

THE PLAIN TRUTH

A Pocket Resume of Catholic Belief

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INTRODUCTION.

The Earth is the globe on which we live.

It is one of the nine heavenly bodies, or planets, which rotate around the sun to make up what is called the **Solar System**. Some of the planets in turn have moons revolving around them, from the earth, which has one, to Jupiter, which has ten. Now these moons and planets circling in intersecting orbits around the sun, plus the sun itself, form but a part of the vast, rotating, starry system called "the clock of the sky." The ancients named it the

Cosmos. For "cosmos" means a system perfect in order and arrangement. And they named it well; for so constant and punctual are the movements of the heavenly bodies that astronomers can count the seasons, the months, the hours and the minutes from their changing positions. And from this delicate timing of such a vast and intricate mechanism it is lawful for us to draw a conclusion, namely, that such mathematical precision was designed and set in motion by an

Intelligent Being. For if it demands intelligence of a high order to make a watch that will keep almost perfect time, it requires a supremely intelligent being to make "the clock of the sky" which keeps absolutely perfect time. A watch does not just happen. Neither did the universe.

Each proclaims a

Maker, and a maker capable of

Revealing Himself to be an intelligent being.

Now there are two ways in which a watchmaker could reveal his intelligence. The first way would be for him to make a watch and hand it to us to inspect. The second would be an extension of the first: that is, he could let us examine the watch and then explain to us how he made it. And the supremely intelligent Being Who made "the clock of the sky" did both. He created the universe and set it before us that from a study of it we might come to a sure though incomplete knowledge of His existence. And intelligent pagans did just that. They came to a knowledge of God by reasoning from effect to cause.

Theirs was a

Natural Religion. But the Creator of the universe, or God, did not leave men to learn of Him through reason alone. He revealed Himself to mankind. And this is called

Revealed Religion. As natural religion rests on reason, revealed religion rests on faith. Yet faith does not contradict reason, observation and experience, but adds to them.

Faith is Defined as a supernatural virtue by which we firmly believe all that God has revealed and all His Church proposes for our belief.

This booklet deals with the facts of revealed religion.

OUR RULE OF FAITH:

THE BIBLE AND TRADITION.

THE BIBLE.

The Book which contains God's revelations is called

The Bible. It is God's written word, and is a collection of 72 single books, Gospels and Apostolic letters, which are divided into two parts, called the Old and the New Testament. The former contains the laws and prophecies which God gave to the Jews, and the history and sacred utterances of those people and their saints and leaders up to the time of Christ. The latter tells us of Christ's birth, life, preaching, miracles, death and resurrection, the founding and spread of the Church, and the experiences and teaching of the Apostles.

The Bible tells us that God created the universe out of nothing and made man according to His own image and likeness. It tells us the names of our

First Parents, namely, Adam and Eve, and also that they lived for a time in innocence, but later fell into guilt by **The Sin of Disobedience**. This fall affected not only themselves but all their descendants by causing every ordinary member of the human race, with one exception, namely, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be born in a state of **Original Sin**, which, unless removed by Baptism, keeps the soul out of heaven. The fall of our first parents had other bad consequences besides making us heirs to sin. It introduced into the world death and sorrow and pain and hatred and greed and all the evils that we have to bear.

Yet, even when Adam and Eve fell into sin and thereby doomed themselves and their posterity to exclusion from heaven. God did not abandon them, but promised to send mankind a

Redeemer. And although many thousands of years were to elapse before this Redeemer would come to earth, men and women could save themselves in the meantime by a firm belief in His coming, by leading good lives and by truly repenting for their sins and doing penance for them.

But sin's corroding effect brought the human race to such a state of iniquity that God destroyed it by

The Deluge. This wiped out all the human race except Noe and his wife and his three sons and their wives. From these few families the present human race sprung. From the family of one of them, Sam, God revealed that the Redeemer would be born.

To effect this He called a Chaldean named

Abram from Ur, a city on the Euphrates River, near the Persian Gulf, to take possession of Palestine and become the father of the Jewish race and the ancestor of the Redeemer. And through the utterances of the prophets and the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel, God foretold that the Redeemer was to be

His Own Divine Son, Who would be born of the Virgin Mary by the power and operation of the Holy Ghost. This is the

Mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation of Christ is not only a fathomless mystery itself, but it involves others equally incomprehensible. The first of these is the

Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, or the existence of Three Persons in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, really distinct and equal in all things. This truth is the foundation of the Christian faith. The Father is the First Person, the Son is the Second, and the Holy Ghost is the Third. They are Three distinct Persons in one Divine Nature. All existed as God from eternity, that is, without a beginning, but at the appointed time the Son took on human flesh and became Man without ceasing to be God. He assumed human nature while still retaining His Divine Nature. And this mystery took place by the power of the Holy Ghost. So that in Christ's Incarnation we have the Blessed Trinity more fully revealed than it had been heretofore. For Christ was the Son of God before He was the Son of Mary. And He remained the Son of God after He became her Son. And this introduces the second mystery of the Incarnation group, namely:

Mary's Divine Maternity. For as an ordinary woman becomes at the birth of her child not just the mother of a material body, but the mother of a human person, so at Christ's birth Mary became the Mother of a Divine Person, Who possessed two natures, the human and divine. And since she became the Mother of the whole Christ, she is truly the Mother of God. The third mystery involved is the

Virgin Birth of Christ. This means that Christ was conceived directly in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost without the intervention of man and without destroying her virginity. It means that He developed prenatally as other children, and was born in a mysterious manner which again left Mary's virginity intact. The fourth mystery related to the Incarnation in the

Immaculate Conception of Mary (defined as a dogma in 1854), which means that Mary's soul was never for an instant stained by original sin. For when all mankind fell through Adam, God still preserved unspotted that avenue through which He would send His Son to redeem the human race, and that avenue was Mary, the Mother of Christ.

The Incarnation, as we have said, is a fathomless mystery, yet we can see several important reasons why Christ became Man. He wished to be a visible Person, and to show men by His humble birth and life that although God and King of all things He was meek and humble of heart. And He wished men to know that He had become one of them out of sheer love for them, and that it would be as one of them, though God besides, that He would minister to their wants, forgive their sins, suffer for them in His Agony and Passion and redeem them by His death on the cross.. As

Man He would practise all the virtues which He would enjoin on them to practise, and first endure Himself greater hunger of heart and body, deeper loneliness of mind and soul, sharper pangs of ingratitude and unrequited love, than He would ever ask them to endure. And, finally, since man had offended God, He as Man and God would redeem the one and repay the other.

Since Christ came to a fallen race, the

Purpose of His Incarnation was to restore to God the honour of which sin had robbed Him, and to redeem mankind. Now to redeem mankind and to make redemption more abundantly fruitful in all lands and in all times, two acts were essential: first, the act of redemption itself; second, the act of instituting a universal and indestructible organisation fitted in every way to carry out His teaching and authority, and therefore to bring salvation to every individual that would ever be born on earth. Christ performed these two acts. He

Redeemed Mankind by dying on the cross. *That* is, His death on the cross restored to God in full the honour of which sin had robbed *Him*; and it paid the full price of man's redemption. And He

Founded a Church. And the Church He founded is the True Church, that is, the congregation of all the faithful, who, being baptized, profess the same doctrine, partake of the same sacraments, and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head on earth, the Pope. Nor can there be more than one True Church, for as there is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, there is but one True Church.

Christ did not begin to work wonders at His birth nor even at that age when children reach the use of reason. He remained quietly with Mary, His Mother, and Joseph, His Foster-Father, in their home in Nazareth until after the latter's death, and practised the carpenter's trade until about His thirtieth year. He then began His

Public Life. This lasted about three and one-half years. During this time He laid the foundation of His Church by proclaiming her Constitution in

The Sermon on the Mount, by admitting about seventy men to be His disciples, from whom He later called Twelve to be His Apostles, by preaching His doctrine of penance, purity, love, forgiveness and holiness, and by proclaiming His Divinity and substantiating that claim beyond all question by deliberately performing miracles in proof of it. The virtue which He demanded above all in His Apostles was faith—faith in His Divinity, and therefore in His power to commission them to go forth in His Name and preach His doctrine to all nations, to forgive sins, as He did, and to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood, as He also did. From the Twelve He selected one as

Head of the Church. This was Peter, and to him Christ said: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. . . . And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . . Feed My lambs, feed My sheep.' That is, He thereby gave to Peter and his successors

Complete Authority to Rule over the whole Church, namely, over the faithful and over all future priests and Bishops, and over the other Apostles. He commissioned the Apostles and their successors with

Full Authority to Teach the whole Church, when He said to them: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." He gave them at the same time the right to receive new members into the Church by her only way of entrance, namely, Baptism.

He gave to all the Apostles and their successors

The Power to Forgive Sins when He breathed on them and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

And Christ bequeathed His greatest gift to mankind, after redemption itself, and conferred upon His Apostles and their successors their greatest power and dignity, when at

The Last Supper He instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and said to His Apostles: "Do this for a commemoration of Me." That was the

First Mass and First Ordination to the priesthood of Christ It was the first **HOLY COMMUNION** and the first

Unbloody Sacrifice. It took place on Holy Thursday night, and on the next day occurred the

Bloody Sacrifice of Calvary. In bequeathing to His Apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins and to consecrate bread and wine, He left to them the means to sanctify the whole Church.

