

sought to practice literally the precepts of Christ and gave what belonged to me to the poor. They said I had gone mad and summoned me to the courts, where their plea won the sympathy of the judges and mine carried no weight. I built a church. My heirs applied for a commission of lunacy and I was put into the insane asylum—and all for obeying the precepts of Christ, whose religion is part and parcel of the law of the land and whose disciples the nation professes to be. I escaped—and here I am—a tramp!

HERETICAL WORSHIP AND THE CHURCH

J. Harding Fisher, S. J., in America

It is a commonplace with Catholics that they may not participate in the form of worship. Many a timid maiden has gone into the arena to be devoured by wild beasts rather than offer incense to pagan gods. Millions of Christians have died violent deaths rather than deny even by an external ceremony their faith in Christ. Countless men, learned and ignorant, prominent and obscure, have sacrificed ambition, preferment, wealth, family and even life itself rather than swerve by a hair's breadth from their duty of professing their full belief in all the things Christ commanded His apostles to teach. They have been considered fools, but they were glad to share in the folly of the Cross; they have been stigmatized as bigots, but their firmness has simply been loyal obedience to the command of Christ. So ingrained in the Catholic character is the conviction that the Faith is the most precious of Divine gifts, to be maintained in its fullness and purity at any cost, that even our children know that they must not participate in heretical worship.

The Church, however, has not failed to emphasize this conviction by legislative enactments. In view of certain discussions, which are rife at present, it may be well to cite one of the many ecclesiastical laws which have to do with this subject. The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office issued a decree on May 10, 1770, a quite recent decree, it is true, as far as the life of the Church goes, but one that had in mind modern conditions, and is in force today as it has been uninterruptedly for the past 147 years. The important part of the text is as follows: "His Holiness has decreed that as a general rule it is illicit for Catholics to be present at the sermons, baptisms and marriages of heretics and schismatics." This is a simple statement of fact. For correct interpretation, it must be borne in mind that the expression, "as a general rule," is not to be understood as implying that Catholics may, now and then take part in heretical worship, provided they do not make a practice of so doing. The words rather lay down a rule of general application, which may not be infringed except in those circumstances where it is clear that there is no intention on the part of the Catholic of participating in non-Catholic services, but merely of performing a social, civil, professional or domestic duty.

A few examples will illustrate this. For instance, a relative or a friend of a bride or groom might be permitted by a confessor to be present at a marriage celebrated in a Protestant church by a Protestant minister; a public official might attend the Protestant obsequies of a public official; a reporter might accept an assignment from his city editor to take down the text of an important Protestant sermon or to collect data concerning an important social function in a Protestant church; a maid might accompany the children over whom she has charge to a non-Catholic Sunday school, if commanded to do so by her mistress; prisoners, soldiers, and sailors might attend public prayers conducted by a Protestant chaplain in a prison, a barracks or on a warship. In all these cases attendance at non-Catholic services, may, under certain circumstances, be considered merely material and not formal, and be understood as such by Catholics and others. It is to be noted, however, that in these cases the Catholic may not take part in the prayers, hymns and other ceremonies of a religious nature, but must act as a mere spectator, observant of the demands of courtesy but not joining in the worship. The discipline of the Church in this matter is very old, for as far back as the time of Tertullian, in the third century, we find explicit directions for the conduct of Catholics, who for one reason or another found it necessary to be present at pagan religious functions.

The material presence is permitted only for grave reasons; the decision moreover, as to whether the reasons are grave enough to warrant attendance is not a matter of individual judgment, but belongs to ecclesiastical authorities, who should be consulted, except in those well defined cases which have been interpreted by a recognized custom or by a previous decision of competent authority. Thus, for instance, the Congregation of the Holy Office decided, April 26, 1894, that students in certain provinces in Russia were not to be permitted to attend services conducted by non-Catholics in the public gymnasiums, even though such attendance was required but a few times a year.

