As the blessing is usually attached to the beads or crucifixes themselves, and not to the person who owns them, the blessing remains after the death of the owner.

Q.—To gain indulgences for the saying of the Rosary is it necessary that the five decades be said without a break, or may the decades be said separately at different times?

A.—Provided that when saying the decades of the Rosary one has the intention of gaining the Indulgences each decade may be said at a different time.

Q.—To gain the Indulgences granted for the saying of the Rosary is it necessary to hold the beads in the hands?

A.—Certain Indulgences are granted for the saying of the Rosary with or without the beads. To gain the Benedictine, Crozier or Dominican Indulgences, the beads must be used; if, however, several persons are reciting the Rosary together it is sufficient that the person leading uses them.

INDULGENCES

Q.—What is the meaning of an Indulgence, e.g., forty days or seven years.

A.—According to the early discipline of the Church when a person committed a grave sin he had to perform a severe penance which sometimes extended over years. When we speak of an Indulgence, e.g., of forty days or seven years, we do not mean that a person's Purgatory will be shortened by forty days or seven years; but, that as much of the temporal punishment due on account of our sins will be remitted as would be atoned for by undergoing the ancient canonical penances of forty days or seven years.

Q.—When a visit to a church is prescribed for the gaining of an Indulgence is it necessary to visit a church each time one wishes to gain the Indulgences or will a single visit suffice to gain several Indulgences?

A.—When the visitation of a church is prescribed for the gaining of an Indulgence separate visits must be made to gain two or more Indulgences.

Q.—Can a person who attends a mission in a parish, other than his own, gain the Indulgences of that mission?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Can Indulgences be applied to one particular soul in Purgatory?

A.—Any Indulgence applicable to the Souls in Purgatory may be applied to the Holy Souls in general or to one particular soul.

Q.—Is there any special Indulgence that may be gained immediately on entering a Church?

A.—An indulgence of three hundred days may be gained by anyone who on entering a church, goes immediately to the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and there adores Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist.

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

Q.—Is a dowry always necessary when a girl wishes to enter a Religious Order?

A.—This depends on the particular Order the girl wishes to enter and also on the qualifications of the girl herself. It is better to apply to the Mother Superior of the particular Order for information. Many Missionary Orders do not demand doweries from suitable applicants.

Q.—Is there any age limit for girls to join a Convent? Can a person of 39 or 40 years of age become a nun? What are the conditions?

A.—According to recent legislation of the Holy See, novices are not to be received below the age of fifteen. Suitable subjects are free to enter after that age, but certain religious Orders and Congregations do not wish to receive subjects who are fairly well on in life on account of the nature of the work these Institutions undertake. The conditions of entry for people of mature years who wish to become religious will depend on the particular Institutions they wish to join.

Q.—May a widow enter a Religious community?

A.—Though certain Religious Institutions regard widowhood as an impediment to entrance, this is not mentioned in Canon Law as an impediment to the religious life. The advice of one's confessor should always be got in such a case as each case must be considered on its own merits.

Q.—May a widower become a priest?

A.—Provided he has the necessary qualifications and is accepted by a Bishop, a widower may become a priest,

Q.—Is a person who has led a life of sin in the past debarred from embracing the Religious Life?

A.—A person who has led a life of sin but who has repented and given up the habit of sin could certainly become a Religious in any Order or Congregation. There are many among the canonised saints whose early lives were anything but blameless; but who repented, embraced the religious life, and are now among the special saints of God.

Q.—Is a past life of sin, which has been repented of, an obstacle to a person becoming a member of the Third Order of St. Francis?

A.—No.

Q.—I wish to become a nun for the African Mission, where should I apply?

A.—Apply to the Rev. Mother, Convent of Our Lady, Ardfoy, Ballintemple, Co. Cork. The following convents also engage in Foreign Missionary work in Africa and elsewhere : The Missionary Convent of the Holy Rosary, Killeshandra, Co. Cavan; The Mother House, Franciscan Missionary Sisters of St. Joseph, Patricroft, near Manchester, England.

