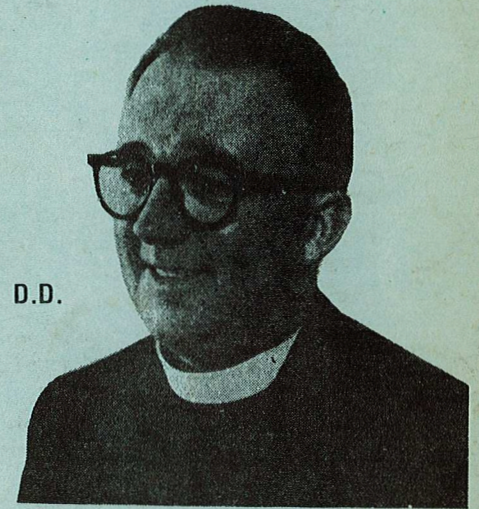


FROM FRIAR ★ ★
TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST

★

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of the Roman Catholic Church*

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FOREWORD

A renewed demand has occurred for this booklet as a result of Dr. Farrell's extensive itinerary throughout Australia and we are grateful to him for his permission to reprint this booklet. His ministry has proved effective, under God, and we trust that many people may have been stirred to see, with the aid of the Word of God, through the many counterfeits of Christianity abroad today.

Dr. Farrell particularly mentioned the ecumenical movement as embodied in the World Council of Churches. Churches from the Church of Christ to the Roman Catholic Church are involved in this, the latter, whilst not a member church, being represented in an advisory capacity on certain committees of the W.C.C.

Coupled with the a-theological confusion evident in Protestant Churches is a ferment in the Roman Catholic Church. These are days when an unambiguous, ringing affirmation of Reformed truth is called for, along with a clear-cut hard-hitting exposure of the many refuges of lies. This booklet effectively demonstrates the age-old truth "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." The Roman Church can't do this - the World Council of Churches has grandiose schemes of social reform while eschewing individual conversion as sub-Christian self-centredness.

We would urge you, therefore, to circulate this booklet widely, that people in and out of the Church of Rome may be rescued from the maelstrom of infidelity in Churches and cults, and find their feet firmly planted on that Rock of Ages which is Christ Jesus, through the Scriptures that are able to make us wise unto salvation.

— D. Shelton.
Minister of the Presbyterian Reformed Church,
Brisbane.

Nail sticker

*"Therefore if any man be in
Christ, he is a new creature:
old things are passed away;
behold, all things are become
new."*

II Cor. v, 17.

FROM FRIAR TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST

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ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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From Friar to Freedom

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans viii. : 1.

A PIOUS DESIRE

WHEN, many years ago, I decided to become a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, I wanted to walk with Christ. However, because I was born into Roman Catholicism I believed that the Roman Catholic Church was the only true church, and that outside of that faith it was almost impossible to be saved. Repeatedly, Popes have declared this dogma: Pope Innocent III, Boniface VIII in his Bull "Unam Sanctam," Clement VI, Benedict XIV, Leo XIII, Pius XII, and Pius IX plainly state it thus: "By faith it is firmly to be held that outside of the APOSTOLIC ROMAN CHURCH none can achieve salvation."* (Ott, p. 312; see footnote) Hence, I never for a moment thought of looking for salvation outside of the Roman Church.

From early boyhood I wanted to be a priest. I was born on April 2, 1911, in Denver, Colorado, U.S.A. Our neighbourhood in Denver was made up of Irish, Scotch and Slav families, most of whom were Roman Catholic. Naturally, in such an environment, I could not help noticing the immense power exercised by the local priests and the high esteem in which they were held. But it was not only the power and esteem they enjoyed that led me to decide to study for the priesthood, it was the sacerdotal dignity claimed for them by the Roman Church that determined me in my vocation.

The priest, according to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, has the power to take ordinary bread and wine, and, by pronouncing the words of the consecration prayer in the Sacrifice of the Mass, to change it into the actual body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ. (Ott, p. 379). Hence, since one cannot separate the human nature of Christ from His divinity, the bread and wine, after being changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, is entitled to the worship of adoration. (Ott. p. 387).

