

This treasure is to be considered as the common property of the faithful, committed to the administration of the Church; since, by virtue of the *Communion of Saints* by which we are united as members of one body, the abundance of some supplies the want of others.

'In this present time, let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may supply your want, that there may be an equality' (2 Cor. viii. 14). Comp. p. 148, § 4.

**86.** What is generally required to gain an Indulgence?

It is required, 1. That we should be in the state of grace, and have already obtained, by true repentance, forgiveness of those sins the temporal punishment of which is to be remitted by the Indulgence; and 2. That we should exactly perform the good works prescribed for the gaining of the Indulgence.

**87.** What must we believe with regard to Indulgences?

We must believe,

1. That the Catholic Church has power to grant Indulgences; and

2. That the use of them is very salutary to us (Council of Trent, Sess. 25).

**88.** From whom has the Catholic Church the power of granting Indulgences?

From Jesus Christ, who made no exception when He said: 'Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven' (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18).

That the Catholic Church has also at all times exercised this full power, is evident even from 2 Cor. ii. 10.

**89.** Who has a right to grant Indulgences?

This right belongs especially to our Most Holy Father the Pope, who, being the successor of St. Peter, has received from Christ the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; the Bishops, however, have also the power of granting some Partial Indulgences.

**90.** For what reasons are Indulgences very salutary to us?

For these:

1. They discharge our debt of temporal punishment.

2. They encourage us to make our peace with God, by substituting easier exercises of piety for the very severe Canonical Penances of the ancient Church.

3. They incite us to true repentance and amendment, since without these requisites they cannot be gained at all.

4. They urge us to receive frequently the Sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist, and to perform good works.

5. They console fervent penitents in their fear of the judgments of God.

To assert that, by an Indulgence, the Church forgives *sins*, past or future, or that she grants indulgences for *money*, is a gross calumny. It is true that, when granting an Indulgence, she has sometimes, besides the conditions of a sincere repentance, prescribed alms-deeds for charitable purposes; for instance, for the building of a church or of an hospital; but as this, laudable as it was in the beginning, gave nevertheless, in the course of time, occasion to abuses, the Council of Trent abolished the abuses, declaring, however, that 'the use of Indulgences is very salutary to Christian people, and approved of by the authority of the Sacred Councils' (Sess. 25).

**91.** Is it, then, not true that the Church, by Indulgences, frees us from the obligation of doing Penance?

No; she does not free us from the obligation of doing Penance according to our capacity, since, the greater is our penitential zeal and love to God, the more do we participate in the Indulgence; she will only assist us in our inability to expiate all temporal punishment in this life, and thus, by a generous Indulgence, effect what, in ancient times, she endeavored to attain by the rigorous Penitential Canons.

**92.** How many kinds of Indulgences are there?

There are two kinds: A *Plenary* Indulgence, which is the remission of the whole debt of temporal punishment due to sin; and a *Partial* Indulgence, which is the remission of a part of it only.

**93.** What is meant by an Indulgence of forty days or seven years?

A remission of such a debt of temporal punishment as a person would discharge if he did penance for forty days or seven years, according to the ancient Canons of the Church.

**94.** What is meant by a *Jubilee*?

A Jubilee is a Plenary Indulgence which the Holy Father grants every twenty-fifth year, or upon extraordinary occasions; during which time, in order to increase the fervor of repentance in the faithful, Confessors have a special power to commute private vows into other works of piety, and to absolve in all reserved cases.

**95.** Can Indulgences also be rendered available to the souls in Purgatory?

Yes, all those which the Pope has expressly declared to be applicable to them.

*Application.* Value and esteem Indulgences, and avail yourself of every opportunity of gaining them worthily for yourself, as well as for the souls of the faithful departed.

#### ON EXTREME UNCTION.

**1.** What is Extreme Unction?

Extreme Unction is a Sacrament in which the sick, by the anointing with holy oil, and by the prayer of the Priest, receive the grace of God for the good of their souls, and often also of their bodies.

This Sacrament is called *Extreme Unction*, because it is usually the *last* of the holy unctions which are administered by the Church.

**2.** Whence do we know that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was instituted by Christ?

We know this, 1. From the Holy Scripture; and 2. From the constant doctrine of the Church.

