

received amidst the clatter of the refectory as it will be enjoyed in the solitude of a cell. It aims at relieving religious of the unnecessary burdens so many of them carry. In his prologue Fr. McCorry writes: "The life of the Evangelical Counsels was never intended to be a life of unqualified misery. . . . In round terms it was more than hinted at that certain distress in religious life is the fault of the distressed. . . ." In order to get at the core of that distress there are obvious chapters on poverty, chastity, and obedience, necessary chapters on ambition, jealousy, and individuality, all of them written with a sparkle that makes old things sound new.

If a small note of criticism may be sounded it is this: the diffidence of the prologue, though engaging, is misleading; it is not warranted by what follows. The book finished, we are left wondering at the sensitiveness of a man who apologizes for a charity so delicate.

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Our Lord the Source of Holiness

Holiness begins from Christ; by Christ it is effected. For no act conducive to salvation can be performed unless it proceeds from Him as its supernatural cause. "Without me," He says, "you can do nothing." If we grieve and do penance for our sins, if with filial fear and hope we turn again to God, it is because He is leading us. Grace and glory flow from His unfathomed fullness. Our Saviour is continually pouring out His gifts of counsel, fortitude, fear, and piety, especially on the leading members of His body, so that the whole body may grow daily more and more in spotless holiness. When the sacraments of the Church are administered by external rite, it is He who produces their effect in souls. He nourishes the redeemed with His own flesh and blood, and thus calms the soul's turbulent passions; He gives increases of grace and is preparing future glory for souls and bodies. All these treasures of His divine goodness He is said to disburse to the members of His mystical body, not merely because He, who is the Eucharistic Victim on earth and the glorified Victim in heaven, lets His wounds and prayers plead our cause before the Eternal Father, but because He selects, He determines, He distributes every single grace to every single person "according to the measure of the giving of Christ."

—Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Mystici corporis*, issued June 29, 1943.

AN IMPORTANT ROMAN INSTRUCTION

On Dec. 20, 1949, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office issued a lengthy and detailed instruction to local Ordinaries concerning the manner and measure in which Catholics may participate in conferences and discussions with non-Catholics with a view to procuring greater unity among Christians—"ecumenical" gatherings, as the Instruction calls them—borrowing the usual Protestant term. The instruction begins with the statement that the Catholic Church earnestly prays that all who believe in Christ shall be "made perfect in one,"¹ and adds that the desire for the return of all Christians to unity, which is growing daily in the hearts of many who are separated from the Catholic Church, is doubtless due to the prayers of the faithful, aided by the grace of the Holy Spirit. However, it goes on to say, some of the efforts toward the reconciliation of non-Catholics with the Catholic Church have not been based on correct principles, and have even been fraught with danger. For this reason the Holy Office, charged with the duty of preserving the faith in its integrity, has deemed it opportune to recall and prescribe the points to be mentioned in the Instruction.

The body of the Instruction is divided into eight numbered paragraphs; however, the subjects it treats can be suitably classified under four general headings: (1) The background and preparation for the work of the "ecumenical movement"; (2) The method of proposing Catholic doctrine in the prosecution of this work; (3) The conditions under which meetings between Catholics and non-Catholics may be conducted; and (4) Several particular points and admonitions.

(1) As a preamble, the Instruction states that the work of promoting "reunion" belongs primarily to the Bishops of the Church, and they are bound to promote it in such wise that those who are seeking the true Church may be helped to find it, and that the members of the Church may not be injured by the dangers which readily follow activities of "the ecumenical movement".

Evidently, then, priests and lay persons may not engage in this work save by the authorization of the Bishop. The Bishop is ad-

UoAn 17:23.

monished to choose for this work priests who are well acquainted with the teaching of the Church, and particularly with the doctrine laid down in three Encyclicals—Leo XIII's *Satis cognitum* on the constitution and unity of the Church, Pius XI's *Mortalium animos* on the promotion of true religious unity, and Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis Christi* on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

Bishops are also admonished to be vigilant over the observance of the canons, which prescribe censorship for books written by Catholics, and of the laws prohibiting certain types of books. Mention is made of non-Catholic publications which are likely to be read or edited or sold by Catholics. I would regard as examples of books over which such vigilance would be called for those which sometimes appear as "Good Will Books" on the "Religious Book List," issued by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and which apparently are recommended to all persons, (since they are approved by a Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew), though some of them should certainly be banned to Catholics, such as one which speaks of the "delusion that one's own church, cult, sect or group alone expresses God's will on earth, that it alone can reveal God's purposes toward mankind."²

Other works of pastoral zeal recommended to the Bishops are the establishment of "information centers" for non-Catholics who are desirous of finding the truth, and ways and means whereby converts can receive a more thorough grounding in the faith, such as study-clubs and retreats. This last point should serve to remind us that in many parishes in our country no special attention is given to converts once they have been received into the Church. It is very evident from the Instruction that the mind of the Church is not being carried out in such cases.