Also Roman Catholics are taught that in the confessional, after the penitents have told their sins to the priest, the confessor has the power to forgive their sins. The Council of Trent, which met after the Reformation 1545, declared: "Whosoever says that the priests are not the only ministers of absolution (forgiveness), let him be condemned." Since I began to go to confession at the age of seven years I soon realised that this power gave the priests a tremendous hold over the lives of their people and that it made them superior to any secular authority on the face of the earth.

However, it was not only the power and dignity of the priesthood that motivated me, it was also a sincere desire to save my soul. I knew from the teachings of the priests and nuns that I could not hope to go directly to heaven after my death. My Roman Catholic catechism taught me that after death I had to pay for the temporal punishment due to my sins. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that by faith it is to be held that "the souls of the just which, in the moment of death, are burdened with venial sins or temporal punishment due to sins, enter purgatory." Therefore I realized that since I committed venial sins daily, and sometimes even mortal sins, I must spend a very long time in purgatory. Now the Roman Church is rather vague in its official teaching concerning the pains of purgatory, but the fertile imagination of the Irish Roman Catholic priests and nuns helped them to invent such sufferings and pains that our childish lives were filled with

(*Ott. Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, by Ludwig Ott. Pub. Mercier Press, Cork. Imprimatur: Cornelius Lucy, Bishop of Cork.)

fear and we would have done anything to avoid purgatory, if possible. Consequently, as a young lad, I reasoned that if a priest had the power through the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass to obtain the release of souls from purgatory I would help my own soul by becoming a priest — because, after my death, those souls who had been aided by my Masses would be obligated to pray for my soul before the throne of the Queen of heaven (The Blessed Virgin Mary), and she in turn would intercede for me before the throne of her Son. This was according to the teaching of the church. "The poor souls in purgatory can be helped, above all, by the Sacrifice of the Mass which is pleasing to God" (Ott, p. 415), and "the souls in Purgatory can intercede for other members of the Mystical Body [The Church]" (Ott, p. 323). And so I determined to become a priest and in due time made known my decision to the proper authorities.

THE BIBLE IN THE R.C. CHURCH

It would take too long, and space does not permit, for me to tell you all about the many years of preparation for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. It will suffice for me to relate those incidents that mark the turning points in my life. For me there was to be no short road to the assurance of salvation. It was to be a long road, beset with many trials and temptations. Often I am asked if I did not know the Bible, or if it was forbidden to me. Actually I had in my possession a New Testament during all of my years of preparation, and the years spent in the monastery. When I left for the Junior Seminary I carried besides my Missal and prayer books three other books, The Glories of Mary by Alphonse Ligouri, The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis, and the Roman Catholic New Testament. The Roman Catholic New Testaments bear the following notation: "An indulgence of 3 years is granted to all the faithful who read the Holy Scriptures at least a quarter of an hour with the veneration due to the Divine Word and as spiritual reading." (Enchiridion Indulgentiarum, 694).

Therefore Roman Catholics should be moved to read the Bible since most are eager to gain indulgences. [By an indulgence (indulgentia) is understood the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishments of sin remaining after the forgiveness of the guilt of sin (Ott, p. 441)]. However, you'll note, that the indulgence is granted only when the Bible is read as spiritual reading and **not for study or interpretation**. Since Roman Catholics know that they can gain indulgences in other, and more easy, ways such as making the Sign of the Cross (seven years each time that it is made with Holy Water), etc., most do not bother with the reading of the Scriptures. Then, too, many are fearful of interpreting the Word of God contrary to the teaching of the Roman Church. In my own case, when, many years later, I left the monastery I still had the three aforementioned books in my possession. The Glories of Mary no longer had a cover. It had worn out. The cover of the Imitation of Christ hung by several threads. But the New Testament was still new. I had only read it when I wished to compare a translation from the Latin with the English.

CONSTANT INDOCTRINATION

The routine of the seminary is so arranged that you seldom have time for real reflection. True, there is a period each morning set aside for the purpose of meditation. But points are read out for your consideration, and, if you allow your mind to wander, you are in danger of committing venial sin.

