

THE EFFECT OF CATHOLICISM ON THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

Essay delivered at the Arizona-California  
District Convention at Apache Mission (East  
Fork), Whiteriver, Arizona, June 1960 by

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Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, rationalist and freethinker, is said to have turned to one of his ministers of state one day and declared: "I'll believe in religion, if you can show me one modern miracle." "The Jews, your majesty, the Jews," replied the minister. Certainly it seems almost like a miracle that a small people, never more than 15 million in number and now reduced by about a third through Nazi butcheries, should for 3500 years have maintained their religious and racial identities and wielded an influence vastly out of proportion to their numbers in almost every civilized country in the world.

Frederick's minister would have been just as accurate, however, if instead of Jews, he had said "The Catholics, your majesty, the Catholics." For the more than 525 million people - according to the latest figures published in the Official Catholic Directory by P.J. Kenedy and Sons - spread over almost every country of the earth. All these people recognize one supreme authority in the pope, worship day in and day out in almost exactly the same way, look at the great ultimate questions from the same point of view, and maintain their unity in a world where divisiveness - in thought, religion, race, and nationality - is the normal order of things. How can an organization as large as this preserve such a monolithic solidarity for more than 1500 years?

A Protestant, of course, is likely to come up with a quick explanation. The hierarchy of the church does it through legalism, brainwashing, binding of consciences, and instilling of fear. Suppose it does. Can you name another organization that has achieved so much and for so long, even though it uses such

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questionable methods? But the explanation is somewhat too glib anyway. Fear plays a part in every religion - fear of death. Whenever the law is applied - and it must constantly be applied to our flesh - there is fear. In fact the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Besides, the average American Catholic does not impress one as a terrorized, haunted person. Psychiatrists might even call him well adjusted and optimistic.

On their part, Catholics have an equally glib explanation for the greatness of their church. It actually is a miracle, they will insist, because it was created by Christ himself on that day when he spoke to Peter: "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There is no other church than the Roman Catholic. The Lord never said that he would create more than one. In fact the apostle affirms the opposite: "There is one body, and one Spirit, One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all." (Eph. 4,4ff) For proof, behold the power, prestige, size and universality of our church.

If one were to point to the obvious fact that there are other Christian churches and that Catholicism is not therefore as universal as it pretends to be, your Catholic apologist might answer: The Lord promised that the devil would never prevail against the true church, but not that he would not attempt to harass the church with contrary winds of doctrine. He has done that repeatedly through the last 2,000 years and inflicted a great deal of damage.

This might be the place to mention a few of the major "contrary winds of doctrine." Many of them would be considered heresies - or worse - even by Protestants. We shall overlook the various heretical movements of the first centuries and merely refer to the greatest one of them all - Arianism - in the fourth century. Fortunately, though Arianism caused the most violent controversies especially in the eastern church, and though it represented the theological views of whole German tribes, notably the eastern Goths under their bishop Ulfilas, it passed away, seemingly without a scar on the body of Catholicism.

It was an altogether different matter when Mohammedanism, arising in the 7th century, posed the greatest threat in the history of the Christian church. Why this militant religion that spread its doctrines by fire and sword came at a time when Christianity had evangelized the middle east and north Africa remains one of the mysteries of God. True, the Christian church had become effete and ineffective in its own homeland. But humanly speaking, one would not have thought that it deserved to be swept away by the new fanaticism of Islam.

Mohammedanism marched from the Near East across northern Africa, land of the church fathers Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine, advanced through Spain into France, where it was turned back by Charles Martell in 732, then held on to half of Spain for another 800 years. It augmented its gains by conquering Constantinople and southeastern Europe in 1453, and almost at the same time moved eastward in Asia and the East Indies, where the Spanish conquest of the Philippines in 1519 brought it to a halt just a few years after Spaniards had expelled it from western Europe in 1492. As a result of this religious movement there are today over 400 million Moslems, only a hundred million fewer than Roman Catholics. Most of them would undoubtedly have been Christian, had Mohammed never arisen.

Another melancholy event for the true church was the rift between eastern orthodox and Roman Catholics in the 11th century. Yet though the Greek churches are truly schismatics, they are rated by Rome only as dissidents, which probably means that if they were willing to recognize the jurisdiction of the pope, they would have to agree to only slight changes in doctrine to be welcomed with open arms. Such changes might even take care of themselves if they accepted the pope, for he is the supreme arbiter and authority on matters of doctrine and morals and would surely set them straight with the uttermost tact and gentleness, perhaps even allowing their priests the right of a single marriage, as he has done with other eastern rite churches that have come back into the fold. It is said that one of the chief purposes of the

forthcoming general or ecumenical council, the 21st in the history of the church and the first since 1870, is the reunion of eastern dissidents with Rome.

More painful by far was the loss suffered by Rome in the Protestant revolt of the 16th century. A Good Catholic looks upon this event as the most grievous calamity ever suffered by the one true church. Protestants are wholly to blame, of course. Like the eastern churches they are schismatics. Schismatics, according to canon law, are "baptized persons who refuse to be subject to the supreme pontiff or to have communication with members of the church subject to the pope." But Protestants are worse. They are not mere dissidents - the term always applied to the eastern churches, but heretics, and heretics, according to canon law, are "baptized persons who, while retaining the name of Christian, obstinately deny or doubt any of the truths proposed for belief by the divine Catholic faith." (National Catholic Almanac for 1960, published annually by St. Anthony's Guild of Patterson, N.J.)

The Protestant church today numbers about 210 million members. But it is broken into 250 denominations, not counting the divisions, such as synods, within each denomination. Many Protestants, besides, are hardly Christians at all, being what Rome calls adherents of "modernism - the synthesis of all heresies." This splintering of Protestant forces is absolute proof to Catholics that breaking away from the one true church does not pay. It brings a curse upon itself. But it is also the reason for a great deal of optimism, not to say gloating, among Catholics. It demonstrates that Protestantism is crumbling, while the Catholic church is gaining in power and prestige. And it means that the road to reunion is virtually a one way street. Suppose the Catholic church did want to meet us halfway. She would have to be traveling over 250 roads. Which would be the right one? Isn't it logical then for Protestants to unite and take the one road that leads to Rome?

Nevertheless the melancholy fact remains that Catholic Rome is not actually the universal church it claims to be. Outside the fold are the 130 million eastern Orthodox and the 210 million Protestants - a total of 340 million. Besides these there are millions of so-called "modernists," who have dropped away from both

Catholic and Protestant churches but are far closer in spirit to the latter than to Catholicism. Among them are some of the most brilliant and prominent people in the world. They altogether outshine the Catholics scholars and poets, whom the Roman church loves to parade before the eyes of the world. Yet in spite of these large groups, the Catholic church can still say: We outnumber all heretics, dissidents and modernists. And we will continue to increase while they decrease.

