

BX 2350

.G8

1904

Copy 1

A Practical Guide for Catholics

BY A

Missionary Priest of the Diocese
of St. Joseph.

*With the Permission of the Ecclesiastical
Authority.*

Sixth Revised and Enlarged Edition.

ST. LOUIS, MO. 1904.

Published by B. HERDER,

17 South Broadway.

A Practical Guide for Catholics

BY A

Missionary Priest of the Diocese
of St. Joseph.

Joseph Guzmán y Guzmán

*With the Permission of the Ecclesiastical
Authority.*

Sixth Revised and Enlarged Edition.

ST. LOUIS, MO. 1904.

Published by B. HERDER,

17 South Broadway.

LIBRARY of CONGRESS

Two Copies Received

APR 1 1904

Copyright Entry

Mar. 24 - 1904
CLASS a XXc. No.
82590
COPY 5

BX 2350
G78
1904

NIHIL OBSTAT.

F. G. HOLWECK,
Censor Theologicus.

S. Ludovici, die 10. Jan. 1904.

IMPRIMATUR.

JOANNES J. GLENNON,
Archiepiscopus S. Ludovici.

S. Ludovici, die 11. Jan. 1904.

Copyright 1904 by Joseph Gummersbach.

— BECKTOLD —
PRINTING AND BOOK MFG. CO.
ST. LOUIS, MO.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
1. The Parish Church	5
2. Love for the Church	8
3. Your Pastor	11
4. Sick Calls	13
5. What is required in the house of every Catholic	16
6. Parish Schools	20
7. On Marriage	26
8. Mixed Marriages	30
9. Indissolubility of the Marriage Tie .	33
10. Impediments to Marriage	35
11. Baptism	38
12. Church Support	41
13. A Christian Rule of Life.	47
14. Morning and Night Prayers	48
15. The Rosary	49
16. The Angelus	50
17. Spiritual Reading	51
Newspapers and Periodicals	52
18. Holy Water and other Religious Articles	53
19. Confession and Communion	54
20. Societies	54
21. Unity and Peace	56
22. Holidays of Obligation	58
Fasting Days of Obligation	59
Days of Abstinence	60
23. Holy Maxims from Holy Scripture .	61

I. The Parish Church.

Since every parish has fixed limits, it is the duty of Catholics to find out to which parish they belong, and this for many reasons.

In the first place, the pastor should know all the people residing in his district; consequently people, and especially newcomers, should lose no time in making themselves known to the priest in charge.

Many persons, especially in country missions where they settle a long distance from the church, live for months and months after their arrival in a parish without informing the pastor of the fact. This is not as it should be. Let the priest know, by some means or other, that you have moved into his parish, and sooner or later he will visit you and provide for your spiritual wants.

Moreover, you should try to find out all about the regulations of your

parish church, because it is to your own interest; you are under certain obligations towards it, since you receive so many favors from it. A parish has to be supported, and according to your means you should give. Do not forget that in all matters pertaining to religion, you are subject to the pastor of your church. On many occasions you need his services, especially where there is question of sick calls, or the administration of such sacraments as none but your parish priest is entitled by the laws of the Church to administer. Children should be baptized in their own parish church, and make their first holy Communion therein. The same holds good in regard to the sacraments of confirmation and matrimony. It belongs to the pastor to administer the last sacraments to the dying. As a rule the funeral rites are to be performed in the parish church of the deceased. Exceptions to these rules may be made only with the express consent of the pastor or the bishop of the diocese.

The Church, ever solicitous for the

spiritual welfare of her children, is most lenient with regard to their wants. Thus, for instance, confession may be made to any approved priest in the diocese where the confession is made. The administration of holy Communion to the sick who receive it *out of devotion only*, is not reserved to the pastor.

We hear many say in our day "I believe that if one does what is right, it makes very little difference what he believes or to what church he goes, he will be saved." But the trouble is, a person is not doing what is right, unless he does what God wishes him to do; and God desires, yes, commands him to be a member of His Church and live obedient to its laws. "He that is not with Me is against Me." "He that will not hear you," said our Lord to his apostles, "let him be to you as the heathen and the publican." Obedience to the laws of God and the Church is the only way to heaven for anyone who knows where the true Church is. This is the only way for a Catholic to make sure of his election. We must have the courage of our convictions

and never be afraid to openly speak the truth, no matter how unpopular it may be. The truth is ever the same—as eternal as God is — and sharper than a two-edged sword.

2. Love for the Church.

If your only purpose on earth be, to save your soul, if that be the one thing necessary, then the dearest object to you on earth should be that which helps you to save your soul: and that is the Church. God himself has arranged it so. His great work of human sanctification is carried on by the Church. Did you fully realize this, the privilege of belonging to the Church would be your greatest joy: you would not exchange this boon for the wealth of the millionaires of our country, no, not for all the honors of the world's rulers. The well instructed Catholic knows the sure way to make certain his election, and in the Church he has so many God-given helps to make easy the winning. Would that you realized what *your Church* is to you. Would that you realized, that as the

