

Bread of Life

by Father Leonard Feeney



Foreword to the First Printing (1952)

I have been persuaded by the members of my Order, The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to publish some of the talks I have been giving on Thursday evenings at Saint Benedict Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, during the past ten years.

Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.
Feast of Saint Teresa of Avila, 1952.

Foreword to the 1974 Printing

The sad situation of the Faith in America and in the whole world is breaking the hearts of true Catholics. The gates of hell have all but prevailed against the Church. It is because Catholics have let go of the Church's doctrine on salvation that all else is being taken away from us. This is what is causing the sickness of the world, and it is even more true to say so today than when I said so twenty-five years ago.

My message today is identically the same as the one I have been giving for the past quarter of a century. It is perpetually part of the infallible teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, against which Our Lord has promised the gates of hell will never prevail.

Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.
Feast of Saint Mary Magdalen, 1974.

To Saint Pius X
respectfully and lovingly dedicated

Chapter 1 — Christmas and Salvation

The only way I can get to what I want to talk about tonight, the love of God for us as a Child and His birth into the world as a Child, is by giving you a challenge.

At Bethlehem, in the crib, is a loving, warm, exquisite Baby. In order to find that little Charity, that bundle of Love lying in the straw, you have got to walk down the hills, over the rocks, across the brooks, into the dark, in your hunt for the cave. You have got to sacrifice other things in order to find it, even the brightness of the stars. The songs of the angels have to be put away, or, if you are a shepherd, your sheep. That is how chaste you have to be to find this Baby.

Holy Scripture says about the shepherds to whom the angels appeared, that they were "field-living." There are two kinds of shepherds: one, the kind who go home at night for supper and return the next morning; and the other, the real pastoral kind, who stay in the field with their sheep night and day, probably going home on holidays with a lamb for dinner.

The shepherds in Holy Scripture were field-watchers. They lived with their sheep on the hill. We know that there is no custodian of anything in the order of nature – no farmer to his field, no bird lover to his doves, no cow puncher to his cattle – so warm and intimate and close, so dependable and loving, as a shepherd to his sheep. In the order of affection, sheep are the closest linked animal to man.

Not even a master is as close to his dog as a shepherd is to his sheep. A shepherd lives with his sheep, watches them pasture, thinks according to their rhythms, shares their weather. He contemplates them. Sheep are man's nourishment and warmth, his food and his wool, his dinner and his clothing. A sheep goes to slaughter not opening his mouth. He is eager to be sacrificed.

And so, as occupations go, I do not think there is any man who could with more reason say it was impossible to leave his work and go over to Bethlehem than a shepherd. A businessman could lock his door. An innkeeper could put his clerk in charge. But a shepherd is afraid to put another shepherd in his place, because sheep follow the leads of a shepherd. One flock, you will notice, is not like another flock. Nervous shepherds have nervous flocks. Lazy shepherds have lazy flocks.

I am an expert at this because I lived for ten months in North Wales. Our religious house was in the midst of the sheep country, and I had plenty of opportunity to study the ways of the shepherds with their sheep. I wrote a poem about it:

Oh you should have seen the miracle
I saw when I was in Wales,
Where myriads of sheep go munching up
And lurching down the dales;
And graze along the meadow marsh,
And nibble around the mill,
Cross the bridges over the brook,
Bleat and eat and fill
Their bellies full of blossoms;
Then lie awhile and sleep.
Then slowly up the slope again
And slowly down the steep,
Their little mouths meandering on,
Bite by bite they pull,
Inch by inch, the sweet grass
While all the beautiful
Valleys of Wye from stream to sky
Are turning into wool.

There is too, perhaps, no occupation to which has been attached so much honest, decent sentiment, as to that of a shepherd.

The sheep are coming home in Greece
Flock by flock and fleece by fleece . . .

Almost a philosophy of life has grown around a shepherd and his sheep.

I could see a more pointed, but no more decisive, sacrifice than a shepherd leaving his sheep on the mountain top and going over to see a little baby, in a cave which housed also an ox and an ass, two kinds of animals in which a shepherd is not interested!

But the shepherds went. They left flocks of angels in the sky, and flocks of sheep on the hill; and they went over to Bethlehem to see a Baby – a little Infant dressed in swaddling clothes – with His Mother beside Him.

As far as I can make out from the Scriptural story, the shepherds did not immediately go back to their sheep. Instead, they went to tell everyone in the town about what they had seen.

Luke 2:18. And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds

20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

They went from field to field, to all the neighboring pastures, and before a day was over, they did not know which shepherd belonged to which sheep.

What did the angels say to the shepherds when they appeared to them, on the hills around Bethlehem? They said, "Glory to God in the highest . . ." That means, the highest awareness of God, allied to the highest praise of Him, is now going to occur on earth, for men to relish and to realize in angelic simplicity.

The angels also said, "Peace on earth to men of good will." Inasmuch as it was to the shepherds that this encouragement was given, it is easy to imply – in fact, it is necessary to see – that these shepherds were men of good will. They were holy men. They were men pleasing to God. They were just men – men in the state of justification.

What new news were the angels coming to give to these believing and holy shepherds, who were in the state of justification? The angels were giving the shepherds the new news of salvation! "For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; For: This day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord . . . You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12.)

If this message to these simple shepherds meant anything, it had to mean that salvation was not theirs until this day – however just, however holy, however trustful and believing they might be. The shepherds were told, "This day is born to you a Saviour," which meant, salvation does not begin until He is born.

"And you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger," means that salvation is a visible thing, as visible as a freshly born, freshly wrapped child, now drinking milk at its mother's breast.

This leads me, my dear listeners, to pause for a little while, to teach you simply, as a father, what is the distinction between justification and salvation – in careful, simple, understandable, theological illustrations; or else you will not be able to understand why "men of good will," to whom "peace" is given, did not have a Saviour until the day of Christmas.

You will not understand Christmas at all, if you do not somehow know the difference between justification and salvation. It is a lack of a knowledge of this most important and basic distinction – without which a true understanding of the Old Testament and its fulfillment in the New can never be made – that has led the Liberal theologians of our day to keep on saying that all you need to do to be saved is to be justified, and that you can be justified without the waters of Redemption which the Babe of Bethlehem was born to bring!

For, the moment that this Baby shall begin His public life to bring His Redemptive message to the world – the heavens will open again! And God will say to the sinners, just and unjust, gathered around John the Baptist and the River Jordan: "This" – referring to the Jesus Who is being baptized with water – "is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17.) You find the Mother of Jesus at Bethlehem. And you find the approving Eternal Father of Jesus at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan!

This is our Saviour. And without our Saviour, there is no salvation.

You will remember that I spoke to you a week or so ago about the fact that until the Ascension of Our Lord into

Heaven there was a state for departed souls known as the "Limbo of the Just." This Limbo was for those who, antecedent to the coming of Our Lord, believed He was coming, and believed He was to be the Saviour and the Redeemer of the world. They had a love and a behavior that was consonant with the fact that God was going to become flesh and blood. They had died in the state of grace. If they had any Purgatory to fulfill, it had been fulfilled. All the temporal punishment due to their sins had been removed. They were perfect setups for the Beatific Vision, were it to be achieved in non-Incarnational terms.

Why could you not say then, that they belonged to the soul of the Beatific Vision? Why all this boxing up of these perfect, sinless souls if the divine nature in them, put there by sanctifying grace, enabled them to love God with all the power of soul they had? They had paid up in suffering for all the offences they had committed. Why are they huddled there, nonbeatified?

All the saints of the Old Testament were there in Limbo. Not one of them had seen the Beatific Vision. They were just waiting. Some of those holy souls must have had to wait many centuries in the Limbo of the Just. Why not let them go to Heaven? They were justified! They had the true Faith! They were sanctified! They had died in the state of sanctifying grace!

They had justification and sanctification. Why was salvation being kept from them?

The answer is, because the souls in the Limbo of the Just could not go into Heaven until the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ in visibility led them in! Until Jesus went into Heaven in His flesh, they could not go in with their souls.

The souls in Limbo could have reminded Jesus: "Dear Jesus, You know we have not any bodies. We are not going to get our bodies again until the last day."

And Jesus could have replied: "I am sorry, but until I am in Heaven in body you cannot be there in soul, no matter how pure and unsullied and sinless your souls may be."

If that does not wipe out the "soul of the Church" theory, I do not know what does! How do you like that for a challenge in terms of the controversy we are now going through here in Saint Benedict Center?

Let me repeat: The holiest men who died in the Old Testament could not see God until God's Son led them to God – until Jesus entered first. Without that Flesh and Blood, resurrected and ascended, without the visible Jesus with material eyes and hands and feet and beating heart, their state of justification and sanctification was called "Hell"! That is what the Apostles' Creed means, in that phrase we never pay much attention to:

. . . He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead: He ascended into Heaven . . .

I would like to offer that as a problem to those who are saying that you can get into Heaven by being sincere and living up to the best that is in you. Here were saints in the Old Testament who not only lived up to the best in themselves, but who believed in revealed truth – who believed in Jesus Christ, in a Redeemer to come. And still, they could not see God! Salvation could not occur until matter (flesh and blood) had moved into the Beatific Life. It is of the Catholic Faith that no human mind, save the mind of Jesus, was admitted to the Beatific Vision until Ascension Thursday.

Is justification the same as salvation? Of course, it is not! Lucifer, the prince of the devils, was once in the state of justification. He was created in the state of justification, and from that state he fell. Justification is only the divine courtyard of salvation: the preparation field, where you are given the grace to be tried out, as you move Godwards. If you have the right stuff, God keeps you. If you have not got the right stuff, God throws you out! "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41.)

Adam was created in the state of justification. He was in the state of sanctifying grace, and in this state he was given a trial – to see if he would persevere in it, to see if his justification ought to be a sealed thing, forever. "Of the fruit of that tree you shall not eat," God commanded. And Adam went over and ate the fruit which God had forbidden him, and his state of justification was lost.

Do you see clearly that justification and salvation are not the same thing? Let me repeat. Lucifer had justification, and is now damned. Adam had justification, and committed Original Sin – and bequeathed the state of alienation from God to every one of his children. Lucifer was never saved, though he was once justified. Justification is a divine probation. Many are tried and found wanting.

You and I enter the state of justification. But that does not mean that we are saved! You never hear a Catholic going around and yelling, "Are you saved?" You might hear a Catholic asking another Catholic, "Are you in the state of sanctifying grace?"

The answer, I hope, would be, "Yes."

"Do you still continue to say, 'Pray for us sinners'?"

"Yes! Because I have not yet been saved. Because I must always pray for the grace of final perseverance. And because, 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' 'He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.' "

Is getting into the state of sanctifying grace, salvation? No!

What is it? Getting into the state of sanctifying grace is justification.

What is required, once you have justification, in order that you may have salvation? You are required to do that for which you were put into the state of justification, and you must persevere in justification until death. As regards the first of these, let me give you an example. Were a man to have gotten into the state of sanctifying grace through Baptism, and were he to come to the time when he could receive the Blessed Eucharist, if he did not eat the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, he would have no life in him. His justification would be meaningless and fruitless. And he would eventually lose his soul, unless he made his justification fruitful.

Every man in the Church, even though he is in the state of sanctifying grace, is required to receive Holy Communion during Easter time, or else he commits a mortal sin. Even in the state of justification, there are other requirements given to us which we are obliged to fulfill.

Is that coming clear to you? I hope so.

Now, in the Old Testament, what did you have to do in order to get into the state of justification, after Adam had sinned? You had to believe in a Redeemer to come, and you had to keep the Commandments. It was not enough just vaguely to "love God."

If, in the Old Testament, you believed "somehow in a God"; or believed only in "everything that was good and fine"; or, you were hoping for the best, or believed in belief – you would not be saved. You had to believe in a Redeemer to come.

It was to diffuse this knowledge of the Redeemer to come that the Jews were always going into exile or captivity – Alexander was coming in, or the Egyptians were coming up. The Jews were circulating all over the world. There was no one, in the whole world, who did not know that a Redeemer was promised, that He was to be given to the Jews, and that He was to be from the tribe of Juda.

When Saint Paul started his last journey to Rome, and was wrecked off an island just south of Sicily, do you remember how the "ignorant natives" greeted him? They thought he was God. They knew the Messiah was to be of flesh and blood, and was to have a voice.

Were there people in the Old Testament who believed in the Redeemer to come, and who kept the Commandments? Yes! What were these people called, the "saved"? No, only the "just."

When they died, the just of the Old Testament, as we saw a few moments ago, went, not to the Beatific Vision, but to the Limbo of the Just. What is the matter with Moses, and David, and Abraham? With Ruth, and Esther, and Judith? Are they not in the state of sanctifying grace, in the state of justification? Yes! But justification and salvation are two different things! Justification is the road to salvation, but it is not it. It is the journey, but not the goal.

Even a person who dies now in the state of justification has to be judged. Why is it not enough to ship him through automatically? He has to stand up in Particular Judgment, to see if he has done all the required things in justification!

If justification and salvation are the same thing, then you and I are saved. We do not need to worry any more, because we are in the state of sanctifying grace! How absurd!

Actually, no one worries more about his eternal salvation than a holy person in the state of sanctifying grace. The saints are always praying that they may not be lost. Saint Teresa of Avila, in the state of justification, saw the place in Hell reserved for her if she kept on going to the parlor to speak to a person she should not speak to. To

whom much is given, of him much is expected.

When Jesus, on the top of the Mount of Olives, ascended into Heaven, the souls of the just ascended with Him. That is of the Faith. The entrance fee of salvation for the souls in the Limbo of the Just was the Flesh and Blood of Jesus, leading them in! That was the requirement for the Old Testament.

Jesus is not going to come down again and lead another group into salvation. He is not coming back until He comes in all His power and majesty, to judge the living and the dead, on the Last Day. He is not going to come down and lead you and me into salvation. He has decreed a different way for us, of the New Testament.

Jesus, without Whom in flesh and blood not one justified soul in the Old Testament could enter into salvation, as He was departing this earth said, as His last commission to His Apostles, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19,20.)

"Go ye into the whole world," Jesus said, "and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15,16.) Jesus is leaving as the fruit of His Passion and Death and Redemption, the Sacrament of Baptism of Water.

Jesus does not say, "Go forth and teach all nations, and I will take them, and lead them to Heaven again." No! To put it in our own words, Jesus says: "I am not coming any more, until the Last Day. I am giving you the water I well earned by My Redemption. If that does not touch you, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

I hope that is perfectly clear to you!

Just as we are required to have one Faith and one Baptism, so as to be saved, we are also required to have one Lord. Just as that Lord led, in flesh and blood, the souls of the Just waiting in Limbo into the Beatific Life, so He has left it to His Vicar in flesh and blood to guide us into Heaven.

The gate of the Kingdom of Heaven in beatitude was opened for the first time by the entrance of Jesus. The keys to that gate were put in the hands of Christ's Vicar on earth when He said to Peter, and his successors: "And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." No matter what we do in the way of justification, we can never enter salvation unless we enter it under the leadership of him who has the keys to that Kingdom.

That flesh and blood Vicar of Jesus Christ is none other than the Pope, our Holy Father, a visible head for Christ's visible Church. He is a man whom we can point to as the visible Vicar on earth of the visible Christ in eternity. He is as pointable-at now in time as Jesus once was when He walked the streets of Jerusalem, followed by Peter and His Apostles.

It is a defined dogma of the Catholic Church that no one can be saved who is not subject to that flesh and blood Vicar of Jesus, the Roman Pontiff. It is one of the requirements for salvation. Justification is useless for purposes of the Beatific Vision unless submission to Christ's Vicar has been added to it in essential complement.

Pope Boniface VIII, in 1302, infallibly declared in his bull, Unam Sanctam: "We declare, say, define and pronounce, that it is wholly necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." A defined dogma can never be changed. It holds for every age; it applies to every generation, until the end of time.

If you do not have a belief in, and submission to, a visible Holy Father and a visible Church, with clear distinguishable marks, you will never get into Heaven.

Our Holy Father the Pope has been given to us by Christ so as to preserve the incarnational values of Redemption until the end of time. He is the only one who is sure to preserve Jesus and Mary at Bethlehem. He is the only one who will unflinchingly protect Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. He is the only one who indispensably can safeguard the flesh and blood dogmas of Christianity in infallible pronouncement. He alone can speak ex cathedra. And his utterances are given to Rome and the world: *urbi et orbi*.

All these values which I am presenting to you tonight, my dear children, are clear values. You are responsible before God for everything I teach you. You cannot go on being "clever" about Christianity, once you have listened to me, or, in my stead, any Catholic priest who will authoritatively teach you the truth. I place responsibility on you for everything you have listened to, tonight, for everything I have said. One day, in the life to come, I shall see you and meet you perhaps before the Judgment Seat of God and I shall ask you what you have made of the talk I gave you on that Thursday night before Christmas, when I had a bad cold.

There is great responsibility always on the listener. All Our Lord's instructions to His Apostles indicated this responsibility. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words: going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 10:14,15.)

May I say that there is a terrific responsibility on every boy and girl who has ever heard me speak on Thursday night, especially now that the defined doctrines of the Church are being assailed in such wholesale fashion. Either believe what I have said, or else tell me where I have falsified the Christian message. Tell me one Council I have denied, or one Doctor I have misquoted. Do not read me some hardly known theological writer of this century, or last century. Give me one Pope infallibly defining, or one Council.

It is not too much of a mystery why the majority of people are not going to be saved. It is as clear as crystal.

"The world, by and large, then," you say, "is somewhat of a failure, as far as salvation is concerned, Father?"

"Yes!" I tell you. "It seems that it is."

"Isn't that a bad thing to come from God?"

Surely you must see the absurdity of that question! That sounds as if God made this world as a project, and if He is not successful with it, He will be disgraced for all eternity! As a matter of fact, God is so successful all by Himself, within Himself, that failure of what is outside Him, does not even need to bother Him. You might say that almost everything He makes is a failure! Failure is almost as much a part of it as He is. Every flower dies. Every tree eventually collapses. Rivers ultimately dig out their beds. Lakes evaporate. Stars burn up!

But this world, as far as men go, need not be a failure! Everybody could know about the Catholic Faith! There is not a city in the United States where you could not find it. Little babies could not find it, I grant you, but little Protestant babies who die before they reach the age of reason are saved. Baptism made them Catholics. That is very sweet, is it not? There is only one Baptism. And every baptized baby is a subject of our Holy Father the Pope. (When you go to Heaven, most of the Americans you meet will be under seven years of age!) But you are not babies, and I am not talking to you as babies. I am talking to you as grown-ups, with Christian responsibilities for fulfilling all Christ's commandments, once you have heard them.

I would be very presumptuous, certainly, if I thought I could move over and settle the whole world's problems in one night's lecture. I can settle the problem for this room! You do not need to go to Hell! You can go to Heaven! Sufficient for the congregation is the preacher thereof, when he is preaching Christ's message.

Do I know if I am going to be saved? No! What do I know? I know how to be saved. And I know that I am on the right road. If the Catholic Church is not the Church for everybody, it is not the Church Christ founded.

Perhaps America would like Catholic priests to talk non-Catholicism? I do not know what they want us to do in America! I can only say to you that in case you want to know what the Catholic Church has been teaching, and what the saints have been saying, I am telling it to you, my dear listeners. I am giving it to you simply and clearly and fully and straight! Salvation is going God's way. Salvation is not "Going My Way"!

Salvation in the Old Testament was from God the Father, promising the Blood of His Divine Son. Salvation in the New Testament is from God the Son, promising His water and the Holy Ghost.

The Blood that flowed from the side of Jesus when He died on the Cross was a testimony to us of what God the Father had given. God the Father did not spare His only Divine Son.

The Water that flowed from the side of Christ, when He was crucified on the Cross, was a testimony of the Water of Baptism, which He would give, in union with the Holy Ghost, to save the world. "As the Father hath sent me," Christ said to His Apostles, "I also send you." (John 20:21.)

Salvation in the New Testament is the complete performance of the Blessed Trinity – is of the Father, and the Son He sent, and of the Holy Ghost, sent by the Son. "But I tell you the truth," Our Lord said, "it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7.)

The waters of Baptism were purchased by the Blood of Jesus. Those who teach whatever Jesus commanded His Apostles to teach, now teach with raging tongues of fire. Baptism is the water of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Who was sent by the First Person, to take water and unite it to the power of the Third.

The Blessed Trinity is in complete covenant with the world once Baptism has been given us by Jesus. When

Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan, the Father's voice was heard, saying, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." And the Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit – was seen, descending in the form of a dove.

For a valid Baptism, you need to pour water, in the name of Jesus Christ, and make the invocation to the Blessed Trinity while you are pouring.

I did not invent this entrance requirement for redemption and salvation. Jesus gave it to me – the same Jesus Who said, in the Sermon on the Mount, that I dare not drop from His commands one jot or one tittle. (Matt. 5:18.) Imagine dropping the first jot, and the first tittle, that Jesus ordered, and continuing to call it Christianity! Imagine claiming to be able to summon the Holy Ghost without the waters of Baptism! Imagine doing this in the face of Jesus' challenge at the Last Supper: "I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you."

Now that I have got my doctrinal message over in detail, let me give it to you in simple summary, before I go on to speak again of Christmas.

In the Old Testament, you could not be justified unless you wanted a Redeemer to come, and you could not be saved until He came. In the New Testament, you cannot be justified unless you want the water Jesus bequeathed us on the Mount of Olives; and you cannot be saved until that water is poured on your head!

That is what Saint Paul was told when he was struck down on the road to Damascus. That is what Saint Peter believed when he was sent to baptize the justified Cornelius. And that is what the eunuch asked for, in the Acts of the Apostles, when he met Saint Philip on the road.

It is now: Baptism of Water, or damnation! If you do not desire that Water, you cannot be justified. And if you do not get it, you cannot be saved.

Let me get back again to Christmas.

I do not know what Christmas in the United States is going to be like from now on. I frankly do not! I have seen how it has deteriorated in the past twenty-five years. I know the deceivers and haters of Jesus and Mary, across the street at Harvard College, will go through this Christmas religiously as fraudulently as they went through the last one. There will be red lights blinking on Christmas trees, this year the same as last year. Light, revealing nothing! Light, meant to be the means of making things visible, with nothing to show!

Undoubtedly, somebody like Theodore Spencer, of Harvard – who called Jesus a "myth," before he died – will get up and read Dickens' Christmas Carol. That is supposed to be very Christmasy! Some noted actor, if he is able, will do a little Christmas barking on the radio. Some notorious comedian will roar like Santa Claus!

That is the culture that goes with Christmas now. And because I, once a son in the Society of Jesus, see it as sad and tragic, and say it is sad and tragic, I am resented. People do not want to see! They would much prefer to hear about an invisible Christmas, and an invisible Church, that we could have in common with those who deny or despise Christ's Divinity and His birth at Christmas from the womb of a little Jewish girl, Mary of Nazareth.

When the angels said to the shepherds, "Go over to Bethlehem!" they did not mean, "Go over and commune with nature." They did not mean, "Turn to Bethlehem, the way a wild Mohammedan would turn to Mecca!" They did not say, "Close your eyes and imagine what profound depths there are in you."

The angels said, "Run like men, and find the Baby – and His little Mother, with Him!"

A mother makes a baby doubly visible. A mother is the framework of the baby. A mother is the auspices under which you look at a baby. You are almost afraid to look at a baby unless his mother is there.

For those who are truly anxious to know and love Jesus and Mary at Christmas, let me touch on one little phase of the situation.

This is a child's world. And a child does not have too many successes. Have you ever watched a child learn to walk? He finally achieves one step after five thousand failures!

A child does not have too many playmates. He does not have too many people at his birthday party. He does not have too many songs to sing him to sleep at night. If he is going to stay a child, he is a little bit lost in the world – a little bit alone. He is the most singular thing in a multitude. His one cry is, "Where is my mother" or "Where is my daddy?" as he looks into every other unsatisfactory face.

A child does not have too long a story to tell about himself. It is a simple tale. He can tell you his whole history in very short order. A child, when he has one sure friend, does not worry about the friends he does not have. A child does not go to sleep each night weirdly worrying about all the other children in the world who might be going to sleep, too; wondering, just as he is on the verge of slipping into slumber, if there is any insomnia on the rest of the street. A child is, in an innocent way (I will not call him selfish), a self-contained little thing.

A child's trust, and heart, and love, and footsteps, and eyes, and interest, are never frustrated by failure. He goes to the piano which he fails to play, opens the book which he does not succeed in reading reaches for the moon which does not come down to him, asks to go in an automobile that will not take him. Things are constantly being taken away from a child. "You cannot have this; you cannot have that."

A Child is given unto us! A Child is born to us, Who is Christ the Lord! Our Lord's whole life was, in its simplicity, the life of a child. He did not have too many friends. I do not think you would call seventy two disciples too many followers – or twelve apostles too many close friends.

A child does not travel much. Neither did Jesus. Except for His excursion into Egypt, He never left the tiny territory of Palestine.

A child expects his little gifts to the world not to have too much dependence on a multitude. I think you can get a child very tired of giving ice-cream cones to fifty people. He does not mind sharing one cone with you, or giving two or three things; but he is not a good headwaiter at a party, or a good entrepreneur.

A child thinks his little mother is the greatest mother, in fact the only mother, in the world. He has to be taught that there are such things as other mothers.

A child is indignant, decisive, impetuous.

We all stay a child as we go through life – the best part of us does. We are a child when we eat, when we sleep, when we are sick, when we are old. When we are lonely, we are a child; when we are hurt, we are a child. If we only would let that child in us become interested in Jesus, you would be surprised how easily we could find Him!

I do not have to teach you to think like a child. It is the one art you all know. Direct your child-interest towards Jesus, and you will be surprised at what wonderful results you will get.

Jesus of Bethlehem is given all over the world in the simple, complete value of Christmas, in all the traditions we know – in the kind of story one tells to a child. The inspired record of His life in Holy Scripture is there, in case a child is looking. If you are looking as a child this Christmas, it is child's play to find it.

If, while you are looking, you are not being a child, but are being very adult, grand, organizational, theoretical, proud, ideological, superacademic and non-committal (there is nothing less non-committal than a child), you will not find Him. You will not find Him even when you see a First-Communion little girl come down the aisle and say to her father (as I once heard a little girl say), "Pick me up and kiss me because Jesus is in my heart." You will not find Him even when you see a little nun consecrated to God, whose face and eyes and hands show it. It will just miss you. You will not even know He is there. You will hear a lot of talk of a girl, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus – about whom there is a book in every library. You will not have time to read her autobiography – you will not even know it is obtainable. You will see her picture here in our room, which Ellen Maria Beneway painted, and you will dismiss it with a non-childlike dismissal; with an adult, supercilious grin, and a horrid academic face.

Depart from me, you cursed academic frauds! You Harvard hypocrites! You would not go over to Bethlehem if it were standing right in front of you! You would not want to know the truth of the Catholic Faith. That is why you do not find it!

A Child is given to you! A Child is born to you Who is Christ, the Lord! Sometimes He takes the meanest instruments to tell you His message. I do not know any priest in the United States of America who could be called this Christmas (thanks to newspaper publicity) a meaner instrument than I am.

But I can still tell you the way of a Child.

Chapter 2 — The Purpose of Christ's Coming

The purpose of Christianity is not to make God knowable. God can be clearly known from the things He has made in this world and has set before our eyes. Christianity has as its purpose to make God visible.

The birth of Jesus in Holy Scripture was all concerned with the visible – an ox, an ass, and a manger! The surroundings of His birth were made so simple that even as you tell it, the story is in terms that are visible to any nation on the earth. Every nation knows a manger, an ox, and an ass.

If the place of Our Lord's birth were some elaborate citadel, or some enormously decorated room, no one could envision it. But when you see a few animals, and a Mother, and the things in which you wrap a baby, you can see as far back as Christmas – and see it all.

The first visitors who were asked to go over to greet Jesus at His birth were little men who never read books, but who were, nevertheless, living up in the hills with nothing but eyes! Shepherds are always on the lookout – for stars, or stray sheep. The shepherds to whom the angels came were simple men to whom the visibility, tangibility, liftability, touchability, gatherability, holdability of God were the first gifts of Christ at Christmas.

When that little Baby – our Jesus – grew up and went out into the world to preach His story – to tell Who He was, and how a world was to be saved by Him, every single item of His telling was vivid and visible.

Jesus did not gather together a large committee and have meeting, at which one member in the sixth row spoke and somebody else made a remark, and the whole thing was lost in the vagueness of the crowd. He picked, selected, and named twelve men. Everyone knew who these twelve men were. We read in the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Chapter 10:

And having called his twelve disciples together, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities.

Even over the invisible world Jesus gave power to them – to such visible, to such tangible people as these twelve men:

Matt. 10:2. . . . The first, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother,

3. James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the

publican, and James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus,

4. Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

That is how clear, reachable, touchable and findable they were.

All Our Lord's miracles were clear and open. All His teaching was clear and open. Instead of reserving His deepest and most profound revelations for a special clique behind closed doors in a conference – with reporters outside hoping for a few crumbs of news – Jesus had as His private chamber a mountain, where He poured out all His secrets. It was a mountain to which everyone could come, and that anyone could climb, clear and visible before Heaven and earth; and where mothers and children could sit and animals lie down beside them. And when the people were come out, and were seated on the grass, Jesus took His place before them, clearly and visibly. And He said to them: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 5:3.)

Jesus' death for the redemption of the world was wildly visible. So definitely visible and focussed was it as a flesh and blood death that He died on a place where men died public deaths – criminals, stripped of their garments. He was nailed to a Cross on Golgotha, with not one tree to get in the way of the One bleeding and dying. It was a place reachable by anyone who was interested – clearly visible before all.

Jesus' death on the Cross was so tangible and material and visible, and so definite and clear, that even after He died and there was nothing left on the Cross but the corpse of our dear Jesus, we have commemorated in the Thirteenth Station of the Cross a pause – a little hushed interval, when even the Roman soldiers stood in awe. The scoffers stopped scoffing. The spitters stopped spitting. The mud throwers dropped their mud. It was the moment when Our Blessed Lady took that visible Flesh and Blood in her arms, held it to her heart, and took off His crown of thorns.

When Jesus died on the Cross, the whole city was shaken with earthquakes, and corpses walked in the streets. Jesus was put in a grave so visible that soldiers knew which grave to guard. He came out of that grave so visibly that you could walk up and see the empty tomb.

Before Jesus visibly ascended into Heaven, He said: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them [visibly pouring water on their heads] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19.)

Some days after Our Lord's Ascension, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the most Blessed Trinity, sent down by Jesus triumphant, descended upon the Apostles, as audible as wind, as visible as a dove, to evoke the messages of Christianity from raging tongues of fire, and to make the men who announced it to the world sheer targets for blazing martyrdoms that God will ever remember and the world can never forget.

That is the way it is. Either Christianity is visible, or else Christ was not God.

But, what have we in our day? Good God! We have Theosophists looking around for non-Calvary religions, or religions in which God was not scourged at the pillar. We have Buddhists walking through Harvard Square, their slanted eyes looking wildly into windows and thinking thoughts in their horrid minds too deep and subterranean to utter. We have Protestants in an arrangement religion that never knows what to call itself from one week to another, that never knows what its new minister is going to tell it from chapter to chapter of Holy Scripture. We have Unitarians who have no faith in an assured Jesus, getting more indefinite about what Christianity meant to say. And, of course, we have Jews evading the Faith, running away from it, pretending they do not hear the name of Jesus-pretending Christmas is not the birth of Jesus Christ, and getting civic leaders to remove "Merry Christmas" from in front of City Hall and to substitute for it "Season's Greetings," because the word "Christ" in "Christmas" annoys them. All this, horrible as it is, I am prepared to cope with.

But imagine priests in the Holy Roman Catholic Church, ordained by the successors to the Apostles – dedicated to the Name and purpose and Blood and robes of Jesus – sitting at Harvard College week after week and listening to religion being lectured about in invisible terms. And imagine their going back, then, to their people and talking about the "soul of the Church," of "salvation outside the Church through sincerity" – apart from the teachings and Sacraments of Jesus Christ; and calling this arrangement "Baptism of Desire" and expecting men to be members of the Catholic Church without even knowing they are members.

What kind of teaching is that?

That is Christmas without any manger; Good Friday without any God bleeding; Easter Sunday without any Flesh

and Blood coming out of the tomb. That is the Christian Faith without any Pope, – the most visible religious leader in the world!

That is what is breaking my heart. Perhaps I am not fair to you to let you know how a priest's heart can suffer. I am letting you see it tonight. We priests are dedicated to the preaching of a visible religion – the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, governed and ruled by our Holy Father the Pope, to whom we here in Saint Benedict Center are faithful.

Christ did not come to found an invisible Church. If you would prefer an invisible Church – if that is your interest in religion – Christianity has nothing to offer you; absolutely nothing.

Furthermore, the word visible is a word that must be watched, if you want it to have its right meaning as applied to the Church. In the first place, it does not mean that the Church has to be visibly seen with your seeing organs – your eyes. It would be possible for a blind man to see the Church with his ears. He could hear the sounds that go with the visible values to which his eyes are closed.