(2) The section dealing with the method of proposing Catholic doctrine in the work of "reunion" is most significant. Actually it takes the form of various prohibitions and condemnations of false methods; and no one familiar with the "irenic" literature that has issued from Catholic sources in recent years can fail to perceive that such methods have been used—perhaps are still being used. There is the method of over-stressing the points of agreement between non-Catholic belief and the Catholic creed. This tendency,

²Cf. *AER*, CXIII, 5 (Nov. 1945), 385; CXV, 3 (Sept. 1946), 319.

the Instruction asserts, foments a dangerous indifferentism, especially among those who are not well grounded in matters theological; it results in a "whittling down" of Catholic doctrines so that their genuine sense is obscured and the purity of Catholic faith suffers.

Another method severely condemned by the Instruction is to allege that the doctrines taught in papal Encyclicals about the return of dissidents to the Church or the constitution of the Church or the Mystical Body of Christ, since they are not matters of faith, need not be taken too seriously.³ It is true, what is stated in Encyclicals is frequently something that is not of divine faith; but Catholics must never forget that such teaching binds to internal acceptance as a matter of religious assent.⁴ It is unfortunate that there is an impression among some non-Catholics nowadays, and even among some Catholics, that Catholics may reject the doctrines of the Encyclicals with perfect impunity. Thus, *Time* for Feb. 25, 1946, in speaking of the doctrine of Church and state, enunciated by Pope Leo XIII, made the erroneous statement: "Though Leo's views are still repeated by a few academic theologians, they are largely ignored by the L.T. S. hierarchy."⁵ I myself have been in a group of presumably well-educated Catholics who undoubtedly thought that any statement of the Pope which is not an *ex cathedra* pronouncement may be freely doubted or denied. It behooves the Bishops and priests of our country to rectify these mistaken notions.

Still worse would it be, the Instruction goes on to say, if the impression were given to non-Catholics that the Catholic Church will not have its full perfection until they are again united to it—as if the Church were not already "in possession of the fullness of Christ." We find an echo of this last idea in an essay by a French Catholic priest, written several years ago, stating that "Christ will not be complete until He will have incorporated into

³It is interesting to note that the three doctrines here cited as taught in papal documents constitute the main theme of the three Encyclicals previously noted, with a change in order—*Mortalium animos*, *Satis cognitum*, and *Mystici Corporis Christi*.

⁴Cf. J. C. Fenton, *AER*, CXXI, 2 and 3 (Aug. and Sept. 1949), 126 ff., 210 ff.

⁵Cf. J. C. Fenton, *AER*, CXIV, 5 (May 1946), 369 ff.

Himself the whole man in each one of us and all the value of humanity scattered and multiplied throughout the world.”⁶

The Instruction takes to task the custom of some Catholics of overemphasizing the evils prevailing in the Church before the Reformation. As is evident, such an attitude might tend to give the impression that the Reformation was actually justified. We must not forget that the main fact, as the Instruction points out, was the defection of so many from the true faith.

Methods of expounding Catholic doctrine which involve excessive display or a vehement method of procedure and treatment are also condemned. In this point we see the prudence of the Church, which would have us ever kindly and gentle and understanding in dealing with non-Catholics. We must presume that they are in good faith in their religious convictions until the opposite is proved.

