

# THE WORDS OF LIFE

## A Brief Survey of Catholic Doctrine

Compiled by **Reverend Father C. C. Martindale, S.J.**

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### PREFACE

The author of this pamphlet, Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., was probably the best known English Jesuit of the period, 1910 to 1960. Born on 25th May, 1879, he was received into the Catholic Church shortly before his eighteenth birthday. He had just completed his secondary education at Harrow. Soon afterwards he entered the Society of Jesus. After his noviciate he was sent up to Oxford University. Monsignor Ronald Knox, when he himself followed him to Oxford, wrote of him that his name "was still a legend among the people he knew - the amazing Jesuit who was a first in Mods and Greats, Hertford scholar, runner-up for Ireland, got the Latin and Greek verse prizes, and the Derby scholarship, and then finished off rather unexpectedly with the Ellerton theological essay prize."

His subsequent career is a fascinating story. He visited Australia twice, in 1928 on the occasion of the XXVIII International Eucharistic Congress at Sydney and again in 1934 for the centenary celebrations of the diocese of Melbourne.

After spending some five years interned in Denmark during the Nazi occupation of 1940-1945, he returned to England an aged and ill man. He died on 18 March, 1963.

Father Martindale was a prolific writer. The Bibliography of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, 1957, lists 487 items under his name. Among these were seventy-nine books and fifty-nine pamphlets.

The pamphlet presented here with minor revisions, was written by him for enquirers seeking to know what Catholics believed.

We let Father Martindale himself set out the manner in which he sought to answer their questioning. This passage is taken from the prefatory note with which he introduced it himself:

". . . I tried to make, not a complete instruction book, nor what would dispense with the Catechism, nor, of course, a book of Apologetics. But I wanted to construct a scheme of Catholic belief into which a man could fit whatever else he learnt. In this way a scheme of the Faith can be offered, as I say, quickly, and yet coherently and solidly . . .

"For central notion I have used that doctrine of the supernatural life of Grace which certainly is at the root

of Christianity. I have often heard it said that it is too "high" for ordinary folk. How should that be? It is God's doctrine, and He has told us to teach that. And experience shows that the duty is no impossibility. St. Paul taught it to raw recruits from paganism, and I have seen men simply jump at it; and, in fact, the simpler the soul who is asking about the Faith, the easier I have found its statement, and the readier its recognition and appropriation."

There are still, thank God, many "simple" and sincere searchers for the fullness of Christian revelation. Much modern writing is so complex and unclear that it may do little to solve their difficulties and enlighten their minds. This pamphlet will be appreciated especially by them.

-THE EDITOR

## A. - INTRODUCTORY.

### I.

I. - I believe that

*God exists*  
because

1. My intelligence tells me that the world must have had a beginning; a First Cause - i.e., a *Creator*.
2. My conscience tells me that Right differs from Wrong, and that I ought to choose and do the Right: there exists therefore a First and Absolute Authority over me - i.e., a *Law-Giver*.
3. History shows me that mankind has always, by a natural instinct, *worshipped* a god or gods.

II. - God, then, whom I believe for these and other reasons to exist, is certainly Creator and Law-Giver, and *has a right to my complete service*.

### II.

I.- God, being the First Cause, must be

1. *Infinite*, and must
2. contain in Himself, to an infinite degree, all the qualities or perfections He has caused, and all possible qualities and perfections.
3. Among these are *Intellect* and *Will*.  
God therefore is  
Infinitely Wise and Infinitely Good.

II. - Therefore it is *incomparably important* that I should know what God wills in regard to myself:  
for an all-wise God must have made me  
*for a purpose*,  
and an all-good God must have had a *good purpose*.  
To neglect this purpose would be folly: to defy it, sin.

### III.

**I.-** *How is mankind at large to know for certain what God's purpose is?  
And how am I to know?*

**1.** History proves that mankind at large comes to very different conclusions, and many men come to none.

**2.** Experience shows that men cannot solve the problem by *study* alone. Many men have no time nor brains, even if they have the desire, to study. Even if successful, they would arrive but slowly and doubtfully at a conclusion. This is true, too, for myself. But I, and they, need to know now, and for certain, what the meaning of life is, and how to deal with it.

**II.** - Therefore, in practice, we need to be told, and by a Voice which cannot lie. Not even *Conscience* is sufficient. Consciences differ, or are silent, or uneducated, or distorted.

So in practice we need a direct message from God, knowable with certainty; that is, a *Divine Revelation*.

## **B. - THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST.**

### **I.**

**I.-** *Jesus Christ*

**1. Jesus Christ** claimed to bring and give this Revelation in a complete and unique way.

All things are given over to Me by the Father, and no one fully knows the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son shall will to reveal Him. (Matt. 11: 27; Luke 10: 22.)