N.B.—Those desiring information about Religious Institutions, etc., should procure a copy of The Religious Orders and Congregations in Ireland (THE IRISH MESSENGER Office, price 9d., post free).

Q.—A boy of 17 wishes to become a priest on the African Missions, where should he apply for information?

A.—Apply to the V. Rev. Father Provincial, A.M., African Missions, Blackrock Road, Cork, or to the Very Rev. Superior-General, House of Our Lady of Africa, Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow.

Q.—Is it necessary to have a good education and means for those who wish to enter an Order for the Foreign

Missions?

A.—The answer to these questions will generally depend on the particular Order the person would wish to join, as some Orders are devoted to teaching, whilst others do nursing and hospital work. In the former case good intellectual ability is required on the part of candidates, while in the latter case a good ordinary education is all that is required. Practically all Foreign Mission Orders have burses for deserving candidates.

Q.—I wish to become a Christian Brother, where am I to apply for information?

A.—Apply to The Superior, St. Mary's, Marino, Dublin, 3, or to the Superior, St. Helen's, Booterstown, Co. Dublin.

Q.—What is the age for entry into the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion?

A.—Apply to the Rev. Mother, Convent of the Cross and Passion, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.

Q.—Are there any Convents of Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Ireland? What are the conditions of entry?

A.—There are the following Convents of Perpetual Adoration in Ireland: Franciscan Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim; Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Wexford; the Convents of the Society of Marie Reparatrice at Dublin, Cork and Limerick. To get particulars about the conditions of entry it is better to apply direct to the Rev. Mother Superior of any of the Convents mentioned above.

Q.—Please let me know the addresses of the Convents of Mercy in Ireland where I could enter. I have only a national school education.

A.—It would be impossible to give such a list of addresses, as your admission into a particular convent would depend on your capabilities and the special works undertaken by the convent, apart from teaching. The best thing you could do would be to apply for information to some Convent of Mercy you know.

Q.—Is there any Order of Nuns who devote their lives to the care of those afflicted with leprosy?

A.—Most of the Missionary Congregations of Nuns, such as the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, include the care of leper asylums as part of their missionary work.

Q.—Are there any Religious Nursing Orders for men?

A.—Yes. The Alexian Brothers, who have a house in Ireland at Mount St. Columb's, Warrenpoint, Co. Down; and, the Brothers of St. John of God, one of whose Irish houses is at Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.

Q.—What are the qualifications required for admission as a Brother in one of the Clerical Institutions?

A.—As the qualifications required vary with the different Orders it is better to consult The Religious Orders and Congregations in Ireland (price 9d., post free) where information about the different Orders is given. When you have selected an Order which seems to suit you write to the address given in connection with the particular Order for further information.

Q.—How am I to become a Franciscan Tertiary?

A.—Apply to the Rev. Director, Third Order, Franciscan Convent, Merchant's Quay, Dublin.

Q.—Is it right for a girl to enter a Nursing Order, who has a dread of night duty and a horror of anything relating to the dead, even to look at a dead person?

A.—Unless this dread of the dead could be overcome, it would seem that such a girl would be unsuitable for a Nursing Order.

NON-CATHOLICS

Q.—Are Non-Catholics Christians?

A.—Those who being baptised believe in Christ are Christians.

Q. Would a Protestant baby who died after being baptised in its own Church go to heaven?

A.—If Baptism were properly administered such a child would go to heaven.

Q.—Can Prayers and Masses be offered for a non-Catholic after his death?

A. Prayers may be recited for a non-Catholic who is deceased, also Masses may be offered privately for him.

Q.—May a Catholic Nurse baptise a non-Catholic infant in her charge only when in danger of death?

A.—A Catholic nurse may baptise a non-Catholic infant in her charge only when in danger of death, provided the child has not yet been properly baptised.

Q.—May a Catholic nurse send word to a non-Catholic minister that a non-Catholic patient, seriously ill, wishes to see

him?

A.—Yes. She would not be justified in asking him explicitly to come for the purpose of performing religious rites, neither may she assist him in the rite, for example, by answering prayers.