**3.** What does Holy Scripture say of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

The Apostle St. James says in his Epistle (v. 14, 15): 'Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the Priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.'

**4.** Why do we infer from these words that Christ has instituted Extreme Unction?

Because the anointing with oil could have no Sacramental power of forgiving sins, if Christ had not so ordained it.

**5.** How is Extreme Unction administered?

The Priest anoints the different senses of the sick person with holy oil, and uses, at each anointing, this form of prayer: 'Through this holy unction, and His most tender mercy, may the Lord forgive thee whatever sins thou hast committed by thy sight' (by thy hearing, etc.)

**6.** What effects does Extreme Unction produce in the soul?

Extreme Unction, 1. Increases sanctifying grace; 2. It remits venial sins, and also those mortal sins which the sick person can no more confess; 3. It removes the remains<sup>1</sup> of sins already forgiven; and 4. It strengthens the soul in her sufferings and temptations, especially in her agony.

<sup>1</sup> By *remains of sins* we understand the temporal punishment, the evil inclinations of the heart, and the weakness of the will, which are the consequences of sins committed, and *remain* even after the sins have been forgiven.

**7.** What effects does Extreme Unction produce in the body?

It often relieves the pains of the sick person, and sometimes restores him even to health, if it be expedient for the salvation of his soul.

**8.** Who can and ought to receive Extreme Unction?

Every Catholic who has come to the use of reason, and is in danger of death by sickness; but not such as in health expose themselves to the danger of death.

**9.** How are we to receive Extreme Unction?

We are to receive it,

1. In the state of grace; wherefore we must previously, if possible, confess our sins, or, at least, make an Act of Perfect Contrition; and

2. With faith, hope, and charity, and resignation to the will of God.

Acts of these and similar virtues should often be made by the sick person during illness, especially when his end approaches, and all present ought to help him to do so. It may be briefly done in the following words:

I believe, my God, in Thee,  
I most firmly hope in Thee,  
And I love most truly Thee,  
And all men are dear to me.  
All my sins are grieving me,  
Which, I beg Thee, pardon me.  
I resign myself to Thee,  
Thank for good and evil Thee;  
Nay, I'll live and die for Thee. Amen.

**10.** When should we receive Extreme Unction?

We should receive it, if possible, whilst we are still in our senses, and after having received the Viaticum.

**11.** How often can Extreme Unction be received?

In each dangerous illness it can be received once; it can, however, be repeated on relapse into danger that had passed.

**12.** Is it not unreasonable for a person, from fear of death, to defer, or even neglect, the receiving of Extreme Unction until he is moribund?

Certainly; for,

1. Extreme Unction has been instituted even for the health of the body;

2. The sick person will recover more probably, if he employs in time the remedy ordained by God, than if he waits until he cannot recover except by a miracle; and

3. If his sickness be mortal, what should he wish for more earnestly than to die happy, which this Holy Sacrament gives him grace to do?

Relatives also, or attendants, of the sick person, sin grievously, if through their fault the last Sacraments are not administered to him in due time. 'His sisters, therefore, sent to Him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick' (John xi. 3).

*Application.* When God in His mercy visits you with a dangerous illness, be sure not to put off the receiving of the Holy Sacraments to the last moment; otherwise death may surprise you when it is no longer possible to have the attendance of a Priest.

#### ON HOLY ORDER.

**1.** On whom did Christ Himself confer the Priesthood?

On His Apostles.

**2.** Was the Priesthood to end with the death of the Apostles?

No; no more than the Church was to end at their death.

**3.** How was the Priesthood continued?

By the Sacrament of Holy Order.

**4.** What is Holy Order?

Holy Order is that Sacrament which communicates

to those who receive it the full power of Priesthood, together with a special grace to discharge their sacred duties well.

**5.** What are the principal powers of Priesthood?

1. The power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord; and 2. The power to forgive sins.

The power of consecrating bread and wine Christ gave to His Church at the Last Supper (comp. p. 259, quest. 9); and the power of forgiving sins He gave after His Resurrection (comp. p. 275, quest. 4).

**6.** Is there in Holy Order also a visible sign which indicates the communicating of the invisible power and grace?

Yes, there are several: the imposition of hands and the prayer of the Bishop, and the delivery of the chalice with wine, and of the paten with bread.