Thus far we have spoken only about the astounding size and solidarity of the Catholic church. One could go on into great detail with statistics to make the phenomenon appear even more impressive. Not all people, however, accept all Catholic statistics at face value. Protestant churches as a rule count only their professed membership, whereas Romanists count all their souls. The hierarchy pads the figures for various reasons and always operates on the theory: once a Catholic, always a Catholic. When one remembers that Pope Pius IX in 1873 during the German Kulturkampf reminded the German Emperor that as a baptized Christian, even though a Protestant, he rightly belonged under the pope's jurisdiction and could not therefore sanction any measures that impaired the standing of his spiritual Lord and sovereign, one may get an idea of the thinking behind some of the statistics. In his chapter on "The Church and Medicine" in the book American Freedom and Catholic Power, Paul Blanshard argues that the same kind of thinking obtains in Catholic hospitals. The priest in such a hospital is considered the divinely appointed guardian of each soul in the hospital. And Catholic nuns and nurses are conscience bound to aid him in asserting his guardianship. That has gone so far in a few cases that Catholic nurses have refused to call in a Protestant pastor or a Jewish rabbi to minister to a dying person. I know that in the Catholic hospital (since 1962 the Watertown Memorial Hospital - non-sectarian) at Watertown, Wisconsin, there have been what one might call physical fights over souls of the dying. In one case a Lutheran doctor booted a priest out of the room. The deceased man was buried from the Lutheran church in this case, but

the nuns insisted that Lutherans got only his body, whereas they had got his soul. It should be mentioned that this particular man was a Lutheran convert from Catholicism. The question now would be: How many people of this kind are added to the roster of Catholic members?

My own impression, for whatever it is worth, is that the figures don't lie - at least not much, and that we really are face to face with an organization of tremendous size, power, and influence. The outward evidence alone is impressive - the vast structures - churches, cloisters, hospitals, schools - that strike the eye in every part of the country; the pomp and ceremony that receive more and more attention in newspapers and picture magazines; the frequent huge donations of living and the bequests of dying Catholics, the growing political influence, the secret admiration of non-Catholics, who are taken in by the success of the church - after all nothing succeeds like success.

A cursory study of a book like the National Catholic Almanac, which has been published for over half a century annually by the St. Anthony's Guild of Paterson, New Jersey, gives one an idea of the range of Catholic activity, membership, achievement, and one might add ambition. There is a mine of material in its nearly 700 pages. There are Who's Whos of famous Catholics both in our country and in the modern world - including all the converts; there are lists of Catholic officials, of saints and their claims to sainthood, of institutions and orders all over the world. You can find out how many times Mother Mary appeared to humans - usually children under ten - how many retreat stations there are in this country and how many people attend them annually - 300,000 men and 100,000 women, in case you are interested; California and Wisconsin each have 13 official retreats, Arizona only one. The acts of the popes and their memorable announcements are also chronicled. There are glossaries of doctrinal and ecclesiastical terms, for Catholics have divided and subdivided all simple concepts like faith or piety until there are dozens of categories, each of which has

acquired a kind of tradition and requires a long definition. Ex: venial and mortal sins. Law vs evangelical counsel (supererogatory works).

## II

So much then for size and range and prestige and power. Now let us turn to less outward things, to what Jaroslav Pelikan in his recent book calls the "Riddle of Roman Catholicism" or what Cecily Hastings, an Englishwoman writing one of the Canterbury books about her faith, calls the "Point of Catholicism." Perhaps we can begin our discussion with Miss Hastings' interesting string of ideas usually associated with Catholicism: No divorce - no birth control - anticommunist - must go to Sunday mass - the real presence in the tabernacle - Easter duties - fish on Friday - praying to our Lady - Lourdes, Fatima - in mixed marriages the children must be Catholics - prayers for the dead - gaining indulgences - miraculous medals - scapulars - rosary beads - mortal sins and venial sins - parochial schools - the church and spiritualism - the church and fashions in dress (these last two seem to be less prominent in America than in England) - the church and films - don't read the sensational press, read a Catholic paper - the pope is infallible. And we might add others: raffles, bingo games and carnivals to raise money - statuettes on dashboards of automobiles to prevent accidents - masses before football games and huddle prayers on the field - blackrobed nuns with white bonnets in schools and hospitals - black garbed priests - celibacy considered a higher and more God pleasing state than marriage - Catholic candidates for the presidency - the Vatican as a miniature state receiving ambassadors from 45 countries, but not from ours - stations of the cross - eucharistic congresses - Gregorian music - church art and architecture - Thomas Aquinas - manifold, colorful vestments and an ornate liturgy (nearly 700 priestly actions in an average high mass) - no reading of the Bible without permission from authorities - absolute monarchical form of government, with the pope lord over bishops, the bishops lord over priests and owners of all church property, and the priests the spiritual lords over the people.

Had one lived at Luther's time one could have added still others: unabashed sale of indulgences for money - worship of endless numbers of relics (the Castle Church at Wittenberg had nineteen thousand) - endless festival days, with vigils the night before - pilgrimages to shrines - processions - monasteries filled with restive monks and nuns who were dreaming of marriage and business out in the world.

All these are of course again outward manifestations of an inward point or essence. The essence goes back to Christ: to His institution of the church and His commission to the apostles. To the apostles he gave the power to remit and to retain sins, but only to one of them he had spoken: Feed my lambs! Feed my Sheep! To only one he had said: On this rock I will build my church. That one was Peter, head of the apostles, and therefore presumably of the early church. From him the power was transferred by apostolic succession to the bishops of Rome and to the priests under them. But if you have followed this argument thus far you have already made two great mental jumps that you can bridge only by relying on legend. For even if Peter did come to Rome - again Protestant scholars, two famous ones, Hans Lietzmann and Oscar Cullmann, have made it seem probable that he died a martyr's death there under Nero - even if these suppositions be admitted as facts, there is still no proof that Peter was pope of the apostolic church or that the Roman bishops were the successors of Peter and popes of the whole Christian church. That special position of the Roman bishop came centuries later and was obviously the result of historical circumstances. The bishop of Rome inherited both the power and prestige of the emperors of Rome. For centuries the world had considered that city mistress of the world. When Constantine in an effort to save the unity of the empire transferred his capital to Byzantium - an action, incidentally, that hastened its dissolution - the Roman bishops stepped into the vacuum thus created, for most of the western emperors after that time were either weaklings or heathen.