Q.—May a non-Catholic wear a Sacred Heart Badge?

A.—Yes. It should be explained to such a person that the badge is worn, not on account of any power it has in itself, but as a petition for the help and assistance of the Sacred Heart.

Q.—Is it wrong to enter a Protestant church where there is no ceremony in progress?

A.—To enter a Protestant church when there is no ceremony in progress, e.g., for the purpose of seeing it, is not wrong.

Q.—Is it wrong to pray at a Protestant wake?

A.—To pray privately at a Protestant wake is not wrong. It would be wrong, however, to take part in prayers publicly recited for the deceased person.

Q.—May a Catholic serve meat to non-Catholics on Fridays and days of abstinence?

A.—As it may reasonably be assumed that the Church does not intend to bind non-Catholics, even though baptised, by the laws of abstinence, a Catholic may serve them with meat on Fridays and days of abstinence.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q.—What principle is followed in selecting the letters of thanksgiving for publication in full in the "Messenger"?

A.—Space will permit only the publication of a few letters in full each month, and those are selected which seem of greater interest to our readers; the others are summarized. We can never promise, under any circumstances, to publish any particular letter of thanksgiving. A promise of thanksgiving is amply fulfilled by sending the thanksgiving letter to the IRISH MESSENGER Office, even though it may not actually appear in full in the IRISH MESSENGER.

Q.—What is meant by "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"?

A.—"The Four Horsemen"—described in the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse signify the judgments and punishments that will fall on the enemies of God and His Church; they represent conquest, slaughter, famine and death.

Q.—Could a person take an oath without going to the civil authority? Is a rash or unnecessary oath binding?

A.—A person could take an oath without going to the civil authority. In order that an oath be binding in civil matters certain formalities must be gone through. Unless these formalities are carried out the State will not recognise the oath, though it may be binding in conscience. As the binding power of a rash oath will depend on the circumstances of the oath it is always better to consult one's confessor in such a case.

Q.—What should be done with old pamphlets and used postage stamps?

A.—Old pamphlets are always welcomed in any Catholic hospital. Used postage stamps may be sent to the Rev. Secretary, Irish Jesuit Missions, St. Stanislaus College, Tullamore, Offaly, where they will be used for promoting missionary work.

Q.—Is Confirmation necessary for salvation?

A.—The Sacrament of Confirmation is not necessary as an essential means of salvation; but it is so far necessary that it would be a sin if a person were to refuse or neglect to receive it when a suitable opportunity arose, unless he were prevented by some reasonable cause.

Q.—In what part of the body does the soul exist?

A.—The soul exists in the whole body and in each part of the body.

Q.—What do you mean by "Chained Bibles"?

A.—Books were very costly during medieval times, and to purchase a Bible would be beyond the means of an ordinary individual. Bibles, were, therefore, chained to stands in churches and monasteries, near a window, to give all who wished an opportunity of reading them, and to prevent them from being taken away. For a similar purpose directories, periodicals, etc., are secured to the reading table in our libraries today.

Q.—Could you give me any information about the prophecy of St. Malachy?

A.—The so-called prophecy of St. Malachy regards the succession of the Popes, from 1143 onwards. It was part of a work published towards the end of the sixteenth century by a Benedictine monk, who said it was copied from a

manuscript never before published. It consists of titles or devices, in Latin, indicating peculiarities of the Popes to whom they are ascribed.

Q.—What is the meaning of the letters I.H.S.?

A.—This monogram is sometimes wrongly understood as signifying the initial letters of Jesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus the Saviour of Men). It is formed of the first three letters IHSOUS the Greek for Jesus, and is therefore the monogram of the name of Our Saviour.

Q.—How did the Eucharistic Congress originate?

A.—The origin of the Eucharistic Congresses in their present form is due to a French lady, Mary Martha Tamasier. Seeing the popularity of the pilgrimages to various shrines, she conceived the idea of enlisting the faithful in pilgrimages to sanctuaries where Eucharistic miracles had occurred. She laid her plans before the Bishop of Lille, France, who enthusiastically developed the idea. The first Eucharistic Congress, strictly speaking, was held in Lille in 1881.

