
Better -- But Still Bad.

James Meehan is improved, but he is still in dangerous condition; pray hard for him.
-- Fr. Molony's father is in grave danger following an auto accident. Two special intentions.

What Non-Catholics May Want to Know. II.

"5. How might a neutral like myself become a member of your Church?"

Ans. Go to the nearest priest and tell him you want to take instructions. After you receive from him a comprehensive view of what the Church teaches, you can decide for yourself, with the grace of God. The priest will take care of the rest. Meanwhile, pray for light to know the Truth, and courage to accept it at any cost.

"6. Is the confessional an institution of the Catholic Church, or is it a side-line with the clergy? Does it also include a stipend?"

Ans. Confession was instituted by Christ, not by the Church. See John 20, 21-23. When He gave His Apostles power to retain as well as forgive sins, He commanded them to judge. No judge can pass a just sentence unless he knows the cause. In the Sacrament of Penance the only competent witness is the penitent himself; he knows his sins. It does not include a stipend; it is just plain hard work with no pay. But the priest is glad to do it, as it is the most consoling work he does -- extending the Mercy of God to sinners.

"7. Do your parochial schools include your higher institutions of learning? Are any of them under the supervision of the government in the country in which they are?"

Ans. The term "parochial" means "of the parish," the local unit of Church government. In this sense there are no "parochial" colleges or universities; these belong either to the diocese, or to some religion order, or to a corporation formed by some administrative group in the Church. They are under the same supervision as other private schools, wherever they are located. In some Catholic countries religion is taught in the state schools. In England the government pays the cost of denominational school, the religious complexion of the school being determined by the affiliation of the majority of the tax-payers in the locality.

"8. Does the Catholic Church exercise any authority over the prerogatives of civil government in any country in the Old World? Name some of them. Do tax-payers in any country contribute to the support of the Catholic Church?"

Ans. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's", the answer of Our Lord to His tempters, determines the attitude of the Church with regard to the State. The Church nowhere exercises the prerogatives of civil government; before 1870, however, the Pope was civil ruler of the "Papal States", in Central Italy, which belonged to the Church and were stolen from it by force. Tax-payers in all countries where there is union of Church and State contribute to the support of the Church; in England, to the Anglican Church; in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, to the Lutheran Church; in Spain, Chile, Peru, and several other countries, to the Catholic Church. We had the same condition in this country before the Revolution.

"9. Does the Catholic Church ever modify or make changes in its tenets? Protestant churches do. Their tenets must be man-made - what?"

Ans. The Church can make no changes in moral principles or in truths to be believed; has received them from God and would be faithless to her trust if she did so. She may make changes in the laws by which these principles are safe-guarded; to safeguard faith, worship, and sacrifice, for instance, she may command attendance at Sunday Mass, abstinence from meat on Friday, Holy Communion once a year, and so forth.