Fortunately, the Roman bishops usually knew what to do with their growing power. They developed a gift of leadership that has continued down to the present day. They were the levelheaded, orthodox churchmen of the great theological controversies, in which the eastern bishops often lost their heads. By the time of Gregory the Great, around 600, there was in fact only a single man who could be considered the ruler of western Christendom, and that was Gregory himself. In the dark ages that followed, the pope was looked up to as the bulwark against heathenism and the symbol of unity against heathen tribes for assistance, against tribal and national divisiveness. To be sure, he sometimes needed help and by instinct he seemed to know which were the best ones to call on. He buttered up Pippin, father of Charlemagne, by anointing him "king of the Franks by grace of God," and Pippin returned the compliment by chasing back the Lombards. Pippin also gave the pope certain territories in Italy that became the foundation of the papal states. Charlemagne twice rescued the pope and was in return crowned emperor of the West on Christmas day, 800.

By that time the so-called two sword theory of papal rule was already a reality, though the doctrine was not enunciated until the 12th century by people like St. Bernard and John of Salisbury. As you know, it is based on Luke 22:38: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them. It is enough." One of its clearest formulations, by Pope Boniface VIII (d. 1303), is quoted by Pelikan and runs as follows:

We are taught by evangelical words that in this power of Peter's are two swords, namely spiritual and temporal... Each is in the power of the Church, that is, a spiritual and a material sword...The latter, indeed, must be exercised for the Church, the former by the Church. The former by the hand of the priest, the latter by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest. For it is necessary that a sword be under a sword, and that temporal authority be subject to spiritual power.

Operating on this theory, the great popes of the Middle Ages fought a continuing battle with the emperors and emerged triumphant. The result was the closest possible union of church and state in every Catholic country down almost to the

beginning of the 20th century. In fact, the pope was the worldly ruler of a large area in central Italy known as the papal states and including Rome. His territories were generally conceded to be the most backward and worst ruled in Europe. That did not harm his position as a temporal ruler, however. He felt he needed this worldly kingdom to demonstrate his independence of any other worldly power. And his overlordship was more or less recognized by sovereigns in every Catholic state, even though some of them treated him rather shabbily at times. Napoleon, for instance, tried to make a choreboy out of Pius VII. This pope "crowned" him emperor, but Napoleon grabbed the crown and placed it on his own head. When Napoleon later took the papal states away from Pius, the latter excommunicated him and was in turn arrested by the emperor and kept a prisoner for three years. But he lost none of his prestige and was stronger than ever when Napoleon's star fell. In 1870 the papal states were once more taken away from the pope - this time by the Italian patriots, and as it turned out permanently. Pope Pius IX in protest declared himself a voluntary prisoner in the Vatican. His four successors followed this example until in 1929 Pius XI and Mussolini made a concordat, by which the pope gave up his claims to the papal states and Mussolini, representing the Italian state, recognized him as sovereign of the tiny Vatican state. So the pope is still a worldly potentate, though on a restricted basis. By relinquishing most of his worldly kingdom and concentrating on things of the spirit, the pope actually gained in power and prestige. His influence today is greater than ever.

By a coincidence he gained his greatest ecclesiastical power in the very year that he lost his temporal kingdom. I refer to the doctrine of papal infallibility, which was railroaded through the Vatican council, the 20th ecumenical council, in 1870 against strong opposition. A group of some 100,000 Old Catholics, who are spread chiefly through the Germanic countries of central Europe, left the church

at that time as a result of the controversy. Incidentally, a doctrine like that of infallibility is never passed unless it has already been accepted by the vast majority of Catholics. There was really nothing new in it. Popes for a thousand years had laid claim to it and acted upon it. But there had been formidable movements against it too, one being the so-called conciliar movement of the 14th and 15th centuries, according to which a council is above a pope. But that movement had long since passed, and anyway popes had never paid any attention to it. The 19th council, at Trent - the one that passed its judgments upon Protestantism - had been under the domination of popes. Now in 1870 all doubt was finally removed.

This doctrine of infallibility is a rather intangible one. By virtue of it a pope is infallible when he speaks on matters of doctrine or morals *ex cathedra* - meaning from his official throne. But the vicars of Christ have been very careful not to speak out too plainly on controversial questions, lest events prove them to be wrong. And when they have gone off the deep end, as even popes sometimes do, Catholics immediately point out that the holy father wasn't speaking *ex cathedra*. As a matter of fact the pope has spoken *ex cathedra* only once since 1870, and that was just ten years ago when he declared it as absolute truth and official church doctrine that Mary had physically ascended into heaven. This doctrine was only the official expression of what Catholics had believed for a long while. Anything else you hear a pope say is merely his own opinion. It usually carries a great deal of weight, coming from him. The faithful tend to think that everything he says is the gospel truth. And outsiders certainly get the impression that he is speaking unconditionally when, for instance, he prohibits Catholics from voting for any Communist candidates the world over. Yet in the last analysis such decisive statements are personal opinion, or ecclesiastical policy, but not infallible truth. Thus when Pius XII in an encyclical letter of April 12, 1950 stated that the account given in Genesis was not necessarily unreconcilable with Darwin's theory of evolution

and when a year later in an address to the Pontifical Academy of Science, he set the date of creation at from five to ten billion years ago, a strict Catholic whom I know well at first shook his head and refused to believe that such a statement has been made. But when I showed him a long article on the subject in the Milwaukee Journal of November 23, 1951, giving a resume of the pope's speech, this Catholic merely said: "Mr. Pacelli is wrong this time. His own private opinions may be just as fallible as mine." I need hardly add that when Mr. Pacelli or Mr. Roncalli (usually called John XXIII) speaks from his throne as successor of Peter, his statements must be accepted as fact by every member of his flock.

If papal infallibility is the keystone in the arch of Catholic power, it is just as true to say that the hierarchy of the church represents all the supporting lower stones. The priest and the bishop are in their way even more important than the pope. It is the priest around whom centers the sacrament of orders. When he is ordained he is endowed with that indelible divine power that enables him to conduct a mass, which in essence means that he has the semi-magical power of changing the elements of bread and water into the body and blood of Christ. This ordination has come down through the laying on of hands and holy prayers in direct line or apostolic succession from the apostles. But there is another essential ingredient in ordination called the correct intention. When in the late 19th century the Anglo-Catholics in the Anglican church asked Pope Leo XIII to recognize them as properly ordained priests and make room for the Anglican church within the Catholic fold, Leo XIII thought long and profoundly on the subject. He could not very well deny that their ordination had come in one unbroken line from the Catholic church of the 16th century. But on the other hand he didn't want to recognize any Protestant ordination as valid. He finally came up with this answer: Anglican ordination had been vitiated because it lacked the proper intention. It was not given for the

purpose of conveying the power to perform the mass. Therefore each ordination would have to be done over in the right way by Roman Catholic bishops.