The daily programme of your life is so well thought-out by the Roman Church that gradually your individuality is destroyed and your personality is so shaped that you conform to a pattern designed by the Roman Church as being best for their purpose — the complete renunciation of self. Despite the great esteem in which a priest is held by the laity of the Roman Church the authorities regard him as a mere cipher in their plan for the conquest of the world by the Roman Catholic Church. Hence, if he is to serve

their purpose he must be thoroughly brain-washed. This they achieve much in the same way as the Communists. They never permit you sufficient sleep, make you fast from food often, and use every means and form of indoctrination.

Also when a doubt arises in your mind concerning any major doctrine taught by the Roman Church you immediately reject it because you have been told that to entertain such a doubt (willingly) is a sign that God may be taking your priestly vocation from you and thus jeopardizing your eternal salvation.

Near the end of my seminary training I had to make up my mind as to whether I wanted to be a secular priest (living under the authority of a bishop as a parish priest or a chaplain in an institution), or be a religious (a priest who has taken the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and living in a monastery or house of a religious order).

CHOOSING A MONASTIC ORDER

I felt that secular priests had too many temptations, and, consequently, had a difficult time in obtaining salvation. I also know that in the past centuries the Roman Catholic Church had canonized (declared officially a soul to be in heaven) only one secular priest, the Curé of Ars, John Mary Vianney. Logically, therefore, I reasoned, if it were so difficult for a person to be saved as a secular priest, it was safer to become a monk or friar (a member of a religious Order). Therefore I spent my final year in the seminary deciding what Order appealed to me, and where I would best fit.

I was well acquainted with the better known Orders such as the Benedictines, Dominicans, Servites, Franciscans, Trappists and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). None of these appealed to me. I wanted a very strict Order in which I could find every assurance

possible of obtaining salvation. I thought I had found this in the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel, commonly called Discalced Carmelite Fathers.

The Carmelite Order had been founded by Crusaders and others in the Holy Land. They remained behind after the Crusades and occupied the caves of the Sons of the Prophets on Mount Carmel. The Patriarch Albert of Jerusalem gave them a simple rule of life and they followed it until in the middle of the thirteenth century they were driven out of the Holy Land by the Moslems. Some of the exiles settled at Mantua, Italy, and others in a village outside of Cambridge, England. The first prior general in England was a man called Simon Stock. It is claimed that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him in a vision and made the famous so-called Brown Scapular Promise.

THE ROMAN SCAPULAR

In the pamphlet printed by The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, "The Brown Scapular by the Rev. E. R. Elliott, O. Carm.", the so-called vision and promise is described on page 5: "... she (Mary) appeared to me accompanied by a great retinue and, holding in her hands the habit (the scapular) of the Order, she said, 'This will be a special favour to you and all Carmelites, WHOSOEVER SHALL DIE WEARING THIS HABIT SHALL NOT SUFFER ETERNAL FIRE.' " The scapular may be made by anyone. All that is required is brown, or nearly black woven cloth of wool made into two squares or oblongs of reasonable size joined by strings. The first scapular worn must be blessed by a priest authorized to confer such a blessing.

There is another promise attached to the wearing of the Brown (Carmelite) Scapular called the Sabbatine Privilege. It is supposed to have been received by Pope John XXII in a personal vision of Mary. Again quoting the above-mentioned pamphlet:

"St. John of the Cross (d. 1591), the great Carmelite Saint and Doctor of the Church, was a devoted believer in the Sabbatine Privilege. Shortly before his death he recalled for the benefit of his friends and that of himself, 'How the Mother of God of Carmel comes on Saturdays, with grace and help to purgatory, and withdraws from it the souls of pious people, who have worn her Holy Scapular.' (Fr. Bruno's St. John of the Cross, Cap. XXI, page 350)"

Many Roman Catholics, after they have been invested in the Brown Scapular, substitute a medal for it. The medal must have the picture of Christ on one side and Mary on the other. Each medal must be blessed by a priest.