Christ, therefore, empowered His Church rule, to teach and to sanctify mankind. The Sacrifice of Calvary took place, and could take place, only once; but the Mass is the same Sacrifice as that of Calvary, for the same Christ Who that once offered Himself a bleeding Victim to His heavenly Father on the cross continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner by the hands of His priests. The Mass, therefore, is the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. The priest offers each Mass for the four following ends: to give God honour and glory; to thank Him for

His benefits; to obtain pardon for our sins and beseech Him for the graces and blessings needed for salvation; and to continue and represent the Sacrifice of Calvary.

Although Christ substantiated His repeated claims to Divinity and divine powers by countless incontrovertible miracles, and confirmed His daily teaching by individual works which no one but a Divine Being could perform, He set the stamp of Divinity on His whole life and established the divine value of His Passion and Death by the supreme miracle of His

Resurrection. This is the basis for complete faith in His doctrine, in His promises, in His redemption of mankind and in the Church which He founded to bring salvation to men. It was recorded by the angels at His open tomb, by the soldiers set to guard His sealed tomb, by the holy women, Apostles and disciples and by St. Paul. It was a public miracle, for Christ remained on earth for forty days and appeared at various times and in different places and was seen on one occasion at least by “more then five hundred brethren.” As He had foretold His Resurrection, so Christ foretold His

Ascension. This took place forty days after His Resurrection and in the presence of many. But Christ while still on earth had promised His Apostles that when His Ascension should take place and He should have ascended into heaven, He would ask the Father to send them

“**Another Paraclete**” the Holy Ghost, to be their Advocate and Comforter, to abide with them forever (that is, with the Church), to teach them all things and bring back to their minds any of His doctrine which they might have forgotten, and to explain to them any part of it which at the time of its utterance they had not fully understood. And when He was about to ascend into heaven from Mount Olivet He commanded the Apostles to return to Jerusalem and wait the descent of the Holy Ghost. This descent took place on

Pentecost, which is called the birthday of the Church. Up to that time the Church had existed in embryonic form, so to speak, receiving her life blood directly from the Heart of Christ, Her Founder; but with the coming of the Holy Spirit (which means “Holy Breathing”), she began to breathe with His life and warmth, living the while on the same Body and Blood of Christ which He through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass had left to her as her “Super-substantial Food.”

TRADITION.

Although the Church reveres the Bible as the written word of God, yet since it is either silent or not clear on some matters essential to salvation, such as Infant Baptism and the exact number of sacraments, she does not depend on it as the sole rule of faith, but uses a second source of Divine Revelation called

Tradition. This consists of the truths of the Catholic Faith revealed by Jesus Christ to His Apostles and handed down to us through the teaching of the Church and the writings of her Holy Fathers and Doctors. Those two sources form the Deposit of Faith. And the Church is the living magisterium, or vocal teacher, who through the Pope interprets the true meaning of Scripture and Tradition and speaks with full, infallible authority on matters of faith and morals. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, preserves her from error.

As the divinely commissioned and divinely directed teacher of truth, therefore, the Church proposes a certain set of doctrines for her children to believe and a certain code of morals for them to observe, and she insists that they obey her voice or accept the punishment which she has a right to inflict. In doing so she is merely following the practice of all lawful authority. The State does the same. So do societies and clubs. Members must obey rules or pay the penalties for breaking them: for if a person *has* a right to command, he has a right to enforce his command.

CHRISTIAN TRUTHS
THE TEACHING CHURCH

The Church teaches:

1. **That There is One God**, a Pure Spirit, Maker of heaven and earth, without beginning or end, omnipresent, knowing and seeing all, omnipotent, infinite in perfection.

2. **That There Are Three Persons In God**, equal and of the same substance: the Father; the Son, born of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, proceeding eternally from the Father and the Son; all Three eternal in wisdom and power, and all Three the same Lord and the same God.

3. **That God Created the Angels** to be with Him forever; that one part of them fell and became devils; that God created Adam and Eve, our first parents, and placed them in Paradise. whence they were justly banished for eating the forbidden fruit; that, therefore, we are born in sin and would have been lost had not God sent us a Saviour.

4. **That the Saviour is Jesus Christ**, the Son of God; perfect God from all eternity, and equal to the Father in all things; perfect Man, with a body and soul like ours.