The imposition of hands and prayer are also mentioned in Holy Scripture: 'I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.' Thus wrote St. Paul to Bishop Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 6; and in a similar manner, 1 Tim. iv. 14. By prayer and imposition of hands Paul and Barnabas were also ordained: 'Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away' (Acts xiii. 3).

**7.** But are not *all* Christians true Priests by their Baptism?

No; as the true Priesthood of the Old Law was propagated by natural descent from Aaron, so it is also in the New Law propagated by a spiritual descent from the Apostles—that is, by ordination.

**8.** Why, then, does St. Peter say that all Christians are '*a kingly Priesthood*'? (1 Pet. ii. 9).

Because all, by their Baptism, are obliged to offer up to God internal or *spiritual sacrifices* (1 Pet. ii. 5) of faith, hope, and charity, of prayer and mortification.

From this passage it can no more be inferred that all Christians are true *Priests* than that all are true *Kings*. In the Old

Law, also, God said to the Israelites: 'You shall be to me a *priestly kingdom*' (2 Kings xix. 6); nevertheless, there was a particular Priesthood, which alone was authorized to offer sacrifices.—Punishment of King Ozias (2 Paral. xxvi.)

**9.** Who can validly administer the Sacrament of Holy Order?

Bishops only, who have received this power by a particular Consecration.

As no one can be made a Priest except by the Sacrament of Holy Order, which can validly be administered only by a Bishop, who again has received the power of administering it from another Bishop lawfully consecrated, it is evident that, by an uninterrupted succession of Bishops lawfully ordained and consecrated, the Priesthood ascends to the Apostles, on whom Christ Himself conferred the Priestly and Episcopal powers both for themselves and for their successors.

**10.** Cannot also civil authorities, or Christian communities, confer spiritual powers?

No; they cannot confer spiritual powers on others, because they have none themselves.

Hence the Council of Trent decrees (Sess. 23, ch. 4) 'that all those who, being only called and instituted by the people, or by the civil power and magistrate, ascend to the exercise of these ministrations, and those who of their own rashness assume them to themselves, are not to be looked upon as ministers of the Church, but as *thieves and robbers, who have not entered by the door*' (John x. 1, 8).

**11.** Can a Priest be deprived of his Ordination?

No; he can as little be deprived of Ordination as of Baptism, because it imprints an indelible character upon the soul.

A Priest, therefore, or a Bishop, cannot be deprived of the powers which he has received in his Ordination or Consecration to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and to offer up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to administer Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and Holy Order; but the power of remitting sins by Sacramental Absolution can be taken from him, because the valid administration of the Sacrament of Penance is also dependent on *Jurisdiction*—that is to say, on his mission or authorization by a lawful spiritual Superior (comp. p. 276, note to quest. 7). For this very reason the Priests and

Bishops of the schismatical Greek Church, and all those who ever have fallen away from the Catholic Church, retain the powers of their Ordination and Consecration which originally they received from the Catholic Church; but all other spiritual power which depends on the Apostolical Mission, and comes from the Head of the Catholic Church, expires with their separation from the Church.

**12.** Are there any other Orders besides those of Priest and Bishop?

Yes; there are others which are preparatory degrees to the Priesthood.

**13.** Which are these other Orders?

1. The *Four Minor Orders*, by which those who receive them are qualified for various offices connected with the Divine Service;

2. The Order of *Sub-deacon*, who has to assist the Deacon when serving at the altar; and

3. The Order of *Deacon*, who immediately assists the Priest at the altar, and helps him also in baptizing, preaching, and giving Holy Communion.

**14.** Who can and ought to embrace the Ecclesiastical state?

He only who is called to it by God.

Parents who, actuated by temporal interests, force their children to take Holy Orders, sin most grievously, and are responsible for all the evil consequences resulting from it.

**15.** What should the faithful do in order to obtain worthy Priests and Pastors?

They should often and fervently pray to God for that grace, and render themselves worthy of it by their love of the Church and respect for the Priesthood.

‘Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest’ (Matt. ix. 38).