DAILY ROUTINE IN THE MONASTERY

My first year as a Discalced Carmelite was spent in the house of novices in preparation for my simple profession of vows. It was a year devoted to prayer and meditation. In addition to the regular daily schedule observed by all Discalced Carmelite Fathers, novices have extra prayer time, increased penances and more mortifications. The silence observed in the novitiate is very strictly observed. Outside of about a half-hour every day of recreation the novices are forbidden to speak to each other, and during the Lenten and Advent seasons total silence is observed. In those seasons the novices walk about during recreation in silence and spend that period in making rosaries, disciplines, etc. The day begins in the novitiate at midnight. The community is called by the bell-ringer (pulsator) and assembles in the chapel, or choir as it is called in a monastery. After the last stroke of the clock bell the Divine Office begins. Matins consisting of nine psalms and nine lessons from the Old and New Testaments with a commentary from one of the early Fathers of the Church is sung, or recited, and this is followed by the five psalms of praise with the Benedictus which portion of the Office is called Lauds. The monks then retire once more to their beds and await the next

rising bell at four forty-five in the morning.

When I speak of beds I do not want you to conjure up visions of soft feather beds, or even comfortable beds. The bed of a Carmelite consists of three planks laid over two trestles and covered by a thin pallet. Three blankets are provided for warmth.

Everything in the monk's room is in keeping with the austerity of his bed. Besides the latter there is a small deal table and a stool. No other furnishing is permitted.

MANY HOURS OF PRAYER

When awakened once more in the morning the community goes to the choir and recites Prime and Terce, each of which consists of three psalms followed by a short lesson and collect. At the conclusion of this portion of the Divine Office the community spends an hour together in silent prayer upon their knees.

After mental prayer the masses of the day follow. If a monk is a priest he celebrates a private mass at one of the many altars in the monastery, usually assisted by another monk — the server. If the monk is still studying for the priesthood he attends the Community Mass which is celebrated by the priest assigned for the week. The lay-brothers who do the manual labour in the monastery also attend this mass. All are expected to receive Holy Communion. These exercises, Divine Office, Mental Prayer and Mass, take about three hours and so it is usually eight o'clock before the monks have breakfast. This consists of bread and coffee and is supposed to be taken standing since in the primitive rule of the Order no allowance is made for breakfast. [Breakfast is a modern concession because of the weakness of man to-day].

The morning is devoted to study, classes and private prayer. In the year of novitiate one is not permitted to study anything

but spiritual subjects and, of course, the Rule, Customs and Discipline of the Carmelite Order. After profession of vows the monk studies theology, and the other necessary subjects for ordination to the priesthood.

Shortly before noon the community goes to the choir when they recite the last two little hours of the morning office, Sext and None. They, like Prime and Terce, consist of three psalms each, followed by a short lesson from the Holy Scripture and the collect of the day. At the conclusion of the Office, the remainder of the time until the Angelus is devoted to the examination of conscience. During the examination one is supposed to recall any sins that one may have committed since last night, and to ask God's forgiveness. However, if one has committed a mortal sin it is necessary to go to confession at the first opportunity. For venial sins it suffices to say the Act of Contrition. After the recitation of the Angelus the monks go to the dining room (refectory) for the main meal of the day.

THE MONASTIC MEALS

All of the meals are taken in silence. The only exceptions are on Easter, Pentecost, Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, Assumption of the B.V.M., Feast of St. Teresa of Avila, of St. John of the Cross, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, Christmas and several other days. However, while the community eats in silence, one of the monks, assigned weekly, reads from a spiritual book or from the Rule and Customs of the Order.

The food is simple and usually consists of soup, a plate with fish or eggs, two vegetables and fruit. The Discalced Carmelite Rule forbids the eating of meat unless the doctor prescribes it. This is rarely done as most medical men feel that eggs and fish are sufficient. When a monk has to eat meat he is placed in the lower part of the refectory and shielded from the gaze of the other

monks by a screen. This part of the refectory is jokingly referred to as "hell."

As each monk finishes his meal he looks around to see if he may be of assistance in the refectory. One will relieve the reader, others the waiters, so they may eat. Several more perform public penances and humiliations. These penances consist of standing with the arms outstretched to form a cross, kissing the sandled feet of the monks, receiving a blow upon the face from the monks, and, at the end of the meal, lying prostrate before the entrance to the refectory so that the departing monks have to step over your body. These, and other penances, are supposed to gain merit for you in heaven and increase your "spiritual banking account." After the noon meal, in most monasteries of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers, the recreational period of the day is supposed to provide fraternal exchange of spiritual ideas, so as to encourage one another in the observance of the religious life. However, in actual fact, it very often becomes a strain, and most uncharitable acts are committed at this time. You cannot confine twenty, or more, healthy men in the unnatural environment of a monastery without it having certain psychological repercussions. It is usually with evident relief that the monks welcome the end of the daily recreational period and retire to their cells for the afternoon rest time, or siesta as it is called in Spain.