5. **That Christ Was Conceived in the Womb of the Virgin Mary**, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without any man for His father; that she remained a pure virgin; and that during His life He founded the Christian religion and offered Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world by dying on the cross to gain mercy, grace and salvation for us.

6. **That Christ Rose from the Dead on the Third Day**, never more to die: that He manifested Himself to His disciples for forty days; ascended into heaven, where He continually intercedes for us; and whence He sent down the Holy Ghost upon His disciples to guide them and their successors in truth.

7. **That Christ Is the Head of the Catholic Church**. His spirit acting as its director; that He founded the Church on a rock; that it is always victorious against the powers of death and hell; that it is always One, for Its members profess one faith and one communion, under one pastor, the successor of St Peter, to whom Christ committed His whole flock; that it is always Holy, because it teaches a holy life; that it is Catholic because it has subsisted in all ages and taught all nations the truth; that it is Apostolic because it derives doctrines, communion, orders, missions, and successors from the Apostles.

8. **That the Scriptures Were Deposited by the Apostles with the Church**, who is the guardian and protector, interpreter and judge of nil controversies concerning them; that, as so interpreted, these Scriptures, together with the traditions of the Apostles, must be received by all as the rule of faith and practice.

9. **That Christ Instituted Seven Sacraments**, and that He also instituted the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood as a remembrance of His Passion and Death in the Mass, where every day He is immolated upon the altar, being Himself both Priest and Victim; that in the Mass we are united with Him, adore Him, give Him thanks and obtain His grace and pardon.

10. **That in the Church There is a Communion of Saints**, by means of which we communicate with the holy ones in heaven, and give thanks to God for His gifts to them and beg a share in their prayers; that we communicate with the faithful in purgatory by offering prayers, alms and sacrifice to God for them.

11. **That without Divine Grace** we cannot make even one step toward heaven; that all our merits are the gifts of God; that Christ died for all men; that God is not the author of sin; and that His grace does not take away our free will.

12. **That Christ Will Come from Heaven on the Last Day to Judge Us All**; that the dead, good and bad, shall rise from their graves at the sound of the last trumpet, to be judged according to their works; that the good shall go to heaven, body and soul, to be happy for all eternity; that the wicked shall be condemned body and soul, to the torments of hell, which are most grievous and are everlasting.

Besides this set of doctrines, which the Church taught explicitly from the beginning, there are others which she defined as the centuries went on and occasion demanded. These are not new, strange or contradictory to any truth which she had always taught, but are only a fuller and more precise definition of what she already held. They simply resided in the Deposit of Faith until the occasion arose for the Church to promulgate them solemnly. The occasion of definition was often, but not always, to clear up controversies and condemn a heresy which taught the error opposed to the particular doctrine's truth. These definitions are the formal declaration of the Pope speaking "ex cathedra," or as

the supreme authority of the visible Church, and promulgating certain existing truths which were clarified by the discussions and conclusions of General, or Ecumenical, Councils, that is, Councils in which the bishops of the world were assembled and over which the Pope or his legate presided. For to make the findings of such a Council dogmas of faith, the Pope must summon its members, preside over its discussions in person or by legate, approve its teaching and promulgate that teaching as *an* article of faith. There have been twenty

Ecumenical Councils in the history of the Church (sometimes two or more were held in the same place). They are