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father save by Me. . . . Without Me you can do nothing. (John 14: 6, 15: 5.)

**2. Jesus Christ** - Was recognized by His followers as making this claim:

To whom (else) should we go? You have the words of everlasting Life. (St. Peter, in John 6: 68.)

Our salvation exists not in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men wherein we must be saved. (St. Peter, in Acts 4: 12. Compare St. Paul, Phil. 2: 10.)

**II.** - Jesus therefore claimed to *give* the Revelation we need,  
and to be the *only one* to give it *completely* and with full *authority*; and His followers fully recognized that this claim was made.

### **II.**

**I.** - To justify His claim, He had to show that He was  
*the Envoy and Mouthpiece of God.*

**1.** He did this -

**(a)** by the unparalleled quality of His life and doctrine;

(b) by working *miracles in proof of the Divine sanction* of His mission. [God alone can work miracles: so if God, by a miracle, had sanctioned what was false, He would Himself be a liar];

(c) by fulfilling in Himself all that the Jewish *prophets* had foretold of the destined Saviour of the world, and of Him only.

2. History supports His claim. The history of Christianity is essentially unlike that of other religions.

II. - So I must believe that

*Jesus Christ was right when He claimed to speak with Divine Authority*: that is, to give the world that Revelation of which it stood in need.

### III.

I.

- If, then, Jesus Christ gave a necessary, unique, infallible, and complete Revelation, it is again of supreme importance that I should know for certain -

(a) what He *said*;

(b) what He *meant*.

II. - How can I find out?

1. Here, as before, Study and Conscience are not enough.

(But, if I pray, will not the Holy Spirit guide us "into all truth"? (John 16: 13). That *might* have been Christ's *only* method for helping me to get at the Truth; yet, I, and other men, may pray and get no answer, or else arrive at *different* conclusions. Not *all* these conclusions can be true: even if all be partially true, I want the whole truth, with certainty, and now.)

2. A collection of students or consciences - i.e., a *non-infallible "Church"* - is not enough.

*Unguaranteed teachers* can offer no more than what they *think probable*. And in practice, the various Churches do not agree upon Christ's doctrine; for within the Churches, other than the "Roman Catholic," official teachers contradict one another.

3. A Book is certainly not enough.

Even if I consider the New Testament can tell me with certainty what Christ said, it cannot tell me with certainty what He meant. Good and learned men interpret the *same* words *differently*. Again, it was long before the New Testament was written, collected, or widely available. And how do I know what is the "New Testament?" There were other Gospels, Epistles, books of "Acts" and of "Revelation," besides those now gathered into one volume. How do I know that all those now included, and only those, were *rightly* included? The New Testament never mentions itself, nor what composes it, nor its qualifications for being believed.

Finally, Christ gave no hint that we were to get at His words, nor their meaning, through a book.

("But is not the New Testament inspired?" Yes: but who says so?  
Neither Christ nor itself. Why, then, do we believe that statement?  
And what exactly does "inspiration" mean?)

### IV.

I.

- The only Teacher who could tell me with certainty what Christ said and meant would be one who was contemporary with myself (for each age brings its own problems), and who could answer my questions with a superhuman Authority.

*I need, therefore, in practice, a contemporary, external, infallible Teacher.*

## II.

- Is there any man, or body of men, now existing which claims to do this for me?

Yes; *one only* - the Pope, and the Church whose Head he is. The Pope and the Church, alone in the world, claim -

(a) to have been founded by Christ,

(b) to have continued unchanged ever since,

(c) to be safeguarded by Him from ever teaching Untruth. They claim, that is, to be the *Infallible Guardians, Heralds, and Interpreters of the Revelation of Christ.*

## III.

-They are, then, what I want, if their claim be justifiable.

How can I find that out?

By examining whether Christ did in fact found *that sort* of Church. If He did, the Roman Church \* is it, or nothing is.

\* N.B. - Until we have shown that the Pope's Church is Christ's Church - i.e., the Catholic Church - it is convenient and logical to call it simply the "Roman" Church.

## C. - THE CHURCH.

### I.

#### I.

- Jesus Christ collected a body of disciples, but also a "close corporation" of twelve men, whom He "sent" to teach and admit yet other disciples into His religion - i.e., the *Apostles*.

#### II.

- The Apostles *were to represent Christ as He did the Father.*

As My Father has sent Me, even so I send you. (John 20: 21).

Anyone who listens to you listens to Me; anyone who rejects you rejects Me, and those who reject Me reject the One who sent Me. (Luke 10: 16).

Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 18: 18).