The attitude of the Church in this matter finds an apt illustration in her legislation with regard to marriage. Catholics who are fairly well instructed in their duties and non-Catholics who have an intelligent knowledge of the discipline of the Church, are acquainted with the fact that a Catholic who attempts to contract matrimony before a Protestant minister, incurs excommunication. By the very force of his act and without explicit condemnation that Catholic is cut off from union with the Church and is deprived of the right of participating in her spiritual advantages. In particular he is barred from receiving the sacraments, until by the Ordinary, or one delegated with authority by the latter, he has been absolved from censure.

Why does the Church adopt this attitude of severity? If a Catholic attempts to contract marriage before a civil official, a city clerk for instance or a justice of the peace, he commits sin but he is not excommunicated. Why the added strictures on attempts to contract marriage before a Protestant minister? The reason for the discrimination is simply this: When the civil official officiates there is no religious ceremony; as a consequence the disobedience of the Catholic participant does not in any sense imply a rejection of the faith. On the other hand, when the Protestant minister officiates there is participation in a religious ceremony of a non-Catholic sect, an act, which, if it is not apostasy, is taken to be an external denial of the truth. Hence the one guilty of it is suspected of heresy and is treated accordingly. Nor does a man escape censure, because he interiorly withholds approbation of the religion in whose rite he participates. The Church judges him by his external act, and passes judgment according to its outward semblance.

With Protestants in general and with Protestant ministers in particular, we may fraternize as friends. We may entertain genuine admiration for their culture. We may sympathize with the nobility of their aims, but we know them to be in error, teaching, unwittingly but none the less really, only a fragmentary version of Christ's doctrine. We cannot be tolerant of error. The evidence of the known truth puts us under stern compulsion. In spite of our desire that there may be one fold under one shepherd, we cannot compromise. As we cannot contribute to the building of Protestant churches, so we cannot set our approval on Protestant propaganda, for in both cases we should be cooperating with error and pulling down Christ's work. It is not easy to say to the invitations of our non-Catholic friends, the classic Non possumus but we must say it, however hard it is. The sacrifices Catholics made under Nero and Elizabeth, the sacrifices made by them in France at the time of the Associations Law, have their counterpart in the life, to compare small things with great, of every Catholic. When there is question of our loyalty to Christ there must be no half measures. He who must be no half man, is against Him. Non Catholics may not understand our attitude, but at least they must do us the justice to acknowledge that we have the courage of our convictions. For those who would curry human favor at the expense of principle no one can have anything but contempt.

THE MEMORY OF MAY
By Brian O'Higgins, in Ave Maria
Fair is the light on the Virgin's altar,
Fair are the flowers that cover it o'er;
And their scent floats down to the people kneeling
In rows far back to the open door,
Where the lingering sunlight gleams
Ere it hies away to its home of rest,
Beyond the crest of the shadowy mountains
That call it away to the kindly west;
And it seems to be waiting, expectant,
For the first, sweet sound of the fervent prayer:
"Pray for us, Mother, O Star of the Sea!
Mary, our hope and our trust are in thee!"

There are many things that the never idle hand of Time will blot out from your memory,—things you would like to recall in their very detail; scenes you would dearly love to live over again because of their comforting and uplifting influence, but which elude you at every turn, and will not come back. You grope for them like one blind; you strain your mind after them as one does in trying to remember some pleasant dream; but always they are hidden in a maze that can not be penetrated, and in the end you are forced to abandon the quest, and to sigh for the sweet pleasure that can not be yours again.

There is one scene, however, that remains mirrored in the clear pools of remembrance for all time; whose glimmer can never be dispelled, no matter how rough or long or dark the years may pass,—no matter how many new scenes may strive to blot it from your mind. There is one beautiful memory that stands beside you forever, sanctifying our sorrows, making brighter your joy, nerving you in the hour of danger, inspiring and helping you always. It is the memory of May devotions in a little country church on some Irish hillside or in some sheltered valley, where the spirits of a long line of Irish saints and martyrs seem to float with the incense down the sun-kissed aisles, and to throng about you as you pray, filling your mind with beautiful thoughts and with heart with love for God, and for that sweet Mother of Joys and Sorrows who takes all our cares in her loving arms, and changes them into fragrant flowers to deck the throne of her beloved Son.