I could even be deaf and blind, and the Church could be visible to me. If somebody were able to talk to me by some sort of touch language in which one of my senses could vicariously do duty for two missing senses, I would be given, in defective form but somehow, the same kind of message that my eyes and my ears would give me if I had them.

Once, in New York, I was invited to a private showing of an educational French film, *La Nuit Silencieuse* – The Night of Silence. At the end, I was weeping like a child. The picture took place in a Catholic school in France where deaf, dumb and blind girls and boys, taken care of by Sisters and Brothers, were taught Christianity through their sense of touch. Values were given to them by some sort of arbitrary, but easily recognizable, alphabet. Through movement, shape, size and texture, the children got on to the fact that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us" (John 1:14.)

I shall never forget one part of this motion picture. It concerned a very brilliant French boy who was deaf, dumb and blind. Even though he had never heard any sound or seen anyone speak, this boy was able to make sounds himself. He had been taught how to shape and coordinate his sounds to make them like ours. He stood there and, in very painful but nevertheless understandable French, made the most beautiful profession of Faith I have ever heard. He knew what the Blessed Eucharist was. He knew what the vestments of the priest were.

We were told that when this French boy went to Confession he would tell his story into the priest's hand with his fingers, and to show that he was sorry for his sins, he would pull down the priest's face and dry the priest's eyes with his handkerchief. Even though you are deaf and dumb, you can still weep! You still can have the gift of tears!

The boy was told that there was an audience watching him. I do not know what "audience" or "watch" meant to him, but somehow he was told that he was on exhibition, and people were observing him as he talked and made his profession of Faith. He was asked, "Have you anything to say to your audience?" They led him to a blackboard. He stood by it, found it with his hand, made a line on it so that he could get some sense of straightness, and then he wrote:

Priez pour moi. "Pray for me."

He put down the chalk, after that, and bowed his own head to show us what he meant.

That boy had found the visible Church. You might almost say that to him it was tangible – that to him the Church was the first value that visible meant.

I am going to tell you now, and will tell you many times again, how grateful I am to Saint John for making the Incarnational message of Christianity so completely unmistakable and never to be doubted again, by his brilliant phrase in the beautiful canticle which opens his Gospel. Instead of saying, "God became visible," Saint John says, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." Everyone knows what "was made flesh" means, whether he be deaf, dumb or blind.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." Visible gets a very strong, central and safeguarded value when you put it that way. Flesh is visible, and unmistakably so. God is there to be heard, as flesh speaks; to be seen as flesh walks. A woman could touch the hem of God's garments.

The whole story of our Emmanuel's entrance into the world is finished after that matchless challenge of Saint

John. There can be no arbitrary discussions about what you mean by visible any more. There can be no handing over of the debate to academic theologians who are more anxious to speculate on it than to see. God has been flesh in this world, and if you are not finding Him from the messages, the words, the pictures, the records, the reports that ultimately stem from Flesh and Blood pointing to Himself, opening His Heart, and saying: "This is God! Bones and blood, and nail-pierced hands"— you have not got Christianity. I do not care what else you are touching – you have not got Christianity.

You may have the grand, cosmic edition of religion which has taken the spotlight on the stage today – the weird apostrophe to vagueness called "the soul of the thing," the "spirit of the faith," "my general inner feeling about the matter." You may have all that, but you have long ago left Christianity.

It may even be to your interest to have Christ go out of the world. I do not know. Maybe you do not want Christ! – Christ of the manger, of the bloody sweat, the crown of thorns, the grave, the risen Flesh and Blood, the Blessed Eucharist. Maybe you would like to drop Christ – and keep something you privately call "Christianity," and hyphenate it with some other idea, and see what you have in common with a Protestant minister or a Jewish rabbi!

I am here only to tell you what Incarnational Christianity is – Flesh and Blood Christianity. That is the only Christianity I was ordained to preach, in the Holy Roman Catholic Church. I start off by calling it visible, and I am not going to let visible be a weak word.

All the seven Sacraments – which are the great instruments of our sanctification – are visible signs instituted by Christ to confer grace. Why are they outward signs? Because He Who instituted them was an outward performer. When He talked, He moved His head. When He taught doctrine, you heard a voice as well as an idea. So the Sacraments, if they are going to be reflections of their Author, have to be visible. There has got to be something in them that is a signature of the fact that there was flesh in the God Who instituted them.

Behind-your-eyes religion, deep-in-your-depths religion, the great nirvana, personal annihilation, negation of pain – all those horrible escapes, are not Christianity. Christianity is an overt, seeable, tangible, liftable, dealable-with religion. You can point to it! There it goes! Here it lies!

It is so precious in visible form, in Incarnational form, that even when the great soul that kept it alive is gone – let us say when the soul of a saint has left his body – the body is still sacred to Christianity. Its bones are relics. Its clothing is a relic. The beard of Saint Francis, the robe of Saint Dominic, the Little Flower's hair and shoes, the mantle which she wore, the little bed she slept on, and the straw on which she coughed herself to eternity – all are relics.

And so the Sacraments by which we are sanctified are outward signs instituted by Christ to confer grace. Without the outward signs you just do not get the Sacraments. You can stand around and commune with the Holy Spirit all you want, but if you do not have water, you do not have Baptism. You can be the most devout priest in all the world, you can love the Blessed Sacrament beyond utterance, you can have your vestments on, your altar there, your candles lit, the altar boy ready to say his prayers, but, if you have not got wheat and wine, there is no Mass. And nothing can take the place of that Mass.

You may say, "Well, I will sit down and read the Mass." I am sorry. Unless you stand up and take bread and wine and say, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," there is no sacrifice. and you are not a functioning priest of the Catholic Church. And if you are a priest of the Catholic Church, and if you have enjoyment, pleasure, peace of soul, in going around and associating with so called "Christians" who are not interested in "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," you are a Catholic priest without the Faith, and you will lose your soul.

There are hundreds of Catholic priests in this country who are going to lose their souls – not for the kind of sins that vulgar people like easily to suggest or imagine. I do not know any group of men more free from sins of that kind than the Catholic priests of this nation. But priests are losing their souls because they have not the courage to preach Incarnational Christianity to vague American minds. And it was for this purpose – the teaching of Incarnational Christianity – that they were put in Holy Orders.

But let me go back and speak again about the word visible. Visible means: visible either in origin or termination. Either the lead or the finish is something tangible, seeable, or holdable.

Suppose I start talking to you about the Passion of Our Lord. I will be talking to you about a body that you will never see while you are on this earth. I will be talking to you about a crown of thorns which you will never take

from His head on the Cross. I will be talking to you about sacred eyes that will never look into your eyes while you are in this present trial. Yet, Jesus was visible, tangible, seeable. Do you understand what I mean by visible?

Suppose I should talk to you about my mother. I would be speaking about a visible mother, albeit you might never see her. Maybe the terms in which you would be thinking of her would be leading more to abstraction than to concretion, but you would know in the depth of your mind that in a certain house in a certain street in a certain town there is a little gray-haired lady with a beatable heart and holdable hands whom I am talking about. Is that not right?

So it is, with regard to the visibility of the Church. Visibility must occur somewhere in the arrangement that touches you, if you are going to be a true Catholic according to Christ's Incarnational requirements.

Take the subject of Baptism for example. Take a little baby and the priest who is going to baptize him. The little mind, the little soul of the baby do not know what is being done, but the sponsors and the priest are there to see that the thing is done visibly. Visibility is dealing with the child in Baptism of Water.

In our day, Baptism of Water has been made invisible by a phrase which the Liberal Catholics of America are constantly employing, to the delight of the Protestants. That phrase is "Baptism of Desire." You will notice that as the Liberals use it the insistence is on the desire more than on the Baptism, on the thirst more than the water, on the longing more than the Sacrament, on the inner holy impulse more than the outward holy rite.

Christ's Baptism was not "Baptism of Desire." Christ's Baptism was so overwhelmingly a Baptism of Water that He, Himself, stripped of His garments, waded into the River Jordan to be baptized by His servant, John. He made the liturgy of His foundational Sacrament so visible that it evoked from Heaven the Holy Spirit, fluttering in the form of a dove, and the voice of His Eternal Father, crying: "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

Desire is a splendid diabolical word with which to confuse people. Up until recent times, even the most ambitious of the theologians of the Church never dared to use it in connection with Baptism except in a study of the nature of justification, which still left the problem of salvation unsolved – salvation by "Baptism of Desire."

Perhaps I had better pause for a moment to explain the difference between justification and salvation.

We achieve salvation after our death. We can be justified in this life. Salvation is of the whole man, body and soul. Justification is of our spirit, and our spirit alone. Salvation is our entrance into the Beatific Vision. Justification is our entrance into the state of sanctifying grace. Salvation is our reward for persevering in grace. Justification is our reward for accepting grace. We may or may not persevere in justification, but if we do persevere, we will attain salvation – at the hour of our death.

When the Council of Trent was discussing the problem of justification, it had to remember that it was possible for one to have been justified in the Old Testament as well as in the New, and that is why the Council allows the distinction between the actual reception of Baptism and the eager willingness to receive it. A man in the Old Testament waiting and wanting Baptism to be instituted, and a man in the New Testament waiting and wanting Baptism to be administered could both be justified.

It was possible to be justified in the Old Testament, but not to be saved. When those who died in the state of justification, in the Old Testament, went out of this life, they did not go to Heaven. They went to what is technically called the "Limbo of the Just" (appropriately referred to as "Hell" in the Apostles' Creed), until the visible Body of Jesus led them to salvation on the day of Ascension. This is how important visibility is to the notion of salvation, whatever it may mean in the realm of justification.

It is sinful to call men to salvation by offering them "Baptism of Desire." If this so-called substitute for Baptism of Water were in any sense usual, or common, or likely – or even practical – Jesus Christ would never have told His Apostles to go forth and baptize with water for the regeneration of the world.

I have said that a Baptism-of-Desire Catholic is not a member of the Church. He cannot be prayed for after death as one of "the faithful departed." Were he to be revived immediately after death – were he to come to life again – he would not be allowed to receive Holy Eucharist or any of the other Sacraments until he was baptized by water. Now, if he can get into the Church Triumphant without Baptism of Water, it is strange that he cannot get into the Church Militant without it. It is an odd procedure for priests of the Church Militant to be shunting people off to the Church Triumphant before these people have enrolled in the a Church Militant, which fights the good fight and preserves the Faith.

What the Baptism-of-Desire teachers make of Our Lord's great text, "Unless a man eat My Flesh and drink My Blood he shall not have life in him," I am very much puzzled to know. Perhaps there is a Eucharist of Desire, as well as a "Baptism of Desire"? And why could there not be Holy Orders of Desire, as the Anglicans would like to have it, or Matrimony of Desire, which would so please the Mormons? And what becomes of the Mystical Body of Christ, made up of invisible members and a visible head – invisible branches on a visible vine? I would very much like to know!

Our priests in America now go around preaching this dry substitute of "Baptism of Desire" for the waters of regeneration. Their "Baptism of Desire" is no longer an antecedent to the Baptism of Water to come. They make it a substitute for Baptism of Water, or rather an excuse for not having it. These priests have brought our Church in the United States into a desert, far removed from the life-giving waters of Christ.

Neither "Baptism of Desire" nor "Baptism of Blood" should truly be called Baptism. Neither is a Sacrament of the Church, and neither was instituted by Jesus Christ.

Suppose a non-baptized person had his choice between Baptism of Water on the one hand, and what is called "Baptism of Blood" on the other. Were he not to choose Baptism of Water, the shedding of his blood would be useless and he would lose his soul. It is Christ's Blood that counts in Redemption, and the fruits of it in application to Baptism. It is not our blood that counts at this foundational point. And it is only when we have received both the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Eucharist that Christ can be said to be shedding His Blood in one of us. This last is the real martyr, and the one who has preserved the Faith.

Baptism is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ. It is the redemptive power of God's words in an instituted rite that gives power to the trickle of water and the invocation in the name of the Blessed Trinity. This little trickle of water so administered is worth more than all the blood shed in the history of the world, for any cause whatsoever. This certainly is the testimony of John the Baptist, who preached redemption, not from the shedding of his own blood or the serving of his own head on a platter at a royal dinner.

Saint John the Baptist did not even preach the value of his own baptism in the River Jordan. He preached the value of the Sacrament instituted by One Who joined water and the Holy Ghost as the foundational requirement for entrance into the Kingdom of God, both on earth and in Heaven. And that is why, thank God, though Zachary and Elizabeth's son was martyred for the Truth, he is not called John the Martyr, but John the Baptist. His is a living testimony that the water of Jesus is more precious than the blood of John.

How beautifully the Blood of Jesus and the Waters of Baptism are linked together in the heart of our Saviour is shown by what happened to Him after He had died and one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear. Immediately there came out Blood and Water, the Blood by which we were redeemed and the Water by which the fruits of Redemption are applied to our souls in the Sacrament of Baptism. Forget this Water that flowed from the heart of Christ, and you will soon forget the Blood that anteceded it.

When the Vatican Council reconvenes, I humbly plead with our Holy Father the Pope, that he will immediately gather his plenipotentiary powers of infallible pronouncement to clear up the wild confusion of visible orating (on the part of his priests and bishops) about an invisible Church – or else the gates of Hell will have all but prevailed against us. The most visible ruler in the world, our Holy Father, in his white robe and white zucchetto, may well take off his triple tiara and get down from his golden throne, and leave Christianity to the kind of committee arrangements to which it is committed in the present-day America, if we keep on preaching "Baptism of Desire."

I beseech our Holy Father to clear up this unholy confusion for the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom his sacrosanct infallibility has now dogmatically and irrevocably secured as assumed into Heaven, body and soul. It was this glorious Queen who, with roses on her feet and stars about her head, suggested water to a little girl at Lourdes as the indispensable symbol of our salvation. It was this Immaculate Mother who caused a spring to break forth from the dry earth so that our sick might be refreshed by the fountains of her love, as our sinners are sanctified by the baptismal waters of her Son.

Chapter 3 — The Secret of the Last Gospel

We are told in the beginning of the Holy Gospel according to Saint John that, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

That is a magical phrase, "the Word was made flesh." "Word" has a great deal of meaning for us. Our memories are all tucked away in the shape of words. Our utterances to those we love are impossible without words, and even when we are thinking by our selves and not speaking, we are somehow wording our thoughts for the hidden ear – which is the bliss of solitude.

Of all man's achievements, perhaps the most astounding is his wording of a thing. When a little child cannot speak – when he has no words yet – one of the first things we do for him is to coax him into word land.

And so, when we are challenged with the idea, "the Word of God," and are let know that one Word serves God for all utterance in eternity and is the perfect expression of all He is, we are very greatly impressed.

If you were to sit down and think for many years as to how you could best say that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became Incarnate – took our nature and dwelt in our midst, breathed our air and walked our roads, looked at our skies and listened to our sounds – I do not think you could possibly get a more chaste, clear, simple, inexhaustible-in-meaning expression of it than to say: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

"Word" leaves nothing out. And when you say "flesh," you get in every single atom of our poor human frailty. If you said, "the Word became man," or, "the Word moved into our scene," or, "the Word became one of our children," there would probably be left out of the realization – for the sake of more lofty, noble and impressive values – a great deal of what seems to be common place in us, of what is lowly and helpless, and yet of what God did assume.

But when you say, "the Word was made flesh," the whole man is flooded in that utterance. There can be no doubt about what has happened. Nothing is left out. Our ears, our nose, our eyes, our hair, our hands – everything is conveyed to our realization of what the Word became.

It is a marvelous wedding, the Word of God and the flesh of man. They are one. Thought now has little elbows. Divine Thought has fingers. The Word of God has a human mind, a human soul, a human will, a human heart. God's eternal Thought pauses, as it is uttered. It is filtered to suit our light. It is dimmed down to our pace. It has our ways.

Saint John's phrase, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us," is a beautiful challenge, and you cannot get away from it. You either have to accept its value the way it is expressed, or else you have to put it aside and go and study "Christianity" or "religion"— getting vaguer and vaguer in terms of some less challenging phrase, until finally your Faith has slipped away from you.

And here is the next point I am going to make: If "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us," that must mean that all God's utterances to the world, from the time of the Incarnation on, were meant somehow to be associated and connected with the flesh. God has nothing further to say to man, except what a voice can speak, a head nod, a hand plead, a pen write, or a man topple over on the ground for, in martyrdom. God has nothing any more to say that is not to be said in terms of flesh and blood. All non-Incarnational communication with man by way of Revelation, has ceased.

We know that with the death of Saint John, the last Apostle, Revelation ended. John's last heartbeat, which was a very flesh and blood performance, closed God's utterance to the world. God put (this is figurative) a finger to His lips and said, "John is dead. I have nothing further to say."

There can be private revelations, but those are another thing – miniature things – and they do not disturb the central truths that touch our Faith and are necessary for salvation. Private revelations are only secondary versions of a finished story, already told.

When you want to know what Christianity means, therefore, and what God has to say to you through "the Word made flesh and dwelt amongst us," the knowledge has to come to you through some flesh and blood utterance, — an Apostle, were you fortunate enough to live in the days of the Apostles, or from somebody whom the Apostles eventually made an apostle, in case you were born after the Apostles had died. For example, Saint Paul appointed Timothy, and Timothy, in his turn, appointed other bishops, and those bishops made other bishops, and so on and on. There has to be flesh and blood succession for the rest of time, because the Catholic Church is not only One and Holy, it is also Apostolic.

The bishop routes are the main highways of Incarnational communication between the Apostles and ourselves. The priests are the side-streets which lead from these main highways. If Peter was the foundation stone on which the Church was founded, to protect the Incarnate utterances of God in security and truth, when Peter dies there has got to be somebody in Peter's place, of the same mold, stamp, vintage, and with the same prerogatives and style of expression that Peter had, or else God's message to man has been broken off and it has no conclusion. Anything that comes to you in terms of a Christian idea that cannot be traced back through flesh and blood routes, through the Apostles to Jesus, is not salvational truth!

The rays of the light of Jesus' eyes have got to be still shining in the world, as light begets light. Jesus fired His Apostles, His Apostles fired other men, who fired other men, and on and on that fire went, as torchlights through the centuries.

Faith comes from hearing. *Fides ex auditu.* (Rom. 10:17.)

Where did you get the Faith?

I heard it from someone else. I did not speculate largely, and this is the result. Someone taught it to me. I heard someone say it.

Where did you get it?

Somebody told me.

And so we have been listening down the centuries, from mouth to ear, from ear to mouth.

Christ said to His disciples, "Go forth and teach." His last message to His Apostles was equivalently this: "Get going! I know that there are only twelve of you! I know that is not many to whom to delegate the world. But that is the way I am going to do it. You have got to touch the whole world! You have got to be the focus point of the world!"

Tradition has it that the Apostles cast lots for the world. Matthew was to go here, Andrew to go there – Thomas to one distant place, Philip to another. That is a wonderful point, is it not? Each was equally capable of going any place! Had Matthew, for example, been sent somewhere else than where he had, good results would have occurred, because flesh and blood would be there. The form and style of Matthew's utterance always would be his, but the words always would be the words of Jesus. That is what Saint Paul tells us is happening. "I preach Christ, and Christ crucified," he wrote. "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ Jesus."

I have spoken about the Word, and I have spoken about the flesh. There is another great value reached out to us for contemplation in the preamble to Saint John's Gospel, and it is contained in the word "light." Let me speak about that light to which God does not hesitate to compare Himself – that beautiful light which was God's first thought on the first day of creation and which is included in Saint John's apostrophe: "All things were made by Him and without Him was made nothing that was made." Of all the things that God made, those which we see most clearly are not, of course, the things under the earth or under the waters. Those things we must delve for, or fish for, one at a time. Nor do we see most clearly all the things on the earth, for the earth is far too large for each of us to travel. It is full of far too many things for each of us ever to encounter them all. No one has caught all the fish in the sea, nor shot all the animals in the woods. No one has tasted all the potatoes or turnips in the field, and, "you cannot see the trees for the forest!"

Of all the things which God has made, the most visible and appreciable are the lights above us in the heavens. Everyone has seen, or could see, practically all the stars. When God was making the disparate display of lights in the sky, He was thinking of the Great Light of which they are merely shadows. All things were made by this Great Light, and without Him was made nothing that was made.

If a sparrow does not fall, apart from Our Father's knowledge, much less does one star shoot from the sky without Our Father's remembering the glory of the Light which is His own Word – which patterned the heavens and induced Him to fill it with the brightness of the stars! Though the little Baby of Bethlehem was born in the dark, He was a great Light. The stars admitted it when one of them was sent to misbehave as a star in order to find, for the Wise Men, the crib where Baby Jesus was.

Light paid eminent tribute to the Baby of Bethlehem. The angels opened the heavens, and blinding light shone through the skies. The light and the stars seemed to say to the shepherds, "It may look dark to you in that cave, but in there is Light infinitely greater than we are."

Let us consider again the beginning of Saint John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it

The little Baby of Bethlehem was a Light shining in the darkness! Light is a word that climbs pretty far. In order that we would understand when Saint John said, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness..." all the stars in the sky, and the moon, and the sun, were put there. They were put there to be the symbol, the reference point, the metaphor, the language, the type, the figure, that God needed when He wanted to let us know what the little cave-hidden Child of Bethlehem was when He came – to let us know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Light of the World.

Now, there is not a light in the sky that has not been shining since before the birth of Christ. The stars have been there since long before the coming of Jesus. The sun which shone on Our Lord is the same sun as you now see. We behold the same moon which He beheld. And so, the notion of a light shining through the centuries is not unknown to us.

If we get one thing from this realization, it is that God would never permit a created light to outshine the eternal, uncreated light of His own Divine Son. We know that the light of Jesus Christ could not be quenched in a few years, or in a few centuries. We have, still in the world, the sound of His voice, the light of His eyes, the brightness of His beauty.

The radiance of God's Son has not been dimmed. It will shine until the end of time, not as in the utterance of God before Christ's coming, not as in Moses' burning bush, not as in Josue's sun standing still – but in the light and sound that came from Mary's Baby Who is God's own Self shining in this world. Any Christianity that you cannot trace back to that Child, is not the light of Faith. It just is not. The true Faith must henceforth come to us in terms of flesh and blood, now that Bethlehem has occurred.

You say, "Does not the Church sometimes give us dogmas phrased in such a way that they seem to be non-incarnational? Do they not sometimes insist on the abstract, essential value of an idea, theologically phrased and safeguarded more by academic utterance than by human appeal?" And I answer you that that is not so. The foundations and facts of the Faith are always entrusted to flesh and blood protection. Our Lord said, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18.) He did not say, "This is dogma, and on this idea I hope to prevail."

Even dogmas, without men, cannot get on. We only know their value as dogmas when we have Christ's Vicar guarding and safeguarding them. Unless a doctrine can be traced to the visible head of the Catholic Church, unless you can see a Pope – and usually a council of bishops behind him – and know where the Pope and council met and sat and wrote and discussed and argued and prayed and finally adjourned, your dogma does not amount to ten cents, no matter how brilliant the theology of it may seem.

Now, some of the light-rays that come from Jesus – some of the dynamic forces that come in terms of flesh and blood – are more intense than others. There are seven great beams of light coming from Him in His Divine power, which have been shining through all the days and nights of the Christian centuries. Seven great floodlights of power, of majesty, and Divine word. They might be called seven great forces by which the actions of Jesus are perpetuated forever.

I speak of seven things Jesus did, in which He made what He did perpetual, unceasing actions, destined to endure through the ages. Even when the Instituter has gone off to Heaven, the deed goes on – the action goes on. These seven things, as you know, are the Seven Sacraments.

Pouring water on the head of a child, in itself, does not amount to too much. As I told you last week, even John the Baptist, the great precursor, who was getting very good results from the way he poured water on heads, or dipped people in a river, admitted that his baptism did not mean too much. He said, "I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but He that shall come after me, is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire." (Matt. 3:11.)

So, I do not think you would get too much value out of just seeing water being poured on the head of a child. Pouring water is so easy to do non-baptismally! Mothers do it so often when they are not baptizing, and children do it so often at the beach that you cannot say the action startles you when you see it. Water has been splashing in all the playgrounds and nurseries of the world from the beginning of time. The first thing you think of when a baby is born is to wash him. Water and baby almost indispensably go together. No one would think any of these actions of themselves have any divine power.

You know I do not want to belittle water! I wrote an article once on "Water at Work," but it was only after I had seen water at work in Jesus' hands that I saw the mystery of it. It had escaped me up to that time.

Of the Baptism He instituted, Jesus said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) That action, that Baptism, of Our Divine Lord's, is the beginning of salvation! Nothing else can take the place of it. You may magnify the large thoughts you have in your head about God. You may enlarge upon man's thirsty desire for God, his great hunger for the divine, his mighty aspirations. You can have floods and torrents and falls of ideas flowing, in longing and outlook, in your meditations. And yet without that little trickle which is literally falling from the fountain of Jesus, you are lost.

The rite of Baptism, because it is so simple, because there is in it so little by way of impressing you or startling you, is all the more a subject matter for sublime faith if you will attach eternal value to it – because Jesus did it.

That which I would not have thought to be too valuable by itself,— when this Agent does it – when Jesus does it,

when His hands do it and His voice utters it,— I will call the most beautiful human initial performance that could possibly occur in this world by way of a divine bestowal of love and grace and benefit. And even after Jesus has ascended into Heaven, His actions and His words will continue undulating and vibrating through all the centuries. Water will pour the way Jesus poured it – voices will repeat the words the way Jesus said them. Just imagine a ceremonial rite that is scattered through the world with the dignity of a sacrament, for which a man is prepared to die, and without which he cannot get into the Kingdom of Heaven! Then and only then do you understand the preciousness of water united to the power of the Holy Ghost.

By holding on to the Baptism of Water, we are testifying that "the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." We are taking God on His own terms. We are saying that in this sacrament we see the definite signature of the Incarnation. If it is impossible to get a priest, anyone with the intention of doing what Jesus did, can baptize. He needs only to take the matter Jesus took (water), and say the words Jesus phrased – and salvation is at hand.

Did you ever see power to equal that? Did you ever see frailty tying up Might in a little bundle and delivering it as a birthday present to a child? Did you ever see Omnipotence so much in bonds?

You probably can think of nothing hushed more quickly than a human voice saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." You probably can think of scarcely anything finishing more quickly than a trickle of water on a child's head. But because Jesus once spoke those words, and because Jesus once performed that action – and gave His Apostles power to perpetuate it – the whole Catholic Church is continually living, being, building, structuring itself. On that tiny frailty at a font, or a faucet, a pool, or a river, our eternal happiness depends. I say again, how do you like that for Omnipotence, if you have eyes to see and ears to hear.

In the minds of Liberal Catholics in the United States, as you very well know, the reason why Baptism of Water today is not insisted upon, is because it seems to them to be so trivial. The very reason for which God chose it, is the reason for which they reject it. And they are willing to allow that the man who disdains it is "sincere and eager and full of earnest God-bound desires." Is that not so? And this false reasoning is built up from an interpretation of a couple of sentences of Pope Pius IX, when he was not defining!

Just imagine, my dear listeners, the whole secret of salvation being missed in the Gospels, in the teachings of the Apostles, in the protestations of the Saints, in the defined teachings of the Popes, in all the prayers and the liturgies of the Church – and imagine it suddenly coming clear in one or two carelessly worded sentences in an encyclical of Pope Pius IX, on which the Liberals base their teaching that there is salvation outside the Catholic Church!

Imagine the visible Church preserving its most central truth – that of its foundational necessity – in a casual phrase in a letter written nineteen hundred years after the Church's founding! Imagine an incidental sentence in a letter of Pope Pius IX being the foundation stone of a Catholic dogma! Imagine the visible body of believers for hundreds and hundreds of years having been left uninformed on the truth of the dogma concerning the essential whereabouts of salvation! Martyrs have shed their blood for the preservation of this doctrine in its strictest sense. Three Popes – two of them in Council – have solemnly and irrevocably defined that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. In the face of that, imagine a Pope in the nineteenth century, Pope Pius IX, in a lengthy letter which was devoid of the chastity of papal infallible pronouncement (it may even have been written by someone else, the Pope merely having signed his name to it), being set up as the substitute for the rock-bottom truth on which the Catholic Church is built; namely, its indispensability to salvation!

Do you think it would be possible for Pope Pius IX ever to make a definition of Catholic truth which would clearly contradict infallible pronouncements of his predecessors on the subject of "outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation"? Imagine the Church having any longer the power to be the teacher of all nations if such an unmistakable phrase could be turned to its very opposite meaning by modern Liberal academic theologians anxious not to endanger their prestiges with heretics.

Faith is the beginning of Christian Hope. Saint Paul says that "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for." (Heb. 11:1.) We dare not even start to hope until the Faith, the true Faith, and its revealed content, are secured in our minds. Only in terms of Faith do we dare to hope.

Were any of us allowed to hope on our own terms, apart from the chastity and the justice and the security of Faith, we would turn our hopes into every vague and unholy thing that could occur to our minds to decide. One might even start hoping that Hell would be abolished, because of some former friend or associate one felt sure

was there!

We must keep to the Covenant, the innocent and clear Covenant, as it was given to us by Jesus. And we must keep to it from the first challenging and innocent overture: "Unless a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

If you are a priest, with Baptism in your power to administer, and if you do not feel that this little flow of water is necessary for each and every head in the whole world, then you have not got the Baptism of Jesus Christ. When Christ commands His Apostles and His priests, and even in emergency a delegate of any kind, to administer His Baptism, He puts His own power on one side of it, the whole world on the other, and the minister of the sacrament in between. With water in your hands and the names of the Blessed Trinity on your lips, you may go with the power of Jesus to the whole world, to every creature in it.

If you start to measure Baptism by your own limitations and say, "How can I ever reach the whole world, or how can anyone!" you have not got a God-established Baptism. You have something man-established, for a finite need. You are then worrying about Baptism and the effects it would have were you to have instituted it, or were salvation to be your private business. In a word, you have no Faith; otherwise you would believe that Baptism is for everybody, as Jesus said it was.

The triviality or the non-triviality of an act can be measured in two ways: (1) by what the action is in itself, indifferently to the person performing it, and (2) by who the agent is who instituted it. If you will admit that a ceremonial can take eternal significance, eternal value, indispensable requirement, simply because of the dignity of the One Who instituted it, you believe, indeed, that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." You believe this ten thousand times more than you would from studying a long treatise on the Incarnation, or a long discourse on how valuable it is to know how well Christ's teachings have pervaded the world.

Christ's teachings, as they have gone indiscriminately through the world and have been indiscriminately uttered here and there, uttered by this one and that one, have got so confused that you do not know where the teaching that calls itself Christian comes from. Even the Church could not guard all the indiscriminate teaching that goes on through the world in the name of Christ, with two hundred and sixty-four acknowledged varieties of it in the United States! But the little trickle of water, the few consecrated words of Baptism, the Church can guard. And because the Seven Sacraments are the actions of Jesus, the request of Jesus, the Church has guarded them through the centuries.

So beautiful is our trust in Our Lord in terms of the value of any action He does, that when we take over to administer a sacrament in His name, we do not mind that we are speaking in our own name, and say, "I baptize you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

You say to me, "And who are you, to say, 'I baptize'?"

Who am I? I am Jesus' voice, still going on. And this is Jesus' hand, still stretched out. And Jesus' grace, still giving eternal benefits through what I say and do in Jesus' name.

So much is this so, that Saint Paul was inspired to call us Catholics, "the fullness of Christ." We are the Mystical Body of Christ. "Mystical" means the marvelous same Christ in endurance, even when He has gone away. He is the Vine, and we are the branches. He is the Head, and we are the members. We become in echo almost as divine as He was in utterance.

The action in a Christian sacrament is so significant that the agent – the one now performing it – says "I." As the sacrament was originally instituted, it was the Agent Who was sublime, and the action trivial. But the Agent made the action divine. As the sacrament is administered now, it is the agent who is trivial. But the action makes the agent divine. How do you like that for hide-and-seek between God and man?

So much is this true, that it would be wrong when you are baptizing to say, "Jesus baptizes you." You must say, "I baptize you." So valuable is anything that Christ institutes and wants to abide, and so valuable is any ray of light that He wants to shine through the centuries – no matter how many seasons or storms or clouds beset it – that you are entitled to speak in Christ's name as "I" even if the only thing you have in your mind is the intention of doing what He wants done.

The reward for our complete abdication in faith to the dignity of the Seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ is a reward of such intimacy – I might almost call it such audacity – that you never cease to wonder at it. Imagine a priest saying, as he invariably does at Holy Mass, "This is My Body" and "This is the Chalice of My Blood!"

What Christ instituted, because of the Instituter, becomes more important when it is uttered than him who utters it. It lends a dignity to the utterer that he would never have in any other utterance.

Making the Sign of the Cross with my hand is not very much in the order of movement. It is not even a sacrament. But making the Sign of the Cross for Jesus' sake, as a gift to Jesus, takes all its value from the One to Whom it is given. The term makes it divine. We move over and we learn from "the Word made flesh and dwelt amongst us" that there is not one single atom of our poor flesh that cannot be dedicated and consecrated to God. And things that could easily be called trivial movements or idle gestures – a bow of our head or a closing of our eyes – are all beating against the portals of God's love. Flesh is calling to flesh!

