

ANOTHER QUESTION BOX.

Questions Posed by Devout Catholics.

Answered by the Editors of the Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY of Ireland No. Dd512a (1940).

(Previously titled *The “Messenger” Question Box Part B.*)

INDULGENCES.

QUESTION — What is the meaning of an Indulgence of, for example, forty days or seven years.

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

[Since Vatican II, reference to number of days or years has been eliminated and such indulgences are referred to as ‘partial indulgences’. It must be recalled that God is never outdone in generosity.]

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

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

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

Answer — Yes.

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

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

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

Answer — An indulgence of three hundred days may be gained by anyone who on entering a church, goes immediately to the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and there adores Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist. [As explained earlier, this is now deemed a ‘partial indulgence’. It must be recalled that God is never outdone in generosity.]

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS.

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — May a widow enter a Religious community?

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

QUESTION — May a widower become a priest?

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

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

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

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

Answer — No.

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

Answer — There are many congregations engaged in missionary work. I can recommend the Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles. Apply to the Rev. Mother, Convent of Our Lady, Ardfoyle, Ballintemple, Co. Cork. The following convents also engage in Foreign Missionary work in Africa and elsewhere : The Missionary Convent of the Holy Rosary, Killeshandra, Co. Cavan or at Holy Rosary Generalate, 23, Cross Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin; The Mother House, Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Saint Joseph, Patricroft, near Manchester, England, or the Generalate: St. Joseph's Convent, Greenleach Lane Worsley, Manchester, M28 2TS, or Prague House, Church Street, Freshford, Kilkenny, Ireland, or 3 Clifford Street, Deeplish, Rochdale, OL11 1NG, United Kingdom.

Note Well. — Those desiring information about Religious Institutions, et cetera, should procure a copy of *The Religious Orders and Congregations in Ireland* from the Office of THE IRISH MESSENGER, 37, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin, 2, for a small price, post free.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — Are there any Religious Nursing Orders for men?

Answer — Yes. The Alexian Brothers, who have a house in Ireland at Mount Saint Columb's, Warrenpoint, Co. Down or the GENERALATE OF THE ALEXIAN BROTHERS, 198 James Boulevard, Signal Mountain, Tennessee, 37377, U.S.A.; and, the Brothers of Saint John of God, one of whose Irish houses is at Granada House, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.

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

Answer — As the qualifications required vary with the different Orders it is better to consult *The Religious Orders and Congregations in Ireland* (from the Office of THE IRISH MESSENGER, 37, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin, 2, for a small price, post free) where information about the different Orders is given. When you have selected an Order, which seems to suit you write to the address given in connection with the particular Order for further information.

QUESTION — How am I to become a Franciscan Tertiary?

Answer — Apply to the Rev. Director, Third Order, (Secular Franciscans) Franciscan Friary, Merchant's Quay, Dublin.

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

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

NON-CATHOLICS.

QUESTION — Are Non-Catholics Christians?

Answer — Those who, being baptised, believe in Christ are Christians.

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — May a Catholic nurse send word to a non-Catholic minister that a non-Catholic patient, seriously ill, wishes to see him?

Answer — Yes. She would not be justified in asking him explicitly to come for the purpose of performing religious rites, neither may she assist him in the rite, for example, by answering prayers. [At this time, the Church's main concern was to preserve the faith of the Catholic and proclaim that they were in error who had deliberately abandoned the True Faith, namely Protestants. Vatican II acknowledged that the majority of today's Protestants have not consciously deserted the True Faith, as their ancestors did, and that provided there is no heresy in the 'prayers', Catholics can participate in the responses.]

QUESTION — May a non-Catholic wear a Sacred Heart Badge?

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

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

Answer — To enter a Protestant church when there is no ceremony in progress, for example, for the purpose of seeing it, is not wrong. [As explained above, at the time, Catholics were forbidden to participate in ANY Protestant service. Vatican II hoped, by liberalizing these strictures, to promote a desire for unity among Christians by a true ecumenism of love.]

QUESTION — Is it wrong to pray at a Protestant wake?

Answer — To pray privately at a Protestant wake is not wrong. It would be wrong, however, to take part in prayers publicly recited for the deceased person. [The remarks made three questions earlier, apply in this case too.]

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

Answer — As it may reasonably be assumed that the Church does not intend to bind non-Catholics, even though baptised, by the laws of abstinence, a Catholic may serve them with meat on Fridays and days of abstinence. [Since Vatican II, the rules of abstinence from meat have been considerably modified, although the obligation to perform some act of penance on Fridays remains. This question is, therefore of historical interest for the principle underlying it.]

MISCELLANEOUS.