1. *The First Council of Nicea*, A.D. 325, which condemned the heresy of Arius, who denied the Divinity of Christ.
2. *The First Council of Constantinople* A.D. 381, which condemned the heresy of Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.
3. *The Council of Ephesus*, A.D. 431, which condemned the heresy of Nestorius, who taught that there were two separate Persons in Christ, human and divine, and that Mary was the Mother of His human Person only, not of His divine. The Church teaches that there is only one Person in Christ, the divine, and that Mary, therefore, is the Mother of God.
4. *The Council of Chalcedon*, A.D. 451, which condemned the heresy of Eutyches, who taught that Christ had only one nature. The Church teaches that Christ had two natures, His human and His divine, and that it is the union of these two natures in Christ under one Divine Person, which gave His human actions divine value.
5. *The Second Council of Constantinople* A.D. 553. This Council condemned the books of Theodorus, which favoured the heresy of Nestorius.
6. *The Third Council of Constantinople*, A.D. 680, which condemned the heresy of the Monothelites, whose author was Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople. This heresy taught that Christ had two natures but only one will, namely, the divine. The Church teaches that Christ had two wills, His human and divine.
7. *The Second Council of Nice*, A.D. 787, which condemned the heresy of the Iconoclasts, or Image-breakers, who taught that the veneration of sacred things is idolatry.
8. *The Fourth Council of Constantinople*. A.D. 809, which condemned and deposed Photius, the politically installed Patriarch of Constantinople, who was the author of the Greek Schism, or the separation between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Eastern Church. This separation still exists and the Orthodox Eastern Church, now heretical as well as schismatic, denies the infallibility of the Pope, holds that the Catholic Church is in error for prescribing celibacy for her clergy, and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father alone, not from the Father and the Son, as the Catholic Church teaches.
9. *The First Council of the Lateran (Rome)*, A.D. 1123, which defined the rights of the Church and those of the emperors or civil powers in the election of bishops and abbots.
10. *The Second Council of the Lateran*, A.D. 1139, which condemned the heresies of Peter of Bruys and Arnold of Brescia who rejected infant Baptism, condemned altars and churches, prohibited the veneration of the cross, rejected the Mass and Holy Eucharist and denied the efficacy of prayers for the dead.
11. *The Third Council of the Lateran*, A.D. 1178 which condemned the heresies of the Waldenses and Albigenses. Peter Waldo, a layman who set himself up as a street preacher, denied that the Church had the right to own property, rejected all the Sacraments except Baptism and The Eucharist, taught that a layman could absolve from sins, rejected indulgences, fasts and ecclesiastical ceremonies, and the distinction between mortal and venial sins, held veneration of sacred images to be idolatry and condemned all oaths. The Albigenses taught the existence of two Gods, denied the inspiration of the Old Testament, banned infant Baptism, taught that marriage was sinful, held that anyone can forgive sins, denied the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption and the Sacraments, declared all penances useless and held that an unworthy priest could not consecrate the Eucharist.
12. *The Fourth Council of the Lateran*, A.D. 1215, which enacted general legislation.
13. *The First Council of Lyons*, A.D. 1245, which decreed a general crusade, or an attempt by Christian armies to recover the Holy Places from the Mohammedan Turks.
14. *The Second Council of Lyons*, A.D. 1274, which defined the doctrine that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.
15. *The Council of Vienne*, A.D. 1312, which abolished the Order of Knights Templars.

16. The Council of Constance, A.D. 1414. which ended the Western Schism, or the confusion which produced three Popes at one time. The Council reformed ecclesiastical government to guard against another such occurrence, and elected Pope Martin V. It condemned the propositions of John Wyclif, who identified God with the universe, taught predestination, denied the Real Presence of Christ In the Eucharist, condemned the veneration of sacred objects and rejected the Episcopacy. This Council also condemned the heresy of John Hus, who denied that St. Peter was head of the Church or that the clergy received any authority from Christ, and held that mortal sin deprives all rulers of jurisdiction.

17. The Council of Florence, A.D. 1439--1445, which effected a temporary reconciliation with the Greeks.

18. The Fifth Council of the Lateran, AD. 1512, which re-established Church discipline.

19. The Council of Trent, AD. 1545-88, which condemned the heresies of Luther, Calvin and others.

20. The Vatican Council, A.D. 1869-70, which decreed the infallibility of The Pope.

Thus through nineteen centuries has the Church, assisted by the Holy Ghost, carefully sifted the opinions of man, rejecting what was wrong, promulgating what was true and right. Thus did she raise the edifice of her doctrine, building it on the great dogmas which the Scriptures and Tradition revealed to her, and ornamenting it with the devotion which the Holy Ghost inspired. Thus did she exhibit the

Four Marks by which men know that she is the Church of Christ, namely, the marks of being One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. For she is One in her government and teaching. Holy in her Founder and in her doctrine and saints, Catholic in her appeal to all hearts in all nations and times, and Apostolic in her tradition and authority.

THE MORAL LAW

Although Christ abrogated much of the Old Law He retained the

Ten Commandments which God had given to Moses as the basis of man's whole conduct. They are

First. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

This Commandment requires all men to honour, love and worship God by prayer and sacrifice, and through the practice of the virtues of faith, hope and charity. It forbids all sins against these three virtues, namely, Idolatry, witchcraft, impiety, or contemptuous sneering at religion; superstition and sacrilege; belief in dreams, fortune-telling and incantations.

Second. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

This Commandment imposes on all the grave obligation of speaking with reverence of God and His saints and ministers, of religion, its practices and ceremonies, and of all things relating to divine services. It teaches the gravity of vows and the duty of keeping solemn promises made to God or in His name. It forbids all rash, unjust and unnecessary oaths, all perjury, cursing, swearing, blasphemy and all profane, vulgar and indecent language.