The bishop differs from the priest only in this that the power of ordination is more fully realized in him. "A bishop possesses the fullness of priestly power." The difference is not in kind but only in degree. Within the borders of his diocese the bishop is "a little pope." He confirms the children, ordains his clergy, assigns them to their charges. makes his own rules for his flock, tells them, for instance, whether they can play bingo or not and how much meat they can eat during Lent.

Viewed from the outside, the Roman hierarchy is a completely authoritarian system - a tyranny, as Protestants have often called it. But that is hardly judging it fairly. I think that the real character of the system is more accurately portrayed in a paragraph that I shall quote from Jaroslav Pelikan's prize-winning volume, "The Riddle of Roman Catholicism." What Pelikan says about the relationship between parish member and priest would be equally true of that between priest and bishop and between bishop and pope:

Many parishes in Western Europe and in America today are proof that priestly authority is not irreconcilable with pastoral concern. Throughout the life of such a parish, neither anticlericalism nor intimidation, but mutual regard is the rule. The devotion of the faithful to their priest is a beautiful thing for any Christian to behold. It is a devotion born of sharing with him the most crucial experiences of life, yet it is characterized by a relaxed good humor and a salty wit. Laymen in such a parish learn to distinguish between the man and the office. They acknowledge the authority of the priestly office regardless of the man; but when the man is dedicated and helpful, they develop a relationship with him that goes beyond the official one. Then he is the bearer not only of the church's authority, but also of its parental love; and his people find it altogether natural to fall him "father."

Is this painting the picture too idealistically? Perhaps so. But no one can deny that a great deal of the strength of the Roman church lies in this hierarchical system of priests and bishops, with the pope at the top. This system was not foisted upon helpless people from without. It grew naturally from within during the

course of history in answer to practical needs. It seemed the most reasonable and efficient way of providing for them. But it is not only a system of government. Remember that it claims to be based on the command of the Lord Himself. It is in fact a spiritual power, as Bismarck found out when during the Kulturkampf of the 1870's and 1880's he tried to counteract it with governmental edicts and police power. In order to fight it one needs another spiritual power - a greater one, the one Luther applied from the Bible.

### III

Having now depicted the hierarchy as a source of the strength of Catholicism, I turn to the liturgy, as another equally significant source of strength. I am using liturgy in the widest sense now, including in it not only the mass, but the seven sacraments, church music, art, and architecture and those secondary forms of piety known as novenas, rosaries and the benediction of the blessed sacrament; also the so-called sacramentals like blessed palms, candles, medals, scapulars, holy water, and such rites as blessing of fields or ships or domestic animals. Perhaps the following anecdote will illustrate how important this aspect of church life can be. It was told by a Protestant chaplain who himself experienced it on the bloody beachhead of Anzio, about 25 miles south of Rome, some time during the three months of desperate fighting there early in 1944. Before one of the attacks it happened that both he and a Catholic chaplain came to the front to hold brief services and to comfort the soldiers in a grim hour. The Protestant merely gathered his soldiers around him, opened his Bible, read from it, then spoke and prayed. Many of his flock looked wistfully at what was happening on the Catholic side. A makeshift altar was set up, sacred vessels and candles were set on it, and soon congregation and priest were going through all motions of the mass, crossing themselves, kneeling, responding, praying and at last partaking of the sacrament. All this activity in itself relieved the tension of the hour and helped the men to

concentrate on their worship, something that this chaplain felt was missing in his service. For liturgy is a kind of visualization of religion, the giving of a local habitation and a name to difficult concepts like faith, duty, worship.

There is obviously a deep need in human nature for what one might call these paraphernalia of religion. If one has been brought up in a liturgical church they become a kind of habit, a groove, a crutch, without which worship is difficult and exceedingly bare. I have often heard it said that Catholics consider Protestant churches naked and empty, compared with theirs. There is no doubt that the Catholic church has gone overboard in catering to this human need. The music, the altars and images, the stations of the cross, the incense, the chanting, the hundreds of priestly motions, the praying of the rosary are instances in point. The whole Catholic mass is a drama, a pageant that will outshine any secular show, and it is repeated every Sunday - every day in fact - the world over during every minute of the 24 hours. Catholics like to boast that because of the time changes on our globe, mass is really continuous. And thereby they say is fulfilled the verse of Malachi, 1,11: (I will quote it first from the Catholic Bible) "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." In the King James version, the words sacrifice and oblation are missing, though incense occurs: "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering."

It would be a sad mistake to consider this drama of the mass mere outward show. Wrong it may be in its theology, but it is not superficial mummery. It is a heroic attempt to make the presence of God felt among men. In Catholic thought it is a kind of pipeline, through which flow the blessings of forgiveness, comfort and spiritual strength direct from heaven. The church has therefore made it a

mortal sin not to attend mass. To do less would be to despise God's greatest gift. The very thought of the mass awakens a feeling of devotion and of awe in the faithful. You may remember with what fear and trembling Luther read his first mass. The thought of calling God down upon the altar almost overwhelmed him. And he kept up the practice of elevating the sacramental host for 25 years after he had introduced the Reformation. It was not until 1543, three years before his death, that he finally yielded to the arguments of his own followers and ceased to do what with him had not been an adoration of the transubstantiated elements but merely a token of honor to the sacrament.

Protestants, however, have less favorable views of this proliferation of the liturgy. We feel that this was not the emphasis given by Christ and the Apostles. The direction of Christ to go into one's chamber away from the public view to pray; his own practice of retiring to the hills to commune with His Father; his simple reading of the scroll of Isaiah and commenting on it in the synagogue at Nazareth; his injunction to his disciples to be servants and to go out on their preaching missions without scrip or purse; his rebuke of the Pharisees with their ceremonial washings, their rigid observance of the Sabbath, their wearing of phylacteries, their public prayers; his attack on the money-changers in the temple and the flaming words: My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have called it a den of thieves; and his beautiful comment: John 4,24: "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" - all these seem to strengthen our view of worship, as does the absence of directions about liturgy in the Bible. One of the chief activities of early Protestants therefore was to cleanse the church of all this ritual and to bring it back to what supposedly was the simplicity of apostolic times. The Puritans in the 16th and 17th centuries were especially violent against what they called idolatry and popery in the service.



They stripped their churches of pictures and organs, would not tolerate man made hymns, but only rhymed psalms, and forbade the observation of Christmas day.

Luther himself never yielded to this temptation, though certain Lutheran churches did. Those of you whose fathers or grandfathers came from Swabia may have heard that the Swabian Lutheran service consisted of little more than reading of Scripture, preaching and prayer. When a somewhat richer liturgy was being introduced in one of the Swabian congregations of southern Wisconsin, the Lutheran farmers rose in arms against what they called this verfluchte Lotterie, this cursed lottery, meaning liturgy. As a general rule, however, I believe that our Lutheran liturgy represents a kind of golden mean between too much and too little. That it could stand improvement was shown 20 years ago when the Lutheran Hymnal was published. That book introduced a richer liturgy, and the tendency today is to enrich the liturgy still more, for instance, by using the orders for matins and vespers, which you will actually find in our Hymnal but which are rarely used.

