
What Non-Catholics May Want To Know.

A non-Catholic living in a community where there is no Catholic Church, in a locality some four hundred miles from Notre Dame, submits the following questions in an honest search for truth. They are printed here with their answers for your information.

"1. How do your Popes and other high church officers acquire their position? Is the Pope considered in direct communication with Almighty God?"

Ans. - The Pope is elected by the College of Cardinals, an appointive body named by previous Popes. Other high officials are named by the Pope, with the aid of a board of Cardinals called the "Sacred Consistorial Congregation." The Pope is not considered "in direct communication with Almighty God," except insofar as the assistance of Holy Ghost, promised by Christ to the Church, preserves him from making any mistake on the rare occasions when he declares a certain teaching to be a revealed truth, or declares some act to be right or wrong; in other words, when he speaks officially, in the name of the Church, in matters of Faith or Morals.

"2. Why do not your high officials referred to above take upon themselves the marriage vows? Cannot a high churchman keep himself morally clean under the responsibility of rearing a family?"

Ans. - He can keep himself morally clean with or without the responsibility of raising a family. The Church prescribes celibacy for her clergy after the example of Christ, with the praise of Christ for those who "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven," and following the counsel of St. Paul, who warns us that one who has a wife is solicitous for the things of the wife, he who has none, for the things of God.

"3. Does the Catholic Church accept a Protestant marriage as valid in the eyes of God?"

Ans. - Yes. The Church legislates for the Sacrament of Matrimony, and includes in her legislation only those who have been baptized Catholics.

"4. a) What is the status of Purgatory in the Catholic system? b) Do you allow that Protestant souls will ever reach the home of the celestials if they do not go via this stopping place? c) Where do persons upon earth acquire the power to intercede for these souls held in bondage in Purgatory? d) Are said souls ever released from there without a stipend being handed to the intercessor?"

Ans. - a) Purgatory is the place of detention of souls that have passed from this life free from mortal sin, but not from venial sin, or without having fulfilled all the penance due their venial sins or their forgiven mortal sins. It is referred to by St. Paul in I Cor., 3, 13-16: "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." See also Matt., 5, 25-26; I Peter, 3, 18-19.

b) "Nothing defiled can enter heaven," whether it be the soul of a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, an infidel, or a pagan.

c) See the Second Book of Macabees (which Luther rejected but Christ accepted) ch. 12, verses 42-46, on the prayers of the Church for the souls in Purgatory, and almost any page of the Bible for other intercessory prayers; note particularly I Titus, 2, 1.

It is in man's nature to ask the intercession of a "friend at court."

d) Certainly. When they have made up for their punishment, or when the intercession of friends moves God to release them. The Mass (for which a stipend of one dollar is accepted from those who can afford it) is one means of intercession, and the most powerful means, but by no means the only mode of intercession. (To be continued)

Prayers.

Sister Martina, who cooked for Notre Dame students forty-five years, was anointed Sunday. John McNelis ('27) asks prayers for his mother. One deceased person; one dying.