*Application.* Always show due respect and submission to Priests, as the Representatives of God and the Dispensers of His Holy Mysteries; and should you

happen to perceive in any of them human failings and infirmities, do not be scandalized, but ‘whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not’ (Matt. xxiii. 3).

#### ON MATRIMONY.

**1.** By whom was Matrimony instituted?

Matrimony was instituted by God Himself, when He gave to Adam in Paradise Eve for his wife, that they both might lead a godly life, and live together in faithful and indissoluble love.

**2.** Was the sanctity of Matrimony always respected according to its original institution?

No. When by sin the entire human race had fallen away from God, the contract of marriage was no longer kept so holy, until our Saviour came, and not only restored Matrimony as God had originally instituted it, but even elevated it to the dignity of a Sacrament.

**3.** How did Christ restore Matrimony to its original institution?

He ordained that Marriage should again, as it was from the beginning, subsist between one man and one woman only, and that unto the death of either of them; and He proposed, therefore, His spiritual union with the Church as an example to married people (Ephes. v.)

‘Moses, by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery’ (Matt. xix. 8, 9, and Luke xvi. 18; Mark x. 11, 12).

**4.** Can, then, the bond of Marriage never be dissolved?

Spiritual Superiors can, indeed, for important reasons, allow a husband and wife to live separated from each other; but, nevertheless, they continue married

people, and neither of them can validly contract a second marriage whilst the other party is living.

'To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife' (1 Cor. vii. 10, 11).

5. How do we know that Matrimony is a Sacrament?

1. St. Paul teaches so, who calls Matrimony in the Church '*a great Sacrament*'<sup>1</sup> (Ephes. v. 32);

2. The Church has at all times believed and taught so, as is evident, not only from the Holy Fathers, but also from the fact that those Sects who in the first ages separated themselves from us agree in holding this doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul teaches that husbands and wives should be united with each other, as Christ and His Church are united. Now, the union that subsists between Christ and His Church is *supernatural* and *replete with graces*; consequently, Matrimony is a sign to which invisible grace is attached, and, therefore, a Sacrament.

6. What, then, is Matrimony in the Church of Christ?

Matrimony is a Sacrament by which two single persons, man and woman, are married to each other, and receive grace from God to discharge the duties of their state faithfully until death.

7. How is this Sacrament received?

The bridegroom and the bride declare before their Pastor and two witnesses that they take each other for wife and husband, whereupon the Priest blesses their union.

Another Priest can only unite them in Matrimony when commissioned by the Pastor of the parties, or by the Bishop, for that purpose.

8. What are the duties of married persons?

1. They should take the mutual love of Christ and

His Church for their model, and live with each other in peace and conjugal fidelity, until death separates them;

2. They should edify each other by leading a holy life;<sup>1</sup>

3. They should concur together in bringing up their children in the fear of God, and suffer no servants to be in their house who might endanger their innocence;

4. The husband should treat his wife with kindness, support and cherish her; the wife should obey her husband in all that is just and honorable, and conscientiously manage the domestic concerns.<sup>2</sup>

'Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge' (Heb. xiii. 4).<sup>3</sup> 'As the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things'; *i.e.*, that are just and honorable. 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it. . . . For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church' (Ephes. v. 24-29).

9. What should married people consider when they are tempted to break their conjugal fidelity?

1. That by adultery they break the solemn contract they have made in the presence of God and of the Church;

2. That they break the most sacred bond by which, according to God's disposal, human society is united and kept together;

3. That they disturb domestic peace, hinder the good education of their children, and destroy the happiness of the whole family; and

4. That they expose themselves to the danger of falling into disgrace and misery, and all sorts of sins and vices, and even of being severely chastised, and ultimately entirely rejected by God Himself.

'He that is an adulterer shall destroy his own soul; he gathereth to himself shame and dishonor, and his reproach shall not be blotted out' (Prov. vi. 32, 33).

In the Old Law adultery was, by God's command, punished

with death, and, in the Primitive Church, with public penance of many years, like manslaughter.—Sin and punishment of King David.

**10.** What should those people bear in mind who intend to enter the married state?

1. They should not thoughtlessly, and without due reflection, enter into an engagement to marry.
2. They should be properly instructed, and be free from impediments;
3. They should live innocently whilst they are engaged, and should not think that, during that time, they are allowed sinful liberties on that account.
4. They should enter the marriage state with a pure and holy intention; and
5. Before they marry, they should make a good Confession and worthily receive Holy Communion.