Besides the basic service of the mass, the Catholic church, as already mentioned, has dozens of secondary forms of piety (novenas, rosaries, "benedictions of the sacrament," retreats and the practices that have arisen out of the piety of the tabernacle). The tabernacle is the receptacle on the altar into which the sacramental body of Christ, the bread, is set aside or reserved. So realistically is the sacramental miracle understood that the reserved bread is said to be Christ himself. If a church is afire, a priest will endanger his life - as one actually did in Wisconsin - to rescue this tabernacle from the flames. Pelikan comments on the sentimentality and tastelessness of some of the practices that have arisen around this piety of the tabernacle. At the end of a novena (novena means a nine day devotion) there is a rite known as "putting Jesus to bed" in which as the tabernacle

is closed, the lights are dimmed and the congregation sings the lullaby "Good Night, Sweet Jesus."

It should be added that many bishops and priests try to wean their members away from this maudlin religiosity. Others, however, encourage it. In fact the whole Mary cultus, which to a Protestant is the extreme of sickening sentimentality, seems to be a step in the wrong direction. Certainly it is the great stumbling block for Protestants. But Romanists are headed for the deep end in this respect. The last two papal ex cathedra pronouncements concerned Mary - her immaculate conception in 1854 and her ascension into heaven in 1950. And there are widespread predictions that soon she will be declared co-redemptrix with her Son. Well, maybe things have to get worse before they can get better, and one way to make a thing impossible is to reduce it to an absurdity.

Apart from the Mary cultus and other sentimental aspects of piety, there exists within the Catholic church a laudable scholarly interest in the study of liturgy. Some of the best things written in the field are by Catholics. The revival of the beautiful Gregorian music around the turn of the century, the encouragement of good art and architecture, and even the efforts of bishops and popes to increase lay participation in the church service - by congregational singing, for instance, - are all to the good. I may add that some of these studies - one might even call them movements -- are having a very noticeable effect on certain Protestant churches, including our own. And already one hears protests against creeping Romanism in Lutheran church life.

One final question might be asked. Where did the Catholic church pick up its elaborate liturgy? A well-informed Catholic will of course answer that it all goes back to the tradition established by the apostles themselves, and perhaps before the apostles by God in the Old Testament. They will refer to various Scripture passages, one referring to prayers for the dead (2 Mac 12: 39-44), another to anoint-

ing of the sick with oil (James 5,14), to the laying on of hands in ordination, or to various practices observed at gatherings of Christians - prayers, love feast and holy communion. Much, he will admit, has been added by the church as custodian of worship. Every smallest item has some meaning. The vestments of the clergy are in a way an epitome of the garments of many ages, so that the past lives in the present in the person of the priest in the chancel.

The liturgy seems to have been elaborate already at an early date. And there is no doubt that there are a good many purely heathen practices incorporated in it. That is not reprehensible in itself, since it may be merely a pouring of Christian content into heathen forms. Christmas was originally a midwinter holiday, part of a heathen fertility cult which aimed at bringing back the life-giving sun once more. But it was thoroughly Christianized. On the other hand the Mary cult probably arose from the heathen worship of various goddesses at the beginning of the Christian era. Ishtar, the Babylonian Venus, and Isis, the Egyptian goddess, called the universal mother, certainly both present many striking parallels to the later figure of the Madonna. And in this case, perhaps the heathenism was never quite removed.

Much of the liturgy also derives from Jewish practices current at the time of the early church. The recent discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls shows us how an extremist Jewish sect - the Essenes - lived shortly before and after the beginning of the Christian era. The ceremonies in connection with their meals resemble those surrounding the Catholic sacrament. Others parallel those of later Christian monasticism. I quote from the English oration given at the Northwestern College commencement two weeks ago and reprinted in the Black and Red: "One scholar has commented that these 'little people never came out of the bathtub.' Every time they thought, spoke or saw anything unclean, they had to take a ritual bath." Now

actually the early monks were noted for the very opposite. They never bathed because they considered it a sin to expose the body. But there was the same concern about ritual in both groups. The scrolls throw a good deal of light on the Jewish antecedents of the Catholic liturgy. It certainly was compounded of many elements and it certainly serves as one of the bulwarks of the Catholic Church. To its devotees it is a source of strength. Outsiders are both repelled and impressed by it.

#### IV

Now I should like to speak briefly on one other source of Catholic strength - theology, which involves the Catholic attitude both toward Scripture and tradition. Theology is the most important of the three I have mentioned, for it is the doctrine about God's plan of salvation in Christ, and like Christ Himself it is the cornerstone of the church. In its long history Roman Catholicism has produced some of the greatest theologians of the church. The eastern Greek church fought most of the early battles for an orthodox theology. The Nicene creed, one might say, is its achievement. But the western or Roman church always recognized what was orthodox and helped it to achieve the victory. From about 400 to the time of Luther Roman Catholic theology was normative for the church. Looking back over nearly two milleniums, one might say that it was greatest during two centuries nearly a thousand years apart. In the century between 350 and 450 it produced a Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin; an Ambrose, who became the father of liturgy and hymnology; a Pope Leo, first of the great papal statesmen; and an Augustine, greatest of its theologians.

Then in the 13th century - the perfect century in the opinion of nostalgic Catholic scholars and churchmen - papal might reached its apogee in Innocent III, Gothic architecture arose in northern France, Francis and Dominic founded the

preaching and ministering orders, Thomas Aquinas systematized the body of Christian doctrine in his "Summa Theologica," and at the end of the period Dante presented the complex of medieval Catholicism in his "Divine Comedy." Since the Reformation the most notable products of Catholic theology are the resolutions of the Council of Trent, which sat at intervals between 1545 and 1563, and the work of the Italian Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine (d. 1621).

Today Thomas Aquinas' theology is considered the norm of Catholic doctrine. What Thomas tried to do was to combine reason with revelation, the one reinforcing the other. For the reasonable side of his theology he used the system of logical thought invented by Aristotle, one of the most profound minds in all history. Incidentally our great Lutheran theologians, the so-called dogmatists of the 17th century - Calov, Gerhard and Quenstedt - used this system too. It is considered rather arid and intellectual but it is sharp and clear. While one can hardly in a few words give an idea of what it is like, the fact is that perhaps unknowingly we may be using it even in our confirmation instruction. Take the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. If you speak of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine, or especially if you are describing the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, you are really harking back to an Aristotelian and for that matter Thomistic distinction between substance and accidents, the substance being the real presence and the accidents being merely the outward look of the bread and wine. But take the doctrine of the ubiquity of the body of Christ, which means the corporeal extension of his body, so that it need not only be sitting at the right hand of the Father, as Calvin insisted, but is extended everywhere through space and may therefore be present in the Lord's Supper. Luther used this philosophical concept, which in a way goes back to Aristotle, to enforce his view of the Lord's Supper. Catholics had used it before him. Or one more example to show how a formalized doctrine can be produced out of the simple account of Scripture. Thomas

and other dogmaticians after him, including our Gerhard, using Aristotle's categories, and causes, began to analyze the incarnation of Christ in this manner: The causa efficiens was the Holy Ghost, the causa instrumentalis was the Virgin Mary, the causa formalis was Christ's appearance on earth and the causa finalis was man's salvation.

