

all the feeling that Calvinism embodied." "Then," he exclaimed, "your father taught you that outside of the Presbyterian Church there was no salvation. Moreover, he fully agreed with Calvin when he said, 'Man fell because the Providence of God ordained it so.' Now the Catholic Church also maintains that outside of her there is no salvation and she also holds to total depravity and foreordination. Hence, then, both sides agree, how have you bettered your condition?" "Excuse me," I replied, "if I flatly contradict you, but the Catholic Church never taught the total depravity of the human race. She has ever taught that by his fall man did not lose his free will or his reason. To attribute such a sin to God is blasphemy. But I am more interested in repeating to you the details of my conversion, rather than refuting the slanders which have been imputed to the Catholic Church. These have been fully answered in many books which you can pick up anywhere."

"About five years after we graduated from school we parted; you went to Europe on a pleasure trip. I started in business in northern New York. Failure of my business projects led me to once again embrace the meditative days of a student. I entered one of our leading New England colleges, where I became introduced to the subtlety of Transcendentalism. It was my first introduction to philosophy and I endeavored to feed myself with the ideas of naturalism. I devoured the words of our professor; spoke sarcastically about God and, in fact, about everything that savored of religion. Yet, despite my attempts, I could not satisfy myself. Everything about me pointed to the undeniable fact that there must be a God, the creator and sustaining power of the world about us. I often asked myself if there really was a God. Of the Catholic Church I then knew nothing, except that I had often heard her called "The Romish Church," the "Scarlet Woman," and such like attractive names. These epithets I readily swallowed as being true, never questioning their truthfulness. Yet, it never once occurred to me that she might be the Church. So I remained floating about in the religious sea, trying to guide myself through the enchanting waters of naturalism. I lived amid men who sought God by the dim light of nature, trying to figure out for themselves the real truth about God; finite minds trying to fathom the deep recesses of the infinite. Then I lost my mother, a kind, religious, and generous soul. This affliction struck me to the heart and I stood on the brink of the abyss that cries out there is no God. Three years of sorrow and desolation followed that melancholy event, and then came a blessing—the best blessing I had so far received.

"A wife?" interrogated my friend, as I paused in my conversation to light another cigar. "No doubt she was a Catholic and by her affection for you caused you to embrace Catholicism. Hark!" he exclaimed, "it is the same old story."

"No," on the contrary, "Romanism was the only thing that she was bitterly opposed to; for she was a member of the Anglican Church."

"Then you embraced the Catholic Church to be on the opposite extreme?" he questionably asserted.

"Hardly," I continued. "But I heard her talk so much of her church, how it contained the 'cream of society,' the most genteel denomination." This led me to consider that the Anglican Church was not the true Church. It was too exclusive. Of course, my wife attempted to convert me to her religion. In her attempts she placed in my hands the 'Book of Common Prayer.' I examined it very closely. Much to my surprise, I discovered the want of conformity to their own rules by many of the clergy, and the futility of reaching them by discipline, the first requisite in a well-ordered household. Then, too, I found out that the body of the book contradicted the "Thirty-nine Articles"; the one acknowledged priest, altar and sacrifice, the other denied all three.

"Did you make known the results of your investigation to Mrs. McGregor, or did you allow her to remain in ignorance?" he questioned.

"At first I dreaded to do so lest it should shake her religious beliefs; and, moreover, I had nothing to offer her as a remedy. Soon she also became dissatisfied with the disunity of her Church and one day she asked me to begin with her an investigation of the claims of the Catholics. To this I readily assented. But her Anglican pastor heard of the idea and by his persuasion finally had her agree to give up the enterprise. Such an action made me furious, because it bespoke of narrow-mindedness, but which I now know was self-preservation. Despite her entreaties to the contrary, I determined to carry out our resolve alone. I procured the 'Faith of Our Fathers,' 'Christian Denominations,' and other books within reach of me and began my detailed search. I entered upon the enterprise as a lawyer, consulting authorities on both sides, weighing the arguments pro and con and examining witnesses on both sides. But, perhaps, this line of conversation is proving uninteresting to you. I will change the subject to business matters.

"Oh, no; continue," he replied, eagerly, "you can't imagine how interested I am. It sounds like a

tale of the 'Arabian Nights.'" Tell me, he went on to say, "the results of your rigid examination of the documents and other evidence."

"Well, I concluded that the Bible is the Word of God; and it asserts that Christ founded one true Church, established apostles and teachers and gave to that one true Church the power to 'teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.' And such power was to be perpetual, for He also said, 'I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world,' and again, 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I shall build My Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.' Admitting the historical truth of the Gospels, we are confronted with those facts. Hence, I concluded that there was one true Church established by the Apostles and the church that could trace its history to an unbroken line back to the Apostles was the true Church. Moreover, this one true Church was to be universal. I then went back to the Early Fathers and plainly saw that they taught the authority of the Church and the necessity of the sacraments. I began to look for light. History and reason proved that the Catholic Church was the only Church that went back to the Apostles in one unbroken line of succession."