Q.—"I promised when ill to do a certain thing if I recovered. I have recovered but find it very inconvenient to do what I promised?"

A.—Such a promise would not, of course, bind under grave sin, unless it concerned a matter of serious moment. It would be a good thing for you, however, to do something else equally good.

Q.—Does it break the Pioneer Badge to take pudding made with a little sherry?

A.—No.

Q.—Please tell me how would a person take the Pioneer Pledge?

A.—For all information with regard to the Pioneer Association it is best to apply to the Rev. Director, Pioneer Association, St. Francis Xavier's, Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin.

Q.—Is it permissible for Pioneers: (a) to drink dry ginger; (b) to use sherry on trifle; (c) to use malt vinegar on salads, pickles, etc.? A.—Yes. All three are permitted to Pioneers.

Q.—A girl who is a Pioneer enters a convent and takes the vow of Obedience, what must she do in case of being offered anything forbidden by the Pioneer Pledge?

A.—In general a person can quite easily keep the Pioneer Pledge in Religion; but, if the keeping of the Pledge is incompatible with her Vow of Obedience, then, of course, she is not obliged to keep the Pledge.

Q.—Does it break the Pioneer Pledge to drink wines, such as Rhubarb Wine and Elderberry Wines?

A.—Rhubarb Wine and such wines are contrary to the Pioneer Pledge.

Q.—Is "Bee Wine " alcoholic, and are Pioneers forbidden to take it?

A.—"Bee Wine " is alcoholic and is strictly forbidden to Pioneers.

Q.—Why does the Church condemn cremation?

A.—Cremation is the process of disposing of the dead by fire rather than by burial. Cremation is against no article of faith, still the Church looks upon it as an unnatural destruction of the human body. In addition this practice was promoted by the Freemasons, and consequently has been regarded as an act of insubordination by the Church. Catholics are forbidden to carry out the order of anyone who wishes to be cremated, while those who direct that their bodies be so disposed of are deprived of ecclesiastical burial, unless they retract before death.

Q.—What is Pharisaical Scandal?

A.—Pharisaical scandal is scandal taken where no scandal is given. It receives its name from those Pharisees who pretended to be scandalised at the actions and teachings of Our Lord as an excuse for refusing to believe in Him.

Q.—Is telling or talking of a scandal known to all or most of the parish sinful?

A.—Such conversation is usually sinful. A person has a right to his good name and we are forbidden to say or do anything that would diminish or destroy this good name without a very serious reason. ,

Q. What is the difference between slander and scandal?

A.—Slander or Calumny is committed by speaking evil of a person which is known to be false; by imputing to a person a wrong of which he is known to be innocent; or by exaggerating real faults. Scandal consists in every word, deed, or omission, whether really or only apparently bad, which is the occasion of sin to another.

Q.—Who are "the brethren of Christ" mentioned in the Gospel?

A.—The "brethren of Christ," mentioned in the Gospel, are not His brothers, but more distant relatives; as careful study will show.

Q.—What is to be understood by Our Lord's words when He said: "And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire " (Matt. v. 22)?

A.—The expression "thou fool," was looked upon, at the time of Our Saviour, when uttered with spite, contempt, or malice as a heinous injury; and therefore is here severely condemned by Our Saviour as deserving of the fire and punishments of hell.

Q.—Is it necessary for a Sacristan to use a linen cloth when removing the Monstrance from the case to the altar for Benediction?

A.—No. It is done in many places, and is recommended as a mark of reverence to the Monstrance.

Q.—(a) If a person touch the Ciborium accidentally should his hand be purified?

(b) How often should a Child of Mary who lives far away from any Centre be supposed to recite the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception?

A.—(a) When a person touches the Ciborium accidentally there is no necessity for him to get his hand purified.