Thomas Aquinas is without doubt a great thinker, and Catholics have made him out to be even greater than he is. To hear them speak, one would consider him the father of American democracy. One could bring just as many views that show him to be hopelessly medieval. Pope Leo XIII late in the 19th century in a special encyclical raised him to the status of supreme thinker of the church and exhorted Catholic scholars to study him. The saying arose that there were plenty of red hats to be found between the pages of the Summa. Strangely Aquinas has also found a good deal of sympathetic treatment from modern thinkers. The leaders of the Great Books movement, among them Raymond Hutchins formerly president of the U. of Chicago, and Mortimer Adler, former professor, included two bulky volumes of Aquinas among the world's great books. Pelikan finds a reason for this preference: Thomas tried to maintain a balance between faith and reason, between the God of nature and the God of revelation. Since most scientists today deal with the world of human reason and of nature, they naturally are interested. Yet they have also realized that both reason and the natural world of science can not bring answers to satisfy the deepest cravings of man. They therefore are attracted by a view which sees both nature and God in their proper perspective. Thomas also has an appeal for those who desire a definite answer to the ultimate questions - something modernist theologians rarely supply. Incidentally he knew his Bible well and subjected both reason and nature to it. For Protestants, Catholic theology at its worst is contained in the decrees of the Council of Trent. The rigid, ruthless hand of the Jesuit order was in control here.

The result is that the semipelagian doctrine of good works was reiterated, and virtually every doctrine of Luther's was anathematized. The Council launched the forces of the Counter-Reformation, and this movement was highly successful in combating Protestantism.

As you all know, the Catholic church believes in both ecclesiastical tradition as well as in the Scripture. In fact it argues that the Scripture itself is tradition or the result of tradition. "We must not imagine Scripture and Tradition to be like two distinct reservoirs receiving the waters of divine truth from distinct and separate springs," write Father William Leonard and Don Bernard Orchard in a Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture. "There is in a sense but one source of revealed truth, viz., divine Tradition, by which is meant the body of revealed truth handed down from the Apostles through the ages and contained in the doctrine, teaching and practice of the Catholic church. Yet since a large and important part of that revelation was committed to writing both before and after the time of Christ the church is accustomed to speak of two sources of revelation, oral Tradition and Scripture."

The Bible is not a closed book, it is argued. The Holy Spirit is with his church even today, teaching and instructing it. Divine guidance did not end with Revelation. On the other hand divine guidance was there before the New Testament was in existence, for the church is 25 years older than the oldest book of the New Testament. The situation was similar in the Old Testament. Abraham, who called upon the name of the Lord and was called the father of the faithful, lived about 700 years before Moses, author of the first books in the Bible. The church produced the Bible, not the Bible the church. More accurately God produced the Bible through the church, not the church through the Bible. Whenever this argument is used, the understanding is of course that church means Roman church, and while Catholics

object to the word Roman, since it disqualifies the word Catholic or universal, one is justified in using it in this connection, because the Roman church was not in existence before the New Testament.

It is argued, furthermore, that the Bible is a difficult book. The word of God concerning salvation is simple enough for anyone to understand, but the Bible contains much more than that simple revelation. And while some "passages" are so clear that he who runs may read, there are others (as in the Epistle to the Romans) so hard that to tell a beginner, 'Read the Bible' is as unfair as if an elementary school teacher were to say to his class, 'Study Euclid.' The Bible is not an easy book to read. Its gold is given sometimes in nuggets, as in the 23rd psalm or the Sermon on the Mount, but more often it comes in ore to be dug, smelted, and refined." I have quoted this from one of the Catholic Canterbury booklets, but its author, Bruce Vawter, quotes it from the Protestant Interpreter's Bible (vol 1,165).

As a result of its views concerning the difficulty of the Bible, the Catholic church has hesitated to place it into the hands of uninstructed laymen. Bible reading would only confuse them and cause quarrels and divisions. For proof Catholics point to the manifold divisions of Protestantism. If you allow every man to come up with his own interpretations, where will you end? Therefore only those who are trained in theology and Bible study, that is, the hierarchy, have the right to read and interpret the Bible. This paternalistic attitude is an offense to Protestants, who believe in freedom of reading as well as freedom of speech. Granted that there are many stupid interpretations of the Bible, and many differences of opinion. These, we believe, are the price we have to pay for freedom. Besides, the average person is not quite as dense as some think. In the long run he will probably come up with as much common sense even in Bible reading as do the learned. Some of the oddest quirks in doctrine, supposedly based on the Bible, have come out of the heads of the most gifted and educated people. I should add that the



Catholic attitude toward Bible reading has changed somewhat lately. Protestantism is evidently having its influence. Bible reading is now actually urged upon laymen by some bishops. Several new translations of the Bible by Catholic scholars, for instance, by the late English convert Knox, have received wide praise and circulation. No Catholic is ever supposed to read a Protestant translation. Bible scholarship in the Roman church is also flourishing, and some of the best scholars now studying the scrolls are Catholics. In general one may say that the Catholic church places a very great stress on its theology. Its doctrines cover almost every conceivable subject including law, medicine, and its liturgy, art and architecture (gothic, for instance, is a visualization of its doctrine).

V

The time has finally come to draw a few practical conclusions from what I have thus far said about the Catholic church. The first and greatest question is this: How much of a threat does that church offer to American religious freedom and thus indirectly to our church? If you want to hear the gloomiest view I advise you to read Paul Blanshard's book "American Freedom and Catholic Power," second, revised edition, 1958. Actually Paul Blanshard isn't completely pessimistic, but he does believe that there is a real danger. The Catholic church now numbers 40 million members in our country, about 23 percent of the population. It is growing constantly. Part of the increase is due to immigration - a goodly number of DPs are Catholics, and one reason why the MacCarran-Walter law is not being changed is that there are too many people in congress and outside who don't care to make this country Catholic through opening the floodgates of immigration. However, we have no quota restrictions as far as Canadians and Latin Americans are concerned. They may come in if they pass certain qualifications such as having enough money, or being needed for work. In this manner an ever increasing number of Mexicans and some French Catholic Canadians are coming in. Their numbers do not compare, however, with the influx of Puerto Ricans, most of them colored and all Catholic and all citizens.