The idea that good will can be won from non-Catholics by suppressing portions of Catholic teaching is also reprobated. The Instruction mentions explicitly as truths which may not be suppressed, the doctrines of the true nature and means of justification (one of the fundamental points of controversy with the original Reformers), the constitution of the Church, the primacy of jurisdiction of the Pope, and the fact that the only true union must consist in the return of non-Catholics to the one true Church. It is indeed a most unfortunate procedure to propose what claims to be an adequate presentation of the Catholic creed, and to omit or pass over lightly certain doctrines which may arouse the hostility of non-Catholics. We must follow the example of Christ and give “hard sayings” when we essay to expound Catholic doctrine in its entirety. The Instruction emphasizes this point by the use of italics: “*Tota igitur et integra doctrina catholica est proponenda atque exponenda.*”

Non-Catholics may be told, the Instruction continues, that when they return to the Catholic Church they will lose none of the good which hitherto they have acquired, through God's grace. But, on the other hand, they may not be given the idea that their return will add any substantial perfection to the Church, as if it were still lacking something. An example of this erroneous notion appeared some years ago in an article by a priest in which it was stated that the visible Church has been rent asunder, but that

⁶Cf. *AER*, CXVII, 4 (Oct. 1947), 292.

the Mystical Body, being invisible, cannot be rent. The underlying notion of this statement was that the Catholic Church has lost its unity—an idea which is utterly false. It is interesting to note that whenever the Instruction uses the word “reunion” it puts it in quotation marks, to indicate that this expression, though it is used commonly, is not quite the correct word from the Catholic standpoint, since it might seem to imply that the unity which Christ promised as one of the notes of His Church, has been lost by the Catholic Church. “Reunion” in the Catholic sense means nothing else than the return of those who once departed from Catholicism to a unity that has never failed the true Church of Christ.

(3) The conditions under which meetings between Catholics and non-Catholics may be conducted or approved by Ordinaries are given in detail. The good feature of such meetings, the Instruction states, is that they furnish an opportunity for non-Catholics to acquire a knowledge of the Catholic faith; the bad feature is that they furnish danger of indifferentism. When an Ordinary believes that there will be good results, he should designate competent priests to explain and to defend Catholic teaching. However, the Instruction states, the laity should not attend such meetings unless they receive special permission from the ecclesiastical authorities, and this should not be given save to those who are well instructed and strong in the faith. If it is found that no good results can be hoped for from such gatherings, the faithful shall be prudently barred from them and the meetings themselves discontinued. The Instruction is particularly solicitous that large gatherings shall not be permitted, save after a most diligent investigation, since these are wont to produce little fruit and much danger.

As far as conferences with non-Catholic theologians are concerned, the Instruction commands that only priests be deputed who have proved themselves capable by their theological knowledge and their firm adherence to the principles and norms laid down by the Church.

Then the Instruction goes on to distinguish those gatherings of Catholics and non-Catholics which need ecclesiastical approval from those which do not. It refers to the *Monitum* issued by the Holy Office on June 5, 1948, which repeated the prescriptions of

the Code,⁷ forbidding conferences and disputations with non-Catholics without the permission of the Holy See. Those gatherings come under the scope of this *Monitum*, the Instruction says, which have been organized with the understanding that both the Catholic and the non-Catholic parties expound and discuss their respective beliefs on an equal footing. However, it adds, certain other types of gatherings are permitted without special ecclesiastical authorization. Such, are catechetical instructions in which a Catholic imparts a knowledge of the faith to non-Catholics, and also conferences explaining Catholic doctrine to prospective converts. Even if on the occasion of such instructions or conference the non-Catholics explain the belief of their own church with a view to comparing it with Catholic doctrine, the meeting does not come under those requiring the permission of ecclesiastical authority, at least as far as the general law of the Church is concerned. Furthermore, the Instruction states, those meetings are not subject to the rules of the *Monitum* in which Catholics and non-Catholics assemble, not to discuss matters of faith and morals, but to consider in what ways they can offer a common defence of the fundamental principles of the natural law or of the Christian religion against the enemies of God, who are so powerful nowadays, or to deliberate on the restoration of social order or other questions of like nature. But, it adds, in such gatherings Catholics may not approve or concede anything at variance with divine revelation or the teaching of the Church—including its social teaching.

As an example, therefore, of a gathering not requiring special ecclesiastical authorization, we can take the case of a priest asked to address a group of Protestants in order to explain at their request some article of Catholic belief. Such a gathering does not come under the heading of a meeting in which both sides discuss their respective beliefs "on an equal footing" (*par cum pari agens*). Similarly, if Catholics meet with their fellow-citizens of other creeds to protest against an obscene motion picture that is being shown in the local theatre, or to uphold the efforts of a group of workmen to obtain a living wage from their employers, or to voice their objections to an attempt to obtain legislation favoring euthanasia, the permission of higher ecclesiastical authorities is not required by the *Monitum*. Such meetings are directed only

⁷ Can. 1258.

toward safeguarding principles of natural law. Even when there is question of upholding fundamental Christian principles, Catholics may unite with non-Catholics in a common effort. This statement of the Instruction is doubtless open to different interpretations. For, on the one hand, to come in this category a meeting must be one in which matters of faith and morals are not discussed, yet fundamental principles of the Christian religion are defended. The meaning seems to be that the principles are such as are admitted without hesitation by all the participants. For example, in a land under Communist domination Catholics and non-Catholics could unite in an effort to ban posters and newspapers casting ridicule on the doctrine of Christ's divinity. However, even in such a meeting Catholics could not favor any statement that is not conformable to Catholic teaching—for example, that non-Catholic churches have the same right to proclaim Christianity as the Catholic Church.