true faith is the greatest gift God has bestowed upon you, so the loss of the true faith would be the greatest misfortune and punishment which God could send you. If this were realized by all the children of the Church, there would be no such thing as a fallen-away Catholic. But how common are such apostates. People give up the practice of their faith on the least provocation, on the least pretext. They have some trouble with the priest, some of his rulings displease them, they dislike some of his actions and they quit the Church. How foolish. Granted that the priest is in the wrong: they on the side of right: They must understand that the priest is not the Church but a frail weak mortal. Then did not Christ foretell that scandal would arise in the Church, yet he warned the people to be steadfast in spite of scandal. At any rate it is not proper to mistake the Church for the scandal-givers and blame God's church for the scandal. We must always remember, that no priest, no archbishop, is the holy Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is God's own institution to continue Christ's work on earth, to apply to you the fruits of your costly redemption, to take away your sins, to instruct you in God's truth, to assist you on to heaven; and in so far the Church is faultless without a spot or wrinkle: as such she is Christ's holy spouse, whom He loved so tenderly, as to die for her. As such the Church should be viewed; and when you quit the Church for any reason, you part company with your truest benefactor; you take a step that will bring inevitable disaster upon your soul. In her *members*, whether rulers or subjects, the Church is human, very human, sinful. In fact her great work is to deal with the sinner. Her clergy are for the most part devoted, faithful, pious, Godfearing—leaning on God as the only object worthy of their love—but being human they may occasionally make mistakes. Didn't Christ prepare you sufficiently for this, when he permitted two of his first clergy who had been prepared for the priesthood by Himself to make serious mistakes?

3. Your Pastor.

You should know your pastor; try to find out his name and residence, for you know not how soon you may need his services. Without priests churches cannot be served, the Holy Sacrifice cannot be offered, the sacraments cannot be administered, the spiritual wants of the sick cannot be attended to, the negligent cannot be reclaimed, the Word of God cannot be preached. Without priests all the works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual, languish and pine away. The priests are the instructors of youth, the fathers of the people, the comforters of the afflicted, the helpers of the distressed. They teach the ignorant, protect the orphan, console the afflicted. Daily at the altar they offer sacrifice, and daily they offer prayers to God, as well as for themselves as for their people. The pastor then is the real and true friend and father of his people; he loves them as the Good Shepherd loved his flock. If he at times should admonish and reprove, do not take offense at it; he will never do so unless it be for your good.

He will be obliged now and again to speak to you about money and the financial standing of your parish, and this, too, in the church. It is anything but a pleasant duty, but still it often becomes a duty which cannot be overlooked. Be sure of one thing, your pastor does this only when necessity compels him, or when the demands of charity are urgent. You should not consider your contribution to the support of your pastor as an act of charity on your part, for it is your sacred duty to do so, for the Church so commands. Never be offended, then, when called upon to contribute for this purpose, for as Christ says, "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Mat. X. 10). See also I Tim. V. 18.

Practical Catholics hold their priest in highest veneration. They love, reverence and respect him, and in doing this they honor Christ himself, whose minister he is. Teach your dear little ones to entertain the same feelings towards him; be sure never to find fault with him or speak of his shortcomings in their presence. Be

kind and considerate towards him. An encouragement from you will often inspire him with fresh zeal, impart to him new energy, and, what is more, will give him consolation amid the struggles and labors of his priestly life. Do not forget this. Never impose upon his generosity too much, and this especially in the matter of sick-calls. Do not put off a sick-call till night, saying: "Father is a good-natured priest, he will not mind coming in the dead of night." But the priest often does mind, although he may be charitable enough not to tell you so.

4. Sick-Calls.

Sick-calls there will always be, and they must not be overlooked. Our Catholics must not be suffered to die without the last sacraments. It is always hard to die, but more especially when deprived of the consoling rites of Mother Church. Nothing should be left undone to secure to those in danger of death the means of preparing well for that terrible hour

on which their eternal welfare depends.

When a person is so sick as to need the services of a priest, lose no time in sending for him. The messenger should state the case clearly to the priest, give him all the details concerning the patient, telling him how long the person has been ailing. This knowledge will give him at once, and before leaving, an insight into the needs of the case, and may thus prevent loss of time or a hurried return to the church. In most of the large parishes it is customary to hand in the sick-calls early in the morning; thus the priest will visit the sick in going the daily rounds of his district. If the call be an urgent one, wait and accompany the pastor; this often saves considerable time, and relieves the priest from the troublesome task of seeking the house. If you send in the night, it is always presumed that it is a sudden and a most dangerous case.

Let some of our good Catholics pause here for a moment and reflect.

Is this always the case? Ask our hard-worked priests about this, and what will be their reply? Too often, alas! yes, too often, the friends and relatives put off sending for the priest until it is almost too late. It is perhaps a dark, cold, rainy night, or in the early hours of the morning, all at once the door-bell is violently pulled. What is the matter? The first words which greet the ears of the priest are these: "O, Father, please make haste, so and so is dying, there is not a moment to lose." The good priest says: "Our Lord has died for that soul; I must go." So with the bearer of this message, he goes forth into the darkness of the night, to visit the dying person. He arrives at the house, and what does he find? The patient, as we say, is almost gone, he is gasping for breath, speech has left him, he has but a few moments to live. Again at other times, when the priest arrives, the last spark of life has been extinguished. Poor soul, too late, too late, you have gone before your God without the necessary

preparation, The priest inquires: "How long has the deceased been sick?" "Only a few days, Father?" "Did you call the doctor?" "Yes, Father." "Then, why did you not call me in sooner?" "O, we were afraid it might alarm him, or make him worse." This is by no means an imaginary case, but one that but too often happens. May God forgive such negligent Catholics, for indeed they need it; there should be no dilly-dallying when the salvation of an immortal soul is at stake. In all cases then send in good time for the priest; bear in mind that charity for the eternal welfare of that soul demands this; put every human consideration aside; depart on your errand of mercy and God will reward and bless you.

5. What is required in the house of every Catholic.

You should always keep on hand all that is needed at the administration of the last sacraments. You know not the day nor the hour when you may need them. When you ex-

pect the priest, have everything in readiness so as to occasion no delay. How distressing it is for a priest to arrive at a house, and to find everything in disorder and upset, and no preparations whatsoever made. So little is required of you, that even the poorest can barely offer an excuse to be without them.