Our Lord and Our Lady are both in Heaven, in flesh and blood. Because there is in the King and Queen of Heaven the same stuff, may I say, as in ourselves, all our poor stuff can call to God. Our breathing can reach Him as we sleep, our eyes as they close at night can move His heart, our head in any of its movements in adoration can be a priceless treasure to God.

God comes to our altar in the Holy Eucharist. He now can reach our kind in time. Had the Word never become flesh and dwelt amongst us, we would have had to go back in spiritual territory and have tried to reach Him only there. We would have had to try to love God through what we would have known of Him abstractly, in His attributes. But what good is a human heart beating in terms of its abstract love of God's attributes? What good are eyes trying to look into God's lack of them? What good are two arms if no other arms can ever enfold them? Voices do not call where there are no ears to listen!

But now, because there is Divinity in the order in which we are – since God became man and Divine ears are now listening to our voices – our "I love You" becomes divine just as soon as it reaches the ears of God!

Jesus instituted a way in which, though He could not be touched or seen or felt by us, yet He could come in physical substance and corporeal union – to be not only the ears listening to our voice and the eyes looking into our eyes, but the very beat of our heart, the marrow in our bones, the texture of our lips, even the roots that grow our hair.

There are two ways you can be united with Jesus. You can see Him, feel Him, listen to Him – were you to have been living nineteen hundred and fifty years ago (and that was beautiful, and some times we envy those who could do that). Or, you can now, in the same body and blood of what you are, be concorporeal with Him. Now, instead of your having to look into Jesus' eyes, other people can look into your eyes and see Jesus!

Your love is Jesus' love! You are in the Sacred Heart! You are flesh of His Flesh, blood of His Blood, heart of His Heart! Just as he devised the little trickle of water for regeneration, in the Sacrament of Baptism, He has devised the little frail wafer of bread in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, to make the union of Himself with us a union more complete and intimate than any other in the world.

Wars come and wars go, countries rise and fall. Sin is here and sin is there, apostasies and heresies appear and disappear. And on and on this little Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist traces its beautiful light – from the Last Supper until the final sunset of the world. I put it once in a verse: Eternal Wonder left the skies

And dwindled into two soft eyes,
Child limbs that could not reach,
Child lips that knew no speech
Spoken, – save the murmurings heard
From breathing beast, wind and bird.
The unbeginning God began
To live the long slow hours of man.
His Mother, bending her fair head,
Straw-gathering – she laid His bed.
A whirling star-world came and halted
Above a blown-roofed, low, thatch-vaulted
Cave – Ah! are we not agreed
'Twas piteous royalty indeed!
And yet beyond an Infant's sleep
Found He a hiddenness more deep;
Finds it each morning when I stand,
He, in the curved holding of my hand.

Starlight is light but ill,
 Star-shadow – darker still:
 The lone firefly that wields
 His fine blue lantern in the fields
 Is far more luminous than Thou
 Who hideth Thine endless splendor – how!
 The rose more glory has to rate her
 Lovelier than the Rose-Creator.
 The violet is mantled finer
 Than the world's own Flower-Designer,
 Hill-Builder and Meadow-Weaver,
 Earth-Waker, Cloud-Conceiver.
 The blind beggar, kneeling while I pass
 Through the sweet words old, told in the Mass,
 Sunnier visions light his dreams
 Than Thine, dark-locked – in death, it seems.
 Covered indeed – and covered how!
 Veil-shielded lest perchance I know
 Not when the long day is sped:
 Ah! is this Jesus or is it bread ?
 I, Christ, who brought Thee down,
 Must label Thee, to know mine own,
 Must light a swinging lamp on high,
 Lest all men, turning, pass Thee by.
 Thou knowest my voice upon the wine;
 Faith knoweth Thee – but no eyes of mine . . .

There is one other thing Jesus had that He shared with us. It was the last thing He thought to give away. It was perhaps the hardest thing of all to give away. Regeneration and union with Him in His Divine nature seemed not too difficult for Him to bequeath us – Baptism seemed easy to give us, and it did not seem to be too much of an effort for Jesus to give us His Flesh and Blood, for He said: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you . . ." (Luke 22:15.) Except for the traitor, there was great love around Him. His Apostles loved Him with all their hearts.

But there was one thing He might have kept for Himself – and that was to be the Child loved by the perfect Mother,— the Child loved as a Divine Child, by a Mother who knew that it was both hers, and it was God! It was both her Child and her God!

Every lullaby of Our Lady was a mixture of tenderness and adoration. Her "Good night" to her Baby was said to God, Who is beyond all the darkness of the world! Imagine saying "Good night" to Eternal Light! Do you see now why the stars were put up there, and why the moon has its work to do? That is easy to see now, is it not?

The last bequeathal, then, which Jesus made to us was of the substance His Mother gave Him – His Body and His Blood. He put it into our mouths at Holy Communion, as Food, so that we could become His own Self. And then He gave His Mother away – to us – so that Our Blessed Lady could say "Good night" each night both to what is human and to what is divine in us; almost to forget, sometimes, which baby she is rocking to sleep, Jesus of Nazareth, or some little girl or boy in Saint Benedict Center!

Chapter 4 — The Eucharist in Four Simple Mysteries

The simplest name for the hiddenness of God in the seemingness of wheat and wine is the Blessed Eucharist. The Blessed Eucharist, or The Holy Eucharist, is the term we use in an over-all reference to the great reality of

God upon our altars.

The word Eucharist means alternately "good favor" or "good thanks." It preserves its shades of meaning, one for God and one for man. The Blessed Eucharist is God's "good favor" to man, and man's "good thanks" to God. The Blessed Eucharist goes both ways, – to God, and from Him, in one little wafer of white, in one small cup of red. The Blessed Eucharist brings God down to man; and it lifts man up to God. It is a communion between God and man.

In our liturgies and our devotions, in our catechisms, in our books of theology, there are four auxiliary titles the Blessed Eucharist requires so as to make its abundant purposes clear to us. These additional titles are: a) The Real Presence, b) The Sacrifice of the Mass, c) Holy Communion and d) The Blessed Sacrament. There must be some sublime reason why these not altogether identical expressions are used by the Church in regard to the Blessed Eucharist. I would like to make these reasons clear to you.

The four distinctions in the Blessed Eucharist which I have just named, are not divisions. It is one and the same Blessed Eucharist in all four holy purposes. But these purposes, rightly entitled, give us a marvelous sense of realization of the Gift of God to us in the Blessed Eucharist. They help us to see what a favor it is from God, and what thanks we owe God in return. The various reverential ways in which Our Holy Mother the Church refers to the Blessed Eucharist deepen our love for its reality.

You may ask: Of the four assignments given the Body and Blood of Jesus when He descends to our altars, which is the highest? I answer at once: The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the highest, the greatest, the most sublime. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is God giving God glory. It is more necessary, more essential, more adorable that God love God, than that I love God, or that God love me.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Blessed Eucharist offered to God immolatively. It is God loving God. It is God given to God by way of propitiation. Nothing is, or could be, more exalted than that. We love God most when we want God to have perfect adoration and perfect love. That is why we are always saying in our Catholic prayers: 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.

Have you ever stopped to think what the world would be like without the Mass? Have you realized how much we must thank God for making the Holy Sacrifice possible to us all these years, and for giving us such dignity when we adore?

In the Sacrifice of the Mass occurs the great mystery of transubstantiation, when the substances of bread and wine are changed into the substance of the Body and of the Blood of Jesus. Let us speak of this wheat and this wine.

The earth does God a great favor by supplying Him with the materials of transubstantiation, with the vestiges He uses in the Eucharist. Have you ever stopped to realize that if the fields yielded no more wheat, or the vineyards stopped distilling the liquids that become wine, there would be no more Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? And without the Mass there would be no Church!

When you realize the elemental innocences out of which God gives us the Bread of Life in the Blessed Eucharist, rains have a new meaning, vines acquire fresh value as their grapes ripen in the sun, wheat fields assume a sudden significance, and clouds and foliage and silt and soil are all supersubstantially associated when we see them as necessities for the accoutrements, the wrappings, of this great Gift which makes our Holy Sacrifice, and which is the Flesh and Blood of Jesus under the eye-likenesses of bread and wine.

Bread is a product of fields and hands. Wine is the product of hills and feet. If Jesus did not have bread, there would be no Blessed Eucharist. No other food could serve Christ's sacrificial purpose with the lightness and clarity and brilliance of wheat become bread. And it was the sun-charged grape bunches on the sides of villages that lured His generosity to pour Himself out in the guise of wine. This wheat and wine came to God the Son from God the Father. The Son thanks His Eternal Father for them at the Offertory of the Mass. He thanks Him for all the hosts and all the wheat fields until the end of time! What a harvest Christ requires for His sacrificial Suppers of Love. And what a wheat bill if God the Father were to charge the Son!

In the immediate prayer before the Consecration in the Mass, the priest reports of Jesus: "Who the day before He suffered took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with eyes lifted up to Heaven, unto Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed it"

What is Jesus giving thanks for in this prayer of report? Not for the Blessed Eucharist in Real Presence as yet, because the words of consecration have not yet occurred. It is for the bread of the Mass. It is just for the bread! Oh, the tons, the cargoes, the ships, the fields, the sun, the rains, the elements, the farmers, the sickles, the scythes, and the little nuns in holy bakeries, that are required to give us the bread for the Holy Eucharist, all down the centuries! Is not that beautiful?

At the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus is not God to Whom we go to adore. That is His purpose as the Real Presence. In the Sacrifice of the Mass Jesus is God to Whom we go to adore with. He is God Whom we give. In the Real Presence, Jesus is the Magnum Donum, the Great Gift, given to us. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus is the Magnum Donum, the Great Gift, given to God the Father!

We can give God, God! We can give the Eternal Father His own Divine Son! We can offer the Son to the Father! And this offering is the payment for all God has given us – full price!

The Sacrifice of the Mass is not only a Gift to God. It is a sacrifice in gift. We are sacrificing something that we give – sacrificing something that is now ours. The priest is asked to offer that great gift of God to God, in terms of sacrifice and in terms of immolation.

Jesus can never die again, but He can be immolated again. And the immolation is complete, which is inflicted on the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

When a priest takes bread in his hands, he has power only over the Body of Jesus. (That the Soul and Blood and Divinity will also come where the priest puts the Body of Jesus, is due to the inseparability of the constituents of the God-Man forever in the place where He is.) And when a priest takes wine in his hands, he has power only over the Blood of Jesus.

It makes no difference whether a power is a power with words or a power with hammer and nails. Power is judged by the effect, not by the devices by which the effect has been achieved. The walls of Jericho were overpowered just as much when they fell to the ground at the command of Josue, as when they fell under the ramming of Oriental wall-bangers.

Jesus gave us in His life examples both of His power directly, and of His power in command: directly, by driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple with a scourge, and by command, causing to fall on their faces the men who came out with Judas to crucify Him. I might almost say there is more power in the person who can bring about his purpose with a word, than in the one who has to have a hammer and nails and violence to help him out.

There is more execution-power in Catholic priests than there was in the Roman soldiers who nailed Our Lord to the Cross, as far as power goes. The soldiers could put the Body of Jesus there only once. Priests can put the Body of Jesus there every morning; indeed, every time they choose! That is terrific power!

In the Mass, we offer the Son back to His Eternal Father, and His Eternal Father remembers the preciousness of this Body and Blood in separate offering, once having seen, to Divine horror, its separateness on Golgotha, when there was all corpse on the Cross and all blood on the ground.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is God's Son dying and offering Himself in death to the Eternal Father, by way of adoration, propitiation, thanksgiving, petition. It is God's Son thanking His Father for the gift of our existence, the graces given us, our Faith, the sacraments we have received. The Sacrifice of the Mass is God's Son pleading with the everlasting majesty of God for the greatest and the tiniest favor the priest might have as his intention. The Mass is God's Son mystically dying for whatever the priest pleases.

The priest can put in the Mass, in the Commemoration of the Living, anyone in the world he wishes to pray for. He can remember one or many of the souls of the Faithful Departed in the Commemoration of the Dead. The Eternal God will be immolated on the altar to thank His Father for whatever the priest or his people wish to thank Him for. He will plead with His Father for whatever the priest or his people wish to plead for.

That is great love for us on the part of Jesus, is it not?

I think you can see in the Mass the transcendence it has over the other sacred values in the Blessed Eucharist. Constructively, that is not necessarily so. But in the dignity of performance, there is nothing to equal it.

The priest indicates at the foot of the altar, as the Mass begins, his own unworthiness. He confesses his sins, and he says he is unworthy to go unto the altar of God. In the Canon of the Mass, however, the priest prays

confidently. He does not speak so much of his own lowliness, in the Canon, because what he does now is, "through Him, and with Him, and in Him."

At the end of the Canon, at the Little Elevation, the priest lifts the Host and the Chalice to God the Father, and he says:

Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, be unto Thee, O God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

Nothing more than this can God the Father ever ask from this world. It is impossible for God to receive any more than to have His own Divine Son given to Him in the Sacrifice of the Mass. When that happens, well, little bell, might you ring; well, little altar boy, might you wear a white surplice; well, priest, might you bear a cross on your vestments!

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a Divine Giver giving a Divine Gift to a Divine Recipient. It is God giving God to God!

The Real Presence is the second great value of the Blessed Eucharist. It must not be confused with God's immensity.

As you know, God is present to all things. God is omnipresent. But that is not what we mean by the Real Presence. God's omnipresence concerns the necessity of His being present to every created thing for its sake, so that it can continue to be and to act. Before the words of consecration, which put God in the Host, God is in the host by omnipresence. But you cannot, before the words of consecration, say of the host, "This is God." Omnipresence means "God is here!" Real Presence means "God is this!"

Let me repeat. Were I to lift up a host, if I had one in my hand, I could say, "God is here," because God is everywhere. But I could not say of that host, "This is God!" After the Consecration, however, I can say of the Host, "This is God!" And I could put that Host in the ciborium, lock Him in the tabernacle, put Him in a pyx. We can adore that Host.

Anything you could say about a thing present, God is submitted to, by the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist. If you open the door and put Him in the tabernacle, into the tabernacle He goes. It does not make the slightest difference that He was there by omnipresence. He is now there in space relation. The unlocated is now located. The supralocal is now local.

"This is My Body." "This is the Chalice of My Blood." Both the consecrating words of the host and the chalice begin with that real, presence-inflicting word, "This."

What is Our Lord's value to us in Real Presence – apart from His other beautiful benefits in graces in the Blessed Eucharist? Well, we now have a place to which we can go, in the presence of which we can say we are, in the direction of which we can bow our heads and fold our hands, to which we can sing our songs, strew our flowers, light our lights, shake our incense; for which we can build our cathedral, top it with a cross, stain-glass it with our windows, give it a center aisle that leads down to the Real Presence, before which we can genuflect. The Real Presence makes our bodies entitled to the prerogatives of adoration.

Were you just looking for God's omnipresence and not Real Presence, His omnipresence – His being everywhere – would impress you more in the ocean if you lived on the shore, in the mountain if you lived inland, in the field if you were a farmer, or in the forest if you were a timber man. You would give Him an igloo if you were an Eskimo, a hut if you were a native at the Equator, a white meetinghouse if you were a New England Congregationalist, and none would ever house Him at all.

But once you get a "This" – a placeable, liftable, carryable, locateable Jesus – you have the Real Presence. In the adorational life of the Church, the Real Presence elicits from us those beautiful human observances, Eucharistic observances, which are sheerly adorational: Benediction, Exposition, processions, the little sanctuary lamp burning when there is no Mass and no communicant at the altar rail. It is what we raise our hats to, when we go by the Church. Its very "thereness" is our comfort, if we sleep in a town where It is, on a street where It is, or, favor beyond all favors, in a religious house where It is!

I could stay on that for a long time. The Curi of Ars in one of his simple sermons (which the proud French intellectuals never noticed were so deeply theological), in his saintly, priestly appreciation of the Real Presence, put it beautifully, challengingly, and theologically – for all he put it bluntly in peasant utterance. He said, about the

Real Presence, "If I place Him on the right, He stays there; if I place Him on the left, He stays there; and if I drop Him on the floor (God help me!), He stays on the floor."

That is the first point about the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist. You can meditate on that. You can realize how wonderful it is to have God "This"; to have God contained! God in a tabernacle, in a pyx, in a priest's pocket, in a child's mouth. God in a room, God before lights!

I shall never forget one night in England when I brought the Holy Eucharist to a lady who was dying. She was unconscious. She could not go to Confession. She could not receive Our Lord. Her sister was with her, and we stayed for many hours and prayed. I had placed the pyx containing the Blessed Eucharist on the mantelpiece. The sister said, "Would you put it on her heart?"

"That is a beautiful idea," I said, and I put the pyx on her heart.

While she was unconscious, lying there and breathing up and down, Our Lord had a little, tiny Lake-of-Galilee ride on a little stormy breast, and He was not a bit afraid, not even of falling over to the side. All He was there was the Real Presence! There was no consciousness in His sick old child to know that He had come from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or that He could be the Blessed Sacrament or Holy Communion, if called upon.

In Real Presence, the Blessed Eucharist is God at a terminal, instead of God beyond the stars, or God beyond the stratosphere, or God light-years away. It is God beside a wax light, beside a tabernacle lamp. One little match-lit star in a dark sanctuary will show you where God is in Real Presence.

I say It is a terminal, a terminus ad quem. You have arrived! This is God! You need go no further to find either Jesus, or, by virtue of the presence of Jesus, God the Father, or God the Holy Spirit – or God's Mother, or His Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim! They are all here! However they relate themselves to this space, I do not know, but around this space, in which is contained the Real Presence, they are crowded – everyone trying to enter the circle of that little Host's dislocation of the air.

The Real Presence is God waiting for attention – or inattention! Most of the time, alas, He is getting no attention. If you want an example of unselfishness, think – not of how many times He has companionship – but of the hours, and hours, and hours that He has none, at least of our kind of companionship, the kind of companionship which He was seeking when He came.

I remember a man telling me one day in New York (and I know the same thing is true here in Boston) of the number of occasions you can go into church, even in the daytime, and for weary hour upon weary hour there will be only one or two people in church. Sometimes there will be nobody but yourself. It is very easy to find an empty church during the day, in large cities. Outside the church, there will be automobiles, newsboys, traffic, business, crowds, parades, reviews, policemen, neon lights – everything! And inside, is God: ignored.

You say, "Is Jesus hurt at being ignored?" Let me tell you a secret.

Jesus is hurt in the Blessed Eucharist when we do not come to visit Him and adore Him as our God and our King. He is not hurt in His hands or His feet, or in His back once so scourged with ropes, or His head, once so crowned with thorns. He is hurt in His heart. That was precisely what He came to say to Saint Margaret Mary, the great apostle of the Sacred Heart.

Jesus came to tell Saint Margaret Mary that His heart had been hurt, not by neglect during the slow three hours on Calvary on Good Friday afternoon, but by the long, long neglect of centuries in the tabernacles of our churches: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and every day of the week, week of the month, month of the year.

If you sometimes wonder why the Sacred Heart was so daring as to unbare His breast at Paray-le-Monial to Margaret Mary, a little nun who came to visit Him in prayer, and to let her see, through the bones and the flesh, the beat of His heart; – and if you sometimes wonder why He asked that a picture of Himself with heart exposed be placed in every Catholic home – know that Jesus wished to show the one part of Him that the ropes had not reached in the scourging, or the crown of thorns had not pierced when He was exposed to ridicule and mocked as a King. The one part of Him the nails did not penetrate. The one part of Him they forgot to wound when He was alive, and which the soldier's spear pierced when the mind and soul of Jesus had gone, and the heart of Jesus was left to the silent entombment of His breast.

Saint Margaret Mary saw the incessant centuries of heartbeat of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – not in Galilee, not

in Judea, not even in His glory in Heaven – but in the hiddenness and the lowliness of our tabernacles.

Do you wish to let me tell you, in one final and doctrinal affirmation, what it was that forged the Eucharist? The Blessed Eucharist, which was to be God's atonement to God in the Mass, God's Presence in our tabernacles, God's divinization of our spirits in the Blessed Sacrament, and God's incorporation into Himself of us in Holy Communion? If you wish to know what it was in Jesus that thought to plunge Himself, in his divine and human majesty, into the semblance of wheat and wine and leave Himself there for us to adore and love until His second coming on the last day, I will tell you it was: – the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From the shedding of His blood, came our redemption. From the beating of His heart in love for us, came the Blessed Eucharist.

The Blessed Eucharist was too great a folly for the mind of Jesus to have thought of, all alone. The Blessed Eucharist was the folly of His heart. The folly of Love.

The one who knew that best, at the Last Supper, was John, the Beloved Disciple. John paid tribute to the Jesus Who gave us the Blessed Eucharist by resting his head on the breast of the Lord.

And now you know that it does hurt the heart of Jesus to be ignored and neglected in the Blessed Eucharist.

Faith is not merely an inner sense. It is an outward act – an adoration, an opening of the mouth, an assent. How can I bring home to you the enormity of the Gift of God to us in His Presence upon our altars?

The Real Presence is the Incarnational overture of the Eternity of God. So eternal is this beautiful Presence, so does It transcend all time, that we say about Jesus, "Jesus Christ, yesterday, today, and the same forever."

God forever in eternity is wonderful to think about. But God, never absent from our world since the night of the Last Supper, that is the ineffable thing! And this, despite the fact that His Presence depends on the frailties of wheat, of a host, of a bakery, of a priest's hands – the frailty of love! If that is not a thunderous edition of the Eternity of God, I do not know what is.

In the Host, we have the Eternity of Jesus given to us humanly to adore. He is an Eternal Person. His flesh is lifted to the power and the grandeur and the dignity of that Eternal Person. The whole Beatific Vision is contained on our altars! The Father and the Holy Spirit have to be there with Jesus, personally, because where the Son is, the Father must be. And where the Father and the Son are, the Holy Spirit must be. And so, all Eternity is there!

Was it not Saint Anthony the Abbot who said that one of the surest ways to drive out the devil is by watches and vigils? The vigil of all vigils is the vigil before the Presence of Jesus. When He decided between two saints at work – between Martha busy at many things and Mary sitting at His feet – Jesus said: "Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:42.)

Nothing you could possibly do by way of activity: nursing, social work, slum clearance, nothing you could do by way of anything could equal your being in the Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist.

O Everlasting, O Holy God! Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus! Dominus Deus Sabaoth! O, Holy, Holy, Holy!

The third purpose to which the Blessed Eucharist is put, is to be the Blessed Sacrament.

The Blessed Sacrament is not the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ without any further qualification. It is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, under the species of bread and wine – under the accidents of bread and wine, the appearances of bread and wine. If the accidents of bread and wine are missing, you have no Blessed Sacrament.

Were Jesus to strip Himself of the outward appearance of the bread or the outward appearance of the wine and walk down from the altar, you would have Him really present to you, but you would have no guise, no medium, for the Blessed Sacrament.

What is the purpose of the Blessed Sacrament – to be the Real Presence? No! To be an offering to God for your salvation, or for the good of the Church, or the interest of your friends in eternity? No! That is a purpose of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The purpose of the Blessed Sacrament is to move into an action which will divinize us. The Blessed Sacrament is Pure Act in action in the created order. There is no action in the created order which of itself will divinize us. There is no action which of its intrinsic worth makes Pure Act act upon us. There always has to be covenant and institution. As the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Eucharist moves over and takes its part along with six other outward signs which Christ, for His own purpose and by reason of His own choice, made Sacraments.

The Blessed Sacrament in action is an outward sign attached to which, in time, the Eternal nature of God flows into us and divinizes us. The Blessed Sacrament in action is not just the Blessed Eucharist there on the altar – the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine in repose. The Blessed Sacrament in action is: the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine, eaten or drunk by us!

Because it is so important for you to understand the innocent overture of God fully, let me repeat it all to you again: The Blessed Eucharist is a sacrament which contains the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. If those species of bread and wine are not there, it is not the Blessed Sacrament, and it can do no sacramental work. If Our Lord walked into this room tonight, He would not be a sacrament – even if He took us in His arms, or washed out feet. It would be beautiful to have Him here. It would be beautiful to be in His presence, and it would be marvelous to listen to Him and to talk to Him. He would speak to us out of two depths – out of time and out of eternity.

But He would not be a sacrament. Jesus in sacrament is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine. If you want to find out what is the indispensable, added thing that makes the Incarnate Second Person of the Blessed Trinity a sacrament, it is the species of bread and wine. Take them away, and there is no sacrament.

Those little species of bread and wine are things taken out of our order. That white look in the bread, that red look in the wine – that wheat taste and wine taste – were there before Jesus came. Jesus made use of them. Whenever He speaks about the divinization of us, Jesus says, "Whoever eateth this bread and drinketh this wine. . . ."

I am divinized by reason of the fact that two little local things – bread and wine – have surrendered their species to the Body and Blood of Jesus, so that I can swallow them; so that I can eat His Body and drink His Blood, in order to have life in me; in order to be divinized!

The individuating sacramental note in the Eucharist is the species of bread and wine. They give us the tangible – touching Immensity! The dimensioned – touching the boundless depths of God! Do you see that?

I would say in the Real Presence, that it is eternity coming down to time; and in the Blessed Sacrament, that it is time going back to eternity. The Blessed Sacrament is time dealing out eternity. It is helplessness dealing out power. It is finiteness dealing out infinity!

And now I shall go on to the last purpose of the Blessed Eucharist: to Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is Jesus, not giving, but taking me in.

When we receive the Host,— the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ – and swallow It, we are divinized because to that act is attached the increasing of sanctifying grace in our souls. When this Blessed Eucharist comes into our poor bodies as sacrament, we know that immediately all our powers move over to deal with It as food. The nutritive parts of us are very innocent. They do not know how deeply faith has taken hold of the communicant!

And so, when the Blessed Eucharist goes down into our stomach and our digestive processes move over and attack It, as if It were ordinary food, as far as species go, it is child's play. Our powers of assimilation have all the devices for dealing with what rests like bread, folds up like bread, and seems to decompose like bread. So, our powers of assimilation attack the species, and in ten minutes the species are destroyed. Because the Blessed Eucharist in Sacrament is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, plus the species of bread and wine, when the species are gone, there is no more Blessed Sacrament.

But there is Holy Communion.

All the Blessed Sacrament asks is that it be an action – that it be the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, plus the species of bread, traveling into our bodies. Its sacrament work is over the minute It reaches our stomachs. Holy Communion work then takes over.

In the Blessed Sacrament, I have taken in Jesus. In Holy Communion, Jesus takes in me.

Holy Communion is Jesus incorporating me into Himself. Jesus, as you know, has two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man. And we, it seems, have also to be little images of that hypostatic union, that union of Christ's two natures, when we move into eternity. We have to have both a divine and a human phase to us. We

must be both God and man – God by adoption and man by incorporation with Jesus. We must be other Christs!

Let me call the Sacrifice of the Mass, "when God meets God," and let me call Holy Communion, "when Man meets man." The Man is the God-Man. Holy Communion is the incorporation of my heart, my blood, my veins, my feet, my hands – everything, every part of me – into the Jesus of the Incarnation.

By way of the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus makes divine entrance into my soul. By way of Holy Communion, Jesus makes my body one with His. How do you like that? "The Father and I are one; and you and I are one. I am the Vine and you are the branches. Abide in Me, and I in you"

It is a terrible thing that some Catholics who go to Mass do not receive Holy Communion. In the early ages of the Church, when martyrs were made, Holy Communion was the life of the Christians. Even little babies received a drop of the Precious Blood in their mouths!

Saint John Chrysostom said, in the fourth century, "Do you know how low the Faith has fallen? Some people come to Mass and do not receive the Holy Eucharist!"

The Blessed Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ under the sacramental appearances of bread and wine. Let us now see how the Divinity is hidden in this great gift of God to man.

Before Our Lord went over to die on Golgotha, He offered, at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday night, the first Sacrifice of the Mass. When Jesus said, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity replaced the substance of the bread and the substance of the wine, although the appearances of both remained.

In the Host sense – in the material order, that is,— it is surprising and beautiful that the Body, Blood, and Soul of Jesus could be hidden under the species of bread and wine. But what takes your heart away, and makes your mind almost die in adoration, is how the Godhead could be there! After all, the human nature of Our Lord has a limited space. But for Infinity to become so finite, for Omnipotence to become so helpless . . . !

When you want to meditate on how powerful God is in His effects in the world – when you want examples of His omnipotence – you think of His mountains, rivers, oceans, planets, meteors, all His great physical forces. They give you some idea of His Divine majesty. Now, try to consider what would be the smallest, tiniest thing in which His omnipotence could be hidden? I think any little bug or worm would be more potent than a frail piece of bread, barely sticking together, and so fragile that it is the easiest thing in the world to break it.

I cannot imagine anything more frail than a host in the order of solid, nor anything more frail than wine in the order of liquid. I cannot imagine God going any lower in the material order, than into these two things. "Adoro Te Devote," says Saint Thomas Aquinas, in his hymn to the Holy Eucharist. "I adore Thee devoutly, Oh buried Godhead!"

On Golgotha, Jesus Christ died once, and He will never die again. On Golgotha, Jesus died in His manhood. At the Last Supper, the night before Golgotha, Jesus died mystically, in His Godhead. The Godhead, as we know, of course, can never die, even once, and since a "mystical death" might be misunderstood, let us call that which befell the Divinity of Our Lord at the Last Supper, what Saint Thomas called it. Let us call it a burial.

Let us see what happened in that burial at the Last Supper, that burial which seemed so easy. "This is My Body," Our Lord said. "This is My Blood. Do this in commemoration of Me."

"Do this in commemoration of Me" meant that every man at that table was given the power to do what Jesus did! Jesus squandered Himself for us in His humanity, on the Cross. But, Good God! have you ever seen such helplessness as that which Jesus inflicted on Himself when He handed His very power in the Godhead over to the men who were His followers? That power meant a death for the Body of Jesus. And that power meant a burial for the Godhead!

Into such a state of summons and call, into such bondage and such helplessness did God go, that for nineteen-hundred odd years, wherever there has been in the world a man commissioned by Holy Orders to say: "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," all the brightness of God, all the power and splendor and glory, all His Divinity, must hide in the little round whiteness of a Host.

The priest who says "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood" does not even have to have the Faith! He does not even have to have love! All he has to have is will and intent. He can be a schismatic, or a priest who just goes through the Mass perfunctorily. He can be a cold show-off, much more interested in his own sermon and

his own interests.

But, once he is ordained, every single time a priest says, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," the Godhead will come. It will never fail – no matter how sinful the priest may be, no matter how much he has crucified Christ on different scores – such as belittling His Mother. That which is food, in his hands can become the Body and Blood of Christ. The priest may never refer to the Blessed Eucharist in his conversations for the rest of the day. He may go off and lunch and talk with heretics and infidels, who deny and hate Jesus Christ. But once the priest says the words of consecration, the Godhead will come.

If the little Host should fall on the floor and the priest did not notice It, the eternal and everlasting power of God would be there on the floor!

Good God, what a thought there is in the Blessed Eucharist! When you know it is God! Oh, the panoply of Its power, and the richness of Its love!

At night, when the sexton blows out the candles and when all the lights are quenched, you would think that the Godhead would pull away. There is no purpose for being there, there is no one present to love It. But no, It abides all through the night, all through the lonely night, in the tabernacle.

So faithful has been the Godhead to the burial bequeathed to It in the Blessed Eucharist that in every single city in the United States, in this unconverted country of ours, It is there in Its place. Think of just one city, and just one church. Think of New York City, and Saint Patrick's Cathedral. God is in Saint Patrick's Cathedral. President Truman or General Eisenhower rides by, in a parade. General MacArthur goes by. The Ambassador from France goes by. And never once does God get an acknowledgment from any of these men being honored, or from their followers, or from the people lining the street, watching them go by!

Think of Saint Paul's Church, across the street from us, and the steady stream of scoffing students and skeptical professors passing all day long, to and from Harvard classrooms. The only worshipper in the church is probably some sleepy old man, saying his beads in front of the Blessed Eucharist.

You can never destroy God. But you can snub Him. God's loneliness in the tabernacles of the world is enough to break one's heart. All the display that sometimes goes on in the sacristies, with how little real love of the Faith! The exhibitions of reverence – and the cold, tepid hearts! Think of all the years when people were so little mindful of the great Life-giving powers of the Blessed Eucharist that they received It only once a year! Other things were more important: painting, sculpture, architecture, science, education, culture.

You feel like saying: "This is too much. Why not call off this covenant – this Sacrament?"

There is a special censure reserved to the Holy Father for those who desecrate the Sacred Species. The fact that that censure is there indicates that the sin of desecration must have been committed, and more than once. In the recent Spanish Civil War, the first thing the Spanish Communists did was to desecrate the Blessed Sacrament. It is true, Jesus can no longer receive any physical injury, nor is it possible to unseat Him as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. But oh! what a return for Love!

The work of our life as Catholics is to be thinking, not of the heights of God only, but of the depths and the lowliness to which He, the ineffable God, has plunged Himself for our love. What a reparation and what a delight is there possible in the love of the Blessed Eucharist!