Christ therefore guaranteed that their *doctrine* and *rulings* should be His, even as His were God's.

Again, this was necessary, if their position was to be different from that of the "Scribes and Pharisees." These could only offer their probable personal opinions about what Moses taught, and make rules which Christ called "commandments of men" (Mark 8: 8). Christ taught and legislated with *God's Authority*, and so were His Apostles to do; else their hearers would have been no better off than those of the Scribes and Pharisees.

## II.

### I.

- *To the Apostles, Christ gave a Head*, chosen from among them, yet summing up their office in Himself - *St. Peter*.

You are Peter (i.e., Rock), and upon this Rock will I build My Church, and the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. (Matt. 16: 18).

I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. (Matt. 16: 19).

Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you [plural], that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for THEE [singular] that THY faith fail not; and, once thou art converted, confirm (*establish*) thy brethren. (Luke 22: 31.)

In the Acts, St. Peter is seen exercising this office of Head.

### II.

- This teaching and governing body, with its Head, was to be a *permanent institution*.

Go and teach all nations, baptizing them, etc., and behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world. (Matt. 28: 19-20.)

As Christ needed official representatives, or successors, to reach places and ages which He could not and did not: the Apostles also needed them, for they were not destined to reach "all nations," nor to live for ever. In fact, if after their death authoritative teachers and legislators had ceased to exist, all future generations would have been back in the old uncertainty about God's doctrine and His will, and Christ's work would have been defeated. Therefore the Apostles were to have successors, with an office substantially similar to theirs, just as they were successors of Christ, and held an office similar, in these points, to His.

## III.

I. - In order, therefore, to ensure -

- (a) *Certainty*,
- (b) *Permanence*,
- (c) *Universality* to His teaching and legislation,

*Christ created a Society*

intended to be world-wide and world-enduring; governed by officials representing Himself in doctrine, and law-making, admitting members on definite conditions of obedience of mind and action, and by a special ceremony. These officials are headed by, established, and shepherded by St. Peter. In matters of doctrine they are safeguarded from telling a lie; in matters of legislation, from enforcing a wrong. *God authorizes their doctrine and their law.*

### II.

- If, then, a modern institution wishes its claim to be Christ's Church to be admitted, it must reproduce at least the following elements: -

A social and institutional structure;

A Unity of Government, containing officials carrying on, unbrokenly, the office of the Apostles, and a Head. carrying on that of St. Peter;

A doctrine uttered, and a legislation imposed, with infallible Authority exercised by or derived from its head;

Identical conditions throughout of admission and membership;

And the essential tendency to become world-wide - i.e., universal.

*No Church save the "Roman" even dreams of claiming to contain these elements, or even looks as if it did.*

## **D. - THE "ROMAN" CHURCH.**

### **I.**

*The "Roman" Church, however, claims to, and in fact does, realize this necessary scheme:*

- She is governed by Bishops and a Pope, who descend in an unbroken line from the Apostles and St. Peter.

She teaches with authority a doctrine which is identical in all parts of herself, and in all periods of her history; and imposes an authoritative legislation on all her members.

She is super-national and inter-national, and in a true geographical sense world-wide, and able to become even more completely so.

### **II.**

- She possesses therefore the characteristics of Unity, Apostolicity, and Catholicity, that must be in any Church which claims to be that which Christ founded, and alone possesses them.

### **II.**

The Roman Church, therefore, claims to be *infallible*. By *Infallibility* she means that:

#### **I.**

- *The Faith of the Believing Church*, as a whole, cannot be false.

#### **II.**

- *The Faith of the Teaching Church*, expressed in certain representative or official ways, cannot be false.

**III.** - These ways are:

**(a)** The *expressed agreement of the Church's acknowledged teachers* that a doctrine is revealed, even if it be not "defined". If in the ordinary exercise of their teaching office they are officially approved in so teaching, we have a sure guarantee that their doctrine is the Church's belief, and cannot be false, though it may be inadequate.

**(b)** A *Council* composed of a sufficiently representative number of her Bishops, whose decrees are recognized and become authoritative through their confirmation by the Pope.

**(c)** The *Pope* speaking as Pope "ex cathedra" - i.e., from the Chair of Peter.

### **III.**

*Papal Infallibility* means, therefore, that

## I.

- When the Pope speaks as the successor of St. Peter, and therefore as Head of the Church and "Vicar" of Christ, and is teaching the entire Church by defining this or that to be part of the Catholic Faith as revealed by Christ, he is safeguarded from teaching falsehood.