"Judging from your conclusions, it seems that you are right," he interrupted. "But go on," he urged, "I did not mean to interrupt you."

"Well, while looking for light and wandering in doubtful waters, my first and only child was taken from me. My wife was hovering between life and death. She called for her minister. He came and said only a few words of sympathy. Then my wife cried out, Reverend Mr. Fraser, does not the Bible say, 'If anyone is sick among you, let him call in the priest of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up.' 'Oh, he replied, 'that was for the early ages of the Church, and passed away with them.' 'But why is it that we also do not need it as well as those of the early ages?' she asked him. 'The truth is,' he responded, 'we don't.' 'Well, I do,' she said.

"I was standing near her bedside, when she made that last remark. I knelt beside her and took her trembling hand into mine. 'You shall have it,' I told her.

"'Yes, Ray,' she told me, 'I want it; I want absolution; the sacraments, the anointing of the sick and all of that.' Leaving her with the nurse I went to a nearby rectory and procured a Catholic priest. I shall not trouble you with any further details. Suffice it to say that my wife recovered, became a Catholic and I was prepared for baptism."

I paused in my story; I perceived that my friend was affected by the remembrances of the past. So was I. We kept silence, a long, deep silence, for several minutes. Then he broke it. He gave me his hand cordially, saying, "Ray, you have done me some good today. But, tell me truthfully, have you ever regretted your step?"

"Never," I replied with great firmness. "And now, Hank—for this was the name I called him during our school days—I am going to ask one favor of you. Will you promise me to grant it?"

"What is it?" he asked, longingly.

"Nothing else than that you will promise me to look earnestly into the claims of the Catholic Church; consider thoroughly her doctrines; and examine her traditions and then write me the results."

"I will," he said.

He had reached his destination. We then parted.

Several months later he sent me a letter; and it read thus:

"My Dear Ray:

"Today I became a Catholic. *Laud Deo.* I can't see why it is that anyone who without any bias examines her claim to be the one, true Church can knowingly remain outside of it. May God pardon me for my past infidelity.

"Your affectionate friend,  
FRANCIS (HANK) O'NEIL."

**THE ASSUMPTION**

The feast of Our Lady's Assumption, standing out as it does midway in the month of August, is the pivot, as it were, upon which we are bidden by the Church to make these thirty days revolve. If we spend this month with Our Lady in a prayerful attitude of mind, we may be sure not only of making notable advancement in spiritual living, but also of great consolation in the inevitable sorrows and disappointments of our daily lives. For the Mother of Sorrows on her entrance to heaven on Assumption Day leaves behind her, like a worn garment, the sorrows which even she, the beloved daughter of the Heavenly Father, was not spared.

Simon had foretold on the day Mary carried her Divine Child to the Temple that a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart and search it through and through. And we know how every joy she experienced when looking upon her "Boy" who was also her Redeemer, was offset by sorrows whose greatness we can never fathom. On Calvary she drained the bitter cup to the very dregs, and we can realize that the years that followed Our Lord's ascension must have been for her one

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unbroken period of the most exquisite pain and loneliness.

Now, on Assumption Day, the separation is over. She is going to His home as He had come to here. He came in the earthly habiliments of flesh to her home. She goes to His with the body that had been His temple. On earth they were never separated. In heaven He would have her near at hand as He had known her on earth. So, while the Apostles laid her body away in the tomb, they little dreamed how short a time it would remain there. When, as tradition tells us, they opened the grave, they found her body gone to heaven, where, united with her immaculate soul, it will forever stand nearer to the throne of the Triune God than that of any other created being.

The Assumption teaches many lessons, but the one of greatest value at the present time is this—that, bending ourselves to the Divine Will without murmuring, we may look forward to a day when our bodies will leave the grave to be transported to the heavenly mansions. The evils we suffer now are but the stepping stones which lift us higher and higher to our true home. Hence, there is no room for worry or repining in the Christian heart or in Christian society, since one day the heavenly portals will be thrown open to receive us on our assumption into the Kingdom of Light, where there is no darkness or sorrow or parting. Like Mary, however, we must await the blessed day of consummation in the humble submission to the Heavenly Father's will, which makes everything conspire for the good of those who, loving Him, trust Him implicitly in all that befalls them in this alien land.—Rosary Magazine.