From early morn, all through the sunlit day, the people have toiled in the fields; the children have tripped, bare-footed, to the school on the hill, and have hastened home again, gathering on the way big bunches of cowslips and daisies and primroses and graceful ferns, to beautify the simple May altar that is to be seen in every Catholic home.

The Angelus rings out over the peaceful fields; all work is suspended; every head is bared and bowed; and the sweet Salutation of the Angel is carried on reverent lips from field to field, and Mary's help is invoked, and a prayer is breathed for the souls of the never-forgotten dead. Home then for a little rest and a simple meal, before they make their way to the devotions in honor of the Virgin Mother of God.

In the calm of the May evening, with the sun far on its way to rest, and the birds singing drowsily and dreamily in blossom-crowned hedges, old and young pass along the white, winding roads to the little church on the hill, where loving hands have clothed Our Lady's altar in a many-colored robe of flowers; and there, with heads bent down, and hearts full to overflowing, they murmur the Rosary responses, give thanks to God for all His graces and blessings in the past, and beg, from His infinite store of mercy, strength and guidance for the days that are to come.

It is through Mary they ask it all,—Mary, who has been the light and the comfort of their race through long centuries of gloom and sorrow; who gave them hope and courage in the night of the Penal times, when it was a crime to speak her name, when it was court-martyrdom to call her Mother and to possess the signs and emblems of her love; Mary, who upheld them in days of persecution and famine and injustice, whispering always to them to be of good cheer,—that, no matter how long the night, sometime the dawn should break, and the land of martyrs be uplifted again in loveliness, in sanctity, and in strength. What wonder that they turn to Mary with love and confidence and hope? What wonder that she is to them and to you and to me the one great beacon light on the dark, rough road that leads to the haven of rest?

Fresh young voices fill the church with hymns of praise to Mary; the altar is a blaze of light; the scent of the incense pervades the House of God from floor to roof; the birds come shyly to the open door, glad to know that human hearts have joined them in their eternal song of praise to God and for His Mother.

The body of Christ is raised aloft in the hands of His anointed; every head is bowed low; every heart pours out its own plea for help in some cross that is hard to bear, in some danger that is soon to be faced, in some temptation that tries a struggling soul to the utmost limit of its strength, and returns to the attack again and again. The last strain of the music dies away; the last prayer is breathed; the last light extinguished on the altar; and then, with glad hearts and strengthened souls, they turn towards home again.

Now they are gone from the blessed altar,
The darkness of evening around it falls,
The sun is hidden beyond the mountains,
Away in the meadow the blackbird calls,
But their hearts bear with them the inspiration
That Mary gives them this evening bright—
To work for God until he shall call them
Away to His home in the Land of Light.

And still they seem to be kneeling there,
And breathing to Heaven the fervent prayer:
Queen of the Angels, O Star of the Sea!
Pray for us, Mary, and guide us to thee!

YOU may try to forget it, you may travel far, may live to the age of a hundred years, but never can you erase from your mind the memory of May devotions in Ireland. Thank God for a memory so sweet!

CARRY ROSARIES AS WELL AS RIFLES
With a rosary, the Catholic soldier is twice armed. His military accoutrement protects him from the Germans. His spiritual equipment makes him immune to a far more deadly enemy—the Blues.

This is not a pious guess. It is a psychological fact testified to by Catholic Bavarians and Catholic French alike. So commonly is the rosary found the source of courage that whole Bavarian regiments march into action reciting the beads. It is said their progress is more like a pilgrimage than an army going into battle. And in France, a magazine published for soldiers by soldiers and called "Brothers in Arms," has an article in which the use of the rosary is advocated as a practical source of strength: "Say the rosary, it will give you courage," pleads the writer. Men who do not already possess rosaries are earnestly urged to send home for them. This striking article stirred many Frenchmen to renew the pious practice of their school days. Translated for English Catholic journals, the appeal reminded thousands of others that a rosary is as necessary as a rifle. To-day the message is repeated for our American Catholic soldiers:

Do you possess a rosary? No! then tell your chaplain, he will give you one or else apply to your mother or your wife, your parish priest and you will get one. If you lose it on the road or in the straw when you shake up your overcoat, do what you do when you lose your pipe and invest quickly in another.