(b) There is no obligation for a Child of Mary to recite the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception. It is a very laudable practice to recite it now and then, especially for those who cannot attend the regular meetings of the members.

Q.—May a Purifier be touched by anyone other than a priest?

A.—A person who has the care of the sacristy may touch the Purifier when necessary.

Q.—Does a child who has accidentally knocked a chalice out of its case commit a sin of sacrilege by replacing it, and should his hands be purified?

A.—The child does not sin by replacing a chalice in such a case and his hands need not be purified.

Q.—Sometimes the term "R.C." is applied to Catholics, especially in Protestant countries, is then any harm in this?

A.—Although the adjective Roman, as qualifying Catholic appears in authoritative documents, and even in authorised prayers, it only signifies where, at present, the local centre of the Catholic Church is situated. Protestants, however, often use the term R.C. when speaking of us, meaning to imply that we are not Catholics in the sense for which all our sacred traditions stand. In this sense Catholics rightly object to the term, and should always object to it.

Q.—May we pray to our departed friends whom we believe are in Heaven?

A.—The Church does not forbid us to pray to our departed friends, in Purgatory or in Heaven provided there is question only of personal private prayer. She forbids any public honour or intercession that would anticipate her judgment in regard to beatification or canonisation.

Q.—Do our dead friends know what is going on here on earth?

A.—It is generally held that they know when we pray for them or ask their prayers. We have no way of finding out how much of what is going on here on earth it pleases God to reveal to them.

Q.—What is meant by "The Fisherman's Ring "?

A.—The Fisherman's Ring is a seal engraved with the effigy of St. Peter fishing in a boat, encircled with the name of the reigning Pope. It is used to seal certain official papal documents. Immediately after the Pope's death it is broken.

Q.—Who is the "Devil's Advocate "?

A.—Whenever there is question of the beatification or canonisation of anyone, an official is appointed to oppose the canonisation or beatification. He is called the "Devil's Advocate," but his official title is "Promoter of the Faith."

Q.—Who are "The Fathers of the Church"?

A.—The Fathers of the Church were those early writers to whose unanimous teaching the Church has always appealed as witness of the Faith. Four conditions are required for a writer to be numbered among the Fathers : (a) he must have lived in the early centuries of the Church; (b) he must have led a saintly life; (c) his writings must have received the approbation of the Church.

Q.—What is meant by "Titular Bishop "?

A.—A "Titular Bishop" bears the title of a diocese, but has no jurisdiction over it.

Q.—What is meant by "The Visit 'ad limina'"?

A.—Every Archbishop and Bishop, in charge of a diocese, is obliged at certain intervals to visit Rome and make a report to the Pope. This is called the visit "ad limina," that is, to the threshold.

Q.—Should a priest be called in when a child, who has not yet gone to Confession, is seriously ill?

A.—If the child is seven years old the priest should be called in. If the child is under seven, but has sufficient use of reason, the priest should also be summoned. Every child who has the use of reason has the right to Holy Communion and to Extreme Unction.

Q.—If a person dies suddenly should a priest be summoned?

A.—A priest should always be summoned as it is not certain in such cases that life is really extinct for some time, though externally that may seem to be the case.

Q.—Is it forbidden to do work on Sunday for which payment is received?

A.—It is not forbidden to do intellectual or liberal work on Sunday for pay, for instance, to teach or write. Servile or manual work, by which the body chiefly is exercised and not the intellect is forbidden.

Q.—What is meant by "servile" work?

A.—"Servile" work is work that is usually done by servants or tradesmen and which pertains more directly to the needs of the body; it is work in which the body is occupied rather than the mind.

Q.—Where can I get a Dictionary of the Catholic Faith?

A.—Useful Catholic Dictionaries are: THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPAEDIC DICTIONARY, edited by Donald Attwater, and published by Cassell and Company, London: THE NEW CATHOLIC DICTIONARY, published by the Universal Knowledge Foundation, London; CATHOLIC DICTIONARY, edited by Addis and Arnold and published by Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London.

Q.—If a person were to stand perfectly still during the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday, is this a sure means of releasing a soul in Purgatory?