That would be our great opportunity – to love the Blessed Eucharist.

Why does Jesus endure whole decades of being unloved? Why does He come, morning after morning, in the Mass, with no appreciation in those to whom He comes, of the majesty of What is in their midst? Why?

Jesus would do it through a whole century for the sake of the one boy or the one girl who will appreciate Him. He would rather be snubbed for a century than miss the love that might await Him when the century is finished. He would do it for the one bowed head, for the one adorational heart.

Jesus feels Himself repaid in His saints. They are worth the bounty, the abandon, the Divine recklessness, the absolute folly of giving Himself into our frail substance by way of food and drink.

By way of, the easily spilled cup! The easily broken-bread!

Chapter 5 — The Great Gift of God

THERE is some sense in which every single road in the Old Testament leads to the Blessed Eucharist – to the tabernacle. We read most of the Book of Exodus today. It might be said that all it was was an "exodus" out of the desert and into the sanctuary – into the presence of Jesus Christ. I genuflected, in my mind, at the end of our reading, because there was Our Lord!

No group of people in the world were so careful as the Jews to observe the prohibition against idolatry and the adoring of a graven image, of a thing made by hands, an object set up to be an idol in the place of God. The pagan nations had obelisks and sphinxes and pyramids, but the Jews – never! The Jews had a terrible sense of holiness. They were very careful to keep their adoration, their bowed head, their liturgy of God the Father's love, away from anything that was not sheer God.

And yet we know there was one thing to which they gave the profoundest and most abject respect and veneration. Nothing in the way of holy protection or liturgical anticipation could exceed the sacrosanct reverence which they gave it. They put it not merely in the Temple – in the Men's Court, the Women's Court, or the Levite's Court. They put it in the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest could enter.

I speak of the Ark of the Covenant; the great Ark of the Covenant of the Old Testament. The Ark was a box which contained the two Tablets of stone on which God had engraved the Commandments given to Moses.

Were you to put in the Holy of Holies one thing that would abide as presence – majoring in being present and being able to be kept present – it certainly would be stone, engraved and guarded, watched and prayed before continually. Of all the things in the Old Testament that could be said to be permanently abiding in "real presence," these two Tables of the Law in the Ark of the Covenant certainly could.

And they were real, to this extent: The writing on the Tablets of stone was God's writing. These Tablets had been engraved above the clouds. In them, the Jews did not have God's Self, God's Substance, but they did have God's thought – carved in stone! No one could fail to feel that that was trembling very close to the Real Presence of God Himself in adoration; that that was awfully close to the real thing! Two stone Tables of the Law, straight from God.

You know how you take a letter from a friend and press it to your heart, and make it substitute for presence? Well, that is what the Jews did, in a way. There was something beautiful in the Jews of the Old Testament, to venerate these Tablets in abiding presence.

Let me give you another point. The Jews were, as you will remember, fed from above by God. Now, when you just stood in a field which you never had tilled, or plowed, or sown, and sustenance came to you – your food fell down upon you from the sky. I think you could say that that was indeed communion (with a small c), could you not? That was very close almost to eating the substance of God. Is that not true?

We know also, about this "manna" that was dropped from heaven, that it was the most unabiding thing that could

be! It never lasted a day. They had to have a fresh rain of manna every day. (None came on the Sabbath.) Though you could cook it and eat it, the sun shining on it would wilt it.

As a tribute to the fact that these were the types of the Blessed Eucharist – one, in presence, a type of the Real-Presence-to-be; and the other, in communion, a type of the Holy-Communion-to-be – it was the requirement that a chalice or ciborium of the manna be kept in the Ark, alongside the stone Tablets. Now, this manna, the manna kept in the ciborium in the Ark, was miraculously preserved! This manna did not fade at night, as did the other manna which rained down from heaven every day.

One other thing was placed in the Ark of the Covenant – the rod of Aaron. The rod of Aaron was a type, too – a type of the priesthood. Do you see your Mass getting ready in the Book of Exodus?

The Jews had to carry the Ark of the Covenant everywhere. David bore it in triumph; Solomon built a temple for it. The Ark was made of setim wood, the most precious and incorruptible of all woods, and it was lined on the inside with pure gold. It had four rings, with which to carry it. They put a pole through two rings, and another pole through the other two, and even when the Ark was not being carried, the poles were left resting on it.

The Ark was surmounted by two beautiful cherubim – knowledge angels – surrendering their angelic minds to the wonder of this covenant and type! And before the Ark, in the Holy Place, there were kept: a seven-branched candlestick, the altar of incense, and the loaves of proposition. How do you like that? Presence and food and priesthood, inside; and candles and incense and bread, outside! Do you see God's Last Supper beginning to gather? Do you see the world being plucked of its ingredients, and the Bread of Life being forged for us? If you do not believe in the Blessed Eucharist, the Book of Exodus means nothing, I assure you! Try reading it!

If you do not believe that the greatest gift God ever gave us was His Flesh and Blood to eat, the great central mystery of Christianity has escaped you. If you think that the Apostles at the Last Supper got Jesus wrong on the Blessed Eucharist, and the crazy Modernists got Him right, what does Christianity mean? We stand or crash, rise or fall, with this Reality!

When you say to a man, "Do you believe in the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist?" and he says, "No," you should know that you are not speaking to a Christian. Many Anglicans, may I say, have told me that they believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist. Now, you figure that out for yourselves! Do they? No, they certainly do not! Imagine believing in the Holy Eucharist, and not keeping It under the guardianship of our Holy Father the Pope, in the Catholic Church!

A student from the Episcopal Theological School, here in Cambridge, came to see me not long ago. "I think I believe in the Blessed Eucharist," he said.

"Oh, no, you don't!" I answered. "How could you possibly believe in the Blessed Eucharist and stay in the Anglican Church, a church which kept the Blessed Eucharist away from its people for three hundred years?"

"Yes," he replied. "That was an unfortunate interval."

And he went right on staying in the Anglican Church! Can you imagine really and truly believing the Blessed Eucharist is God, and not being overcome at the wickedness of a heretical church which could for so many centuries keep It from its people? I told this boy that he was dishonest and a fraud, and I have letters from him admitting it! Our Liberal Catholic priests who are going around talking the wrong way to Protestants, cooing to them instead of giving them the strong, straight challenge of the Faith, are keeping them away from the Bread of Life!

The Blessed Eucharist is dynamite to a priest's heart – what It is, where It is kept, and how It is guarded! If priests of the Old Law could guard with all the sanctity of the priesthood the stones God wrote on – which were not God – and the food dropped down from heaven – which was not God's substance – what do you think we Catholic priests ought to be guarding in our sermons and our talks? Interfaith "charity"? What we have in common with Jewish rabbis and Episcopalian doubters? Imagine how God will punish His priests in our day! He is beginning the punishment, as a matter of fact, right before our eyes.

We read today that ten thousand priests and nuns have been kicked out of their religious houses, back into lay life, in Hungary. And, as far as we could find out, there was not one martyrdom among them. Imagine that! Not one priest stood at his altar and let those dogs kill him! Kill him for the sake of Jesus, in the Blessed Eucharist! The old rabbis guarded the Ark of the Covenant better than our priests are guarding our Holy of Holies.

Well, I am getting ahead of my story. However, I do not mind if you know the indignation and worry and sorrow in my heart.

You will remember that I spoke to you last week about the Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist? Let me discuss that again for a few moments.

When the priest takes up the wafer of bread at the Sacrifice of the Mass, he does not say, "This is God." He does not say, in the words of consecration, "This is Jesus." Nor does he say, "This is Jesus' Spirit."

The priest says, in Jesus' name, "This is My Body." At those words, the Eucharistic presence of Jesus, His Body (and, since they can never again be separated, His Blood, Soul and Divinity) replaces the substance of the bread. An astounding thing has taken place, and the priest for all the rest of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, speaks of the "Corpus" – the "Body" of Jesus.

The astounding thing which has taken place is not – as of late I have heard it explained – that "the same God Who is in the mountains, the skies, the oceans and the forests, is here on the altar." To all those things, as I brought out last week, God is present by His omnipresence. The astounding thing is that here, on the altar, is really the Body of Jesus. The eyes of Mary's Child, the heartbeat of Mary's Child, the hands and feet of Mary's Child, are here!

Get that, and the rest is safe. Get that, and you will have the Faith. Get that, and you will love God. Get that, and you will be capable of making that "act of perfect love" which our Liberal clergy think it is so easy for those outside the Church to make – and which we at Saint Benedict Center believe it is absurd to ask them to elicit. (And can you not see why?) Get that, and you will be ready to die for Jesus Christ.

What is transubstantiation? It is the dignity and transcendent majesty of Being's own Self, telling a created thing to move over – to push out – while It moves in, on Its own terms! The substance of the bread entirely ceases to be, and Jesus takes its place.

You could, my dear listeners, have transubstantiation of any substance into the Body and Blood of Jesus, if God had willed it. Jesus could have taken up a stone, and said, "This is My Body." That would mean that the species of the stone would be left, but the substance would be the Substance of the Body of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. But, as Jesus said: "What man is there among you, who, if his son asks him for bread, will he give him a stone?" How much more will not Our Eternal Father?

It could be, however. What would you then have on the altar? You would have Jesus, literally adorable, and seeming to be a tablet of stone – not which God engraved with His writing, but which He substantiated with His own Presence. Would it be adorable? It would. Would it be Real Presence? It would be Real Presence. It would be something you could pick up as real, something you could carry or put down.

Would it be a communion? It would not. Why? Because God would not be present there in the guise of food. Food is communion before it is Holy Communion. That is all that bread is meant to be before Holy Communion – communion with man. Food communicates itself, imparts itself, to man, and man assimilates it. Man takes food into himself, turns it into energy, and sustains his life by it. We say he turns the food into himself; it becomes part of him.

Do you see now the difference between the Real Presence and Holy Communion, even though the same Divine Lord is present in each mystery?

As I told you, the beautiful, central, devotional mystery of the Catholic Faith is the Blessed Eucharist. Now, with regard to an Object so sacrosanct, so precious, so adorable, so dear, we would never change our terminology and lightly call it "Real Presence," "Blessed Sacrament," "Holy Communion," or "the Sacrifice of the Mass," unless there were in this Sacred Thing values that warranted this change in terminology. Otherwise, we would be trifling with the truth. That would not be holy. As words go, "sacrifice" and "communion" do not mean the same thing. They are, as words, greatly different.

If God puts Himself – transubstantiates Himself – into the place of a communion, a food, then that Food is the Real Presence and Holy Communion. It is the Real Presence because God is there, and It is Holy Communion because It is there under the species of a communion entity – of an eatable entity. Under the whiteness and lightness and the assimilability of bread, our Holy of Holies moves in.

Our Holy of Holies is more than the Tables of the Law and the manna, together! Our Holy of Holies is more than

the Tables of the Law in that It is the Word of God in truth – not merely in writing. It is more than the manna in that It is the Substance of God in food – not merely an abounding gift of food from heaven.

The Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in the tabernacle. I can now kneel before the tabernacle and acknowledge God. I can give Him not merely the adoration of my spirit – which could reach Him somehow in eternity and beyond time – but I can give Him the adoration and love of my body, of my hands, my blood, my heart, my knees, my breast, my silence. My closed mouth and rapt attention. My eyes can shut and adore, because I am in the Real Presence of something in my own kind. Flesh and Blood are here – so flesh and blood can adore! Think of all the lovely joys and wonders of Divine Love, for a heart of good will.

Nobody could fail to be impressed in a Catholic church, as much by the material adoration as by the spiritual adoration. What goes on in the realm of the spirit there, we do not always know. But there is a moment in the Catholic Church when everyone knows what is going on, both in the spirit and in the flesh. It is the beautiful, impressive moment in the Mass, when every movement and every sound are stilled, the whole congregation hushed, a little boy rings a bell, and all heads are bowed. It is the solemn moment of Consecration.

The fact that heretics and infidels, atheists and doubters, go by that Catholic church by the hundreds, and never pay any attention to it, shows that they are not men of good will. Nowhere in the world is a challenge given which is so sheer, and clear, and imperative, and strong, and unduckable, as the challenge of the Catholic Church. It is the wonder of the world, and the only thing which men of bad will can do is to avoid it – to smile it off, or compromise on some other score!

Will they be lost? Yes, they will be lost. Imagine Harvard students in Adams House not being able to find the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, fifty yards across the street, in Saint Paul's Church!

The Real Presence, then, is God to go to and adore. The Sacrifice of the Mass is God to give to God. Nothing we have to give of ourselves is worthy of God. Only God is worthy of God. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we have, not a paschal lamb, but the true Lamb of God! We have Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God,— to give to God! The priest who stood and confessed, at the beginning of the Mass, to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to the saints, and to all the people, that he was unworthy (and was encouraged to think of himself as a sinner by the altar boy, who is also a sinner) is now, in the giving of God to God, worthy of the respect of the angels! He is giving a Gift no one on earth, except a priest, can give. He is Aaron. And that is why the rod of Aaron was in the Ark of the Covenant, do you see?

The Blessed Eucharist comes to us in two ways, as Sacrament and as Holy Communion. Saint Augustine says that God became man so that man might become God. The purpose of the Blessed Eucharist in sacrament is the divinization of man. The action which makes the Blessed Eucharist a sacrament is Its entrance into your mouth and the making of the little journey down into your body. That little gulp is a gulp of God!

Suppose you cannot eat? You cannot receive the Blessed Sacrament! The sacramental effect is attached to the act of eating. You know now why God, when He was building our eating apparatus, built it with such astounding wonder. Jesus wakes us to the marvels of the function of eating because He has His heart set on Something which we can eat. "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." (John 6:54.)

The easiest, most natural thing a man does is going to be the most tremendous in effect for him. The first thing a baby knows, is how to eat. If the time comes when doctors have to teach babies how to eat, that will be the end of all children. We may have to teach a child to clap its hands, move its feet, look at the moon – but never to eat! Usually the baby reminds the doctor that he wants to eat, and not the other way round. If you want to know what the baby is crying about, you may be sure it is not for lack of a nursery story or nice music. It is for lack of food! That is one thing we all very well know.

Now, here comes the great mystery. I know I touched on this in my talk last week, but since, this week, I am speaking about the Real Presence and Holy Communion both as prefigured in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New, it is no harm, I think, to repeat myself for a few minutes. Here is the mystery: When the species of bread and wine are destroyed, what happens to Jesus? Where does He go? Does He leave us? He is no longer there as sacrament. You know that, because Jesus without the species is not in sacrament.

Is He absorbed into us, as is our other food? No, He is not. We are absorbed into Him! How? Corporeally and humanly. From now on begins our union with His human nature. There also begins our union with one another.

When I go to the altar and receive the Blessed Eucharist, I do not receive my loved ones also. I receive only Jesus. My union with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist does not make me united with another human being unless he is also incorporated with Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist. Two things incorporated with an identical third, are incorporated with each other.

All other foods which we eat, we assimilate – we absorb into ourselves – because we are greater than they are. This Food, however, assimilates us, because we are less than It – infinitely less than It. The Food assimilates the eater, in this sublime performance, because the Food is greater than the eater.

The more assimilable we are, the more completely are we taken into Jesus, in Holy Communion. The more Christ-like we are, in our actions, in our efforts, our ways, our habits, the more we have prepared ourselves for the reception of Him. If we are meek and lowly, we are easily brought into the fibers of His flesh and blood and heart.

We are both humanized and divinized in the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion. The Blessed Sacrament divinizes us, and Holy Communion humanizes us according to the pattern of Jesus Christ. And Holy Communion Mary-izes us, also, because the humanity of Jesus is what He received entirely from His Mother.

How far does this humanization of us go? There is no measure as to how intense and one that Communion can be. It can be so one – Jesus' assimilation of you can be so complete – that you can look like Jesus, feel like Jesus, talk like Jesus, suffer like Jesus. His interests become your interests!

Some of the saints even take over from the intensity of the Holy Communion union that which their love has most brooded over – the holes of the nails in His hands and feet, the wound in His side. They receive the Stigmata. It is part of the innocent overture to the world that real saints make. Saint John of the Cross was so intense in his love for Christ that when he suffered pain, he worried most about the fact that Jesus was suffering pain. His own pain did not seem to bother him.

In Holy Communion, your body belongs much more to Jesus Christ than to you. "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me," Saint Paul said. (Gal. 2:20.) I have read to you many times the sixth chapter of Saint John, in which he stresses this with all the intensity possible. The Doctors of the Church had no hesitancy in emphasizing it. Nourishment is not nourishment unless it be assimilated: unless the food and he who receives it form but one living body.

"My Flesh is food indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed," Jesus said. No one could possibly say that Christ, the Author of Life, could ever be absorbed into His creatures, as food! We, the weaker element, could never absorb Jesus, the stronger; Jesus, Who is God!

"This Food does not change Itself into him who receives It: It does change to Itself him who eats It," Saint Thomas Aquinas says. "The Holy Eucharist unites us to Christ and unites us as well one to another. It makes us concorporeal."

Saint Augustine expresses it: "I am the food of grown men; grow and thou shalt feed upon Me; nor shalt thou convert Me, like the food of thy flesh, into thee, but thou shalt be converted into Me."

Saint John Chrysostom said, "What is the Eucharist? Why was it given? What is its purpose?" And he answers: "That we may become one body, members formed of His flesh and His bones. By reason of His coming we communicate, not only by charity, but with this, His Body, really and physically."

Saint Cyril of Alexandria says that it is only the senseless one, with his usual cowardice, who says that we are not by our body united with Christ, and in Him with each other, through Holy Communion.

Somatophobia is the curse of our day! The way the moderns treat the body, deal with it, biologize it, chemicalize it, psychoanalyze it, is proof they have no respect for it. And if you have not divine respect for that which is as close to you as your hands, your ears, your eyes, the body you must bring upstairs and put to bed, that bears the heat of the day, how can you possibly get into salvation? Christianity is a concorporeal spiritual life! The same cowards who make the Church an invisible society, have tried to make the Blessed Eucharist a purely spiritual communion, with nothing to do with our body.

The priest says in the Mass: "Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis quem potavi, adhaereat visceribus meis . . ."— "May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave unto my entrails . . ." May we be formed and fashioned out of the same substance, concorporeally united, so that we

may become other Christs.

Our bodies are made so sacred, because of the Eucharistic union with Christ, that even when we die, our very relics are precious. Catholic dead bodies are precious things. They are carried into church, and placed at the foot of the altar. The priest blesses them, says special prayers over them, while the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for the repose of the souls which once animated them. They are the temples where the Body and Blood of Jesus dwelt.

I might almost say that the Holy Communion effect of the Blessed Eucharist is the one we understand most of all. At night, we have to leave the Real Presence when the pastor says it is time to go home and the sexton closes and locks the door. In the morning, when the Mass is over, the Holy Sacrifice is finished, and there will not be another Mass until the next morning. The Blessed Sacrament effect, as far as we can see the result, is short, because the sacramental effect is not for our delight. It is for God's delight in us.

The Blessed Sacrament in us, in divinization, is so that God can look, the saints applaud, and Our Blessed Lady watch. While it is true that the stars are vestiges of God – in us, after we have received the Blessed Sacrament, God sees something far brighter than His stars. He sees His own Being shining back at Him. Imagine God looking into His own eyes!

How do I know that? Jesus tells us so, in utterance after utterance: "As the Father and I are one, you and I shall be one . . . Abide in Me, and I in you . . . I am in the Father, and you in Me, and I in you . . . Abide in My love."

"Everything the Father gave Me, I shall give you," Jesus said at the Last Supper, when He talked about this Sacrament – this Sacrament which Liberal Catholic priests are not talking about, and which Protestants are snubbing. "Everything the Father gave Me, I shall give you." My eternal awareness of all joy and beauty, you shall have.

If this is not Christianity, then all the saints have been defrauded by God. There is no Christianity without this Reality of all Realities!

All the patient preparation for it! All the Ark of the Covenant carrying, all the wanderings toward the Promised Land, all the manna in the desert! What blasphemy, that we do not fight for It in our day! We have no other purpose but to fight for this Bread of Life, for which we should be ready to shed our blood. How was Saint Matthew killed? As he was saying Mass. That is the way for us priests to die – instead of in automobile accidents!

We priests are not supposed to be the comfort, in the wrong way, to the people. We are supposed to be a challenge, and a lightning bolt of love – a lightning bolt that will shock the world into realization.

"Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you . . . He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day . . . He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him . . . This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live forever." (John 6:54-59.) Either accept this, or you will not be saved!

The Holy Communion effect of the Blessed Eucharist is our union with the human nature of Christ. In the Blessed Sacrament we become God the Father's son, and in Holy Communion we become Mary's child. Every holy person looks like Jesus. When it is said that we should see Christ in the eyes of our neighbor, that statement is not make-believe. It is not uttered just for the nice sound of it. It is said because Christ is there, in our neighbor, if our neighbor is receiving the Blessed Eucharist. And Christ is not there, if our neighbor is not receiving the Blessed Eucharist.

"Unless you eat My Flesh and drink My Blood, you shall not have life in you." Without the Blessed Eucharist, you cannot be saved. If you do not receive the Blessed Eucharist, you do not have Christ in you at all. You are as barren as the Holy of Holies when the Ark of the Covenant was lost in Mount Nebo.

The Ark of the Covenant was secretly removed from the Temple by the prophet Jeremias, before the Babylonians plundered the Temple and took the Jews off to captivity, in the year 587 B.C. Jeremias hid the Ark on the mount where Moses was buried. He hid it in a cave, which he carefully sealed. He did not mark the cave, and when the Jews returned later for the Ark, they could not find it. To this day, it has not been found.

The Tables of the Law were gone. Why? Because the fullness of time was approaching. The presence of stone

was waiting for the presence of the Bones of God! The manna that had perished each night was waiting for the Manna that perishes each day within the temples of our bodies!

The Blessed Sacrament effect, then, is to make us fascinating to God. The Holy Communion effect is to make God fascinating to us!

You ask, why do we go to Communion again, if we have gone once? Somehow, because it is food – though It is very little food quantitatively – It keeps a similarity with food, with bread. It follows the rule of food, and we partake of it daily. It is our daily Bread. We refurbish our union with Jesus in this marvelous assimilative exchange.

Were we to receive the Blessed Eucharist once, and were that enough for a lifetime, we would, I assure you, quickly forget that we ever had been united with It as food. That does not happen if every day It is our Food of all foods. Think of the charity of the Blessed Eucharist as Food – so sweet and gentle and frail – light enough not to be an encumbrance to our other food, or a hardship to it, inconspicuous by way of bulk, taking the minor place of the things we consume, mingling with our meat, and water and bread! To say that the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ moves in with the water and the bread and the milk and the honey that we consume and is delighted to be part of an assimilative arrangement, in which Jesus will prevail on His own terms, is to make the Blessed Eucharist most precious in utmost performance! We are closer to It than to anything else I can think of!

Now, there may be something lacking in my heart in its appreciation of the Sacrifice of the Mass as a sacrifice to God. There may be distractions in my mind which make me forget the Real Presence, so that I may not be constantly kneeling before the tabernacle. There is something transient, quickly passing, in the Blessed Sacrament, that when the eating is finished, I might forget It.

But, by reason of Holy Communion, I know at every moment that Jesus and I are still one, that where I go now, He goes, that whoever hurts me, hurts Him, whoever loves me, loves Him. I know that wherever I am I can speak His Divine message. I know that I am almost a little vicarious presence and sacrifice all in one, by reason of my Communion with Jesus. I am one flesh and blood with Him.

Man cannot approach or realize God in better terms than that. Man is an incarnational animal. If you do not give him something down to the depths of his body and his soul, you do not touch him.

Our Blessed Lord is constrained to say: "Who eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, liveth in Me and I in him." He did not say: "Who consumes My Spirit will be united to the Infinity of Me." The reason He did not say this is not because it is not so, but because He knew that if He found a loving human heart, it would have to start its long journey to Him on human terms. Its first steps would have to be human. When you are equalized with Jesus through the nature which you and He have in common, then the Divine Person is with you by reason of that nature. And that to my mind is the big feature of the Blessed Eucharist that has been lost.

That loss, to my mind, is the explanation for all the indefinite, vague talk about the Mystical Body of Christ. Incorporation into the human nature of Jesus Christ through the reception of the Blessed Eucharist makes us members of the Mystical Body of Christ, or else I do not know the meaning of the term. I do not know why we call it the Mystical Body of Christ, if that is not so!

No other sacrament unites us with the human nature of Jesus in substance – with His Body and His Blood. Our union with the physical Body of a Divine Person is what makes us members of the Mystical Body of Christ. The Word of God, antecedent to becoming flesh, had no body at all. He should not be spoken of as having one. When the Word became flesh, He took a Body – from the substance of the Blessed Virgin Mary. That Body is not yet the Mystical Body. When He assimilated the bodies of other men into His own, through the Blessed Eucharist in Holy Communion, when He made these bodies His members and Himself their Head – made them His branches while He remained their vine – then, and only then, as the fruit of this sublime communion of Body with body, Flesh with flesh, and Blood with blood, can we speak of the Mystical Body of Christ. That is why Saint Paul said, ". . . and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ . . ." (Col. 1:24.)

When our union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is loved and realized – when we know that we are, in Holy Communion, plunged in the Sacred Heart, in the Blood of Jesus – we can say and mean the prayer of thanksgiving after Mass and Holy Communion:

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification;

Body of Christ, be my salvation;
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins; . . .

In His revelations to Saint Margaret Mary, the Sacred Heart was referring chiefly and uniquely to Himself in the Blessed Eucharist. Our Lord knew that those who had taken His Body and Blood into their mouths – into their being – had not been conscious through Faith of the great heartbeat of Incarnational love for them in His Sacred Heart. It is not the Sacred Heart imagined, that Jesus wants of us, but the Sacred Heart realized: the Sacred Heart realized by concorporeal union with Him. Two hearts in one human breast, and one heart entirely unmindful of the Other, is the hardship that the Sacred Heart has to bear.

Jesus Christ said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He did not say, "My direction is the way." He said, pointing to His own breast, "I am the Way." Imagine knowing that, and being interested in any way or truth or life that is not Jesus! And imagine that same Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life – entering your door, coming through the portals of your lips into your heart and abiding physically there, tabernacled in your breast – and your having any other interest in the world before Him!

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life! He is the Book, the Subject and the Teacher! Jesus is not merely my Lord and my God. He is my God and my all!

Do you think there is a single person in the world who does not know that in Christianity the main mystery, the central reality, the challenge of all challenges – the dynamite doctrine of all – is the eating of the Body and Blood of Christ? Do you think anybody could be constructed as a man with the kind of temperament and interests a man has – and not be engrossed in that more than in anything else?

Do you think Catholicism's sociological challenge, its liturgical challenge, or art challenge, or political challenge, could be equal to the challenge of this great Bread, which is God's Body and Blood, and which we call the Bread of Life?

You may say that many people do not know about the Blessed Eucharist. I answer: It is our obligation to tell them! The Blessed Eucharist is supposed to be like a city set on a hill. It is supposed to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. It is the Light of the World, the Salt of the Earth! Everything you get from a Catholic should be salted with that interest. Everything you see in a Catholic's eyes should shine with that light.

Those are the things Our Lord said on the Mount of the Beatitudes, in His beautiful discourse there. The top peak of His utterance, in the Sermon on the Mount, was an appeal to "Our Father" to give us this day our "supersubstantial bread."

I am now going to say a simple, strong and clear thing about the Blessed Eucharist. I think that Baptism makes you the son of God. I do not think it makes you the child of Mary. I think that the Holy Eucharist makes you a child of Mary. Baptism, being from the merits of Christ who was the Child of Mary, you get through the co-redemptive merits of Mary, by her motherly adoption of you. You also get it from her as Intercessor, as Mediatrix of All Graces. Without her there would be no Christ to institute Baptism to remit original sin. She is, therefore, the Mediatrix, the remote reason for our having Baptism. But when you speak of a mother as a "remote reason" you know you have not got a mother at hand.

Our Lady is the Queen of Baptism. But she is the Mother of the Eucharist. What happens to those children who die between Baptism and Holy Eucharist? They are in the state of grace, which state of grace has been won for them by the Flesh and Blood of Jesus in suffering in union with the Divine nature of the Word. It has been won for them out of the treasury of suffering of Jesus and Mary. Baptism has taken these little children out of original sin and restored them to divine sonship, lost through Adam's sin.

They go to the Beatific Vision. They are of the kingdom of Mary; but they are not the children of Mary. Mary is their Queen, but not their Mother. They are like little angels. There was a strong tradition in the Church that always spoke of them as "those angels who died in infancy." They have the Beatific Vision, and they see the great Queen, but they do not move in as part of the Mystical Body of Christ in the quintessence of that beautiful word.

Baptism is the preparation and the liturgy. It is the inchoative Eucharist – the beginning, the preparation for the Holy Eucharist. Baptism has as its purpose to make us sons of God – so that we can be incorporated with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and become the children of Mary's womb!

And so I say: If a child dies after having received Baptism, he dies as the son of God, but not yet as the child of

Mary. When he gets his body back, at the end of the world, he has to drink of the Chalice in the Kingdom of his Father in order to be incorporated in flesh and blood with Jesus – and so become Mary's child. There is no other way! But is it not beautiful?

This is chastity: to keep central things central, to keep the Holy of Holies holy. The one central thing in the temple of the Jews was the Holy of Holies. The courts outside it had significance and meaning because the central thing was kept sacrosanct. Into the Holy of Holies, the High Priest went but once a year. He was the only one who could enter in. The faithful remained outside, watching. We have a Holy of Holies far more sacred than that of the Jews. And when a priest walks into the sanctuary of our Holy of Holies, there should be no other interest in his heart or in his thoughts except that Blessed Eucharist.

Our Bread of Life looks like the frailest little thing in the world. The Host is the least like stone that anything could possibly be. It is the most perishable little substance. Each morning it has to be renewed. But it is infinitely more abiding than the stones in the Ark of the Covenant – as long as the words of Jesus Christ are spoken, as long as there are priests somewhere in the world.

The Blessed Eucharist will never be lost, as were the Tablets of stone in the Ark of the Covenant. You can lose the Faith, if you are a priest, but another priest will come – there will be another altar, another vineyard, another wheat field. The Sacrifice of the Mass will always be in the world, from the rising of the sun to its going down.

We have not just one Ark of the Covenant. We have thousands and thousands of tabernacles, housing that little Frailty, whose whiteness and roundness are now the wrappings of the Flesh and Blood of God, once structured in Nazareth out of the pure substance of Mary's body. Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist is the Gift of God, and of her who for nine months was the tabernacle of God.

The Blessed Eucharist will never be lost. Jesus visibly said only one Mass. He forgave only a few sins directly. But His priests fill the confessionals and the sanctuaries of the world with absolving and with consecrating hands.

Chapter 6 — The Royal Requirements for Heaven

We are very happy with our picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which arrived from Mexico today. We have hung it in our window for all the world to see. This picture, which originated miraculously from Our lady, herself, is to my mind one of the most beautiful pictures of Our Blessed Lady that I have ever seen. I really love it. It is a New World picture, and was given by Our Lady to a simple little Mexican peasant. It was made out of the plain, everyday materials of Mexico, and it contains to my eye the true ingredients of love and art, mingled together.

We learn from the Doctors of the Church, the twenty-nine great theologians who were as brilliant as they were holy, that in the Incarnation, the Incomprehensible wanted to make Himself comprehended. This is particularly the message of Saint Leo the Great, in his treatise on the Blessed Virgin's Maternity.

Let me say it this way: The Eternal put Himself into time, and did not lose His Eternity. The All-Powerful became helpless, and still retained His power. "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth," Our Lord said. (Matt. 28:18.) Watch Me as I walk around! I have hands and feet and eyes, like you. But because I am like you, do not fail to notice My power. However, do not forget how human I am, either, just because you remember My power!

That is the mystery of the Incarnation.

The reason Our Blessed Lady is a virgin – among thousands of other beautiful reasons – is that she had momentarily to enter eternity and conceive Our Lord of the Holy Ghost, and she had, in time, to stay the same little girl that the angel found when he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace." (Luke 1:28.)

Do you see what a blasphemy against Our Blessed Lady it is to say that after the conception and birth of Our Lord she had other children? She was a virgin ante, inter et post partum – that is, before, during and after the birth of Our Lord. Just as God was God, before, during and after the Incarnation.

In this great meeting between Time and Eternity, in which Our Blessed Lady was Time's womb, Time's arms, Time's eyes, Flesh and Blood's temple, God had to leave her just as much ours as she was His. He was still the Omnipotent God. He was still the Only Begotten Son of God the Father. And, the Incarnation left Mary still the little Immaculate Virgin.

I like the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe for that reason. Most artists, when they paint a picture of Our Lady – especially the proud, Renaissance artists, whose main purpose is to make her heavenly by making her pretty – get to the point after a while of making her almost "too good for this earth." Metaphorically, poetically and courteously, she is awarded the honor of being the Queen of Heaven. But the Queen of Heaven must still be the Queen of the Earth. She must still be our little girl. We do not walk into Heaven scared out of our lives!

The picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe shows Our Lady as the Simplest little girl in the road – And, she is Queen of Heaven without having left the road. Even while walking on the road, she is still in the sky. She has a look of lowliness, unlike the look which proud, conceited artists give her by decorations and embellishments.

When we go into Our Blessed Lady's presence in prayer, we must always remember that though towards no queen in the world would we ever have more awe and respect, yet towards no queen in the world would we be more simple. We must be able both to see her as a Queen and as a Mother – with all the majesty of a queen and all the tenderness of a mother.

If you cannot see in Our Lady the majesty of Queen of Heaven, more gloriously shining than all the angels of Heaven put together, then your right eye is scandalizing you, and it were better that you pluck it out. If you cannot receive the same majestic Queen into your home as a humble little Mother, ready to take Jesus' hand in one of her hands and your hand in the other, then your right hand is scandalizing you, and it were better that you cut it off! (Matt. 5:29,30.)

Men in our day take Our Lady and put her in their own proud thoughts, very far away; or else they make her too common for the grandeur of Queen of Heaven. That is what Our Lord is talking about in the Sermon on the Mount, otherwise the whole treatise does not lead to the first thing in His mind and in His heart – His Virginal Mother, conceived without sin, His Father's perfect Daughter and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Why did Our Lord go up to Galilee to preach the Sermon on the Mount? Because it was the proper setting for the things He had to say. While preaching the Sermon on the Mount, He was looking on the fields and brooks and hills and roads that were most familiar to His Mother's eyes.

We must be able to greet Mary as Gabriel greeted her: "Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with thee." We must be able to greet her as Elizabeth greeted her: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (Luke 1:42.) And we must unite these extremes of greeting in the common phrase uttered by both Gabriel and Elizabeth, "Blessed art thou among women." That is what you do when you say your Hail Mary. And in Gabriel's, Elizabeth's and in Mary's name, I thank you very much for the many times you do that!

I am minded tonight to speak of another great person, and he is Saint Joseph. I am coming to believe more and more every day that if you do not have Saint Joseph you will not keep your true value of Our Lady, or your true value of Our Lord. If you do not have Saint Joseph, Jesus is going to be coldly "Christ," and then, even more coldly, "Christianity," and then some large frigid movement for world betterment. If you do not have Saint Joseph, the little, pure Virgin is going to be too august.

But when you have Saint Joseph looking at his beautiful bride and saying, "This is my wife," and Saint Joseph looking at Jesus and saying, "This is my Child," the girl is safe to be the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and Jesus is safe to be the Son of the Eternal Father. Saint Joseph is the guardian of the Holy Family. He is the guardian of Jesus and Mary – and he is the guardian of Jesus and Mary in our thoughts. If you do not go to Joseph, you will never, never, never find Jesus and Mary.

When the Angel Gabriel came to Our Lady, he did not call her "Mary." He said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." But, to Joseph, the angel said, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (Matt. 1:20,21.) What an assignment!

Just as soon as the Child Jesus was born, Saint Joseph fled with Him and His Mother into Egypt. We are Egypt. We are the Gentiles. Saint Joseph took to us – and we take to Saint Joseph! Imagine this singular, beautiful man, who perfectly satisfies God the Father to be His image paternally and who perfectly satisfies God the Holy Ghost to be His image spousally! Imagine in one man that being so! Imagine the dignity of that beautiful boy!

We are often given a picture of Saint Joseph as one who, because Our Lady and her Child needed a husband and father, was given to them, and who had no other dignity beyond what a servant might enjoy. The secondary reasons for his membership in the Holy Family are alone emphasized: to protect Our Lady from the stones of the Jews, or to provide food for the Child. You never could tell what might happen! Then, when the Child was lost in the Temple for three days, and Our Lady said, referring to Saint Joseph, "Thy father and I have sought Thee, sorrowing," we are made to feel: "Why does Our Lady speak this way? She should not have said, 'Thy father!'" (Luke 2:48.)

If Our Lady made a mistake in saying "Thy father," why, I ask you, did God inspire that it should be put down that way? If Saint Joseph was not the true husband of Our Lady, why do we call him "Spouse of Our Lady"? We say in the Divine Praises, "Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse." Well, you say, it is chaste spouse. What is the matter with being a chaste spouse?

We can move in without any false notion and yet be beautifully strong in calling Saint Joseph the father to the Child and the spouse to Our Lady, in the right way. We know that Jesus was born virginally. And we know that Our Lady was Mary, ever Virgin. We know that Jesus is the Son of God the Father and the Child of Mary, the Virgin. We know that Mary is the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, by Whose power she conceived Jesus.

We know also, therefore, that Saint Joseph was doing father-work for one Person of the Blessed Trinity, and husband-work for another. For the Paternity of God, he was taking care of a Child; for the Love of God, he was taking care of a Bride.

If God the Father would dare to let His Only Begotten Son come into the world, with our eyes and hands and heart, and not have Him incarnately taken care of, He would leave Him unguarded in the greatest need a child has. And if God the Holy Ghost is going to espouse the Blessed Virgin Mary, and then leave her unprotected and uncared for – as a husband will protect a wife – He has left her unguarded and uncared for in the greatest need a girl has.

God did not do that. He gave them Saint Joseph. And in that giving, Saint Joseph got everything in the world. Jesus came for love of Mary, that I know; but both Jesus and Mary were given to Saint Joseph!

My dear children, what you have to do is this: You have to leave your ethics class, and moral theology class, and sociology class, and psychology class, and marriage-adjustment class, and go back and study the little Holy Family, innocently and simply, as children. If you do not do that, you will never get the mystery of eternal life.

Pray to Saint Joseph, the guardian of the Holy Family. Pope Pius IX, who proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, also proclaimed Saint Joseph the patron of the Universal Church. And by the way, I have, once, heard a Jew speak of Our Lady, regretfully. I have heard Protestants speak of Our Lady, belittlingly, for they do not love her. But I have never heard a Jew or a Protestant even mention Saint Joseph!

It will never be defined that Saint Joseph was immaculately conceived, for he was not. He was conceived and born in original sin. He is a little son – our beautiful little fallen-race boy – who was great and beautiful enough to be the father of Jesus when He needed a father's care, and the spouse of Our Lady when she needed the protection of a husband. He gave this protection with marvelous tenderness and purity. He is pictured, as you know, with a lily in his hand. We can move over and stand with Saint Joseph, we who were born in original sin, in a way we could not with our august Lord and our august Lady.

There are only two relics of Saint Joseph which have been left to us. The marriage ring he gave to the Blessed Virgin is at Perugia, in Italy. His cincture is in Joinville, in France.

Saint Joseph died before Our Lord did. I am prepared to believe, and so may you, though the Church has not yet infallibly so defined, that Saint Joseph's body rose with Christ and that he is in Heaven body and soul, crowned with glory and honor – because, next to Our Lord and Our Lady, he is the highest of all the saints.

How do we know, in loving Christian faith, that Saint Joseph's body is in Heaven? Well, because he and Jesus and Mary make up the Holy Family. Just imagine the Holy Family in Heaven, with one body missing! When we pray for a happy death, we pray to Jesus, Mary and Joseph to be with us in our last agony. Just imagine you and

I having bodies in our last agony, and Mary and Jesus having bodies and being able to be with us, and Saint Joseph alone left in the order of sheer soul!

Saint Bernardine of Siena and Saint Francis de Sales both proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of the body of Saint Joseph from the dead, and his ascension into Heaven along with Our Lord, Jesus Christ. No Holy Father ever scolded them for so speaking, and our Holy Mother the Church canonized them, despite this utterance.

Saint Joseph is the patron of the Universal Church, as I have said. May I now say, in all simplicity, that the visible Church must have a visible head on earth, and a visible patron in Heaven!

Saint Joseph was of royal blood. Now, you know that with the Jews, paternity was the way honor was derived. So much was this so, that when a man died, his brother could marry his widow, in order to raise up children to the man. All honor and glory, even nationality in the strongest sense, traveled in the father; not in the mother.

This is a strong thing: If Joseph had not been the husband of Mary, Jesus would not have been a king! The blood of David the King, traveled into Jesus through Mary, but the title to royalty traveled to Jesus through Joseph! If you want to get straight the title, King of the Jews, you had better get it the way Saint Matthew gives it:

Matt. 1:6. And Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon...

16. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

That genealogy is not by accident. That genealogy is to let you know Who is the King of the Jews.

Who is of the blood of David? Jesus! From His little Virginal Mother. But Who is the King of the Jews? Jesus! The Son of a father who has royal inheritance; Jesus, the Son of Joseph.

On the hills of Bethlehem, the angels spoke to the shepherds and told them to run down and see Mary's Child. Over in the East, the star led the three Kings to see Him Who was born King of the Jews; that is, Joseph's royal little Son. The Kings came to see what Jesus took from Joseph. The shepherds came to see what Jesus took from Mary – His flesh and blood!

We, my dear children, are supposed to be royal, because we come of royal blood. We are incorporated into the blood of David, the King. We are incorporated, through the Blessed Eucharist, into the Blood of Christ, the King, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

Jesus made it very plain, when He went before Pilate, Who He was, and what He wanted to be called. Pontius Pilate was as sensitive on the subject of kingship as he possibly could be.

"Art Thou a King?" asked Pilate of Jesus. (John 18:37.)

Now, watch the triumph of Our dear Lord! If you want triumph, this is it. Jesus of Nazareth is going to die, and He is going to send His Vicar over to Rome, to establish a dynasty that will never die – that will make Caesar's dynasty look like ten cents! Pontifex Maximus! Supreme Pontiff!

Watch our great and beautiful King! We are His subjects. Tonight, here in Saint Benedict Center, we have His little throne room, and in it the Infant Jesus of Prague, with His royal crown on. Imagine this for triumph, as Jesus answers Pilate! We were in His mind, as He speaks!

"Art Thou a King" asked Pilate.

"Yes. For this I came into the world Nineteen hundred and eighteen years from now, in Saint Benedict Center, where a light shines before My Queen and Mother, I will have a throne room all to Myself – hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years from now! Jewels will be on My crown, and girls and boys will come and kiss the robes of just anything that looks like Me!

"My Body and Blood will be their delight, and My Sacrifice will be for them their adoration in the Mass. They will call My Mother the Queen of the Angels"

Do not, my dear children, I beg you, miss the triumph of Jesus in the world! This is the kind of triumph to have when all the Caesars have long been dead and forgotten.

So, "Art Thou a King?" asked Pilate.

"Yes," answered Jesus. "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice." (John 18:37.)

Now, a man with a crown is a king, albeit the crown is of thorns! Jesus preferred a crown of thorns, rather than no crown at all. "And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon His head." (John 19:2.)

"Behold your King!" Pilate said to the Jews.

So much did Jesus make a regal impression on Pilate, that when He was on the Cross the one tribute the cowardly Pilate made to Him was the title which he wrote and put upon the Cross: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. When the Jews read this title, they cried out to Pilate: "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'"

But Pilate answered: "What I have written, I have written." (John 19:21,22.)

So Jesus had a crown of thorns. And His throne was the Cross. And His royal robes were His own Blood. And He had a sceptre of nails in His hands.

If you like democracy in your local political life, all right. But in your religious life you have to be royal and regal. Every day when you go to Holy Communion you are charged with the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who is the King of the world in all His majesty and power.

If you do not go over to the royalties that go with belief – unless there is a majesty in your prayers, a beautiful royal behavior in everything you do – you will never be a true Catholic. Unless your thoughts and your actions, your ability to suffer, your fidelity to your word, your lovely manners in solitude, when you are alone with your thoughts; – unless you are constantly fastidious about the world, keeping out of your love and affections things which cannot be brought before the face of Christ the King – you will never be qualified to dwell with Him and His Queen forever. And you must stop saying in the Our Father, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

You ask me, "Is there a fastidiousness in God? Do you mean to say, Father, that when you want to be royal you have to have all the delicacies and graces that go with a royal person – with a person in a kingdom?"

My answer is, Yes!

"God is fastidious in these things?"

Yes. Very, very fastidious!

I was showing the boys the other day, in Holy Scripture, how fastidious God was on the subject of the priesthood – and would be still, if the priest were not receiving His own Body and Blood. Today, the beautiful, exquisite, flawless Body of Jesus is consumed by the one who offers it, and so what is in the priest is beautiful. Somehow Jesus can transform a poor priest. It is only because something more exquisite than he, is at the altar, mystically and in communion and in union, that the priest is allowed to go on and please the fastidiousness of God on the altar.

Let me read to you what rules were required for the priest in the Old Testament. Now, remember, these are God's own words:

Lev. 21:16. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

17. Say to Aaron: Whosoever of thy seed throughout their families, hath a blemish, he shall not offer bread to his God.

18. Neither shall he approach to minister to him: If he be blind, if he be lame, if he have a little, or a great, or a crooked nose,

19. If his foot, or if his hand be broken,

20. If he be crookbacked, or blear eyed, or have a pearl in his eye, or a continual scab, or a dry scurf in his body, or a rupture:

21. Whosoever of the seed of Aaron the priest hath a blemish, he shall not approach to offer sacrifices to the Lord, nor bread to his God.

22. He shall eat nevertheless of the loaves, that are offered in the sanctuary.

23. Yet so that he enter not within the veil, nor approach to the altar, because he hath a blemish, and he must not defile my sanctuary. I am the Lord who sanctify them.

That is terrific, is it not? The priest must be beautiful. We are a royal priesthood. We must be thronal in our manners and in our ways. We must be a delight to be with. I do not mean, by that, a hail-fellow-well-met, but a royal fellow, deeply loved, true to his word, beautiful and noble, faithful in his thoughts and loves and clarities and courages,— a little halo and crown of glory shining on his head, everywhere he goes! This is true Christianity, or else it means nothing!

We were speaking in class today of the priesthood of Saint John, the Evangelist. The Beloved Disciple, Saint John, was the priest given to Mary by Jesus, for the rest of her stay on earth after He had departed into Heaven. Saint John was not only Our Lady's son – he was also her priest. She received from his hands, in the Mass, the Flesh and Blood which her own body had spun for God, in the Incarnation!

It must have been quite a thing to see – that daily Mass! It must have been quite an altar rail! The hand of the Beloved Disciple must have trembled in the holding of the Host which he put into the mouth of the tabernacle of tabernacles, the Immaculate Mother of God!

That must have been a moment! Do you wonder that God wanted it prolonged for a great many years? Have you not satisfactorily explained to yourself why she lived until the age of seventy-two, before she died, of love? Mary was as close to Jesus, by reason of John's giving Him to her, as He was close in her womb when she was forging Him out of her flesh and blood.

A beautiful point was raised in class this morning. It was this: "Does one receive the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Holy Communion?"

Now, as you know, the priest in the Mass does not put the Immaculate Heart of Mary under the species of bread and wine. If he said, "This is Mary's heart," at Consecration time, that would be wrong. The priest puts Jesus' heart there.

Does Mary's heart go where Jesus' heart has been put? Understand now, that due to transubstantiation, the Body and the Blood of Jesus are present on our altars. Knowing that, does Mary's heart go where Jesus' heart goes?

Let me answer this question slowly. I think the Sacred Heart wanted to let us know, through His apparitions to Saint Margaret Mary, that which we should have been seeing right along, and that is, that His great gift to us is of His heart. And I think that the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is to let us know that Our lady's great gift to us is of her heart.

We know that Mary has a glorified body, and that that glorified body can go through glass or wood or stone. It can travel with the speed of light. It can penetrate without destroying that through which it passes. Would it not be odd and strange, having now been given the power to indwell in any place, if she did not want her heart to indwell in the heart of Jesus?

Would it not be odd, if the Sacred Heart of Jesus is saying to us: "Son, give Me thy heart," if He does not make the same request of the Blessed Virgin Mary? And would it not be most odd if Our Lady did not want to give her heart to Jesus, or wanted to, and was unable to do so?

If, all through the years, love everywhere and always has been saying, "I give you my heart. Let us be one heart," would it not be odd that the hearts of Jesus and Mary were the two hearts that could not quite do that?

Would it not be odd if you could say to another, "Yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus," and you could go to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and find one another, but you could not find Mary there?

Our Lord's great condemnation of people who would not follow Him was always that they had hardness of heart, toughness and meanness of heart, hearts that resisted. Do you think He constantly would be saying that, if He had not found a heart so beautiful and clear and light, so full of penetration and assimilation, as the heart of Mary? Where is the light one, the bright one, the clear one, that makes Jesus so critical about other hearts?

I could go on, adding and adding, and adding!

I told you before, here in the Center, that the one thing in Jesus and Mary that made them most united, when Jesus was a Baby in Mary's womb, was their hearts – because Mary's heartbeat was the bloodflow into the veins of Jesus.

The blood which coursed through Jesus came back into Mary's heart, when He was a Baby in her womb. Was

there no Divinity flooding back with it?

When Jesus hung bleeding on the Cross, the drops of His Precious Blood which fell upon the ground remained Divine, and the angels had to guard them. It would be strange, would it not, if the blood which flowed back into Mary's heart from the body of her Divine Baby, while He was in her womb, were less Divine than His blood on the ground beneath His Cross?

Do I speak a mystery? I do. Do I dare not go too far? I do dare not. But I say, and must say, that once this blood has gone into Jesus' veins, it is Jesus' Precious Blood, even though it returns again to the heart of His Mother.

My dearest children, I tell you this without fear of heresy: Jesus and Mary are one heart! If you find Jesus' heart, you will find Mary's heart. And if you find Mary's heart, you will find Jesus' heart.

You go to the Eucharist to find Jesus' heart, and there you will find Mary's heart, too. If you go to Mary and put your head in her lap, the heart she will give you is the heart of Jesus. And if you receive Jesus' heart into your being, He will give you Mary's heart.

When Jesus' head was crowned with thorns, the soul of Jesus was still in His body, and He could feel the crowning. When His hands were pierced with nails, He felt that pain. When His back was beaten with lashes, He felt that cruel scourging. But when the centurion pierced His heart, Jesus was dead. There was no soul of Jesus there to enable Him to feel that piercing.

But Jesus and Mary are one heart. And when that sword pierced the heart of Jesus, the only heart that could feel it was the heart of Mary. Only the alive heart felt – and the lance pierced it. Mary stood by the side of Jesus, and the lance went through her heart. "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce," Simeon had said to Mary. (Luke 2:35.) He was really saying, "His soul will be gone when the sword goes through your hearts!"

Out of the heart of Jesus, when it was pierced on the Cross, blood and water flowed – that out of the hearts of many, thoughts might be revealed. (Luke 2:35.) What do you think – by way of salvation – of that blood and water coming from the heart of Jesus? Do you like it? That is the test. What do you think of that blood, and what do you think of that water? The blood signifies the Eucharist, and the water, Baptism!

You may say to me, "I give you one final problem. I can understand how the hearts of Jesus and Mary can be one heart when their bodies are glorified, but how about before their bodies were glorified? Does not Jesus' body have to be in one place, and Mary's in another? Does not Jesus' heart have to be here, and Mary's have to be there?"

There were times, even before Jesus died and rose from the dead and was glorified, when His enemies came to seize Jesus, – and He just vanished! They did not know where He was. He once made a journey of six miles in a boat – in one minute! He walked on water. He was transfigured in the sky. Even many of the saints are famous for bilocation. I do not know how it is done. But, it is strange that two hearts that wanted to be one could be kept from being one by the law of physical resistance, when One of them was God!

Chapter 7 — The Waters of Salvation

The Catholic Faith in the United States of America is always academically ascribed to the Baltimore Catechism.

The Baltimore Catechism was confected at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, by a group of American Bishops under the control and influence of James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. James Cardinal Gibbons was a Catholic prelate who did not hesitate to get up before a Methodist congregation, in a Methodist Church, and give a supposedly Catholic sermon while reading from a Protestant Bible!

Cardinal Gibbons was not a great theologian. He was a controller of theological thought. I hesitate to call him an

opportunist, because there may be times when a priest might brilliantly take advantage of a situation, for Our Lord's sake. But when a Catholic prelate becomes all opportunist, and is interested in teaching what doctrines of the Church would be most to the liking of his hearers or what general summary of the Church's history – as in the Baltimore Cardinal's book, *The Faith of Our Fathers* – will be least offensive to his new-found neighbors, then I think opportunism, is serious defect.

Cardinal Gibbons' main ambition was to show that Catholicism was good Americanism. It is for that reason he went out of his way to take such metaphorical expressions in theology as "Baptism of Desire" and "Baptism of Blood" and put them side by side with Baptism of Water. As a consequence, every little Catholic child in a Catholic school, from the time of Cardinal Gibbons on, has been required to say, in answer to the question, "How many kinds of Baptism are there?": "There are three kinds of Baptism: Baptism of Water, Baptism of Desire, and Baptism of Blood."

That is heresy! There is only one Baptism, just as there is only one Lord and one Faith. (Eph. 4:5.) The Council of Vienne explicitly defines that this one Baptism, which is administered by water, is the one which must be faithfully confessed by all.

The Council of Trent, in its second Canon on the subject of Baptism, declares, with the majestic authority of the Church:

If anyone shall say that true and natural water is not of necessity in Baptism, and therefore shall turn those words of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, "unless one be born again of water and the Holy Spirit" (John 3:5), into some metaphor, let him be anathema.

Therefore, I repeat, metaphorical water is forbidden under pain of heresy. And what is "Baptism of Desire," as the Liberals teach it, but metaphorical water dishonestly substituting itself for the innocent requirement of Christ?

The same heretical theology that turned Baptism of Water into any dry desire one might have in the general direction of Heaven, has also turned one Lord into one's personal sincerity, and one Faith into the light of invincible ignorance!

And, by the way, speaking of the Baltimore Catechism, even its most ardent supporters are forced to admit that shortly after the publication of the Baltimore Catechism, various editions with word meanings, explanatory notes, and even with different arrangements, came forth – so that, by testimony of all Catholic theologians in America, there is a considerable diversity in the books that go by the name of the Baltimore Catechism. Yet the Baltimore Catechism is always referred to in a singular apostrophe, as though it had the dignity of the Gospel itself.

A catechism is as good as the man who wrote it. If the Baltimore Catechism is so good, why do they revise it and revise it and revise it?

The crucial point, then, at which heresy entered the Catholic Church in the United States and backwashed to the dying Faith of Europe and the rest of the world, was through the teaching of the doctrine known as "Baptism of Desire," in the Baltimore Catechism.

As I have explained to you many times, neither "Baptism of Desire" nor "Baptism of Blood" should truly be called Baptism. Neither is a sacrament of the Church. Neither was instituted by Jesus Christ. No one can receive any of the other sacraments by reason of having received these so-called "Baptisms." Baptism of Water is the initial requirement for the reception of all the other sacraments.

Did Jesus really mean water to be essential for the Baptism He instituted? He did. When He started His public life Jesus came down and stood in water, in the River Jordan, where John was baptizing. He wanted, thereby, to let us know what Baptism was to mean in the Catholic Church forevermore. Baptizing forever means pouring water on you, or sprinkling you with water, or dipping you in water.

As John the Baptist was baptizing Jesus, John said to Him, "I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me?" Then Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice." (Matt. 3:14,15.)

Unfulfilled justice is the state of justification. Fulfilled justice is the state of salvation. What Jesus is saying to us, at His own baptism by John in the River Jordan, is that justification is now being turned into salvation with the aid of water.

Jesus goes so far as to praise and belittle John the Baptist in terms of this very rite of Baptism. He says of John the Baptist, "Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the

Baptist: yet he that is the lesser in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11.) John the Baptist's greatness came not from being born in the state of justification. It came from being admitted into the Kingdom of Christ in salvation.

If Jesus was baptized with water to fulfill all justice, how shall we have justice fulfilled in us without Baptism of Water?

There are only three birthdays commemorated by the Church in the liturgical year. All other saints in Heaven are commemorated on the days of their death. The three birthdays the Catholic Church celebrates are those of Jesus, Mary and John the Baptist. The crown of these three birthdays, of course, is the birth of Christ, the born One, Who was born for the rebirth of the world.

The eighth of September is the most beautiful human birthday in the whole year. It is the birthday of Mary, the Mother of God. June twenty-fourth is the birthday of the most beautiful sheerly human boy that could be. It is the birthday of Saint John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother's womb, when Mary, with Jesus in her womb, visited Elizabeth.

Mary gave birth to Jesus. John the Baptist baptized Him. Baptism is a virginal birth, and Jesus' birth was for a virginal Baptism. Birth and Baptism go together in Christian regeneration, and in Christian salvation. Natural birth is belittled in terms of baptismal birth. Jesus calls Baptism, "being born again of water and the Holy Ghost."

If in admiration of the power of water in Baptism, you are going to ask me, "How do you expect water to do so much?, I cannot answer you. I would never ask water to do so much. I would never think of that. But Jesus has asked water to do so much! As a matter of fact, He has asked water to do so much that when He gives the components of our foundational Sacrament – one of earth and one of Heaven – even though you might think it irreverent, Jesus mentions the water first and the Holy Ghost second! "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) That is how important water is!

Without Baptism of Water, you never can receive any of the other sacraments. All the Apostles had to be baptized. They were not in the state of mortal sin. But, they had to be baptized. From this need we can see the difference between justification and salvation.

I have told you this many times: Were I not to have been baptized by water, my ordination to the priesthood would be invalid. Suppose I never knew I had not been baptized? Well, I would never know I was not a priest. That is how important Baptism of Water is.

Can you not have Holy Orders of Desire? No! Are the Sacraments being tampered with in the United States today? Yes! Is the Faith practically gone? Yes!

When the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost and flooded the first Christians with light, probably many made perfect acts of love. Why did Saint Peter add Baptism of Water? Why did he say, "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you!" (Acts 2:38.) Why did he undertake to baptize three thousand people in one day?

Why, as we learn in the Acts of the Apostles, was Saint Paul struck down by a blinding light and told to go over to Damascus and have water poured on his head? Why was Cornelius at Caesarea told to send for Saint Peter, and why was Saint Philip transported to Gaza to baptize the Ethiopian eunuch? Why were these baptizings necessary? Why all this "waste" of water and energy?

Why did Saint Martin of Tours raise a catechumen from the dead, and baptize him? Why did the North American martyrs come over here, if unbaptized Indians could make perfect acts of love? The Indians poured scalding hot water on one of the North American martyrs, Saint John de Brebeuf, by way of ridiculing the Baptism of Water he was preaching. Why did the Church allow this torture to be provoked, if the waters of Baptism are non-essential to Indian salvation?

Q. What. does "Baptism of Desire" mean?

A. It means the belief in the necessity of Baptism of Water for salvation, and a full intent to receive it.

Q. Can "Baptism of Desire" save you?

A. Never.

Q. Could "Baptism of Desire" save you if you really believed it could?

A. It could not.

Q. Could it possibly suffice for you to pass into a state of justification?

A. It could.

Q. If you got into the state of justification with the aid of "Baptism of Desire," and then failed to receive Baptism of Water, could you be saved?

A. Never.

Actually, no one who has not been baptized can stay in the state of Christian justification very long, because he does not have the sacramental helps to keep justification alive. So, if he were in the state of justification, it would be only for a day or two, maybe three. If we who are Catholics have a hard enough job to keep in the state of sanctifying grace, with all the prayers and sacramental helps we have, good God! how is anyone without them going to stay in the state of a perfect act of love of God? It is a blasphemy to say one could!

What induces this perfect act of love which is required to make "Baptism of Desire" effective for justification? And is it a perfect act of love of God? A perfect act of love of what God? Jesus Christ? "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me," Jesus said. (John 14:6.)

These are the questions we must ask ourselves when offered a choice between the Sacrament of salvation and our own sanctimoniousness. No one can make a perfect act of love of God without Jesus and His Blessed Mother and His divine special graces. We, who have been baptized and have received Holy Communion, are very much in doubt as to whether we can make a perfect act of love of God! We hope for it, and pray for it! This man the Catholic Liberals talk about seems to be outfitted to make a perfect act of love of God without any of the sacraments! Not only are the Liberals getting rid of Baptism; they are getting rid of the whole sacramental order.

The Council of Trent, when treating of the Sacraments, anathematizes in most solemn canons those who say: (1) that the Sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation; (2) that one can even get into a state of justification without at least a resolve to receive them; (3) that they are all of equal dignity and necessity; (4) that their purpose is mere support of Faith.

You do not have Faith by saying you have Faith! You do not have love by saying you have love! You cannot love God if you do not love Jesus. And you cannot love Jesus if you do not know Him through His great gifts, His Sacraments. If you do not know Him, I defy you to make a perfect act of love. You are calling it perfect love, and at the same time you are refusing that which poured out of the heart of Jesus: Blood and water. You are refusing the Blood of the Eucharist and the water of Baptism. To call that love is a blasphemy!

You have to know substantially everything about the Faith, to make a perfect act of love. Imagine being able to make a perfect act of love without knowing the Blessed Eucharist, or the Blessed Mother, or the forgiveness of sins!

This is the way the situation is now discussed in American seminaries:

"A man makes a perfect act of love. He is in the state of justification."

"How soon does he have to be baptized?"

"Within a reasonable period."

"What is a reasonable period?"

"Whatever the priest appoints."

"What would be a reasonable period to appoint?"

"Well, the candidate would have to be well instructed. In some countries, like Africa, for instance, a catechumen is instructed for three or four years. Poor, simple, untutored people have to be taught."

"Suppose one of these catechumens dies before being baptised?"...

That is where the seminary professor runs out of answers, and has to make up confused ones, with the assistance of the Baltimore Catechism, The Catholic Encyclopedia, and a few articles by some hitherto brilliant unknowns in the American Ecclesiastical Review.

The paragraph in The Catholic Encyclopedia on the allowability of "Baptism of Desire" is one of the most sneaky pieces of surreptitious theology ever placed in print. It was written by Rev. William H. W. Fanning, S.J., professor of Church History at Saint Louis University, who pretends to tell you in the entire article on Baptism, that Baptism

of Water is necessary for salvation, but gives you the Liberal escape you were looking for, by reason of his interpretation of a phrase in a sermon delivered by Saint Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, on the death of a catechumen, the Emperor Valentinian II.

Saint Ambrose, in his sermon, declared of Valentinian: "Did he not obtain the grace which he desired? Did he not obtain what he asked for? Certainly, he obtained it, because he asked for it."

Any simple and loving Catholic would understand Saint Ambrose to have meant by this comfort, that he hoped Valentinian had been baptized by somebody, even though he (Saint Ambrose) did not know who it was, and even though there was no official record of it. Because if the grace Valentinian desired was something other than Baptism of Water, why call him a catechumen?

Is a catechumen one who desires other graces than the grace of Baptism of Water? And did one of his instructors in the Faith declare to Valentinian that in case he died before being baptized with water, he was still sure to be saved? And did he tell Valentinian that in case he did die before being baptized, Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, would get up in the pulpit and assure his bereaved friends that Baptism of Water, in the case of Valentinian II, had suddenly become unnecessary?

Personally, I think the three sentences of Saint Ambrose quoted by Father Fanning are unfortunate, if only for the fact that they can be turned to such a purpose. But if Father Fanning were sincere in wanting to know what chances for salvation, according to Saint Ambrose, a catechumen has who has not yet received Baptism of Water, and dies before he does receive it, Father Fanning would have quoted this clear-cut teaching on the subject from the writings of Saint Ambrose in his treatise, *De Mysteriis* (Ch. IV, no. 20):

...Nor again is there any mystery of regeneration without water, for except a man be born anew of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. (John 3:5.) But even a catechumen believes in the cross of the Lord Jesus, wherewith he also is signed; but unless he is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot receive the remission of sins nor imbibe the gift of spiritual grace.

Notice that Saint Ambrose did not add, concerning this catechumen, "unless he dies in the meantime." This is what he should have added if what Father Fanning says about Saint Ambrose is true.

Father Migne, one of the greatest authorities on patrology in the Catholic Church, positively denies that Saint Ambrose ever held the opinion attributed to him concerning the salvation without Baptism of Water of the Emperor Valentinian. (*Patrologia Latina*, Vol. XVI, p. 412, n. 19.)

If anyone should wish to add, concerning the catechumen who dies before receiving Baptism, that though he did not receive Baptism of Water, he did receive "Baptism of Desire," I doubt if such a one would dare to call this "Baptism of Desire" a sacrament. And Saint Ambrose, knowing that "Baptism of Desire" is not a sacrament, was holy and clear enough to say:

...For no one ascends into the Kingdom of Heaven except by the Sacrament of Baptism. (*De Abraham*, Bk. 11, Ch. XI, no. 79.)

Saint Ambrose also declares:

One is the baptism which the Church administers, the baptism of water and the Holy Ghost, with which catechumens need to be baptized. (*Exposition on Psalm 118*, s. 3, p. 18.)

I myself would say, my dear children, that a catechumen who dies before Baptism, is punished. The notion now is that he is rewarded! He is a great hero. What a holy man! That is a queer morbidity, is it not?

But let us return again to this "perfect act of love" which is supposed to accompany "Baptism of Desire" so as to make it be the substitute for Baptism of Water. How a man knows he has made a perfect act of love of God, I do not know! The Liberals always seem to know that he has. Without the Sacraments, we cannot determine for certain what is the value of our private acts. It is by way of discouraging this sanctificational self-sufficiency, that the inspired writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes was led to say, "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred." (Eccl. 9:1.)