First of all cleanliness is required ; even the direst poverty is no excuse for uncleanness. Place a small table, covered with a clean white cloth, near the bedside of the sick person. On this table there should be the following articles : a crucifix, that sacred emblem of man's redemption ; if not two, at least one blessed candle ; wax candles for this purpose are blessed on the Feast of the Purification, and every Catholic should possess one ; then have two small vessels, one containing holy water, and the other pure water, along with a clean towel, a spoon and some bread and cotton.

The solemn moment has arrived, the priest has come, bearing with him your God. Meet him at the door and

profoundly adore your Lord and Master. Show the priest at once to the sick chamber, light the candle and retire until the confession be heard, if such be necessary. At the given signal return and remain upon your knees until the priest has finished. You can do much to aid the poor sufferer by your piety and devotion, and also add to the solemnity and impressiveness of these holy rites. Join in the prayers and respond aloud, especially when the litany of the dying is recited.

The priest has done his work. He has strengthened that soul with the body of Jesus Christ, he has administered Extreme Unction, and given the last Blessing. He has bid that soul to go forth courageously from this world in the name of the God that created, sanctified and redeemed it. He has spoken the last words of consolation, and recommending that soul to Jesus, Mary and Joseph; he departs, rejoicing inwardly that he has been the means of smoothing its path to eternity. After his withdrawal, avoid

saying or doing anything calculated to disturb the calm and peace of mind enjoyed by the sick person. Do not enter into vain and useless conversation, but on the contrary, do all you can to keep his thoughts fixed on God and eternity; and when the last struggle approaches, you can do much to defeat the attacks of Satan, especially by reciting the rosary, suggesting pious thoughts, repeating the act of contrition, pronouncing frequently those sweetest of names, Jesus, Mary, Joseph. From time to time present the crucifix to the lips of the sufferer, place the lighted candle in his hands; all these little attentions will rob death of its sting, and nerve that soul to face death as a true soldier of Jesus Christ. And when all is over, when the soul has gone hence, let all the friends and relatives offer up fervent prayers for the one just passed away.

If all these instructions were faithfully carried out, and why should they not be, how many of the sad scenes we witness on these occasions would be spared us, and how many more souls would thereby be saved!

6. Parish Schools.

This chapter is of the utmost importance, and especially to parents. Now there are three centers of Christian education: the home, the Church and the school. The education of a child must begin at home, for it belongs to the father and mother to plant in the souls of their offspring the first seeds of the faith; they must lay the foundation of that spiritual edifice which by degrees will be raised therein. As the children grow up and begin to understand a wider range of truths, then the Church, in the person of the priest, will do her part in the training of the intellect and the heart of the young. Weekly instructions will be given to explain the truths of our holy religion, and the superior knowledge of the priest, together with his sacred character, will add considerably towards improving the good qualities of the child.

However, this does not yet suffice. Parents, especially in this country, have to labor and to toil from early morn till late at night, and con-

sequently, after their day's work is ended, they have little or no inclination to sit down and instruct their children. Again in many cases, through no fault of their own, they do not possess the necessary knowledge. The pastor will supply this deficiency to some extent; but as we have said, his duties are so numerous, and his time so taken up, that the work is not yet complete. What then is the remedy? It is the parish school, or better, it is the Catholic school.

Catholic parents have certain obligations with regard to the school. Not only should they appreciate its existence, for where it does exist, it is one of the greatest blessings of a parish; but they should show their appreciation of it by taking a lively interest in its welfare. You ought to bear in mind that the school has been built often at the price of a very great sacrifice, and that it was built for the benefit of your children. Public school instruction, as furnished in this country, does not undertake to make your child a Christian, and nothing less

than this should satisfy a Christian parent. Your first duty is to send your child to your parish school, or to a good Catholic school. Let no reason induce you to act otherwise. Do not argue as some lukewarm Catholics do; never say the public school is just as good and costs me less — this is not true, because education without religion is no education. For unless the will, the qualities of the heart, which is the seat of virtue and of all that is noble in man, be properly cultivated, you may have smart men and smart women, but not good and virtuous men and women. If there were no Catholic schools in the land, the Catholic faith would soon entirely disappear.

Send your children regularly and punctually to school. This is essential not only for them, but also for the welfare of the school. You wish your children to learn all they can; but how is this possible unless they go to school every day. Some persons keep their children at home for the most trivial reasons, and yet are the very

first to complain that their children make no headway in their studies. You do an injustice to the teachers, if you fail to send your children regularly to school. If they miss a day or two a week, they will fail to make any progress. But the teacher is not to blame for this. And furthermore, send your children in time. Let them be there when the school opens in the morning as well as in the afternoon. The coming late to school of children, day after day, argues a want of care on the part of the parents.

Lastly, the parents should care that their little ones come neat and tidy to school. Poverty does not exclude cleanliness. A child that goes to school neat and tidy, although it may be only poorly clad, reflects the greatest credit on its mother, and is an indication of the character of the home it hails from. The untidiness of children indicates negligence, and is a sign that the home is not well regulated. Follow out our advice strictly on the school question, and you will then be faithful to the sacred trust im-

posed upon you by God, and later on you will reap the reward, inasmuch as your children will prove a source of great comfort and consolation to you. As to those parents who live so far away from Catholic communities as to have no opportunity of sending their children regularly either to a Catholic school, or to the instructions given by the priest, they have a difficult task to perform. We speak of those families that live ten, twenty or more miles away from the next Catholic settlement. What are they to do? Evidently it is the bounden duty of such parents to make up at home, by their own diligence, for the work of the school and of the priest. How can this be done? If parents are obliged in conscience to work for the daily bread of their children, and that under pain of mortal sin, how much more strictly are they bound to labor for the eternal salvation of their children! The soul is more noble than the body, and eternity infinitely more important than time. This is self-evident. Hence parents should guard against settling

in a district where there is but little or no opportunity of practising their religion and of bringing up their children in the faith. They thereby do the greatest injustice to their children and expose themselves, as well as their children, to the loss of faith and the consequent loss of their souls. There are in our days so many Catholic parishes throughout the length and breadth of the land, that no Catholic father can offer a reasonable excuse for settling in the midst of a Protestant or infidel population.