There is a small increase annually in converts - 100,000 during the last year according to the official estimates. But conversion, as was pointed out in a recent column of the Northwestern Lutheran, is a two way street, and it is quite likely that Protestantism in this country wins more converts from Rome than vice versa. The greatest increase in the Catholic population comes from the explosive birthrate. Catholics are urged to have large families, and they usually do. The result is that they already outnumber all other Americans in a number of states, notably in such former rockribbed Puritan strongholds as Massachusetts and Connecticut. Half of the church members of Milwaukee and Wisconsin are Catholics, and the same holds true for Chicago and San Francisco and Philadelphia, to mention only a few instances.

Newspapers, advertising agencies and business men soon learn to adapt themselves to census figures. Southern Wisconsin, for instance, has always had a large Catholic population. Some 30 years ago, a Washington newspaperman made a scornful remark that Wisconsin congressmen always have to cater to the Catholic and Lutheran cow country. But Catholic prestige is higher today. In Milwaukee, Marquette University tries to assume a kind of cultural leadership. Its medical school has an advantageous tie-up with the County hospital. It puts on a statewide exhibition in science for high school science students each spring together with the Milwaukee Journal. Graduates from its school of journalism knock at the doors of Milwaukee newspaper offices asking for jobs, and they are getting more and more of them. Sometimes the woman's page in one prominent paper almost reads like a Catholic gossip column. Plays in the Catholic colleges, and there are several of them in Milwaukee, receive favorable reviews. Almost never is any news item throwing an unfavorable light on the Catholic church given much play. After all you don't want to offend one half of your readers. To top it all, the niece of the founder of the Milwaukee Journal, a stockholder in the paper, recently endowed a

professorship in the Marquette School of Journalism to the tune of \$300,000. That would seem to perpetuate the link between Jesuitism and journalism in Milwaukee.

Catholic church groups have no compunction in stopping the showing of certain movies or even plays. A few years ago, the Milwaukee YMCA had scheduled the play Family Portrait dealing with the family life of the young Christ. On the whole it is reverent and thought provoking, yet Jesus is shown as having brothers and sisters, children of Mary. Such an idea is anathema to Catholics, who say that the Lord's brothers mentioned in the Bible were his cousins. So Catholics sent an ultimatum, and the play was not given. They also tried unsuccessfully to have a Catholic appointed Superintendent of Public Schools in Milwaukee some years ago. In Chicago they forced the Chicago Tribune television station to cancel the showing of the film on Martin Luther.

We know that the hierarchy is becoming more and more insistent on receiving funds from the state for its parochial schools. It is only the decisions of the supreme court and the sharp protests of non-Catholics that have stopped this drive to combine church and state to the advantage of the Roman church. It need hardly be mentioned in this connection that the union of church and state under church domination is still a cardinal principle of the Roman hierarchy. We have heard that question stated and argued often in this presidential election year, in which one of most prominent candidates is a Catholic. I might as well give you my opinion on a Catholic president. I recognize that those who bring up this subject and think it through are doing a perfectly legitimate, in fact, a very necessary and laudable thing. The idea of condemning a discussion of the religious qualifications of a candidate as prejudice and bigotry is in itself prejudice and bigotry. At the same time, however, I do not think we have anything to fear if Mr. Kennedy becomes president. I believe that he is honest in saying that his

presidential oath would come before any supposed oath of loyalty to the pope. Besides, I don't believe that he would dare to favor the strict papal view of things in opposition to our constitution. One step in that direction would make him impossible and set back the Catholic church for a decade or a quarter century on its path to greater influence. So I think we would be perfectly safe, and if you like Mr. Kennedy, my advice would be to vote for him with a good conscience. I am almost certain, that according to the law of averages, we will have a Catholic president some day, so we might as well face the fact now.

That of course does not mean that his church should not be watched - and most carefully. It isn't that we criticize the Roman church for trying to win back Protestants to the fold. After all, we also try to convert Catholics. But Roman Catholicism is more than a religion. It is also a dominating power. It does not believe in toleration. It does not recognize any truth but its own, or even the right of anyone to hold a truth other than its own. It considers tolerance a necessary evil, to be swept away at the earliest possible opportunity.

One of the favorite arguments of the Catholic friend whom I have already quoted is that Protestant churches have as little freedom of religious belief as Catholics. He referred to the so-called heresy trials, which took place in of all places the United Lutheran church in the Milwaukee area a few years ago. Three ministers were brought before a church tribunal and two, as I remember, were dismissed from the Northwest Synod. They has expressed doubts about the virgin birth of Christ. Therefore, said he, you have no more freedom of religion than we. I tried to show him that freedom of religion, according to the Constitution, meant something else. It meant that I could leave my church and join another for conscience sake without being haled before a court and probably burnt at the stake. Naturally every church, every club, every business firm or factory has certain

standards, which one must live up to if one wants to work within that group. The great thing is to have the right to change. The speaker at the U of Wisconsin commencement this year uttered a pertinent sentence about Russian communists. They believe that all men are equal, and so do we, he said. But they believe in keeping them equal and we do not, and that is the difference. With a slightly different emphasis, I suppose that could spell the difference between Romanist and Protestant, since our whole aim is to make each person a responsible, thinking member of the kingdom of God, to place the Bible into his hands, and actually to give him the right of deciding according to his conscience and his spiritually enlightened understanding whether he wants to accept our church or not. God gave Adam and Eve the right to make such a decision, even though it turned out unhappily.

Paul Blanshard first became interested in the Catholic question because of the church's stand on the population problem. He resented especially its attempts to enforce its own views concerning sex on others by influencing lawmakers and doctors and nurses in hospitals. As we all know, Catholics are death on mechanical aids to birth control, though they do allow the evasion of begetting offspring by what they call natural methods - chiefly the rhythm method and abstinence, the second of which most medical students and psychologists condemn as most unnatural and harmful. No one would object to the position of Catholics on this question. In fact many Lutherans and other too hold a similar view. What is objectionable is the attempt to enforce their views by law and make them mandatory for others who do not share them. Such prohibitory laws are still on the books in the state of Connecticut - and in several others. Blanshard says he has it on good authority that as late as 1926, the Roman Curia was about evenly divided on birth control. But four years later Pius IX "discovered" that Christianity and birth control were incompatible.