A.—There is no authority for such a belief.

Q.—Why does the Church prescribe abstinence on Fridays?

A.—The Church prescribes abstinence on Fridays in commemoration of Our Saviour's death on Good Friday.

Q.—Does one break the law of abstinence by eating vegetables which have been boiled with meat?

A.—No.

Q.—Is it sinful to believe in dreams?

A.—In general it is sinful to believe in dreams. The gravity of the sin will depend on the amount of credence put in the dreams.

Q.—What is meant by "churching"?

A.—It is the custom for Catholic mothers to come to church as soon as possible after childbirth, to thank God for His goodness and to ask His blessing on themselves and their children. The blessing pronounced by the priest on such occasions is called "churching."

Q.—Is it improper for a woman to be in church with her head uncovered?

A.—According to St. Paul women should keep their heads covered in church as a mark of reverence. This would hold while they are at Mass celebrated in a private house.

Q.—Is it right to pray for a temporal favour such as, to win a share in the Sweepstakes?

A.—It is lawful to pray for temporal favours such as the above.

Q.—What is the significance of the use of incense in the ceremonies of the Church?

A.—The use of incense in the ceremonies of the Church is symbolical; it is a sign of prayer ascending as a sweet odour to God. Sometimes it is used to express adoration of God, or to bless the people and things dedicated to religious uses.

Q.—What is meant by "natural" mysteries?

A.—In the order of nature we believe in many facts which do not admit of explanation, for example, the growing of the grass. These are called natural mysteries.

Q.—What is meant by the "Heroic Act"?

A.—The Heroic Act consists in this, that a member of the Church here on earth offers to God for the Souls in

Purgatory all the satisfactory works he will perform during life, and also all the suffrages that may accrue to him after death. It is revocable at will.

Q.—What is the "Index"?

A.—The Index of Prohibited Books is a book consisting of two parts : The first part contains all ecclesiastical legislation regarding books and the second part a list of prohibited publications.

Q.—When I pray all kinds of distracting thoughts come into my head; is that a sign that my prayers are of no value?

A.—Provided you do our best to keep the distracting thoughts from your mind your prayers are quite all right. Every distraction repelled means extra merit.

Q.—Is it right to get a birth-mark removed from a child's face?

A.—Certainly. If the doctor recommends the removal of such a mark it should be done.

Q.—What is meant by "fraud"?

A.—Fraud includes all kinds of cheating in buying or selling, the using of false money, weights and measures, supplying goods inferior to what has been agreed upon, also exacting more interest for money lent than the general custom and laws of the country permit.

Q.—What is to be done with broken statues, crucifixes and such pious objects?

A.—Broken statues, etc., should be destroyed. If this cannot be done by fire, then the best way of destroying them completely should be adopted.

Q.—What are "scruples" and what is the best way to overcome them?

A.—Consult the booklet published by the IRISH MESSENGER Office : Scruples and Their Treatment, in which much information is given about this matter. The book costs 5d., post free.

Q.—Why does the Pope choose a new name at his election?

A.—According to a custom which has been traced back to the sixth century the Pope selects a new name at his election. This name is usually that of some preceding Pope whose life he admires or whose works he intends to imitate.

Q.—At some funeral services the priest and people kneel down at a certain part of the services this is not done at other funeral services. Is there any explanation for this?

A.—It is only a matter of custom which varies in different places.

Q.—On days of fast and abstinence is it allowed to drink tea outside the times allowed for food on these days? How long may the principal meal last?

A.—It is permitted to take a drink, e.g., of tea, when one wishes to do so on days of fast and abstinence. The principal meal may last as long as it is necessary for a person to take a good meal.

Q.—Does a person break the law of abstinence by taking mock-turtle soup on Friday?

A.—As mock-turtle soup is made of calf's head, to imitate real turtle soup, a person would break the law of abstinence by taking it on Friday.

Q.—Is it true that a baby who gets private baptism, but who dies before the full ceremony is carried out, remains in darkness in heaven to the end of time?