By the way, the theologians who are so sure of how easy it is for those outside the Faith to make a perfect act of love of God when they (the theologians) are talking about salvation, are very difficult persons for you or me to meet in the confessional box when they are talking about absolution from sins. If you said to them, "I made a perfect act of love of God," they would say to you, "How do you know? That is presumption! No man knows

whether he is worthy of love or hate!" They only allow the perfect act of love of God when they want to excuse themselves for not evangelizing Protestants and infidels.

With regard to a perfect act of love of God, the same principle applies in Confession, as in Baptism. If you commit a mortal sin and make a perfect act of love of God, the sin is forgiven. But you must mention this sin in your next Confession. If you do not, you return to the state of mortal sin. Everyone admits that.

Suppose I went to Confession and said, "Bless me, Father, for have sinned. But I am not going to tell you my sins. I committed many mortal sins, but I made perfect acts of love."

"You had better tell me your sins!" the priest would say.

"Does not a perfect act of love forgive sins?"

"It does for an ignorant native, but not for you!"

That does not sound right, now does it?

In case any theologians, more anxious to be correct than true, – to be cautious rather than courageous, – should, at this point, offer me the difficulty: If a man in the state of mortal sin can get out of it by a perfect act of love of God, provided he intends to receive the Sacrament of Penance, why cannot a man in the state of original sin get out of it if he intends to receive the Sacrament of Baptism? My answer is, that I am not defending, and never intended to defend confession of one's sins as necessary by a necessity of means, for salvation. It is necessary by the necessity of precept. Baptism is necessary by the necessity of means and precept, together.

All these cautious theologians, all these truth skippers, know this as well as I do. But they pretend not to have learned it, when they are trying to teach me the Liberal value of "Baptism of Desire"; when they are trying to teach me the Sacrament of Baptism not as Christ instituted it, but as they have manufactured innovations to go with what Christ instituted.

Perhaps, before I go on, I should explain what necessity of means and necessity of precept are, in simple terms. That I will do.

If you do not receive Baptism of Water, you cannot be saved, whether you were guilty or not guilty for not having received it. If it was not your fault that you did not receive it, then you just do not go to Heaven. You are lacking something required for Heaven. You did not add your own positive rejection of the requirement so as to give you a positive deficiency. Yours is a permanent lack of something required for eternal salvation.

The little baby who dies without Baptism, cannot go to Heaven. He has never committed a mortal sin. But he lacks the entrance requirement for Heaven. He will not be punished for having rejected Baptism. He will not be accused by God of having committed a mortal sin. He will go to the essential Hell (Limbo) which is the loss of the Beatific Vision. But he will not go to the Hell of fire where one is positively punished for what one has positively done.

With regard to the Sacrament of Penance, a man in the state of mortal sin is required to confess that mortal sin. If he should make a perfect act of love in the meantime, that mortal sin is forgiven, but the confessing of it is still required.

If a man should commit a mortal sin, and then elicit a perfect act of love of God, which included the intention to confess his sin, and then later went to Confession and refused to confess the sin he had been forgiven because of the act of perfect love, he would never get that sin back again. But he would get a new sin for failing to confess the old one, and that would be a new mortal sin. And that mortal sin would send him to Hell, if he died in that state.

If a man in the state of mortal sin made a perfect act of love of God, and intended to confess his mortal sin, but died before the priest reached him, he would have died before he received a sacrament which was necessary by precept, but not a sacrament which was necessary by the necessity of both precept and means. Penance is not of its essence a salvational sacrament. It is a sacrament of justification, or rather, of re-justification for those who are baptized. Baptism is the sacrament of justification and salvation in one sheer act where both these needs exist, and of salvation alone, if justification has preceded it.

And now let me go back to what is called necessity of means in a sacramental requirement. Necessity of means means, if you have not got the requirement, it is just too bad for you, whether you are to blame or whether you

are not to blame. If you are not to blame, it is just too bad. And if you are to blame, so much the worse!

Necessity of precept means, that if you have not fulfilled a requirement, and you are not to blame for not fulfilling it, then it is all right, provided you have taken care of it in another way, and provided there is another way to take care of it.

If you have fulfilled a Divine precept in another way, you are still required to fulfill it literally in the way Christ prescribed, when you can. In case you cannot, there is no need to worry.

Baptism is necessary for salvation by a necessity of means. This necessity is imposed on all men, including infants.

Baptism is necessary for salvation by a necessity of both means and precept for adults, who are not yet baptized.

Unbaptized infants who die go to Limbo. Notice, they do not go to Hell. Also notice, they do not go to Heaven.

Unbaptized adults who die go to Hell. Notice they do not go either to Limbo or to Heaven.

And, just as the necessity of Baptism for salvation is insisted on by the Church, so is the necessity of explicit Faith on the part of any adult who is going to be baptized. Under Pope Clement XI in 1703, when the missionary movement to "ignorant natives" was at its height, all missionaries were explicitly forbidden by the Holy Office to baptize even a barbarian, even if he was dying, unless they elicited from him an explicit act of belief in Jesus Christ. Nor was it enough, declared the Holy Office, for this barbarian to know that God exists and is a remunerator. He must be told all the central mysteries of the Faith that derive from the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation. The Holy Office also declared that a knowledge of these mysteries was necessary for salvation by a necessity of means.

What I am giving you here, my dear children, is the common man's peek at discursive theology. Can you not now see why discursive theology, all by itself, will not make a saint? Can you not see why there are so many mediocre Doctors of Divinity who know only the technical values of the Faith?

We were not told by Our Lord to speak this kind of theology! We were told by Him to speak authoritatively, to say out what He had commanded us to say – be the conclusions what they may!

I have often told you what a scandal it is for the simple of heart to have to listen to nothing but professional theology preached to them, instead of authoritative theology. God's holy Word is seen not by reason of the clever reasons added to support it, but by reason of the authoritative voice, and gesture, and strength, and simplicity, and indignation, and tenderness, and certitude, of the one who preaches it. We might call this style of theology I plead for, "Pauline," in the noble sense. Saint Paul would hardly be called a Doctor of Sacred Theology by any savant today, but the Ephesians, and Colossians, and Philippians, and Romans, and Hebrews (to speak only of a few groups) knew he meant what he said because no man could possibly speak with such clarity and courage and authority unless God was speaking through him.

As I give you this grammar-school course in pretentious theological thinking, naturally I expect you, at times, to rebel and to say, "Where is the mercy of God in all this? Are we saved or damned according to theological technicalities?"

If you were to say to me, "Does it not seem odd that unbaptized children should never see the face of God?" I would have to say that it did seem odd, according to my standards. I do not know what scheme I would have made for unbaptized children, if I were God.

I only know what covenants God has made. I must seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice as He revealed it, and let Him add His mercies, by Himself. I am the servant of God, not His counsellor! "Who hath been His counsellor?" Isaias inquires in Holy Scripture, in scorn and indignation! (Isa. 40:13.)

It might even be that it were better for a particular child to die before Baptism, and go to Limbo. Perhaps that child, if baptized, might have grown up and committed heinous mortal sins, and be hurled into positive Hell. I do not know!

God knows, and God is more merciful than I am, and His mercies are not in the least clouded, simply because I seem not to be thinking of them when I am trying to fulfill His justices as He has revealed it.

As between an unbaptized baby in Limbo, and a blasphemy against the Sacrament of Baptism, give me the

Limbo baby and let me keep the Sacrament of salvation!

Another point which I must make in distinction between the necessity of Baptism and the necessity of the Sacrament of Penance, for our salvation, is this: Baptism is wholly necessary, and the Sacrament of Penance is only provisionally necessary.

You never have to go to Confession unless you have committed a mortal sin. Were it to be that you never had committed a mortal sin in your whole life, you would never have needed to go to Confession in your whole life by virtue of any precept. It might be well for you to go to Confession, under this circumstance, by way of counsel, to confess your venial sins, and to help keep you from committing mortal sin, but there is no positive precept requiring anyone who has never committed a mortal sin to go to Confession at any time. With regard to the commandment of the Church by which we are required, under pain of mortal sin, to confess our sins at least once a year; we do not violate this commandment by failing to confess our sins if we have no mortal sins on our soul.

Theoretically, therefore, we could get into Heaven without ever going to Confession – if we never committed a mortal sin. There have been some saints who never committed a mortal sin in their whole lives. If they went to Confession, it was because they wanted to go, not because they were required to go by virtue of precept.

And so, with regard to the commandment to confess our sins once a year, and with regard to the general precept to confess our mortal sins, the proviso must always be added: in case you have committed a mortal sin.

With regard to Baptism, the outlook is completely different, We are not told we must be baptized in case we are in original sin. It is of the Faith that everyone of us was born in the state of original sin. We come into this world guilty enough, because of our birth, to need the waters of Baptism.

These waters of Baptism are so all-embracing in their necessity that we cannot even presume to go to Confession until this Baptism has been administered. And we are not allowed to tell in Confession any sin committed before we were baptized, because Baptism administered in the case of an adult washes away not only original sin – of which everyone is guilty – but also actual sins, in case there are any on the catechumen's soul.

It is a strange thing that I should have to be at such pains in a country where there are so many Catholic colleges, and so much theological instruction in our seminaries, to have to elaborate and painfully explain this distinction between the necessity of the waters of Baptism, and the necessity of the absolution of a priest in the Sacrament of Penance.

Let us suppose that a man has elicited an act of perfect love of God before he has received Baptism. I am very much surprised if such acts of love are either practically possible, or in any sense too likely, at least since the days of Pentecost. I very much suspect acts of love of even being possible, unless the man is fontbound for Baptism as he is making them.

But, let us suppose an act of perfect love has occurred in a man's soul. Can this man be said to be freed from original sin by this perfect act of love of God? He cannot, in the true and full sense. There has not been imprinted on his soul, by reason of this perfect act of love of God, the character which Baptism imprints, to seal him as redeemed, and outfit him for the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Therefore, I should be inclined to say that this man, by his perfect act of love of God, was freed from one of the effects of original sin, namely, the absence of sanctifying grace, but was not freed from the obligation to go on and secure a title to the Beatific Vision.

Even Adam, in the state of original justice, was not entitled to the Beatific Vision. Adam, in the state of sanctifying grace, without original sin, fully sanctified as far as guiltlessness could go, was still required to observe God's command not to eat of the fruit from a forbidden tree – before he could be saved!

It is not justice alone that saves us. It is justice, allied to the positive commands of God!

I will give you one more challenging answer to the muggy theological thinking of our day by our Liberal clergy, and then I promise you, my dear children, I shall go back to thinking about salvation in the ways of love, not just in the ways of logic.

Let us suppose a man receives Baptism for an evil purpose. Let us suppose he receives that Baptism sinfully. Let us suppose he receives that Baptism just to marry a dowager, just to make money, just to have his name

written in the Baptismal book under the aegis of Christian protection, as thousands of Jews did in Spain.

As long as that man intends to receive Baptism, he is freed from original sin!

Does he go into a state of justification? He does not. The intention for which he received Baptism puts him immediately in the state of positive mortal sin. But the fact that he intended to receive Baptism, rids him of original sin. Were he then to go to Confession, the only sin he would be required to confess would be the sin of sacrilegious reception of Baptism, not the sin of having simply received it.

With regard to his other sins, they would have been blotted out forever, without confessing them. He might need now to add the attrition required for the forgiveness of sins, but he would not need to add the confession. And even this malefactor – even this Jew – were he later by Confession, to get into the state of sanctifying grace, would now without further Baptism, be entitled to receive the Blessed Eucharist. No unbaptized person has that right – no matter how justified he is by acts of perfect love – apart from the waters of redemption.

It is an old saying of the Church, and a true one, given to us by our Holy Mother in guileless childlike fashion, that the law of praying is the law of believing. Or, as it is put in Latin, *Lex orandi est lex credendi*.

Where better could I learn how the law of praying is the law of believing than in the central structural prayers of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? To show you how salvation-minded our Holy Mother the Church is, for those who have passed the catechumen stage and have been admitted through the doors of Baptism into the sanctuary of her love in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, here is the way our Holy Mother tells her priest to pray at the Offertory of every Mass, when he is offering the host to the Eternal Father as the bread which is soon to be transubstantiated into the Body of Jesus:

Receive, O holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this spotless host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for mine own countless sins, offenses, and negligences, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians living and dead, that it may avail both for my own and their salvation unto life everlasting.

Did you notice here, my dear children, the intense salvational purpose of the Mass? Did you notice here how we pray to be included in its election? And did you not also clearly notice those who are excluded?

Here is how the priest, just before the Canon of the Mass, makes his prayer of oblation of the bread and wine, and of himself and of his washed hands:

Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation which we make to Thee in remembrance of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, of Blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the saints that it may avail to their honor and our salvation: and, that they may vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Do you see here who are those who still need to be saved? And do you also see those who are being congratulated for having been saved? And do you notice the Mother, the Precursor, and the key Apostles of Jesus, put in one little group as the pure fruits of the Saviour's life and death? Are we not asking those who have been saved to save us who are still waiting for it?

There is only one Name by which we are saved, and it is the Name of Jesus. It was the Name which the angel told Our Lady and her most chaste spouse, Saint Joseph, that they should give to Jesus, not when He was born, but when He was circumcised – in the "baptism" of the Old Testament.

Briefly, my dear children, let me tell you how to handle this whole difficulty of justification and salvation, as it is presented to us by the confused minds who are pretending in our day that their own doubts make for good scholarship, and by this route, for good theology.

Our Lord said, "Unless a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." This water means literally water, poured on you, sprinkled on you, or into which you are immersed. Our Lord can speak metaphorically, as must everyone who speaks at all, at times. But with regard to this water, He is not so speaking. Nothing in His utterance indicates this; nothing in the practice of the Church vouchsafes it; and nothing in the teachings of the Doctors or the definitions of the Popes, the behavior of the Apostles, or the manner of dying of the martyrs, will allow the water Christ refers to, to be other than the water of the kind He was immersed in the River Jordan, when His Father's voice was saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

(Matt. 3:17.)

When you hear a theologian saying, "I know that was what Christ said, but first we must understand what He means," you know you have a sceptic on your hands, who is blasphemously trying to improve on the utterances of Jesus. He is implicitly telling you that Jesus gave us vague notions as to what Baptism meant, and that he (the theologian) is now going to clarify this matter.

He will then say to you, "Well, how were the souls in the Old Testament saved, before Baptism was instituted?"

You must reply to him, "There were no souls saved in the Old Testament. They had to wait in Limbo for the coming of Christ."

He will then say, indignantly, "Well, how were they justified? Was it not without Baptism?"

And you will say, "Obviously, if Baptism had not yet been instituted!"

He will then say, "Well, cannot you be justified in the New Testament without Baptism?"

The answer to this is, "Suppose you can?"

He will then say, "If you die in the state of justification, without yet being baptized, are you not saved?"

You must answer him, "No, you are not. That is your reasoning in the matter. That is not Christ's statement."

And if he persists in saying, "Well, where does one go who dies in the state of justification which has been achieved without Baptism?" – insist that he does not go to Heaven.

And if he goes on to yell at you angrily, "Where are you going to send him – to Hell?", say: "No, I am not going to send him to Hell because I am not the judge of the living and the dead. I am going to say what Christ said, 'He cannot go into Heaven unless he is baptized by water.'"

It is important also to add, "I am making an act of Faith. You are not. I believe in Baptism because Christ revealed it, not because I have also figured it out by my own notion concerning the intrinsic requirements for justification." The reasons for a thing being so, are not the true motives of Faith. Also I believe that the reasons against a thing being so, are not the true defenses of Faith. There is only one true defense for the Catholic Faith, namely: That is not what Christ said.

There is no one about to die in the state of justification whom God cannot secure Baptism for, and indeed, Baptism of Water. The schemes concerning salvation, I leave to the sceptics. The clear truths of salvation, I am preaching to you.

If the Liberal theologians are going to end up by handing me a group of justified people who have not yet been baptized, who have to go to Heaven because they cannot go to Hell, I am going to hand them right back to the Liberal theologians to take care of!

If I seem to be cruel in this matter, I ask them what greater form of seeming cruelty could one offer than that of a Catholic mother's unbaptized child who died before the waters of Baptism reached his little head, and whose one reason for not now having the Beatific Vision is because he did not receive the waters of Baptism.

My own little brother was such a child, who died before he could be baptized. I have never believed that he has been saved; because I am trying to seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, so as to save my own as yet unsaved soul.

Here is a brief catechism line-up, in case you would like to brush up on what I have been saying:

Q. Can anyone now be saved without Baptism of Water?

A. No one can be saved without Baptism of Water.

Q. Are the souls of those who die in the state of justification saved, if they have not received Baptism of Water?

A. No. They are not saved.

Q. Where do these souls go if they die in the state of justification but have not received Baptism of Water?

A. I do not know.

Q. Do they go to Hell?

A. No.

Q. Do they go to Heaven?

A. No.

Q. Are there any such souls?

A. I do not know! Neither do you!

Q. What are we to say to those who believe there are such souls?

A. We must say to them that they are making reason prevail over Faith, and the laws of probability over the Providence of God.

May I pause here to declare that I think, both with regard to the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of Penance, that the Liberal theologians, when it suits them, are making perfect acts of love of God altogether too easy for a fallen nature like ours.

I am not going to think it as difficult for a Catholic who has fallen into mortal sin but who, through his Faith, remembers his Holy Communion, his Blessed Mother, his past confessions, God's rich forgivenesses in the sacraments, to make an act of perfect love, as for a catechumen, who has not had yet the benefit of one of God's sanctifying sacraments. But the very fact that the Church requires every mortal sin committed to be confessed, whether one is perfectly sorry for it or not, shows the Church has a maternal suspicion of this perfect act of love of God obtaining forgiveness apart from the Sacrament of forgiveness instituted by Christ.

When I am dying, my dear children, if I tell you I am in the state of mortal sin (and I promise to do so if so it seems to me) do run for a priest, no matter how far you have to run! Do not just kneel down and teach me how to perfectly love without any sanctifying grace in my soul!

If the priest reaches me before I die, know that I have truly received the mercy of God. If the priest does not reach me, then wonder very much whether I have received it or not!

That is all that can be said for our unaided love. It is only when God's own Love in Person comes down and inhabits us that our love can truly be called eternal. And the Holy Spirit is not interested in our love until the waters of regeneration have flowed on us. At the same Baptism where our Saviour was being washed with the waters of the Jordan by Saint John the Baptist, and where the Father's voice was audible, and was heard saying, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Love of God, became visible as a dove.

Do not think, my dear children, that the waters of the world, which God took such great care in making and arranging in the initial days of creation, were not made for some supreme purpose. They were not made for mere reservoir reasons. They were made for redemptional reasons. They were meant to be the waters of salvation. And that is why, for all the monotonous simplicity that that water has in itself, God the Father has given it such variety and importance.

There is not one place in the world where you could go and say, even to the most ignorant native, "You must be baptized by water and the Holy Ghost," and hear him reply, "What is water?"

Water is the greatest physical need our nature has by way of refreshment. When men lie on the hot sands of the desert, parched and feverish, they do not cry out for money or gold or diamonds or any fantastic forms of food. They cry for water.

Water is somehow the history of the world: in the Flood; in the passage of the Chosen People through the Red Sea; and in all journeys, discoveries and explorations. It is impossible to spoil water, for no matter how much filth you pour into it, you need only drop it on the earth and let it sink into the ground, and it will purify itself and return to you in the spring and fountain, as pure and virginal as it was originally created.

Indescribable as this essentially colorless, odorless, tasteless, and unshaped substance is, God lets it roam through our world in all manners and varieties so as to give interest and color and light to our thoughts and prepare them for the initial overture of salvation. A dehydrated mind cannot function physically, cannot think imaginatively, and cannot be saved in apostolic challenge.

"As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God!" (Ps. 41:2.)

Water supplies us with a whole reservoir of thoughts and words so that Christianity shall have a vocabulary which the world could never improve on. Water is the brook and the well and the spring and the fountain and the pond and the lake and the river and the gulf and the strait and the bay and the sea and the ocean. Yes, and

water is the whirlpool and the eddy and the falls and the torrent and the geyser. It is surf, foam, breaker, wave, roller, brine, mist, dew. It is hail, snow, frost, slush, and sleet. It is ice, icicle, and iceberg; rainbow, cloud, and steam. The swimmer dives and splashes in it. The sailor travels on it. Water is what makes things damp, wet, and soggy; and it sprinkles the world, laves it, and rinses it, for there is never an end to what it can do.

Water is one of the world's greatest natural mysteries. And when God's only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, entered our world to talk our language and take us on our own terms, He used as the first instrument of our sanctification that which was most natural for us to know and understand. He saw water all around us and did not despise it. He turned it into the child's Sacrament, the same Jesus who said, "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 18:3.) He took water and sanctified it with spiritual power. He transformed it into the Sacrament of Baptism, by the union of water and the Holy Ghost.

When Christ died on the Cross, and the centurion pierced His side with a spear, there flowed out blood and water. (John 19:34.) All Christ's blood flowed out for our salvation. A little water followed, to indicate the simple requirement of Baptism. Imagine blood and water ever having any higher meaning in the whole of Holy Scripture than they have as they flow from the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Saint John, the beloved disciple, was the one who saw this blood and water flow from the heart of Our Saviour after He had died:

John 19:35. And he that saw it, hath given testimony; and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe.

It is the same Beloved Disciple who concludes his beautiful revelation from God known as the Apocalypse, with these words and so ends the whole of Holy Scripture:

Apoc 22:1. And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb...

11. He that hurteth, let him hurt still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still...

14. Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.

15. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

16. I Jesus have sent my angel, to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and stock of David, the bright and morning star.

17. And the spirit and the bride say: Come. And he that heareth, let him say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life, freely.

18. For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book.

19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from these things that are written in this book.

20. He that giveth testimony of these things, saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Chapter 8 — The Fewness of the Saved

A priest is a man who, entirely independently of his merits and worth, is set apart for the teaching of the revealed truth of Our Lord.

As I, a priest, speak the Catholic Faith, I am not speaking it freely. I am not speaking of it, in doctrinal territories, as the fruit of my free speculation. There is some sense in which I freely choose to be the slave which I am to that Truth, but a Catholic priest, dressed in black, segregated by Holy Orders, his whole life dedicated to a commitment and a crusade, is free only to speak what Jesus Christ taught and what the Catholic Church has defined.

I am not going to depart from the teachings of Jesus Christ and the infallible definitions which safeguard those teachings, given to us by the Holy Roman Pontiffs of the Catholic Church, no matter how little it pleases people who, because of doctrinal weaknesses in their Faith, like to have religion an evasive, pushed-to-the-side, interfaith affair!

I have told you many times in Saint Benedict Center that one of the first things, after my ordination, that came home to me, and alarmed me, was the knowledge that a priest was going to have a hard time in America to tell the beautiful, simple, unchangeable truths of the Catholic Faith. This was made clear to me by the leisurely, almost effortless way in which among most Americans any utterance of the Faith from the mouth of a priest was detoured by way of being "religious differences." I was told, "We do not discuss religious differences." Or, "We do not like arguments on the subject of religion." Or, "We do not like to be disagreeable on the subject of God."

One of the requirements of a priest is that he be a resistant person, and one able to clarify vision where it concerns the interests of men as they move towards eternity. Sometimes that will take a great deal of courage on the part of the priest because no priest likes to offend, or be stubborn, or over-insistent. A priest does not like to tell his listeners that the reason they do not have the Faith is because of their own bad will. And yet, if we do not say that there is in the world today bad will at the root of the evasion of Jesus and Mary, of the Catholic Faith, and of the Holy Father, then our cause is a lost cause, and we are not speaking the way Our Lord wanted us to speak.

Nothing can be taught, unless there is some good will in the hearts of the receivers. Our Lord made good will the crux of whether or not the truth was going to come home to the people who listened to Him. "They do not have the truth because they do not want to have the truth!" He said. "Neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead." (Luke 16:31.)

One of the experiences I have had during my life has been that of dealing with college men and women, and of being able to indicate to them that there was bad will in what was keeping them away from Our Lord and Our Lady. I listened to them for long, long months, and I knew then, as I know now, that the thing which kept every one of them from being a Catholic was bad will.

You may say that it is not nice to say "bad will." Well, if you do not accuse them of bad will you are going to have to accuse them of things which I would not want to have said of me. I would rather have bad will than the things they are said to have. It is said that their lack of faith is due to background, environment, bad blood, bad

digestion, ignorance, and so on.

Bad will, if I had it, I could change; but with those other things, I do not know how long it would take me to restore myself. If a man is bad willed, he can turn around and be good willed, when he realizes what is the matter with him, because the will is a spiritual faculty and what was bad will can become good will.

There is not a single person in the United States, who has the use of reason, who does not know that Jesus Christ is the crux of the whole world's salvation or damnation. There is not a person who does not somehow sense, in the depths of his mind, that the Catholic Church is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, and that it is, therefore, the true Church.

The call to salvation should not be an invitation. It should be a challenge! It should be a clarion call. "Listen! Do you want to be damned forever and abandoned by God, except for being kept in mere existence? Do you want to be put down with God's enemies? If you don't, listen to what I have to say!"

Damnation and salvation in the same utterance are what make a man realize what both these values mean. "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire!" (Matt. 25:41.) These words of Our Lord's wake a man up! They make a man think in terms of his flesh and blood. Every man knows what fire is.

From Jesus we get both the call to salvation and the awareness of what it is. Jesus came to bring us the message of eternal life. To have a sure place as co-heirs to all the majesty and power of God for all eternity, as the adopted brothers of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is what Christ promised to us. In comparison with the life prepared for us, everything in this world is mere triviality. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9.)

To obtain salvation is the purpose of our life. This whole world was made by God from the very beginning to be a world in which Christian salvation is the challenge. Our Lord told His Apostles: "Go forth and teach all nations." Go forth and tell them what you are to give them. Tell them what they should be looking for!

When Father Isaac Jogues came to the North American Indians, he did not say to them, "What are your wigwam wants?" He said, "Wigwams or not, this is what I tell you: You have had plenty of canoes floating on water. You have had falls and fountains, lakes and rivers, in your land. But I am going to make water do more than all your currents put together have done since they began flowing! The waters of Baptism which I will give you, will open for you the gates of eternal life!"

We should not be sitting around saying, "What is America looking for, peace of mind?" Peace of mind is not salvation! Peace of soul is not salvation!

"I am come to cast fire on the earth," Our Lord said. (Luke 12:49.) "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you." (John 14:27.) "For I came to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother The brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me." (Matt. 10:21,35,36,38.)

Do you call that satisfying a man's wants?

A real Catholic says that the achieving of salvation is a victory, and the first victory that a man ought to be thinking of during the day. The one effort which a man ought to be making every moment of his life is toward the saving of his immortal soul. Everything else would take care of itself – sanity, certitude, marriage, children, vocation, employment – all would be beautifully taken care of, if the saving of his immortal soul were the first aim of every man.

A real Catholic says that the challenge of salvation is absolute, whether the statistics please you or not. Some statistics say that there are three hundred and seventy-five million Catholics in the world. I doubt if the number is that high, but by pushing figures you might get within sight of it. When I was in the seminary, the conjectured number was about three hundred and thirty-five million.

Let us say that there are two billion people in the world. And let us suppose that the Catholics make a good one-sixth of the population. One-sixth of the world would be Catholic, therefore, and five-sixths of the world would not.

What is the matter with the five-sixths of the world who are not Catholic? Well, they have not the excuse in our own particular day that the challenge of the Faith was not put up to them, because the news of Saint Benedict

Center has gone over the whole world! It is very well known that a Catholic priest was silenced and his followers placed under interdict for saying that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church.

Just sheer obstinacy or stubbornness on a priest's part – on my part – in not being willing to obey a superior (if that were all there were to it), is hardly enough impact on news to have the ears of the world open with interest. Why are people in every country interested in Saint Benedict Center? I received a letter yesterday from Holland. Today I received letters from Ireland, from South America, Italy, Russia, Czechoslovakia, England, India.

We have had the International News Service, the United Press, the Associated Press, the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, newspaper reporters and feature writers from all over the United States, telephoning us, coming over to see us. What are they interested in? A priest's supposed disobedience? No!

They are interested in the fact that a group of hard-working scholars, laboring for nine years in the shadow of the most prestiged university in America – studying the Scriptures and the Fathers and Doctors of the Church – have put their finger on the thing that is causing the sickness of the world. People are excited about a group of Catholics who are giving a clear answer to a clear question! They know that those who cannot indicate where salvation is in clear reply, simply do not know where salvation is! Saying fast that there is no salvation outside the Church, and then adding that sincerity outside the Church is salvation within the Church, is the most diabolical double-talk ever uttered in the name of religious teaching!

I told you last week that the big hold-up question which I was given, with regard to the Church's doctrine on salvation, was: "There are, comparatively, so few Catholics in the world. Do you mean to tell me that five-sixths of the world, who are not Catholic, are going to Hell?"

It looks very bad for God, they say, if five-sixths of the world are not going to Heaven, and only one-sixth of the world is. And then I have to explain that that one-sixth of the world does not necessarily go to Heaven either, just because it is Catholic. A Catholic has a hard time to save his soul. It is not enough to be a Catholic to get to Heaven. One has to be a good Catholic.

Do I think I am going to be saved? I do not know for sure. I must measure up to the requirements for salvation. But I know for sure what these requirements are.

The first requirement is that I persevere in the Catholic Faith. This is the highest achievement a man can aspire to, and the highest favor God can bestow. No one can merit this great favor. One can only pray for it, while doing all in one's power to please God and to fulfill His commands.

It has been rumored that I have been telling those among whom I work that I, and possibly they, will go to Heaven, and that the rest of the world will go to Hell. That is not true. We are Catholics, not Calvinists. What I have been saying is that the majority of the world will not save their souls, and we hope and pray that we will not be part of that majority.

Pope Pius XII recently canonized a French priest who had died in disgrace. The priest was Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, who was ordained in 1700 and died in 1716, at the age of forty three. Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort was thrown out of every diocese in France. Bishop after bishop expelled him. All his followers deserted him. The French Jansenists tried to poison him. Everywhere he went he was rebuked.

Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort has this to say concerning the number of those who are going to be saved: "The number of the elect is so small – so small – that were we to know how small it is, we should faint away with grief. The number of the elect is so small that were God to assemble them together, He would cry to them, as He did of old by the mouth of His prophet, 'Gather yourselves together, one by one' – one from this province, one from that kingdom."

If this declaration of Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort's is cruel, intolerant, bigoted, why was the priest who made it canonized a saint? And why are his ideas now given to Catholics in writings which they are permitted and encouraged to read?

Saint John Chrysostom said that very few priests are saved. Saint Teresa of Avila said that she saw souls falling into Hell like snowflakes. The Curé of Ars said that the number of those saved was as few as the grapes left on the vine after the pickers had finished their work!

Saint Augustine said: "Outside the Catholic Church one can have everything except salvation. He can have honor; he can have the Sacraments; he can sing 'Alleluia'; he can answer, 'Amen'; he can hold the Gospel; he

can have faith in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and preach; but never, except in the Catholic Church can he have salvation."

If this was wrong doctrine, why do they keep Saint Augustine as a Doctor of the Church? Why do they celebrate his feast? Why do not the Liberals rub out his feast from the calendar?

That one statement of Saint Augustine's alone lets you know that I am pointing towards what the Catholic Church has always taught. If people say that outside the Catholic Church there is salvation, they ought not merely to attack me and silence me, they ought to rip out Saint Augustine from the calendar of saints – or tell me where I have misquoted him.

A Protestant says it is easy to get to Heaven – just be sincere to anything. And Liberal Catholics are now saying the same thing!

I am telling you, my dear children, what the Holy Father will have to define again, and what is our Faith! I am telling you what the Liberal Catholics are keeping away from you. And I am telling it to you in clear challenge! A lot of crazy thinking is corrected by clear challenges! And I do not know any place where man goes wilder than when he starts to think incorrectly in religious territories.

Take this sort of reasoning, for example: A man says, "My religion, or an important part of it at least, is to respect your religion, regardless of what it is."

Or, "I hold that Christ is Divine. If you say He is not Divine, I have respect for your belief."

Do you not see that that is an awfully funny creed? I get into Heaven through Christ, and you get into Heaven without Christ! That is a strange division in a world in which we are meant to be one. In other words, I have Christ and believe He is God, but I cannot give Him to you, whom I love!

Do you really and truly believe that Jesus is God and that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, Who leadeth all men into eternity?

Yes, you say.

Then how can you possibly be a friend to anyone unless your heart is constantly beating to give to him that Jesus Who is your God? Why give your friend your friendship, or your books, or let him play your victrola records, and not give him the belief in your heart?

Whoever says that he has Jesus Christ for his Saviour, and thinks that everyone else does not have to have Him as Saviour too, does not really believe in or love Jesus Christ!

What kind of Christianity is it where one-sixth of the world is being saved through belief in Jesus, and the other five-sixths is being saved by disbelief in Him?

A real Catholic fights for the preservation of Jesus and Mary. He says that his Blessed Mother, unless she is for everyone, could not possibly be the Queen of Angels, could not possibly be the Virgin of Bethlehem, could not possibly stand before the veiled faces of the Cherubim and Seraphim!