What have those parents to do that actually live at so great a distance from the church? They must open in the family circle a kind of class of instruction, and continue this noble and necessary work until their children are sufficiently grounded in the truths of salvation. Besides, on Sundays and holydays the prayers for mass should be read in common, together with an explanation of the epistle and gospel of the day. We know of no book better calculated to foster piety and instruction in the home circle

than Goffine's explanation of the epistles and gospels. That book has in the past preserved the faith in many scattered Catholic families of the far West.

7. On Marriage.

Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. Catholics ought to know the conditions required to enter worthily into this state. Marriage is a serious matter; it binds the parties together for life. The consequences being of such importance, it should not be entered into hastily, but only after mature deliberation. A promise of marriage should be slowly given, and the parties concerned previously endeavor to become thoroughly acquainted with each other's character and dispositions, for this promise once seriously made cannot legally be broken. A betrothal binds in conscience, and in many cases cannot be canceled without great detriment to both parties. In teaching this, the Church shows her wisdom, for how often has a hasty marriage

not been the cause of a lifelong repentance! It has been truly said: As is the first step in marriage, so also will be the whole married life. There are and have been at all times many unhappy marriages; in many of which the parties are not suited to each other; in others one of them may have had no calling to that state of life.

We are all called by God to a certain state of life in this world, and the marriage state, which is a vocation, at least in a wide sense, comes from God. The Apostle St. Paul says: "As the Lord hath distributed to every one, as God hath called every one, so let him walk." 1 Cor. VII, 17.

Parents should not forget this; they should not interfere, through worldly motives, with their children when there is question of choosing a certain state of life, as an eternity frequently depends upon this choice. They should help their children to find out their calling by means of prayer and good advice, and induce them to seek the counsel of their confessor before making a choice.

Marriage then, as St. Paul says, is a great sacrament. "This is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church." Eph. V, 31-37. Such is the teaching of God's infallible Church; hence the exalted dignity of marriage.

Young people should beware of keeping company with and of engaging themselves to persons whom they are forbidden by God's law to marry, or who are unfit to care for a family. They should usually ask the advice and consent of their parents, especially before contracting an engagement to marry, for in this the blessing of parents counts for a great deal. Secret engagements, as experience shows, very often turn out badly. Good parents do not, as a rule, oppose the suitable marriage of their children; on the contrary, they rather rejoice, inasmuch as they desire their welfare and their happiness. It is then a very serious blunder and a mistaken idea on the part of young people to keep their engagement secret from their fathers and mothers.

Before contracting an engagement to marry, they should make sure, that there is no obstacle in the way, by first consulting their pastor or confessor. They should not engage themselves more than a few months before marrying, for long engagements are frequently dangerous.

Before deciding on the date of the wedding, they should make sure that it is not within the forbidden time; therefore they ought to pay a visit to their pastor to make the necessary arrangements at least three weeks before the date fixed for the marriage. The reason of this is, that the bans should be published on three successive Sundays in the parish church. It often happens that the parties reside in different parishes; in this case both pastors should be seen, as the bans must be called out in both parishes. It is customary for the wedding to take place in the church of the parish in which the bride resides. Besides the marriage should be celebrated at Nuptial Mass.

8. Mixed Marriages.

What are we to understand by a mixed marriage? It is the union between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. The Church has at all times discouraged such marriages; she looks upon them as a very great misfortune, and in forbidding them shows her wisdom. The reason why the Church does not sanction these unions is easy to understand, and apt to convince any fair-minded man. The chief end of marriage is to beget Christian children for God. To bring about this result the co-operation of both father and mother is necessary. God has intrusted to the mother the first years of the child. She is the first to reach the depths where his reason lies hidden; she can, so to say, touch it and impress upon it her own image. From her loving heart and gentle smiles he grows in the virtues of faith, hope and charity. How great, he thinks, is the God, of whom his mother speaks so reverently! But the father, likewise, has his place in this great work. Without his example and authority, the teachings

of the mother would frequently be lost. If the mother explains to her child the beauty of virtue, the father must also convince him of his manliness. From this it will be seen that both father and mother must work together harmoniously to attain this end, and this requires that they both be of the same mind and of the same faith. If they differ, then, in that which is most essential, the spiritual welfare of the child is bound to suffer, and experience proves that such unions have robbed the Church of thousands of souls. It would fill volumes to relate the wretchedness and misery of many a home occasioned by a mixed marriage. Let our Catholics then pause and think seriously before they bind themselves irrevocably to one who, perhaps, despises that which they hold dearer than life itself, viz.: the Catholic faith. We know there are exceptions—but those exceptions are few—and only prove the general rule.

However, when there are good valid reasons for such a marriage, a dispensation may be obtained, but even then

certain conditions are required. In the first place, the non-Catholic party must consent to have all the children baptized and reared in the Catholic faith; 2. that the Catholic party shall be allowed full freedom to practise his or her religion, and no obstacles shall be placed in the way. 3. The Catholic party must promise to be faithful to the true faith and to endeavor to lead the non-Catholic later on to the Church by good example. In this manner the Catholic may be the means of winning over the other party to the Church. These conditions are indispensable, and to secure a lawful dispensation, they must be complied with.