## II. - Therefore his Infallibility does not mean

- (a) impeccability - i.e., that he cannot sin;
- (b) omniscience - i.e., that he knows everything;
- (c) inspiration: he is not positively inspired to teach this or that, still less to teach anything new; he is *prevented* from teaching, *if* he teaches meaning to bind the whole Church irrevocably, anything *false*. It does not, therefore, concern his private opinions; nor even all his public pronouncements; nor his doctrine with regard to what is not part of the "Deposit of Faith," which he must guard, hand down, interpret, and define.

*Note: Development.*

*Development of Doctrine.* - The Church cannot invent new doctrines, but she can understand and explain her doctrines more and more perfectly. She cannot alter their substance, but can improve their statement.

In successive periods, different doctrines have been attacked or wrongly explained - e.g., the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Sacraments. The Church thereupon examined her dogmas, stated them more accurately, and defined them more positively. What doctrines she thus dealt with depends usually on which were being attacked or misinterpreted; thus, e.g., the Sacraments were more fully treated in the thirteenth century, and the Trinity and the Incarnation in the fourth and fifth. Thus doctrine grows, but dogma does not alter.

## E. - CATHOLIC DOGMA.

[*Note.* - It will be remembered that it is not intended here to offer proofs that the Catholic dogmas, taken separately, are true, but to display sufficiently with clearness what the Church's doctrine is, in a coherent form. However, if the student has by now been led to think sympathetically of the "Roman Church" as reasonable in her claims, and probably the Church founded by Christ Himself, he will already be prepared for drawing the practical conclusion that if she teaches truth, each of her doctrines, even unproved departmentally, is true.]

### I. THE HOLY TRINITY.

#### I. - The Catholic Church teaches that

(i) *God is*, and can only be, *One* as to His Nature;  
yet that

(ii) *God is*, not only *One*, but *Three* as to His Personality. \*

\* This may be *illustrated* by *Human Nature*, which requires two distinct persons for its completeness, male and female, while its *personalities* may be multiplied indefinitely. *God's Nature is One*, and yet requires three Personalities, and having these is utterly complete and incapable of further communication. How? Why? Herein lies the Mystery of the Trinity.

God is, not only *One*, but *Three* as to His Personality. That this is so is  
(a) a Dogma, that of the Holy Trinity;

(b) a Mystery: that is, a truth guaranteed to us by God, but such in its nature that the human intellect cannot adequately grasp it. Theology may *discuss* it, but cannot *explain* it fully, being but human thought dealing with what is by nature above human thought.

## II.

- The "Three" in God are named "Persons," because in them is at least all that we mean by Personality, without the limitations of human personality.

They are respectively named Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, partly because of the special relation they are to be thought of, by us, as bearing to one another; and also because of the special relations in which we stand to them. In practice, the Catholic worships the Father as his Creator and Providence, the Son as his Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as living in him and sanctifying him; and the Three as being none the less One God, equal to one another, and possessing one identical Nature and Substance.

## II. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE.

### I.

- A stone is not "alive"; a flower is at least alive; a dog has a higher *kind* of life than a flower, and a man than a dog.

Therefore there are different kinds of life, one higher than another. Is there no higher kind of life than man's? The Church says there is.

(Reason, which knows of a First Cause CANNOT show there is no higher kind of life than man's. We turn to the Church.

### II.

- She teaches that *it was and is God's intention* freely to raise human life to a super-human level - i.e., to give to man a higher *kind* of life than his own; one he could not claim; nor, by his own efforts, merit; nor could be merely improved into as, e.g., a flower can be improved into being of a better quality as flower, but not into being, e.g., an animal; this life is also given the name of "Grace," in so far as it is God's "free gift," which *gratia* means. It is nothing less, indeed, than a participation in the Divine Life, so far as man can appropriate it.

### III.

- To each higher kind of life belongs an appropriately higher kind of knowledge. A flower cannot "understand" anything, nor a dog what a man can. So if there be a higher kind of life than man's, it will contain truths, and a way of knowing them, essentially above the co-natural grasp, or faculty, of man. He may know *about* them if he be *told* by competent Authority; but he cannot exhaust these super-human truths by his human knowledge. Such truths are called *Mysteries*; the Trinity is one of these (see above) [E. Section I.]. "Grace" also assists the intellect to believe even naturally ascertainable truths, like God's existence, in a new and supernatural way. Finally, each kind of life implies a greater likeness to, and therefore union with, God. A dog lives by instinct in accord with natural law. Man can choose to live in accordance with it, and put his human will in union with God's will. To supernatural life belongs a supernatural Union.

## III. THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN.

The Church teaches that

### I.

- *God gave the supernatural life to the first man and woman* He created, so that they not only had a human body and a human indestructible soul, and duties of natural worship and obedience to God's law, but a supernatural life of grace and a destiny of supernatural union with Him.