A.—Certainly not. A baby who dies after private baptism gets the complete happiness of heaven, as would a baby who died after a full ceremony was carried out.

Q.—Is there any "Ordo" published for the use of the laity who use the Missal?

A.—A complete Ordo for the use of the laity is published in the Jesuit Year Book. Published by THE IRISH MESSENGER Office. Post free, 2s. 5d.

Q.—May a person who has stolen goods make restitution to some charity instead of making restitution to the person from whom the goods have been stolen, if the latter is in good circumstances?

A.—Certainly not. If the owner is known and can be easily reached restitution must be made to him as the goods belong to him.

Q.—If a person is unable to pay his debts is he exempt from doing so?

A.—If a person cannot pay his debts the obligation of paying them is suspended, but it is not destroyed. As soon as he is able to pay his debts he must do so.

Q.—What are the Catacombs?

A.—The Catacombs are underground galleries dug through the layer of tufa rock under Rome and in the vicinity, and used as places of burial. During times of persecution they were used as places of refuge by the Christians.

Q.—What kind of oil may be used in the lamp before the picture or statue of the Sacred Heart?

A.—Any kind of oil that is found satisfactory in each particular case may be used in the Sacred Heart lamp.

Q.—What is "The Holy House of Loretto"?

A.—According to ancient tradition the house of the Holy Family at Nazareth was removed by angels from Nazareth in 1291 to Tersatto, a little hill overlooking the city of Fiume in Dalmatia. Three years later it was again miraculously transported to a spot near Recanati, Italy; finally, it was removed to a hill about a mile away within sight of the Adriatic sea. This place was called Loretto, either because it belonged to a saintly widow named Lauretta or because it was covered with laurels.

Q.—May black-puddings be taken on Fridays and days of abstinence?

A.—As these puddings are made from the blood of animals mixed with meat they may not be taken on Fridays or days of abstinence.

Q.—What is meant by the "Baptism of Ships"?

A.—This is more correctly the blessing of ships, of which a form is given in the Roman Ritual. Prayers are said asking God's blessing for the ship and for those who travel on it. The practice of blessing ships became common during the time of the Crusades.

Q.—What becomes of unbaptised children?

A.—Unbaptised children are excluded from heaven, but, according to the opinion universally held, they do not undergo suffering of any kind in the next life. They go to a place which is called Limbo.

Q.—I have got a "Chain Prayer," what am I to do with it?

A.—Burn it. Such a prayer is usually sent through the post with instructions to recite it and make a certain number of copies of it to be sent to others. The instructions usually convey a warning that grave misfortune will fall on the person who breaks the chain by refusing to spread the prayer as indicated. No one is obliged to say such a prayer and should not pay the slightest attention to the threat contained in it. It is the work of a fanatic or superstitious crank.

Q.—On Good Friday my daughter was given a prayer which she was told to copy seven times and pass on the copies to others. Wonderful results were said to come from the recital of the prayer; is this genuine?

A.—It is better to have nothing to do with such prayers. The practices connected with them are practically always superstitious and there is no authority for the favours said to be gained by those who recite them.

Q.—Should a person genuflect before a statue of Our Lady or of a Saint?

A.—A genuflection does not necessarily mean adoration; it is done to earthly monarchs as a mark of respect for their authority. The proper mark of reverence to a statue or picture of Our Lady or of a saint is to bow; a genuflection performed in such a case might be misunderstood.

Q.—What is the meaning in the Ordo of "The Blessed Virgin, in Sabbato"?

A.—This means that the Votive Mass of Our Lady is said on the Saturday and the Office of Our Blessed Lady is recited.

Q.—When are the Feasts of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and St. Mary Magdalen?

A.—The Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour is kept on the Sunday preceding 24th June, the Feast of St. John the Baptist. The Feast of St. Mary Magdalen is on 22nd July.

Q.—Who is the Patron Saint of a boy baptised Roger or Roderick?