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

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

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

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

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

Answer — A person could take an oath without going to the civil authority. In order that an oath

be binding in civil matters, certain formalities must be gone through. Unless these formalities are carried out, the State will not recognise the oath, though it may be binding in conscience. As the binding power of a rash oath will depend on the circumstances of the oath, it is always better to consult one's confessor in such a case.

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

Answer — Old pamphlets are always welcomed in any Catholic hospital. Used postage stamps may be sent to the Rev. Secretary, Irish Jesuit Missions, formerly at Saint Stanislaus College, Tullamore, Offaly, now at 20 Upper Gardiner Street Dublin 1, where they will be used for promoting missionary work.

QUESTION — Is Confirmation necessary for salvation?

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

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

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

QUESTION — What do you mean by "Chained Bibles"?

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

QUESTION — Could you give me any information about the prophecy of Saint Malachy?

Answer — The so-called prophecy of Saint Malachy regards the succession of the Popes, from 1143 onwards. It was part of a work published towards the end of the sixteenth century by a Benedictine monk, who said it was copied from a manuscript never before published. It consists of titles or devices, in Latin, indicating peculiarities of the Popes to whom they are ascribed.

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

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

QUESTION — How did the Eucharistic Congress originate?

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

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

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

QUESTION — Does it break the Pioneer Badge, whereby I promised total abstention from alcohol in honour of the Sacred Heart, to take pudding made with a little sherry?

Answer — No.

QUESTION — Please tell me how would a person take the Pioneer Pledge of total abstention from alcohol?

Answer — For all information with regard to the Pioneer Association it is best to apply to the Rev. Director, Pioneer Association, Saint Francis Xavier's, Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin or at 27 Upper Sherrard Street, Dublin 1.

QUESTION — Is it permissible for Pioneers:

(a) to drink dry ginger;

(b) to use sherry on trifle;

(c) to use malt vinegar on salads, pickles, et cetera?

Answer — Yes. All three are permitted to Pioneers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — Why does the Church condemn cremation?

Answer — Cremation is the process of disposing of the dead by fire rather than by burial. Cremation is against no article of faith, still the Church looks upon it as an unnatural destruction of the human body. Some centuries ago, it was actively promoted by the enemies of religion as a direct insult and challenge to God and His power to raise the body to judgment and life. In addition, this practice was promoted by the Freemasons, and consequently has been regarded as an act of insubordination by the Church. Catholics are forbidden to carry out the order of anyone who wishes to be cremated, while those who direct that their bodies be so disposed of are deprived of ecclesiastical burial, unless they retract before death. [After Vatican II, Catholics are permitted cremation, provided that there is no hint of the errors that previously meant its prohibition.]

QUESTION — What is Pharisaical Scandal?

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

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

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

QUESTION — What is the difference between slander and scandal?

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

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

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

QUESTION — What is to be understood by Our Lord's words when He said: "And whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire " (Matthew 5:22)?

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — If a person touch the Ciborium accidentally should his hand be purified?

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — Sometimes the term "R.C." (Roman Catholic) is applied to Catholics, especially in Protestant countries; is there any harm in this?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — Who is the "Devil's Advocate"?

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

QUESTION — Who are "The Fathers of the Church"?

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

QUESTION — What is meant by "Titular Bishop"?

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

Q--What is meant by "The Visit 'ad limina', " please?

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

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

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

QUESTION — If a person dies suddenly should a priest be summoned?

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

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

Answer — It is not forbidden to do intellectual or liberal work on Sunday for pay, for instance, to teach or write. Servile or manual work, by which the body chiefly is exercised and not the intellect, is forbidden. What is forbidden is ‘un-necessary servile work’ There may be times when some servile work is ‘necessary’. Payment is irrelevant.

QUESTION — What is meant by "servile" work?

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

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

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

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

Answer — There is no authority for such a belief.

QUESTION — Why does the Church prescribe abstinence on Fridays?

Answer — The Church prescribes abstinence on Fridays in commemoration of Our Saviour's death on Good Friday. [Since Vatican II, the rules of abstinence from meat have been considerably modified, although the obligation to perform some act of penance on Fridays remains for the reason given.]

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

Answer — No.

QUESTION — Is it sinful to believe in dreams?

Answer — In general it is sinful to believe in dreams. (Only rarely in Salvation History has God used dreams to certain chosen souls to reveal a message.) The gravity of the sin will depend on the amount of credence put in the dreams.

QUESTION — What is meant by "churching"?

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

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

Answer — According to Saint Paul women should keep their heads covered in church as a mark of reverence. This would hold while they are at Mass celebrated in a private house. [By the Church's power of binding and loosing, the Church since Vatican II has released women from this obligation.]

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — What is meant by "natural" mysteries?

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

QUESTION — What is meant by the "Heroic Act"?