Third. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

This commandment decrees that Sunday shall be for all a day of rest, prayer and other religious duties; that all shall observe this day in the manner prescribed by their own religion, and that Catholics shall attend Mass and, if possible, receive Holy Communion and perform some pious works befitting the holiness and calm of the day, such as visiting the sick and lonely, or any of the other spiritual or corporal works of mercy. It prohibits all unnecessary work and whatever would keep Catholics from attending Mass or lead them to a profanation of the Lord's Day.

Fourth. Honour thy father and thy mother.

This Commandment constrains all to love, honour and obey their parents, and to obey and show due respect to superiors, legitimate rulers and all in rightful authority. It forbids all contempt, stubbornness, ill-will and disobedience to parents and superiors. On the other hand, this Commandment requires parents to provide for and instruct their children, and superiors to be just and kind to their employees, not hindering their religious duties or leading them from God by coercion or temptation.

Fifth. Thou shalt not kill.

This Commandment condemns wilful murder, quarrelling, fighting, hatred, anger and revenge. It forbids all injurious words, the giving of scandal, which kills the soul, bad example and the refusal to ask pardon for offences committed or to grant it when it is requested.

Sixth. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

This Commandment forbids “all unchaste freedoms with another’s wife or husband”; also all immodest looks, words, and actions, indecent stories, songs, books, pictures and plays, dangerous companions, and persons and places that may be occasions of *sin*.

Seventh. Thou shalt not steal.

This Commandment obliges all to pay their lawful debts, to restore ill-gotten goods or money, and to return borrowed articles as soon as possible and in as good repair as when borrowed. It forbids all unjust taking or keeping of what belongs to another, all cheating in games or in buying and selling, and all injury to the property of others.

Eighth. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

This Commandment ordains that all people shall be spoken of with justice, charity and understanding, and that each shall speak of others as he would wish to be spoken of himself; and directs that any injury done to others by false evidence, false reports, rumours and gossip shall be repaired according to the measure of the damage inflicted or to the utmost extent of the offender’s honest ability. It forbids all false testimony, rash judgment and lies, backbiting, calumny, detraction and all words and speeches hurtful to the honour and reputation of others.

Ninth. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.

This Commandment, like the Sixth, forbids all immodest thoughts desires, words, glances and discourses, and all books, places and persons which might be an occasion of any sin against chastity. It protects the Sacrament of Matrimony by standing guard over its rights and holiness, and thus prevents any initial encroachments on it which might end in divorce, as the futile attempt by men to break the indissoluble bond which was welded together by God is called.

Tenth. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s goods.

This Commandment prohibits all greedy desires for the property of others, and all devious and sharp practices by which a neighbour might be deprived of his goods or fair business profits.

These are the ten great, thundering commands which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. Christ showed how all ten of them could be kept in their integrity by man’s love for God and his neighbour. For if we truly love God and our neighbour, we will neither offend nor injure them.

The Church, in conformity with her duty to direct the religious lives of those entrusted to her care, has enunciated

Six Precepts which bind Catholics under pain of mortal sin. They are:

First. To assist at Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation.

Second. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.

Third. To confess our sins at least once a year.

Fourth. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter time.

Fifth. To contribute to the support of the Church.

Sixth. To observe the Church’s laws concerning marriage.

VIRTUES

These are the sixteen laws which God and His Church have solemnly commanded man to obey. They prescribe only what is reasonable, helpful and just, and forbid only what is evil in God’s sight and therefore harmful to society and the individual. By obeying them man is valuable to the State, serviceable to God and profitable to himself. By observing them constantly and in detail, he comes to lead what is called a virtuous life, which is not just a life of intermittent good, or a life good only in high spots, but a habitually good life. In other words, he practices

Supernatural Virtue, which is defined as a habit or quality which enables and inclines a person to do good. It is the facile and constant inclination of the human will to do the will of God. It implies repeated acts. It denotes a permanent tendency, a lasting fitness to do good and an ease in doing it that is akin to the athlete’s effortless, tireless stroke, and, like it, is born of repetition.

There are ten principal virtues in all: three Theological Virtues, four Cardinal Virtues and three Evangelical Virtues, or Counsels. The

Three Theological Virtues are Faith, Hope and Charity. These are called divine virtues, for they actually unite us

with God. Faith binds us to Him as the truthful Object of our belief. He cannot betray us. Hope attaches us to Him as the all-loyal Object of our aspirations. He cannot deceive us. And Charity, or Love, merges us with Him as the Chief Good that attracts us. He cannot disappoint us. These three virtues comprise the entire Christian life:

Faith teaches us to know God as our supernatural end; Hope arouses in us the longing to possess Him; Love unites us with Him as far as this is possible here on earth. These three virtues are infused into the soul by the grace of Baptism.