A.—There are two Saints named Roger: St. Roger, a Cistercian Abbot, of English birth, who governed the Abbey of Elan, in the Diocese of Rheims, in the twelfth century, feast-4th January: and St. Roger, a disciple of St. Francis of Assisi, renowned for his gifts of prophecy and miracles, and who died in Spain in 1236, feast-5th March. The feast of SS. Roderick and Salomon, who were martyred in Spain in the ninth century, is celebrated on 13th March.

Q.—How many saints are there called Francis; in honour of which saint is the Cord worn?

A.—There are at least ten saints called Francis: for instance, St. Francis de Sales, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Borgia, St. Francis Xavier. The Cord is worn in honour of St. Francis of Assisi.

Q.—Certain of the saints are said to be "stigmatic" what is meant by this?

A.—The stigmata are impressions of the five wounds of the crucified Christ, on the hands, feet, side and sometimes on the forehead. Only persons of very great piety are privileged to bear the stigmata.

Q.—Who is the Patron Saint of a girl named Patricia?

A.—The Feast of St. Patricia, a virgin who died at Naples, is celebrated on 25th August. The Feast of SS. Macedonius, Patritia and Modesta, who were martyred for the Faith at Nicomedia about the year A.D. 304, is celebrated on 13th March. Either of the SS. Patritia mentioned above could be taken as Patron Saint of the girl.

Q.—Who is the patron of those who suffer from mental trouble?

A.—St. Dymrna, a sixth-century Irish saint, who was put to death at Gheel, Belgium, and whose feast is celebrated on 15th May.

Q.—Who is the patron saint of a girl named Maud?

A.—Either of the following saints could be patron saint of the girl: St. Matilda, Feast-14th March; St. Mechtildis, Feast-14th November; St. Mary Magdalen, Feast-22nd July.

Q.—Please give some information about St. Cornelius.

A.—There are several saints of this name, St. Cornelius the Centurion, who was baptised by St. Peter and who, according to tradition became first Bishop of Caesarea. His feast is celebrated on the 2nd February. St. Cornelius, an Irish saint of the Augustinian Order and Archbishop of Armagh, whose feast is celebrated on 4th June. St. Cornelius, Pope. His feast is celebrated on 14th September.

Q.—To what saint may one pray for the cure of sore eyes?

A.—Several indulgenced prayers to St. Lucy for the cure of sore eyes are given in The Raccolta. St. Lucy was a Sicilian maiden who suffered for her faith in the great persecution under Diocletian. Her feast is celebrated on 13th December.

Q.—Who is the Patron Saint of a girl called Jane?

A.—Either of the following saints may be the Patron Saint of a girl called Jane: Blessed Jane of Valois, daughter of Louis XI of France, who founded the Institute of Nuns known as the Annonciades. Her Feast is celebrated on 4th February.

Blessed Mary Jane Bonomo, a Benedictine nun, remarkable for her sublime prayer and for her patience in suffering. Her feast is celebrated on 1st March.

St. Jane Frances Fremiot de Chantal who founded the Order of Nuns of the Visitation. Her Feast is celebrated on 21st August.

Q.—Who was St. Expeditus?

A.—St. Expeditus was one of a band of Armenian martyrs who suffered for the Faith at Melitene; his feast is celebrated on 19th April.

Q.—Who is the Patroness of a girl named Valerie?

A.—St. Valerie, the mother of SS. Gervase and Protase, and wife of St. Vitalis; her Feast is celebrated on 28th April; or, St. Valeria, a virgin, who suffered for the Faith at Limoges (France); her Feast is celebrated on 9th December.

Q.—Who is St. Rock?

A.—St. Roch or St. Rock was a citizen of Montpellier, in France, who devoted his life to the service of the plague-stricken. He has always been venerated as the special patron of the sick; his Feast is celebrated on 18th August.

Q.—Are Eileen and Sheila names of Saints?

A.—Yes. Eileen is the Irish form of Helen or Helena. The Feast of St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, is celebrated on 18th August.

Sheila is the Irish form of Cecilia. The Feast of St. Cecilia, the patroness of church music, is 22nd November