A canonical enactment is then promulgated in the Instruction. According to the *Monitum*, following the prescription of Canon 1325, § 3, only the Holy See may ordinarily grant Catholics permission to participate in assemblies with non-Catholics in which matters of faith and morals are treated by both parties on an equal footing. Now, however, for a period of three years from the date of publication of the Instruction—that is, until Dec. 20, 1952—local Ordinaries may authorize *local* meetings of this nature. By local meetings would seem to be meant those in which the participants reside in the same diocese, for a special provision is later made for interdiocesan meetings.

However, the Instruction lays down three conditions which must be observed in these local meetings—first, there must be no *communicatio in sacris*; second, there must be proper supervision and direction of the meetings; third, a Bishop in whose diocese such meetings have been held must report to the Holy Office at the end of each year, announcing that they have taken place and relating the experience gleaned from them.

A special paragraph is devoted in the Instruction to strictly theological gatherings. The same faculty to permit these is given to Ordinaries for a period of three years. Indeed, the Instruction adds, if several Ordinaries agree that one shall take charge of this type of meeting, they are free to do so. But in the report to the

Holy Office particular details must be announced—what questions were treated, who were present, and who were the speakers on both sides.

Finally, according to the Instruction, when there is question of interdiocesan, national, or international conventions of Catholics and non-Catholics, special permission must be sought from the Holy See for each case. In the petition it must be stated what questions are to be discussed, and who are the proposed speakers. Before the permission of the Holy See has been secured, it is forbidden to Catholics to begin any external preparation or to collaborate with non-Catholics making such preparations.

Examples of the type of meeting visualized in this last ruling of the Instruction would be the "Conversations of Malines" inaugurated by Cardinal Mercier a quarter of a century ago, and the great assembly of Christian sects held in Amsterdam in 1948. It is interesting to note that the Instruction does not limit the participation of Catholics to meetings begun under Catholic auspices.

(4) Particular points and admonitions embrace: first, the approval of the recitation of a prayer by both Catholic and non-Catholic participants at the opening and close of a meeting, provided the prayer is one that is approved by the Catholic Church. The Instruction mentions explicitly the Lord's Prayer. This is merely an application of the principle, admitted by theologians, that Catholics may participate in *private* prayers with non-Catholics, as long as the prayers are orthodox. Thus, there is no objection to the recitation of the Our Father by Catholic and Protestant children in a public school, under the direction of a Catholic teacher.⁸ But, the Instruction again warns against any *communicatio in sacris*—that is, participation in official or public worship with non-Catholics.

Secondly, the Instruction states, although each Ordinary has the task of taking charge of the movement toward "reunion" in his own diocese, it is suitable and even necessary to have the united efforts of a number of Bishops to set up measures for observing, investigating and directing the whole activity in this field. The Bishops, therefore, are to take common counsel as to how to secure uniformity and well-concerted action.

⁸ Cf. Connell, *Morals in Politics and Professions* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Bookshop, 1946), p. 157.

Thirdly, religious superiors are admonished to see that their subjects strictly and faithfully observe the directions of the Holy See and of the local Ordinaries in promoting the work of "reunion." It is very evident from this prescription that even the members of exempt religious societies may not conduct conferences or discussions of the type referred to in the *Monitum* without the permission of the Bishop. Their religious superiors can grant no permission of this kind.

It could be appropriately remarked here, although the Instruction does not mention it, that the local Ordinary may reserve to himself the right to authorize the participation of Catholics in even those meetings which do not come under the scope of the *Monitum*—for example, those whose stated purpose is the promotion of good will, or the procuring of "released time instruction" for public school children. Such meetings, though inaugurated for an end not comprised in the prohibition of the *Monitum*, might easily pass into assemblies requiring the permission of the Ordinary; hence, in prudence he could require that they be submitted to his judgment.