THE VAIN REPETITION OF PSALMS

Vespers and Compline follow the afternoon siesta. The former consists of five psalms, the Magnificat and the Collect of the Day, and the latter three psalms, the Nunc Dimittis and a closing collect, or prayer. This concludes the Divine Office of the day. It was so divided into seven parts by the early Benedictine abbeys in keeping with Psalm 119:164: "Seven times a day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous judgments." Very often I am asked how is it that, in view of the fact that daily in our

prayers and offices we were reciting, or singing about thirty psalms (weekly we were supposed, theoretically, to cover the entire Psalter), we did not come to know of God's plan of salvation through the reading and singing of His Word. The answer is very evident to a Roman Catholic. Whenever we heard a particular passage that seemed to be in conflict with the teaching of the Roman Church, we would decide that we were not interpreting it properly. For example, in Psalm 18:2: "The Lord is my Rock . . ." and in 62:6. "He only is my rock . . ." we would either ignore the implication that Peter was not THE Rock, or come to the conclusion that we did not possess sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures to understand the passage. It was the same when we heard passages read from the Old and New Testaments during the recitation of the Divine Office. For Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith . . ." we would understand it as reading: "Therefore being justified by faith in the Roman Catholic Church . . ."

The afternoon, after Vespers, is generally spent in the cell (monk's room). There in the solitude of his chamber he is supposed to try and achieve "union with God" through spiritual reading, private meditation and prayer. The Carmelite Rule stresses this part of the life of a monk and states "Remain in your cell, day and night, meditating on the law of the Lord." Actually, a great deal of time is frittered away in idleness and boredom.

MORTIFYING THE FLESH !

Another hour of silent meditation in the choir, collation (a simple supper consisting of bread and tea), night prayers and the Discipline bring to an end the monastic day.

The Discipline is a public scourging in which all of the monks participate. After night prayers the monks return to the dormitory and each friar places himself in front of the door of his cell. At a signal from the superior the lights are extinguished, and the monks

partially disrobe themselves and proceed to scourge their naked thighs, while singing in Latin, very slowly, Psalm 51. The scourge, or discipline as it is called, is made of three lengths of rope passed through a woven handle in such a fashion as to form a whip of six ends, each about fifteen inches in length. The tips of the ropes are dipped in bees-wax to harden them. The application of this scourge depends, of course, on the fervour of the friar. But the individual usually draws blood. At the end of the singing of the psalm the superior, the Father Prior, recites several prayers and the monks re-arrange their clothing. When the lights have been turned on the monks kneel, each one in his own doorway, and the Father Prior passes down the corridor, blessing each monk who in turn kisses the scapular (an apron-like affair that hangs in the front and back) of the superior. The monks retire and thus ends the monastic day.

If works could save, every Carmelite Father would be assured of salvation, as you can see by the penitential life the monks lead. However, we know from Romans iii, 20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Hence it is pathetic to think of all the thousands of monks and nuns, yea, millions of Roman Catholics, performing almost countless works that they believe to be meritorious. Not knowing "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans iii, 28). However, because of my lack of true knowledge concerning God's Word I believed that I had to earn heaven and merit it by my work. Therefore I continued in darkness.

THE PROFESSION OF VOWS

At the end of my year as a novice (1935) I made my first profession of vows, and then in 1938 on the Feast of the Ascension I made my solemn profession of vows. I am including a copy of my profession, in Latin and English, so that you may see how

binding the profession is to a Roman Catholic.

"Ego, Fr. Hugo a Sancta Teresa Margarita, facio meam Professionem votorum solemnium, et promitto obedientiam, castitatem, et paupertatem Deo, ac beatissimae Virgini Mariae de Monte Carmelo, et Reverendo Patri Nostro, Fratri Petro Thomas a Virgine Carmeli, Praeposito Generali Ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum Discalceatorum, suisque successoribus, secundum Regulam primitivam praedicti Ordinis usque ad mortem."

