

Special In-Depth

# Catholic Religious Organization Believed Not One of Many Branches

## Members Aware Claim Regarded As Arrogant

By LOUIS CASSELL  
UPI Correspondent

Roman Catholics never speak of "our denomination" and rarely of "our church."

The distinction is more than semantic. To a Catholic, the world-wide religious organization of 500 million members which has its headquarters in Rome is not simply one of many branches of the Christian church.

It is the "one true church"—the only institution in the world which can authentically and authoritatively proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Major Stumbling Block

Catholics are well aware that this claim is regarded by non-Catholics as arrogant, and as a major stumbling block to Christian unity.

But they cannot readily surrender or compromise it, because it is directly related to the dogma of infallibility, which is the keystone of all Catholic doctrine.

Catholics believe that Christ commissioned His apostles to establish a church, which was to be not merely a spiritual fellowship of like-minded people but a visible, unified organization with definite rules, prescribed beliefs and a hierarchical system of government.

They believe that authority over the church was vested in the apostles, and has passed down to their successors, "the bishops. And they believe that supreme authority was vested in St. Peter, and has passed down to each man who has succeeded him as bishop of Rome, or Pope.

### Impossible to Err

Since Jesus was fully aware of the weakness of the human

beings to whom He entrusted His message, Catholics believe. He took special steps to make sure that they could not lead the church astray. He clothed the apostles (and their successors) with a divine protection which makes it impossible for them to err when they undertake to define the content of the Christian revelation.

That is what Catholics mean by "infallibility."

It should be noted that the "infallible teaching authority" is regarded as being lodged primarily in the church rather than in the Pope as an individual. During the first 18 centuries of the church's history, the basic dogmas which Catholics consider infallibly true were proclaimed jointly by all of the bishops assembled in an ecumenical world-wide council, such as the one which will meet in Rome in 1962.

The last ecumenical council met at the Vatican in 1870. It resulted in a dogma declaring that the Pope alone could make infallible pronouncements under certain circumstances.

The circumstances are these: the pronouncement must deal with a matter of faith or morals (not political) or social beliefs or anything else of that kind; and the Pope must make clear that he is speaking to the whole church "ex cathedra"—that is, "from the chair" of St. Peter.

### Use Power Sparingly

This power has been used very sparingly by the popes. Only once in the past 91 years has a Pope undertaken to define, ex cathedra, an article of Catholic faith. That was in 1850, when Pope Pius XII proclaimed as a dogma the long-held Catholic belief that the Virgin Mary was bodily assumed into heaven at the end of her life on earth.

Are "non infallible" papal pronouncements, such as those found in encyclicals, binding on a devout Catholic?

There is much confusion on

this point, among Catholics as well as non-Catholics.

Some Catholics look upon a papal encyclical as a piece of fatherly advice which can be heeded or ignored. Some non-Catholics quote from the encyclicals of long-dead popes as though every word of them were current and inviolable law for all Catholics.

The truth is somewhere between these extremes. A Catholic who is both devoted and well-instructed will try to give "positive assent" to all of the religious and moral teachings of the church, and will be particularly respectful of papal encyclicals, even though he does not regard his acceptance of them as absolutely mandatory.

When a priest or bishop—for that matter, the Pope—goes clearly outside the realm of faith and morals, and offers advice on a political issue, Catholics know they are free to spurn his guidance. Their readiness to do just that was demonstrated in the recent Puerto Rican elections.

### Embrace by Single Act

Non-Catholics are inclined to feel that the authoritative nature of the Catholic Church—symbolized by the dogma of infallibility—subject Catholics to "thought control" and deprives them of freedom of conscience. To Catholics, however, it is a comforting assurance. Instead of trying to think through every religious question for himself on the basis of his own understanding and insight, as many Protestants and Jews feel compelled to do, a Catholic can embrace the entire body of the church's doctrine by a single act of faith, in which he accepts the church as a divinely-established institution "incapable of teaching error."

What role does the Bible play in Catholic teaching? This question is often asked by Protestants who regard Holy Scripture as the only authoritative source of Christian doctrine.

The Catholic Church holds

that the Bible is the divinely-inspired word of God—a definition that would satisfy even a Fundamentalist Protestant.

But it also holds that the church preceded and produced the New Testament, and that the scriptures can be properly understood only when explained and interpreted by the church. "Private interpretation" of the Bible—a basic principle of Protestantism—is strictly forbidden in the Catholic Church.

Catholic also believe that there are many authentic truths of the Christian revelation which were not recorded in the Bible, but have been handed down by word of mouth for centuries. This verbal "tradition" is considered to be a valid source of doctrine, alongside the Bible. Many Catholics believe about the Virgin Mary are based on tradition rather than scripture.

Next: The role of the Virgin Mary in Catholic piety.

### Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn W. Watkins  
(Register & Tribune Syndicate, 1961)

Porpoise vs. Shark? Nothing to it. You would not have to spend much time around any seacoast where the bottlenose porpoise is common without having someone tell you about the terrible battles that take place between the porpoise and the shark.

By the number of times the story is told, and the great number of people who claim to have seen it, it is remarkable that there are any sharks left alive. There may be instances where a shark might attempt to eat a baby porpoise. At such a time the mother would attack the shark; the entire porpoise school might help her, but this would seldom happen under human observation.

The shark lives much of its life at the bottom of the shallow sea, or some several feet below the surface in the deeper parts. The porpoise spends most of its time near the top. The shark is a coward; the porpoise on the other hand, has no grudge against it. The porpoise is much too intelligent to spend any time fighting sharks; it just isn't consistent with his nature.