‘We are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God’ (Tob. viii. 5).

Example of Sara, who could say to God: ‘Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul clean from all lust. Never have I joined myself with them that play, neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness. But a husband I consented to take, with Thy fear, not with my lust’ (Tob. iii. 16-18).

**11.** Who may be said to espouse each other thoughtlessly?

1. All who neglect to have previous recourse to God, and disregard His will, the advice of their parents, and the salvation of their own soul in the affair (Prov. xix. 14);
2. Those who, in their choice, care less for religion and virtue than for temporal advantages, etc.; and
3. Those who do not first consider whether they will be able to fulfil the weighty duties of the married state.

The husband should be able to maintain his wife and children; he should not be a free-thinker, or addicted to gambling, drinking, quarrelling, cursing, etc. The wife should be free from vanity, love of finery, and capriciousness; she should be

chaste, pious, modest, industrious, and economical. Both should possess the requisite virtue, intelligence, and learning in religious matters, in order to be able to give their children a Christian education.

**12.** Are people bound to keep their promise or engagement to marry each other?

Yes, under pain of grievous sin; unless both parties voluntarily retract it, or either of them, for particular reasons, has a right to retract, which is to be decided by their spiritual Superiors.

**13.** What sin do they commit who receive the Sacrament of Matrimony with an unholy intention, or in the state of mortal sin?

They render themselves guilty of sacrilege, and, therefore, unworthy of all the Divine graces and blessings.

**14.** How many kinds of *Impediments* are there? There are two kinds:

1. Such as render marriage *unlawful*; as, for instance, the forbidden times, the simple vow of chastity, a promise of marriage to another person, etc.;
2. Such as render it also *null*; for instance, consanguinity and affinity to the fourth degree inclusively; spiritual relationship; a solemn vow of chastity; one of the parties not being a Christian; likewise (in those places where the special canons of the Council of Trent on clandestine marriages have been received and published) the marriage not being contracted in the presence of the Pastor, or of a Priest commissioned by him, and of two witnesses at least; and others.

In order to discover whether there are any Impediments of marriage, it is very advisable for the parties to make a sincere General Confession some time before they enter into the contract. For this same reason the Banns are published in the Church; and any one who knows of an Impediment is in conscience bound to declare it to the Pastor.

**15.** What is understood by the *forbidden times*?

1. The time which begins with the first Sunday of Advent and ends with the Epiphany of our Lord; and 2. That which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Low Sunday, within which times the Church forbids the *solemnizing of marriage*, because they have been particularly set apart for penance and prayer.

In many dioceses it has been decreed that within these times no marriage is to be contracted without a special dispensation from the Bishop. But even in case this is granted, the married parties, conformably to a general command of the Church, are forbidden to celebrate their wedding with pageantry, entertainments, and rejoicings; nor is the Priest allowed to say the Mass appointed in the Missal for the bridegroom and the bride, or to give them the solemn nuptial Benediction independently of this Mass.

**16.** Can the Impediments of Marriage never be dispensed with?

The Church can dispense with some when there are sufficient reasons, but not with all; on this subject the parties must confer with their Pastor.

Only the Church, in whose power it is to grant or to refuse the dispensation (and not those who ask for it, and are too easily deceived by a blind passion), is competent to decide whether the reasons be sufficient. That these reasons must, at all events, be weighty, is evident from the decree of the Council of Trent (Sess. 24, Ch. v.), which says that 'Impediments of marriage are either never, or but rarely, to be dispensed with.' A dispensation got by fraud, though valid before men, is, nevertheless, invalid before God.

**17.** What should we think of *mixed* marriages—*i.e.*, of marriages which are contracted between Catholics and non-Catholics, especially Protestants?

That the Church has, at all times, disapproved of such marriages, and never permits them, except on certain conditions.