I, Fr. Hugh of St. Therese Margaret, make my profession of solemn vows, and promise obedience, chastity and poverty to God, and the most blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, and to our Reverend Father, Fr. Peter Thomas of the Virgin of Carmel, Prior General of the Order of the Discalced Carmelite Brethren, and to his successors, according to the primitive Rule of the above mentioned Order **EVEN UNTIL DEATH.**

In 1938, when I made my solemn and final profession of vows, I was completing my theological studies for my ordination to the priesthood. I had received tonsure, Minor Orders and the Sacred Order of the Subdiaconate from the hands of Bishop Francis Clement Kelley of Oklahoma City. As I now recall I had not really been bothered by any serious doubts concerning the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. It looked as if I was set for life. However, God had other plans for me. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. **FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW, HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON . . .**" (Romans viii, 28 and 29).

DOUBTING THE POWER OF THE PRIEST !

During this period of my training I was practising how to

celebrate Mass. It takes months to learn the rubrics and ritual of the Mass. Many times while practising I would ask myself if I believed that after my final ordination to the priesthood I would have the power to command God to come down upon the altar. According to the teaching of the Roman Church the priest, no matter how unworthy he may personally be, even if he has just made a pact with the devil for his soul, has the power to change the element of bread and wine into the actual body and blood, soul and **DIVINITY**, of Jesus Christ. Provided he pronounces the words of consecration properly, and has the **intention** on consecrating, God must come down on the altar, enter and take over the elements. The more I thought about this power claimed by the Roman Church for the priests, the less I believed in such a power. Repeatedly, I went to my Father Confessor and told him about my doubts. His only answer was that I must have patience. He told me that even if I did not believe in anything that the Roman Church taught, it would be all right for me to be a priest, provided that I would faithfully teach what they wanted me to teach. He said: "Your own personal faith has nothing to do with it. You are merely a tool in the hands of Mother Church for the propagation of the faith. Be loyal to the Roman Catholic faith and all will come out well in the end." However, that was not to be the case. Daily my doubts increased. The superiors noticed my attitude and surmised that I had problems, but did nothing about it. As a matter of fact, the high superior, Father Provincial, hated me. He realized that I knew that he was not a learned man. He pretended to great learning and sanctity and possessed neither. He was determined to break me and destroy me, if possible.

Fortunately, the local prior, Father Edward, was my friend and protected me, even at the cost of incurring the wrath of the Provincial. Finally, I lost faith completely in the Roman Church and its invented dogmas. I ceased to care whether the superiors found out about my loss of faith or not.

During the months that followed I many times considered leaving the Order. But I knew that if I stepped out of the Order I would, in conscience, have to leave the Roman Catholic Church. I knew very little of the claims of Protestantism. The only books that I had been allowed to study were those written by Roman Catholic authors and these had so perverted and distorted the teachings of God and the Protestant theologians as to paint them to be tools of Satan. I did not know where to turn, but I placed my faith in God. I knew that He would not desert me in my time of trial.

MY DECISION TO ESCAPE

At length, on August 2, 1940, I realized that for a long time previous I had not believed in the peculiar doctrines of the Roman Church such as Transubstantiation, Auricular Confession (confession to a priest in order to be forgiven by him personally), and the Infallibility of the Pope (that when he is speaking in his official capacity concerning faith and morals he cannot err). I knew that to remain in the monastery would be impossible. The life is difficult enough when you believe all that the Roman Church teaches. When you lose that belief life as a friar monk becomes impossible. I had completed my theological education and I knew that I could never again hold the faith of a Roman Catholic. Therefore, without letting anyone know, I resolved to leave the monastery and to do it that very afternoon. I was very careful. The Father Provincial, my enemy, was visiting the monastery to which I was attached. I was aware of the fact that if he became suspicious, and thought that I intended to leave, he would have a Roman Catholic medical doctor sign commitment papers, and place me in a mental institution under the control of the Roman Church. This may sound very far fetched to those of you who know kindly Roman Catholics, but I can assure you that in America, Ireland and many other countries there are hundreds of priests and monks in mental hospitals who are there simply because they lost faith in the Pope, and the

Roman Catholic Church, and wanted to leave.