### II.

- But the human soul has the faculty of free will. God would not therefore force this special privilege on them, but allowed them to reject it if they chose. He made it a conditional gift, dependent on their obedience to a special command addressed by Him to them.

### III.

- They disobeyed this command, and He therefore withdrew His special gift of supernatural life, and left them merely on the natural level.

This is the dogma of *the Fall* - i.e., *the rejection of a supernatural life*.

### IV.

- But the first man was regarded as no mere isolated unit, but "socially" - i.e., as *representative of the race*. In his deprivation, therefore, the race was involved; and his descendants were born without that special Life they were intended to have.

This is the dogma of *Original Sin* - i.e., our loss of a supernatural life intended for us.

## IV. THE REDEMPTION.

### I.

- God did not will, however, that this deprivation should be final. But we can, by our natural efforts, never win a supernatural thing.

The supernatural Life had to be *given* back to us. God might have done this in many ways.

### II.

- He chose to do it through a *Second Adam*, that is, a second Representative of the race, in whom we might be *incorporated*, as we were in the First Adam.

### III.

- But He did more than He originally did.

He did not simply create a second man, merely human, who should have the chance of making the right choice.

God's Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, was Himself to become man, not only receiving, but containing, by nature, that supernatural life, inasmuch as He is God.

### IV.

- If, then, men by their free choice -itself necessarily assisted, though not of course coerced, by grace - make themselves one with the Second Adam, they unite themselves to the source itself of supernatural life, and are better than restored, to the position they had lost.

[*Note.* - Those who are thus "incorporated" with Him form His Body, which is the Catholic Church, and it is at once clear that all who are *not* so incorporated do not possess that supernatural life which is supernatural salvation.

[(The grace of Christ's salvation was also "retrospective" and those who lived even before His actual Incarnation could "incorporate" themselves with Him by a sufficient "desire" to do all that God should will).

[The whole doctrine of the Incarnation, the Church, and the Sacraments, is the working out for and by man of this recovery of the supernatural life.]

## V. THE INCARNATION.

Of Jesus Christ, the Church teaches that He:

- I. -
  - (i) was *God*, in the full sense,
  - (ii) *Man*, in the full sense,
  - (iii) yet *one Person*.
- II. - Was *born* of a woman, yet had no human father (this is the dogma of the *Virgin Birth*).
- III. *Died* upon the Cross, *Rose* again, body and soul; and after a certain period departed from His visible life on earth.
- IV. - This death, then, was a supreme act of worship to God; a *sacrifice of obedience* which better than annuls Adam's disobedience, for it was truly offered by man, since Christ was man, and was fully worthy of God, since He was God.
- V. - It is also a symbol of the terrible character of sin, which slays the supernatural life, in the soul, for on the Cross Christ represented *sinful man*, for whom He was atoning; so, too, His resurrection was the symbol and promise of its restoration, as well as a proof that in Him that Life is indestructible.

## VI. THE SACRAMENTS.

### (a) Introductory.

- I. -
  1. God willed to restore the world through Jesus Christ, God and Man.
  2. Christ willed to continue His work through means which were neither merely spiritual nor merely material; but, like Himself, both - i.e., *the Church and the Sacraments*.
- II. -

In the Catholic Religion, therefore, you must attend to one general *object*, the implanting of a supernatural life in man; and to one general *method*, the achieving of this spiritual result through partly material means.

Thus:

  1. Christ is God and man:
  2. Man is soul and body:
  3. In the soul, beside its natural life, a supernatural life is to exist.
  4. That life is inserted, developed, and, if necessary, restored, in ways which include a material and natural element, as well as a supernatural, spiritual one, thus *suiting the whole man*.
  5. The chief of these are the *Sacraments* - material transactions which symbolize, and effect, a spiritual result.
  6. They are not, therefore, mechanical in their results. These results are a combination of what I do in using them and what God does in giving them and working through them.

Thus the Church has, besides the three essential "Notes" mentioned above (D. Section I. Point II.), a fourth - i.e., *Holiness*; for not only is Holiness visible to a heroic degree in her saints, but her whole "machinery" is arranged for the imparting and developing of the supernatural life, or grace.

### (b) Baptism.

## I.

- Man is born into the natural life, the world, in the natural way. Man must be born into the supernatural life, the "Kingdom of Heaven," in a supernatural way.

This *new birth*, this inserting of the new life, is brought about (so Christ ordained) by Baptism.

Unless a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. (St. John 3: 5.)

Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (St. Matt. 28: 19.)

In Baptism, therefore, the material element is the pouring of water and the pronouncing of these words; the spiritual result is the new birth into the supernatural life of special union with God: the washing away of "Original Sin" (see E. section III.). It is, too, a symbolic "burial with Christ," in view of "resurrection" with Him.