**18.** Why does the Church disapprove of such marriages?

1. Because the Catholic party is exposed to great

danger of either losing the faith or of becoming indifferent;

2. Because the Catholic education of the children is generally deficient, and not seldom impossible;

3. Because the non-Catholic party does not acknowledge Matrimony either as a Sacrament or as indissoluble, and can, therefore, according to his or her principles, separate, and marry again, which the Catholic consort is not permitted to do; and

4. Because for that very reason such a marriage never is a true emblem of the most intimate, indissoluble union of Christ with His Church, which, however, every Christian marriage ought to be; in fine,

5. Because the happiness of conjugal union depends, above all, on unity of faith.

**19.** On what conditions does the Church consent to a mixed marriage?

On these: 1. That the Catholic party be allowed the free exercise of religion; 2. That he or she earnestly endeavor to gain by persuasion the non-Catholic consort to the true Church; and 3. That all the children be brought up in the Catholic religion (Briefs of Pius VIII. and Gregory XVI.)

**20.** Is the Church obliged to require such conditions?

Yes; otherwise she would either be indifferent to the eternal perdition of her children, or deny that she alone is the true saving Church.

**21.** Can, then, a person never be permitted to contract a mixed marriage, unless the Catholic education of the children be previously secured?

No; for such a marriage would be a grievous sin against the Catholic Church and the spiritual welfare of the children that may be born; wherefore the Church can in no case give her consent to it.

Parents who consent to such a marriage of their child render themselves guilty of the same sin as the child, and incur a severe responsibility before God.



*Application.* In the choice of a state of life consult, above all things, God and the salvation of your soul. Should you, after a mature deliberation, think yourself to be called to the married state, prepare yourself for it by prayer, good works, and especially by a good General Confession, and be careful not to follow those who, by sin and vice, draw the curse of God upon their heads.

#### ON SACRAMENTALS.

1. What do we usually understand by Sacramentals ?

By *Sacramentals* we understand,

1. All those things which the Church blesses or consecrates for the Divine Service, or for our own pious use: as Holy Water, Oil, Salt, Bread, Wine, Palms, Altars, Chalices, etc.;

2. Also the Exorcisms, Blessings, and Consecrations used by the Church.

2. Why are such things called Sacramentals ?

They are called Sacramentals because they resemble the Sacraments, though they are essentially different from them.

3. What is the difference between the Sacramentals and the Sacraments ?

1. The Sacraments were instituted by God, and operate by the efficacy which God gave them; the Sacramentals, on the contrary, were instituted by the Church, and produce their effects by the prayers and blessings of the Church ;

2. The Sacraments have an infallible effect, unless we put an obstacle in their way; but the effect of the Sacramentals depends principally on the pious intention of the person who makes use of them ;

3. The Sacraments effect immediately inward sanctification, whereas the Sacramentals, by imparting subordinate graces, only contribute towards it, and protect us also from temporal evils ;

4. The Sacraments are in general necessary, and commanded by God ; but the Sacramentals are only recommended by the Church as useful and wholesome.

4. Why does the Church consecrate or bless the things belonging to the Divine Service ?

The Church consecrates or blesses all those things that belong to the Divine Service, as Churches, Altars, Bells, Vestments, etc., 1. In order to sanctify them, and dedicate them peculiarly to the Divine Service ; and 2. To render them more venerable and salutary to us. (Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church.)

'Every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer' (1 Tim. iv. 5). Thus, even in the Old Law, the altar and all the vessels thereof were sprinkled and anointed, as the Lord had commanded (Levit. viii. 11).

5. Why does the Church bless also Bread, Wine, the Fruits of the field, and such like things ?

The Church blesses these things,

1. After the example of Jesus Christ, who also blessed loaves and fishes (Luke ix. 16) ;

2. That 'to them that love God, all things [may] work together unto good' (Rom. viii. 28) ; and

3. That as by the sin of Adam the curse of God extended to all the creatures of the earth (Gen. iii. 17 ; Rom. viii. 20-22), so also His blessings may be poured out over all.

From our birth to our death the Church incessantly shows her love and solicitude for us : she prays for us, consoles us, helps us, blesses us ; even over our last place of rest—the cemetery and grave—she pronounces her blessing.

6. Why should we especially make a devout use of the Sacramentals ?

Because we participate through them in the prayer and blessing of the whole Church, in the name of which the Priest consecrates and blesses.

If in the Old Law the blessing of the patriarchs was so highly esteemed, how much more should we esteem the blessing of the