The Four Cardinal Virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, They are called “cardinal” virtues because, like the four cardinal points of the compass, with the other complementary virtues of meekness, diligence, continence, etc., lying between, *they* enable a person to steer his course safely through life. They and the virtues which come under them are moral virtues whose practice keeps in check those evils and moral disorders which are incidental to our human frailty. Their perfect observance would be the completion of the natural law, as the theological virtues are the fulfilment of the supernatural or Christian law. Their perfect practice was never accomplished, however, without the aid of Christ’s teaching and grace, though the Stoic philosopher who formulated them in theory did make an appreciable effort in the practice of them. ‘They are the natural watchmen and servants of the supernatural virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.

Prudence is an intelligent understanding of the moral values of a certain proposed course of action or undertaking which the intellect submits to the will for approval or rejection. It is the virtue which guides a person in his decisions. It comprises foresight, balance, restraint, wariness, humility and acumen. It unites the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove.

Justice renders to God and man what is due to each. It contains the virtues of piety, obedience, honesty, truthfulness, respect, gratitude, recompense and liberality. It renders to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.

Fortitude is practised in the unwavering acceptance and endurance of the crosses and hardships of life, and in the unflinching stand taken against those agencies within and without us which work for our moral deterioration. Its component parts are patience and perseverance.

Temperance consists in control of the passions, appetites and instincts which original sin unleashed in our nature, and which actual sins are continually letting loose after grace and repentance have retrained them. It includes sobriety, humility, chastity, awareness and diligence.

The Three Evangelical Counsels are three virtues whose complete observance leads to perfection in the spiritual life. They are:

Voluntary Poverty, or the renunciation of all right to private possessions.

Perfect Chastity, which is the angelic chastity practised by those who voluntarily embrace celibacy and renounce married life.

Perfect Obedience, which is the free and voluntary giving up of our own will to live at the direction of a superior.

These three means to perfection are called Counsels, since Christ did not give them as commands to all, but counselled them as ways to perfection for those who had the supernatural call to follow them. They are protected by three solemn vows or promises to God, Who in return for the pledges made gives the grace necessary to observe them.

And just as those individuals who make these three voluntary pledges need proportionate grace to practise them, so do all men need the grace necessary to observe the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church and the Theological and Cardinal, or Moral, Virtues which, taken together, form the obligations of a Christian life. Christ recognised this need and instituted the supreme means of supplying it, namely, the Sacraments.

THE SANCTIFYING CHURCH.

The Seven Sacraments. These, with the Sacrifice of the Mass, prayers, the sacramentals, penance and works of mercy, supply men and women in every state of life with the grace necessary for salvation.

A Sacrament is defined as a sensible sign of inward grace, and receives its power to confer grace from the merits of Christ, Who alone instituted, and Who alone could institute, the Sacraments; for only God could give and apply grace to the soul through an outward action. The Seven Sacraments are:

Baptism, which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians and children of God and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

When Baptism is received by adults, it also remits the actual sins which the person may have committed, and all the punishment due to them. So necessary is Baptism that without it no one can enter heaven. The Church defines Baptism as being of three kinds: of Water (the formal reception of the Sacrament), of Desire (the ardent wish to do all that is ordained for salvation), and of Blood (the giving of one's life for the sake of Christ).

Confirmation, which makes us strong and perfect soldiers of Christ. The special graces which Confirmation confers on the soul are the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and the Fear of the Lord.

The Blessed Eucharist. This is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. This change of bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, is wrought in the Sacrifice of the Mass by the words of consecration spoken by the priest. The Eucharist is received by the faithful in Holy Communion. The conditions for its worthy reception are that the communicants be in a state of grace and fasting from the previous midnight.

Penance, by which those sins which are committed after Baptism are forgiven. For the worthy reception of this Sacrament, a full and sincere confession of all sins committed since the previous good confession is required; also genuine sorrow for these sins and a firm purpose of sinning no more, which latter includes the unconditional resolution of avoiding the occasion of sins, especially of those persons and places which in the past were occasions of sin. The priest speaks the words of absolution, but it is God Who reads the heart and the intention of the penitent. A bad confession, instead of removing sins, adds to them a sacrilege. The penance which the priest imposes should be performed as soon as possible.

Extreme Unction, which confers the grace of a good death. It may be received only by those in danger of death from sickness and should be preceded by a sincere confession.

Holy Orders, which gives to the Church her bishops and priests by conferring on them the power to say Mass, absolve from sin and administer the other Sacraments.

Matrimony, which unites a man and woman in the indissoluble bond of marriage. This bond can be broken only by the death of one of the parties. It confers on the husband and wife the grace to live happily together and to bring up their children in the fear and love of God.