## II.

- As Birth can only happen once, so Baptism cannot be repeated.

As Birth is the opposite of death, Baptism is not only the opposite of that deprivation of "grace" which is Original Sin, but the annulling of all actual sin, which is spiritual death, unless, indeed, I *will* to keep that sin in me; that is, will to remain supernaturally disunited from God; in that case the effects of Baptism are, as it were, held up, until I alter my will and allow them to operate.

So necessary is it that this New Birth should be made sure of, that converts about whose baptism there is any doubt are *conditionally* baptized when they become Catholics.

### (c) Confirmation.

## I.

- In natural life the change from boyhood to youth marks a crisis; it needs special care; and leads to new responsibility, duty of work, and temptations.

In the supernatural life, Birth is followed, normally, by a need of new strengthening; to meet this Christ instituted the Sacrament of Confirmation, of which the material part is the laying on of the Bishop's hands and an anointing with consecrated oil, as athletes used to be anointed. The effect is a special strengthening by God of the supernatural life.

## II.

- As "adolescence" comes once only, so Confirmation can be administered only once. It, like Baptism and Ordination, impresses an indelible stamp or "character" on the soul.

### (d) Marriage.

## I.

- A crisis in human life comes when a man and woman join their lives together and marry.

Human marriage is a *contract* between two persons. *Christian Marriage* is still that contract, but it is no mere human contract any more, owing to the supernatural life which is in the two parties and unites them in a special way to God.

[N.B. - Baptized persons, even though not in a "state of grace," obtain the Sacrament, but illicitly. Cf. too Gen. 2: 24.]

That is, the contract becomes also a Sacrament: the contract remains as the material element; and God imparts to the man and woman a special grace suited to their new state of life. Not only do they join themselves to one another, but *God joins them*. (Matt. 19: 6.)

## **II.**

- St. Paul says marriage is the most perfect human symbol of the intimate union of Christ with His Church, and this, we have seen, is the continuation and reflection of the union of the Divine and human natures in Himself.

Hence Marriage is ordained to be *one*, for He was one Person, and His Church is one: and *indissoluble*, for in Him the Divine and human natures are never to be separated, nor is He from His Church. There is then no such thing as an experimental or temporary marriage, nor divorce.

Infidelity is not only a sin against the husband or wife, but an insult to the Incarnation, of which marriage is the symbol; and all personal impurity, even in the unmarried, is a spiritual adultery and insult to the indwelling Christ, who is supernaturally united to the Christian soul.

### **(e) Holy Orders.**

Another crisis in a man's life may be the *Consecration* of himself, in a special way, to God's service.

#### **I.**

- In His Catholic Church Christ instituted not only the Pope, but also *Bishops and Priests*.

It is the peculiar function of Bishops to ordain;

Of priests, to administer the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance {below, in E. VI. Section (g) and Section (h) Part (ii)}. God has chosen throughout to use men as ministers, and material things as means.

#### **II.**

- In this special consecration of a man to God's service a special grace is needed: the Sacrament of *Orders* supplies this; its material part is the ordination or consecration by the Bishop, and the spiritual part is that which makes a man "a priest for ever," or a Bishop.

### **(f) Anointing of the Sick.**

Sickness and pain have always been a burden to man and an enigma to his understanding.

The Sacrament of Anointing is spoken of in the Letter of James (James 5: 14-16). It commends the sick person to the suffering and glorified Lord that he might raise him up and save him.

It may be given to anyone who is seriously ill through sickness or old age. Old people may be anointed if they are weak, although not suffering from a dangerous illness.

This sacrament gives the Holy Spirit by whom health may be restored and strength given to resist temptation and overcome anxiety about death.

"Viaticum", or "journey money" is the administration of Holy Communion to those in danger of death through sickness. It gives them spiritual strength and is a pledge of their resurrection with Christ.

### **(g) The Eucharist.**

*(i) The Real Presence.*

## I.

- A man's life is not wholly made up of crises. He needs his daily food.

So, too, his supernatural life needs its constant suitable nourishment.

This is chiefly given in *the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood*.

## II.

- The Church teaches that when Christ said "This is My Body, this is My Blood,"

He meant the words in their full sense, and that *what was bread and wine becomes, by the Priest's Consecration, Christ Himself*.

## III.

- This change is called *Transubstantiation*, for under the appearances of bread and wine, which do not change, a different *thing* is made present - namely, Christ Himself, instead of the bread and wine.

*How* this can be is one of those mysteries (above, in E. Section II. Part III.), which the human mind can never *adequately* grasp or explain.