Under no circumstances should a Catholic marry before a magistrate or squire, as marriage is a sacrament, and consequently more than a mere civil contract. To marry before a Protestant preacher is never allowed. Not only is it a grievous sin, but it is worse; it places the Catholic under the ban of the Church, excommunicating him, than which no greater evil could possibly befall him. In a

word, then, mixed marriages are indeed a great evil, and generally give rise to religious indifference, and in many instances occasion the loss of faith, the greatest of misfortunes in this life.

9. Indissolubility of the Marriage Tie, etc.

When the married couple do not agree, that is to say, when they do not live in peace and charity, the Church and State may and do allow, for sufficient reasons, a separation from bed and board. Let it be understood, however, that this does not mean a divorce. In the Catholic Church there is no such thing, and this has always been the infallible teaching of the Church. Death alone can dissolve the union between man and wife, for as Christ himself says: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." The Catholic Church never has yielded, nor will she ever yield in this point, and in this she carries out strictly the teaching of her divine Founder, Jesus

Christ. One of the greatest curses to society at the present day, and especially in this country, is the immense number of civil divorces granted, and this is appalling even to those who teach their lawfulness. Divorce destroys domestic peace and breaks up thousands of homes every year. Yes, good Catholic wife, your greatest benefactor is the Catholic Church.

To the worthy reception of every sacrament are attached special graces. The sacrament of matrimony worthily received imparts an increase of sanctifying grace. More than this, a special actual grace is given to married persons, which will enable them to love and to be true to each other at all times; to bear up together with life's trials; to resist all temptations and to bring up their children in the knowledge, fear and love of God. In a word, it imparts to them the graces necessary to discharge faithfully the obligations imposed upon them by their state of life.

Inasmuch then as marriage is a sacrament, parties should prepare

themselves to receive it worthily. It must be received in a state of grace; consequently confession must precede. True Catholics never forget this and God's blessing is their reward. The correct thing for Catholics is to marry at Nuptial Mass and to receive holy Communion at it, and not in the evening, as some do contrary to the spirit of the Church. By a Nuptial Mass is meant a Mass prescribed by the Church for the special purpose of invoking the divine blessing upon the married couple, and most earnestly does the Church exhort her children to avail themselves of this privilege. Of course the Nuptial Mass supposes in every case that both parties are Catholics. If all Catholics would follow out this advice much evil would be prevented, many scandals would be avoided, and God's blessing would be obtained.

10. Impediments to Marriage.

There are two kinds of impediments recognized by the Church. The one renders the marriage contract null and

void, this is called an *invalidating* impediment; the other renders it unlawful and sinful, and is called a *prohibiting* impediment.

The difference between the two kinds of impediments is this: When parties marry with an *invalidating* impediment, and without dispensation, it is not marriage at all. They are living in a state of sin. What is to be done in this case? The parties must either obtain a dispensation from the bishop, if it can be obtained, or if no dispensation can be granted, they are bound to separate under pain of eternal damnation. On the other hand, when parties enter upon the married state with a *prohibiting* impediment and without dispensation, they commit a grievous sin, but still they are man and wife. They are not allowed to separate; they are bound to confess their sin and to perform the penance that shall be imposed on them.

Some *invalidating* impediments. 1. The bond of a previous valid marriage. No man can be married again whose wife is still living, nor can any

woman, whose husband is still living, be married to another, if in either case the previous marriage was valid. There can be no dispensation from this impediment. 2. Consanguinity, which means relationships by blood. Hence no one can contract a real marriage with a blood relative as far as third cousin inclusive. 3. Affinity. According to this impediment no widower can contract a real marriage with a blood relation of his wife as far as third cousin inclusive. The same as to a widow. When the widower or widow had been living in an unlawful marriage, then the impediment of affinity exists also, but only to the second degree. There is also a spiritual affinity invalidating matrimony between either of the sponsors with his or her godchild, and also, between either of the sponsors with the father or the mother of the godchild. 4. Marriage is also null and void between a Catholic and a Jew, or a heathen, or a non-baptized person. This case is different from that in which a Catholic marries a person who, though being baptized,

does not belong to the true Church. This latter case is only a *prohibiting* impediment. It is a real marriage, the parties must remain together, but the Catholic husband or wife must do penance for his or her sin.

In some cases the Church dispenses from some of the above named invalidating impediments, in others not. Hence, when persons wish to marry, knowing that one or the other of these impediments exists, they should let the pastor know in good time that he may inquire and determine what ought to be done.

The *prohibiting* impediments do not make the marriage null and void, but only sinful and unlawful, when there is no dispensation. They are: 1. Forbidden times, that is during Lent and Advent. 2. Certain religious vows. 3. Marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic. 4. A previous promise of marriage not canceled.

II. Baptism.

The Catholic Church has ever taught that the sacrament of baptism

is necessary for salvation, and the practice of pious Christians from time immemorial has confirmed this teaching. We are born into this world as sinners, or as St. Paul has it, as "children of wrath." Original sin is the heir-loom of every child of Adam. Christ instituted this sacrament to wash the stain of this sin from the soul.

Parents should learn from this, how necessary it is for them to see to the baptism of their children without delay. As soon after birth as the health of the child will reasonably permit, it should be taken to the parish church to be baptized. The consequences of a delay are sometimes very disastrous. Bear in mind the many dangers to which a child is exposed at this tender and critical age. Sickness may carry it off with slight or no warning, and should it die without baptism, it will never behold the face of God or enjoy the happiness of heaven. Parents, how can you be so cruel as to endanger your child's salvation! If through any negligence of your own, you

allowed your child to die without baptism, you would never forgive yourselves, and in this you would be right, as it would be an irreparable calamity.