That is what Saint John Chrysostom says. And he is the great, golden-mouthed Doctor of the Church.

Liberal Catholics give us a very funny kind of God; a God Who, whatever reward He has waiting for us in eternity, is pretty clumsy in the way He is preparing us for it. He gave one sixth of us His Blessed Mother, one-sixth of us His Body and Blood to be our Food; and the other five-sixths He gave nothing to. He left them with only fine feelings about themselves, fine sayings from the Farmers' Almanac, fine platitudes directed towards the goals of indefiniteness. He gave them no Calvary, no Bethlehem, no Blessed Eucharist, no Sacraments, no Resurrection, no Assumption.

Just imagine Our Blessed Lady's Assumption into Heaven being for the encouragement of only one-sixth of the world, and the other five-sixths having to get in on a starvation diet!

You hear it said, "Father Feeney says that you have to be a member of the Catholic Church in order to be saved!" That is right. That is what I am saying. But it is made to sound as if I am the one taking the cruel position.

I am taking the kind position. Every man is kind when he is telling the full truth! And most especially is this so when the truth he is telling is eternal truth.

Either "No salvation outside the Catholic Church" means just that, or else let us throw in the one-sixth with the five-sixths and say that no one knows where we are going! And do not think that we are far away from that, right here in the United States, where the trend is to a religion of America, called for the moment, "Interfaith."

You know how many Catholics are losing their Faith because priests think that the one thing they dare not do is to be challenging and preach the truth. There may be many things about me that annoy you, but one thing you have to admit: I am not trying to duck the issue. I am not giving you false leads. I am not saying, "Everything is going to be all right." I am not going to end up with impressive gestures, with Rotary Club Christianity, with Interfaith ideas.

There are three kinds of Communists: economic Communists, cultural Communists, and religious Communists. The least dangerous of these three is the economic Communist, the man who has no money. Then comes the cultural Communist, the man who has no values.

And finally, the most dangerous of all, is the religious Communist, the man who has no Faith and who wishes to share that lack of Faith with everybody.

It is this last form of Communism which has given rise to the movement known as Interfaith, which consists of a common denominator belief that leaves a Jew delighted, a Protestant contented, and a Catholic without an Apostles' Creed.

What we need is more courage. And more courage! And then more courage!

My dear men and women, I am not here to preserve a notion in religion, but rather to preserve the Faith for which the martyrs died, and the Faith which the Doctors taught. There is not a single saint I might pick up: Saint Bernard, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Teresa of Avila, who does not say all these things which I am telling you. If you doubt it, come and listen to me, and let me show you.

Please let me give you the Catholic Faith straight! Let me give it to you the way Jesus taught it, the Saints lived it, the Popes and Councils defined it. Simply, clearly, it is this: that unless you are a child of the Holy Father, and are baptized, and receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you will not save your soul!

Unless you take the Blessed Mother of Jesus and recite the prayer the angel said to her, and unless "Jesus" is the sweetest name on your lips, and the thought of Jesus is always in your mind, you will not dwell in Heaven for all eternity.

My Blessed Mother, little Mary of Nazareth, to whom the Angel Gabriel appeared and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women," is the Mother of God. She is the Mother of the only God I adore. She is the Mother of my Emmanuel, and if her Child is not God, then I have no God to adore, and I refuse to take any other.

This world was given the first tangible hope it ever had, in Christmas. And I insist: If that little Jesus of Bethlehem is not God, and that little Mother, Mary of Nazareth, is not the Mother of God, then I am sorry, I just do not believe in God, and neither do you!

We were studying in class today the life and times of Saint Edward the Confessor, that beautiful English king who was noted for his love and reverence of Jesus, and who lived almost eleven hundred years after the birth of Christ, when the Norman kings came into England. And here is something to think about: As far apart as we are in time, if we got together tonight, Saint Edward the Confessor and I, we could talk the same Faith – Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the Holy Father, the Seven Sacraments, the forgiveness of sins. The very same utterance would be ours, however our styles of English might differ.

I know, and everyone else knows, that that is true. Those who do not hold the Catholic Faith do not even stick for five years to what they talk in place of it. Seventy million Protestants in the United States now do not believe in anything! Just imagine trying to defend that kind of thing!

The result is, thousands and thousands of husbands and wives, who do not even remotely worship the same God. The result is, hundreds and hundreds of boys and girls in love, who do not know even remotely what is the nature of their eternal destiny. Imagine a boy making love to anything so frail as a girl, and not being able to offer her the Christian securities that God puts at his disposal. And then imagine death striking this young girl swiftly, and leaving her loved one never to know in his heart what her ultimate destiny has been!

The first time that I administered the Sacrament of Baptism was in the middle of a river, in the middle of a New England winter. I was told, on my way to hear confessions in a parish close to Boston, that a boy had just fallen through the ice in a river nearby. I ran to the place where he was last seen. Someone had called the Fire Department, too, and so a fireman and a priest went out together on the ice to look for the boy in one of the holes in the ice-covered river.

We found him, and pulled him out. And I baptized him conditionally. Later I learned from his mother that he had never been baptized, and that she was pleased with what I had done. She said it was the only hope left to her concerning him.

May I say that the Catholic Faith is available to every country in the world: to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, India (some Catholic Indian girls have come here to Saint Benedict Center, descendants of the converts of Saint Francis Xavier), China, Japan, Java, Cuba, South America, Canada, and so on.

I always wonder how anyone studying American history could fail to notice – supposing he were just interested in knowing the plain, historical facts about Columbus – that one of the islands Christopher Columbus discovered he named "San Salvador." San Salvador means Holy Saviour! Why would not a person ask himself about that? Why was the first-named island in the new world called Holy Saviour Island?

Columbus crossed the ocean on a boat named "The Santa Maria." Is a girl, Mary, remembered from the first century up to 1492 a hard girl to find out about? Is there any information about the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, a man in the United States could not get in case he wanted to know? How much does any American student read about Our Blessed Lady?

Suppose a man were just poetic, artistic. It would be nice to know, would it not, what kind of a girl the greatest painters in the world were painting, or the greatest musicians were writing songs about? Is that not so? Especially when you see and read of the horrors, brutalities, scandals that go on night and day in every city of the United States, in all our dives and brothels, in all our lack of respect for woman, and in all the condescension of people who look down on her.

If my Blessed Mother is not for everyone I meet, she is not for me. If my Hail Mary is not mine to give you too, whoever you are, then I do not have a Hail Mary. And the thing is finished if our Holy Father the Pope, the most visible leader of religion in the world today, is not necessary, as Christ's Vicar, for every man's salvation.

When the atomic bomb comes, do not dare to go before God and say that a Catholic priest did not tell you the message of salvation! I have given it to you as clear as crystal, and there is no way in which you can squirm out of it.

If you want to know what the Catholic Faith is – now that you have had brought home to you its necessity for salvation – I will take time and patience to teach you every bit of the beauty of Christianity.

The hard fact of the matter is, my dear children, that if five sixths of the world do not find the Catholic Faith it is because five-sixths of the world would not take it even if it were given to them. If they will not take it in the green wood, they will not take it in the dry!

If you will not take it as I give it to you tonight, what chance have I with the Zulus?

If you will not take it in Cambridge, what chance have I with the native on the desert island?

Before I close, I would like to dwell for a few moments on the feast of today.

This washout of a world had in it one sublime success. Quantitatively, the world did not give much to God. But in quality, it gave Him a girl so transcendently beautiful, so responsive to the slightest wish of His heart on any and every term, that she was worthy to be called His masterpiece of creation.

She is higher than all the angels. She is alone in her singular, solitary beauty. She is the Daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, and the Spouse of God the Holy Ghost. She is the Mediatrix of All Graces, the little Gate of Heaven for the boys and girls, men and women, who want to be human on Sacred Heart terms.

I have no words adequately to eulogize her. I have, however, one small message in terms of the visibility of God's covenant with man that will touch her feast of today.

This is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is not the feast of the Immaculate Creation, though Our Lady's soul was created by God's power and love. It is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. This feast

commemorates the first instant that this child, privileged above all creatures, began to be in the womb of Anna, her mother.

I cannot think of anything less visible – as the word visible has display value, exhibition value, publicity value – than a tiny, infinitesimal girl, dwelling in the womb of her mother. But because this is the seed of the visibility she will have, and the visibility she will give her Son; because visibility has now become, and will grow and move and be born into the world; because flesh and blood will be the Queen of the Angels: this is the feast of the Immaculate Conception!

She is infinitely close to an angel, she is so almost non-material, this little Mary who, immaculately conceived, has just begun to be. But she is infinitely far away from an angel also, in that she is a human child. Maybe only the angels could see her, with angelic brilliance. Anna herself did not know, as she breathed and walked and slept.

But God knew!

A silent child was in the womb of Anna; a child who was to move into the world, and who was to be the visible Queen of Heaven and Earth.

It is for the safeguarding of her that we are dedicated in the Catholic Church. To the little visible girl, and her little visible Child.

Her orbit went from the Immaculate Conception, in Nazareth, to her Coronation, in Heaven. On this day, in her infinitesimal smallness, I, priest of her Son, greet her: the one complete success in human creation; Our Life, Our Sweetness, and Our Hope!

Chapter 9 — In the Presence of God

In this life we can have perfect joy, because joy comes from giving, and there is no greater One to Whom to give than God, and nothing more we have to give than ourselves.

In this life we cannot have perfect happiness, because happiness comes from getting, and what God has to give us in full, He is reserving for the life to come, when all His glory shall be revealed to us.

When we go to Heaven, and have perfect happiness along with our perfect joy, we will no longer distinguish between them, as happiness and joy. Our giving and our getting will be as undifferentiated as God's attributes are in His nature. We will be both giving and getting in the same eternal rapture. Our joy and our happiness will be one. "As the Father and I are one, you and I shall be one," said Our Lord.

Although we can have perfect joy in this life, there is some sense in which this joy is deficient – not because it is not perfect joy, but because its partner, perfect happiness, is still withheld from it.

And now I will tell you my most innocent priestly secret: Although we cannot have perfect happiness in this life, we can have a foretaste of it. And the place where this foretaste occurs is in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist.

We are meant in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist to taste, ahead of time, the beatitude prepared for us in the Beatific Vision. If, when we visit the Blessed Eucharist, we do not sense this happiness, we must not be discouraged. But we must know the right reason why.

The reason for our not being rapturously happy in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist is not because Our Lord cannot yet be seen! Thousands of things we see with our eyes, and what happiness do they give us? We should be able to see through the appearances of bread and wine with the eyes of faith. We should be able to glimpse the happiness awaiting us in vision as it now entices us through faith. If we do not feel any of this happiness, or any of its enticements, even by foretaste, it is because our faith is weak, not because perfect happiness is not there in our company.

What shall we do to attain this foretaste of beatitude, in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist? We must remember in all humility that the things to which our memory and our mind and our will and our tastes and our desires have heretofore been put, were the wrong things. Our minds, antecedent to coming to this great mystery of Faith, were occupied with the wrong objects, and in the wrong methods, and for the wrong reasons. We have been remembering things we should not remember, willing things that never should have been willed, having tastes that should not have occurred within us.

Our lonelinesses, our longings, our nostalgias, our melancholies, have all been for the wrong reasons. We must therefore yield all our powers to Jesus in the Eucharist, and let Him transform our powers for new purposes. We must not kneel in front of the Blessed Eucharist and start examining the deficiencies of our own characters, or try to belittle the generosity of Jesus by saying that realizations of love of a mystical kind were never meant for us.

We should say to Jesus, as Saint Ignatius said to Him, "Take and receive, O Lord, my liberty. Take all my will, my mind, my memory." We should be transformed into adoration of the Word made flesh Who dwells amongst us.

Everyone realizes that love is the greatest enterprise there is in this world, and that true human love is a matter of flesh and blood. No one can ever love for long without pointing to his heart, the great central terminal of flesh and blood within our breasts. Just because human love has been abused, and because most of it which we know has either been sinful or perverse, we should not try to keep it from being a goal of our hearts at their best.

If we do not find what human love at its most intense pitch means, when we are in the presence of the Flesh and Blood of Jesus, then we are bound to go to the romantic adventures of a wicked world to find out what it was not meant to be, and to learn how deep and diabolical can be our disillusionment.

There are some snobs, pretending to be saints, who wish to play safe with flesh and blood. Because its dangers are so many, they wish to avoid incarnational love entirely. This is not what the Blessed Eucharist was given us for.

Saint Margaret Mary was a Visitation nun, in the seventeenth century, who could not pray. She used to sit in chapel, full of distractions. She found the hours of prayer long ones. When visiting Our Lord, she was aware only of her own doubts and her own discomfitures. Our Lord flared out through the hidings of bread and wine, one day, and asked her to give Him her heart. He offered her His Heart in return. He told her to keep coming to see Him, and that some day His Sacred Heart would be entirely hers. From then on, Saint Margaret Mary could not be torn out of chapel, as long as Our Lord was there.

The Little Flower of Jesus said that the books about love which she read gave her a headache. It was only Love's Presence in the Eucharist that consoled her, and Love's silences that became her song.

If the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us, then we must love Jesus as flesh and blood. Tell me what the phrase "dwelt amongst us" can mean more perfectly than His abiding Presence in our tabernacles? If, when we kneel before Him in Eucharistic Presence, we are not flooded with an incipient happiness that exceeds any this world can offer, and of any kind, the fault is ours. The fault is ours to admit, not to analyze. And the fault is ours to correct, by simple apostrophes. "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." (Matt. 7:7.)

One more thing, as a priest, I would like to say. The greatest prayer Our Lord gave us is the well-known "Our Father Who art in Heaven." This supreme petition is for Bread. That same Bread which Matthew calls "supersubstantial bread" and Luke calls "daily bread" is the Bread the priest is looking at in the middle of the Canon of the Mass, at the high point, between the Consecration and the Communion, just after the utterance of the great "Amen."

The priest is required to have his eyes fixed on the Sacred Host as he utters the words: "Give us this day our daily bread." In a High Mass, the priest is required to sing this Our Father, to let his children know its supreme purpose, as our Holy Mother the Church protects it.

The Our Father is the prayer that the Blessed Eucharist be given to us daily. The Blessed Eucharist is the only petition in terms of a definite object that the Lord's Prayer contains. Saint Jerome tells us that Our Lord Himself commanded the Apostles to put the Our Father in its sublime position in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

To take this Our Father out of the Canon of the Mass, as the Liberal Catholic clergy of our day are doing, and recite it with Protestants who minimize it in terms of their added ending: "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," is blasphemy.

To refuse to say the Our Father as the Liberal clergy also do when they join with Jews in Brotherhood organizations or Good-Will movements apart from "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," is infidelity.

And these are two of the reasons why I, a beleaguered priest, am trying to raise my voice, in the United States of America, to shout and sing the true Our Father the way it was spoken on the Mount of the Beatitudes, and the way it is sung in the Canon of the Mass.

Chapter 10 — Our Lady's Fullness of Grace

And now I speak to you a profound and reverential thing. I say it with the deepest humility in my heart and the deepest reverence in my mind, and I hope the deepest courtesy in the words in which I say it.

What I say is this: The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God, was baptized by water; and had to be baptized in order to be saved.

Our Lady was redeemed in her own special way. She was preservatively redeemed. From the very first instant Our Lady entered existence, she entered it as a justified child. The stain of original sin had never been allowed to touch her because of the foreseen merits of Christ, her Child. She was not only a just maiden, she was highest of all the just. The angel called her "full of grace." And the angel said, "The Lord is with thee." (Luke 1:28.)

But it was not enough, even for the Blessed Virgin, to have been preservatively redeemed and kept free from the stain of original sin. Her Child was her Savior, and she had to share in the fruits of salvation which it was His to bestow.

Our Lady was redeemed before Our Saviour came, because in God's plans it is not needful for the Redeemer to have come in order for one to be redeemed. Redemption is awarded in view of the price the Redeemer is going to pay, in case He has not yet come, or has paid in case He has come. The just souls in the Old Testament, therefore, could be justified by believing in the Redeemer to come. They could be justified before the Redeemer came. But they could not be saved until He came. Salvation is another grace beyond the grace of Redemption. Salvation requires the Saviour to have come.

Let me put it in this simple way. A man could be born in original sin, then be redeemed by sanctifying grace, then fall out of the state of sanctifying grace, and then go to Hell. It could then be said of this man that he was created in the state of original sin; that he was then redeemed; and that he was afterwards damned. To be redeemed, therefore, and to be saved are not one and the same thing. Many souls, once redeemed, are now damned; Judas Iscariot, for instance.

Q. Did Christ redeem the whole world?

A. Yes, Christ redeemed the whole world. That is to say, He paid a price large enough to redeem the whole world. But the fruits of this Redemption were not applied to all souls. The fruits were theirs for the asking but they would not ask, and so they did not receive.

Q. Were the fruits of Redemption ever applied to some souls who are now in Hell?

A. Yes. Some souls benefited by the fruits of Redemption, entered the state of justification, lost it by mortal sin, died in that state and went to Hell. Therefore, it is true to say that many of the redeemed are now in Hell.

Q. Did Christ save all men?

A. Christ did not save all men. Christ died for their salvation, but most men refuse to be saved.

Q. Does not Christ wish all men to be saved?

A. Yes. Christ wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:4.) This is called the "salvific will of Christ."

Q. Does Christ wish men to be saved without coming to the knowledge of the truth?

A. He does not! This is not the salvific will of Christ.

Q. Are there any of the saved now in Hell?

A. No!

Q. I repeat, are there any of the redeemed now in Hell?

A. Yes!

Q. Does this make clear to us the distinction between Christ Our Redeemer and Christ Our Saviour?

A. It most certainly does.

Everyone must now see that salvation is a step beyond Redemption. Everyone must now see there are very good reasons for calling Our Lord both Our Redeemer and Our Saviour.

If anyone shall say to me, why did Our Lady need to be baptized if she was conceived without the stain of original sin, I shall ask in reply, why did John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother's womb, need to be baptized in order to be saved?

"I ought to be baptized by thee," Saint John the Baptist said to Jesus, "and comest thou to me?"

"Suffer it to be so now," Jesus answered him. "For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice." (Matt. 3:14,15.)

Was John the Baptist baptized? Of course, he was baptized, else why did he say, "I ought to be baptized by Thee"? Holy Scripture goes out of its way in the lesson of John the Baptist to teach us that even a child sanctified in his mother's womb, the first fruits of the Redeemer already come, needed also to receive the waters of Baptism so as to be saved.

One needs to receive the waters of Baptism even if one be John the Baptist. Our Faith tells us this innocently and clearly. And the great Doctors of the Church, including Saint Jerome and Saint John Chrysostom, positively affirm it to be so, and go out of their way to tell us that John the Baptist was baptized by Jesus.

What then was the superiority of John the Baptist's justification over ours?

He was justified before he was born.

And what is the superiority of Our Lady's justification over Saint John the Baptist's?

She, our Immaculate One, was justified the moment she was conceived.

When Our Lady journeyed down the hill country to visit her cousin Elizabeth, it was then that John the Baptist, the child of Elizabeth, leaped in his mother's womb. Why did he leap? It is true he was sanctified the moment Our Lady with her Divine Child entered his house. His sanctification we must attribute to the presence of Jesus.

But my question is: Why did he leap?

Saint John the Baptist leaped because he was not only John, the child. He leaped because he was also John, the Baptist! He leaped because he was in the presence of the most beautiful creature on whom the waters of Baptism were ever going to be bestowed for purposes of salvation.

Saint John the Baptist leaped because he was in the presence of the Mother of God, who was sinless from the first moment of her conception; who was full of justification; who was full of grace! John leaped in his mother's womb because he was the flesh and blood precursor of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, the Saviour even of the Just – the Saviour even of the Queen of the Just! He knew by some mystical insight the purposes to which the waters of Baptism were going to be put when they were poured on the head of the future Queen of Angels.

We know that were it not for the presence of Jesus in Mary's womb, her journey down the hill country and into the house of Elizabeth would have no efficacy on its own. We know well that the sanctification of the infant in Elizabeth's womb was due to the Divinity of the Child tabernacled in the womb of Mary. But neither God the Father in Heaven, nor mothers like Elizabeth on earth, distinguish with too much precision between a woman and a child when the woman is with child.

Elizabeth did not cry, "Whence is this to me, that my God should come to me?" She cried, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Not even Mary's entrance through Elizabeth's door sufficed for the sanctification of the Precursor. Our Lady's footstep and voice both were needed, for Saint Luke tells us that it was when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary that the infant leaped in her womb:

Luke 1:41. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44. For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

Our Lady, herself, when she answered Elizabeth, admitted the distinction between justification and salvation. And this is the point which I am trying so hard to make for you, dear children of Saint Benedict Center, so as to preserve your Faith. Our Blessed Lady said, in the very first words of her Magnificat: "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (Luke 1:46.) And well might she say this, because she was in the state of sanctifying grace, where magnifying the Lord is the soul's privilege.

But Our Blessed Lady immediately added: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (Luke 1:47.) Why does Mary call Jesus her Saviour? Why does she need a Saviour? As her Redeemer, what justifying grace has He denied her? If being in the state of justification is sufficient for salvation, why does Our Lady call her Child her Saviour?

When the angel hailed Mary as full of grace, her Divine Child had not yet been conceived. The Saviour was not yet in our world. And she was full of grace. Why did Mary need a Saviour? The answer is, because the waters of Baptism, which her Son would give, were necessary for her – not as redemption from original sin since she had already been preserved free from the stain of original sin – but to open for her the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven. The King must enter first, and the Queen must enter on the King's sacramental terms.

Likewise we know, from the structure of all sacramental theology, that no one, not even the Blessed Virgin Mary, could be entitled to receive the Blessed Sacrament until the waters of Baptism had been received. Baptism is not only the closing of the old life – for which it was not needed in the case of Mary – it is the opening of the new, for which, even in her, the unique case, it was needed.

When Jesus was about to die, He handed over the care of His Blessed Mother to a newly ordained priest, a beloved Apostle, raised to the Sacrament of Holy Orders the night before. It was the privilege of this great Apostle, Saint John, to be Our Lady's priest, her Mass celebrator, from the day of Christ's death to the day of her own death, at the age of seventy-two.

Every morning when Our Lady went to Holy Communion she received back into her body the Flesh and Blood

she had once given to be assumed into the sanctity of the Second Person of the Godhead. This Flesh and Blood, as it came back to her at Holy Communion time from the hands of one of Christ's priests, gave her sacramental grace even though she was full of grace as it came. She was filled up and flowing over, and from her abundance we have all received.

No one, not even the Blessed Virgin Mary, can validly receive the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist until he has been first baptized with water.

This is not my arrangement. This is the will of God. And the first one who would want to observe it in sacramental and divine importance would be the Handmaid of the Lord, whose delight it was to say, "Be it done unto me according to Thy word." (Luke 1:38.)

Let me pause here, then, and repeat for you, with complete awe, the necessities imposed on the humility of Our Blessed Lady so as to enable her, the sinless one, immaculately conceived, the virginal Mother of God's own Son and the virginal Spouse of the Holy Ghost, to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the crowned Queen of the Angels along with her risen and ascended Son.

"He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid," Our Lady said. (Luke 1:48.) Let me mention the exalted reason for this humility. This most justified creature, this girl full of grace, this perfection of all creaturehood – of whom the angel could say, "The Lord is with thee," without any equivocation – even in her sanctification owed the salvation of her soul and body to her Son, Who did not cease to be her Saviour.

Our Lady did not need to be baptized so as to get rid of the guilt of original sin. The guilt of original sin she never had. She was preserved from it. And that is why she is said to have been immaculately conceived.

In 1854, Pope Plus IX infallibly defined that Our Lady was immaculately conceived. Four years later, in 1858, she appeared to a little French girl, in the southern part of France, and improved on this definition in her own charming and personal way. Our Lady did not say to Bernadette, "I was immaculately conceived." She said, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

The two requirements, then, for the Mother of Jesus to be crowned as the Queen of the beatified, were: that she be baptized by water for the salvation of her soul, and that she receive the Flesh and Blood of her Child in the Holy Eucharist, for the salvation of her soul and of her body.

These two sacraments were administered to Our Lady. And surely a third, the Sacrament of Confirmation. And so in soul and body, she was assumed into Heaven and crowned in the great Palace of Salvation, in its highest Throne Room, in the seat reserved for the Queen.

"Hail, full of grace," was the greeting of the Angel Gabriel to her in her perfect state of justification. "Hail, Holy Queen," is what she is called in Heaven, in her state of perfect salvation.

Would you like a summary of things implied so far, stated in dear catechism questions? I will give it to you:

Q. What do we mean by Our Lady's conception when we are using the title, The Immaculate Conception?

A. We are referring to Our Lady as conceived in her mother's womb, not to Our Lady's conception of Jesus, in her womb.

Q. Why is Our Lady called the Blessed Virgin? Is it because she was both blessed and virgin?

A. It is rather because she was blessedly virginal; because she was faithful as a virgin, fruitful with a Divine Child. It is because she was maternally virginal; or better, it is because she was the Virgin Mother.

Q. Which was the greater gift to Our Lady, to be immaculately conceived, or to be the virginal Mother of God?

A. To be the virginal Mother of God.

Q. Why was she immaculately conceived?

A. Because one day she was going to be the virginal Mother of God.

Q. Would Adam's children have been immaculately conceived if he had not eaten the forbidden fruit?

A. Adam's children would have been conceived in the state of grace, but there would be no reason for referring to this as immaculate conception.

Q. What warrants our calling Our Lady's conception in the state of grace an immaculate conception?

A. Because a conception in the state of original sin was due Our Lady, provided she had not been preserved from it.

Q. Would it be all right to say Our Lady was conceived apart from original sin?

A. Not precisely.

Q. How, therefore, is it best to put the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception?

A. It is best to say that Our Lady was conceived without the stain of original sin.

Q. Were some of the effects of original sin endured by Our Lady?

A. Yes. The fact that Our Lady could die, for instance, or could suffer, or could know sorrow, or had to eat bread by the sweat of her brow, were all external effects of original sin which she had to suffer.

Q. What effect of original sin was Our Lady spared from?

A. The internal effect of it, namely, the guilt of it in her soul. Indeed, she was also freed of the effects of concupiscence and of power to contract sickness, as special embellishments of her beautiful, sinless spirit, and as special honors to the flesh and blood from which the flesh and blood of God were to be taken. But Our Lady could be tired. She could be lonely, and hungry. She could weep, and be hurt. She could have been killed, had anyone tried to harm her. And, finally, Our Lady could die. She did die. Thanks be to God's preservative power, her flesh never knew corruption in its brief visit to the grave.

Q. On which side of the picture do you put Our Lady; with God, or with man?

A. I put Our Lady with man. Our Lady is not God.

Q. Is she as powerful as God?

A. By nature, no; by grace, yes; for she is Virgin Most Powerful. She said: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name." (Luke 1:49.)

Q. Why, therefore, is Our Lady, Virgin Most Powerful?

A. Because God has so willed it.

Q. Did God have to will it?

A. No!

Q. Why did He will it?

A. He willed it because He willed it. And no one dares ask Him why, who knows Him to be God.

Q. Is God powerless to unwill that which He has already willed?

A. Yes. God is powerless now to do so. And powerless by His own Divine choice.

Q. Does not this make God's omnipotence innocently attractive to us, to say it is put in the keeping of one of our children?

A. It makes Him infinitely lovable, and on our own terms.

Q. Do we love God more with Mary or without her?

A. Without Mary, none of us would love God. We would reverence Him, and fear Him; but we would never speak to Him as Our Father; never ask Him for His Divine Child as our daily Bread; and we would never say, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Q. Is Our Blessed Lady the mediator between God and man?

A. She is not. There is only one mediator, and He is Christ, Our Lord.

Q. What do we mean by calling Our Lady, "Mediatrice of All Graces"?

A. We mean that all the graces that the Mediator won for us, including the grace of Himself as our Emmanuel, are put into Our Lady's keeping. They receive these graces to whom Our Lady gives them; and they are refused these graces from whom she takes them away.

Q. Why was the dogma of the Immaculate Conception defined so late?

A. Because it is not the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady that the heretics who hate Our Lady are most interested to attack.

Q. Are the heretics not interested in making Our Lady a sinner?

A. No. They are not. They are content to let her be called sinless, provided they can say she was not a virgin.

Q. What is the Protestant phobia with regard to Our Blessed Lady?

A. Her virginity.

Q. Will some of the heretics admit her to have been a virgin for a while?

Our Lady's Fullness of Grace

A. Yes, provided you acknowledge that she had other children besides Jesus.

Q. Is the Blessed Virgin the main hatred of the Protestants towards the Catholic Church?

A. No. The Protestants' main hatred in the Catholic Church is the Blessed Eucharist.

Q. How did the Protestants in their prayers, insidiously attack the Blessed Eucharist?

A. By destroying the intimate, Eucharistic, petitional meaning of the Our Father. They also added a dismissal phrase at the end of it, to wit: "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

Q. Have the Protestants come out lately with a new Bible?

A. Yes. They have just come out with a new Bible. It is called the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, and it is the largest financed publication of the Holy Scripture ever made under heretical auspices.

Q. Does the revised Protestant Bible ease up at last on the Our Father?

A. Yes, it does.

Q. How?

A. By taking out the spurious final phrase, "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

Q. But was not that the most important phrase in the Our Father in the way the Protestants said it and sang it up until now?

A. Yes; it was.

Q. Have the Protestants tampered with other phrases in the Bible?

A. Yes. A notable example is their rendering of the famous Christmas message uttered by the angels: "Peace on earth to men of good will." (Luke 2:14.)

Q. How did the Protestants phrase this message of the angels?

A. Their old Bible recorded it: "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Q. How does the new, revised version of the Protestant Bible record this message?

A. The new, revised edition of the Protestant Bible has changed the angels' message into: ". . . and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

Q. Is it not true that now the Protestant Our Father is the same as the Catholic Our Father?

A. It seems to read the same.

Q. Can you explain this capitulation on the part of the Protestants?

A. Yes. They are launching an attack on the Blessed Virgin Mary. And they want the interfaith clergy of the Catholic Church in the United States not to notice it.

Q. How are they distracting the American Catholic hierarchy from the tricks they are playing with the Word of God?

A. By changing the erstwhile Protestant Our Father into the Catholic version, and by easing up on the alteration they made in the message of the angels to the shepherds at Bethlehem.

Q. Will the Catholic Bishops of America be pleased with this concession on the part of the Protestants?

A. They will be very pleased, and will express their pleasure many times in the newspapers.

Q. And now, having let up on the Our Father, where does the new Protestant Bible deal its blow?

A. At the Hail Mary.

Q. At the Hail Mary directly?

A. No. They decided that would not be prudent at this time.

Q. So, where do they deal their blow, aimed to destroy the value of this prayer?

A. At the Prophecy of Isaias, in the Old Testament, which declares: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." (Isa. 7:14.)

Q. What do the Protestants now call this virgin whom Isaias foretold?

A. They call her "a young woman."

Q. And how do they now put it?

A. "Behold a young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel."

Q. Is that the end of the Hail Mary?

A. Yes, and the end of Isaias, and of Emmanuel, and of the fruit of Mary's womb, and of the Bread of Life. It is the Our Father and the Hail Mary given the American Protestant brush-off in one well-studied blow.

Q. What phrase do the Protestants most hate in the Our Father?

A. "Give us this day our daily bread."

Q. What phrase do they most hate in the Hail Mary?

A. "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

Q. Who is meant in both these phrases?

A. Jesus.

Q. Whom do the Protestants hate in the Our Father and in the Hail Mary?

A. Jesus. He is the "supersubstantial bread" of the Our Father. (Matt. 6:11.) He is the "blessed fruit" of the Hail Mary. (Luke 1:42.)

Q. They protest they do not hate Jesus!

A. I have clearly known and shown that they do.

Let us consider for a few moments the Our Father and the Hail Mary. I think you would say that the Our Father and the Hail Mary are the two most common prayers on the lips of Catholics throughout the centuries.

The Our Father is said to the hiddenness of God in Heaven. And the Hail Mary is said to the hiddenness of God in a girl on earth: "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

In the Our Father, you cannot see God the Father in Heaven, and in the Hail Mary you cannot see God the Son on earth. Both of these prayers are sublime prayers of sheer faith.

Do you think it an accident that these are the prayers the Church has made the very substance of its invocation throughout the centuries? If we think a little farther, we might also say that God values more what we can see with our inner vision than what we attest to from what He has given us through our outer senses. Or, rather, let me put it this way: He would rather have us know Him through the genius and love and warmth and generosity and keenness of our inner vision, than He would reveal Himself to us. "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." (John 20:29.)

You know that the whole rest of your eternity, once you have finished this life, is going to be blistering with things being revealed! Eternity is going to be complete vision. Vision takes over and nothing else remains. There is no more darkness. There will be the whole blazing Godhead – the whole burning aeons of eternity.

We have our few little years now in which we grope our way towards this eternal life, earning our way to it. God gives us a little help, and He loves it when we walk a little farther ourselves.