(ii) *Mass*.

The use to which Christ intended this sacramental mystery to be put is twofold: *Sacrifice* and *Communion*.

## I.

- *Mass*, to which all Catholics are bound to go, when possible, on Sundays and certain festivals, is the *Christian Sacrifice* offered to God by Christ and His Church, in adoration, expiation, gratitude and intercession.

## II.

- It is the same Sacrifice as that of Calvary, because the Victim and the Priest are the same - namely, Christ, who offers Himself to His Father - the only Sacrifice worthy of God and adequately able to redeem the world. Yet since the Sacrifice was fully accomplished on the Cross, the Mass does not actually redeem, but continuously *applies* redemption to the world.

## III.

- When, therefore, I assist at Mass, and join my will to Christ's, I join in carrying out the work of Redemption, and, as a Christian, co-operate with Christ. Even if I be not "in grace," I fruitfully assist at Mass, because I offer Christ, as Christ offers Himself, to the Father. But if I be united by grace to Him, I participate in Him both as priest and victim, and exercise a supernatural work of enormous power and dignity.

**Thus it is clear why the Mass is the centre of Catholic practical religion, and the intelligent joining in the offering of Mass one of the greatest actions I can perform.**

(iii) *Holy Communion*.

## I.

- When I receive into myself Christ's Self, under His sacramental appearance of Bread and Wine, my soul is nourished by His Real Presence, and my supernatural life is strengthened and developed by Communion with that life itself in its source. It is God's will that men should reach him through Christ, and Christ's that we should enter into visible as well as spiritual Communion with Himself, through the Blessed Sacrament.

The Church rules that we should go to Holy Communion at least once a year, and desires that we should go as often as possible.

- II.**
- Christ is a *living person*. Where, therefore, any part of Him is, all of Him is. He is *wholly* present both under the veil of Bread and under that of Wine: hence, to receive Him under either is to receive Him wholly.

**(h) Penance.**

*(i) Actual Sin and its Cure.*

I can *weaken* the supernatural life by getting out of touch with God, and *strengthen* it by Communion with Him. Can I kill it?

- I.**
- Yes; by *mortal sin* - i.e., if I offend against God by defying His will -
    - (a) in a *grave* matter;
    - (b) by a *deliberate* act - i.e., fully aware of what I am doing, and
    - (c) with the *full consent* of my will.

I disunite myself, in this way, from Him: I reject His "grace"; my soul dies supernaturally; my sin is "mortal."

If the matter is trivial, or I do not know God's will clearly, or if I am, e.g., surprised into my act and do it without fully free choice, it may be "venial," and my soul is weakened but does not die.

- II.**
- If I kill my soul by sin, can it be brought to life again?

Yes: as God gave the world a second chance, so He does for the individual. As long as I live on earth, God will always help me to the restoration of my supernatural life on certain conditions.

These are *Contrition* and the *use*, when possible, of the *Sacrament of Penance*.

*(ii) The Sacrament of Penance.*

- I.**
- *Contrition* is being *sorry for my sin on God's account*. I may grieve for my sin because it has offended God and violated His law; or because it has caused the sufferings and death of Christ; or because it has deserved for me God's punishment (see below, in section F.) or it has deprived me of the eternal happiness of Heaven.

The moment I repent my sin by an "act of perfect contrition" it is *forgiven*, though the duty of seeking *absolution* in the Sacrament of Penance remains. "Perfect contrition" is sorrow for my sin because I love the God whom I have offended.

- II.**
- With Contrition must go *resolve not to repeat the sin*; else I am not truly sorry. But as I cannot begin to be sorry without God's grace assisting me, so neither can I keep my resolve without His grace. I resolve, therefore, not trusting to my own strength for success, but to His co-operating love.

N.B. - *Being* contrite is not the same as *feeling* contrite; and *resolving* to sin no more is not *guaranteeing*

to sin no more. I cannot altogether control my feelings, and I can give no such guarantee.

### III.

- If, then, I have committed a grave sin
  - (i) I must repent on God's account:
  - (ii) I must resolve, with His help, not to sin again:
  - (iii) I must confess to a priest that and any other mortal sin committed since my last confession.

The Priest will then give me absolution, according to Christ's rule, "Whose sins you remit, they are remitted to them" (John 20: 23); and a Penance {see below at (iii), ' # ' }; and my supernatural life is forthwith re-established.

N.B. - To efface sin is only one part of this Sacrament; it confers grace and help for the future, and may be profited by even if no grave sin be on my conscience.

(iii) *Punishment.*

### I.

- With all guilt goes *Punishment.*

If the love at the back of my sorrow were quite perfect, God would cancel all my punishment; but my love is usually imperfect, and even after forgiveness of sin some penalty is usually left for me to pay.