Answer — The Heroic Act consists in this, that a member of the Church here on earth offers to God for the Souls in Purgatory all the satisfactory works he will perform during life, and also all the suffrages that may accrue to him after death. It is revocable at will.

QUESTION — What is the "Index"?

Answer — The Index of Prohibited Books is a book consisting of two parts: The first part contains all ecclesiastical legislation regarding books and the second part a list of prohibited publications. [Though formally abolished in 1968 by Blessed Paul VI, it provides a useful insight on what reading to avoid.]

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — What is meant by "fraud"?

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

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

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

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

Answer — Consult the booklet published by the IRISH MESSENGER Office: *Scruples and Their Treatment*, in which much information is given about this matter. [Or read the pamphlet "Scruples" at <http://www.pamphlets.org.au/docs/cts/oregon/html/ctsormor056.html> It is a useful insight.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Answer — As mock-turtle soup is made of calf's head, to imitate real turtle soup, a person would break the law of abstinence from meat by taking it on Friday. [Since Vatican II, the rules of abstinence from meat have been considerably modified, although the obligation to perform some act of penance on Fridays remains. This remark is pertinent to the next question as well.]

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

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

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

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

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

Answer — A complete *Ordo* for the use of the laity is published in the *Jesuit Year Book*. Published by THE IRISH MESSENGER Office, 37, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin, 2.

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

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

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

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

QUESTION — What are the Catacombs?

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

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

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

QUESTION — What is "The Holy House of Loreto"?

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

QUESTION — What is meant by the "Baptism of Ships"?

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

QUESTION — What becomes of unbaptised children?

Answer — God has not revealed their fate. We know that unbaptised persons including children are excluded from heaven. Baptism may be by water, by blood or by desire. According to the opinion almost universally held, unbaptised children do not undergo suffering of any kind in the next life. They go to a place, which is called Limbo by these theologians. Other theologians have suggested that the souls of these children, like the souls of the angelic spirits of old, are given a test of loyalty, the outcome of which we have no way of knowing, but which Baptism would have spared them.

QUESTION — I have got a "Chain Prayer"; what am I to do with it?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Answer — This means that the Votive Mass of Our Lady is said or can be said on the Saturday and the Office of Our Blessed Lady is recited or can be recited.

QUESTION — When are the Feasts of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and Saint Mary Magdalen?

Answer — The Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (or of Perpetual Help) is kept on the Sunday preceding 24th June the Feast of Saint John the Baptist. [It is now celebrated on June 27th.] The Feast of Saint Mary Magdalen is on 22nd July.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Answer — Either of the following saints could be patron saint of the girl: Saint Matilda, Feast-14th March; Saint Mechtildis or Mechtilde, Feast-19th November (14th November in some places); Saint Mary Magdalen, Feast-22nd July.

QUESTION — Please give some information about Saint Cornelius.

Answer — There are several saints of this name. Saint Cornelius the Centurion was baptised by Saint Peter and, according to tradition, became first Bishop of Caesarea. His feast is celebrated on the 2nd February. Saint Cornelius or Conor or Concord, an Irish saint of the Augustinian Order and Archbishop of Armagh, has his feast celebrated on 4th June. Saint Cornelius, Pope has his feast celebrated on 16th September, formerly on the 14th.

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

Answer — Several indulgenced prayers to Saint Lucy for the cure of sore eyes are given in *The Raccolta* (the Book of Indulgenced Prayers). Saint Lucy was a Sicilian maiden who suffered for her faith in the great persecution under Diocletian. Her feast is celebrated on 13th December.

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

Answer — As well as being a feminine form of Saint John's name, any of the following saints may be the Patron Saint of a girl called Jane: Blessed [now Saint] Jane (or Joan) of Valois, daughter of Louis XI of France, who founded the Institute of Nuns known as the Annonciades. Her Feast is celebrated on 4th February.

Blessed Mary Jane Bonomo (Giovanna Maria Bonomo, died in 1670), a Benedictine nun, remarkable for her sublime prayer and for her patience in suffering. Her feast is celebrated on 1st March.

Saint Jane Frances Fremiot de Chantal who founded the Order of Nuns of the Visitation. Her Feast is celebrated on 12th August (or 21st August or 12th December in some places).

QUESTION — Who was Saint Expeditus?

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

QUESTION — Who is the Patroness of a girl named Valerie?

Answer — Saint Valerie (Valeria of Milan) is the mother of Saints Gervase (Gervasius) and Protase (Protasius), and wife of Saint Vitalis; her Feast is celebrated on 28th April. Another Saint Valeria (Valerie of Limoges) is a virgin, who suffered for the Faith at Limoges (France); her Feast is celebrated on 9th December.

QUESTION — Who is Saint Rock?

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

QUESTION — Are Eileen and Sheila names of Saints?

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

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