It is very evident that the Instruction makes no concession in the matter of doctrinal or moral principles previously held by the Catholic Church. On the contrary, it rather emphasizes those principles, and insists in detail on their observance by all Catholics. The Instruction states that there have been faults on the part of some Catholics in their manner of collaborating toward the "ecumenical movements," either because they did not follow correct principles or because they did not avoid dangers in pursuing their zealous designs. The same fact is implied in the statement made by the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Dr. W. A. Alisser't Hooft, in Geneva: "The directive remains below the level reached by certain members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy."⁹ And Rev. Marc Boegner, President of the same organization asserted that the Instruction is a step backward in the "ecumenical movement." "For," he said, "up to now there have been frequent contacts between Roman Catholic clergymen and laymen and those of the different Protestant faiths represented in the World Council of Churches. But the result of this decree seems to be that now no local ecumenic meetings, even

⁹ Quoted in *Time*, March 13, 1950, p. 92.

among theologians alone, can take place without the formal authorization of a local bishop. The worst is that any meeting implying the presence of theologians or laymen from several dioceses will automatically require the formal approval of the Holy See." 10

To most non-Catholics it is indeed a hard saying that the only type of "reunion" possible according to Catholic principles is that which includes the acceptance of the complete body of Catholic doctrines by those who wish to be united to the Catholic Church. The Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, while praising the section of the Instruction which approves of co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics in defending fundamental Christian principles, asserts of the Catholic notion of "reunion": "We have no thought or intention of reunion on such terms and mean something quite different by reunion." 11

Priests must, therefore, be on their guard lest, in their zeal to bring the light of the true faith to those who are outside the Church, they compromise in any way the principles of Catholic doctrine. Above all, they must observe to the letter the directions laid down in the Instruction, in the matter of seeking ecclesiastical authorization for any meetings with non-Catholics for the purpose of discussing doctrinal differences, and if the local Ordinary has made some particular rulings, these must be obeyed most exactly.

To all Catholics the words regarding the work of "reunion" which terminate the letter should be a source of inspiration: "All indeed, but mainly priests and religious, must be admonished and encouraged to seek to fecundate and promote the work by their prayers and sacrifices. Finally, all must be made conscious of the fact that for those wandering outside the fold there is no more efficacious means of preparing the way to embrace the truth and the Church than the faith of Catholics associated with good moral conduct."

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10 Quoted in United Press dispatch, March 3, 1950.

11 Quoted in *The Tablet*, March 11, 1950.

HOW NEAR IS EVENING MASS?

The Holy Father's concession that this Holy Year of 1950 might, at the local bishop's option, be inaugurated by a special midnight Mass, cannot but raise in some quarters the question of the general restoration of post-noon Mass as a regular feature of Catholic life.

It would seem that German- and French-speaking Catholics are about psychologically ready now for post-noon Mass, weekdays and Sundays; that Polish- and Bohemian-speaking Catholics are just a step behind them; that Italian- and English-speaking Catholics are getting warmed up to the thought for Sundays; while Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking ones are still to be reached by the notion at all.

When Pope Pius XII addressed the consistory in the presence of the thirty-two newly-created cardinals, Feb. 20, 1946, he delivered a remarkable discourse, of which the final section dwelt with eloquence upon the social mission of the Mass in the modern world. His Holiness summed up: "The Church, then, provides in the Mass, Venerable Brethren, the greatest good of human society. Every day from where the sun rises to where it sets, without distinction of peoples or nations, there is offered a clean oblation, at which are present all children of the Church scattered throughout the world, and all here find a refuge in their needs."

One of those listening most attentively there that day was Theodosio de Gouveia, Archbishop of Lourenco Marques, in Portuguese East Africa. "From where the sun rises to where it sets," he heard the Pope say very distinctly ("*da dove nasce il sole fin dove tramonta*"), giving a sharpened tone to the Vulgate reading. But Africa's new cardinal could reflect that the ordinary version of Malachy's words, *usque ad occasum*, could be translated "from when the sun rises to when it sets." He could recall, what every one knew, that there had been ample war-time "privileges" for afternoon and evening Mass. Cardinal Faulhaber, for instance, could have told him that in 1941 the papacy allowed the German bishops to have evening Mass, Sundays and week-days, as need dictated. Cardinal Spellman might also have informed him that in 1942 the Holy Father had acceded to his request that all the American armed forces should be allowed post-noon Mass, on