Keep your rosary, not in your pouch; you might forget to say it; but in your pocket. It may fall out when you pull out your tobacco bag or your knife and the comrades will see it. But that will only suggest a good practice for them.

Say your rosary, it is like the grenade and the rifle, namely, to be used. Say it when in church at Benediction time together with the people or if you are alone go to a statue of the Blessed Virgin and recite it there. Say your rosary when you are in the dumps and your brood over home. There every evening repair to the old church and offer theirs for papa or the big brother whom they know to be on the Somme or at Verdun. Do the same, it will give you courage. Say it in the trenches when the Boches keep quiet and the marmites are not falling about. Nothing simpler; it is the easiest prayer going. Nothing to learn, nothing to read, no brain-work whatever. It is the sweetest of all prayers. You speak to the heavenly Mother, who recall her virtues, her power, her kindness. You ask her to watch over you and if you die to take you to paradise. Say your rosary for the comrades who yesterday evening walked over to the trenches and who are fighting whilst you are resting; say it for the wounded who are still lying on the battlefield; for the dead who have appeared before God and are in bad need of help and consolation. Say it every day and you will find what an amount of good it does.

Recruits, carry rosaries as well as rifles! — New World.

THE FAILURE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

For years it has been a commonplace with all discerning Catholics that as a substitute for a Catholic school the Sunday school was wholly inadequate. Bishops on their confirmation tours and priests in the confessional easily differentiate the children who were trained in a Catholic school from those who were trained in a Sunday school. To be sure, it is said, half a loaf is better than no bread, but who could be content with a half loaf when there is bread in abundance? We have never been able to see our way clear to regard the Sunday school as a half loaf, for as a substitute for the Catholic school it is a miserable makeshift, and it could easily be considered as more harmful than beneficial. If the champions of the Sunday school fancy that it can impart that thorough knowledge of religion which our age demands, then it is more of an injury than a benefit, for it lulls people into a false attitude towards things spiritual which they would not think of assuming towards things material. No one thinks a knowledge of music or mathematics may be acquired in a class of one hour each week, and only those who regard religion as less important than music and mathematics can be content with the perfunctory methods of imparting knowledge in the Sunday school.

That has always been the position of the Catholic Church on this important subject and time seems to be justifying it. Only last week the report went abroad from the leaders of the Protestant School Association that of the 19,000,000 of young persons of Sunday school age only 6,000,000 actually attend Sunday school, and promptly on the heels of this information comes the announcement that \$48,000 was appropriated to increase the efficiency of the Protestant Sunday school. Such a report confirms the Catholic Church in her judgment in regarding the Sunday school as hopelessly inadequate as a substitute for the parish school.—The Guardian.

The sister of joy is patience. Patience always ends by bringing joy, but joy will not stay where patience is not. An impatient spirit spoils the sweetest possibilities of happiness, for as Ruskin truly says, "Patience lies at the root of all pleasures as well as of all powers."

There are two good rules which ought to be written on every heart. Never believe anything bad about anybody unless you positively know it is true; never tell even that, unless you feel that it is absolutely necessary, and that God is listening while you tell it.—Henry Van Dyke.

Are You Shingling?
YOU owe it to yourself to investigate "The Greatest Roofing Development of the 20th Century"—Neponset Twin Shingles—the roof that doesn't rust, rot, decay, split, or rattle! First, you want a handsome roof. Dotted all over Canada may be found most attractive roofs—some dull red, some dark green—looking like exceptionally well-laid slate. They are of NEPONSET TWIN SHINGLES. It will cost you little more to lay Neponset Twin Shingles than wooden Shingles of good quality. But the greatest economy comes in the long years of service, free from repairs, staining or painting. And most important—Fire Protection. Tests prove that asphalt checks fire on a roof more effectively than so-called "fireproof" roofs. Neponset Twin Shingles are made of Asphalt and other materials used in the famous Paroid Roofing, and are approved by the Board of Fire Underwriters. Neponset Twin Shingles have an extra wearing surface of crushed slate, red and green. Sold by lumber or hardware dealers, or write us for prices and particulars.

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