While the Fathers were taking the afternoon siesta I quietly slipped out by the back door and fled to the Y.M.C.A. in San Antonio for protection. I knew that the Provincial and his religious associates would not risk bringing this matter to the Protestant ministers of Texas by trying to seize me. After contacting a number of ministers and discussing my plight with them, I moved to Houston, a more Protestant dominated city than San Antonio, which is about sixty per cent. Spanish Roman Catholic.

ENTERING THE PROTESTANT MINISTRY WITHOUT CHRIST!

At this time I was not really converted. I had never made a real decision for Christ. I considered it to be enough for one's spiritual welfare to accept the theological opinions of the church to which one belonged. Consequently, I entered the Protestant ministry and for the next fifteen years of my life served in various capacities without being assured of my salvation.

Time and space prohibits my telling you all of the digressions that took place during those fifteen years. I led a very worldly life. At one time, during this period, it was my proud boast that I was just as worldly as any man. Some day, the Lord willing, I shall write a book describing the great mercy and patience of God with me during this "exile."

However, all of the time, God's irresistible grace was working. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given to him of my Father." (St. John vi, 63 and 65). Finally came the turning point in my spiritual life. One trial yet awaited me. I began to believe that I had made a mistake in leaving the Roman Church and so in 1955 I returned to the Roman Catholic

Church. They sent me to a Trappist Monastery for penance. I was quite willing. I wanted to do anything within my power to bring about some assurance as to my eternal destiny. I opened my mind to all that they tried to teach me, but it was useless. I not only found out that I did not believe in the doctrine of the Roman Church, but I also realized that they could not have the truth since most of their doctrine was man-made. Again I left the Roman Church — of course, without them knowing that I intended to do so. I then set out for the East Coast, and prayed the God would show me His will. My prayer was quickly answered, and answered in such a fashion that I could no longer doubt His will.

STEPS TOWARDS MY CONVERSION

I was speaking before a group of business men on the political implications of a Roman Catholic for the Presidency when, after the meeting, a large man approached me and congratulated me on my knowledge of the Roman Church and its teachings. I, of course, as usual, was puffed up with pride, and then he said, "However, my friend, I must tell you that you have the lowest spiritual temperature I have ever taken." I was thoroughly offended, and turned from him with as much rudeness as I could summon. I dismissed him in my mind as being a "crack-pot." However, he was too much of a soul-winner to let me off his hook so easily. He belonged to that very dedicated group of "Fishermen for Christ," who do not cease in their pursuit of souls, no matter how badly they are rebuffed or even insulted. He kept after me and, finally, brought me under conviction.

At first I refused his solution to my spiritual problems. He told me that I merely had to accept Christ, place all my trust in Him, "believe on Him" and I would have eternal life. He constantly reminded me of Christ's words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." (John vi, 47). It all seemed too easy to be true. Why, I asked myself, would all of the

teachings of the various faiths be promulgated when it was as easy as that? But then I realized that it was not easy. One had to humbly acknowledge that he was a sinner, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. ii. 23); but that he was saved by the blood of Christ shed on Calvary, and not of his own merit, "He that spared not his own son, **but delivered him up for us all . . .**" (Rom. viii, 32). So I acknowledged I was a sinner, and said with the Psalmist, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Then I accepted Christ as my only Saviour, counting on no one else — not even the Blessed Virgin Mary.

AFTER MY CONVERSION

From that day I have never had any doubts about my salvation. "Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess (acknowledge) Me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x, 32).

After my decision for Christ I worked with an organisation which had for its purpose the helping of priests to find Christ. However, I soon realised that God was calling me to an unique ministry — that of teaching Christians how to win Roman Catholics for the Lord. Therefore in 1959 I went out on faith, as we say in the United States of America, trusting in Him to provide for all of my needs. This He has done. Lack of space prevents me from telling of all of the great blessings and mercies that I have enjoyed. I have travelled many times throughout the U.S.A. and Canada, and have been on preaching tours of Europe several times. Everywhere I have preached with love and authority, and have been well received.

It is not my purpose to sow the seeds of hatred and bitterness, but rather to show by the Gospel how to win Roman Catholics for Christ. I constantly remind people of those wonderful words

in the first chapter of John which form part of the Last Gospel read at the end of every Mass in the Roman Catholic Church. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Praised be that Holy Name forever. AMEN.

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