They're Playful The explanation of the "shark vs. porpoise" battle, and the reason why so many people think the conflict takes place so often, is probably due to the porpoise's playfulness. These animals have devised several games they play with reckless abandon. One porpoise takes a fish in its mouth and starts away; he is "it."

The other porpoises of the school take after him. The one carrying the "ball" may make an end run, may even try a smash right through the "line." Often one or more of the animals will hurl itself into the air. The entire school may travel over many miles of ocean during these games.

Dozens of people along the shore and on bridges and boats may witness the entire performance sometime during its course. And probably half of the people that see the game think the animals are battling sharks.

Other Games Another game played with a "ball" consists mainly of rapid short runs, back and forth, over and under until it is impossible for the observer to tell if there are several, or many porpoises in the "game." Some of the animals play a game that resembles "cross-tag."

Any of these games, viewed from a distance or from the viewpoint of a man in a boat,

## The Family Council

Editor's Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a woman's editor. Each article is a summary of an actual case history. The Council reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors. (Copyright 1961—General Features Corp.)

Guy L. — It's hard to know when her grouch is "official."

Heloise L. — A man can't understand the exhaustion and depression a woman goes through.

Guy L. — The months run together awfully fast in our house, judging from Heloise's disposition. Granted that she's entitled to be a little irritable every four weeks, it's hard to know when her grouch is "official" and when she's just taking advantage of her femaleness.

I grew up with five sisters, and I must say they didn't go "em-p-e-r-a-n-t-i-a-l" every month. And all around I see girls and women doing their jobs, even hard physical ones. There's no difference in their behavior or appearance.

Maybe I'm wrong but I think Heloise is "milking" her condition for all it's worth. How much indulgence is she really entitled to?

Heloise L. — Guy has no business comparing me to others. All I know is I have a hard time each month. I get

terrible headaches and feel extremely nervous. And there's fatigue and lowness to struggle with.

His bawling me out doesn't help any. When he says he feels under the weather, I'm all sympathy for him. But when I ask him to go easy on me and not make demands, he suspects I'm putting on an act.

Maybe other women are luckier. They can proceed as usual. But even when I was at school, I'd get special permission to skip gym or be excused from orchestra practice, when those days rolled around. I felt wobbly and I couldn't concentrate. I still have special problems.

I'd go to a doctor, but nothing's really wrong. Guy is just unfeeling.

The Council: Hie thee to a doctor, Heloise, for the answer that will either silence Guy or satisfy him. The bad news is that at last pre-menstrual tension is acknowledged and recognized as a full-fledged "condition," and that it can be treated and almost eliminated in most instances.

This may not apply to Heloise, but the "bad news" is that the psychological changes in a woman at this time are independent of the physical processes. This means that the grouchy gal would be grouchy anyway, only now she has something to blame it on. A neurotic woman will act up under any stress, and this is just another of a series.

It behooves Heloise to let a doctor decide whether her distress is caused by hormonal, nutritional, mechanical or psychological difficulties. Although she says "Nothing's wrong," and would insist that she's equanimous and easy to live with most of the time, Guy disagrees. And the Council votes with Guy.

Granted that Heloise's discomfort is real and that her plea for pampering is legitimate, there's no reason for accepting this as the permanent "lot in life" for Heloise and Guy. The bloated, heavy feeling, for example, may be due to fluid-retention which is readily treatable. A periodic drop in the blood-sugar level may account for tiredness and dizziness. Diet can remedy that. And tranquilizers are invoked for the psychological factors in the cyclic tension picture.

Getting the true medical picture should settle these questions: Is Heloise afflicted with special problems, or is she just a cry-baby? Is Guy's squawking justified or is he just a cold potato? Would the whimpering end if Heloise exercised a little self-discipline and used some common-sense? Or is she entitled to medication and T.L.C. (tender loving care) en route to a cure?

The next instalment, played in the doctor's office, may well be the happy ending for the problem.

## Section of Road For Winnemucca To Sea Is Started

Lakeview — Another section of the Winnemucca-to-the-sea highway route has been started.

Earth moving and bridge construction on the 9.2 miles of new highway from Adel to the foot of Greaser canyon was said well started last week. Completion of the state highway department contract by Continental Construction company, Corvallis, is scheduled for June 1.

This section of the Adel-Winnemucca rd. will cross Warner valley and connect with earlier construction at the foot of Greaser canyon. Three bridges in the valley have been subcontracted to H. G. Carl company, Salem. Construction started

Construction was started last summer by the Hutchins company, Roseburg, on the section from the foot of Greaser canyon to the top of Blizard gap, 6.5 miles.

Beyond that, and for 6.5 miles into Guano valley, the Lake county road department pioneered a road last summer. The road from there up Dougherty slide to the Nevada state line, about 71 miles, was built earlier by Lake county.

The entire road from the state line to Winnemucca, about 145 miles, has been finished and paved. The Adel to Lakeview road had been paved previously.

The Blizard-Greaser section was the first state contract and involved monies of the county, federal and state. The new section across Warner valley uses federal and state money.

could look like a fight between a porpoise and a shark. Besides, we "want" to believe that a shark has a relentless enemy in the porpoise.

The porpoise's nose is a pretty sensitive part of its body; it is not made for ramming into hard bodies. The porpoise and the shark have lived in the same ocean for many millions of years. They may not be "bosom friends," but they certainly are not mortal enemies. The "fights" between the porpoise and the shark occur more often in the imagination of the observer than in the waters of the ocean.

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