stands in need of definite spiritual direction and instruction based upon an understanding of the function of his particular status in the Church of God.

There should be no doubt about the need of a definite theological spirituality for the diocesan priesthood. In the absence of such sound and scientific instruction, the diocesan priest and seminarian are almost inevitably bound to have recourse to a desultory and often highly unsatisfactory "spiritual reading" for information and motivation on their own work and their own status. This situation is quite inexcusable today. In the world of business, in the professional and military life, the men of our time have perfected the technique of explaining the position and the function of every class of workers laboring together towards a common goal. The chemist engaged in the task of quantitative analysis would never think of consulting simply "a book about chemistry" for his own instruction. Unless we are willing to expend a like effort in the service of Jesus Christ, we must resign ourselves to the spectacle of a diocesan priest or seminarian looking to "a spiritual book" for information about his highly specialized divine calling. Haphazard spirituality will never help a man appreciate the *presbyterium* and its function in the Church.

There should be little need for worry that a spirituality of the diocesan priesthood will engender disunity within the priesthood or within the Church. Archbishop Guerry somewhat drily observes in his comments on the letters of Fr. Féret: "that, for the diocesan clergy, the danger of a specialization pushed too far appears less pressing than for many other members of the Mystical Body."[1]* The true theology and spirituality of the diocesan priesthood cannot fail to bring out the bonds of unity which bind all Christians, and particularly all priests, together in the one Church of Jesus Christ. It will show not only the obligation, but the strength and the meaning of that priestly loyalty through which and in which the disciples of Christ find their unity.

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"Λα *lfais<m-Dieu,* HI, 81.

Answers to Questions

"INTERFAITH" PROBLEMS

Question I; What is to be said of the use of such expressions as "interfaith meetings," and "persons of different faiths," or of emphasizing "unity-in-diversity," when Catholics are describing their relations and attitude toward non-Catholics?

Question 2: When Pope Pius XII referred to "the right to worship God" in his Christmas message of 1942 as a fundamental human right, did he mean that everyone has a true right to practice whatever religion he deems true?

Answer I. The use by Catholics of such expressions as "interfaith meetings" and "persons of different faiths," whereby non-Catholics are said or implied to have a different *faith* from Catholics is very unfortunate. The word *faith,* as traditionally used in the Catholic Church, signifies exclusively the one true faith, which is found only in the Catholic Church. Objectively, the faith is the body of truths that are proposed by the infallible magisterium of the Church as divinely revealed; subjectively, faith is the infused virtue whereby one accepts the truths of divine revelation on account of God's authority. It is true, the virtue of faith can reside in persons of good will separated from Catholic unity; yet, even in such the infused virtue impels them to believe only what is actually true; it does not extend to doctrines which they themselves may sincerely believe but which are actually false (St. Thomas, *Sum.theol.,* II-II, q. 1, a. 3). The words of St. Paul are very explicit in this connection: "One Lord, *one faith,* one baptism" *(Ephes.* 4:5). When Catholics wish to speak of those outside the true fold, they could refer to them as persons of different denominations, different beliefs, different creeds—but the word *faith* should be retained in its traditional Catholic sense.

Similarly, to characterize the relation between Catholics and Protestants as "unity-in-diversity" is misleading, inasmuch as it implies that essentially Catholics are one with heretics, and that their diversities are only accidental. Actually, the very opposite is the true situation. For, however near an heretical sect may seem to be to the Catholic Church in its particular beliefs, a wide

gulf separates them, inasfar as the divinely established means whereby the message of God is to be communicated to souls—the infallible magisterium of the Church—is rejected by every heretical sect. By telling Protestants that they are one with us in certain beliefs, in such wise as to give the impression that we regard this unity as the predominant feature of our relation with them, we are actually misleading them regarding the true attitude of the Catholic Church toward those who do not acknowledge her teaching authority.

Answer 2: In his Christmas message of 1942, Pope Pius XII enumerated among the basic human rights, called for by the dignity of the human person, "the right to religious formation and education; the right to the worship of God in private and in public" *(Principles of Peace,* n. 1846). Now, although the Soverign Pontiff did not further qualify the significance of "religious" and "worship," these words can refer only to the Catholic religion and worship, if the word "right" be taken in its proper, objective sense. For, if there is anything basic in Catholic teaching, it is the doctrine that the Son of God established only one religion and imposed on all men the obligation of embracing it; consequently, no other religion has a real objective right to exist and tp function, and no individual has an objective right to embrace any non-Catholic religion. For certainly, no one has a right to act against the command of God. Such has ever been the teaching of the Church. For example, Pope Pius IX condemned the proposition "Everyone is free to embrace and to profess that religion which under the guidance of the light of human reason he has judged to be true" *(DB,* 1715).

It is true that a person may be justified in conscience when he practises a false religion; he may even be bound to embrace such a religion because of an invincibly erroneous conscience^ But even in such a supposition, he has no real right to act as he does. In the words of Merkelbach: "As regards an invincibly erroneous conscience, although a man can and must follow it in the internal forum, he has no true and proper right to do so—a right which is founded on the objective relations of things—but only a supposed right *(jus existimatum)" (Summa theologiae moralis* [Paris, 1938], I, n. 211). Again, a person may have a *civil* right to practise a false religion, and to grant such liberty' may be the most feasible policy even in a Catholic country. As Pope Leo XIII expressed

it: "If the Church judges that it is not lawful for various types of divine worship to have the same right as the true Church, she does not on that account condemn those rulers who, for the sake of gaining some good or prohibiting some evil, patiently tolerate in their conduct and practice that each have a place in the state" *(DB,* 1874). But, it must be emphasized, such a *civil right* by no means indicates that false religions have a *natural right* to exist, or that their members have a *natural right* to practise them.

It is to be hoped that Catholic priests will be scrupulously exact in explaining the doctrine of "freedom of worship," as the Catholic Church understands it, especially in these times when so many regard religion as a purely subjective affair, instead of a divinely established form of doctrine and worship, committed by the Son of God to His one true Church.

SURGERY FOR THE HEALTHY

Question: If a person is about to go to a foreign land where medical and hospital care is very difficult to obtain (e.g., a foreign missionary), may he have his appendix removed, even though he has no symptoms of appendicitis, on the score that an attack of this disease in his future abode, where the proper surgical treatment will not be available, will very probably be fatal?

Answer: According to Catholic moral principles, the mutilation or excision of a part of the body is permitted only when there is certainty or probability that benefit will thereby come to the whole body in sufficient measure to compensate for the harm that has been done. (It might be well to note in passing—though it does not relate to the question at hand—that this principle may be extended to include benefit to the body of another person. This interpretation is defended by the Rev. B. J. Cunningham, C.M., S.T.D., in *The Morality of Organic Transplanation* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944]). If, however, there is not at least a probability that the mutilation or excision is necessary or useful, it is forbidden by the fifth commandment. Accordingly, the question with which we are concerned can be reduced to this: "Is it sufficiently probable that an operation for appendicitis will be necessary or useful at