Baptism and Penance are called Sacraments of the Dead, since they are received by persons in sin, and since their object is to cleanse the soul from sin and bring it back from spiritual death to a life of grace. The other five Sacraments are called Sacraments of the Living, for they can be received worthily only by those in the state of grace, that is, of spiritual life. Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders can be received only once, the others more than once.

Each Of the Sacraments confers a particular grace which men need to carry out the duties of their state, and to die in God's friendship. St. Bonaventure makes an ingenious and evocative application of the Sacraments to the Christian, whom he envisions as a soldier of Christ. Baptism, he says, is the Sacrament of those who enter the army of Christ; Confirmation that of those engaged in actual battle; the Eucharist that of those regaining strength; Penance that of the fighter arising from defeat; Extreme Unction that of the dying; Holy Orders that of the officers charged with training new soldiers; and Matrimony that of those whose business it is to furnish new recruits.

Prayer is the next great source of grace after the Mass and the Sacraments. It is defined as an elevation of the soul to God, to adore Him, to bless His holy name, to praise His goodness, to return Him thanks for His benefits and to petition Him humbly for all the necessities of soul and body. The prayers most highly recommended for daily recital are, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor. and Acts of Contrition and of Faith, Hope and Charity. Prayer unites the individual soul to God, and binds together in one great unit of help and communication of spiritual good the three group, of members of the indivisible Church. These are

The Church Militant, or the members of the Church who are still on earth waging the battle of life.

The Church Suffering, or her deceased members who are sure of heaven but who are expiating the temporal punishment due to their sins. This expiation takes place in **Purgatory**, a place and state in which the souls of the just, if they die with any guilt of venial sin or any debt of temporal punishment, suffer until all debts have been paid.

Reason and Revelation both demand the existence of Purgatory. For on the one hand, nothing defiled can enter heaven; and on the other, a person may die who is guilty of unforgiven venial sin, or who has received absolution for his sins, but has not yet paid the temporal punishment which sin incurs.

The Church Triumphant, or her members who have attained to the glory and happiness of heaven. This teaching of reciprocal help among the members of Christ's Church through prayers and good works is called

The Communion of Saints. It is an article of faith.

The Sacramentals. These are rites and ceremonies instituted by the Church to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. They are the pious use of holy water, of the crucifix, of blessed bread, the wearing of scapulars and blessed medals, the blessings by priests, bishops and the Pope, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the lighting of blessed candles, and many other devotions.

Indulgences are often attached to the performance of these pious works. An indulgence, which means a pardon, is defined as an act of mercy exercised by the Church apart from the Sacrament of Penance, by which we may gain partial or plenary remission, through the merits of our Saviour, of the temporal punishment remaining due for sin; the guilt and eternal punishment having been already remitted in absolution. Indulgences are gained in many ways, among which is the performing of

The Works of Mercy. These fall into two divisions:

The Spiritual Works of Mercy: to counsel and advise the doubtful and depressed, to instruct the ignorant, to try to bring back to God those who have gone astray, especially if there is a reasonable hope that they will listen to the plea, to comfort the afflicted, to forgive offences, to bear wrongs patiently, and to pray for the living and the dead.

The Corporal Works of Mercy: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to the homeless, to visit the sick, to visit those in prison, to ransom those in captivity, to bury the dead.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is among the greatest, most ancient, and most efficacious means of keeping God's grace and of finding it again when it has been lost through sin. Catholics honour and venerate Mary, as God Himself did. They do not worship her, for that would be idolatry, as Catholics well know. They give to Mary the same kind of veneration as they do the saints, but in a greater degree, for Mary, though a creature, is the most perfect creature that God ever made. They worship God alone as the Creator of the Universe, as the all-perfect Being, the Pure Spirit, the Father and Judge of all men, Who was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

PRAYERS

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

THE ANGELIC SALUTATION.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

THE GLORY.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

(Spiritual Communion is an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ, in the Most Holy Sacrament, and a heartfelt welcome as if we had actually received Him. A fervent Spiritual Communion sometimes produces results similar to those of actual Communion. We should make a Spiritual Communion as often as we assist at Holy Mass or whenever we visit the Blessed Sacrament. We may make a Spiritual Communion frequently during the day. This pious practice tends to increase our devotion to Jesus in the Sacrament of His Love, and our fervour in the reception of Holy Communion.)

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee. Our Father (3 times).

O sweetest Heart of Jesus, I implore that I may ever love Thee more and more.

Nihil obstat:

F. MOYNIHAN,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:

* D. MANNIX,
Archiepiscopus Melbournensis.