Too long a delay is then sinful. It is the teaching of many theologians that to postpone baptism beyond two weeks, without a very serious reason, is a mortal sin. Yet some parents do not scruple to wait weeks and even months before they see to this. They will bring forward all kinds of flimsy excuses. Sometimes it is no money, and sometimes no clothes. Money is frequently forthcoming for other purposes, but for this — no. If you are poor, do not fear, bring your child to be baptized, every good priest will deem it a happiness to make a Christian of your child.

To baptize belongs to the sacred office of the priesthood, and whenever possible the priest should perform this ceremony. In case of necessity, however, any man, woman, or child may administer the sacrament of baptism. People residing a long distance from a church must not forget this, as at

any time they may be called upon to give private baptism. Baptism is administered by pouring water on the head of the child, saying at the same time, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

The name of a Saint should be chosen for a child. The name of a heathen, a nation, or what we call pet-names, are to be studiously avoided. Only such as are known to be practical Catholics should be invited to act as sponsors; under no circumstances should non-Catholics be asked to stand as sponsors. When this is done, great annoyance is frequently caused to the priest, inasmuch as he is bound to refuse them. The obligations of sponsors are, in case of the parents' death, to see that the child is brought up in the Catholic faith. It is customary to make an offering at the baptism of a child, and good Catholics do this willingly.

12. Church Support.

The Church in her external make-up is a society, an organization com-

posed of rulers and subjects, just as any other society or the civil government. Now as the State *should* work, the Church *does* work for the common good of the people, and hence like the State, she must be *supported* by the people. The Church is so much more deserving of support than the State, as the Church is higher, more necessary than the State, as the good she does is greater, more far reaching than that done by the State. Yet, Oh inconsistency! (surely the devil is to blame for it) people find no fault whatever when the State asks for some of their earnings, but let the Church ask for some! and what fault finding do we hear! The State *levies* taxes according to the amount of one's possessions—so much on every hundred dollars, and the people pay it. But in the Church each person wants to determine for himself what he is to give, and very often he chooses to give very little or nothing. In most countries the tax for the Church is levied as the tax for the State, and the people pay heavily toward the Church, though you may

imagine they pay nothing. Some people think, that because the Church is not *of earth*, because her work is of the spiritual, charitable order, she ought to get along without money. Would that she could. She is not of earth, but she is on earth, and who or what can get along *on earth* without money. God Himself realizes this, for He gave the first law regarding taxation for the Church, and He levied a *heavy* tax, one tenth of all one's earnings. Listen to God's own words. "I have given to the sons of Levi (priests) all the tithes (one tenth) of Israel for a possession, for the ministry wherewith they serve Me in the tabernacle." Num. - XVIII, 29. "All things which you shall offer of the tithes and shall separate, for the gifts of the Lord shall be the *best* and *choicest* things." Num. XVIII, 29. "Every one shall offer according to what he hath." Deut. XVI, 37.

"No *one* shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord." Deut. XVI, 16. "Give unto the most High according to what He hath given to

thee." Eccles. XXXV. "Honor the Lord with thy substance and give Him of the first of all thy fruits." Consider well these texts and note how general their application is: *all* the tithes, *every* one shall offer. *No one* shall refuse, even the widow's mite is noticed. People who would be insulted if others paid their grocer's or butcher's bill, are perfectly willing to let others pay for their place in church. The *Literary Digest*, one of the foremost papers in the country, in the issue of January 17th, 1903, quotes statistics showing that Catholics, considering their large number, contribute less than Protestants toward Church support. Hence complaint from Catholics is unreasonable, when we reflect how much more they get from their Church than Protestant churches can give. Then we must not forget what St. Paul says: "God loveth the cheerful giver."

Religion demands sacrifice, and people who are not willing to do much for the Church certainly do not prize very highly the benefits they derive

from the Church. To do good is all that we are let live for, and surely one can do no greater good and enjoy no greater honor than to help build and maintain temples wherein alone God is properly honored. Do away with the Church — and God would quickly do away with the world. But to sift things down to a finer point, how much do you really give to your church? You who think church dues are too high? Thirty or forty dollars a year? That seems to be a big amount, but it is about ten cents a day. Do you smoke? Do you eat sweet meats, candy, cakes? The price of one good cigar laid aside every day, the price of a hand full of sweet meats spared every day would pay your church dues. Do you drink? The price of one bottle of beer put aside every day would square you before the church. Do you go to a theatre once in a while? What you give thus for pleasure, for pastime, would more than pay your church dues. The butter you put on your bread would about pay them, and yet you grumble

over the amount, though we have seen that nothing on earth is so useful and necessary to us as is the Church. My dear friend, by your little outlay you make it possible for the truth of God to be preached in your locality, for Christ to dwell in your midst as truly as He dwells in Heaven; you draw upon yourself God's blessings, receive His graces, which are worth more than all the world. You are assisted on to Heaven. Do you get your money's worth? You could never give as much to the Church as you get from her. God assures you He will not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity.

The principal means of church support in our country is derived from collections taken up at the services, and the rent of pews and seats. The principle remains the same no matter how the tax is collected. This method may not be the best, but it is the one now in general use, and our faithful people must good-naturedly submit to it until some better method is adopted.

Some people vainly imagine that

because they pay no pew rent they are thereby excused from supporting the church. And if they should chance to rent a seat — they expect their pastor to stand guard at it and keep it for their exclusive use.

The non-pewrenters are just as much obliged to support the Church according to their means as are the pew-renters. If the faithful of our time and country had the charity of the early Christians, and the love and zeal for religion that characterized the congregations of the first century of the Christian era, the harmony and peace — and unity in parishes so much desired would be realized — and the unbelieving world would be attracted to the Church — and God's kingdom on earth would be enlarged — and each parish would become as of old a garden of sanctity and holiness in which God would delight to dwell.