We could never merit eternal happiness. We could never fully earn our way to the Beatific Vision. But God is very anxious to make it a just reward. He wants to make it something we are entitled to.

There are parallel passages in the Our Father and the Hail Mary which are very much alike. Do you not think so? We say to Our Father Who is in Heaven: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven..." That is what we say to Him in praise. The rest of the prayer is petition.

We say to Our Lady, in the Hail Mary: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb..." That is what we say to her in praise. The rest of the prayer is petition.

How close must be Jesus and Mary, when the arch-prayer of all the prayers offered to Mary is the prayer made of her before she even showed us Jesus! When there was only one pair of eyes to look into with physical sight, and a little baby hidden, to be seen only by faith!

You might say, "Well, not too much faith would be required after a while, Father, for the little mother obviously was with child." Yes, but you would have to believe on faith that this was a Virginal Mother, that she was the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and that dear Saint Joseph was not the father of the Child. Do you not see that?

That is the foundation of all Christianity! So much does Christianity rest on that foundation that if you are not

prepared to go and love Jesus in the womb of Mary, you might as well leave Christianity. If you just take over Jesus in His later years, when He was a teacher and said fine things that ought to be remembered – fine Christian principles for the world – it would be much better not to take Him at all. That is farthest away from the way true Christianity has remembered Him all through the centuries.

True Christianity has looked into Mary's eyes, and adored the Jesus it could not see. It has adored Jesus when Mary was breathing for Him, nourishing Him with her blood; when her footsteps were the advance of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity! Her sleep was His sleep! Her rest was His rest! Her fatigue was His fatigue! Her mountain climbing was God ascending! Her descent into a valley was God lowering Himself into the depths of His own world! When Jesus and Mary were one heartbeat and one blood stream!

That is where we say the Hail Mary. If that is not true, the whole first chapter of Luke is wasted. Holy Scripture entrusts itself to the clarion call of a loving mind. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) Blessed are those who want to find God, for here is where they will find Him!

You will not find Jesus in treatises on Christ. You will not find Him in Mauriac's *Life of Christ*, or Papini's *Life of Christ*, or Fulton Oursler's *Greatest Story Ever Told*. This last is a conceited, proud performance which is full of heresy. Neither will you find Jesus in Karl Adam's *Spirit of Catholicism*, or in Fulton Sheen's *Peace of Soul*.

You will find Jesus first in the womb of Our Blessed Lady after an angel has greeted her and the power of the Holy Ghost has overshadowed her. You will find Him as she walks over a hill, or hides in a cave at His birth. If you are as simple as the shepherds, and have their faith and clear vision, somehow the angels will open the sky for you, and you will be able to find Jesus, as a Baby in a crib.

And then you will be able to listen, later on, to Him as He teaches – Him Whom you adored in the pure citadel of Our Blessed Lady, from which citadel He departed only for love of us!

Our Lady suffered no pain at the birth of Jesus. That is of the Faith. It was pain enough that those two, who were so one, should be, in space, apart! The pain, the travail, and the labor; the heartache and the heartbreak of Our Lady, were on Calvary, when she gave Him in death for us.

She gave Him to life for us, and she gave Him to death for us.

Chapter 11 — A Plea for Courageous Catholics

My interest in your knowing that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church is not for the sake of the thoughts you are going to have about people outside the Church whom you are going to meet. It is for the purpose of putting you right, in your own Faith! It is for the sake of your salvation primarily, that I tell you the Church's doctrine on salvation, and only secondarily for the sake of the salvation of other people.

Just suppose you are minded to make the salvation of other people more important than your own salvation? That is not the right order of interest on your part! That is not according to God's plans. That is not what God expects of us.

God expects some kind of, what I might call, innocent selfishness to be attached to our regard of our own existence and the preservation, of it. We blink our own eyes as something flashes in front of us. We pull back our own hands if some danger approaches. Our own heart beats when some horror is beside us.

Putting other people before yourself in the things you are meant to be most interested in, in terms of yourself, is a wrong kind of vicariousness. There is a wrong kind of selfishness, as we know, but there is a right kind of selfishness.

"What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26.) I think that this statement of Our Lord's is strong enough to imply in its challenge: "What good does it do if everybody gets into Heaven, if you do not get in?"

"Well," you say, "if everybody else does not get in, I do not mind not getting in. I will just sacrifice myself for Humanity. I will be democratic about the whole thing!"

That is not a sane response! God does not expect us to be that selfless. On that score you would want to be insane every time you passed an insane asylum, or be put in prison every time you passed a jail – by way, let us say, of democratic charity. That makes no sense!

Jesus says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." (Matt. 22:37.) Before He passes to the second commandment, Jesus tells us about the first: "This is the greatest and the first commandment." Do not touch one single phrase of the next commandment until you have fully comprehended and understood this first one!

Our Lord then goes on: "And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:39.)

But the first is the greatest commandment! That means that in regard to the saving of your soul, you desire your own salvation; and there is enough love of self during your life to preserve that desire.

We think alone! We suffer alone! We are lonely alone! We worry alone! We pray alone! We are heartbroken alone! And, we die alone! A man with an assignment like that to fulfill is entitled to a certain amount of healthy, salutary and noble self-interest.

To be more interested in my neighbor's salvation than in my own – to ask how the man next door is going to be saved instead of how I am going to be saved – is asking the right question in the wrong place; putting the first question where the second should be.

Were the scheme to go on that crazily on the subject of salvation, A would be interested in B's salvation, and B would be interested in A's salvation. It would be said to A: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of B's soul?"

It is hard enough to save your own soul, with a conscience of your own, a disposition of your own, a temperament of your own, without using all that equipment to save somebody else's. We will get over later to the points where unselfishness comes in, but, first of all, the basic challenge is to save your own soul.

If you think there is any salvation outside the Catholic Faith, you cannot save your own soul – even though you never told it to anybody! You cannot say: "I am not going to deny it orally, but I am not going to believe it inwardly."

You never could save your soul that way. You would be praying hypothetically. There would be a condition in your prayer, a proviso, a hold-back, a little limp in the wrong place. You would have a hidden suspicion in your mind that the Catholic Faith was not truly the way for you if you could have been saved without it in another situation.

If you think that people who live lives unmotivated by the true Faith, and who measure up to all that is best and sincere in themselves, get into Heaven by reason of that performance, it would take only the slightest bit of adjustment to see yourself as that person.

Any one of us can see a thousand places in the course of our lives where one detour would have meant the loss of our Faith. One priest not encountered, one book not read, one sermon not listened to, would have meant the

loss of our Faith. One support not given, or one prayer not had recourse to, would have meant the loss of our Faith. Therefore, we are incapable of totally excluding from our thought the five-sixths of the world in which we might so easily have been, had it not been for the grace of God. Thanks be to God, we corresponded with the grace which He gave us!

God has sufficient grace waiting for every man in the world, would he but take it! Were God to see that he would take it were it offered to him, it would be given. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:3,4.)

We have been urged to think by our Liberal clergy, who are more sociological than they are theological, that it is the greatest kindness to those who have not the Faith to say that they will get into Heaven without it. This is not the greatest kindness! It is the greatest lack of charity towards them!

If you feel that those outside the Church can get into Heaven, there is something weak in your prayer for conversions. There is something senseless about your contributions to foreign missions. There is something lacking in your respect for the power of the Holy Ghost when you send a missionary off to foreign lands – to make the natives more interested in material benefits than in the necessity of their salvation!

Your belief that those outside the Church can get into Heaven is a terrible belittling of the labors of the twelve Apostles, who cast lots for the whole world and went off here and there all over the earth. It is a terrible belittling of all the traveling the great priests and apostles of the Church did in the early days, and all down the centuries. These men did not become missionaries just for the sake of vacations, or excursions, or religious experiences. They became missionaries and traveled to every known part of the world because it was a necessity that they go!

Jesus said to His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15,16.)

The Apostles divided up the world and went off to the ends of the earth, because they knew that the ends of the earth would never see God were they not to go!

Do not tell me that the voyages of Saint Paul, that gorgeous little Apostle to the Gentiles – who never rested for a moment except when they put chains on him in prison and locked him up, with a keeper at the door to bar him in – do not tell me that the voyages of that tireless little worker, up and down Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and Spain, were just for the sake of making an impression! Or that they were by way of seeing what the set-up for the future Church was going to be! Or were simply because he was a restless man who could not stay still very long!

Where Saint Paul most wanted to be, as everybody knows, was in Jerusalem. He wanted to stay in Jerusalem because he wanted to be with Our Blessed Lady.

The Gospel of Our Blessed Lady was written by Saint Paul's beloved disciple, Saint Luke, who learned from Saint Paul how to love the Mother of God. Both Saint Jerome and Saint John Chrysostom refer to the Holy Gospel of Saint Luke as the Gospel of Saint Paul. In his humility, Saint Paul wanted Saint Luke, the beautifully educated physician, to tell the classic story of Saint Paul's love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, which he did, under Saint Paul's own tender auspices.

Instead of remaining with Our Blessed Lady in Jerusalem, Saint Paul, as we know, was always on the march, always on a ship, always on the go, from town to town, country to country. He was writing letters here and there, exhorting, beseeching, encouraging, and repeating, that the Church of Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation.

I think that it is a terrible belittling of Saint Paul to say that two things could have saved the people to whom Saint Paul traveled: (1) Saint Paul's arrival, and (2) their own fine sincerity, in case he had not come.

Anybody with half an eye can see that on Saint Paul's last great journey to Rome, the shipwreck which cast him on the tiny island of Malta, just off the coast of Sicily – where the natives came and received him and were baptized – was an accident in man's plans, but was providence in God's plans. It was because there was a loving heart on that island, a head waiting for Baptism, and a mouth open for the Holy Eucharist, that the ship was wrecked on Malta.

If you, a Catholic, can feel that the Faith you have is not essential to your salvation, all your prayers and contemplation will get you nowhere. Your adoration will cool. Your protests of gratitude to Our Blessed Lady will not ring true. Your "Hail Mary, full of grace..." will be just one version of the apostrophe to where all graces are

and from where all benefits come! The whole rest of the world will be un-Mary'd and un-Mother'd, at least in your heart.

You will feel that it is somehow Our Lady's fault that she is not known to those who, in your mind, are presumably so anxious to know her!

How dare you call Our Lady "Virgin Most Powerful" if there is somebody who really wants her, and who cannot reach her!

How dare you call Jesus the "Saviour of the world," when right across from Saint Paul's Church here in Cambridge (and just outside the window of Saint Benedict Center) you have a whole building full of college boys who cannot find Him across the street – and all because of virtues hidden in them which Jesus cannot pierce!

Matt. 7:7. Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you.

8. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

In spite of these words of Jesus, the men who live opposite us in Adams House, at Harvard, who sit in rooms where there are no crucifixes, no morning and night prayers, no aspirations, no thought of eternity from one semester to another, are, according to Liberal Catholics, not coming into the Catholic Church because of the deficiencies of God's grace and the self-sufficiency of their own goodness! Imagine Divine goodness finding human goodness an obstacle to its own entrance!

Do I dare say that it is the badness of Harvard that is keeping Christ out? If I do not say this, not only have I lost my Faith, I have lost my mind! There is a way of knowing what iniquity there is in a college boy's sneers, his blasphemous utterances, his impure face and irreverent attitude towards every decency and decorum, even without going to the criteria of apostolic life. Any Cambridge policeman, in blue uniform or in plain clothes, can tell you what I am trying to say.

My dear children, I beseech you, if you want to save your own souls, admit that the Catholic Church is the only way! Do not deny Our Lord's words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me. Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have life in you." (John 14:6; 6:54.)

If we are not to realize these words of Our Lord for our own souls, we will not be saved. We have to realize the truths of the Catholic Faith both for ourselves and for others: for others in case they want to see our light shining, and for ourselves when the only light shining is the light behind our closed eyes, the light of our Faith, Catholic and holy, sheer and clear.

We have to have somehow the kind of Faith that Saint John of the Cross wants us to have when he says: "Each human spirit should talk to God as if no spirit existed but itself."

God is not a mathematician. He does not have formulas and devices for getting the square root of us. He takes us with marvelous singularity, and He is completely and eternally interested in each one of us. Singularly we are created. Singularly we are redeemed. Singularly we receive the Sacraments. Singularly we receive absolution. Singularly we are judged.

Our first judgment after death is a particular judgment: Leonard Feeney and God Almighty, face to face! I have to stand with something of a report from the whole world in my poor soul when I face my Judge. So must you! If part of your report to Him is that you thought the way you reached Him was not the only way – if you thought there were by-paths to Heaven in face of what Our Blessed Lord went so far out of His way to say: "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" (Matt. 7:14) – you will never, never see God.

You say, "Well, Father, is that a kind thing to say to people, to tell them that they cannot be saved?"

It would be an unkind thing to say if they could do nothing about it! If it were impossible for them to become Catholics, or if becoming Catholics meant for them the forfeiting of something fine, noble, certain, and sustaining in their belief. Or if it meant the toppling over of beautiful dogmas; if a great edifice of belief had to go down in the face of our onslaught.

But do you think it uncharitable to say it to the starving minds of America, whose main problem seems to be

whether or not to take care of our incurably sick, or to kill them! Do you think it uncharitable to talk to them about what is the value of suffering, loneliness and death?

What we say is stringent, I agree, but anyone who hears us can get from us all that we have, for the asking. We will give them our Faith, our Blessed Eucharist, our Blessed Mother.

It is child's play to walk into the Catholic Church! Getting into one of the Harvard clubs, or into the Masons, or into any of the set-ups of heresy in this country, is complicated compared to getting into the Catholic Faith. It is child's play for a little baby to get in, if he has a head for water to be poured on. The simplest innocent in the street, if he has a mouth to open for the Blessed Eucharist, can get in. It does not take much elaborate instruction to teach a Hail Mary, and then you are on the right road to salvation!

All the Sacraments are innocent and simple in their administration. We are a child in every one of them when we receive them.

If a man will, he can look around the world to see where God has signed the guardianship and protection of the road to Heaven. At the head of it, he will find the Pope, visible and singular, clear and unconfined.

It is child's play to see the Pope, if one wants visibility. It is child's play to find Rome! Rome is the most conspicuous city in the world, in geography and everything else. Land and sea are all woven around it with such beautiful conformation of design. If you are not there, you are always going there in one way or another, in interest or reference. All paths almost naturally lead there. Sweet winds blow, and foods grow there – wine, and oil, and wheat.

The Church does not change its Eternal City from year to year, or shift it around to make it more popular to international outlooks! There is Rome! There it stands! The Eternal City, never to be changed!

You can walk where Peter walked, and Paul labored. You can stand where Peter was crucified, and Paul beheaded. You can look where every Pope has looked, over the same hills. When the Pope moves from Rome for a temporary stay, as to Avignon, the whole thing is out of kilter until he gets back again! What do you want by way of more childlike overture?

The same Jesus who declared that He was the Son of the Eternal Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity – the one Mediator between God and man and the judge of the living and the dead – also declared to Saint Peter, the Prince of the Apostles: "And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 16:19.) Imagine, in the face of that, our indicating to people that there are other ways into Heaven than through the gate, and other ways of opening the door than by going to the keeper of the keys!

A man can become a martyr in the Catholic Church for dying for any one dogma of it. The dogma for which we, in Saint Benedict Center, most hope to die – because it is the dogma most under attack in our day – is that no one can possibly enter the Kingdom of Heaven without personal submission to our Holy Father the Pope. I dare any Liberal theologian to turn this challenge aside by one of his sceptical terms! I dare him to tell me how to "belong to the soul" of Pope Pius XII, a flesh and blood pontiff, living and breathing in the Vatican, at Rome!

Imagine a shepherd who does not know his sheep, and a sheep who does not know his shepherd, after Christ's doubt-clearing utterance: "I am the good Shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know Me." (John 10:14.)

When you tell a man there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church, it sounds strong by way of challenge. But what you have to buttress it with, by way of invitation and wedding feast, is so clear and beautiful, and strong and sheer, that nothing in the world could be more welcome to the unhappy, restless and despairing minds of our time.

The confused, strained faces in Harvard Square grow worse every month. They were bad enough when we first came here. Now they are practically intolerable. The soda clerks rarely look into the faces of the people who sit at their counters. The clerks at Bill's Place tell me they often dare not look at the men and women grieving above the food they have just served to them.

I have never seen such distortion! Distortion in a man's face is bad, but distortion in a girl's face is simply the awfulest thing in the world to look at. Their doubts and confusions are there in their faces for anyone to read, and their lack of faith, hope, charity and certainty.

You can see distant suicides in their memories; students they have known who have killed themselves. Everybody you meet in Harvard knows someone who has killed himself! How do you like that for horror? The

other day I got to one of the boys in Adams House who had taken his own life. The College authorities allowed the account of that suicide to appear in the newspapers because they were afraid I might tell. Think of all the suicides I have not been able to get to!

Imagine Catholic priests being hesitant to come out and thunder to the confused minds in America about salvation in terms of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Father, and the sanctity of the saints!

We priests were not put in Sacrament to take care of the temporal needs of our flocks. Our assignment is to the spiritual welfare of our people. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux wrote: "Christ allowed one of His Apostles to take charge of all the money – the traitorous Apostle – because He wanted to teach prelates readily to entrust the managing of temporal affairs to anyone, but to keep the managing of spiritual things to themselves; though many do the contrary."

The hungry whom we must feed, and the naked whom we must clothe are those who hunger for the Bread of Life and thirst for communion with the Blood of Christ. The Blessed Eucharist is a priest's great gift to man: that Divine Food and Drink which makes him concorporeal with Jesus and induces the Blessed Virgin Mary to take him as her child.

Saint Paul tells us that we could give all our goods to the poor and still not have charity. (1 Cor. 13:3.) Unless a priest makes the Blessed Eucharist his first and foremost charity, how can he say, or ask anyone else to say, what Saint Paul once shouted: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.)

Priests should be poor men. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, insisted that all his sons should be poor. A poor priest is free to talk all the time about man's eternal salvation.

A poor priest can be fearless, and capable of indignation. He can "be angry and sin not," as the Holy Scripture exhorts him to. (Eph. 4:26.) A priest who is poor does not need to have in his voice the same horrid pleasantries that are heard in the voices of academic preceptors in wealthy universities.

There can be dynamite in a poor priest's sentences. One may see challenge and danger in his eyes. A poor priest is always warning that salvation is not easily achieved, unless we are willing to pay the price.

Each and every one of us can make the grade in the matter of salvation if we want to do so. The Catholic Faith is a loving invitation. We are saved singly, not in groups.

Jesus' coming to us in the Blessed Eucharist can never be any hidden meditation in our own heart. We do not reach Him in Flesh and Blood in the sanctuaries of our sincerity, with the tabernacle lamp of our own self importance before us. We never reach Him as a group, or as a crowd. Each one of us has to come up and open his or her individual mouth, and to each the priest has got to say: "May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ keep thy soul unto life everlasting."

The Blessed Eucharist means nothing to a man who thinks other people can get along without It. The Blessed Eucharist means nothing to a communicant who thinks he needs It but someone else does not. The Blessed Eucharist means nothing to a communicant who offers others any charity ahead of this Charity of the Bread of Life.

"Depart from Me, you cursed...", God will say to such, "for I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink." (Matt. 25:41,42.) Our neighbor was meant to be another Christ, were he fed on the right Food; were he nurtured in the right way. Those who receive Christ for themselves and starve their neighbor of this blessed Food, are killing off Christ in the world. They are blighting the branches that should grow on the vine. That is what is meant by the second commandment of Christ: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The gates of Hell will not prevail against the Catholic Church. But the Church can get weak and frail. It is getting very weak in this country. There are twenty-six million Catholics in the United States. I do not think that that is an enormous amount, or even a good growth, for a Faith which is supposed to be universal, and outside of which there is no salvation!

In the best records which I have seen, the report is that last year in this country there were 116,000 converts to Catholicism. That is a very weak record! That is only two and one-half converts per priest, since there are 45,000 priests in the United States.

I am sure that that average would not have satisfied Saint Ignatius of Loyola! I do not think that he would have

said to Saint Francis Xavier: "See if you can fill your quota of two and one-half Indians!"

What did Saint Francis Xavier do? He went over to India, not because he thought that Christianity would be a nice thing for the Indians to have – a favorable way to salvation in case they were interested, or a nice scheme for their sincerity. Saint Francis Xavier went over to India because, as he said in his prayer: "Behold, O Lord, how to Thy dishonor Hell is being filled with these souls..."

Saint Francis Xavier went to India to give the Indians the Blessed Eucharist, Our Blessed Mother, the Seven Sacraments, the forgiveness of sins. All alone, Saint Francis Xavier spread the Catholic Faith in India. He went next to Japan, and his labors there were so beautiful that three Japanese boys, who had become Jesuits, suffered martyrdom for the Faith which Saint Francis Xavier brought to them. They became saints, and the Church now refers to them as Paul, John and James, on their feast-day!

Saint Francis Xavier said: "Would to God the Faith could get into Japan before the decadent Western culture gets in!" When he had finished his work in Japan, Saint Francis Xavier headed for China, but he never reached there. He died on the Island of Sancian, with his hands outstretched towards China – this former professor at the University of Paris, whom Saint Ignatius had called out of the classroom in order that he might preach the doctrine of salvation. There is scarcely a person in the world who has not heard of Saint Francis Xavier.

Why should an American priest be hindered from trying to be like Saint Francis Xavier? Why cannot I say in one little room the story of salvation exactly as he spoke it in three nations?

Saint Francis Xavier died in 1552. A century later, France sent to North America eight wonderful saints, six priests and two lay brothers, all Jesuits. They came over as missionaries to the American Indians. They came, not to improve the American Indians sociologically, not to tell them how to manage their tomahawks, or wear their feathers, or how to make better Indian porridge. They came to tell the Indians that through Baptism and belief in Our Blessed Lord as God, and Our Blessed Mother as God's Mother, and the Blessed Eucharist as God in Food, they could be saved.

Without equipment, without display, these eight Jesuit missionaries made the long, hazardous journey to North America for one purpose: to preach salvation! They came to savage, wild people, who were without tradition, without the benefits of European culture – a people to whom it would be very hard to teach anything.

These eight beautiful, strong Jesuits came over and shed their blood to give to the American Indians Baptism and Truth.

I think it not unfair to say that we are unfortunate here in America in the matter of Catholic apostolate. We have had plenty of time, since the days of the eight North American martyrs, to have had American saints of our own. South America – the South America we are apt to condescend to, to look down upon, because it does not have our material "advantages" – has produced saints: Saint Rose of Lima, Blessed Martin de Porres.

Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, who is called the first American saint, was an Italian, really. She became an American citizen in the last years of her life so that she might more easily do her work here in the United States. Her mission to America was to get Catholic Italian children away from Protestant American influence. "I shall have no peace," she said, "until I have wrested every last infant from Protestant hands."

The eight North American martyrs got from their labors at least one precious flower, a little Indian girl named Kateri Tekakwitha. I said that we have no saints. Maybe Kateri Tekakwitha will be our first. I am anxious for that day to come!

Chapter 12 — The Road to Martyrdom

The greatest lack of charity in the world today, my dear children, is found in the Liberal Catholic treatment of Jesus. This treatment goes on all through the year, but it comes home to one most especially at Christmas. Liberal Catholicism at Christmas is a "Jingle Bells" Catholicism, with no Blessed Mother, and no little Child at her breast. Mary and her Child are exposed to the cold winds of our disregard – they who need our love as they needed the breath of the ox and the ass; as Jesus needed the warmth of the swaddling clothes!

God is lost and forgotten in His own world! Having come to make Himself visible, He is snubbed by the hard hearts of the world and told that they prefer it the other way. They prefer that the visible should not have become visible. And they pretend to get that message out of the mouth of Jesus! They imply that what He came to say need not have been said!

You say, "Father, are you not very hard on the world at large when you feel that so few people get into Heaven? You make the way so narrow and straight!"

Our Lord, not I, said that the way was narrow and straight. But, may I say, the journey is not hard for all that. It is a struggle to get to Heaven. It is a cross-bearing pilgrimage. But there is something beautiful about carrying a cross when you know which road to walk upon. The insufferable burden of the cross is when you do not know which way to carry it: when you come to a crossroads, and the crossroads becomes the cross, not that which is upon your back!

Everyone in the United States, if he wants salvation truthfully and sincerely, knows in the depths of his heart that the Catholic Church is the way. Even when he has not heard the truth of the Church, he has heard the falsehoods spoken about it. He knows it by the manner in which it is slandered and rejected.

I was reading today a prayer written by Saint Thomas More, just before he died, in 1535. Saint Thomas More was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and while he was there waiting for the sentence of execution to be passed on him, he turned to prayer.

Saint Thomas More could not find in the England of his day many who would support him in the dogma for which he was to die. He was given the hold-up question which is always put to us these days: "Are you right, and are all the bishops wrong?"

There was something in Saint Thomas More's stubbornness in the Tower that was a rebuke to the more than thirty bishops in England who would not support him. Actually, we know that there was one bishop, Cardinal Fisher, who did support the doctrine of Papal Supremacy, in defense of which Saint Thomas More was prepared to die. That fact, however, was concealed from Saint Thomas More. The officers of the King deliberately told him that Saint John Fisher had given in. Saint Thomas More thought that he was fighting for the Faith non-episcopally. When it was said to him, "You are going against all the bishops in England," he said, "I have all the bishops in Heaven on my side!"

Saint Thomas More, since he believed that Cardinal Fisher had defected, did go against every bishop in England. And still the Church has canonized Thomas More. The bishops in England had gone into heresy! If the bishops of Saint Thomas More's day could go into heresy, the bishops of our day can go into heresy, too.

If we in Boston are not to learn from Saint Thomas More, then I ask you, by God in Heaven, why do we have a church dedicated to him right in the center of the city? Is not the Church teaching as much through that canonized loved one, as through the Question Box in the local diocesan paper?

Does not the Church teach by her canonizations? Does not the Church teach the Jesuits, for example, whom they should follow when it makes two Jesuits, Saint Peter Canisius and Saint Robert Bellarmine, Doctors of the Church?

Before I go on to speak of Christmas and the liturgy of Christmas, I am minded to say to you, very, very strongly, that the Church is still teaching that there is no salvation outside it. It is teaching this doctrine in all its prayers, in all its abjurations of heresy, and in the kind of Catholic it is willing to call a success in Heaven.

The canonized Catholics are always conspicuous for their orthodoxy. The saints are never the Liberal Catholics; never the easy, careless, mundane minds. The latter may prevail locally for a while. They may be editors or assistant editors of diocesan newspapers. They may write a column in the press, or appear on the radio, or television. But the kind of mind which the Church guards and preserves and gives to us for example, is the kind of mind that says what Saint Thomas More said in the last year of his life, when he was preparing for his beautiful martyrdom:

Teach me, O Lord, to be joyful of tribulations,
To walk the narrow way that leadeth to life...

If it is a narrow road, then not great crowds are pouring over it. One, therefore, could walk that way, if one walked with the steps of a child!

That brings me to a second point, and to a thought that has been in my mind this Christmas season. I have been thinking of how beautifully the Catholic Church arranges Christmas week.

The liturgists in the Church, in our day, have come to be those men who feel that when dogma is aesthetic, it is then *de fide*; or, in other words, when it is attractive decoratively, it has then been defined! They skim off the liturgy from the Faith and leave all the, I might say, hard, cold, challenging, monotonous, heavy, beautiful, silent, unobtrusive truths, behind.

If these men, these modern liturgists, were to have arranged Christmas week, I am certain that they never would have ordered the feasts of the Church so that the priest would go from white vestments for the Mass of Christmas to red vestments on the very day after Christmas, for the Mass of a martyr saint!

I know these aesthetes! I unfortunately lingered in their territories too long in the days when I was urged to be America's leading Catholic versemaker! I can almost hear them say: "Oh, can't the martyrs wait until after the Epiphany? We have just gone over to Bethlehem to see the Baby, and you turn us on to Stephen and his stoning immediately, the day after!"

The very day after the birthday of the silent, hidden little Baby Who is God – the day after this Divine challenge to the world – the Church gives us for our reflection and veneration a man cast out of the city and stoned by the Jews because he believed that this Baby, lying on straw in a cave, breathed on by an ox and an ass, and wrapped in the clean, warm, woolen clothes His Mother had prepared for Him, was God. The Church celebrates, the day after Christmas, the death of its first martyr, Saint Stephen.

You see, Christmas does not stay in soft territory for too long, does it?

The second day after Christmas is the feast of Saint John, the beloved disciple, who was also a martyr. The only reason the priest wears white vestments on this day is because the martyrdom of Saint John is celebrated on another day. Saint John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. That was martyrdom indeed, and Saint John deserves to be called a martyr, even though he was miraculously preserved from death and died of love, as an old man. The priest is urged to wear white vestments, on the second day after Christmas, for a white-haired old man, the last of the Apostles to die.

The third day after Christmas is the feast of the Holy Innocents, which commemorates the slaughter of so many little infant boys for the sake of Jesus. You might say, "Why don't you hush up these noisy Jewish babies until our songs get sung and our Christmas carols are finished?" "No," says the Church, "this is the way I want it: Rachel, bewailing her children!" . . . Rachel was buried near the place where the Holy Innocents were martyred.

Having staggered through these three days of Christmas week, with Stephen stoned, John in and out of a cauldron of boiling oil, and the Holy Innocents slaughtered, we come, on the fourth day, to Saint Thomas à Becket – another martyr! He is called à Becket, and not just Becket, because in his day – which was shortly after the Norman invasion – the little French connectives were still put in English names.

Thomas à Becket is the great Archbishop of Canterbury who was killed in his Cathedral for the dogmas of the Faith. As he entered his Cathedral in the evening, at the hour of Vespers, his enemies came to kill him. Saint Thomas forbade his people to defend him with their arms. "The house of God," he said, "must not be defended like a fortress." He walked into the church, and when he was not far from the altar, his murderers overtook him.

They hit him once with a sword. That must have hurt. They hit him harder with a sword. And he was not gone. They hit him again, and the sword broke!

It was a pretty sound beating Saint Thomas got on that head on which a mitre had rested, to show God what a man was willing to suffer for the beliefs in his mind, for the dogmas that make him divine – and not the points of view that make him popular.

We envy this great Saint Thomas of Canterbury. We know it is a beautiful thing to die for the dogmas of the Faith. There is some sense in which you can say that if a Catholic does not know when he is right in his Faith, so that he can stand alone against the world in defense of it, he has not got the Faith at all!

Saint Joan of Arc had to stand alone. Condemned and betrayed by a bishop, she was burned at the stake. Little Bernadette of Lourdes knew that she must stand alone in preserving the message given to her by Our Lady.

We find in Saint Thomas More's meditations, which he made all alone in the Tower of London, the following prayer:

Give me Thy grace, good Lord,
To set the world at nought.
To set my mind fast upon Thee,
And not to hang upon the blast of men's mouths...
To be content to be solitary,
Not to long for worldly company,
Little by little utterly to cast off the world,
And rid my mind of all the business thereof,
Not to long to hear of any worldly things...

Imagine how beautiful a heart must be, how sure it must be in its union with God and the divine company of His Blessed, to say: "I do not want to hang upon the blasts of men's mouths. I want to be content to be solitary, to be glad to be alone."

Saint Thomas More did not mean that he wanted to be alone for loneliness' sake. He did not say, "I want to be lonely." He said, "I want to be content to be solitary" – because: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.)

This is all the more poignant when we remember that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, for love of us, submitted Himself to indignities which neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost ever knew, or could know, in eternity. God the Father was never scourged with ropes. The face of God the Holy Spirit was never spat upon. And neither God the Father nor God the Holy Spirit, in the nature They have in common with the Son in eternity, could die.

Only the Son of God took a human nature, and only He was able to die. He trod the wine press alone. (Isa. 63:3.) "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken Me?" He cried on Calvary, (Matt. 27:46), to let the other two Persons in the Blessed Trinity know the depths of degradation to which one Person of the Divine Three was plunged for the sake of man.

There was one place in the passion of Jesus where an angel comforted Him, and that was in the agony in the Garden. But there was another place where there is no mention of the comfort even of an angel, and that was in the agony on the Cross.

All alone, God died: in the supremest martyrdom that ever could be. We who can die are privileged to die with Jesus. If we die apart from Him, it is a routine death, which even the undertaker will soon forget. If we die for the sake of Him, it is a martyrdom, which even the angels will remember.

But to go back to the birthday of this lonely Jesus. The feast of Saint Sylvester is at the end of Christmas week. He was a Pope. They call him the first great Pope after the Church came out of the catacombs. The conversion of Constantine the Great occurred during his pontificate. Pope Sylvester was the Roman Pontiff during the Council of Nicea, in 325. He died in 335.

I would say that the great message of Christmas week can be summed up in two words: dogmas and martyrs; dogmas for which Catholics should be ready to die, and martyrs which Catholics should be eager to become.

That is our offering to the little Child of Bethlehem, from the world of hardship into which He came. We give Him the whole of our mind in belief, and the full flood of our heart's blood in testimony to that belief.

Americans are generous. They are tired of being generous for the wrong reasons. As an American Catholic

priest, I call them to a new crusade: in which their courage will need to be divine, their suffering will be great, and their victory eternal.