The Catholic attitude on sex is a rather complicated, peculiar thing. First of all, though Catholics boast that they have raised marriage to the status of a sacrament, they actually place it below celibacy. This unnatural incomplete way of life has during almost the whole history of the Roman church been glorified as something especially pleasing to God. We beg to differ. Secondly, though in the account of the creation of man and woman in Genesis 2, the Lord God himself says that the reason he created woman was that "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him," Catholic teaching has declared that the sole purpose of sexual relations is procreation. Already in the 13th century holy Thomas Aquinas declared in his Summa Theologica that every carnal act from which generation cannot follow is "a vice against nature." Presumably the church then as now sanctioned the marriages of elderly people who are beyond the childbearing stage. Logically such unions should therefore be called vices against nature. But the point to be made is that at this early date sex had been narrowed down to a single purpose. The late Kaiser, with his Kueche, Kirche, Kinder, Kamerad, representing the range of wifely duties, knew better than that. But what can one expect from a monk like Thomas?

A third feature of the Catholic view on sex is that only a marriage blessed by the church is a marriage at all. Protestant or civil marriages are actually mere adulterous relationships, to be annulled at will, if the occasion arises. Thus while the church is very strict in the matter of divorce, it is easygoing in the matter of annulment. Of course, its position is logical and I suppose it must draw the line sharply in order to enforce that position, but non-Catholics consider it quite objectionable.

Once the church has blessed the marriage - and if you have ever attended a nuptial high mass, you do get the impression that they tie the knot about 50 times - the sole duty of the married couple is to bring young Catholics into the world.

In fact that is the duty of the partners even in a mixed marriage. The Catholic view in this matter runs something like this: The more children the greater the size and eventually the influence of the Catholic church. According to the old saying you can get the better of your opponents by either licking 'em or joining 'em. There is a third way; to outbreed them. But the Catholic looks at the matter in a higher light. The more children born, the greater the number who will share in the eternal bliss prepared by Christ for his church. Many devout Lutherans share this opinion. But Catholics project it too far, for instance, in applying it to what is called therapeutic abortion. In about one out of every 200 - some say in one out of every 65 - pregnancies, something goes completely wrong in the development of the fetus, so that the life of the mother is endangered unless the pregnancy is terminated. In such cases the church has ruled unequivocally that the life of the fetus has superior claim over that of the mother. Even though the former is usually dead or does not have a chance of life, it is to be assumed that it did have life and that it has a soul. It is better that the undeveloped child be given a chance to live even for a while in the body of the mother, or be baptized and thus enter the kingdom of heaven, than that its life be ended. Anyway the mother, though she dies, will save her soul, and that is all that counts. It is the priests that have concocted this unpleasant doctrine, and all protests of non-Catholic doctors have sometimes not availed to counteract it. Patients have had to be removed from Catholic hospitals when a doctor announced that he was going to perform a therapeutic abortion to save a mother's life. Blanshard admits that in one case the rule was changed because of the enraged protests that came into the hospital.

One could go on for a long while talking about Catholics, but perhaps I have said more than enough, or not enough, in spite of all the words. I don't pretend to have solved the riddle of Catholicism. At best I have only restated it, and that only in art. Allow me to make a few observations in conclusion. We all agree that

there is a deep abyss between Catholicism and Protestantism. Yet there are many in our day on both sides who have hopes that the abyss may one day be bridged. We have heard that Catholics and Lutherans in Germany were brought together more closely during and after World War II, Lutherans even offering their churches to Catholics who had lost theirs.

A German priest, Karl Adam, has written books to bring about the mutual understanding that might in the end lead to a reunion. One of his observations amused me. He was trying to reassure married Protestant ministers that they would not be left out in the cold in case they returned to the mother church. That mother is kind and gracious and would, he said, find lesser jobs for them outside the chancel or at least away from the altar, but still within the church organization. I don't think it would be a great source of comfort to any Protestant minister to ring the bell or carry the candles for celibate celebrants, officiating at masses or extreme unctions. This man Adam spoke at the seminary at St. Louis, I am told. Later I heard that the late Pius XII rapped him on the knuckles for his well-meant efforts.

I think that most people would testify that Catholics make good neighbors. And I don't think that they are trying to win us over to their church by being friendly. It is a different matter with priests when they are suave and gracious. A man like Msgr. Fulton Sheean can stand as the type of the priest who is ingratiating but unyielding. He can put on a good show. An editorial in the Denver Post of June 16 held him up as a model for religious telecasters. It criticized the Episcopal Bishop Pike for being too controversial on his program. The hierarchy has always taken to heart very seriously the first part of Christ's admonition to be wise as serpents but innocent as doves.

On the Protestant side one also hears a great deal about understanding Catholics, about being fair and tolerant toward them, especially in this election



year. The typical American Protestant likes nothing so much as to have the reputation of being religiously broadminded, of upholding freedom of religion, and of avoiding all bigotry. Yet Protestants would not consider any approach toward Rome, unless Rome were willing to come half way. We Lutherans, I am sure, would insist that the pope come even farther.

My impression, however, is that Protestants and even Lutherans are more kindly disposed to the Roman church than they used to be. We are not really more kindly disposed to the Roman system as such, but toward some of its features, which are being brought into our churches by the back door so to day and after the initial shock are accepted as quite reasonable. These features range all the way from wearing the clerical collar and the cassock to taking part in retreats and even forming a Lutheran monastic brotherhood, as has been done in Michigan. The time has passed when a Lutheran preacher could fill out a poorly prepared sermon by denigrating the pope. The spirit of a book like "The Riddle of Catholicism" by the Lutheran Pelikan is a friendly one.

I was somewhat surprised recently that the opinion was expressed in a group of Lutherans that the pope was not the antichrist. This was shortly after the Union committee had agreed with representatives from the Missouri Synod that this view was still the official doctrine of our church. Great offense was recently taken by a number of our own students when Catholic priests and nuns were ridiculed in a student skit. How will it all end? Will the Roman church actually attract more and more Protestants and finally whole Protestant groups? Or will it come to grief itself in its struggle with Protestantism, communism and modernism? God alone knows the answer.

On April 20-22 fourteen leading American evangelicals gathered for a friendly discussion of Roman Catholicism at Buck Hill Falls, Pa. The opinions they

expressed, as reported in Christianity Today are fair enough yet firm. On the whole they might serve as guiding lines for our attitude toward Rome. I shall quote two of them in closing: "Martin Luther was able to stand up to Rome because of the years of study during which he had saturated himself in Scripture," and "The classic weapons of Protestantism are spiritual." The reality of Christian experience remains the most powerful rebuke to the Roman Catholic mutilation of the grace of God; and the demonstration of sainthood through Christian vocation is still the best refutation of error in Roman teaching." I think that essentially what these men were trying to say is this: To preach and to live the gospel is our classic weapon against the pomp and power and error of Rome, just as it is our weapon against the power and ruthlessness of communism, just as it is our weapon against evil and sin everywhere. It is, besides, the precious gift of God, the strength of the church, and the hope of our own salvation.

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