13. A Christian Rule of Life.

A rule of life is most earnestly recommended. In these days of lukewarmness and tepidity, certain Christian practices at home and in common

prove a great safeguard to Catholics. Nothing is a source of greater edification, or more calculated to foster devotion than to see a family united in the practice of these beautiful acts of Catholic piety.

14. Morning and Night Prayers.

One of the most important duties of a Christian is daily prayer. The wants of the soul must be seen to as well as those of the body. One of the Fathers of the Church says: "As moisture is necessary for the life of a plant, so prayer is necessary for the life of the soul." This important exercise should be faithfully observed, and when possible let it be a family exercise, as this is more pleasing to God. Our Lord says that when several are gathered together to pray in His name, He is in their midst. No family deserves to be called truly Catholic, unless the prayers, or at least, the night prayers, are said in common. In every house where this is done the good results are easily seen: Religion is respected, peace and harmony reign in the household, and the precept of charity is ob-

served. In fact, the words of the Holy Ghost are fully realized: "How good and pleasant for brothers to dwell in one." These home exercises of piety your children will never forget.

15. The Rosary.

Every true Catholic loves to recite the rosary, that beautiful devotion in honor of Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God. No devotion is more sanctifying than this. When properly said, it brings before our minds all the great mysteries of our faith. It teaches us the part Mary played in the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation, and how by her co-operation she aided in the great work of man's salvation. No prayer is so suitable and so well adapted to our times and to our wants as the rosary. Our late Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., realized this. Not only was he personally fond of this devotion, but he labored by every means to infuse the same spirit into his spiritual children. The month of October has become, so to say, a second month of Mary, since during

this month we honor her under the new but beautiful title of "Queen of the Holy Rosary."

From this it will be easily seen that the recitation of the rosary should enter into the rule of life of every devout Catholic. When this is done in common in the family, it will never fail to draw down God's blessing. A household in which Mary is honored and loved, is a happy one. If it is not possible to say the beads through every day, time may be found to say at least a decade or two. Give to Mary this token of your filial love and affection, and in return she will guard you from the snares of the evil one and the enemies of your salvation.

16. The Angelus.

When possible the Angelus should be said, at least in private. It is said three times a day at the ringing of the church bell, to remind us of the mystery of the Incarnation. Many indulgences are attached to this devotion. It is taught to the children in Catholic schools, and parents should encourage

them by their example to keep up this practice. This act of piety urged by the Church and enriched by indulgences should enter into the life of every devout Catholic.

17. Spiritual Reading.

A part of the evening after the day's work cannot be more profitably spent than in reading some good and pious book. It is not only entertaining, but it is at the same time most instructive. If our young people would only read good books, instead of the trashy novels of the present day, how much better it would be for them. They would learn to know their religion better, and this knowledge would make them proud of the faith they confess, and be a powerful inducement to practice it faithfully. As to the choice of books, for spiritual reading, the Imitation of Christ, the Glories of Mary and other works of St. Alphonsus, Goffine's Instructions, the life of some saint are especially recommended. St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus, laid the foundation of

his great holiness simply by reading the lives of saints.

Newspapers and Periodicals.

Tell me what you read, and I will tell you what you are. You intend to introduce a Christian rule of life into your household; well, then, keep out of your home the daily newspaper. These papers often contain the details of more scandals and crimes than you have time to read and will prove injurious to the morals of the young. Is the description of a seduction, of an elopement, of a divorce, of a suicide or murder, adapted to improve your morals or those of your children? The recital of murders, suicides, impurities, fill the pages of the secular press. Then look at the advertisements. What in olden times was punishable with death, that is now-a-days brought unblushingly to the knowledge of the public. Is it possible that you or your children can read this printed filth and remain pure? Impossible. Therefore, away with these papers from the Catholic home. Keep a good Catholic

paper on hand. The same may be said about many of the secular periodicals. Be sure to take some good Catholic periodicals, now so numerous and so useful and well written.

18. Holy Water and other Religious Articles.

No home should be without a crucifix, holy water and pious pictures. When one enters a house and perceives the crucifix, the holy water font or pious pictures, it is a sure sign that religion is there honored and respected. These outward signs of Catholicity both please and edify. Holy water through the special blessing of the Church becomes most efficacious. It has the property of purifying everything it touches, and for this reason the Church employs it in many of her august ceremonies. It should be kept in every sleeping apartment, and used both morning and night. The Catholic mother should teach her little ones the meaning of the holy water, and instruct them to bless themselves with it frequently. Never be without it; in

every church a supply is kept on hand to supply the faithful with it.

19. Confession and Communion.

The monthly confession and communion should, if possible, be observed. Nothing is more conducive to a holy life than often to receive these holy sacraments. The frequent reception of holy communion is strongly urged by the Church. Set aside one day in the month for this purpose, and do not let it go by. The first Friday or Sunday in the month is the best time for this, and the pastor generally attends the confessional earlier, so as to give an opportunity to all to go to confession. Wherever the golden rule of monthly confession and communion is observed, the faith and piety of the people are manifest in a hundred different ways.

20. Societies.

Societies are of the utmost importance. If our Catholics do not join Catholic sodalities, or confraternities, or benevolent, or temperance societies,

they will join societies that are outside the Church or forbidden by the Church. The danger from forbidden societies is greater in the country districts, where the Catholics are less numerous, than in the large cities. Our Catholics living in cities are sufficiently organized among themselves. There is no excuse nor shadow of a reason for city Catholics to join a secret or non-Catholic union. In the country it is different. As the faithful are scattered and often limited in number, it is more difficult to start societies and to keep them up. Hence the Catholics there are more easily allured into secret societies. Their agents speak to them kindly, assuring them that their society has nothing to do with religion, absolutely nothing. But wait! From their fruit you shall know the tree. Let these Catholics remain two or three years members of those societies, and they will cease to go to church, or to frequent the sacraments. They are lost to the Church and to the faith. Hence never join any society without first consulting your pastor.