In the material world violation of law brings its penalty mechanically; in the free world of the spirit penalties may be more or less remitted according to the goodness of the human will and the choice of God. The residue remains to be paid either in this world or in the next.

# My *penance*, imposed by the priest, in God's name, stands for part of that penalty, or for all.

## F. - VII. THE NEXT WORLD

### (i) Heaven and Hell.

I must die, either quite guiltless or gravely guilty, or not wholly cleansed yet not gravely stained.

### I.

- If I die *gravely* guilty, with my will *set* against God's, with *no supernatural life in me*, it follows I cannot enter into the supernatural results of what I have not got. I am supernaturally separated from God; and God, who always gives a man a sufficient chance in this life, does not give him another in the next. This eternal supernatural separation is *Hell*.

Because I might have had supernatural union and joy, my state is one of remorse; and because I ought to have had it, of punishment. The punishment which reaches me from within myself is called the Punishment of *Loss*; that which comes from outside, the Punishment of *Sense*, and the Church, following Christ's example, calls this, as He did, fire. (Matt. 25: 41.)

### II.

- If I die "in grace" and all punishment for past sins has been remitted, I pass straight into conscious supernatural communion with God, which is to be *in Heaven*.

### (ii) Purgatory.

## I.

- Most men, we may surmise, die with their will substantially right with God's, yet *imperfectly* so, and with their debt of punishment only *partially* paid.

Their wills, therefore, have to be made perfectly right, and their debt *fully* paid, that so their *complete* union with God may become possible.

## II.

- The period during which this is done is that of *Purgatory*. If I genuinely love someone, and see myself unworthy of him or her, this itself is pain, and should be purifying. Such is Purgatory. The soul, freed from the illusions of the world, has seen God and its sin. This, and whatever other pain God may inflict upon it, gradually removes its imperfections, and it reaches its full joys of Heaven.

## III.

- Finally, since we are, and remain, men, and not mere souls nor pure spirits like the angels, we shall at the end be perfect men, body and soul. This is the *resurrection of the body*. We shall in some way have that unity of spirit governing matter which now makes us soul and body, yet *one* person.

## IV.

- Souls in Purgatory can be helped by our prayers, because in them and us the "same supernatural life exists. We are in communion with them, as with the saints in heaven and the just on earth.

We may, therefore, pray *to* and *for* the souls in Purgatory, *to* the saints in heaven; and the saints pray *for* us.

This is the *Communion of Saints*, resulting from an identity of supernatural life.

### (iii) The Saints and Our Lady.

## I.

- As not all men on earth achieve a supernatural life equal in intensity or in "amount," though it be identical in sort, so neither in heaven are all souls equal in joy and glory.

## II.

- After the perfection of Our Lord, none is higher than that of the *Blessed Virgin*, His Mother.

1. The Church teaches that to Mary, in view of her unique office - i.e., that of becoming the Mother of God's Son made flesh - was from the *beginning of her existence* given that supernatural life which is given to us in *Baptism*. This is her *Immaculate Conception*. This she never violated by any actual sin.

2. She is rightly called *Mother of God*, because Jesus Christ, her Son, is true God and true man, in one person; her Son, therefore, is God, and she is God's Mother. Thus the Immaculate Conception does not mean that she had no human father, nor does her title Mother of God mean she was eternal, or Mother of Godhead.

3. She was taken body and soul to heaven. This is her *Assumption*.

4. As we are God's sons, and brothers of Christ, so Mary must be *our Mother too*, and uniquely powerful to help us.

## CONCLUSION

These pages are not a *proof* of the truth of Catholicism, nor an *exhaustive instruction* about Catholic belief. But they provide a scheme composed of the Church's essential dogmas. Into this scheme you can fit further secondary details as you go on. You see how the different organic parts of the thing hang together. If you knew what is in this book, your Catholic Faith would be like a skeleton: it would need flesh putting on it; and God, together with a certain practice of it, as of prayer, would have to bring it all to life.

At present I see that God created me, and must govern me. But I need to *know* His will: He must tell it to me. He did this through Christ, and Christ chose that His Voice should continue to be heard, no less authoritatively, through a Church. Only one existing Church fulfils this function of authoritative and safeguarded teaching, and realizes the other characteristics of what He instituted.

Round the central doctrine of the Supernatural Life all her doctrines concerned with man's soul may be grouped; and as God worked through Christ, and Christ through other men, so all her work is sacramental, and includes a material and a spiritual element. She is suited to *this* life, and in our supernatural sonship and brotherhood all true human dignity, equality, and liberty are rooted; and to the *next*, which is to last eternally.

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