**THE MONROE DOCTRINE**

The Monroe Doctrine has come in for a good deal of publicity since Mr. Wilson decided that the United States should enter the League of Nations and the Senate decided that it should not. The people so far have decided nothing in the matter. But they have heard a great deal from partisan lips of the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine. What that Doctrine really contains is a declaration to the Powers of Europe to keep hands off this hemisphere and the "Governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have on great consideration and on just principles acknowledged. We could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States." (Message of President Monroe to Congress, December 2, 1823)

The whole content of the Monroe Doctrine implies the capability of the smaller republics of the West to work out their own destiny if unhampered by interference. It further implies an obligation on the part of the Great Republic of the West to protect them from the European nations that might cast covetous eyes on their great natural resources. It is surely a bill of rights to the smaller nations and a bill of obligations to the Big Nation to secure these rights. If the Big Nation is negligent in the matter it is betraying a sacred, self-assumed trust. If the Big Nation becomes a bully instead of a Big Brother the Monroe Doctrine becomes a farce instead of a fact, and a criminal force too, stained with the blood of the helpless and the weak.

The report of the Fall Committee only too clearly shows that American brotherhood meant injustice for the Republic of Mexico. Right-thinking Americans must face facts and the facts that have to be faced in Mexico since Huerta was allowed to die in neglect under the so-called protection of America are facts that lend little comfort to Americans who still believe that their Government stands for the protection of the weak and the suffering who are struggling to lead their own lives south of the Rio Grande. The Mexican middle is more than a party crime. It is a national disgrace.

Now comes the cry of outraged Haiti. After five years of American occupation, Herbert Seligmann declares in the Nation that 3,000 innocent men and women have been sent to their deaths by American bullets. "Black men and women have been put to torture to make them give information; theft, arson and murder have been committed almost with impunity upon the persons and property of Haitians by white men wearing the uniform of the United States." The press has been silent or untruthful on Haiti as it was silent or untruthful on Mexico.

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When the press spoke, before the Fall Committee took up the Mexican problem, it spoke through Government organs only. And Government organs have a strange way of handling truth. Nor has the press spoken of the American occupation of San Domingo. Yet San Domingo has been under military rule for some time. And military rule does not foster democracy even if it is American military rule.

In our days of youth we served notice on Europe that we would protect the struggling nations in this hemisphere from foreign aggression. In this day of our strength we are betraying our promises and betraying our trust. Are we going the way of the strong nations of the past who believed that their strength was the norm of justice. Are we making the Monroe Doctrine a cloak for crime?—Africa.

Some critics are vicious; some are gentle. Both have their uses. They all make us stop and think. If there were no critics in the world, there would be little, if any, progress; and very much sin.—Mgr. Francis C. Keiley.

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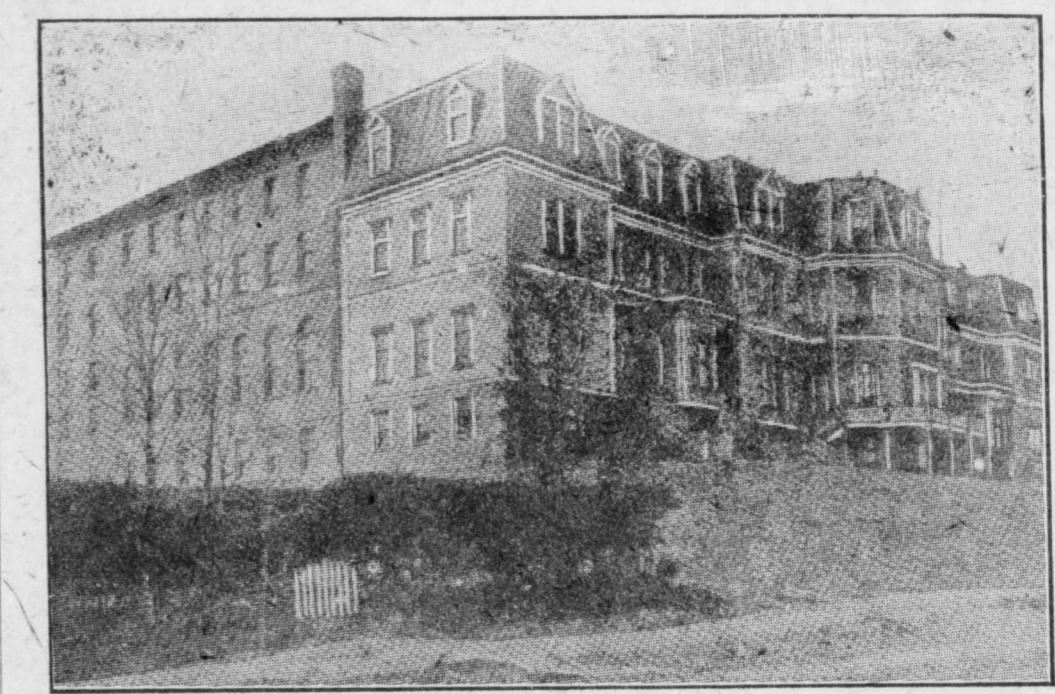
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