21. Unity and Peace.

If God is so interested in His Church as He assures us He is, then there is nothing grander on earth in His eyes, and therefore in truth, than a parish whose members work in unity and harmony for His greater honor and glory. On the other hand nothing is more displeasing to Him than opposition between priest and people or a want of harmony in the parish organization. St. Paul says, God is not the God of dissension, but of peace, and gives this warning: "Be careful to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace."

Christ pronounces a blessing on the peace maker and consequently a curse on the peace breaker. "Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God." Yet in almost every congregation we find the discontented parishioner: Some who are chronic fault finders. This should not be. We must give and take. We must bear with one another, as we hope to be borne with. We must forgive one another.

If the priest means well, or if most of the people are in favor of a measure, let others suppress their objections and join in to promote harmony and unity. You must consider God's providence. He often permits things to occur in a parish which are not pleasant, but He wishes to try the people's faith and their love for Him, and the priest's patience. We show our love for God when we are willing to put up with hard and disagreeable things for His sake. We must never forget that there are two sides to every question. You may have lots of fault to find with the priest or with other people in the parish, but "don't take it out on God," for He certainly finds more reason to complain about your behavior towards Him. Remember, above all, that no priest is the Catholic Church, and you go to church, and support the church, not for the priest's sake, but to give worship to God and to do good for your own souls.

The Church to-day is the same in make-up as it was during the days of the apostles; so the words of St. Paul

to the parishes he formed will apply to the people of every parish. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be *no* schisms among you. "Fulfill ye, my joy, that you be of one mind, having the same charity; being of *one accord*, agreeing in sentiment." Phil. II, 2. "Stand fast in one spirit with one mind *laboring* together for the faith of the gospel." Phil. I, 27. His prayer for a parish was: "Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of *one mind*, one towards another according to Jesus Christ, that with one mind and one mouth, you may glorify God." Rom. XV, 5. Would that every parish could say: "All the multitude of believers had but *one heart* and *one soul*" Acts IV, 12. On the other hand St. Paul says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, to *mark* them who make dissensions and *avoid* them." Rom XVI.

22. Holy Days of Obligation.

All Sundays in the year; the Circumcision of Our Lord (January 1);

the Ascension of Our Lord (40 days after Easter); the Assumption of the B. V. Mary, (August 15th); All Saints (November 1st); Immaculate Conception (December 8th); Nativity of Our Lord, or Christmas Day (December 25th).

On all these days of obligation every Catholic who has arrived at the years of understanding, that is, from seven years upward, is obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to hear Mass and rest from unnecessary servile work.

Fasting Days of Obligation.

All the week days of Lent; the Ember Days for the four seasons of the year, namely, the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays occurring, 1st, for the Winter Quarter, after the third Sunday of Advent; 2nd, for the Spring Quarter, after the first Sunday in Lent; 3rd, for the Summer Quarter, after Whitsunday; and 4th, for the Autumnal Quarter, after the 14th of September; also the Vigils of All Saints, Christmas, Whitsunday and the Assumption.

Fast Days are binding on every Catholic who has reached the age of twenty-one and is under sixty, and is not lawfully excused.

A Vigil is a day preceding a feast day. If the feast should occur on Monday, the Vigil is kept on the Saturday before, as Sunday is never a fast day.

Days of Abstinence.

All Fridays in the year except when Christmas falls on Friday; and all fasting days excepting those on which the use of flesh-meat is expressly allowed by the proper authorities. Soldiers and sailors in the service of the United States are exempted from the rule of abstinence all through the year, excepting Ash-Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, and the Vigils of the Assumption and Christmas.

A day of abstinence is a day on which we are not allowed to eat flesh-meat.

Even children over seven years of age are bound to observe this law.

By special privilege laboring men and their families may eat meat once a day on all abstinence days except Fridays, Ash-Wednesday, Wednesday and Saturday in Holy Week and the Vigil of Christmas.

23. Holy Maxims from Holy Scripture.

Be not faint-hearted in your mind.

Neglect not to pray and to give alms.

Laugh no man to scorn in the bitterness of his soul, for there is one that humbleth and exalteth, God, who seeth all.

Devise not a lie against thy brother, neither do the like against thy friend.

Hate not laborious work, nor husbandry ordained by the Most High. . . .

Humble thy spirit very much, for the vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms. . . .

Hurt not the servant that worketh faithfully, nor the hired man that giveth thee his life. Let a wise servant be dear to thee as thy own soul; defraud him not of liberty, nor leave him needy. . . .

Hast thou children? Instruct them and bow down their neck from their childhood.

With thy whole heart honor thy father and forget not the groanings of thy mother. Remember that thou hadst not been born but through them, and make a return to them, as they have done for thee.

Servants, obey in all lawful things your masters according to the flesh, not serving to the eye, as it were, pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God. Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance.

With all thy soul fear the Lord and reverence His priests. With all thy strength love Him that made thee, and forsake not His ministers; honor God with all thy soul, and give honor to the priests, give them their portion as it is commanded thee.

Stretch out thy hand to the poor, that thy expiation and thy blessing may be perfected. Be not wanting in comforting them that weep, and walk with them that mourn.

You shall not hurt a widow or orphan; if you hurt them, they will cry out to Me, and I will hear their cry, and My rage shall be enkindled, and I shall strike you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless.

Be not slow in visiting the sick, for by these things thou shalt be confirmed in love.

In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?

THE END.

APR 1 1904



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 019 566 707 A